

**What to observe in medicine, or the means of improving it, as a science and an art : with the duties of the medical profession to their patients, the public, and themselves : an introductory address to the Harveian Medical Society, delivered at the commencement of its twenty-second session, October 7, 1852 / by James Bird.**

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24 *The necessity of*  
*from the Author*  
WHAT TO OBSERVE IN MEDICINE,

OR

THE MEANS OF IMPROVING IT,

AS

A SCIENCE AND AN ART:

WITH THE

DUTIES OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION TO THEIR  
PATIENTS, THE PUBLIC, AND  
THEMSELVES:

An Introductory Address

TO

THE HARVEIAN MEDICAL SOCIETY,

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF ITS  
TWENTY-SECOND SESSION,  
OCTOBER 7, 1852.

BY

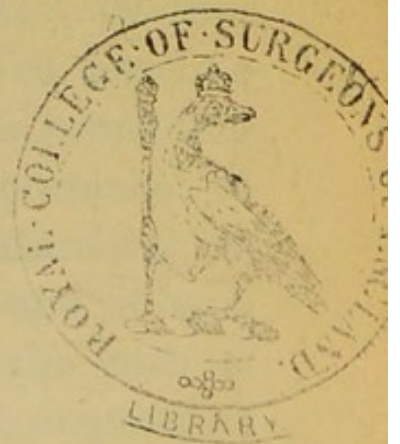
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## INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

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WE are again assembled to inaugurate a new session of the Harveian Medical Society, by an Address commemorative of those objects for which the founders of the Institution were originally associated, and to which we their successors should still devote our time, our opportunities, and our talents, in so far as we can render such subservient to the public good, or to the maintenance of professional honour. He who proposes to himself the accomplishment of a large amount of the former, cannot fail in securing for his calling a considerable share of the other. In proportion as professions can be brought to bear on ameliorating the condition of the many, or promoting the common welfare, so will their importance be estimated and their dignity increased. Mankind are seldom unthankful for actual services; and if men be content to follow, in their callings, the path of utility, even when they come short of the acquisition of wealth, they cannot fail of their reward in the conscious discharge of duty to their fellows, the



respect of the good, and the affectionate regard of all to whom their services prove a blessing.

While other professions establish the dominion of intellect over the material world, by subjugating the powers of nature to the benefit and use of the community, or put in force comprehensive enactments, whether of politics or commerce, for improving the condition and increasing the comforts of mankind, it is the privilege of the medical profession to share, with religion, a like beneficence of object—relief of human suffering in man's hour of trial and affliction. It is no less an object of philanthropy, and obedience to our divine Master's precepts, to alleviate physical, than to remove moral evil. To recall to freedom and reason the ruined maniac, to restore life and vigour to the body's dying and weakened functions; to find pleasure in our vocation of removing disease and assuaging pain, and to prepare ourselves for the truly useful exercise of the physician's or the surgeon's art, in its most comprehensive effect and utility, entail on us an amount of Christian responsibility, which can only be adequately discharged by devoted professional love incompatible with selfishness. A sense of professional obligations to our patients, the public, and our colleagues, should have its origin in high and ennobling motives; and on these heads, respectively, our duty must be measured by the ratio of what we know and do, for perfecting scientific practical medicine, for advancing public hygiene, and the practice of medical ethics.

However laborious our studies, then, or painful the acquisition of knowledge for restoring health or relieving the sufferings of humanity, all will be done



without hope of reward, beyond the capability and pleasure of doing good. "Woe to the physician," says Hufeland, "who makes money or the honour of men the end of his efforts! he will be in continual contradiction with himself and his duties; he will find his hopes disappointed, and his efforts unproductive; he will curse a vocation which does not reward, because he knows not true reward."

In the first place, let us turn to what we more immediately owe our patients and this Society, "founded as it was by zealous professional men, anxious to promote their own improvement and the advancement of medical science."

Dedicated as it was to the true interest of scientific medicine, it was therefore named after the immortal Harvey; who, by trained observation and clear inductive reasoning, having established the existence of the general circulation, effected for physiology and medicine what Newton by a yet higher abstraction of a general law, from the fact of a stone falling to the ground, was able to perform for general physics. By Harvey's discovery, the whole circle of medical opinion and practice was changed; and if this Society be worthy of the immortal name it bears, it will, in these perilous times of quackery and sciolism, stand side by side with like scientific societies, as a buttress of support for the practice of rational medicine. That it already has been, and still will be, the means of extending the scientific character, and elevating the tone of our profession in the immediate circle of its influence, will not, I know, be questioned; and I may, for myself, with gratitude acknowledge the ever-courteous demeanour of the associates around



me, and call to mind the philosophic medical researches of some of those lights of our profession who before now occupied this chair.

