Manuscript of Presidential Address by Dr David Yellowlees to the Royal Medical Society of Edinburgh, 18 December 1857

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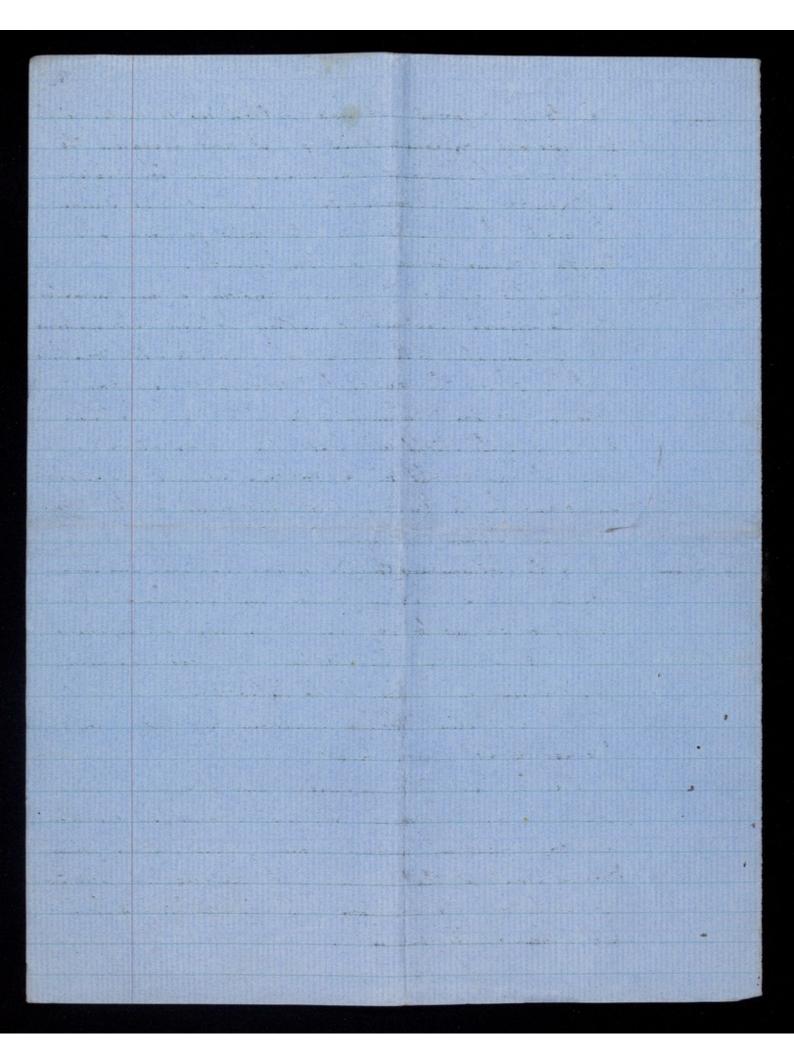
Gentlemen

They to offer you my most sineers thanks for the honor you have conferred on me in placing me here; and let me assure you that throughout the Dession Lwill do my submost, with support and in conjunction with my fellow-president, to advance the preputation of the Society and the interest of the members.

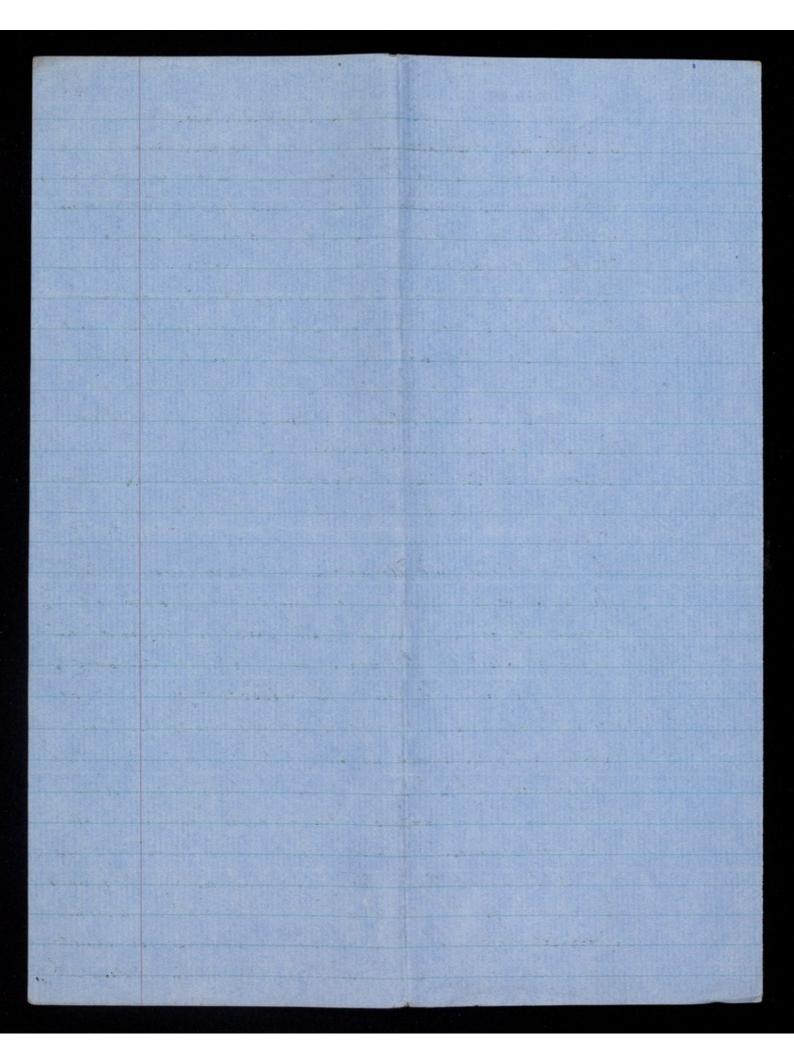
in our 121 sh session to find a new subject for a breestential address, and I shall not attempt to do so, but Gentlemen, there is one Subject which can not but he interesting to us all, and which is so continually changing that it may be said to be always new — I mean, the present condition of Medicine, both as a Science and an art.

