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Contributors

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ON

THE UNITY OF DISEASE:

BEING

THE ANNUAL ORATION

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

MEDICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON,

In Commemoration of its Ninety-third Anniversary,

MARCH 8, 1866.

Published at the request of the Society.

BY

WEEDEN COOKE,

SURGEON TO THE CANCER HOSPITAL, AND TO THE ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL.

LONDON:

STATHAM & CO., 13 LEICESTER ST., REGENT ST., W.

MDCCCLXVI.

ON THE UNITY OF DISEASE.

—o—

Mr. President and Gentlemen,

Knowing how competent for criticism is the audience I have before me, and remembering what able men have preceded me in this honourable post, I must confess myself nervous and diffident in addressing you, doubting my ability to bring before you matters which shall be of sufficient interest to enlist your attention, or, at any rate, so to illustrate the subjects I have chosen, as that you may be enabled to say the hour thus devoted has not been thrown away. I know, however, how abundant is the forbearance and generosity of my fellow Fellows, and I gather confidence in the thought that I cannot easily overdraw my account upon that bank. In deference, however, to that generosity, it behoves me to endeavour to limit my drafts to the smallest issue.

The Society has established no rules to guide the orator in his choice of subject. The whole world is before him where to choose. And, seeing how earth, air, and sea, are all made man's ministers, no less in his moments of sickness, than in his bustling busy life, it cannot but be said that in selecting a theme for such an assembly as this, there is truly an embarrassment of riches. From

the wondrous *interior* of the earth we derive those things which make railroads and the mighty fiery flying serpent, which seems to annihilate space, and make not this island only, but all Europe, the practice ground of those who have the skill and talent to make their abilities known to mankind. From *its bowels* also are derived, not only the rich ores which after passing through many cunning processes, serve as emblems of exchange, and so reduce the cumbrous method of barter to an elegant and easy process, but out of its mighty rocks and caverns, and from off its cultured surface come things that rightly manipulated by human ingenuity, subdue disease, overcome baneful influences, and bring back to ruddy health the wan and wasted form of man. Scarcely less than *earth* does *air* minister to the necessities of man, whether in sickness or in health. Without it, the beautiful mechanism of all animate creation would cease to perform its vitalizing functions. That there are gradations in the property of air we know. The remarkable discovery of ozone has of late years shown us that unless this peculiar arrangement of the chemical constituents of air be present in some sensible quantity, there is a failure of health, both in man and animals. It is found in greatest force in mountainous regions, and at the sea shore, and thus to its presence is attributed the beneficial effects of those autumnal trips to health resorts which we are so accustomed to recommend, and which happily most of us now feel it a duty to extend to ourselves. With what

braced intellect, and nervous sinews do we not return from these airings of the body and of the mind, doubly capable of performing our appointed duty in the world. And if we turn to those melancholy abodes in every large town, aye, and in many a country village, too, where disease finds its ever-seething nidus, is not the air which each of the unfortunate inhabitants has to breathe, redolent of foul odours, carrying pestilence into the very heart of the victim. Thus is our life-sustaining medium, poisoned by the idleness and ignorance and the folly of man, made to subserve the purpose of the destroying angel. And who shall tell a tithe of the vast import of that other element, *water*, in all the affairs of life? In vapour, how infinite is its power? It speeds the senator to form our laws, the soldier to defend our possessions, the merchant to supply our requirements. It hastens to the bed of sickness the anxious relative, and opens to distant parts the medical or surgical talent of the whole land. The argosies of the world floating on this mighty power, which is said to cover two-thirds of the globe, are made to defy the adverse winds, and bring in safety the produce of other lands. And if again, it be ordained that we shall have to support our interests, or defend our honour on the bosom of the ocean, it will be the grand and humanizing invention of Watt that will be applied to out-manœuvre and overpower the enemies to our peace. But it is in the more domestic uses of this element that we are personally concerned. It enters into the composition

of all animate and many inanimate bodies. Without water the human frame itself would be devoid of form and return to its original dust. The vegetable world would be a small heap of grey ashes, whilst the vast crystalline masses which make up the greater part of the crust of this earth would be but a collection of incoherent particles, wafted aloft by every fleeting breeze, rendering this planet perfectly uninhabitable. Rivers have well been called the arteries of the world, for it is water and its circulation that keeps all creation alive and fitted for the duties imposed upon it. Time will not permit me to dwell upon the uses to which medicine has applied this all-pervading element. Water drinking, with or without extraneous mineral substances, has its advocates and its devotees. Water ablutions, wet-sheets, sea-bathing, the hot bath, the shower bath, the douche, all testify to those restorative powers of water, which medical men are accustomed to call to their aid in various disorders of the system. Above all, the morning "tub," which is now happily so universal, is an institution due to the writings and personal advocacy of members of our profession.