Proceeding with the main object of this discourse: "What to observe, or the means of pursuing medicine, with a view to its improvement as a science and an art"—let me first define what meaning may be attached to the term "Medical Science", and see whether the objects of investigation, to which medicine and its collateral branches are directed, admit of the same generalization and inductive method that have, with so much advantage, been employed for elaborating practical rules in other departments of knowledge. By medical science, we mean that department embracing the facts and principles, or laws of organized vitality, subservient to the establishment of practical rules for the healing art, and for the prevention, as well as the cure, of disease. Though the practical application of its principles has been made a ground of subdivision for its labours, we cannot recognize a distinction between medicine and surgery, except in the mechanical department of the latter: for the same philosophical conception of principles, on the subject of normal and abnormal action, must form the staple value of the physician's and surgeon's professional knowledge.

The certainty of result with which the principles of the more exact sciences may be practically applied, may be taken as a test of their perfection. The cause of their superiority exists, however, in the properties and relations of unorganized matter being more simple and uniform, more constant and invariable, than the complicated and dissimilar phenomena re-



sulting from the action of organized matter. The properties of component structures, the sum of whose functions constitutes *their life*, are less definite and constant, less susceptible of proof from calculation, less within the bounds of probability, than magnitude, distance, position and motion, which enter into the calculations of the astronomer; or yet than the properties of solid or liquid matter, which constitute the science of statics and hydrostatics, dynamics, and hydrodynamics. These and other like sciences, which treat of the more simple properties and relations of matter, are essentially numerical in their nature; while the observations and experiments, which constitute the staple of their facts, are of the most simple kind, capable of being made more perceptible to the senses, and more exact, by the aid of instruments, or devised methods of great nicety. But medicine, which deals with the very complex properties of matter, in its organized and most variable form, which admits not the use of most perfect instruments of calculation, and is aided by very few accurate means of research, compared to the many objects of its study, is a science than which none can be met with more difficult, none which more requires that its studies should be based on a highly cultivated intellect, rendered more discriminating and acute by all that experience can suggest or ingenuity invent. The complex phenomena of health and disease admit of no exact measure by instruments of calculation, compared to the more perfect sciences. The physician may count the pulse, register the number of the respirations, ascertain the temperature of the body, weigh and test its excretions, and record all the symptoms of



disease, yet find himself widely astray from certainty, when he essays to ascertain the law of connexion between the phenomena and certain forms of structure; or endeavour to simplify the complexity of combination, in which they appear, by tracing their dependence one upon another, or in the order of causation in which they have been presented. And even should he be able to ascertain the causes and consequences of disease, he has *still* to ascertain minutely morbid changes, and the effects of the treatment adopted; and, *even after all*, will be obliged to candidly admit that what he positively knows, may come short of what is positively unknown.

But though the truth of all this must be conceded, there is yet no science existing which admits of so much improvement as medicine; none of late years, which has been pursuing a more philosophical and positive direction, by adopting more inductive methods of observation, by following well-trained habits of thought, and adopting a rational eclecticism, seeking truth in every system and every theory. The experience of the past, and the experiments of the present, have been re-arranged and classified, from which have been developed the now prevailing opinions of solidohumoral pathology. The too devoted and zealous cultivation of mere pathological anatomy, or the visible result of morbid action in the tissues of the body, giving currency for a while to an almost exclusive solidism and localization of disease, led to a most mischievous and exclusive system of heroic remedies for its removal, without much judicious reference to the constitutional conditions on which the first so frequently depend. But juster and



more enlightened views of the essential nature of pathology, derived from a more extensive employment of the microscope for determining the real nature of minute structural changes, and a more refined chemical examination of morbid products, gave rise to two new lines of research—*pathological anatomy* in its most extended sense, and *pathological chemistry*: of which the exponents are the organic conditions of the vascular and nervous systems, and the states of the blood and the secretions. Pathological anatomy thus embraces normal and abnormal, textural and functional anatomy, or *histology* and *pathology*. A sound and accurate physiological chemistry, and a well classified pathological anatomy, must form the groundwork of a truly enlightened pathology; and the former must be the only solid foundation of rational pathological chemistry, on which a better system of *therapeutics* than the present must be based, before we expect to find practical medicine possessing that degree of certainty in result, which every well-wisher to his profession would wish to see introduced into his art, in order that he may be more able to predicate results in the generality of cases.