It is most important for those who hope soon to undertake the practical duties of our profession, not only to have distinct ideas as to individual diseases

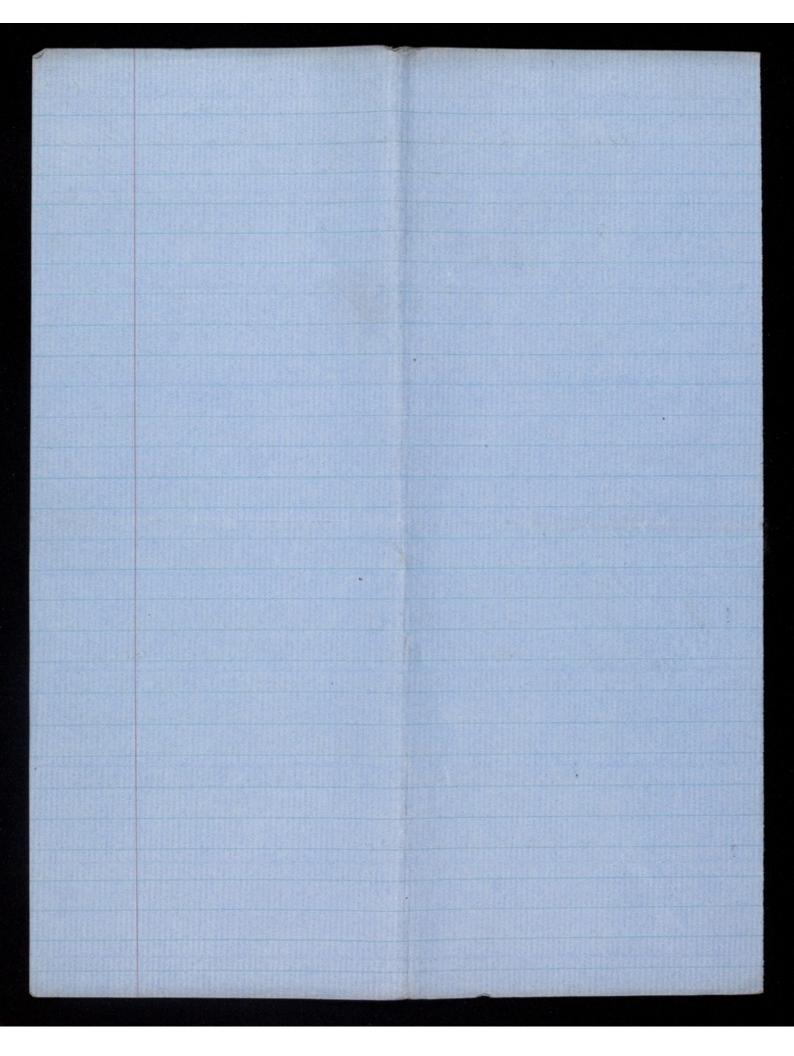
and their appropriate treatment, but also to have a comprehensive view of the general hearings of the Profession, and a correct appreciation of the changes which it is continually undergoing. and this subject is a specially appropriate one because at no time during the whole history of Medicine have these changes been so safed or so important as since the beginning of the present Century, and during no other equal period has such progress been made in clueidating the nature, Causes, and results of Disease, and Consequently in our ability to detect, and remove or relieve it. We shall not wonder at this progress five look at the sources ofil, and the consider - eration of some of these may very profilably occupy we for a little. as the first and greatest of them all I mention the advances which have been morb: Anat. made in the sludy of Morbid Anatomy I has indeed done great things for Medicine, and I must do greates things still. Jul: Diseases Il has taught us, for Example, as to Fubercular diseases, the nature, course, and curabilety of Philhisis pul-- monalis : I has told us that asciles oftens depends on tubercular desease of the peritoneum, and that Aydrocephalus is usually caused by the deposition of Luberele in the arachnoid asto the Brain it has shewn us the Connection Brain between softening and apoplery.