And these vast elements, Earth, Air, and Water, so intertwined and dependent on each other, are more closely bound together by that wondrous nervous system, Electricity. In nothing has the intellect of man shown itself so transcendent as in the remarkable contrivances for bending this enormous power to the service of mankind. The very wildest poetic vision of the bard of Avon is

reduced to sober reality. The fairy Puck's boast "I'll put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes," is carried out by prosaic professors and very substantial business-like engineers, and we are thus enabled to converse with our Antipodes upon the politics and the mercantile, and even medical matters, of each with the same facility as our imaginary sprite could skim the wide-world over to find that

"Little Western flower,
The juice of which on sleeping eyelids laid,
Will make, or man or woman madly dote,
Upon the next live creature that it sees."

This property of matter has long been made to subserve medical purposes, but, perhaps in a very empirical manner, until Faraday, Duchenne of Boulogne, and some of our own members, especially Dr. Althaus, threw more light upon the matter, and thereby greatly extended the beneficial influence of this agent over various diseases, especially those affecting the nervous system.

The elements could no more exist without electricity than could either of them cohere independent of each other, such is the harmonious unity of all material things. This grand design of Almighty Power exhausts our admiration.

But if we look to the development of animal and vegetable life upon this earth, and trace the remarkable gradations of each as they have been shown to us by the discoveries of Owen, and Mantell, and Murchison, and Lyell, and Goëthe, and Darwin, and Huxley, and many others; we shall there also see

how gradually and uniformly the Almighty Power has worked to bring the earth and all that is within it, and upon it, to its present wonderful perfection. In its infancy the first created things, recognizable by geological science, were minute shell-fish, classified by Cuvier under the name of Radiata. Even these it is suggested must have lived upon smaller creatures as they do in the present day; but being of a gelatinous character possibly little more than a single germ, the very earliest type of a living thing has not come down to us in those vast rocky museums which have been opened up by geological investigations. Still, *gradually* as the world was settling down into land and water, higher forms of animal and vegetable life appear; and only when the structure was fitted with all the requirements necessary for the sustentation of the human race, did it please the Creator of all things to make man in his own image. We know how finely drawn is the line between animal and vegetable life. We know from the magnificent lectures of Professor Huxley how the bony structure of ourselves may be traced even in fishes. We know from the beautiful discovery of the poet Goëthe how all the parts of a plant are represented in the seed, and we know from the patient enquiries of embryologists how in the different stages of development, even the human embryo itself passes through forms which are permanent in the fish, the reptile, the bird, and the lower mammalia, before it attains its specific maturity. These are but a few instances of the dove-tailing process which shows no break in the

chain of all creation. *Gradatim et seriatim* the whole machine made up of so many apparently distinct parts works harmoniously, and therein displays the infinite power of the Great Intellect that conceived and carried out so wondrous a scheme.

It is permitted to man every day to add more and more to the proofs of this unity of design. *How low* has fallen in the estimation of the present generation of medical men the nosology of disease as arranged by Cullen, is shown by the absence of the word nosology from Dr. Copland's "Dictionary of Medicine." The natural arrangement of the vegetable kingdom, by Jussieu and De Candolle has entirely supplanted the artificial system of Linnæus, observation has taken the place of theory, and the *imagination* is held in subjection by all true followers of science.

Disease although very various in its aspect, is in its causation and results very uniform; and moreover, as in the creation of things there is always a link between the lower and the higher development, so in that decay which is called disease we can trace a connecting medium in several instances, perhaps as we learn more, in all. It is within the observation of most practitioners that scarlet fever and measles very frequently follow one another, and even whooping-cough is by no means a rare concomitant of these exanthems. In a recent number of the *Lancet* the connection between scarlet fever and puerperal fever was positively established by the history of an outbreak of puerperal fever at Maidenhead, the origin of which

was clearly traced to the scarlatina infection having been brought to a puerperal woman by the nurse and the doctor who attended her. It has been noticed also that during the prevalence of epidemic influenza, not only puerperal fever but Erysipelas prevailed to a more than ordinary degree. I need not remark upon the frequent coincidence of diphtheria and scarlet fever, because that has been so well established as to induce many to believe them to be, if not the same disease, at least, cousins-german. Although undesirous to refer to *cases* in such an address as this, I may perhaps be permitted to quote a singular instance in corroboration of these statements, given in those elegant "Medical Reflections," published by Sir Henry Holland. "Lord B—— at the age of fifteen had the measles in the ordinary way, caught at a public school, when resident there. This was followed about two months afterwards by scarlet fever with ulcerated throat; which went on in the usual manner, leaving behind the most extensive anasarca over the body which I have ever seen in sequel to this disease. He was cured by bark and steel with blue-pills and diuretics. Two or three years afterwards Lord B—— when at Berlin had the measles a second time. The physician who attended him in that city entertained no doubt as to the nature of the disorder; and what forms the extraordinary part of the case, this attack of measles was followed again, after the interval of a few weeks, by scarlet fever unequivocal in its symptoms, according to the information I received, with desquamation, but no

anasarca following it. "It seems impossible to suppose," says Sir Henry, "any mere casual coincidence here." There has been a great effort at all times to classify skin diseases, and just now we have quite a glut of systems, but who has not seen these outbreaks blending with each other, and changing their type in the course of the attack.