The scientific pursuit of medicine, then, being a profession of acknowledged difficulty, and the intricacies of the human frame, in health and disease, immeasurably great, how can we best solve these difficulties, or unravel the complex phenomena with which we have to deal? To this the answer is obvious,—by observation alone; or that act of our senses, in its most enlarged and intellectual meaning, implying a distinct and precise conception of the thing observed, coupled with an examination of its



reciprocal relations and connexions ; in short, clinical studies minutely carried out and systematically arranged. The main objects of our investigations here should be, *first*, the study of particular facts, or of isolated diseases ; and, *second*, the inquiry into general facts, to become the foundation of rational medicine as a science.

We shall thus be able to determine what is common and what is peculiar to diseases, and to remedies. With a view of improving medicine as a science, what is common in the greater number of diseases, and in the greater number of cases of the same disease, must be ascertained, so as to determine what that may be in which the community and similarity consist. The peculiarity of different diseases, and wherein this peculiarity consists, should also be made the great object of scientific medical research ; so that the enlightened physician and surgeon may be able to follow the indications of cure, based on a knowledge of the peculiar element of difference in special diseases.

Before we can arrive, however, by the inductive method, at such a generalized knowledge of diseases, and of the common elements of morbid changes in the living system, or of the conditions on which such changes depend, we must clinically examine the particular facts, which are the objects of observation, in connexion with the manifestation, origin, and progress of special and isolated disease. Several proposed systems of philosophical medicine have variously enumerated these facts ; but, for all the purposes of obtaining a more correct clinical registry of the essential features of disease in most cases, I am dis-



posed to adopt, with slight modifications, the proposed enumeration of facts to be observed, as given by Professor Lanza, of Naples, in his work on Positive Nosology.

1st. *The individual condition of the patient*, embracing age, sex, temperament, constitution, previous disease, and state at the commencement of the disease in question.

2nd. *Combination of symptoms peculiar to the disease.* The principal and accessory symptoms are here to be carefully observed and recorded; so that what is peculiar and essential, in the true external character of the disease, may be accurately observed and carefully considered; and thus, by reasoning on them, we may convert them into signs, and arrive through such at a knowledge of the organ affected, and of the anatomico-pathological form of the disease. To insure accuracy on this head, it will here be necessary to note the condition of the patient's pulse, the state of the tongue, the nature of the excretions both alvine and urinary, the temperature and condition of the skin, with the tone and irritability of the muscular and nervous functions. In making this examination, so as to trace the relations and connexions of the things observed, with the functional state of the organs of which they are the direct signs, we shall be greatly aided by percussion and the stethoscope, the use of the microscope, the urinometer and chemical analyses both of the secretions and excretions.

3rd. *The course of the disease.* On this head we will note and scrutinize whether the disease be acute or chronic, continuous or periodic, regular or irre-



gular, conspicuous or latent, having remissions, alternations, paroxysms, relapses, or other variations.

4th. *The disease itself.* This must embrace the nature of the disease, its anatomico-pathological form, extent and degree of the organic lesions, and of the influences which determine the course of it. Visible, tangible, and audible alterations of the natural and vital properties, of parts constitute the anatomical form of the disease; our acquaintance with which is solely due to the persevering research of modern anatomists, aided by the microscope, percussion, the stethoscope, and pathological chemistry. The impulse of late years communicated to the prosecution of this latter branch of scientific medicine, by the labours of Dr. Prout, L'Heritier, Vogel, Liebig, and others, bids fair, when improved by further research, to change the whole character of practical medicine, and to give it greatly increased power, both in the prophylaxis and management of disease. Through this it was that the observation of the albuminous diathesis of tuberculous patients, whose blood is deficient in red globules, accompanied by vitiation of the fibrine, with a similar deficiency of carbon in the elaborated chyle, suggested the propriety of employing iron in this diathesis, and led to the use of cod-liver oil, with such success in the general result, as to remove the treatment of pulmonary consumption from the list of "*opprobria medicinae*": equal, if not greater triumphs, may be yet effected in the treatment of other diseases. But though a judicious application of well ascertained chemico-pathological facts to the knowledge of therapeutics, may prove a valuable aid in improving our methods



of treatment, we must not allow ourselves, through an unskilful use of this branch of our science, to fall into the errors of Van Helmont and his contemporaries, who essayed to cure all diseases by chemical remedies.

