Medical etiquette; or an essay upon the laws and regulations, which ought to govern the conduct of members of the medical profession in their relation to each other. Compiled exclusively for the profession / By Abraham Banks.

MEDICAL ETIQUETTE

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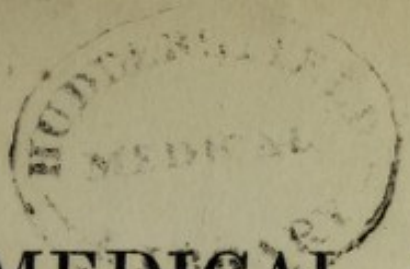
MEDICAL ETIQUETTE,

&c. &c. &c.

"Nec id quidem, quod communiter appellamus honestum, quod colitur ab iis qui bonos se viros haberi volunt, cum emolumentis unquam est comparandum."—*Cicero de Officiis, lib.* 3, *cap.* 4.




MEDICAL ETIQUETTE;

OR

AN ESSAY

UPON THE

LAWS AND REGULATIONS,

WHICH OUGHT TO GOVERN THE CONDUCT OF MEMBERS OF THE

MEDICAL PROFESSION

IN THEIR RELATION TO EACH OTHER.

COMPILED EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE PROFESSION.

By ABRAHAM BANKS, Esq.,

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS, LONDON; LICENTIATE OF THE COMPANY OF APOTHECARIES; AND LATE SURGEON IN THE HON. EAST INDIA COMPANY'S SERVICE.

BETTER PERHAPS EXPRESSED THUS:

M.R.C.S.L.; L.A.C.L.; S.H.E.I.C.S., &c. &c. &c.

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TO

HENRY S. ROOTS, Esq. M.D.,

&c.,

WITH A FEW WORDS FROM THE AUTHOR.

Dear Sir,

In looking around me for a suitable individual to whom to dedicate a Treatise devoted to the inculcation of truth and principle, amongst a class of men, whose diversified and liberal pursuits justly entitle them to take the lead in society; on whom could my thoughts alight more fitted than yourself—a man whose whole life has been one uninterrupted course of the strictest integrity; whose enlarged views of liberality are as far removed from that vain and ostentatious display which daily disgraces our public journals, as the pure atmosphere of the celestial regions above us, is from the foul air which inhabits the subterranean caves beneath us?

Pardon the liberty which I have taken, in thus dedicating this Essay to you, as a testimony of the respect which I bear to that honourable and straight-forward conduct which has ever been the characteristic of your life; and which has blazed with such brilliancy in the circle of your movements, above the petty jealousies and littlenesses which too often bring reproach on our occupation; and if I may be allowed, without trespassing upon the bounds of good taste, I would quote, as being applicable, the saying of Pyrrhus, respecting Fabricius of old, that "it would be easier to turn the Sun from his course, than thee from the path of honour."

With much respect,

Most obediently your's,

ABRAHAM BANKS.

September 9th, 1839.

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PREFACE.

It has appeared to us that some little work has been long wanted in the profession, to which members, desirous of acting uprightly and honourably, might refer in all cases of doubt, many of which cannot fail to occur to every individual in the course of practice, and which are frequently the cause of much misunderstanding, and often of angry feeling, between persons possessing the highest notions of honour.

A good deal of repetition will, perhaps, appear to some to run through this Essay; but when one particular quality is treated of, it is next to impossible to avoid frequently referring to the term. We are aware, that, at first sight, a little inconsistency may strike the reader, in the chapter on Dispensaries; but when we say that man's strongest motive for working is to obtain a livelihood, we are reasoning upon the

positive condition of the great mass of the working mind of this nation, which has become callous, and in a measure brutalized, by the oppressions under which it has so long laboured. Man, in a state of freedom, is a totally different animal, and works for independency, and the pure pleasure arising therefrom; and when we argue that a man would undergo any privation before degrading himself by the acceptance of public charity, we assume that man to be in a state of freedom—not yet lost to all sense of shame; but as freedom cannot be said to be the condition of the working classes in England, we consider that our reasoning is borne out by fact, that the lower orders would not work, if they could have their tables spread without. This, we think, will reconcile the apparent contradiction. We shall probably be thought to have had recourse to strong language, in our chapter on the Affectation of Mystery; but we must claim the indulgence of the profession for feelings which have been excited, and expressions which have spontaneously arisen, when thrown into collision with the unmanly and disgraceful artifices there condemned.

