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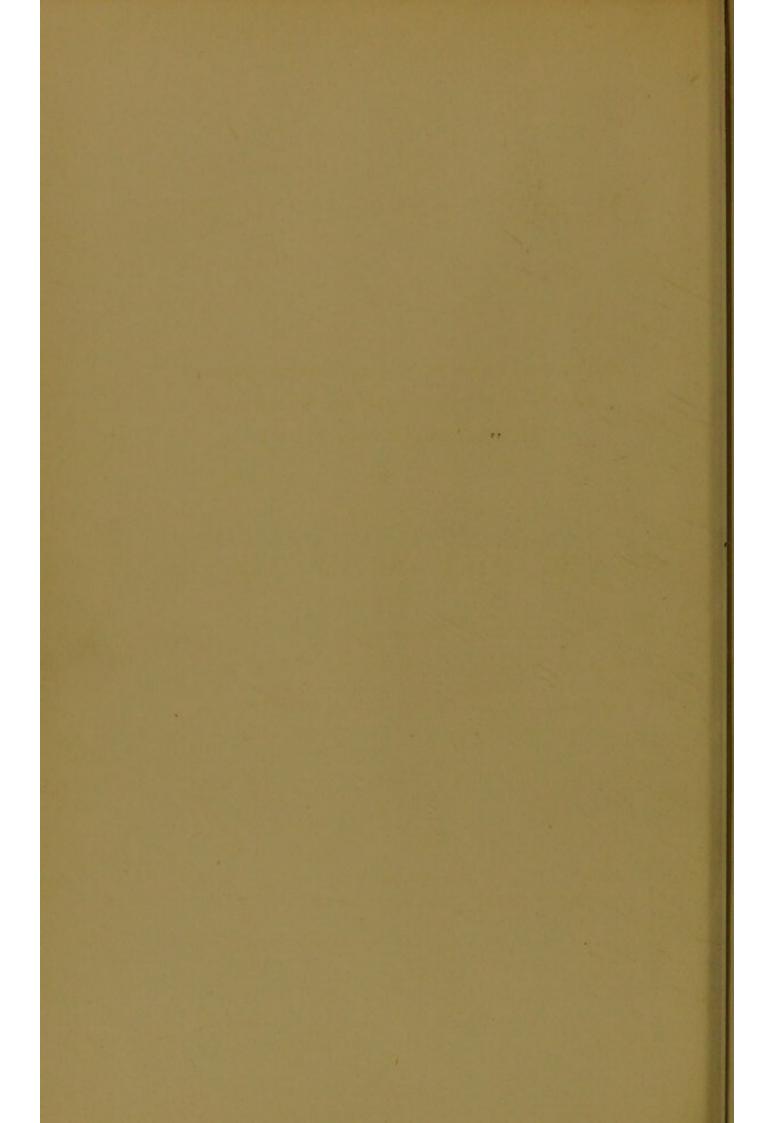
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THE DIGNITY OF MEDICINE.





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DIGNITY OF MEDICINE

An Address delivered before the Royal Medical Society of Edinburgh, at the Opening of the 169th Session, Oct. 26, 1906

BY

SIR DYCE DUCKWORTH

M.D., LL.D., F.R.C.P.