5th. *The concurrence or combination of causes.* Under this series of facts, we shall have to consider the hygienic conditions antecedent to the invasion of the disease; the patient's profession, social position, mode of life, ventilation, state of the dwelling and locality, kind of nourishment, and moral influences. During the course of the treatment, too, the healthiness of the place where the patient is treated, and the moral influences which affect him during the course of the disease, must all be taken into account and recorded with exactness. But on this subject a wide field for improvement has been left open. An examination of structural changes, without an inquiry into function, must prove almost valueless in scientific medicine, as strikingly exemplified in the history of the zealous cultivation of pathological anatomy to the exclusion of true pathology; and for a scientific knowledge of functions, inquiry into the operation of external agents on the organism is as essential to a true knowledge of disease and of morbid changes as that of the structures of the organism itself. This can only be effected by bringing in what is ascertained and known of meteorological science to explain the origin and production of morbid phenomena, under different states of atmospheric heat, cold, and moisture. Excepting the Registrar General's weekly enumeration of diseases, in connexion with the Meteorological Register, kept at Greenwich, the only truly scien-



tific attempt of this kind in the metropolis, to connect morbid action with its relation to atmospheric changes, is now in progress of trial at St. Mary's hospital. Twenty stations, also, of meteorological observation, in connexion with clinical studies on disease in the Indian hospitals, have been established under the orders of the Honourable Court of Directors of the East-India Company, through the enlightened exertions of Colonel Sykes.

6th. *The efficacy and tolerance of the remedial means employed.* Under this head all immediate effects produced by the ingesta, whether dietetic agents or drugs, on the individual condition of the patient, ought to be carefully observed and recorded. Attention to this fact is most important, and should be preliminary to all others bearing on the cure. Neglect of it has, perhaps, tended more than all other causes to retard our knowledge of the true value of therapeutic remedies in the cure of diseases. Chemical investigations, particularly those of Liebig, have led to the discovery that the great functions of nutrition, secretion, and excretion, are performed by the primary constituents of various kinds of food; and a knowledge, therefore, of the exact influence which these substances exert over the composition of various animal textures, must be obtained, as preliminary and accessory to any inquiry regarding the influence of remedies on the chemical composition of the animal tissues, fluids, and secretions. The researches of Mialhe, Wohler, Bernard, Golding Bird, and others, in relation to the alteration which remedies produce in the chemical composition of the animal structures and fluids, have established some



most important facts on this point ; and have in some measure made us acquainted with the nature of the chemical changes, which medicines themselves are subject to during their passage through the animal economy. But, until scientific medicine has made greater advances than it has yet done, in its collateral branches of physiological and pathological chemistry, we can scarcely consider it in possession of sufficient data for pursuing the chemistry of therapeutics, with much chance of success, or of making, to the fullest extent, an application of chemistry to the cure of disease. To this point, however, namely, an improved system of therapeutics, explanatory of the influence of remedies on diseased condition, all our knowledge of physiology and pathology, in the most extended sense, should be concentrated ; in order that we may with more certainty of result, apply the principles of our professional knowledge as the practical rules of our art. By this test the perfection of other exact sciences is judged ; and by this alone will the public ever test the value of scientific principles in medicine, when applied as rules of art. Too little attention has, I think, been paid in this country to this most important branch of the profession ; for, without this knowledge of the *modus operandi* of remedies, our practice must be in a great degree empirical and uncertain, even though we may be able to ascertain the true nature of the disease, and may have clearly traced it to the causes from which it originated. The direct practical value of such inquiries cannot be too strongly impressed on the minds of my professional brethren ; and while the Harveian Society is bound to give that due weight to pathology,



as the foundation of scientific medicine, to which it is justly entitled, it will yet give no inferior place to therapeutics; as our success in the practice of our profession, both in prolonging human life and lessening human suffering, will be in exact proportion to our knowledge of the action of those remedies, with which we propose to invigorate the system in the one case, or alter diseased action in the other.

