

Address delivered at the opening of the twenty-eighth session of the Leeds School of Medicine / by the president, John Deakin Heaton.

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ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

OPENING OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION

OF THE

LEEDS SCHOOL OF MEDICINE.

BY THE PRESIDENT,

JOHN DEAKIN HEATON, M.D., LOND.,

FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON, PHYSICIAN TO THE LEEDS GENERAL INFIRMARY, AND LECTURER
ON PRACTICE OF MEDICINE IN THE LEEDS SCHOOL OF MEDICINE.

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ADDRESS

OPENING OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION

OF THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

BY THE PRESIDENT

JOHN DEWEY, M.D., LL.D.

NEW YORK: THE UNIVERSITY OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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TO
THE PUPILS
OF THE
LEEDS SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

THIS ADDRESS
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

WITH THE BEST WISHES OF

THE AUTHOR.

THE AUTHOR

ADDRESS.

It is now twenty-seven years since the foundation of the Leeds School of Medicine, with which most of us who are here present are connected either as teachers or pupils, and the commencement of whose twenty-eighth session we are met this day to celebrate.

From the day of small things, when the first lectures of this School were delivered, as I have been informed, in a room at the Leeds Dispensary, and when a loft at the back of the same building was the only dissecting room, this institution has been advanced, by the perseverance and ability of its council, and, let me add, by the diligence and solid acquirements, and consequent success, of its pupils, to the substantial and distinguished, I might almost say pre-eminent, position which it now holds amongst other provincial establishments of like nature. There were difficulties and opposition to be overcome in the first instance, and there may have been temporary discouragements, chiefly from general causes affecting our own in common with all other Schools of Medicine; but energy, and discretion, and harmony in our councils, and sympathy and co-operation between teachers and pupils, have overcome all obstacles; and from the vantage ground of the sure position which this School has now attained, we may contemplate, with a calm satisfaction, the early struggles and successful labours of our past career, and anticipate, without presumption, a continued progress for the time to come. We possess a building furnished with every requisite for efficiently conducting the business of the School,—the commodious theatre in which we are now assembled,—museums of anatomy, pathology, and materia-medica,—a laboratory,—and dissecting-rooms; we have a library of standard works on the various branches of study here prosecuted,—a valuable microscope,—numberless plates and diagrams for the better illustration of the

subjects of our lectures in the various courses,—and, in short, every means and appliance for the most efficient conduct of your professional education.

During the period of upwards of a quarter of a century that this School has now existed, most of its founders have retired from active participation in its management. Some have been removed by death; others, with whom we still are conversant, after having long zealously borne their share of the burden of the day, and seeing now their labours crowned with an assured success, have felt themselves entitled to resign this charge into younger and more vigorous hands; but we still have the privilege of numbering in our band of workers one valued representative* of the first Council, and may we long retain amongst us this link with what is now wellnigh a bygone generation of the Council of this School.

Of those who are now your teachers, a large proportion have formerly appeared as students on the benches which you now occupy, some having been amongst the first students of this School. It is exactly twenty-three years since he who now addresses you was first enrolled as one of the body to which you now belong. It seemed to me then almost presumptuous to propose to myself that I should, at some future time, attain to the dignity of teacher of Practical Medicine, both in this chair and in the neighbouring hospital,—duties which were then most ably discharged by the late respected Dr. Williamson. Nevertheless, I did, in those early days, set these objects before me as a mark to be aimed at, and, perhaps, in time attained; and, as is now apparent, my early ambition has been justified by the result. For fifteen years I have had the honour of membership in our Council, at first as teacher of Botany and Materia Medica, and, latterly, the very duties have devolved upon me, in conjunction with my colleague, Dr. Chadwick, to which I from the first aspired.

Doubtless some of you will, in future years, fill up the gaps which the course of time must gradually and inevitably open in our ranks. And this is, indeed, as it should be. The *alumni* of this School are those who, before all others, are most likely to entertain,

* Samuel Smith, Esq., F.R.C.S., senior surgeon to the Leeds General Infirmary.

and practically to evince, a lively interest in their *Alma Mater*. I would say to each of you, Whether you set this or some other perchance still higher mark before you for your future attainment, let your motto be "*Excelsior!*" Make it your determination, from this critical commencement of your path through life, still to progress, and to reach to the highest position within your possible attainment,—I do not say of public distinction, but of social respect, and of moral and intellectual merit.