I shall be treading, perhaps, somewhat upon volcanic ground if I ask the question, how is it that a soft chancre, said to be non-infecting, and curable by the simplest wash, and in fact, not syphilis at all, will give rise to an indurated syphilitic chancre in one of the opposite sex? Perhaps it may be denied that such is the case. I can only say there are very few women who have hard chancre compared to the many who have soft sores, and I will venture one step further upon this debateable ground, and assert that constitutional syphilis *very often* follows soft sores in women, and not very infrequently in men.

It is, however, especially in reference to the changes of type in hereditary disease that I am anxious to address you. The transmission from parent to offspring of external forms, and even peculiarities, will be readily conceded, whilst many cling to the opinion that the qualities of the mind are derived from one or other parent; at least, we know that that subtle disease of the intellect—insanity—which well nigh baffles all pathological research is essentially of an hereditary character. Gout and calculus vesicæ are often hereditary, and doubtless dependent on the same causes. Even so

unlikely a disease as hydrocele has been known to be hereditary in families for many generations, and although the chain has been broken by the birth of an *only* daughter, it has reappeared in her son. Hernia is also frequently hereditary, and very probably depends upon that want of perfect formation about the abdominal ring, which may account also for the presence of hydrocele. Some skin diseases are hereditary, and especially that peculiar one—ichthyosis—the behaviour of which has formed the theme of some most interesting and learned papers in *The Medico-Chirurgical Review*, by Mr. Sedgwick. I have known stammering to descend in families, and epilepsy, as well as goître, although sometimes the results of personal and territorial peculiarities, are nevertheless very frequently inbred faults of parental origin: and especially with regard to epilepsy, I would remark that tuberculosis in one or other parent is no uncommon antecedent, as is shown by Dr. Copland. I am told by Dr. Fuller, of St. George's Hospital, that it is very common for him to find that rheumatism, and even gout, have antecedent phthisical relationships, that diabetes and phthisis have close family associations, and that the treatment of these diseases, to be effectual, must be founded upon a close investigation of these hereditary tendencies.

It has often been asserted that what is called struma is the result of a constitutional deterioration, derived from syphilitic parents; but I think Mr. Hutchinson has lately demonstrated very conclusively that there is no foundation for this

opinion. Reliable evidence is entirely wanting to prove that either of the two, especially hereditary diseases—phthisis and cancer—are even remotely associated with, or dependent upon syphilis. Acquired diseases do not seem, fortunately, to have any long duration in families, and may doubtless, by proper treatment and by well-selected marriages be, in the current language of the day, "stamped out," although in a different manner to that practice in the veterinary art which these words suggest.

Both surgeons and physicians know very well how intimate are the associations between diseases of the joints, of bone, of the glands, and fistula ani, with phthisis. The lung disease often remains in abeyance during the continuance of the local manifestation of the tubercular diathesis, but when the surgeon removes the diseased part, and there is no longer an escape for the tubercular matter, the physician too frequently finds that a more vital part has been attacked, and the last state of that patient is worse than the first.

Now, I suppose it will be granted that phthisis is in the aggregate an hereditary disease. It may be accelerated, perhaps even produced by cold and wet habitations, by insufficient or improper food, by close confinement, or by habits which tend to depress the powers of life; but the universal prevalence of this disease in all ranks of life shows that it is one of inheritance, and I believe statistics which are unstable and unsatisfactory in some instances, may in this case be thoroughly relied

upon as supporters of the generally hereditary character of phthisis.

We have seen that other well-known diseases are in alliance with this tubercular affection, but I don't think it has been hitherto pointed out that certain tumours, generally situated in the breast, and denominated adenoid, are also examples of tubercular disease. That these tumours are sometimes the result of improper sexual irritation I know, but in the great majority of cases they are not so, and in these we invariably find a history of phthisis in the family of the patient, and thus we have another instance of what is called the polymorphism of disease. Proceeding still further in this interesting study of the unity of disease, I have to state that this very adenoid tumour is convertible into a veritable schirrus. I have had for some years under my care two sisters; their father's sister died of phthisis. The elder of the two had for *fourteen years* a small moveable tumour in the right breast. It then became attached to the pectoral muscle, and the skin to it, and increased in size. Soon after this the whole breast became hard and nodulated, and inflamed, and ulceration ensued. Severe stabbing pains now came on: an ulcer with an indurated base and margins was established beneath the nipple. The axillary glands then became enlarged and hard. Although the subject of several attacks of erysipelas, she lived on for three years after I first saw her, and died exhausted by the disease. I was not informed of the death until several weeks after