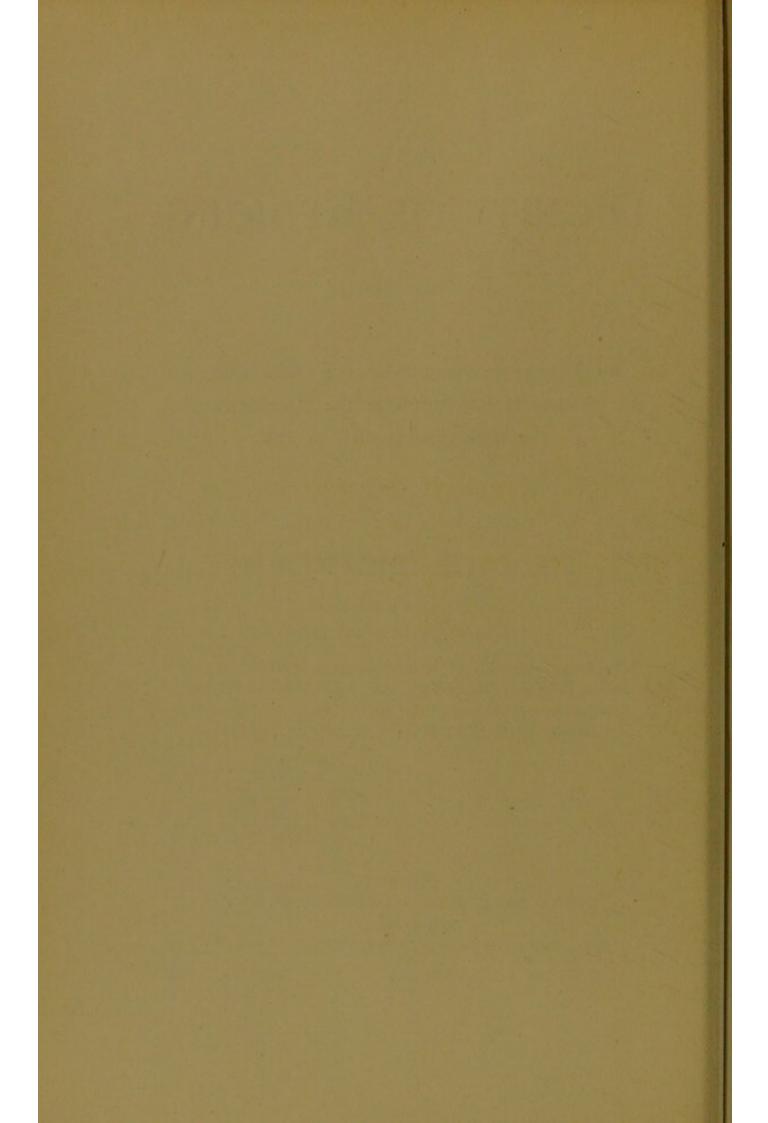
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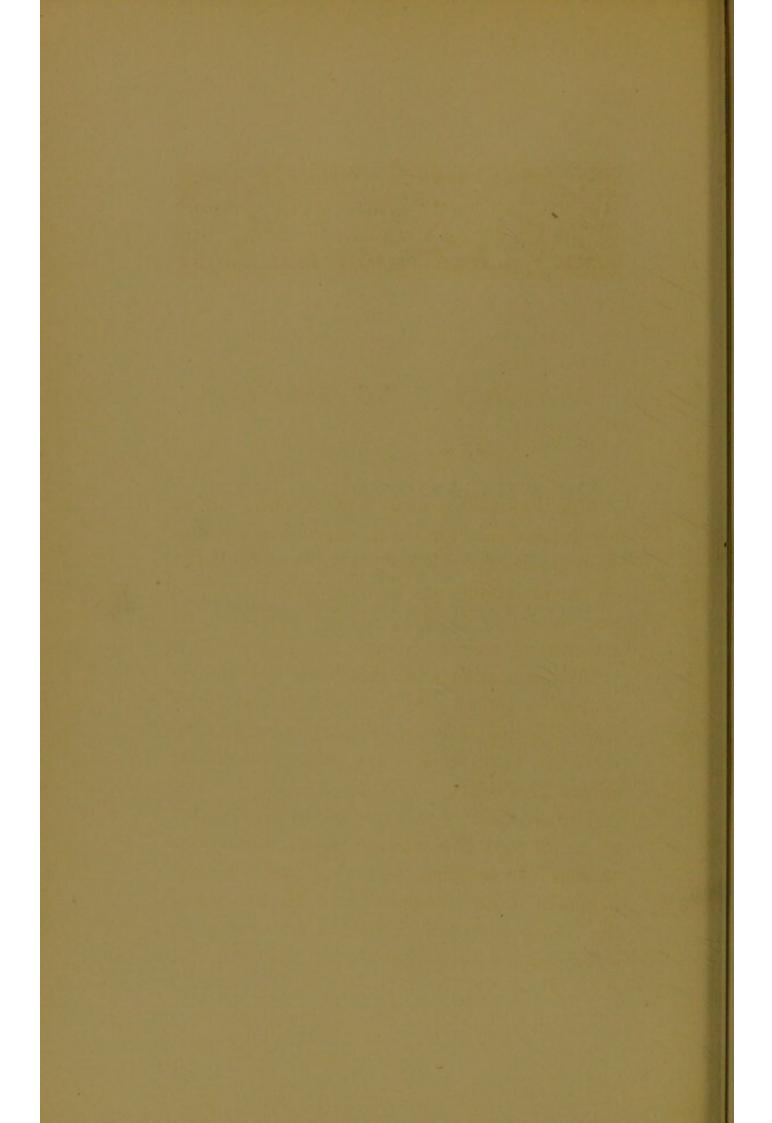
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SIR WILLIAM TURNER, K.C.B.,

M.B., LL.D., D.C.L., D.SC., F.R.S.,

PRINCIPAL AND VICE-CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,

IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF HIS TEACHING AND FRIENDSHIP I INSCRIBE THIS ADDRESS.





THE DIGNITY OF MEDICINE.

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN, — It is hardly necessary for me to express to you my deep sense of the honour you have conferred on me in inviting me to open this Session of our venerable Society, or the pleasure and satisfaction which it affords me.