The rewards and distinctions are singularly few which are placed within the reach of the members of our profession, which, more than any other, devotes its professional resources to the disinterested relief of the physical evils of humanity. I know not of any medical man who has been ennobled as an acknowledgment and reward of professional merit; a simple baronetcy is the highest distinction to which a favoured court physician is occasionally raised. But I confess to you, that, for my own part, I do not at all regret that these high worldly distinctions are not strewn in our path. Were the case otherwise, it would tend to lessen that general sentiment of disinterested kindness which characterises our fraternity, and of which the confident reliance of the public upon almost any true member of our body, for prompt and willing and kindly help in any case of real need, irrespective of the question of a prospective fee, or even where it is most evident that no remuneration can ever be obtained, is a most honourable testimony.

There can be no more striking illustration of the evil influence which power and place, and the desire of acquisition, may exercise upon a mind otherwise noble, quenching every sentiment of benevolence and honour and self-respect in sordid avarice, than is afforded by the life of the eminent Lord Bacon; who having, as Lord Chancellor of England, acquired the highest place of dignity and trust next to the throne itself, and having gained in the intellectual world a lasting and universal fame by the development of his new philosophy, yielded to the meanness of taking bribes in the discharge of his judicial office; whereupon, accused by Parliament of bribery and exaction, he made a most humiliating confession of his delinquencies, and being sentenced to fine and degradation, ended his days in retirement, which, however, passed in

learned studies, was more truly honourable than had been his public career.

I judge then that, though great worldly honours are not offered to our ambition as members of the faculty of medicine, we have little need to regret that this is so. There are distinctions in the fields of science and philanthropy more ennobling and enduring than are those of wealth and title. Had Bacon only been known as the venal Chancellor of a weak and vicious king, his name would ere now have been forgotten, or remembered only with contempt; but as the author of the "Novum Organon" he will ever be held in the highest honour by all nations. Bacon's conscious reliance on the real merit of his intellectual labours assured him that this would be the case. "My name and memory," he says in his will, "I leave to foreign nations, and to mine own countrymen after some time be passed over." That time has passed over which might be required to pardon and forget his history as Chancellor of England, and now his name is only remembered, as he desired and anticipated, as the great promoter of intellectual and scientific progress.

Such are the distinctions which are most worthy of our emulation; they are pure and lasting; they bring with them no regrets, they do not fade with a temporary popularity. And we think we may assert, without presumption, that no body of men have distinguished themselves more as the promoters of scientific discovery and of philanthropic measures, than have the members of the medical profession. I do consider that such pursuits are the peculiar characteristics and ornaments of our body. In all benevolent associations, the medical man comes forward with his time, his professional services, and such an amount of pecuniary assistance too as his moderate competency may permit. In all learned and scientific societies how large a proportion of the members are likewise actively engaged in medical practice; and amongst those who add to our scientific knowledge by practical research and new discoveries, medical men press forward in the van. In the recent gathering of scientific men to the meeting of the British Association in this town, how large a proportion of names distinguished in the world of science are members of our profession. The Hunterian Museum in the College of Surgeons, the British Museum, which took its origin

in the scientific and literary collections of Sir Hans Sloane, the Radcliffe Library at Oxford, the statue of Jenner which now adorns Trafalgar Square, the safety lamp of Sir Humphrey Davy, are all of them, monuments of the scientific zeal of men of our profession, successfully applied to the noblest purposes of public good,—the promotion of learning and art, and the preservation of health and life.

Such bright examples may make you justly proud of your profession, and arouse your emulation to follow in the path which your predecessors have so well marked out. It is true that not all, indeed comparatively few, are endowed with that high intellect and untiring zeal which alone can secure to their possessor a name so distinguished as are any of those which I have mentioned. But, as yet, your abilities are untried; you know not yourselves of what you may be capable. When young Davy was apprenticed to an apothecary in Cornwall, probably neither he nor his friends anticipated that he would become one of the first philosophers of his age, and invent an instrument,—not by accident, but upon true inductive principles,—experimentally feeling his way, step by step, to the complete result,—which has been, and continues to be, the means of protecting miners in our coal pits from the fatal explosion of the invisible gases exuding from the strata in which they work.