it happened, and so had no opportunity of examining the internal organs. The other sister also had several small adenoid tumours in both breasts. No change has overtaken these tumours, except that under the influence of cod-liver oil they have very nearly disappeared. I have other cases to show, as does that just recited, how possible it is for one disease to be merged into another, and many such may be collected from authors. That these are not coincidences only, may be shown by the history of cancer patients themselves. One-fourth have relations who had suffered from cancer, very nearly one-half have relations who had suffered from phthisis. Of the remaining fourth part we need take little account, since it is so difficult to obtain a certain knowledge of the disease from which even our own grandmothers died. In some cases there are histories of both cancer and phthisis in the family of the patient. In a patient at present under my charge, with cancer of the rectum, the father's family all died of consumption. His wife bore him fifteen children. Eleven died of consumption, this one has cancer, and there are three alive. Some little time since, a distinguished lady died of cancer of the breast, under the able care of my friend and colleague, Mr. de Meric, and her daughter had previously died of phthisis. A great artist of this country died a few years ago of cancer of the liver. Two of his daughters died of phthisis; the mother is perfectly healthy. I am obliged to weary you with a few of these cases to support my statement,

that there are these remarkable interchanges of disease, that there is no such thing as a definite limit, and that the opinion which has been formed by one of our most esteemed fellows—that an innocent tumour never becomes malignant—is contrary to all the laws and practice of nature. Destruction has its stages and its uniformity no less than construction. The philosophy of Hamlet may not be up to the present time, but it is wonderfully suggestive:—

> "Imperious Cæsar, dead, and turned to clay,
> Might stop a hole to keep the wind away;
> O! that the earth, which kept the world in awe,
> Should patch a hole to expel the winter's flaw."

In cancer itself we have a variety of appearances. How unlike is the scirrhous tumour of the breast to that vascular growth formerly called fungus hæmatodes. How dissimilar are the appearances of the soft brain-like matter of a medullary tumour to the collection of viscous cysts, known as colloid cancer, and how distinct from all seems the epithelial affection, common to the skin and mucous membrane. And yet all these are rightly classed under one head, for they may be seen occasionally present in one individual. The anatomical structure of the parts seeming to determine the peculiar form the disease assumes. I have often noticed that the more malignant and rapidly-growing form of this disease—the medullary—is generally derived from a parent who has had scirrhus, indicating a gradually increasing

development of the mischievous dyscrasia which originated the malady.

The minute anatomy of disease which is now studied so assiduously and with such splendid results, so far as it has yet been received, certainly gives much countenance to the polymorphic opinions I have ventured to urge. It is thoroughly established that the cells of a cancerous growth are nothing more than those which naturally belong to the tissue involved, having however, been altered in shape by the contained fluid, and so made incapable of producing the healthy formed material of the natural cell. The same may be said of the cells of tubercle. And there is only this difference between the cells of tubercle and cancer, that the former are, perhaps, always of epithelial origin, smaller, also, than cancer cells, and generally undergoing more rapidly the process of withering and disintegration. Even the lymph products of inflammatory action, are with difficulty distinguished from tuberculous matter. "The likeness between tubercle and such lymph products," says Mr. Paget, "is often too great for diagnosis, they have been, and are, often confounded, and the withered and degenerated nuclei, and other particles of which tubercles are chiefly composed, are at least as much like those of degenerate inflammatory lymph as they are like any other morbid products."

In the process of growth, as in the process of repair, it has been shown by many, but especially by M. Andral, that there is a gradual upward

metamorphosis of tissues, that the cellular is the matrix of the other textures in the fœtus, as it is also in the repair of divided muscle or tendon, or even bone; and when atrophy overtakes any of these structures from disuse or loss of nervous supply, or any other cause, the part again is reduced to the condition of cellular tissue.

Here we see, then, how in that inner arcana of life revealed to us by the microscope there is the same blending of differences which rules throughout all creation.

If there be a large foundation of truth in these views, as I verily believe, although I fear I have but faintly expressed them, then is there opened to our vision a vista we all long for, a glimpse of something like a scientific certainty in the treatment of those diseases which we inherit from our progenitors.

The farm, the garden, the orchard, and our flowing streams yields us examples of the changes attainable by high cultivation, by crossing breeds, and by the practice of engrafting a superior upon an inferior plant. The little bitter sloe may be made to yield the large juicy plum, the sour crab-apple shall by cultivation put forth a sweet and handsome fruit; the simple primrose by the gardener's art is converted into the double primula; the dog-rose of our hedges, beautiful in its wild simplicity, may be so highly elaborated that it shall form a coronet for the queen of beauty, and rival even the blushes her praises bespeak. The little herb-robert, our own indigenous island

geranium, is capable of an infinity of development. The large-hearted cabbage we so much enjoy was originally a weed on the sea-shore. Those beautiful heads of asparagus which gladden our tables in the spring are the effects of art applied to a little green herb found growing on the sea-girt rocks. The vegetable world is full of these suggestive transformations, and so is the animal. I remember to have seen on the farm of a gentleman in Wales one of those little black Welsh oxen, which are generally about the size of an Exmoor pony, raised by management almost to the dimensions of an elephant. We know how breeding in and in degenerates a farmer's stock. Unless there be a frequent change of sire in the breeding of pigs, the progeny return to the lean and lanky greyhound condition of the wild boar of the woods. Our annual bucolic feasts give occasion to show what perfection of symmetry, what marvellous development of structure, may be obtained in the bovine race by man's ingenuity. Who amongst us does not admire the splendid results of cultivation shown in the fleet race-horse, the high-mettled hunter, and even that peculiarly English animal, the noble dray-horse.