My connection with this Society is indeed of long standing, for it is forty-seven years since I joined it as an ordinary member, and forty-five years since I was elected one of its annual Presidents.

The Presidency has always been regarded as one of the "blue ribbons" of the Edinburgh student of medicine, and a reference to the names of those who have held this office, and the positions they have filled in later life, must satisfy any enquirer that the occupants of our presidential chair have an ideal placed before them which is calculated to stir their energies throughout their whole professional career.*

I should fail in my duty here and now, if I did not bear witness to my indebtedness to this Society. It certainly helped me to make many dear friends, and its stimulating influences not only stirred my ambition, but provoked a wholesome enthusiasm for my work. I can recall instances, too, where this influence came to bear on some of its more languid members, and roused them to a degree

* Amongst these may be mentioned: Caleb Hilliar Parry, Astley Paston Cooper, Gilbert Blane, John Bostock, H. H. Southey, Henry Holland, J. Elliotson, Richard Bright, Marshall Hall, John Davy, Charles Hastings, Alexander Tweedie, J. C. Coindet, John Conolly, James Bardsley, Allen Thomson, J. Y. Simpson, John Goodsir, J. Hughes Bennett, John Reid, W. B. Carpenter, T. B. Peacock, Douglas Maclagan, W. R. Sanders, Spencer Cobbold, J. Burdon Sanderson, Charles Murchison, and T. Grainger Stewart. Amongst the Ordinary Members: William Cullen, Joseph Black, the Monros, James Gregory, Robert Willan, Mark Akenside, Richard Brocklesby, Oliver Goldsmith, George Fordyce, Walter Farquhar, John Haygarth, Lucas Pepys, Benjamin Rush, John Hunter, J. Edward Smith, Mungo Park, Charles Darwin, Peter M. Roget, John Latham, John Ayrton Paris, Francis Bisset Hawkins, James Clark, James Syme, William Sharpey, Robert Christison, Thomas Addison, R. Carswell, C. J. B. Williams, J. Risdon Bennett, J. Matthews Duncan, Joseph Lister, and Wilson Fox.

of energy and emulation which, otherwise, might never have been quickened.

The discipline and dignified conduct of the Society's meetings, the training in debate, and the exercise of the critical faculty, were an invaluable part of our student life.

On an occasion such as this, one in my position is tempted to look back to the past, while in no degree forgetting that for those whom he addresses the future lies open, with all that it holds in store for them. Memories of former days now crowd into my mind, and I picture in this unchanged hall the faces of many old friends, and even recall the tones of their voices. Alas! many of these have passed away after longer or shorter periods of life, not a few in distant parts of the Empire, some amidst the exigencies of war, or in the public services, and others while filling varied spheres of professional importance and usefulness at home. Yes.

> "The past will always win A glory from its being far."

It is pleasing to find in the Professoriate here, still active and fresh, at least two of the Presidents of my time in the persons of Dr. Crum Brown and Sir Thomas R. Fraser, and two a little junior to me, Dr. John Wyllie and Mr. John Chiene. You have recently had before you one of the best speakers of that time, Sir James Crichton Browne, a senior President in 1860, and you have doubtless followed the fortunes of another of our contemporaries, the late Attorney-General, Sir Robert Finlay, who took his degree with me, and forthwith proceeded to study law. The present Regius Professor of Medicine in the University of Dublin, Dr. Little, was also an active member in my time. Your present Professor of Botany came somewhat later, and I had the pleasure of examining him for his degree.

Let me tell you next something of the system and details of the teaching then in vogue here. There was John Goodsir, almost a giant in stature, and certainly in intellect, the foremost anatomist of the day; with him, as his Senior Demonstrator, the present distinguished Principal of the University, and Cleland, now the Professor of Anatomy in Glasgow, as a junior Demonstrator; Lyon Playfair, afterwards Lord Playfair, made chemistry full of interest for us; Christison gave us masterly teaching on that now sadly neglected subject, the Materia Medica; Syme captivated us by his brilliant surgical acumen; and Simpson was ever a source of freshness to us, for he had many interests beyond those of obstetrics and gynæcology, in which he was a great master. Your late Professor of Midwifery, a former President of this Society, occasionally took his uncle's place, and gave promise of his future powers as a brilliant teacher. The clinics of Hughes Bennett and Laycock (my old chiefs), of Gairdner, Warburton Begbie, Sanders, of Miller, Spence, and Dunsmure, were all inspiring to the multitudes who followed them. It was a time in which to take sides, for there were certain professional feuds prevailing in those days, now happily unknown, which, if they were calculated to make the rivals of the Edinburgh School blaspheme, certainly promoted a keenness of atmosphere which was beneficial to the average student, who found it difficult to pursue a via media, and was stirred to an enthusiasm, always desirable in early life, for one or other of his masters. Anything is better than stagnation and dulness, and, indeed, amidst these contentions, new truths were slowly emerging out of the dusty arena. Lister was quietly building up his fame at the side of his father-in-law, Syme, and beginning to study the grave problem of sepsis, which was still the bane of the best surgery of the day. Simpson was venturing to urge greater boldness in dealing with the peritoneal cavity ; for we were then solemnly taught that "all abdominal surgery was abominable surgery." Spence began to smell his sponges, and rinse them in dilute hydrochloric acid before applying them to any open wound. Bennett was proving to the physicians that a simple supporting treatment was all that was requisite to promote recovery from pneumonia, and that neither depletion nor stimulation were necessary routines of practice : and at this time the physical signs of mitral stenosis were first made plain for us by the intuition of Gairdner. There were other eminent professors at work during this period, including Aytoun, Kelland, Blackie, Campbell Fraser, Tait, George Wilson, and Allman. Traill was lecturing on Medical Jurisprudence when he was past 80 years of age. He died shortly after giving about the eighth one of the course which I attended, and the subject of it was Arsenic, with an account of the famous Aqua Toffana.