as to the Lungs, it has enabled us to distinguish Lungs. the different Inflammations; it has revealed the nature of Pulmonary Emphysema and its relation to Collapse and Bronchilis; and I has show the mode of production and the consequences of Empy Preumo thorax and Empreud. as to the Heart & Vascular Rystem, it has demonstra-Heart & Versels ted the almost constant connection between Rheumation and Inflammation of the Pericardial V Endo card ial membranes, il has shewn the constant & necessary connection between Cardiae & Pulmonary Diseases, and between Diseases of the Right and Left Rides of the Heart; and it has taught us to Explain absence laryngeal Symptoms by the pressure of an aneurous on the Re-= current hangageal nerve. alment! Canal as to the alimentary Canal it has corrected our ideas as to the Sources of Hamatemesis and Melana; and I has enabled us to Explain to purging of Lyphoid fever, Dysentery and Fuberculoses & referring each to its specific alceration of the intestine. all this Morbid anatomy has done, and I must do yet much more. Cancer, and albummuria and Epilepsy, and Paralysis, and Insanity all need & demand further and more Careful investigation, and it is from morbed anatomy that we may with the greatest likeli-- hood Expect the solution of the difficulties which all of them still present.



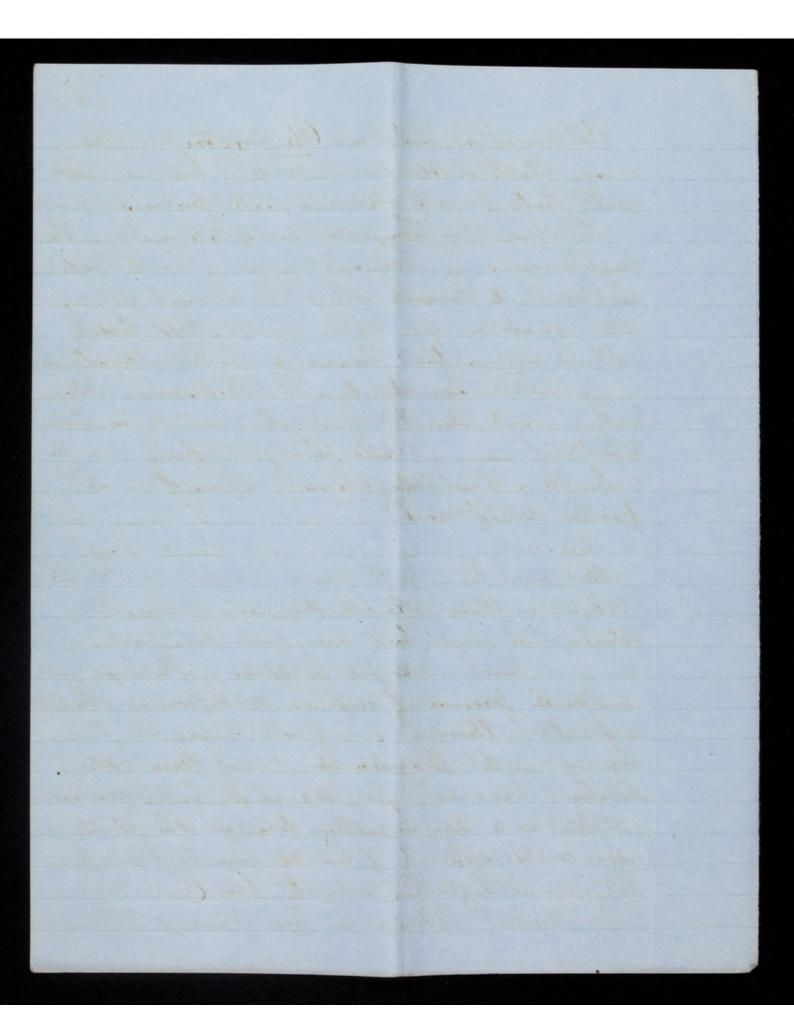
Physical Diagnosis must be mentioned as a great source of the Recent advances in Medicine; for Physical Diagnosis would have been of little value Morbed Anatomy procured, and Morbed analomy could have produced comparatively few practical results, had not Physical Diagnosis enabled us to recognize during life the diseases with which it had made us familias. Of the great importance of Phys: Diagnosis, Speel that it is quite unnecessary to speaks; for the Exeper-= were of Every day is teaching us all how invalthe precision and accuracy and ease with which diseases of the Heart and Lungs are recognized by means of it, and to the great importance and pequent use in Ovarian and Uterine diseases. Under this head, the Microscope deserves special mention: To il we are indebted for many of the advances in Morbed Anatomy of which Thave been speaking, and chiefly by means fil must we supert the further progress in that department which I have been auticipating. Isul, in addition to this, as a means of Diagnosis its value is great indeed: In the Examination of Urinary Deposits, for Example, it gives us invaluable aid, by shewing the form of the Crystalline sediment,



