

The address delivered at the opening of the classes of the Middlesex Hospital Medical College, session 1859-60 / by Mitchell Henry.

Contributors

Henry, Mitchell, 1826-1910.
Royal College of Surgeons of England

Publication/Creation

London : Mitchell & Son, printers, 1859.

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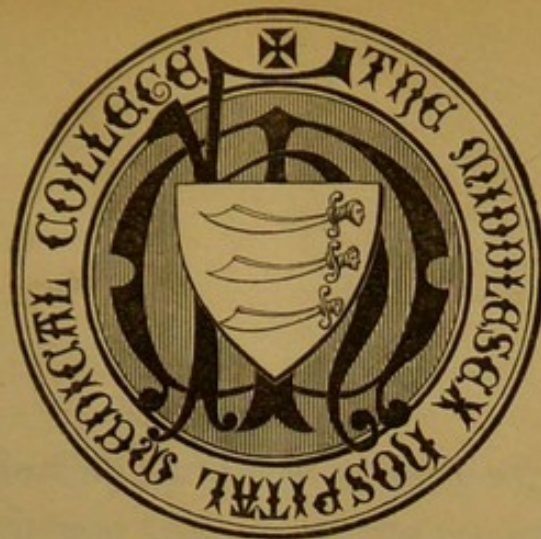
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THE ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

OPENING OF THE CLASSES

OF THE

Middlesex Hospital Medical College.

SESSION 1859-60.

BY

MITCHELL HENRY,

F.R.C.S.,

SURGEON TO THE HOSPITAL,

LECTURER ON MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE IN THE COLLEGE,

SURGEON TO THE NORTH-LONDON OPHTHALMIC INFIRMARY,

CONSULTING SURGEON TO THE EAST GRINSTEAD DISPENSARY,

ETC.

LONDON:

MITCHELL & SON, PRINTERS, WARDOUR STREET.

1859.



The following Address is printed, as nearly as possible, as it was spoken, at the request of some of those who heard it, and at the desire of my Colleagues.

It was favourably received by an audience pre-disposed to overlook its defects, and to accept kindly whatever might be in it that was not unworthy; and it is hoped, therefore, that any one who may now read it, will not forget the difficulty of giving even the semblance of novelty to thoughts which have been expressed a thousand times before.

Its object was simply to give utterance to certain things which I believe to be true, and of universal application; and if it shall assist in giving a nobler idea of life and its responsibilities, to any young man who may be entering upon the study of a profession, either that of Medicine or any other, the purpose I had in view will be amply attained.

M. H.

11, King Street,
October, 1850.

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M. H.

Harley Street,
October, 1859.

AN ADDRESS

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

We are met upon an occasion of great, if not of solemn importance—we are here to take part in a ceremony which though once in each year it recurs, never fails to excite some feelings of interest, and some degree of emotion in the minds even of those most habituated to it.

Upon this day, and in many instances at this very hour, there are assembled in almost all the Hospitals of this metropolis, and in many of the Hospitals and Infirmaries of this kingdom, audiences similar to the one now gathered within these walls, numbering, like it, the aged and the young, the tyro and the sage; persons differing in all the outward circumstances of experience and position, yet all actuated by kindred impulses, all brought together for one common object—the promotion of medical teaching, the inauguration of a new Session of medical labor. Let us begin our work with the consciousness that this is no solitary, no isolated meeting, but let us feel animated by the thought that, wherever within the compass of England the science of medical teaching has reared her head, there at this time will be found those who, like us, have met to do her honor, and to bid her great and holy work God speed. Year after year each returning October has opened upon similar gatherings; in every Medical School is to be observed at this time the same unbounded excitement; their

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Year after year each returning October has opened upon similar gatherings; in every Medical School is to be observed at this time the same unwonted excitement; there

are the same friendly greetings, the same encouraging smiles, for we are met to welcome back the old pupils, and to offer a no less cordial greeting to the new. The ceremony, indeed, may lack in novelty, the words of welcome and of warning have been spoken again and again from this place, but not yet too often. The prelections of friendship are always cheering, and it is as those who would be amongst your best friends, that we meet you here to-day.

