

**Introductory lecture to a course on the theory and practice of medicine :  
delivered at the Medical School Park Street Dublin / by William Stokes.**

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**Publication/Creation**

[London] : [publisher not identified], [between 1830 and 1839?]

**Persistent URL**

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## Introductory Lecture

TO A COURSE ON THE

# THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MEDICINE,

*Delivered at the Medical School Park Street Dublin,*

BY WILLIAM STOKES, M.D.,

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[From the London Medical and Surgical Journal, No. 99.]

GENTLEMEN,—You may have often heard that the approaches to science are rugged and uninteresting, and some of you have perhaps experienced the truth of the remark. Hence the custom of delivering an introductory lecture, in order to lay before the young mind, when first entering on each path of knowledge, the objects, the results, the attained good, and the hoped-for glory of the pursuit. These are to be displayed with clearness and with truth, yet it is obvious, that much of the effect of such a lecture must depend on the nature of the subject, and the judgment of the speaker; and it is well when the exalted nature of the one is attainable by the capabilities of the other. Such a lecture, then, should be an earnest lesson on the objects, the pleasures, and the advantages of that science, of which the course is destined to treat; its history, its true mode of study, its interests, actual state, and future prospects may all form legitimate subjects, and when thus rightly viewed, an introductory lecture, so far from being a mere ornamental appendage, may become a most important part of the course.

With these views let us approach our subject, the theory and practice of medicine. Let us contemplate that study and that profession, which, venerable by all antiquity, yet in itself is "ever new." Even in its infancy, when the world was in darkness, was medicine a glorious science when compared with its contemporaries, and its first professors were ennobled and exalted by its influence. As their mantles descended through a long line of illustrious successors, we see medicine progressively expanding, and even when the night of barbarism hung gloomily over the earth, we see its genius triumphing over the surrounding darkness, and shining in the east as a beacon to the shipwrecked mind of man; and I trust that I shall be able to prove to you, that, in our own time, when the human mind has made such astonishing advances, that me-

dicine has kept pace with her sister sciences, and it is a gratifying reflection to think, that among the most distinguished promoters of the collateral sciences, physicians have ever held a commanding rank, thus proving themselves foremost in knowledge, as they have ever been in philanthropy, in private and public charity, and in all good will to man.

It is scarcely necessary to allude to the title of this course of lectures, further than to remark, that however different they may be in name, it is yet impossible to draw the line of distinction between the theory and the practice of medicine. If medicine were merely the knowledge of a number of empirical remedies for particular symptoms, given without our enquiring into their mode of action, or any acquaintance with the dependence of one function, or one viscus, on another, of any knowledge in short of physiology in the healthy or diseased state, then we might have a practice of medicine independent of what is called its theory. But medicine now holds a higher place, and much of its improvement is traceable to our advances in physiological and pathological science. Thus, to treat, or teach, the treatment of a disease, we must know the healthy function of the organ or organs, the history of development, the influence of other organic systems, the changes produced by disease, and, as far as possible, the action of all external or internal agents on the viscera. But this is the theory of medicine.

For example, let us suppose that we are called either to treat or to teach the treatment of a case of enlarged liver. Let me here remark, that in selecting this case I do not wish you to suppose that I am one of what might be called the hepatic school of medicine, in which the existence of almost every organ, except the liver, seems to be forgotten, and of which the creed seems to be, that there is but one viscus, the liver, one source of disease, biliary derangement, and one cure, mercury; a



creed which, though not enforced and defended by the sword, has lost perhaps as much of human life as others, whose history is written in letters of blood. But no one can doubt the importance of the organ, and I have taken it to illustrate the connexion between the theory and the practice of medicine.