and by revealing the presence of Blood, Pus, Epithel-- ium of Fube-Casts buth Hammation of the Blood, it detects benerythoenia corpuseles. In Diseases of the Stomach of reveals the Dareine ventricule, and in Diabetes the Forula_ both - the vegetable products of Fermentation and Decomposition, Il has proved that the essence of many Culaneous Diseases is the presence of an animal of beget-able parasite, — particularly it has demonstrated the vegetable character of Favus, and has made us familias with the habits and propensities of the acarus Deabiei : and although the Mieroscope count, alone and unaided, cannot does not enable us to decide as Ste nature of a suspicious growth get the minute chueture as revealed by it, when taken in Connection with the Other Circumstances of the Case, furnishes very important information, and demand 5 very careful consideration in out decision as to the nature of the disease.

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To Recent advances in Chemistry, Medicine is not a little indebted, and to it do we look most hopefully for further and freater progress. The Chemistry of Therapeuties has of lake years made great progress - especially in giving us the active parts of Crude Vegetable drugs in the most convenient and most efficient form of the Vegetable alkaloids: I need only mention Jannin for Galls, Shychnine for Aux Vomica, atropine for Belladonna, Digita -aline for Digitalis, and above all, Luinine for Cinchona and Morphia for Opium. Our Knowledge of the Chemistry of Health - of the processes which go on normall in the living lab-= oratory within us _ is graduall, though blowly. Extending : and our Knowledge of the Chemistry of Disease is retending too: Took how much it has already done for Medicine; It has taught us, for Frample, to consider the presence of albumen in the wrine as almost invariable a proof of disease of the blidneys, and, arguing from the speed decomposition of three after its secretion, that soplained Manie poisoning as very probably due to the premature decomposition of the accumulated wrea, and the Consequent circulation of Carbonato of ammonia in the blood.



Let me repeat that I is in this direction more than in any other that we must chiefly and most hope-- fully look for new discoveries of for greater progress. Organic Chemistry is advancing every day; the tangled mass of facts and figures of which I seems at present to consist will allbe arranged yet in their connection and order; and their beauty will be seen in their harmony and their results: for Vital Chemishy Cannot but as vance along with it, and then Duthological Chemistry is sure to follow: — And if it first fruit are so valuable what may we not Expect from it further development? So much them for the recent progress of Scientific medicine ; altho ' other sources, and many other proofs of I might have been given mentioned. Such and to great progress in Medicine as a Science necessarily emplies Corresponding changes in Practical Medicine : freat changes there have been and great progress too, and paradoxical though I may seem, progress chieff & retrogression. Just as a man is making progress who forms a more correct estimate of houself than he formerly had even although that estimate be a lower one,

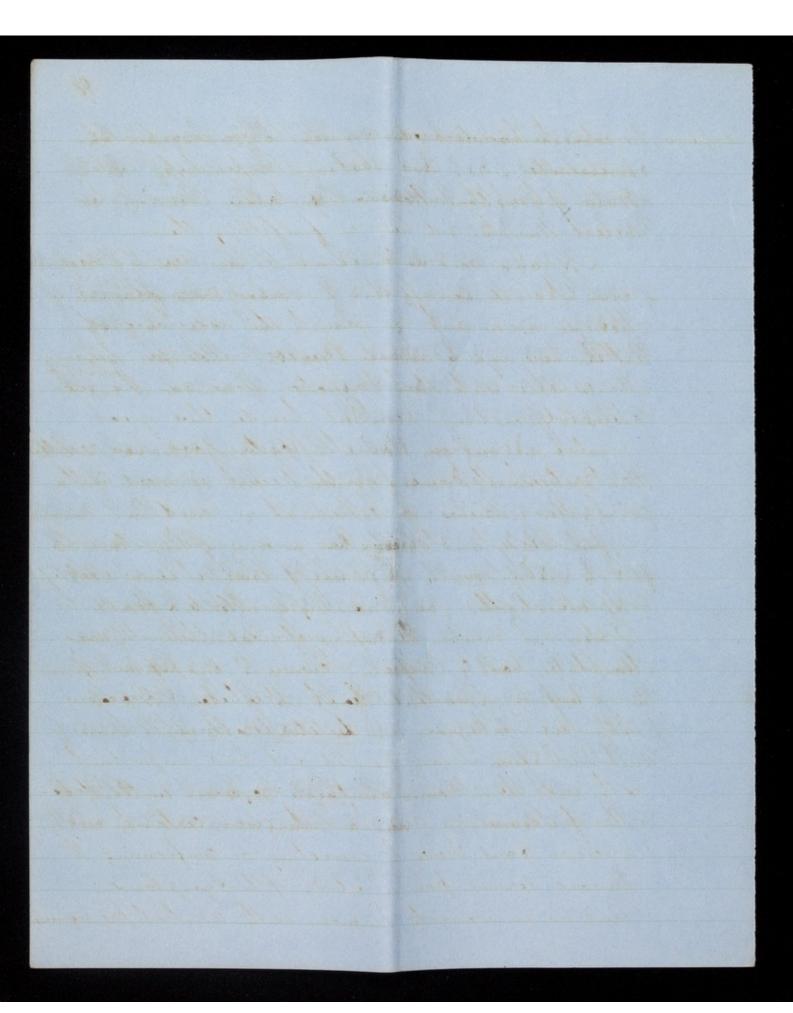
So practical Medicine has been advancing by forming