Whether or no any of you will achieve for himself an illustrious name to be had in honour by after generations, we cannot, by any glance into futurity, as yet declare; some of you may even now feel the first stirrings of genius within his breast; and truly amongst the many intelligent faces which I see before me, I cannot but believe that some are destined to rise above the common level of respectable mediocrity, and to become leaders in the progress of truth and civilization. It is with the deepest interest that we look upon the youth of to-day who are destined to become the men of the next generation; as we consider that upon you, and such as you, must depend the moral and intellectual progress or decline of our people and our country. Let each one of you feel aright the responsibility which attaches to himself individually, and resolve that he will discharge himself of it well; and though you may not become great philosophers, nor acquire distinguished names nor lofty titles, I feel sure that you may all become able and

scientific practitioners of the art which mitigates the physical evils of humanity, and command the respect and esteem of the community over which your influence extends, by the consistent adhesion to a manly, upright, kindly, and, in short, a Christian line of conduct.

But in order to this you must be in real earnest; next to the duties of religion, make your professional education now your great aim. No longer let any momentary gratification interfere with duty. You must have relaxation; to be without this is good neither for body nor mind; but seek this only when your work for the time is done. Do not persuade yourselves that you can correct a present neglect and inattention by closer application at a future time,—that a first session ill-spent may be compensated by a double assiduity in the second year. This is, in every way, a great mistake;—it is the flattering but delusive unction which the idle and inattentive student lays to his soul. Whilst, on the one hand, persevering industry begun by times will soon render the habit easy and then pleasant; on the other hand, the difficulty of application will become greater the longer the unwelcome task is postponed. For the most part opportunities once lost are like water spilt upon the ground, which can never be gathered up. At your age especially the mind is continually in a state of change and progress. With you the present is the time for the acquisition of knowledge. In youth the powers of observation are most active; there is an aptitude for receiving new ideas, and the memory is strong and retentive to impress them permanently on the mind. This, then, is especially the time for *learning*. After the lapse of some years, you will find that your mental habit is undergoing a change; new facts will be less easily and less firmly impressed on your memory; the time which has been given you specially for the purpose of learning will have passed away; but if you have well improved that time, the knowledge you will have then acquired,—“The rude material with which wisdom builds”—will be maturing into wisdom. You will then find your powers of thought most vigorous; your reasoning faculties will be acquiring their full development; you will be enabled to trace events to their hidden causes; you will anticipate the results which must follow from influences which you see in operation; by thought and reflection you will combine and contrast

individual facts, so as to induce from them sure general principles for future application. If you have well applied yourselves to the acquirement of sound learning in your youth, you will, in mature age, have got that *wisdom* which the wisest of men has declared to be "the principal thing."

Do not then consider any part of the time which has been given to you as unimportant; each period has its allotted duty, in which alone that duty can be fully discharged. Nor allow yourselves to regard any of your actions as indifferent. Events succeed each other in a way which we cannot foresee. A foolish or wicked action consented to in youth will have its influence throughout the career of him by whom it was committed. A man's character is the result of all his former experience,—the follies to which he has yielded,—the temptations he has resisted. If it be true that for every idle *word* an account is to be rendered, you cannot suppose that your *actions* can be unimportant,—can pass away and leave no trace of their occurrence.

This is what I wished to impress upon you, when, at the close of the last summer session, I begged you to remember that your *education*, in the true and full sense of the word, is not merely the specific instruction which you may receive here, or in other schools,—is not interrupted by the termination of a session, or the completion of a curriculum;—but includes every influence which tends to elevate your moral as well as your intellectual character,—to confirm your habits of application,—to strengthen your powers of observation,—to mature your judgment. To these great ends all your occupations should conduce; your recreations as well as your severer studies; in this sense your education should terminate only with your life. And so, when you have reached declining years, when the body is no longer active, and the mind (still the subject of progressive change) passes into the habit of quiet contemplation, you may be able to look back upon a well spent life, and serenely anticipate a fuller and a nobler development of your intellect in a future state.

But I must leave these more general suggestions, intended for the guidance of your conduct as students, and as young men entering on the business of life; as there are some subjects upon which it is necessary for me to address you more especially pertaining to the

business of this School of *Medicine*, and interesting to you as *medical* students.