You detect an enlarged liver; you are called to cure the disease:—

1st. You must be aware of the healthy state of the organ, and of its healthy functions, as shown by the volume, sensibility, influence on digestion, and the healthy state of the secretion. You must know all these, as it is by the departure from these conditions that you recognise this disease at all.—*But this is the theory of medicine.*

2ndly. You must know the history of its development, because there is a period of life when the natural state of the liver is in a greatly enlarged condition, and this may continue even to adult life, and produce an enlarged liver, not the result of disease but the arrest of development, and the question will arise as to whether the case before you is an example of this, or of recent and actual disease. The whole treatment turns on this.—*Yet this is the theory of medicine.*

3rdly. You must know the influence of other organic systems. An enlarged liver may be produced mechanically by obstructions in the lungs or in the heart; it may be produced from the sympathetic irritation of a duodenitis, or be the result of original disease in its own structure. All these circumstances must be known and taken into account. If it be merely obstruction in the venæ cavæ hepaticæ the ordinary treatment will not answer; if there be duodenitis we must modify our treatment, and so on. We must know these things; we must know how to recognise these diseases before we can prescribe or practise successfully. All this is that part of the theory of medicine called pathology, or the physiology of the diseased body.

4thly. You must know the effects of disease on the liver itself. Some of these are removable by art, others are totally incurable. You must know these in order to determine on the probability of their existence.

5thly and lastly. You must know the influence of remedial agents on the liver and the adjacent organs. You must be familiar with the effects of stimulation of the mucous surfaces of the stomach and duodenum. Then, indeed, and not till then, will you be qualified to treat the case with judgment and success. The same remarks, I need scarcely add, will be found applicable to the diseases of each viscus in the body.

The objects of medicine, gentlemen, are twofold; first, to cure disease, no matter where seated or how produced; and secondly, to relieve bodily suffering in cases where a cure is impossible. Its great end is to prolong life, and to diminish the bodily evils which result from the infirmities of our nature and other

circumstances. Some of you may ask, where then is the distinction between medicine and surgery? In truth, there is no distinction in reality, and there should be none in theory. The human constitution is one;—there is no division of it into a medical and surgical domain; the same laws and the same principles of treatment apply to the cure of a fractured bone and the cicatrisation of an internal ulcer. Unlike the corporations of medicine and surgery, the supposed purely medical and purely surgical parts of the body live in excellent harmony. Here, then, there is no division, no jealousy, no separation of interests.

I am by no means prepared to deny that advantages may arise from a practitioner devoting himself to this or that branch of his profession; but, *if he seeks for eminence*, he will first educate himself *generally*. Let him attain extended views of pathological medicine; let him make himself master of the actual state of the science, and then he will find that there is not a single fact or law with which he has become acquainted that will not have its bearing on his particular pursuit. It is in the education of medical men that the ruinous effects of the division of the professions of medicine and surgery are most perceived; and I feel convinced that, of the two, *the surgical student is the greater sufferer*, because his views of pathology are injured. All the great laws in pathology are drawn from the consideration of visceral disease; yet the attention of the surgical student is diverted from this, and directed to what, I will say, can never elevate him in the ranks of science. He is taught anatomy, and what is called surgical disease, but he is kept ignorant, by this wretched system, of the greater part of his profession, until he comes to practise, when, if he has a mind fitted for observation, he will find, that for one dislocation there will be hundreds of visceral diseases; and he will discover what was concealed from him during his pupilage, *that many, many more die of what are called medical than surgical diseases*. During the late war, more men in the British navy died of fever than of all other causes—including the sword. But, I rejoice to say, that in Dublin the exclusive system of education is fast wearing away, and one of the many excellencies of our national school of medicine is the instruction in general pathology. There are few schools of medicine where now a more enlarged and liberal spirit of education exists.

In the study of your profession, gentlemen, let me warn you not to allow yourselves to be misled by the idea that surgery and medicine are different in their nature. The mere surgeon or the mere physician only knows half of his profession. Reckless of human life, he may practise the healing art as a trade, but he never can know it as a science. But, as there are infinitely more cases of what are termed medical than surgical disease, it is plain, that the surgeon, ignorant of medicine,