a little has wined traded explained application which die the had it was reasoned his Chain I the effects of applicable the wife there is a see that the mention to you by a see the has never never between her house it is not the made markeled between middle is it will be

a lower, but more correct, estimate of what it may attempt and of what it can accomplish The first effect of these recent ad vances - Especially those in Morbed anatomy - was to give most hopeless and gloomy views of disease , and by revealing organic changes, to show the vanity of out suffered hower to arrest or remove it: This was especially true of Fubercular Orseases, Vulmonay Emply Rema, Valvalas disease of the heart, apoples, Sight's Disease, and Circhosis. Sul pour this shaking of out Confidence with Capabil-= the of Medicine of the efficacy of supposed remedies there resulted a double good: attention was more specially directed to the alleviation fthe Diseases which we did not now Expect to cure, and we gradually learned how much unaided Mateire Can flew effect towards the cure of apparents hopeless That It so the dut of the Physician to be the Lervant and the assistant of Nature is the old and inval-= nable but much neglected letson which Fevers, Phthisis, and Heart Disease have agreed con-= vincings to teach us; we have learned that it is Hature, not the Physician, who effects the Cure: that the Physician ought to follow Nature's mode of Cure, not to coerce tature to follow the his;

A product of the party of the second of the Account of the seal of the fact that The second of the set from the second of the second of the the state the sent the fall of a liver to and the second of the second of the second when he would be a world by a comment To the state of th A CONTRACTOR OF THE PARTY OF TH

mode he has devised & which he deems infunitely Superior preferable; and that his proper duty is to watch closely the indications of Nature, and, when hecessary, & aid her in fulfelling them. It is no small advance to have learned host much Nature can effect, in what circumstances she requires and can gain of the assistance of Medicine, and what diseases are so for beyond the reach of both that palleation alone can be at-the reach of both that palleation alone can be at-the reach of both that palleation alone can be at-the reach of both that palleation alone can be at-the reach of both that palleation alone can be at-negative advantage, much positive good has results to Ractical Medicine from the recent advances is the Lubridiary Sciences on which it is based. above all, Chemisty has given us the mestimable boon - Chlordonn, in praise of which it is as need top to speak at all, as it is impossible to speak too highly: and Physiological Chemisty has taught na how to cure & curvy & Dyphepsia, and how to alleviate at least Diabeter & Diseases All Digective organs, & dietetie treatment. Shave alread powled and how important is the aid we altain from Phys: Diagnosis in the deterprecision bout Views & correcting of confirming the opinions derived from a study of the Rymphous; and as an accurate diagnosis esthe Essential pre-requisite



for correct treatment, we see that this Diagnois has contributed , not less although less directs to the advance of practical Mediene then either Chemistry of norbed anatomy. Having said so much about the recent progress Medicine as an art, Incend not stay to prove that the true ways to advance Bractical Medicine is to advance these subsidiary occures, of which I is the Combined practical result Let me out say that in the fields of research which these Lubsidiary & crences present there is room for a far greater number of habourers , and that comple Careful study and observation in any of them Count fail to yield result which shall bedike honorable to the moestigator, and Valuable to ulledical Science I need out mention the names of Carsevell, Owen Marshall Hall " Carpenter, Bennett and Reit to prove this to prove also that the R. M. I has born its part in such labours, and has reaper its full share of Quel Distriction Let these names etimalate us to ast worthit of such predecessors, and blabour as earself + as well!