This consideration it is that has done most to reconcile me to the formidable and unsought undertaking of delivering the Introductory Address. Great, and to me impossible, would be the task, if it were required that the Address should be worthy of the occasion, but I am yet encouraged by the thought that if, with becoming earnestness, I shall have expressed the heartfelt pleasure that we experience in finding ourselves again surrounded by those who at once stimulate and appreciate our labours, my task will have been more than half performed.

To you, Sir, it is my duty and my privilege to offer our grateful thanks for the uniform encouragement which, as the organ of the Governors of this Hospital, you have ever afforded to the cause of Medical Education; an encouragement, let me say, that we the more appreciate, inasmuch as it is attended with much personal exertion, and with never-failing courtesy.

To you, Pupils, and friends of former years, I have to say, that those sentiments of regard and esteem which were fostered amidst labours that we have shared together in days gone by, do not grow less warm because we have always found you anxious to maintain the honour of your Alma Mater, and to shew, by your presence here, on occasions such as this, that your interest in her and hers is no

ephemeral sentiment, but an abiding principle of your professional lives.

To you, Gentlemen, whose acquaintance we make for the first time to-night, I have to promise every aid in study, every encouragement in exertion, that can spring from a heartfelt desire on our part to promote your best interests, and to render your attendance here truly profitable. In addressing, then, a few observations especially to you, I shall perhaps on the one hand conform to the spirit in which these introductory addresses were first conceived, and on the other shall do what lies in my power to deprecate that criticism to which I should justly render myself liable, if presumptuously, I were to attempt to teach my seniors, from whom I would so gladly learn.

Be it then our task to night, as all of us students in the great laboratory of nature, to enquire how best we may hope to wring from her those medical secrets that she guards so jealously, and which the longest and most devoted life of any amongst us, will prove too short even to admire. I seek for no novel topic upon which to occupy your time, but I would simply bring together those thoughts which naturally suggest themselves when we reflect that many amongst you are now just commencing the great business of your lives; the work, for which all your previous education has been but a preparation; that work which, if you rightly interpret the decrees of the Omnipotent, you came into the world to do. How can you do it best, with satisfaction to yourselves, and with lasting benefit to your fellow-men?

Now, Gentlemen, I can have no hesitation in telling you that in most, if not in all respects, the mental and moral qualifications with which you must enter upon your campaign, if you would end it triumphantly, are precisely

those that are essential to success in any calling in life. Let us enquire, then, what qualities have attended the most distinguished men in all professions, and let us see if there be not some one or more characteristics common to them all. If, then, I may be permitted to attempt an answer to this not very easy enquiry, an answer founded upon biographical reading, and upon reflection, I should say that those qualities which most conduce to worthy success in life, are "*earnestness of purpose*," and a "*genuine love of truth*."

What is it, I would ask, that made Xavier and Schwartz, each in his several Church, the most glorious of Missionaries; Luther the most formidable of Reformers; Bunyan and Wesley foremost of moral and religious Teachers? What is it that inspired the courage and foreshadowed the successes of an Alexander, a Hannibal, a Cæsar, and a Napoleon? What is it that made Cromwell at once the wisest of statesmen, and the most successful of generals;—what is it that has embalmed the memories of Socrates and Newton, and Milton, and Johnson, and Herschell?—what is it that gave the ermine to Eldon and Thurlow, and Ellenborough?—what is it that enabled Arkwright and Watt, and Stephenson, to revolutionize the physical world?—what is it that in our own profession has rendered the names of Sydenham and Harvey, and Hunter and Jenner familiar as household words?

It was—take it, Gentlemen, as the most solemn truth the history of these men proclaims—it was that they possessed *earnestness of purpose*. To them life was no plaything; time was no bauble: and so must it be with you, so must it be with the students of divinity and law, so with the soldier and the merchant, so in every calling in life.

Come furnished with earnestness of purpose, and you

shall even overcome defects of early education ; you shall certainly compensate for the lack of genius ; you shall give pledges to success which are the harbingers of greatness.

But bring it not, have no adequate conception of the dignity of labour—of labour, that best friend to man,—spend your time in idleness, and waste your mind upon frivolity,—and neither wealth nor station, nor an amply endowed intellect, shall save you from self-contempt, or rescue your memories from deserved oblivion.