Apart from the immediate academic atmosphere in the city, we had, at the time I refer to, the dignified examples in the profession of Craigie, Benjamin Bell, James Begbie, John Brown, Andrew Wood, Douglas Maclagan, Daniel Rutherford Haldane, Matthews Duncan, Warburton Begbie, and others, men of the highest character and attainments, whose influence helped many of us in various ways.*

The teaching of Laycock as a clinician and psychologist was quite out of harmony with its time, a period given over to minute histology and pathology under the influence of Bennett, Beale, and Virchow. Many of us learned in later years to find the value and importance of many of Laycock's views, and to venerate his memory and his genius.

Some of us have thought that we were then over-lectured, and had inadequate time left to digest and meditate on all that was imparted to us. Times have indeed changed a good deal in this respect, and I imagine that while you have less *professorial* you have now more *tutorial* pabulum presented to you. Whether we suffered or not from a plethora of lectures, it was at least a privilege to sit at the feet of eminent masters of their subject, and most of us, I doubt not, found time in after-life to absorb and utilise the instruction we received. We were certainly inclined to some measure of narcosis during the four o'clock prelections

* "We pass: the path that each man trod Is dim, or will be dim with weeds; What fame is left for human deeds, In endless age! It rests with God."

" In Memoriam."

on pathology by Professor Henderson. These were trying after a long day's work, including four previous lectures, dissections, and hospital attendance; yet the climate of Edinburgh gave us tone and much endurance.

There was then no Students' Union, and few were the opportunities of athleticism. Our great refreshment came in the summer sessions, with the delightful botanical rambles in the Highlands with our beloved Professor Balfour.

How much or how little all these reminiscences may interest any of you, I cannot tell. It has been said that "to understand and judge the present, we must deeply read the past. Those who know nothing of what men have been, have no standard by which to measure men as they are." If the times are changed, most certainly we ourselves are changed also. The conditions of life have indeed been marvellously altered in the course of the last halfcentury, and one of the most marked features of the change is the increase of activity and restlessness, and the decline of quietude and meditation. The pace has quickened, and most of the work done is hurried. May we not strike a note of warning here, and say with Robertson, of Brighton, who remarked fifty years ago that "our stimulating artificial culture is destroying depth; that mere knowledge is not wisdom; that character in the world wants root"; and who gave as one illustration of this, the fact that "the folio of patient years is replaced by the pamphlet that stirs men's curiosity to-day, and to-morrow is forgotten"?* What would this writer say were he amongst us now? I think we greatly need to slacken our pace, and spend more time in meditation.

In regard to our modern system of education, let us recall the proper meaning of the word University — a *studium generale* — and always bear in mind that such an institution is not designed for instruction in any one faculty, or merely to afford special teaching for any particular profession or career. In regard to our profession, no one can doubt that in this University the Faculty of Medicine is as complete and comprehensive as can be desired, and, according to some modern educationists, a curriculum in it alone would constitute a liberal education. I am not pre-

* Sir Walter Scott foresaw this eighty-nine years ago: "The ponderous folios so dear to the seventeenth century, from which, under favour be it spoken, we have distilled matter for our quartos and octavos, and which, once more subjected to the alembic, may, should our sons be yet more frivolous than ourselves, be still further reduced into duo-decimos and pamphlets."— "Rob Roy," 1817.