In the multiplication of the finny tribe what remarkable results have been obtained by human forethought. It would seem, indeed, that man is only now beginning to use the dominion which was given to him "over the beasts of the field, and the fowl of the air, and the fishes of the sea." He was appointed lord over all, to "replenish the

earth, and to subdue it." Biblical commentators generally have considered that this dominion over every living thing was conferred upon man to enhance his dignity, and that, being naked and defenceless, it was necessary for his safety. But considering how the animals, *feræ naturæ*, recede from the haunts of man, the latter explanation cannot at any rate be accepted. The power given is a part of the scheme of creation, by which man is made the immediate agent of the Deity in replenishing the earth. And most of us know how large a part an honoured member of our own profession has borne, not only in pisciculture, but in the distribution and propagation of the fowl of the air also.

And man himself! I need not quote the proud lines of Milton. But taking him only as the chief of animals, looking at him as an oarsman, a boxer, a cricketer, a swordsman, an athlete in all the various exercises which youth contrives to nerve his sinews, and give healthy development to his remarkable physical structure; is it not evident that it is given to us if we can but apprehend rightly the laws which govern health and decay, so to teach our fellow man, as that he shall be able to fend off, if he be so minded, those tendencies to dissolution which the passions, or the prejudices, or the ignorance of his forefathers have entailed upon him. Darwin's theory of selection is certainly true with regard to disease. We constantly see the strong-built member of a family escaping the hereditary tendency to phthisis, and giving forth

healthy offspring. We see fevers settling lightly upon some, and bearing the more tender ones to the earth. We see cancer missing a generation to revive in the children of a weakened parent.

There is no question that by going into the family history of every case of this sort we have to treat, we may so advise our patients as that these diseases shall be to a great extent prevented for the future, and in a measure be put into abeyance even when they have been already developed.

The great obstacle to all our curative and preventitive efforts is undoubtedly the intense mental and physical labour we impose upon ourselves. In this small country, where we crowd and hustle one another, the race for even competence is indeed a steeple chase, beset with difficulties; and he who would distinguish himself beyond his fellows not infrequently falls early in the contest, leaving, perhaps, the sad legaey to his children of a constitution enfeebled by his noble efforts to serve them. *Vi victoræ* indeed, might well be written on the brow of such an one, for his triumphs are bought at terrible sacrifices. The forum, the senate, the mart, and perhaps more than all, those nocturnal labourers whose thoughts, clothed in nervous language, inform us day by day of the political movements of the whole world, yield their annual victims to this noble ambition; and it will not be said that our own profession lags behind any one of these in its energetic pursuit of great accomplishments. I fear that although we see and can advise others against the evils attendant upon protracted

and difficult labour, most of us are prone to the like exhausting process; and perhaps we do not even much respect those who idly wait on fortune, and simply *take* the goods the gods provide them. Is not the adynamic nature of inflammation, and of most diseases in the present day, attributable in considerable measure to the great nervous exhaustion every day encountered by the largest portions of our over-worked populations?

I should be venturing upon very delicate ground if I were to attempt to show how much also hereditary disease might be diminished, if, as in the farm yard, we could in the human family select for their physical superiorities the mothers and fathers of our race. Alas! it is, that lawyers rather than doctors are the counsellors upon these occasions, and not infrequently hereditary lands carry with them hereditary seeds of early physical decay. Why should not the doctor be called in upon all occasions of proposed union to decide upon the physical propriety of the match, as regularly as is the lawyer to inquire into the infinitely less important pecuniary eligibility of the aspiring swain. Granted that the latter is a proper exhibition of forethought, would not the former proposition fend off worse things even than poverty, the loss of infants dearer than life itself, or the long agony of a puny, crippled, or epileptic existence. I cannot but think that if these two great obstacles to the prevention of disease, inordinate mental labour, and ill-assorted marriages, were by each one of us duly impressed upon families upon every occasion which opportu-

nity afforded us, that we should in the course of time open the eyes of the community to their own welfare and happiness, and induce them to act upon advice which would certainly tend greatly to the diminution of disease.

The prevention of disease is our highest aim; the cure of it is also within our reach. That is to say, by experience and by ingenuity we have found many means of counteracting the evil influences of decay, as well as of helping those powers of reconstruction which have well been designated the *vis medicatrix naturæ*. It is greatly due to the ingenuity, and perseverance, and manual skill of our President that many lives are saved, and much happiness is produced in families by the performance of that remarkable operation, ovariotomy, which has made his name famous throughout Europe.