Earnestness is the talismanic key that opens all locks ; it is the passport to success in everything : especially is it the magic wand of the student of nature. If then you are engaged in study, study with earnestness ; if attending a lecture, bring not your bodies only, but your minds also ; and even if engaged in recreation, do it with your whole attention : above all, never fall into that dreamy state of almost imbecile fatuity, that state of half work, half play, which sometimes forms the refuge of the sensualist, who, when tired of an unceasing round of material pleasures, seeks at last for some relief in the exercise of his despised intellect, and at other times seems to constitute the delight of a half educated *dilettante*.

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.” “Work while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work.”

Now is your day, perform your task here with diligence and earnestness, and shew that you are men.

More than two thousand years ago, in language fitted for all time, Socrates proclaimed, “The best man, and most beloved by the gods, is he who, as a husbandman, performs all the duties of husbandry ; as a surgeon, those of the medical art ; in political life his duty towards the

commonwealth; but the man who does nothing well, is neither useful nor agreeable to the gods." Oh! how are you to be envied, who are but just commencing the study of your profession. You who have time and opportunity still before you, you whom self-reproach haunts not, who have never wasted your chances, but for whom all things are yet in store. Would that I could adequately impress you with this great truth, that your success depends upon your earnestness. In one short phrase, earnestness is in the moral world as that one spot which Archimedes asked in the physical world, whereby to move the earth.

And you, too, Gentlemen, who are here to continue a course already commenced, reflect that if you have hitherto been deficient in this great quality, the opportunity is not yet wholly lost. Make this night your fresh starting point. Cast away any bad or idle habits that you may have contracted; and if for the next six months you persevere in diligence as a duty, I will promise that henceforth you shall persevere in it as a pleasure.

But to accomplish this you must rise to the consciousness of the necessity of stern self-discipline. No man can hope to do that which your future lives will be passed in doing, namely, in guiding others, unless he has first conquered himself—

"Man who would

Be man must rule the empire of himself,

In it must reign supreme, erecting his throne

On vanquished will."

Together with earnestness you must bring a *real love of truth*—a quality scarcer, perhaps, than even the former. The love of truth for its own sake is amidst the rarest of human endowments, yet without it no man can be truly great, aye, even respectable.

The habit of looking at things straightforwardly in the face is of all others essential to the Practitioner of Medicine. Disease makes no allowances. You can get no secrets from nature, unless you interrogate her as honest as well as humble suitors. Take, then, Dr. Johnson's advice, and, before you enter on your studies, clear your mind of cant. Cant in religion, cant in social and political life, cant in science—is in each and every instance a co-queting with hypocrisy, unworthy of an intellectual being, and certain to emasculate the mind of him that indulges in it. Do not make a mistake pointed out by Archbishop Whately, as common enough with weak and prejudiced persons, that you are lovers of truth, because you like to have truth on your side. Most men do this; for few are insensible to the material advantage of truth. As hypocrisy is said to be the homage vice pays to virtue, so is truth too powerful an ally to be lightly discarded. Comparatively few, however, care to be on the side of truth, unless it happens to be their side also.

These two, then, earnestness in your work and the habitual love of truth for its own sake, are, I take it, those two *general* qualities which it is essential you should bring with you to the study of any profession, and especially to the study of Medicine, which admits not of bias or prejudice.

The question next naturally presents itself as to what you may expect now that you have become students of medicine. What advantages or what disadvantages attach to the circumstance, that it is your lot to have been born within the present century, and that you have commenced your studies at this particular juncture.

I have heard men lament that they were born too late: too late for discovery—assert that a reputation was much

more easily obtained in early times, when knowledge was scanty, and the harvest untouched—when every husbandman was nearly certain of a bounteous yield from the virgin soil. This very lament, however, is a proof that those who make it are unfit for the high purposes of science. Ambition truly is a great quality, and the desire to be distinguished has accompanied the finest characters, and often seemed to foreshadow their success. Too often, however, what is called ambition is mere vanity, a spurious counterfeit, the growth of a degraded mind, which reacts again to the still greater degradation of the mind in which it is unfortunately nourished.