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when it is made that you have the way to have the state of the state of bed and the 11.1 the took week histories la steer not of the trans recording for to the in the manifest state land a speak desichent where there had the and the territory than secure your real well will be to

But it is important for us not only to have correct and comprehensive views of the present state filledicul Knowledge, and of the general condition four Bofession, but lettervise to Know something about those who practise it. Let us glance very shorth at the present state felled into practice and Mercul Ractitioners. and we notice first that they are almost outnumbered & a host of Charlatans V Quacks: not that this copeculiar to the present day, for Nerbalds in the days of Hippacrates just as now. and just as there ever will be while Medicine is imperfect, but flate years Quackery has taken full advantage of the Fransition State of Medicene and has become a great social evil It is nearly strange how little conceded in order believer a successful Charlatan; for the public is Indeed "a' most credulous monster; - a modicion of trutt, a lively imagination, and unlimited impudent boldness cannot fail to procure duccess. a modicion of truth is needed to give plansibility to the system & starting how same generally - admitted doctrine, - but a very modicion suffices: a livel unaquation is essential to pretine in glowing language the ravages of the fell Disease, and to

11 and the course of the line The chart in the stand discussed for della hard lives for them has a will mence of the described to withful to thebrews wilded the little to these his in made and interested to the contract of the second of It hall ball not report to the Strike from a superation that the had been to Grandle and Sidelphile

proclaim the greatness of the Deliveres who has arisen; and if in addition to this, & a powerful effort of imag-- in atme genius, there can be produced the portrait of a Doctor in familias conversation with a sey the bearing skel-= elon, Luccess will be speed tumbounded * But limittees, unblushing, mensacious boldness is the miracle fullahomet seems the very perfection of Quackery. He caused it to be proclamed about that an a certain day he would compel a mountain to come to him, and that he would offer prayers from it summit for all his true followers: In the presence of the assembled multitude Mahomet comcommand in vain thistead of being abashed and disconterted by its disobedience, he out said Well " if the hill will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet will. " go to the hill". Doubtless the people were Salis = feed that the hill had some good reason for refusing to come, and, rejoicing that they had been the object, fthe prophet; all powerful prayer, they dispersed proclaiming allah is great, tillahomet is his prophet. Am I exeal of Homeopethy and Hysropathy under the head of Quaekery? We cannot help noticing that each possesses the modieum of truth_ - the one being founded on the value of pech air and

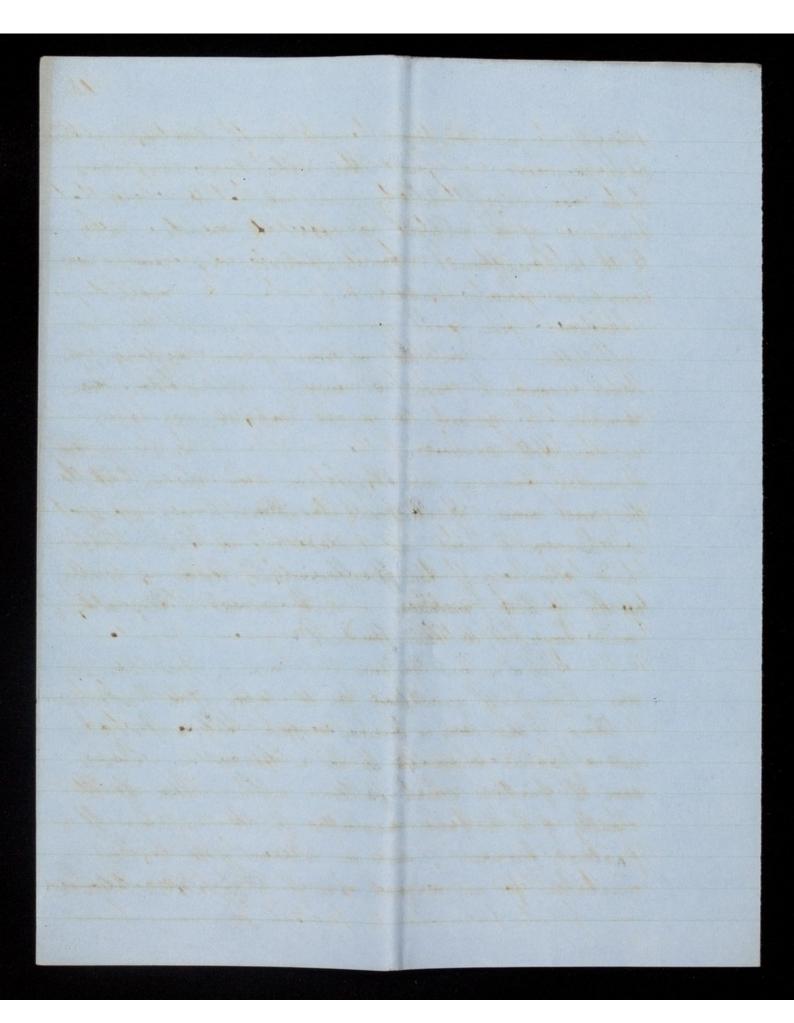
with the the whole we the smooth commended and there will remain the a Sand Sand Thomas de la faction of the state of the sta Se many the second description tolerale lands were the be lightigate in posity but the wine

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pure toates, and the other afoparents Existing althor herhalps unconsciously, on the well-llwown influence of the mind over the body: And that to believe that the Cures which tative has effected are due rither to well blankets or infuniteorinal doses requires no feeble imagination, and to proclaim to small degree of boldness.