pared to agree with this opinion, since I regard the preliminary studies of the humanities as of the utmost importance for all who aspire to take a high position in medicine. That condition is secured to you in some measure by the tests applied before you enter on your purely professional work. A large experience of medical students has long convinced me of the general superiority of those who have enjoyed a good literary and classical education before entering on the physic line. I do not believe that any variety of scientific study, by itself, can take the place of the humanities, or equally well train the mind.* In preparing for our profession, we have to take care that we do not develop into mere observers and healers of disease. In other words, we must beware of becoming too professional. It may never be forgotten that of all callings ours is the most essentially human, and therefore it is incumbent on us to acquire a full knowledge of human nature as exemplified in all sorts and conditions of men, women, and children. Charles Kingsley has told us that "if we do not know Nature, we shall never know Art," and we may be sure that if we do not under-

^{* &}quot;I do not myself believe in science of any kind as the principal pabulum of the half-cultivated mind."— Professor James Clerk Maxwell.

stand human nature, we shall never become adepts in the practice of medical art. No amount of training in science or physic alone will ever develop or foster the true ars medica, any more than it will insure a character for morality or plain common-sense. Happily for us, the essential nature of our work, and its grand catholicity, helps us better than those who enter other callings, so that it is easier for us, if we will, to acquire a full knowledge of our common humanity. If, however, we become attracted or engrossed by any collateral subject in our curriculum, we may lose this acquirement, and then prove failures as practitioners of medicine in after-life, despite academic honours and high scientific attainments. I have witnessed a good many of such failures, and it is well for any one who has been led astray into any one of these seductive bypaths, to pursue it to the best advantage, and leave the high-road leading to Physic.

Let me not be misunderstood. I am in no degree decrying the careful study of such scientific subjects as are wisely set down in your curriculum, but these have to be dealt with in strict relation to the whole course of studies, and no one of them can be permitted to hamper or delay the fluent pursuit of those which follow. Students of medicine are not being trained to become physicists, chemists, or biologists, but in order to understand the laws and principles underlying physics, chemistry, and biology, which certainly govern scientific medicine. It is commonly asserted that some of our modern examiners, as experts in science, are apt to forget this, and so fail to regard the medical aspirant in his proper light, losing sight of his particular aims and destiny, and, no less, of the great fact that, as Dr. Johnson expressed it, "there are two kinds of knowledge—one which a man can carry in his head, and another which he knows where to find."

Let me recommend to you some bypaths which, if not apparent just now, may be safely followed, and with advantage. Your professional work is exacting and engrossing, but whenever opportunities and leisure arrive you will do well to enlarge and refresh your mental powers by diligent reading of the best books in our literature, whether of history, romance, or poetry. You remember the story of Richard Blackmore, who asked Sydenham to recommend him the best books wherein to study medicine, and the seemingly paradoxical reply of the great physician, "Read Don Quixote." This was no paradox, however, but a sly intimation that a knowledge of medicine came not from reading medical books, but demanded from its followers a special aptitude, together with a full knowledge of men and manners. Provided that you have the aptitude for physic as a pursuit, you may gain much of this knowledge and wisdom by a cultivation of good literature. No one deserves to be a Scottish undergraduate who has not been enraptured by the fascinating novels of Sir Walter Scott, the charming writings of Dr. John Brown, and those of Robert Louis Stevenson, all alumni of this University. No young doctor should omit a study of Dickens, Thackeray, and Pepys' Diary. I need hardly mention the imperative duty of acquaintance with the works of Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and many other authors.

Another safe bypath for student life is that of acquiring a familiarity with one or more modern languages. These open up new worlds, and help greatly to the mental width and capacity of all who attain proficiency in them. They will at least introduce you to the best work of our Continental brethren, and help to keep you abreast of the thoughts of some of the leading spirits in our art.

You will require no urging towards the bypath of athleticism while in the status pupillaris. That way is always seductive to wholesome-minded British youth. You have now opportunities for exercise and games which were not available in my time. I am reminded here of a dear friend, the senior President of my year of office and a fellowresident in the Infirmary, who excelled in all qualities as a student, an athlete, and a volunteer, the late John Duncan, whose memory is still cherished in this city, and whose untimely death caused widespread regret. Some of the older Edinburgh men have had misgivings about the numerous provisions now made for your academic social life and games, fearing lest the influences of the Union and your various clubs may distract you, and tend to dissipate your energies. I feel sure that in our time we should have welcomed a good deal of what you now enjoy, and not been the worse for such wholesome outlets. I have yet to learn that harm has come to you from any one of them. The importance of a corpus sanum is as great as that of a mens sana, and if the modern Scottish undergraduate is enabled to avail himself of these amenities, and also to cultivate literature and science on something more fortifying than the proverbial avena tenuis (though that need not be left out of the dietary), I will venture to believe that he is not undergoing

a process of degeneration either in mind or body.

The last bypath I will mention may lead you far. I refer to the value of foreign travel whenever opportunity offers. There are few better means of enlarging the mind or cultivating human sympathies than are afforded by contact with the people of other nations, and, when possible, before settling into practice.