will far exceed the physician ignorant of surgery, in the extent of his malpractice. I have long observed the ruinous system which has been pursued by teachers, as connected with this subject. The pupil was taught to consider, that if he was a skilful anatomist, if he understood the routine surgery of an hospital, and had carefully studied certain works on surgery, and some obsolete books of pathology, he was thereby prepared, in the language of the schools, to go forth to teach and practise the art and mystery of medicine in general. Now, all this was wrong. You may be profound anatomists and be bad surgeons, and worse physicians; you may have by heart the writings of Pott and Desault, of Hunter and Thomson, and be totally incapable of treating a simple or complicated fever, or a case of visceral disease. But it is not necessary to say more. Society demands that the old system of a division in education should be abolished; and ere long, I even trust to see a fusion of the profession, when much of the present evils must cease, when medical men shall have a common centre, from which they will receive a common impulse; when their efforts shall be solely directed to the increase of medical science, and the political and moral exaltation of their profession; and last, yet not least, when the ingenuous pupil shall not be led astray; when he shall not be told by one teacher to despise this, and by another to neglect that part of his profession; but having the *whole* of the noble science of medicine thrown open to him, his mind, unwarping by prejudice, unfettered by fear, shall be permitted to take that right view of his pursuit, that alone can lead him, and assuredly will lead him, to the honours and successes which truth bestows on all its votaries.

I have said, that the exclusive system of education had singularly diminished in Dublin. Indeed, our national school has earned great reputation for general pathology; and from a long and cordial intercourse with the class of Dublin, I will affirm, that there are few places where we can see such zeal, talent, and thirst for knowledge among the students. As an Irishman, addressing my own countrymen, let me congratulate you on the fame the Dublin School of Medicine and Surgery has now acquired, and is every day acquiring; and when the strength of Irish talent, aided by the proper working of our unrivalled institutions, is brought into play, may we not anticipate a still more glorious result? This reflection has often cheered me, that within the last few years there has been a greater stimulus infused into the science and literature of this country. Amid the ungenial influences of political excitement, and the animosities of party, how gladly should we contemplate the advance of what will prove an honour to our national character, and an advantage to mankind. It is like the growth of the coral into rocks and fertile islands, though surrounded by the strife and waste of waters. Our scien-

tific societies have multiplied; our periodical literature, the want of which furnished so fruitful a theme for cavil, has been extended so as to afford a wholesome and vigorous supply in the varied departments of literature and science; and our monthly and quarterly publications are taking their proper place among the ranks of British journals. When we turn to works of a more permanent kind, we also see cause for satisfaction. Many most important works in anatomy, surgical pathology, physiological medicine, and midwifery, have lately issued from the Irish press; and the Irish contributions to the *Cyclopædia of Practical Medicine*, are allowed on all hands to give to that work no mean portion of its value.

There are few more wholesome exercises for the mind, few so necessary and so useful as the comparison of the actual state of any science with its advance and character at a former period; and it is in this, most chiefly, that the value of what is called the history of medicine consists. We study it then, not as a matter of antiquarian research, of learned curiosity, but as the picture of the human mind, now on the right path, now misled by error, yet still struggling onward; as the record of a dear-bought experience, and a beacon to warn us of the rocks and shoals that beset its future progress unto truth. To analyse the actual state of medical science, to show you all that has been done within a little time, to display all old pretensions to the character of a true and thrice noble science, would far exhaust my capabilities and your patience. Let it suffice to contemplate the improvement considered generally, and the means by which that improvement has been attained.

It is an error, too generally received, that medicine owes all its advances to the researches of modern times. Far be it from me to undervalue these, but I believe that the opinion I have alluded to is wrong, and is perhaps kept alive by our own vanity; for, by a specious deception, we often take to ourselves the honours and distinctions of the time we live in. The truth is, that medicine, like many other of the sister sciences, has been long steadily advancing, and the flippant every day remarks that the *inductive system* (that is the observation of facts and the embodying of those conclusions that legitimately flow from them) has been only introduced into medicine in our time; and that our predecessors in medicine put theory first and fact second in their medical philosophy, are "*as false as dicers' oaths*." Have the authors and teachers who are so fond of decrying the medicine of a former day at a time when they are (perhaps innocently) making use of its facts and observations—have they read the writings of the father of medicine? Have they studied that "*aureum opus*," so well called from its lustre, its purity, and surpassing value? Was Avicenna a mere theorist? Did Morgagni observe no facts, nor truly record them, even at the



expense of his medical reputation? Is there no induction in Baglivi? Was Haller unacquainted with the method of experiment and induction? Or is the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, the good, the great, the injured, but the immortal Harvey, forgotten? Where do they place Boerhaave? and shall the name of Sydenham go down with his ashes to oblivion?