It is not very easy, perhaps, to define in words what constitutes the distinction between commendable ambition and contemptible vanity, but, as it appears to me, true and noble ambition never recognizes to itself the person of the ambitious man as that which is to be distinguished, but works on for some great object, sure that success will follow, and seeing before it nothing but that great object—the Pole-star of the intellectual life.

A vain man and his work, on the contrary, are never separated: the labour, however noble, is ever degraded by the desire for personal distinction. The object sought is not the truth, but the truth only so far as it ministers to personal *éclat*. A complaint, therefore, that the great discoveries have all been made, and that a reputation was achieved more easily in times gone by, can never proceed from a truly ambitious man, although it may and often does proceed from a vain one.

But indeed, Gentlemen, we may join issue here, and ask how can knowledge or discovery have any limit, seeing that the Great Author of all, Himself illimitable, can be measured in his works by nothing less than Himself. None

of our poor discoveries can lessen the domain of the unknown, which is itself infinite.*

Enter into your labours with no such foolish imaginings. To the earnest seeker after truth, the great field of science is all open : as yet mankind has scarcely cleared a pathway through the thorny brushwood of human prejudice and social customs, which leads to that rich garden where the fruit hangs heavy on the trees, and the only qualifications required from the gatherer are diligence and honesty.

In our own profession especially, this lament of the paucity of great discoveries yet remaining is utterly idle and absurd. Why, it may almost be said that discoveries in natural science have only just begun. Truly we live in a great age, the age of science and social progress. Never join with those who, unworthy of the times in which they have been born, complain that the age of poetry has flown, that eloquence and the drama are gone, that chivalry is a thing that has passed away, and who venture to assert that our existence is in a prosaic time, amidst little men fitted for little deeds. You, I am persuaded, will never be found amongst those who libel their Creator by pretending that man, God's best and greatest work, has degenerated, as knowledge, God's best gift to man, has increased, and the great truths, both of His moral and material world, have become more and more widely diffused. In our own calling, I do not scruple to say that any man of good education and fair judgment, is at this present time safer as a medical guide than were even the luminaries a few years ago. Think how great a thing it is that when you shall

* For this thought I am indebted to a remark quoted by my kinsman and namesake, the late Dr. J. K. Mitchell of Philadelphia, in his *Lecture on the progress of Recent Science*.

have finished your short career within this Hospital, you shall know much more than ever Pott or Cooper knew; you shall be able to relieve suffering and to ward off death with far more certainty than could Harvey, or Sydenham, or even those who lived much later.

Medicine daily approaches nearer and nearer to the conditions of an exact science. Armed with his stethoscope, the wise Physician can predicate what is going on in the great vital organs within the chest as exactly as though he saw them mapped out before him: furnished with the ophthalmoscope, the Surgeon can tell what is the condition of the interior of the eye; and left no longer to the uncertain guidance of experience and general knowledge, he can say what hope remains for the amaurotic, and, if he cannot always cure, can at least save his patient from unnecessary and oftentimes painful treatment. Guided by a few chemical tests, the accomplished practitioner can ascertain what is the cause of the fearful thirst of diabetes, or of the lethargy of retained urea; and by simple and easy experiment can do much to save the sufferer from the dreadful torments attendant on the formation of stone or in the paroxysms of gout.

Of the wonders of the microscope, what layman even has not heard? And although upon practical medicine and surgery in the cure of disease, it has not yet perhaps exerted all the influence that so many have predicted for it, no one can deny that the habits of close observation and attention that it necessitates on the part of its cultivators, have proved even more valuable than the direct results flowing from its employment. Of the inestimable benefits offered to mankind in the discovery of anæsthetics, a very few days' experience within the walls of this Hospital will convince the most sceptical. But, as I believe, our

greatest triumphs are yet to come, and those in that department of our art which has hitherto been least satisfactory, I mean in therapeutics. The discovery of the alkaloids and of kindred medicines, bids in my opinion fair to cast on this hitherto the most uncertain portion of our science, a light by the brilliancy of which we shall be enabled to track disease to its utmost limits, and there to combat, and, if it please God, to overthrow and slay it.