Some events of considerable importance to the medical profession, and to all who are now commencing their medical education, have recently occurred. That which is of most interest, in connection with the business of this School, is the announcement, by the examining bodies in London, of certain changes which they have directed in the prescribed curriculum of study for newly-commencing students, and of changes likewise in the nature and method of the examinations to which you will be subjected before receiving your diplomas. The changes in the prescribed order of study will, of course, affect only those whom I may call freshmen, such as appear here to-day for the first time. Older pupils will complete their studies according to regulations previously in force. The general tendency of these changes is to diminish the amount of attendance upon lectures, to be required henceforth of medical students. Such alteration is in compliance with an opinion which has been frequently expressed of late years, and which seems to have been gaining ground,—that the system of *professorial* teaching has been carried too far, that students have been required to spend too much time in the lecture-room. The total number of lectures comprised in the entire curriculum has been calculated, and certainly the aggregate, so stated, seems formidable. In conformity with this view, the number of lectures required in particular courses has already been considerably curtailed, and now the number of courses which the student is required to attend is likewise to be diminished. On the whole, since the time when I was undergoing my own novitiate in this School, this kind of enforced learning has undergone very much reduction. But, upon this subject, I wish to impress upon you a few considerations. In the first place, you are not to suppose, because less attendance upon lectures is now to be required of you, that, therefore, this is an unimportant element in your education. On the contrary, I state to you my own conviction, from a considerable amount of experience both as a learner and a teacher, that no other method has been invented whereby a student may become so thoroughly grounded in any branch of science, within a given time, as by regular and diligent attendance upon an able course of lectures systematically

arranged, combined with careful meditation and reading upon the subject after each day's lecture. The lecturer has frequently the means of illustrating and explaining his lectures by experiments, models, specimens, and diagrams, which not only impress the subject more forcibly on the mind of the hearer, but make it much more thoroughly understood than it would be by reading merely. The greater interest attached to oral teaching commands the attention more efficiently, and the apportioning of the subject into allotted lessons, day by day, takes the student systematically through the whole, and slowly, but surely, *infiltrates* into the minds of the hearers a thorough appreciation of the entire scheme. Meanwhile the conversational examinations, which are occasionally substituted for the customary lectures, enable the student to take a retrospect of the ground already traversed, and to detect any particulars in which his knowledge remains imperfect; whilst, at the same time, they afford the lecturer the opportunity of more fully explaining any point in which his teaching has hitherto been but imperfectly apprehended.

My own opinion, indeed, is, that the recent change of curriculum in so far as it diminishes the number of lectures provided for your instruction, was uncalled for, and, in fact, is undesirable; and I believe that several of my colleagues agree with me in this opinion. The objection made to many courses of lectures is the time which they abstract from other more practical modes of study. But if you consider that a course of one hundred lectures, which will extend over not less than half a year, only occupies one hundred hours, or ten days of ten hours per diem (which is not a longer time than such of you as are really desirous of making the best use of your days will devote to study), you will at once perceive that the tax, which attendance upon lectures imposes on your time, is more imaginary than real. The only real inconvenience attaching to the plan of teaching by lectures is that they are necessarily at stated times, which may be occasionally interfered with by other duties in the case of those whose time is not at their own disposal. This is inevitable; but for any occasional hiatus which may thus occur, you must endeavour to compensate by your own reading; and now that courses are fewer and lectures less numerous, it is more than ever incumbent on you that you

omit not a single lecture which it is in your power to attend. Let me impress upon you, likewise, the necessity of *punctuality*. By coming into this room while the lecture is in progress, you disturb the class, and, having lost the connection of the subject, you may gain little benefit yourself. Remember, likewise, that the object in requiring less of your time in the lecture-room, is not to diminish your amount of study, but to allow you more time for learning your profession in other ways, especially for the study of anatomy in the dissecting-room, and of disease in the hospital and dead-house, and chemical manipulation in the laboratory.

Both the College of Surgeons and the Society of Apothecaries have announced changes in the mode of their *examinations*, which will shortly come into effect. The examinations conducted by both bodies are to be divided into two parts; to the first of these, candidates will be subjected, at a somewhat early period of their professional education; whereas students will undergo the second examination (which will be on more advanced and practical subjects) when they have completed the prescribed course of study. I consider that this change in the plan of the examinations will be most beneficial. By the stimulus of a prospective examination, at no distant period, any disposition to present negligence, on the part of junior students, will be efficiently counteracted; and this will tend to discourage the wretched system of *grinding*, which, by an artificial forcing, endeavours temporarily to supply to the hitherto idle and improvident student the education which can only be efficiently secured by years of diligent application; which may provide a fugitive and unpractical capability of answering by rote certain anticipated questions, but which inevitably leaves its victims unprepared to cope with the serious responsibilities of their profession. It has been objected to this change of plan that it subjects provincial students to the expense and delay of a double journey to London, from which Metropolitan students are exempt; but it is only with this, as in numberless other instances, in which some trouble and expense is incurred in obtaining for provincial residents what is peculiar to the metropolis; and to counterbalance this unavoidable charge in the case in question, you have to consider that your expenses, in many respects, are less here than they would be in London, whilst your opportunities of study and professional learning

are not inferior, and that for the large proportion of you who will ultimately practice out of London, your examination fees are smaller on that account.