The true state of the case is, that medicine, in its present advanced state, only represents the improvement in other branches of human knowledge, all of which are so intimately linked together, that although their extremes be far removed, there is a point where all are reciprocally cause and effect; so that if we take any one of them, it is easy to show its intimate bearings with, and importance to, all the rest. We have been long advancing in medicine, and though I admit most fully the vast strides which have been made, still I must here declare my firm conviction, that the study of the older authors is too much neglected, and that in them you will find a treasury of knowledge, much of which you may think to be the production of modern times.

If the writings of the ancient authors only contained a small portion of the information with which they abound, it would be a sufficient stimulus to their study; to reflect that it is in them, in the medical writings of the ancients, that the germs of the inductive philosophy are first to be found. It is then in the old regions of medicine that we find the fountains of that mighty river, which for 2000 years has fertilised the earth, and made man its lord. Had the progress of man not been retarded by the ignorance which is the child and servant of barbaric despotism, an earlier Newton might have enlightened the earth, an earlier Laplace have measured the heavens, or a Cuvier declared the glories of a past and present creation. The mind of man would have burst its chains, and ages ago have formed that holy alliance with knowledge and her first-born, liberty, which now is its safeguard and its glory. I repeat it, in the writings of Hippocrates you will find the principles of the inductive philosophy. A physician showed Bacon the road to immortality.

We find that there is in the mind of man a tendency to reverse the true mode of reasoning, and to seek for a principle before it has observed facts, and this was the cause of the retardation of medicine, as well as of all other sciences. Hence the various schools from Pythagoras to Cullen or Brown in our day. But a slow though sure revolution was long going forward, and I believe that Cullen and Brown were even *behind* the actual state of medicine in their time. Physicians turned disgusted from the war of words and doubt to seek in tangible objects the certainty which these only can produce; in a word they began to follow the Baconian system more generally. They reverted to the instructions of Hippocrates, and from that period our modern im-

provement may date. They turned their attention to the examination of those changes which disease produces on the human body, and connected these with the symptoms observed during life. And what has been the result of this!

1st. The accumulation of an enormous number of facts, relative to the changes of organs produced by disease.

2nd. The connection of a vast number of these changes with particular symptoms, and hence the advance in diagnosis.

3rd. The establishment of the true value of symptomatology, and the verification of that all-important fact, that opposite states and organs may produce similar symptoms.

4th. The knowledge of the vast class of latent diseases; in other words, diseases which exist without influencing the phenomena of animal life, or, in some cases, the phenomena of both animal and organic life. Diseases either without symptoms at all, or only with such as previously were not supposed capable of leading to their detection. You know that the phenomena of life are divided into two classes, viz. those of organic or vegetable life, such as *nutrition, circulation, absorption, respiration, secretion*. While those of animal life, or the life of relation (*so called from its being the source of our connection with surrounding bodies*), are the senses, the phenomena of mind, and muscular motion. The one life seems more under the influence of the ganglionic, and the other under that of the cerebro-spinal system of nerves.

As some of the junior part of the class may not have accurate ideas as to the meaning of symptoms, I may state that disease is recognised by signs and symptoms.

By signs we mean those mechanical alterations, produced by disease, in the conditions of parts, which are recognisable to the external senses of *touch, sight, and hearing*; *changes in appearance, volume, shape, resistance, peculiarities of feel*, and the production of *sounds*. We may make a diagnosis by signs alone. Take for example a case of tympanitis. The abdomen is prominent, enlarged, circular, elastic, and sounding like a drum when struck. Thus we learn that the belly is distended by air.

Now, *symptoms* are totally different; they consist in certain changes produced in *functions*; and these functional changes are to be considered in a threefold manner:—

1st. Changes in the functions of the part itself.

2nd. Changes in the phenomena of organic life.

3rd. Changes in the phenomena of animal life.