But bear in mind, Gentlemen, these high results are only to be attained by persevering labour,—by labour amidst many difficulties and oft-repeated discouragements,—by labour that chooses its locality as well as its object, and refuses to produce its fruits unless it be pursued amidst the sufferings, and sorrows, and dangers attendant on sickness and death,—by labour that sometimes seems hardly to have begun, until we are called upon to follow it in the dead-house, amidst the perishing relics of our fellow men.

But there see how it is that morbid anatomy, itself a modern science, enables us to look back, as it were through an avenue,* upon the countless paths through which death has made his approach: see how we can track him in his progress, and mark how, step by step, he has gained his territory, and at last has achieved his final victory. But each such victory, if only rightly used, weakens him, while it strengthens us. We learn his wiles, and, increasing our defence, may hope to keep him from life's citadel, until at least those threescore years and ten be passed, beyond which life is too often only a prolonged sorrow, whilst death, it is our glorious privilege to know, is the

* For this beautiful image I am indebted to my recollection of an expression that fell from that master of eloquence, Mr. Paget.

opening of that bright world where disease and pain are known no more.

"Death is the crown of life:

Were death denied, poor man would live in vain:

Were death denied, to live would not be life:

Were death denied, even fools would wish to die."—

(YOUNG, *Narcissa*, l. 526.)

There is one other mental and moral qualification, almost indeed a special qualification, that all of you must bring to the practice of medicine. I mean a genuine sympathy with the sufferings of your patients; for when under due regulation, it is precisely this sympathy which determines the question, whether or not a man shall crown his abstract knowledge, so as to become a really successful practitioner, that is, successful in relieving the sufferings of his patient. No very selfish or cold-hearted man ever can become a good physician. The human body is not a mere machine to be dealt with as though it were destitute of soul and sentiment; on the contrary, our chief diseases are influenced, and sometimes indeed proceed from this mysterious union of spirit with matter. With the poet we may ask:—

"Am I but what I seem? but mere flesh and blood?

A branching channel and a mazy flood?

The purple stream, that through my vessels glides,

Dull, and unconscious, flows like common tides.

The pipes, through which the circling juices stray,

Are not that thinking I, no more than they.

This frame, compacted with transcendent skill,

Of moving joints, obedient to my will;

Nursed from the fruitful glebe, like yonder tree,

Waxes and wastes. I call it *mine*, not *me*.

New matter still the mouldering mass sustains,

The mansion changed, the tenant yet remains;

And from the fleeting stream, repaired by food,

Distinct as is the Swimmer from the Flood."—*Anonymous*.

The varying states of the nervous system, through the medium of which the inner life becomes manifest, is revealed to us often in outward signs. The flow of tears that comes at last to the relief of the o'er charged bosom, the parched lips and agonizing thirst that accompany anxiety and fear, are both amongst the more obvious illustrations of it; but as practitioners, we must be on the watch for yet more delicate manifestations of this mysterious nervous influence. We must look for those occult phenomena, difficult to express in words, but which, as is well known to the practical physician, do yet exist, and go far to determine the question whether, in any particular case, disease shall triumph over its victim, or be itself subdued, and succeeded by a renewed state of health and strength. If you want to ascertain the real condition of your patient, you must not feel his pulse whilst he is still influenced by the excitement of your visit, but must wait until a few soothing words have calmed his agitation, and given time for the blood to resume its equable flow. In all circumstances you must try to gain the confidence of the sick. A hesitating awkward manner, or the fierce brusqueness affected by some, are positive drawbacks to your usefulness. Your manners should be the reflex of your mind; if that is open, honest, noble, kind, your manners will be frank, genial, sympathetic; but if your minds be narrow, warped, ascetic, and destitute of the kindly affections, depend upon it, your knowledge, however extensive, will just lack that one thing which alone can render it available. In this respect medicine may almost be said to require an inborn aptitude in its votaries, as much as music or painting. You will meet with those who seem to identify themselves with their patient, who learn to anticipate his wants, and by a sort of intuitive

consciousness, know precisely what is required for his comfort or his cure. Such persons are said to possess great tact, and when this is combined with great honesty, it becomes indeed a gift of priceless value.

I have often thought what a depth of knowledge and of sympathy there is in that old aphorism which tells us that "the second best remedy is often better than the best, if only the patient likes it best."