Charlatanism must abound Rolong as Mediene is an imperfect science, and so long as men are labe found who are read; to sacrifice truth, and the health or lives of their reighbours that the ignorance and errors of regular practitioners are quoted puch men as their best advertisements, therefore let us take care that are earnesthe preparing forthe difficulties of practice and may never be quilty of thus aiding importure and disgracing regular.

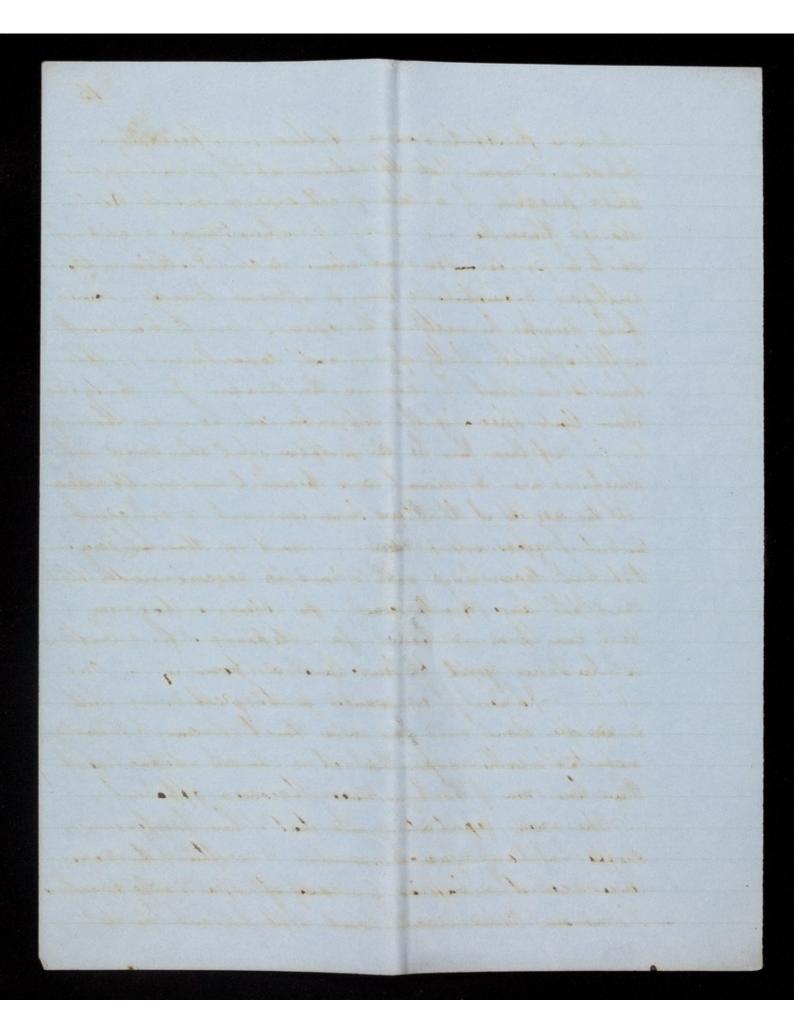
Medicine Vin Surgery which present enigneas that cannot be suffained, and difficulties which cannot be surgered. The admitted timpotence of elledicine in many cases, as well as the Changes which I has been recently undergoing, and the alleged ignorance of many fit, practitioners have of late furnished the pretects for many fierce.



attacks on our Brofession, and huch little calumniation fits members; but these illustured accusers have been chieff distinguished for by their atter ignorance of the subjects of which they wrote, and Is the self sufficient of contemptions tone which such ignorance always produces. Such charges - from such quarters - furnish their own refutation, and the defence of our profession from such assailants may be safely left to those from whom it penders so much selfdenying and were quittely funded fraising our Profession when we say that the great was of Medical Practitioners are upright and honorable men - actuated of the best makines, and discharging their professional duties in always worthy of these motives, - with credit of themselves and benefit to their patients. fel it is but too true that many practitioners are imperfectly qualified for the duties of the Profession: Thus, I have seen a bruise supposed to be a pacture, and a pacture supposed to be a bruise : Thave seen the piction which follows inflammation of the sheaths of the tensous mistaken for the crepities of a pactured fore-arm, and an absens of the Valva mistaken for an wegent case of Strangulated Kerned.