Let us take, for example, a case of inflammation of the stomach. We have, first, changes in its own function,—morbid sensibility, vomiting, thirst, anorexia. In the next place, we have changes in the functions of organic life,—fever, from the action on the



circulating system; hurried respiration, and cough, and hiccup, from the action on the respiratory system; jaundice, from its action on the biliary system; suppression of the secretion of the skin, kidneys, &c. All these, you observe, are lesions of the functions of organic life.

But we may have other symptoms; prostration, headach, delirium, convulsions; these are lesions of the life of relation, or animal life.

Now, in many cases, we have to combine these sources of knowledge to form a correct diagnosis. Take, for example, a case of hepatitis.

The patient has had pains in the hepatic region, fever, jaundice, hurried breathing, tenderness. After some time he has a tumour; the side dilated; the hypochondrium dull on percussion. Well, the signs point out an enlargement of the liver; the symptoms, that the cause of that enlargement was an acute hepatitis.

In general we may state, that signs only declare the actually existing mechanical condition, while symptoms, either present or past, point out the cause of the change, whatever it may be. Both must be studied together; but you will learn more from symptoms without signs, than from signs without symptoms. But to return to the results of the improved method of investigation.

Great light was thrown on *fever* in general; and it is, I believe, quite true; that all the advances which we have made in the knowledge of fever, are due to the prosecution of pathological anatomy. Almost all of what we may call our general knowledge of fever is due to Hippocrates; but anatomy has revealed its effects, its complications; and the all-important fact, that the cause of its fatality is often local inflammation. This knowledge, however, is not so new as is taught by some modern systematists. Galen (*De Affect. Intern. c. xli.*) taught that in continual fevers bleeding and cold drinks were the powerful remedies. Sydenham declares that the ignorance of the inflammations in malignant fevers, has been more fatal to the human race than the invention of gunpowder. Baglivi, that malignant fevers often depend on a visceral inflammation, and Van Swieten knew the frequency of intestinal ulcerations in typhus.

Among the direct results of pathological anatomy, it is shown, that *disease is seldom confined to one organ, or even one system*, and thus it has utterly shaken the nosological system of Cullen and his predecessors, which you know consisted in classifying disease by symptoms, which were supposed to point out a certain and single disease. For example, the nosologists class *phthisis* as an affection of the lung, but pathological anatomy has shown, that in many cases it is the result of a disease invading many organs and systems, and that the pulmonary disease is but a link in the chain of morbid actions. Pathological anatomy also has demonstrated the inflammatory

nature of a vast number of diseases, and has thus given us a key to treatment, to prevention, and to palliation when the disease is incurable.

The last grand result of pathological anatomy, is the discovery that a vast number of affections, supposed to be merely lesions of function, are more or less connected also with alteration of structure. Thus many of the dyspepsias of the nosologists are proved to be examples of gastritis, or of other organic diseases; cases of asthma turn out to be chronic inflammation with emphysema; the palpitations may depend on organic disease which has sprung from a carditis, and so on. I need not now dilate on the vast importance of such facts to practical medicine.

But let us now come to an all-important inquiry. Is pathological anatomy to be considered as the basis of medicine? or is it, even when combined with clinical observation, the foundation of all medical knowledge? This inquiry, you will at once perceive, involves the question as to whether Hippocrates and his followers have done anything for the science, or whether medicine is wholly new, an infant, and consequently a weak and imperfect, science. Are we to despise the works of the ancients, to be ignorant of them, and to allow medicine to be in its infancy. In fact, if we review the history of medicine from the Hippocratic era to the absurdities of Hahnemann, we find that there have been two orders of men, one constituting what we may term the school founders, who made a theory, and sought to square facts to meet that theory; these have only brought disgrace on medicine. The other class consists of the Hippocratic observers, that is, of men who sought for facts, who collected and pondered on these facts, in other words, who were Baconian philosophers. It is the labour of these that has really advanced medicine. Asclepiades, who lived in the first century of the Christian era, declared that the medicine of Hippocrates was a *cold meditation* of death. The celebrated Thessalus, who lived under Nero, in writing to the emperor makes use of the following words:—

“I have founded a new sect, which is the only new one. I have been forced to this, because none of the physicians who have preceded me have discovered *anything useful*, either for the preservation of health or for the cure of diseases, and because Hippocrates himself has put forward many dangerous maxims.”