With reverence, indeed, be it spoken—but that which most distinguished the human career of the Great Physician of all, was His intense sympathy with the sufferings of our race; and in that sympathy we best may hope to imitate Him in our dealings with mankind. And you shall see its power even now. Go read the history of Pinel, and learn how madness itself has yielded to the force of sympathy and love.

But, Gentlemen, however one individual may possess this sympathy as a natural gift, a sufficient degree of it is to be acquired by all, for all possess its rudiments; and there is this great advantage attaching to it, that the way to cultivate it is precisely the way to learn your profession, namely, by being constantly amongst the sick, and by having your heart's desire fixed upon them and their diseases. If you do this, resolutely excluding from your minds all vanity or thought of self, and are awake to the responsibility of treating that which the apostle tells us is the Temple of the Most High, you need have no fears, but that your knowledge shall be made available for the relief of much of the suffering that is in the world, and for the restoration to many of that greatest of all blessings, the blessing of health.

And now, Gentlemen, the task which I proposed to myself is well nigh performed. I have studiously avoided

entering into any details; for in an address of this kind details would be out of place. Neither time nor patience remain for them. I have not spoken to you of the temptations peculiar to our profession, or of those more vulgar temptations which are certain to assail you during your residence in this metropolis. Against these a sense of personal responsibility, and religious principle imbibed in early life, can form the only effectual safeguards. I have not ventured to distinguish any particular branches of medical study as especially deserving of your attention; neither have I attempted to point out what books you should read, or how occupy your leisure time. These things must be left to the wise experience of your several teachers, and to your own common sense. My business has been to indicate, I well know how imperfectly, some of those great principles of conduct which are established by the experience of ages.

Little remains for me, except, in a very few words to tell you, that, thanks to the wise and far-seeing liberality of the Governors, this Hospital and College affords to you all the necessities, aye, and even all the luxuries, that can possibly be desired in the study of your profession.

Every convenience that science is acquainted with is here placed at your disposal for the study of anatomy, both theoretical and practical; of chemistry in all its departments; of physiology, of botany, and of all those other branches of human knowledge that appertain to the medical art. But, when I tell you this, suffer me at the same time to remind you, that it entirely depends upon yourselves what use you make of these advantages. These are the instruments of teaching; but, remember that you do not come here merely to be *taught*, but rather to *learn*. You cannot be mere recipients of

knowledge; on the contrary, you must be willing and active agents in acquiring information—and, therefore, it is precisely those things which you now find hardest and most irksome, that will eventually prove of greatest value in the discipline of your minds, which is in truth one of the chief ends to be obtained by all general and by no small part even of special study.

But, Gentlemen, when you have exhausted all that can either be theoretically or practically learned in this Medical College, bear in mind that, after all, your chief interests must centre in the wondrous spectacle that is hourly open to you within the walls of yonder great Hospital. It is to be intelligent and earnest students of the phenomena here daily recurring, that you have come to study in London.

Neglect in this department would be irreparable. By uncertain—spasmodic,—almost by disgraceful labour—you might, perhaps, pass through your examinations, and by hard study in after life, you might compensate for the lack of that information which you may very easily acquire by even a moderate degree of attention to your lectures. But if you despise your Hospital practice, nay, if you do not from first to last throw into it the very extremity of zeal and enthusiasm of which you are capable, woe indeed will be yours when you come to share in the anxieties and responsibilities of practice.

Upon this subject it is necessary that I should speak plainly, and without reserve. And, therefore, painful as the confession is, I do not hesitate to declare that the ignorance in practical matters, of some whom I have known to have obtained their diplomas, is to my mind perfectly appalling. Of these men, it might with truth be said that they “walked the hospitals,” for they made

of those wards, which all who enter them should regard as consecrated by suffering, merely pleasant lounging places in which to while away their time in idle gossip. diversified occasionally by those moving incidents which so often occur in practice. It was the constant habit of such persons to attribute their own deficiencies to the short comings of the governing bodies which regulate the details of Medical Education; but at the present moment, excuses like these would be utterly idle and absurd.

Far be it, however, from me to say that great improvement in medical education is not loudly called for, notwithstanding what has been judiciously done within the last few years; but, believe me, you have to do with the actually existing state of things—and not with what it might theoretically be or may possibly become.