I remember in my early youth to have heard an apocryphal story of Sir Astley Cooper, that he had opened the abdomen of a female, taken out her stomach and bowels, washed them, and put them back again. Mr. Baker Brown has realised this apparently extremely improbable *canard*. Others have done the same, but certainly to him is due the credit of having persevered through much obloquy, and even threatenings of criminal proceedings in establishing the propriety and comparative safety of opening the cavity of the abdomen, and extracting therefrom tumours whose presence threaten life.

By his aid also, and that of others in this

Society, Mr. James Lane, Mr. Bryant, Mr. Henry Smith, &c., fistulous openings between the vagina and rectum, and even between the bladder and vagina, giving rise to the most loathsome sufferings, have been happily closed, thus restoring to useful life and enjoyment many worthy persons. It is an old story now that diseased joints which used to necessitate the lopping of the limb, are either cured by rest and constitutional support, so ably advocated by one of our late Presidents, Mr. Hilton, or by the excision of the particular portion of the affected articular surfaces. Even that great advance in surgery inaugurated by Stromeyer, and imported into this country by Dr. Little, whereby the halt and the lame are enabled to throw away their crutches, has been still further promoted by one of our members, who offers a method of restoration for ill-shapen limbs without having recourse to the knife at all. Although in this instance the cutting of tendons is perhaps the least painful of all operations, and as far as I am aware is never attended by any after ill consequences, such as pyæmia or hæmorrhage: still, I think we have occasion to rejoice when the same benefits may be attained without submitting the patient to the always unpleasant ordeal of an operation. Another of our members in the prime and vigour of his youth has *per saltum* jumped into deserved eminence by means of that patient labour, and diligent research, and intuitive skill, shown especially in the diagnosis and treatment of calculus, and other diseases of the bladder and its appendages, which

rarely fail to meet with their reward. The late King of the Belgians, everywhere acknowledged to be singularly astute in council, and happy in the selection of his agents, took with him from this country, when called to the throne of Belgium, an English physician, whose pathological investigations gave promise of his attaining the very highest position in his profession: and when in the decline of this excellent monarch's existence the skill of Belgium and Germany and France had failed to relieve him of a distressing malady, England sent forth her young surgeon at his call, and another victory, happily this time bloodless and saving, was attained not very far from the classic plains of Waterloo. The service thus rendered is supposed to have been royally rewarded; and although the king-makers who do their work by destroying the image of God are elevated to the very highest honours, and are rewarded with pensions and estates which descend to their ennobled progeny, we must be content that for *saving* the valuable life of a wise king, our young surgeon was placed in the distinguished position of Surgeon-Extraordinary to this foreign sovereign, and that his royal son has recently most wisely renewed that honourable title.

The progress of surgery in this particular matter has been eminently useful. It is said that whilst a third of the adult persons who are cut for stone die, the operation of crushing is now brought to such perfection that not one in fifty need succumb to this disease. We are undoubtedly much indebted to the mechanical ingenuity of our instru-

ment makers for carrying out so admirably the suggestions of the surgeon.

Our Society has been honoured this year by a visit from a distinguished physician from Sweden, who has conceived a somewhat remarkable theory and practice in the management of syphilis. He has himself so much faith in the curative effect of his proposal that he went to the trouble and expense of spending several months in this country in order that all those who are pursuing the study of this disease, and have large opportunities of investigating the various suggested modes of treatment, may be fully informed of his views, and be enabled if they are so disposed to carry them out in accordance with his instructions. Although the proposal was remarkable, the character of Dr. Boeck was so high, his earnestness so great, and his single mindedness so manifest, that nobody could fail to be interested in his self-imposed mission, and all were honourably anxious to give him the opportunities he sought. Knowing that I had published some decided views upon the treatment of this disease, he included my humble self in the list of those whom he honoured by a visit, and I can truly say that few things in professional life have given me greater pleasure than that short interview. The one single desire to benefit his race is evident in every thought he utters. It is true that I was flattered by his agreement with me that the eruption is the natural cure of the disease, and that there is no warrant for giving a specific character to the indurated sore only; but when I came to contest

with him, the advantages of his repeated inoculations, and attributed the cure to the absence of abortive treatment, he received my gentle criticism with so much amiability, and developed his views so much in the spirit of our own Cowper, who in the words of a true gentlemen says

> "Discourse may want an animated 'no,'
> To brush the surface and to make it flow,
> But still remember, if you mean to please,
> To press your point with modesty and ease,"

that it was impossible to dismiss the thought as a vain vision, and Dr. Boeck has succeeded in interesting many gentlemen in the investigation he came among us to promote. It becomes not me to anticipate the verdict which may be pronounced, but already I think I see, as a result of this visit, further leanings to that natural method of cure I have myself, with others, striven to establish. I am glad to say the Society has had the agreeable satisfaction of making this amiable gentleman, and earnest student, one of its Corresponding Fellows.