And what was this new doctrine? That nature in each case pointed out to the patient what was most fit for him, and that hence he should be diligently supplied with every thing that he fancied.

We have next Paracelsus. He commenced his course of lectures at Basle, in the year 1526, by publicly burning the writings of Galen and Avicenna, and assured his auditors that a single hair of his head contained more knowledge than Hippocrates and his successors. He taught the cabalistic medicine, the intimate



connexion between the planets and the viscera; he was a vitalist, but embodied his vitalism under the shape of a demon, who resided within the system, and which he called Archæus. Diagnosis was to repose on the examinations of the stars, and not on symptoms. He invented the doctrine of tartar, which is the cause of all diseases, of accumulation, obstruction, and concretion; "and I call it tartar," says he, "because it contains the oil, the spirit, and the salt, which burn the patient as hell does."

Hahnemann, the founder of the homœopathic doctrine, may be quoted next as an example of these school founders, and he, like his predecessors, expresses himself with all that arrogance, which ignorance, when it pretends to learning, invariably assumes. Speaking of the Hippocratic medicine, he says,

"Since this art only consists in a gross imitation of a dangerous and insufficient process, it must be admitted, that the true medicine was not discovered until by me. It is the infallible oracle of the art of curing; it is the sole mode of really curing disease, because it reposes on an eternal and infallible law of nature."

And what is this mode and doctrine?—We have it in four propositions, and it is hard to say which of them is most revolting to common sense. We are told that it is absurd to seek for the cause of symptoms in order to remove them;—that we must cure diseases by the exhibition of substances which would otherwise produce them; that the dose is to be inconceivably small; and that there are three original diseases from which spring all the maladies which afflict mankind,—syphilis, sycosis, and the itch! These are the fruitful causes of all diseases, epidemic, sporadic, idiopathic, and symptomatic. Like his predecessor in quackery and deceit, he, too, has in his syphilis, sycosis, and itch, the oil, the spirit, and the salt, which burn the patient as hell does. Like Paracelsus, too, he maintains the curability of diseases, and is a disciple of the animal magnetism.

Let us next see how Broussais announced his doctrine to an admiring world.

"After so many vacillations in its march, medicine at length follows the only path which can conduct it to truth—the observation of the relations of man, with external modifications and the relations of the organs of man, one to the other." This is the physiological method, because it cannot be followed without studying life.

I am more anxious to draw your attention to this doctrine, as Broussais may be considered as the source of the anatomical school, which of late was so completely the fashion,—if I may use such a term; and it is a striking instance of the danger that attends the idea of our having made a discovery, to see a man like Broussais, than whom few have really added so much to medicine, falling

into the same fault of arrogance and contempt towards his predecessors.

At this moment the medical world, particularly on the Continent, are divided into two great sects. One may be called that of the *pathologico-anatomists*, the other the *Hippocratists*. The first declares that diseases are *primitively local* in all cases; that the symptoms—say in a case of fever—are only the results of a sympathetic irritation from some local disease, which is to be attacked with vigour; that pathological anatomy is to be the foundation of all practice; that there is nothing approaching to a *specific in medicine*; and that *Nature makes little or no attempt to cure*. Their favourite maxim is that saying of Bichat's,—"*What is observation if we are ignorant of the seat of disease?*"

This is the sentiment of an anatomist, but not of a physician; and we must regret that it once escaped the author of the "Researches on Life and Death," a book of such interest and such beauty, as to captivate even the non-medical reader, and make the very name of Bichat be hallowed in our memory. Many are the diseases of which we know not the seat; yet in which observation, Hippocratic observation, is of the greatest utility.

We know not the seat of fever, let the followers of Broussais say what they may to the contrary;—yet is observation of symptoms of no avail in fever? Are the effects of contagion, the history and nature of epidemics, the termination by crisis, the results of treatment, of symptoms as connected with prognosis,—is the observation of these useless or unnecessary? Sydenham knew not the seat of variola; yet he declared the true principles of its treatment. There are very many diseases on which pathological anatomy throws but a negative light,—if I may use such a term,—particularly affections of the fluids, and the neuroses.