In selecting a topic which should be worthy of your attention, and of an occasion such as this, I have decided to discuss briefly one which is rarely treated in these days, and is, indeed, well-nigh lost sight of, yet is pregnant with importance both for the public and our profession. My subject is the Dignity of Medicine.

I suppose that it will hardly be maintained that our profession holds to-day the position it did half a century ago in the estimation of the body politic. Whatever explanations of the fact, for fact I believe it to be, may be adduced, there can be no doubt that any loss of prestige or appreciation of it is not due to decadence or inefficiency in the art or in the service of medicine itself, for their progress has been greater and more beneficial to humanity within the period named than during the previous two centuries.

The fault must then either lie at our own door,

and concern us individually in respect of our character and general conduct, or be the result of an altered disposition towards us and our work on the part of the public.

A measure of dignity has long been accorded to the Church, the Law, and Physic, and while I believe that the latter has not in more recent times kept its place, I am not sure that the former continue to hold theirs as securely as they formerly did. We are not, however, concerned with them. It may be that there is a common cause for a decline in the public estimation of all these professions.

Each individual represents his personal calling, and commends or asperses it by his character and attainments. I have already alluded to the influence of some of the representatives of medicine in this city in my time, who set an example of dignity and highmindedness. If I name but one, Sir Robert Christison, I specify a type of the man I have in my mind, and I feel sure that there are now in your midst men of like manner who exemplify the qualities I refer to.*

* We look to our several Medical and Surgical Corporations to maintain our proper position before the public, and to exert a wholesome discipline in the profession in accordance with the powers they rightly possess. The Universities have little or no authority of this kind. I might well add the name of William Pulteney Alison, who died in 1859, the year I matriculated, for his character and influence made a deep impression on all his contemporaries, and led the stern Carlyle to write of him as "the brave and humane Dr. Alison whose noble healing art in his charitable hands became once more a truly sacred one."

I am not, however, concerned to treat of the dignity of the individual member of our profession, although much, indeed, depends on him as an exponent of the value and benefits of medicine when practised by an adept and a person of the highest character; nor do I refer to those who by nature are void of any personal dignity, yet assume a professional counterfeit of it which ill befits them, and brings both contempt and ridicule on the masqueraders. Skill in physic alone does not constitute the highest excellence of the physician, and you have heard already to-night that knowledge does not always imply wisdom. A larger question remains, and it is this: What manner of man is he?

I desire rather to speak of the dignity of medicine as evidenced by its beneficent work, as a great social power in any community, and as spreading everywhere a wholesome influence. This is the particular dignity which appears to me to have declined in recent years, and largely ceased to inspire the respect which is due to it. It rests with us to recover and reconstitute this dignity.

The value and far-reaching benefits of modern medicine are not recognised as they deserve by successive British Governments, or by the majority of our municipal authorities. The proofs of this are unfortunately not far to seek. They are, indeed, lamentably notorious. The timorous, stingy, and inadequate provisions made for measures of public health, for the conduct of the insane, for the prosecution of research, and for the sanitary services generally, all bear witness to a mistrust of the high aims of Medicine, and an indifference to the unselfish and ill-rewarded labours of our profession. These humane efforts somehow fail to impress persons of enlightenment any more than those of ordinary intelligence. Not seldom, the most prudent advice is treated with suspicion, and the advisers, although experts in their subjects, receive little serious consideration or respect.

How little the public, or any British Government representing it, recognises its duty towards medical education is shown by the fact that it contributes nothing directly, and very little indirectly, towards the maintenance and costly equipments of any School of Medicine in Britain, and is content to leave these bodies to support themselves, while their teachers forego all or most of their emoluments to keep them in efficiency. In every other country in Europe their claim is fully recognised, and met by grants of public money in acknowledgement of the debt which is due to the beneficence of Medicine and those who teach it.

Do we raise undue pretensions if we claim honour and appreciation for those who labour, almost gratuitously, to train successive generations of practitioners who are subsequently to minister for the benefit of the public ?

Again, we may trace the disregard of our municipal authorities for the progress of medicine, or the advantage of the suffering poor, in the cruel extortion of rates from our hospitals which can so ill afford to pay them.

It might have been expected that with the progress of education there would be a corresponding interest in, and a growing appreciation of, the value of medical science in all communities. The discussions of medical subjects in the public press, and other ephemeral literature, so far from enlisting intelligent sympathy with the efforts of our original thinkers and workers, rather tend to place our suffering brethren and patients in a wrong attitude towards their medical advisers, and to induce a captious mood, which sometimes seriously hampers the successful treatment of their ailments. We notice rather, either a spirit of indifference, or a disposition to be over-critical, and, withal, a growing prevalence of credulity which for mental inanity almost equals, if it does not surpass, that of two centuries ago. These manifestations are obvious to any unprejudiced observer.