The application also of the numerical method, to all the symptoms and circumstances of diseases, may be applied with much advantage in enabling us to arrive at certainty of result in scientific medicine. Their duration; their comparative frequency and mortality; the variations of mortality according to age, sex, season of the year, localities and climate, may be all made the subject of numerical notation; the generalized inferences from which, under particular conditions and circumstances, may become the foundation of most useful practical rules of art.

Such is a brief outline of the intricacies and requirements of medicine pursued both as a science and an art. To unravel one and supply the other, must be the business of a lifetime; not of one, but of many individuals in succession; who, selecting a well-digested plan of experimental medicine, for collecting facts on which to found general principles and rules of art, must labour, with a sincerity of purpose, to obtain common grounds for comparing them in all countries; rejecting those that are doubtful, and perfecting all those that are incomplete or carelessly observed. In the absence of any association, or scientific centre of common intercourse, where the united efforts of the enlightened medical men of Europe and



of England might be made tributary to this great object of our profession, we should like to see all the scientific medical societies of this kingdom and of Europe organized into an association, for carrying out this most legitimate and important inquiry. Looking at other scientific departments, and contemplating what great and noble things have been accomplished by the union of wealth and enterprise, I do not despair of yet seeing the establishment of such an union of zealous medical investigators of the truth, before the burning light of whose labour the glare of false systems will be extinguished, and we shall no more hear of a Homœopathic or Hydropathic Congress.

In desiring a unity of effort, I would advocate an uniformity of education for the members of our common profession; and I see no objection to the subdivision of medical practice into various departments. After a comprehensive and efficient medical education, imperatively required of all who enter the profession, if any should choose to circumscribe the field of their labours to particular branches of inquiry, we need not object to different subdivisions of the medical art; as those thoroughly acquainted with the philosophical principles which unite all, may render these special labours subservient to the general elevation of medical character.

It has been very wisely said that the best medical police consists in dignified humanity; or the relation of medical science to the state and to the public. A life of active benevolence and utility is certainly imposed on all who have chosen the healing art for a profession. If we would promote the dignity of our calling, or its claims to public sympathy, we must be



more anxious to advance the science and art of medicine, in proportion to other branches of knowledge, than clamorous for public enactments to secure special privileges, or defend our interests against the various forms of empiricism and quackery. The limited and exclusive spirit in which medical investigations have been too often carried on; a comparatively partial knowledge of the great objects of medical art, for the prevention, relief, and cure of disease; want of skill in all the elementary sciences requisite for advancing these respective departments of professional utility; and defective aptitude in applying the true principles of medical science, for its improvement as an art, may be enumerated as causes, why practical medicine has advanced less rapidly than might have been expected from the progress of discovery in other branches of scientific research.

It is not desirable that the legislature should leave the people without a safeguard, or allow them to become a prey to their own credulity and the shameless arrogance of impostors; yet the true security of our medical interests with the public, must be the character of usefulness we secure for ourselves. If we wish that men should form a just estimate of medicine, or see it cultivated in a manner capable of affording light to direct the measures of Government, we must not simply view it in relation to the health of individuals, or the complaints it may cure in the private circle of our acquaintance. To study it comprehensively, or for the objects of public utility, beyond the removal or alleviation of disease, by the mere therapeutic operation of drugs, we must attentively examine phenomena of the animal economy, which spontaneously



result from so-called vitality, or which are produced by external impressions, and the action of certain substances internally. We must trace the causes which improve or deteriorate the physical constitution of mankind; ascertain how physical education and regimen have been the means of developing the action of different organs, and rousing dormant faculties; and ascertain how successive generations, by the employment of such means, have given origin to a race of men physically and morally distinct from their barbarian ancestors. This is the philosophy of *hygiene*, or the application of the principles and the art of medicine for securing the well-being, and ameliorating the condition, of society. It embraces the physical and moral health of individuals and communities; pursues medical investigation, in all its relations and bearings, for the advancement of social comfort, and the relief of human suffering. It aims at something beyond the means of wealth, or of a livelihood; at a higher standard of utility, for medical science and art, than the mere treatment of disease by the common routine of practice; and teaches mankind how to usefully apply the *juvantia* for the preservation of public health, and to avoid or modify the *lædientia* which cause and aggravate public sickness and misery. In devoting attention to this part of professional duty, we only discharge what is required of us by Christian philanthropy, and by gratitude to the Government, under the wisdom of whose measures we are protected and derive our usefulness. Believe me, gentlemen, that had our professional studies and exertions been more generally and zealously directed into such secure channels of public usefulness and professional honour,