Besides this double examination on professional subjects, the Court of Examiners of the Apothecaries' Society propose to institute a preliminary or matriculation examination in general learning; and the College of Surgeons intimate their intention of adopting the same plan. This examination, as at present announced, includes classics and the elements of mathematics. Should the experiment succeed, it is probable, and I think very desirable, that this examination will be made to include some of the modern European languages, and other branches of polite learning. The member of any learned profession should possess that amount of general education which is proper to a gentleman, and the want of which discredits both himself and the profession to which he belongs. And it seems right that the societies, to whom is confided the trust of guarding the portals to our profession, should enforce the acquirement of such general learning, and ascertain that it is really possessed by those who are admitted within its precincts. It is not to be expected that the majority of medical men should be accomplished classics, or profound mathematicians; I do not think that such scholars would be likely to make the best practitioners; and I am sure that the amount of time necessary for such large acquirements could be ill spared from that required for their professional studies by young men who, for the most part, are very much dependent on their own exertions after reaching manhood; but it is most desirable that all members of our profession should possess such an acquaintance with grammar, history, geography, languages, and the powers of numbers, as shall render him a polite and well-bred gentleman. In such preliminary learning as orthography, and the other rules of English grammar, sometimes pupils in this school have displayed a deficiency much to be regretted; and it is remarkable how prevalent such deficiency is, not alone amongst medical students, but amongst young men of varied pursuits, whose position and prospects would have suggested a different result. The recent middle-class examinations by the University of Oxford have brought out this fact very strikingly. Of the eleven hundred and fifty candidates, about five-eighths were rejected; and of this very

large proportion of failures, the greater part were due to inability to pass the preliminary examination in the rudiments of learning. "Some who would have taken high honours in other departments, were amongst those rejected for want of these simpler attainments." I believe one reason for this prevailing deficiency in the elements of learning is that, in our schools, boys are not generally examined by written papers, but, for the most part, orally: they *say* their lessons more than they *write* them. It would be a very good practice for any of you who are conscious of deficiency in the particulars under consideration, were you to write out your own recollections of the lectures you attend here, in your own words, endeavouring to express your meaning as clearly and correctly as you are able. By this practice, you would gradually acquire a facility and correctness of orthography and expression of great value to you through life. And whilst yet connected with this School, you would find this acquirement valuable in the examinations which are held at the close of each of our sessions. In these examinations, the papers which are sent in are sometimes disfigured by much want of arrangement, and by diffuse, circuitous expressions, where precision and conciseness are so essential. Clearness of style and correct writing in such papers conduce to the desired success, whereas a slovenly verbosity incurs the risk of actual error.

Upon the subject of the sessional examinations held in this School, I wish to make some remarks. The Council have long regretted the want of general competition amongst the students for the honours which are awarded to successful candidates at the close of each session. These examinations were instituted, and prizes offered for competition, conformably with the old maxim, "*aliter æmulatio ingenia*," for the purpose of stimulating the industry and quickening the intelligence of the whole School. But when only few students avail themselves of these opportunities, it is evident that this intention is not accomplished. Even to successful candidates the Council have had to regret that, in some instances, the effect of these examinations for honours has not been an un-mixed good. When, for the sake of securing a prize in any one class, the candidate is induced to give an almost exclusive attention to the individual subject, to the neglect of other branches of professional learning, of equal, or perhaps of greater practical value,

and especially to the neglect of the important duties of the hospital and the dissecting-room, such student defeats the objects for which these examinations have been instituted, and—converting the means intended to promote his progress into a delusion and a snare—is doing himself an injury greater than the pleasure of a triumph or the possession of a medal can at all compensate. The Council of the College of Surgeons, in a recently-published address, have condemned these examinations as having such injurious tendency as I have pointed out, and rather to be discouraged than recommended. Believing, however, that this kind of appeal to the sentiment of emulation in the minds of our pupils (some form of which has been of almost universal adoption by those engaged in the education of youth) may be so guarded as to retain its advantages, whilst such injurious perversion as I have pointed out is obviated, the Council of this School have, after much consideration, drawn up an entirely new scheme of sessional examinations, which is intended to come into operation at the close of this session.