The relations between physicians and intelligent patients are hardly as satisfactory now as they were wont to be, and there is apt to be less confidence, if not, at times, an actual mistrust, on the part of patients, which assuredly does not work out to their benefit. This diminished confidence cannot invariably be set down to pretentiousness or undue assumption on the part of the medical adviser. It appears, indeed, to be a manifestation of the spirit of the age we are living in. Thus, even modern Medicine, with all its advantages, improvements and enlarged resources, stands before the public shorn, apparently, of much of the dignity and appreciation it formerly enjoyed. If my contention is admitted, how may we seek to account for it? The following explanations occur to me :---

First, with respect to ourselves. We must

note the fact that the average modern physician is not, as he formerly was, a man of general scholarship and wide learning ; of that class, I mean, which compelled the respect and admiration of Dr. Johnson. Happily, I could point even now to some brilliant exceptions amongst us of men who would have shed lustre on any previous period. The reasons for the decline of the particular learning I refer to are fairly obvious. Medicine, ever a "jealous mistress,"* has now such heavy claims on the attention and devotion of her followers, that few men can find the time, means, or energy requisite to pursue abstract studies, or indulge in refined scholarship. To attain the special knowledge and practical experience now demanded, furnishes of itself a hard task, extending over many years, tending, perhaps unfortunately, to narrow the general outlook, and to leave little time and inclination for the pursuit of literary or other bypaths of learning. Most of the Universities have come to recognise these demands of modern Medicine, and altered their requirements accordingly, thereby reducing the claims of the literæ humaniores on their aspirants for degrees in Medicine, and replacing these by studies in science. The progress of the sciences on

* Andrew Clark.

which our work is based is now so rapid and constant that it has induced, or compelled, many modern physicians to pursue merely special departments of practice. We recognise the importance of experts in some of these parts of the great whole, but I am disposed to believe that we witness now an undue amount of differentiation, and an erection of specialties to a degree which is of doubtful advantage to the welfare either of Medicine or of the public. One result of this has been, as I venture to think, to lower the dignity of Medicine and of the profession, in some measure, before the world.

Again, it may be that some members of our calling fail to commend their profession or its dignity by their inflated pretensions, or manner of life, or, perhaps, in not a few instances, by an inherent inaptitude to adapt themselves to their varied social environments.

We must not be surprised if we provoke misgivings on the part of the intelligent public as regards our level-headedness or probity, when some of us express dogmatically opinions respecting matters and habits of daily life which are in plain contradiction to all experience and common-sense. As in other professions, we have in our ranks a proportion of unwise men and so-called "faddists," and it must be that they bring obloquy upon many others besides themselves. If our art and practice are not based on common-sense and strict integrity, I am sorry for Medicine. It is not always easy to refute in public such opinions and conduct as I refer to, and most of us have sometimes to fall back on the wise dictum of Bishop Andrewes, that "he who tolerates, does not necessarily approve."

We can hardly suppose that the conditions under which so many of our brethren have to work amongst the poor in large towns tend otherwise than to detract somewhat from a due appreciation of the claims of our art for respect and appreciation. I speak with all sympathy for these of our colleagues, knowing full well with what exemplary and ill-requited labour they spend the best days of their life in the service of exacting and often ungrateful communities. If the public is inappreciative of their efforts and sacrifices, we, at all events, are able to appraise them, and to include many of these toilers amongst the worthiest members of our body.

We may be sure that anything approaching extortion, or greed of reward, must seriously impair the regard which is due to our body, and we may remember a remark of the late Dr. Matthews Duncan to the effect that "all extortioners die poor." Again, we may damage our position and usefulness by embroiling ourselves as extreme partisans in political or ecclesiastical matters, forgetting that, as physicians, we live in a higher æther, above the dust of such strife, and in a spirit of comprehensive catholicity and charity.

The best of us fully recognise our fallibility, yet we do well to regard ourselves, after strenuous preparation for our life-work, as solemnly commissioned to heal the sick, and we may at least pray and hope to be endowed with some measure of the $\chi a \rho i \sigma \mu a \tau a ' i a \mu a \tau \omega \nu$.

Our young aspirants in Medicine are, perhaps, not sufficiently led to entertain this particular conception of their calling. To be inspired with it would supply, as I venture to believe, a power for high motives and successful achievements. It might secure for us a worthier appreciation of our daily duties amongst our fellow-men.

Next, as regards the aspect of the public towards Medicine. The prevalence of the idea that our profession is largely available for gratuitous services, by no means adds to the respect in which it is held by the public, although as an abstract proposition this might well appear to be the case. It is true that every great physician or surgeon builds his fame primarily on the shoulders of the poor, yet it must be added that the poorest of the community are those who most often secure in our hospitals gratuitous services greater by far than can be obtained by the well-to-do in their homes. If the practitioner ventures sometimes to act upon the maxim, "accipe dum dolet," the remainder of the sentence is not seldom forced upon him, "post morbum medicus olet."