society,—instead of finding itself misled, deceived, and rendered sceptical of medical truth, by the palpable error and downfall of successive systems of specialism, exclusive medical doctrine, and sometimes of more venial error,—would have still firmly confided in our knowledge, and trusted us without the taint of suspicion. The philosophical and orthodox pursuit of medical science, guided by high moral convictions and principles, and the elaboration of practical truths applicable to the varying phases of disease, will be more sure of triumphing over the heterodox antagonisms of quackery, than angry intolerance of spirit towards those of the professors, who are themselves deceived or fraudulently deceive others. Craft and imposture are encouraged to spread their snares among the credulous, when the judgment is depraved as well as the digestion. The teaching of orthodox medicine, that the complex phenomena of disease, produced by complicated and variable influences, cannot possibly be confined to the organ most prominently affected, or be singly associated with deranged action in the nervous or vascular systems of the body, afford us the only rational means of convincing the credulous, that special pretensions of hydropathy, homœopathy, or any like systems of cure, have no foundation in truth. There are no specific remedies or methods applicable generally to the cure of disease, though the skilful physician will wisely consent to borrow certain principles from these heterodox systems, when they can be made scientifically applicable to particular circumstances of diseased condition. Rational medicine, while it condemns the exclusiveness and dogmatism of these heresies and quackeries, will judiciously



weigh the value of homœopathic curative experience, and the natural history of disease which it supplies; knowing well, from observation and experiment, that many morbid derangements are curable by favourable atmospheric changes, with abstinence and suitable diet; while the weakened and diseased mind's attention is turned, from its own frail tenement's uneasy sensations, by objects of interest engrossing its belief and deemed capable of working charms. This lesson, though borrowed from a heretical system, is not to be forgotten by the practitioner of rational medicine, who may derive from it discretion not to trust too implicitly to the remedial efficacy of drugs, in exclusion of other and not less important measures.

But if this be true of *homœopathic* it is not less so of *hydropathic* curative experience; as the water cure, under direction and principles of rational medicine, may be of much utility for some diseases. *A modicum* of truth only may be found existing in these exclusive and heretical systems; but the sooner that *little* is incorporated with the principles of rational medicine, it will be the means of rescuing the fanatical and credulous of society from the avaricious gripe of the ignorant and designing.

In the present age, there is a rapidly increasing tendency to set at nought prescription and authority, and to think that, where everything is capable of improvement, any inclination to adhere closely to the past, can only be dictated by opposition to the principle of progress. A spirit of jealous rivalry, which seals up the understanding against the perception of another's merit, a blind and stupid prejudice against innovation and the evidence of new truths; and a



bitterness of sectarian medical zeal, unwilling to candidly appreciate or kindly receive the discoveries and labours of our brethren, have too often afforded occasion for our character having suffered in the opinion of mankind. Where the supposed discoverers cannot, on such occasions, gain a ready professional hearing, they appeal to the laity for a public one;—seldom denied to any who get up a pretended cry of persecution and illiberal professional opposition. The history of the past records but too many examples of this spirit. The discovery of the circulation of the blood, inoculation, vaccination, auscultation, and even the introduction into use of chloroform, have been successively decried and opposed by those at the head of our profession, who were either too indolent to learn their value, or too prejudiced to try their usefulness. Men are not slow to take hold of these frailties of professional character, these weaknesses of a house divided against itself, and show themselves ready to join the ranks of our opponents; while numbers, from the sheer love of novelty, yield to the artful delusions of seductive and mischievous quackeries. The continual revolution of dogmas and modes of practice prevalent in different ages; the discordance and the rivalries among the authorities of our own time; the shallowness of observation on disease, unimproved by analytical perception, or the mental exercise of the senses on tangible and visible objects; and the error of hasty induction; have altogether lowered the *status* of medical skill in public opinion, and destroyed a confidence in medical character, without which we cannot perfectly exercise our benign vocation. It matters not how we may estimate our own merits, as we can



contribute nothing to our professional character or interests, unless we get society to view them in the same light. In the present transition state of our profession, from a former blind confidence in our authority, to one of watchful public suspicion and scepticism, we must carefully build up a firmer influence by public exertions, and strengthen our professional character of being unselfishly useful beyond a limited and private circle.