According to this scheme, three examinations will be held at the close of each session, in which all the students attending their first, second, and third year's lectures respectively, will be expected to take part. The examination for students of each year will include questions on all the subjects of the lectures which they attend, and will be presided over by the lecturers on these subjects conjointly. In the examination of third year's students the physicians and surgeons of the Infirmary will assist, in order to render these examinations, as far as possible, of a practical nature. A classified list will be formed of the students who pass each of these examinations; besides which, we shall still adhere to the plan of offering special rewards to the most meritorious, according to the following plan. We offer a bronze medal and first certificate for the first man, and a second certificate for the second man, in his first year; and to each of the first men in the second and third years, a silver medal and first certificate, and to each second man a second certificate; supposing, in each case, that the answers possess an absolute merit entitling them to such rewards. These honours offered for your competition will, we hope, stimulate the energies of you all; and for such as fail to attain the prizes, a good position in the list will still be a creditable distinction.

During the passed vacation, the Council have caused the whole of this building to be thoroughly cleaned and renovated. The museums have been cleaned and re-arranged; and an entirely new museum of *materia medica*, completely illustrative of this branch of study, is being formed by the kind assistance of the eminent chemical firm of Harvey and Reynolds. The lecturers on anatomy have kindly devoted much time to classifying and perfecting the very valuable pathological museum which we possess: and, with the intention of still further assisting you in your studies, and encouraging habits of industry and good order, we propose to open the large room, in which the pathological museum is contained, for your daily use as a reading-room (under suitable regulations), where you will have an opportunity of referring to the books contained in our library, and perusing the best recent medical literature, which will be provided for your use. Thus every facility will be provided for the profitable employment of your time during the intervals between lectures, or other occupations; and any departure from the academic quiet, which ought to prevail within these walls, will be left without excuse. The Council feel that in thus opening for your use a room (containing objects of much value, and liable to injury), wherein you may congregate, for the purpose of study, unrestricted and without any constant oversight, they are placing great confidence in your gentlemanly feeling and good conduct, and they feel assured that you will not give occasion to regret the trust reposed upon you.

I must not conclude without some reference to an event of recent occurrence, of much interest to all who belong to our profession, whether as beginners, who will, in due time, enter on its duties and share its responsibilities, or as practitioners to whom those duties and responsibilities are already familiar: I allude to the enactment of the law "To regulate the qualifications of practitioners in medicine and surgery"—during the last session of Parliament.

For more than twenty years the profession has agitated, with a variable energy, for some recognition by the State of its duly qualified members, whereby they might ensure suitable protection in the discharge of their professional duties, and be effectually distinguished from the motley tribe of ignorant and dishonest quacks,

who prey upon the credulity and infirmities of their victims, and whose pretended connection with our profession is only an injury and a disgrace. Other provisions were likewise demanded, to bring the methods of admitting new members of the profession under some uniform system, and to provide a Council, in which the profession generally should be represented, whereby the affairs of our commonwealth should be managed.

But the resistance of the chartered corporations, who, not unnaturally, have felt the wish to retain the privileges they have long enjoyed,—the great contrariety and opposition of opinion in the profession generally,—and the patronage of quackery even by many of those by whom our laws are enacted,—have, till now, baffled all attempts to construct a bill which should be generally acceptable to the profession, and be able to make its way successfully through the Houses of Parliament. At length, and very much through the judicious and persevering efforts of the British Medical Association, certain concessions having been made by opposed interests, and requirements having been withdrawn or mitigated, the recent Act has been passed; which, although it may fall short of the expectations of enthusiastic reformers, is, I believe, generally acceptable to the profession; being confessedly a compromise, yet possessing some practical efficiency, and forming a substantial basis whereon subsequent improvements may hereafter be engrafted. We may therefore say of this law, as Solon replied when it was asked of him whether he had given to the citizens of Athens the best code of laws, that “it is the best that they would receive.”

The execution of the provisions of this Act is entrusted to a General Council, consisting of representatives elected by the Universities and Medical Corporations, together with six other members nominated by the Privy Council; but the Act does not provide that the representatives of the Universities or the nominees of the Privy Council shall necessarily be themselves qualified to be registered under this Act; so that these ten members of Council are not *necessarily* members of our profession. Thus the representation of the whole body of the profession, which has been long contended for, cannot be said to exist in this Council.