I have alluded to the effect on the public mind produced by the discussion of medical and scientific topics in the daily press. The premature announcements of alleged discoveries and cures, or of new methods of treatment and diet, emanating often from men quite void of all clinical experience, are certainly mischievous. These abortive results, hurried out of German laboratories, for the most part, after occupying attention for a few weeks, naturally come to nothing, yet they are apt to be reckoned to us as failures in the field of legitimate medicine. Though most of us are innocent in these matters, our patients express surprise when we confess to ignorance of the last new vaunted method of treatment. or the value of some fresh product of coal tar, of which they have acquired a knowledge from the newspapers.

As I have already remarked, the time has passed by when the physician was amongst the few scholars and learned men of his day, and was thus a personage or an out-standing man in society, and I have shown that this position was due to the fact that the scope of Physic was then much smaller, and could be compassed with less effort than is possible now. Moreover, in respect of these men, we find ourselves as much impressed by their high character as by their medical attainments, by their wisdom as well as by their knowledge. It is in this manner that we rightly venerate the memories of such men as Sydenham, Boërhaave, Harvey, or Thomas Browne, who have left behind them splendid ideals for lesser men to try and pursue in all ages. We may bear in mind what the late Sir Henry Holland (who joined this Society exactly a hundred years ago) once remarked to me : "There must always be an aristocracy in every profession." We must try and meet the pressing claims of modern Medicine as fully as we can, and yet strive to study in some other fields of mental culture. So only shall we grow robust in mind, be level-headed, and better fitted to hold our place amongst members of the other great professions.

To sum up, we find that there is an inherent

dignity in Medicine as a science and as an art ; that it is fraught with benefit to mankind ; that its power to spread these benefits increases in every age, and gives token of special progress in the near future. We believe that its noble ideals and the unselfish efforts of its servants deserve the respect of all right-minded people, and demand their interest and sympathy. We regard those who practise Medicine as priests of the body upon whom the State may always rely for loyalty and prudence, as men who are daily in touch with all classes, and enabled, apart from all politics, by their discipline, steadfastness, and Christian humanity to stem the tide of socialism and other mischievous tendencies, whencesoever they may emanate.

Recognising this dignity ourselves, we are, or ought to be, impressed by the grandeur and importance of the problems which we, as its ministers, have to solve, by the memory of all the good and great men who have preceded us in this task, and by the ideals they aspired to. To venerate and try to copy the examples set before us in the remote and recent past by members of our calling, who, by their knowledge, skill, and wisdom have assuaged the miseries and raised the standard of health of their fellow-men, is a duty for each one of us now and henceforth. And with some pride do we point for appreciation to the heroic, untiring, and unselfish work, so often maligned, done by our pioneers in research, by our brethren every day in the midst of pestilence, and, when occasion requires, in the forefront of the line of battle.* Nor do we forget those labouring single-handed in various unexplored regions of the earth.

Surely, a fair consideration of these facts amply testifies to the dignity claimed for our art, and for those who practise it. We may go calmly on our way, conscious of the glories of Medicine, if, whatever the world may think of us or our calling, we try to be worthy of the character of Sydenham, as described in Johnson's life of him: "for his whole character was amiable; that his chief view was the benefit of mankind; and the chief motive of his actions, the will of God, whom he mentions with reverence well becoming the most enlightened and penetrating mind. He was benevolent, candid, and communicative, sincere and religious; qualities which it were happy if they could copy from him, who emulate his knowledge and imitate his methods."

^{*} The Army Medical Service has gained more Victoria Crosses for valour in proportion to its numbers than any other branch of the Army.

Gentlemen, I fear I may have wearied you with what may appear to some to be mere platitudes. It is not unfitting here and now to discuss such a subject as I have laid before you this evening. You are now preparing for your future life-work, and varied, indeed, will that be. Yet, wherever you may be called to exercise your profession, you will surely often stand in need of self-respect, patience, forbear-The special duties of ance, and wisdom. ordinary practice will call for calmness, brightness, and self-control. These are not lessons to be learned in any class-room or laboratory, but they will not fail to be at your command if you start in professional life with the highest ideals of the dignity of Medicine, and of your work in it, taking ever the high line of duty which leads always to success, securing at once the respect of your friends, and the confusion of any that may be inimical.

My affectionate wishes and my best hopes go out now for the long-continued prosperity of this old Society. May its future history be as brilliant as its past, and its high reputation ever remain one of the most prominent and interesting features of the Edinburgh Medical School!