In the treatment of fever, small-pox, diabetes, and other diseases which come especially under the notice of the physician, great improvements have been effected, but it would be *contra bonos mores* for me, a surgeon, to do more than compliment the young physicians of the day upon their zeal and energy and success in the noble aims they have in view. I would, however, venture to use this public opportunity for urging upon the younger members of our fraternity, the necessity of being both phy-

sician and surgeon, not in name perhaps, for titles are idle things, and sometimes mask the true worth of the wearer, but in fact; for although the physician may not ever be called upon to remove a tumour or cut off a limb, he is not infrequently consulted as to the treatment of a carbuncle, or diseases of bone, or urinary affections which may involve the presence of a calculus, and many other things which are especially studied by surgeons; whilst the surgeon, if he have little knowledge of those general pathological changes, which result in some local mischief, he is called upon to remedy, and which influence to a vast extent the results of operations even for accidental injuries; if he be not ready to meet these constitutional peculiarities, with appropriate remedies, and to modify his operative measures in accordance with these important determinating influences, he will, perhaps, do more harm than good by his surgical skill. The College of Physicians has set a good example in providing an examination for those of its members who intend entering into general practice, embracing all the branches of medical science. But surely it is the duty of *both* colleges to enforce from *all* their members a knowledge of medicine as it bears upon surgery, and of surgery as it is dependent on medicine. Peculiar talents and abilities will not fail to show themselves, and the public soon learn to select for extraordinary purposes the ablest of his craft. This fundamental knowledge being obtained, we may then divide our labours with the utmost advantage, for it is not given to man to

excel in everything, and the field of inquiry is so large, and as yet so requiring enlightenment, that, as Dr. Hughes Bennett well says, "If every young practitioner would dedicate his life to the careful elucidation of the natural progress of only one disease, he would do more for medical practice than has been accomplished by centuries of empirical trials of remedies."

The natural progress of disease is the one important study most neglected by our forefathers, yet, of all others, the most necessary for arriving at the best means of combating it. I say not that we should stand by with folded arms, and let the unlearned sufferer commit all the indiscretions of diet and general hygienic improprieties, which have probably induced the disease; neither do I consider that such remedies as give tone to the system should be abstained from, but, in those diseases which have not yet been made subject to man's control, I think we have no right to experimentalize, either surgically or medically, until we know what course Nature herself will take in the matter. I know not how it may eventually prove to be in phthisis, whether there are parts of the world where phthisical patients may live the allotted period of life. Although there are some few observations of travellers, which go to show that within the torrid zone this disease is almost unknown, and that even in the frigid zone it is much less met with than in our own temperate circle. One of our young recruits, an active son of an active sire, recently returned from Australia, tells us, that

these invalids obtain there a respite from the destroyer.

And here I must digress for a moment to refer to a passage in the oration of Dr. Thudicum delivered two years ago, in which he pointed out that cancer is hardly ever met with amongst the native population by the medical officers of our Indian possessions, and draws inferences therefrom in disfavour of our boasted civilization. I would venture to read the fact in another way, and say that cancer being an hereditary scion of the house in which phthisis is brought up, they affect the same latitudes, and are always mutually dependent one upon the other.

Shall we not some day have travelling medical fellowships to solve for us these important and remarkable bearings upon the health of the people.

Returning from this digression, I would say, that there are constant manifestations in the case of syphilis, and many in that of cancer showing a natural remedial power which may be brought out and fostered by the watchful and studious attendant, who is never more useful than when directing the mode of life, the place of residence, the diet, and general habits of his patient. I would wish to mention that there are, however, two especial remedies which have a large and beneficial influence in overcoming the dyscrasia which accompanies both these diseases, iron and cod-liver oil. I must leave it to others to explain *how* they act, but that they do assist marvellously in improving the general condition, and thus give Nature time

and opportunity to renovate herself is not a questionable theory, but an accomplished demonstration. I have over and over again had occasion to observe how fat and well persons having undoubted cancer of the breast, of the bladder, of the lip, &c., have become under the influence of these remedies.

Several cases of scirrhus have been induced to atrophy, and others have been reduced and kept in abeyance for now eight, ten, even fourteen years by these means, and, indeed, there seems no reason why, in many of these cases, the prolongation of life should be at all interfered with.

Whilst in constitutional syphilis, as far as can be said of any mere medicines, these remedies are certainly curative.

I am no sceptic in medical matters, but it cannot be denied that the past age was too dogmatic, and that whilst the *investigation* of disease was left in the hands of a few hospital physicians and surgeons, the great body of practitioners were content with the practice of their art after the manner taught them in their youth. Now, however, by throwing open to talent, wherever displayed, the offices of the great hospitals, by the great increase of these admirable institutions throughout the country, by the establishment of a medical press which gives opportunity for study to the most remote parts of the land, and by the multiplication of societies for discussion and mental improvement, no man has any excuse for not being a student all his days, no man has any right to rest satisfied whilst there is a

single field in the realm of medicine unconquered. The results of this wide distribution of the opportunities for investigating disease *de novo* are every year increasing to the benefit of our race, and seeing how much has already been done, there would seem to be great encouragement for asserting that the time will come when we shall refuse to acknowledge the existence of *any in*curable disease. Each practitioner in his own way is helping on this important work, and I believe, so interesting and absorbing is the pursuit, that having these greatly increased advantages, we all now "do with our *might*" "whatever our hand" or our brain "findeth to do."