The Act provides that all duly qualified practitioners shall have their names placed upon a public register; so that the omission of

any name from this list will mark the individual as unqualified, whatever lofty pretensions he may set forth. Those only whose names appear on this register will be capable of holding any medical appointment under Government, or which receives any pecuniary assistance from the State. Any person falsely assuming any title implying that he is registered under this Act, is liable to a fine upon summary conviction. Those qualified to be placed upon this register are such as have passed the examinations and received the Diploma of some one of the various examining bodies in existence named by the Act; and the register will show the nature of the qualification by which each is entitled to be placed on the list; thus the qualification remains as various as it is at present; indeed more so, as the Diplomas of many Corporations are now legalized which have hitherto possessed merely an honorary value. The Council, however, has the power of representing to the Privy Council any examining body whose examinations are not approved, and, upon such representation, the Privy Council may suspend the acceptance of the Diplomas of such body. Lastly, there has hitherto been much practical inconvenience from the circumstance that each of the three divisions of this kingdom has had its own authoritative Pharmacopœia, containing formularies for medicinal preparations frequently under the same name as adopted in the others, though differing materially in strength and composition; each, likewise, containing many formularies and articles of the *materia medica* omitted from the others. The inconvenience and danger of this system will henceforth be removed by the provision that the Council shall compile a British Pharmacopœia for the whole nation.

From this sketch of the main provisions of the Act, you must perceive that it possesses no principle of finality; it can only be regarded as the first approach to efficient legislation for our profession. The chief advantage of this degree of success I consider to be, that our claims to legislative recognition and protection are now acknowledged; we have now, as a body, a recognised position in the State which we have not before enjoyed. And from this vantage ground we may now more effectually strive for such further ameliorations as we are entitled to possess. But, after all, legislative enactments can do but little; the work is in our own hands; if each member of our profession were true to himself, and true to

the fellow-members of our calling,—determined that principles of honour and benevolence shall guide him, and that on these principles he will do his best according to the abilities which God has given him,—and, suppressing all jealous feelings, that he will respect and protect the rights of every true brother as if they were his own,—we should indeed be strong in our own strength against both quackery and credulity, even were we still unsupported by any legislative protection. And even when such protection has done all that it can for us, it would be an evil rather than a good, should it induce the profession to rely on such support rather than on its own true dignity and merit.

Before concluding, I would again impress upon you the serious responsibilities of the course of life upon which you are now entering,—responsibilities of which it will require the best energies of every one of you to discharge himself aright. Do not think it a light or easy thing to become an able practitioner. I do not say it to discourage you, but to stimulate your exertions, when I assure you that you will find it very much the contrary. If such has been the case always in respect of the healing art, it is now more so than ever. The rapid development of medical science of late years,—the application of so many of the collateral sciences to the elucidation of medical diagnosis,—chemical analysis, the use of the microscope, the refinements of what is called the physical examination of disease,—all these require a much greater amount of study in order duly to inform the mind,—of observation to gain the necessary experience,—of practice to acquire an efficient delicacy of tact and manipulation,—than at any former period could possibly have been demanded of the most zealous and conscientious of our predecessors.

But if the progress of discovery and advance of science thus expand and complicate the demands that are made upon us, we are amply compensated by the greater simplicity and certainty of the results to which we are conducted. The elaborately constructed hypotheses of former times, wanting only in any foundation of observed fact, have now given way to the simpler truths of nature elicited by the careful application of the inductive method; and the right employment of the knowledge of these truths, when practically acquired, will enable you to solve many doubts, will

guide you unhesitatingly to the true diagnosis of many diseases, and the right application of efficient remedies, for which the easier studies of former times would have afforded no resource. You have, then, not only every inducement, but very strong encouragement, to a zealous perseverance in the course whereby you are to be fitted for the successful practice of the profession of your choice; and, let me assure you, that we your teachers watch over your progress with an affectionate sympathy and interest. The arduous and responsible duties which we have assumed in the maintenance of this School are best repaid by your good conduct and your ultimate success; and we hope and believe that, as your predecessors have, with few exceptions, realized our expectations, so you, who now occupy their places, will maintain and still further elevate the distinguished character which our School at present enjoys.

THE END.

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