If there be any who think that many of the points canvassed, in the preceding remarks, might have been left unnoticed, I would, in love to the profession, tell them, that to gloss over the errors of the past is not the way to make amends for the future in public opinion. Though ready to give due weight and credit to the great amount of public philanthropy, high moral worth, and private honour, appertaining to the great body of our profession, yet it must not be concealed that, by the backslidings of not a few, and in the strife of rival interests, we have in part lost the great amount of public confidence we once possessed.

But while I would thus desire to see medical character raised in general estimation, by organization and unity, by untiring zeal and unselfish efforts for the benefit of the public and our patients, I would yet more rejoice at the establishment of *that* moral union among ourselves, emanating from a just appreciation of a professional brother's merit, or that Christian charity which leans to virtue's side. This brings me, in the last place, to say a few words on the subject of medical ethics. These properly embrace man's duties and responsibilities, in relation to his



Creator and his professional fellows. Sound religious and moral principles, instilled into the heart in early life, and strengthened with its growth, may be deemed the only sure foundation of correct conduct and action, under the cares that corrode, and the angry feelings which excite us, amid the trials of life. All other restraints but these, against moral offences, against dishonest methods of practice, or offences of professional etiquette and propriety, are but conventional, and little to be relied on, since the barrier between belief and self-interest is soon broken down. Some of the latter, by errors of professional conduct, which originate in vanity or cupidity, may be deemed venial and should be lightly punished; they originate in professional claims, ever too anxiously and seldom judiciously brought before the tribunal of public opinion, and are dictated by overweening conceit of men's own merits, and a depreciation of their neighbour's. In so far as public confidence in the learning and skill of our fellow medical practitioners may be thus undermined, and the comparison made in our favour, it is sure to lead to mutual disparagement and recrimination; and this species of discreditable struggle for pre-eminence, which a discriminating public is ready to view with indifference, and the high-minded among our professional brethren with something bordering on pity, must be deprecated as unworthy of a noble profession: and surely men lose themselves and damage medical character by these petty jealousies and party squabbles.

The ethical relations of medical practitioners, who are members of public institutions and corporate bodies, impose a yet greater amount of ethical obli-



gation *on them*, than what is required of individuals in their private relations to each other. The good of such institutions, and the munificence of public charity of which they are the exponents, ought not to be sacrificed to the interests or private views of individual cupidity; nor should the others, whose privileges were meant to be a safeguard to the public against ignorance and quackery, become the clique-ries of arrogance and club exclusiveness. I make not these remarks in any captious spirit, but knowing the unfavourable light in which such professional derelictions of moral obligation are viewed by the public, I should not be justified in leaving them altogether unnoticed.

And now, gentlemen, while I thank you for the patience with which you have listened to me, and can but feebly express, by thanks, how much I owe to the kindness and ever-ready courtesy of my colleagues, during the past year, I must express, what will be shared by every high-toned and honourable mind, the wish to see our common interests united by a bond of professional zeal, private friendship, and public usefulness. I should like to see all the members of our profession, high-minded, skillful, and enlightened. I should like to see them free from prejudice and professional intolerance; I should like to see them courteous and honourable in their conduct to each other; I should like to see them acting under a strong sense of Christian principle; and then they cannot fail of being influential and respected in this life, and happy when they come to leave the world and its trials.

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position on them, then what is required of individuals in their private relations to each other? The good of such institutions, and the maintenance of public charity of which they are the exponent, ought not to be sacrificed to the interests or private views of individual cupidities; nor should the others, whose privileges were meant to be a safeguard to the public against ignorance and error, become the objects of enmity and cold exclusiveness. I make not these remarks in any opposition spirit, but knowing the obligations which in such professional duties of men of wisdom and vision are owed by the public, I should not have been surprised to find that they should not have been forgotten.

LONDON:

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LINCOLN'S INN-FIELDS.

VALVES OF THE HUMAN HEART.  
 will be shared by every high-toned and honorable mind, the wish to see our common interests united by a bond of professional respect, friendship, and public welfare. I am, Sir, very truly,  
 Yours, &c.  
 W. A. STORRY.