It is, Gentlemen, because we are deeply impressed with the paramount importance of Hospital study, that those regulations have been framed which necessitate on the part of every student here, a continuous course of practical employment in the Wards, so long as he remains with us; and it is for the same reason that, with their wonted spirit, the Governors have recently instituted those “Hospital Assistantships” which will, I hope, form the subjects of an active,—I had almost said—of a fierce competition amongst you.

There can be no doubt, however, that the double examination recently instituted by the College of Surgeons, will prove a great boon to the really industrious student. And here I cannot but avail myself of the opportunity of saying how highly we appreciate the presence amongst us this evening of one,* who was long

* Mr. Arnott.

amongst the brightest ornaments of this Hospital, and who though now, in his capacity as President of the Royal College of Surgeons, for the second time raised to the highest position the Surgical Profession can confer, yet maintains his interests and his sympathies in the prosperity of his old Hospital and School, and friends.

When also that scheme of study which has recently been shadowed out by the Medical Council of Education and Registration shall be carried into operation, I know of but little more that legislation can effect. Sure, however, am I, that for many years past no educational regulations need ever have proved a serious obstacle to those who were determined to learn their profession *in spite* of difficulties.

The pleasing task now remains to me, of congratulating you, as I do from the bottom of my heart, both upon the Profession you have chosen, and upon the time at which you have entered it. It is a profession that is rapidly rising in public estimation, and will continue to rise so long as civilization maintains itself in advance of barbarism, and men learn to recognize the truth that it is a better and a wiser thing to save men's lives than to destroy them. The time is fast approaching when to permit of the unnecessary sacrifice of human life by preventible causes, will justly be considered as among the most heinous crimes a nation can commit. And if this be so, who, I would ask, can be called upon both to determine and to carry sanitary laws into execution, if not the members of the Medical Profession, who will thus attain to a connection with the state, which, according to some, is to form the Utopia of our hopes?

A nobler and a holier Profession you could not have

chosen ; for in it your lives may be passed in the exercise of that practical charity which we know, upon the highest authority, forms the essence of true religion—"in visiting the fatherless and the widow in their afflictions, and in keeping yourselves unspotted from the world."*

Were it required that I should set before you examples for your imitation, I could find many amongst those who are still living ; many more could I find amongst the mighty Dead, amongst those who have been gathered to their fathers, but whose memories still smell sweet, and blossom in the dust. *Dulce est meminisse !*

I will content myself, however, with reminding you that when that great and good man, Dr. Prout, so recently removed from us, was told that from the rapid advance of the symptoms of the disease under which he laboured, he had but a few hours to live, he called for pen and paper, and passed literally some of the last remaining moments of his life in dictating directions for the guidance of certain complicated cases of disease, which happened to be under his care. He did so, because throughout a long life, he had endeavoured so to live as never to be unprepared to die, and because he was actuated by a sense of *Duty*—of duty which has so often proved the support of our countrymen in every variety of danger and distress.

May Duty, then, which actuated him, be also our guiding star throughout our careers. May this Session now commenced, prove to all, a Session of honest work, and as such only an epitome of our lives—and so persevering in duty—even when time has shaken us by the hand, and we know that Death is not far behind, it

* See Note at end of Lecture.

may haply come to pass, that when at length our day too has ended, and the great dread secret is revealed, it shall then be said of each of us, by those who yet survive, as was said of one of old—"he was skilful enough to have lived still, if knowledge could be set up against mortality."

NOTE.

I AM aware that, owing to the change attached to the meaning of the word "religion," since the days of the translators of the English Version of the Scriptures, it has come to pass that the "offices of religion" here referred to, are made to possess a higher significance than properly belongs to them. The "*θρησκεία*," or outward ceremonial observances of religion, must be accompanied by the "*εὐσέβεια*" or "godliness;" but it can hardly be considered wrong to have used the expressions in the text, when we remember that, as the observances here commended, cannot be acceptable unless performed in the true spirit of godliness, so also neither will they be persistent, as all experience shews, if they be not based on that higher "religion," the "*εὐσέβεια*."—See COLERIDGE'S *Aids to Reflection*, p. 17, 1836. TRENCH'S *New Testament Synonyms*, p. 191.