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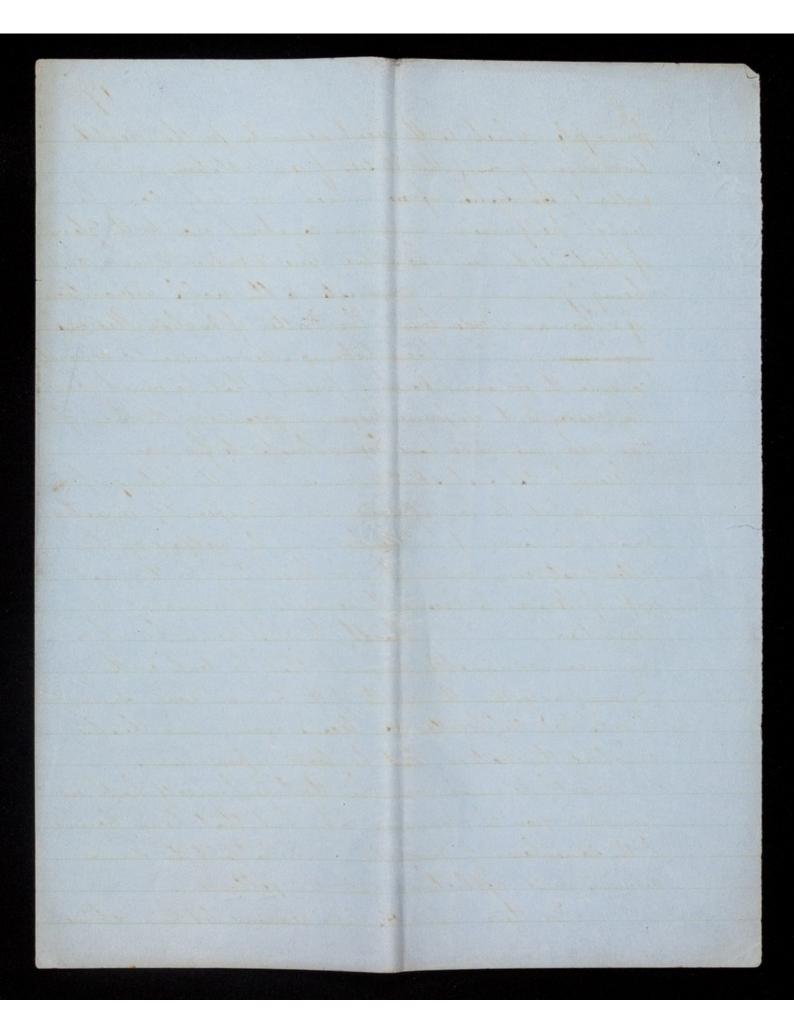
One puitful source of this is specialism. I do not mean that Specialism which is nothing else than Quackery - which is well said to have the Rection as its favorite and most appropriate seat" and Which is professinges Sometimes to come Festula without Cutting, sometime, "Hernia urthant husses", some--times " Syphilis unthout mercury", (the treatment in the last of these, of the way, fluenally consisting in profuse salivation in Succes of Corrosive Sublimate) but I mean that Specialism which is so common in the Megalow Profession - a limitation of one's study and praetice almost Exclusives to a special branch felledicind that it is necessary for the advancement of elledical Science that each department should have it special students, and the range of Medicine is so Extensive that no man can be a master in all departments, but he has no right to purchase Duperiority in one is too often done, and when such a one is in-= Expected called whow to act in another department than his own his ignorance becomes apparent, and his own reputation and that of his profession Ruffer in Consequence : ___ thus, the Exper-- ienced occilist is baffled & acase of Spasmodic stricture, The accomplished acconcluent is found unable to



and we preeminents need that highest moral

m of make

principle which water best security for the right discharge of any the duties of any station, and without the duties of no which no duty can be sight performed __ a constant eye both glong of that God " in whom we live t move thave out being". Sisten to the noble admonition of Thomas Lydenham, "he Father of English Medicine"" Who ever takes up Medicine should seriously a consider the following points: firstly, that he must one " day render to the Dupreme Judge an account of the lives of " the sick went who have been inhusted to his care. " Seconds, that such skill & Science as, I the blefring of " almighty Sod, he has attained, are to be specially directed " bowards the honor of his Makes, and the welfare of his " fellow creatures; Since it is a base thing for the great " gift of Heaven to become the servants of avarice or . ambition . Shirdly, he must remember it is " no mean of ignoble animal that he deals with. " he may as certain the worth of the human rase Rung, for " it sake sod's Ohl begotten Son became man, and thereby , ennobled the nature that he took whow him. Last, he must remember that he hunself hath no Exemption from the Common lot, but that he is bound by the same laws of mortality, and hable to the same ailinents and afflictions with his fellows. For these, and the like reasons let him shine



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" brender aid to his the dishessed with the greater care with the Rindlies spirit, and with the shonger " fellow-felling."

If we are actuated & motives like these, and freeline worthing of them, we shall obtain not merel professional succees, but blessings infinitely greater: — we shall obtain the affordal of own own consciences, and of our fellowmen, and at the end we shall receive the soul satisfying "Well done" of Nin whose approbation alone can confer true and menting happiness.



Stellowless.

Residential addres la Sv. Yellowlees 1857