And this leads me to that which perhaps ought to have been the proper theme of my discourse, but which at any rate should not be omitted in this place; namely, the claims our old Society has upon the estimation of all those who appreciate the advances which medical science has made during the last century. I have recounted some few of the many improvements which have lately germinated in the rooms of the Medical Society of London, but not a tithe of those which have for now nearly a hundred years been fostered by opportunities afforded there to all those who desire to place their thoughts and experiences before their professional brethren, for free discussion and joint inquiry, as to the truthfulness and usefulness or otherwise of the proposed innovation. Three or four years ago one of our most able members, Dr. Routh, in an address from this chair, thoroughly exhausted the his-

tory of the benefits which this society has conferred upon medical science, and therefore upon the public, and I think it would be a most desirable thing that the society should keep that address in print, and present a copy of it to every new member. It is a noble, and just, and eloquent testimony to the merits of the men who have passed away, and the work which has been inaugurated in this society. Since then we have had many contributions of great practical value. One of our late secretaries has distinguished himself by a persevering study of the applicability of the laryngoscope to the diagnosis and cure of diseases of the throat and posterior nares; and by his demonstrations before the society, has much aided the rest of us, in the practical use of this valuable instrument. Another secretary, too early retiring from his useful labours in this society, has by his ingenuity contrived to make that instrument by which we are enabled to see all the structures of the interior of the eye, serviceable to a whole class of students. Another of our members, Dr. Anstie, has introduced to our notice an instrument called the Sphygmograph, by means of which the varying beats of the pulse in fevers are traced upon a sheet of paper, indicating with unerring exactitude the sthenic or asthenic character of the fever. Although not one of our members, I may perhaps be allowed, whilst mentioning these great modern aids to diagnosis, to refer to the admirable class-microscope invented by Dr. Lionel Beale, by means which every student in a class-room is enabled to examine for himself each speci-

men that is sent round in any given lecture. We have still another modern invention; namely, the endoscope, by means of which, not only the interior of the urethra, but the interior of the bladder itself may be explored, and we are promised that by perseverance in the contrivance of reflecting mirrors not only shall we be enabled to see the interior of the stomach, but that there will be no hollow space communicating with the exterior of the body, which shall be free from our prying inspection. So much has been done, that we must not throw a doubt upon even this accomplishment. If ghosts may by created by reflections, and invisible ladies can tell our thoughts by means of mirrors, why should not we, applying these mechanical powers to our own science attain even to substantial benefits.

These are specimens only of the advance which is being made in the certain diagnosis of diseases which our forefathers had to guess at. The meetings of this Society enable not only its Fellows, but any medical man to bring any supposed improvement before a large number of practical men for examination and criticism, and he is certain to receive a sympathising and an honest inquiry into the value of his suggestion.

This has worked admirably now for ninety-three years, and although there have been times when much apathy was shown, and the Society drooped somewhat from the establishment of other societies, some of a special character which have attracted communications, that would otherwise have found

a place here; nevertheless, this Society has its special uses, and its popularity and prosperity were never greater than at this moment. During the past year we have elected no less than thirty-three new subscribing fellows, and six distinguished corresponding fellows; whilst we have lost by death and resignation twenty-one fellows, so that we are more than sustaining our usual numbers. We have to lament the loss during the past year of Dr. Frederick William Mackenzie of Chester place, Hyde Park square. Mr. Decimus Nelson Frampton, of Lower Belgrave street, Eaton square, and Mr. Edwin Day, of Hertford street, May Fair. The latter gentleman was snatched away at the early age of twenty-nine, and the two former in the very prime of manhood. We all here remember the courteous, amiable, thoughtful, hard-working, and ever studious Mackenzie. Distinguished as a student at the University, he brought a cultivated mind to the work he had set himself to do. Although he had drifted as it were into midwifery practice, which he illustrated by many valuable communications and lectures, his favourite inquiries were of a therapeutic character, and he did much useful work in the investigation of the uses of many preparations which he supposed might have a special influence ever certain diseases, more particularly cancer. The loss of so earnest and honest an inquirer is not easily supplied, but happily there is a rejuvenescence about this old Society which reminds one of the constitutional doctrine, *Le Roi est mort, vive le Roi.*

In our present appearance there is certainly no evidence that we have fallen into the "sear,—the yellow leaf," although I think I may say we have

> *"That which should accompany old age,*
> *As honour, love, obedience, and troops of friends."*

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