So much for the doctrine of the anatomical school. I beg of you not to misunderstand me as undervaluing pathological anatomy; I only wish to show you its true value. I believe there could hardly be adduced a single fact in pathological anatomy that has not its distinct bearing on practical medicine. And it is true that the diseases whose treatment is best understood, are those whose pathological nature is best known. Even in fever, the actual nature of which has not been revealed, great advantage has been derived from anatomical researches; for all the advance in our knowledge of this Protean disease consists in ascertaining the number, nature, and seat of the local inflammations which accompany or arise in the course, and complicate the disease.

Let us, lastly, revert to the opinion of the Hippocratists.—They admit that *vast advantage* has arisen from pathological anatomy; but they see that its light is limited within certain bounds. They believe that great ad-



vantage is to be derived from the careful study of symptoms, even in cases whose pathological nature is not revealed by the knife. They believe that there are many diseases whose local origin cannot be demonstrated; for instance, *fever*. They deny that pathological anatomy is always to be our guide; but admit a rational empiricism, and the use of remedies which may be called specifics; and, lastly, they hold that nature in many cases makes an attempt to cure; and that the physician, in the words of Hippocrates, is to be *the minister and interpreter of Nature*, rather than her master.

Let us then combine the precepts of the founder of medicine with the lights of modern science. Let us take *observation*, and that observation rendered fruitful by study, for our guide; and let the observation equally embrace the phenomena of the living as well as the dead. Let us be Hippocratists in the dissecting room as well as at the bed-side. By comparing the practice of these two schools we get more accurate ideas as to their doctrine. The anatomists, holding that all diseases are local, direct their whole attention to the discovery of the lesion and its connexion with symptoms. This, with their doctrine that almost all diseases are inflammatory, leads them to a strict general and local anti-phlogistic treatment. Fever is to them symptomatic, and the supposed source is to be vigorously attacked in the commencement. *Diathesis, the nature of the epidemic*, and the *powers of nature*, to effect a cure, are comparatively neglected. They inhibit purgatives for fear of increasing the local inflammation, and lose many patients for want of a timely support of the powers of life.

They deny specificism in disease as well as in medicine, and are sorely puzzled to explain the extraordinary powers of bark, and mercury, and sulphur, and iodine. They despise the experience of the past.

The true Hippocratist, on the other hand, believing that we have not yet arrived at the knowledge of the local origin of all diseases, and particularly fevers, grounds his practice accordingly. He draws his experience from the recorded knowledge of the past, and his

own unbiassed observation. When he recognises a local inflammation he meets it with judgment, taking into account the habit, diathesis, epidemic, constitution, and tendency to crisis. He trusts much to nature, and watches her operations, particularly in fever. He is not afraid of moderate evacuations; the phantom of a local inflammation does not always haunt him; and even where he recognises its existence, that does not prevent him from using a stimulating and supporting treatment, if the general state of the patient requires it. He treats particular diseases by particular remedies, the utility of which has been proved by experience—such as syphilis, scrofula, intermittent fever, and so on. He uses the expectant medicine, which is not inactive treatment, but founded on the observations of the powers of nature:—“*Natura morborum medicatrix*;” but he never loses the opportunity of doing good when such presents itself, remembering the first aphorism of his great master:

“*Occasio præceps.*”

I have great hopes for medicine, for I see men's minds turning to the true path; and I trust that all whom I now address will deem themselves as labourers in the great work. Think what a noble science you profess!—the only one relating to earth-born things, which, while it ennobles the mind of man, yet softens and expands his heart; whose source is all science, whose end is good to man. Above all things follow truth; Nature can never deceive,—see that you be her faithful interpreter. The great evil is, that there has as yet been adopted no means by which the experience of the past can be brought fully to bear on the actual teaching and practice of medicine. Too often has the physician to create his own instruments. But when all the scattered facts of medicine are collected, whether they be the observations on the living or the dead body, as old as history or as young as to-day; when these votive tablets are hung up in the temple of truth, and their facts verified, compared, and classified, then, and not till then, will you see medicine in all her glory.



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