And here it may be as well to state to

whom the following Treatise is not addressed. In the first place, it is not addressed to him,* who from accident, or any other cause, having been called in to attend another man's patient, endeavours by every mean and underhand insinuation to wrest that patient from the original attendant; nor is it addressed to him, who may have been sent for, whilst another was in attendance, and taking advantage of the absence of that other, after much apparently skilful examination, and many enquiries to no purport whatever, casts up his eyes to heaven, and, with that mysterious waving to and fro of the hands, and that significant medical "*hum*," exclaims, aghast in wonder and amaze, "What a pity you had not sent for *me* before—if I had only been called in *six hours* sooner—but it is now too late, it has gone too far;"—nor to him, who under similar circumstances, on being shewn the medicine which had been prescribed, so natural to the friends of the patient, examines the devoted bottle with wonderful sagacity, and after due smelling, and sniffing, and tasting, and various other mountebank operations, dooms the

* All the imperfections of character alluded to are unfortunately taken from living practitioners.

unconscious deadly potion, consisting perhaps of a little saline mixture, to the awful punishment of ejection from the window;—nor is it addressed to him, who resolves to build up a reputation for fame at any price, who depends more for success upon detraction, and sapping the reputation of others, than on any intrinsic merit of his own. These generally consist of the out-pourings of the schools, of novices who have only seen the A B C of practice, and possess a little smattering of the science, but who, as they gain experience and knowledge, outgrow this absurdity. We should hope the maturer part of the profession was a stranger to such glaring outrages as these; if, however, there be any of advanced practice capable of such conduct, all that we can say is, that they are too contemptible even for castigation.

But, to aim at higher game, it is not addressed to him, who takes advantage of having once been summoned to a family, to call again unasked, and by sundry intimations endeavours to lower the estimation in which the regular attendant is held, and thereby pave the way for his own admission; to call such conduct unpro-

fessional and dishonest, is not rendering it full justice; it is base and unmanly in the extreme; it is assassination in the dark—the resort of the coward. The man who gives his adversary due notice of attack, and thus enables him to withstand the shock of his charge, who openly declares him to be an ignorant blockhead, and unfit to practise his profession, is a noble and honest character compared with this other. Nor, lastly, is it addressed to the man who carries his profession upon his back wherever he goes, who never loses an opportunity of instilling into the minds of all those who have the misfortune to pass before him, that he is the incomparable; that if a person really wishes to be cured, to *him* they must go; that of all the professors of medicine he is, emphatically, *the professor*—the nonsuch of the profession; or, to him who seizes the opportunity, when the family are present, of reprimanding a young practitioner for alleged indiscretion, for the malicious purpose of injuring his reputation, or who expatiates in his absence on the advantages of employing a physician exclusively, who understands disease and infirmities better, and who, when unhampered by a general practitioner, orders little or

no medicine; for such men there are, to their shame be it said, amongst the leading physicians of the day.

Now, having stated to whom this Treatise is not, it will, probably, be expected we should state to whom it is, addressed. It is addressed to all those who are fitted, morally and mentally, to practise one of the noblest of professions; to the honest, the upright, and conscientious individual; the man of stern, uncompromising, and unflinching integrity; whose true nobility of pride would rather induce him to submit to the meanest of occupations, which become honourable when practised by such a character, than ensure success by having recourse to any of the disreputable practices here exposed; who conceives the true dignity of the profession to be upheld and maintained, not by endeavouring to outvie his neighbour in splendour of equipage, or in grandeur of his dwelling; not by spending twice as much as his income would warrant an honest man in doing; but by a uniform and unremitting exercise of straightforward honourable conduct.

To such a character is this Essay addressed, with the purest and most unfeigned desire to see the profession disentangle itself from the thraldom under which it labours, to raise it in public estimation,—but, above all, in the estimation of the members themselves; to induce a reverence for that self-respect, which every individual should entertain for himself; and to this man we trust it may not be wholly useless, by suggesting hints which may serve to direct him in cases of difficulty; for, with the very best of intentions, a man may be thrown into situations where he will hesitate as to what course to pursue: for instance, he may be sent for in a hurry when the regular attendant happens to be out of the way; he goes and prescribes, then of course retires, leaving the patient under the care of the regular attendant; but, as he is going, the family request him to call again; he pleads professional honour and etiquette, proffering his services at any time under similar circumstances; the family still urge him to continue, asserting that it will make no difference so far as the previous attendant is concerned, as if he refuses, they will send for some other person; a man, whose feelings are not over

keen, has no difficulty here. But we trust the profession embraces thousands of members, who would feel it a very unenviable situation.

In conclusion, we beg to say, that, as there must of necessity be many imperfections in a first attempt of this kind, any hints which may be furnished by our professional brethren, will be gratefully acknowledged, and fully appreciated.

New Church Street,
August 24th, 1839.

MEDICAL ETIQUETTE.

"Do unto others, as you would that they should do unto you; for this is the law and the prophets." — *Matthew.*

CHAPTER I.

WHEN ONE PRACTITIONER ATTENDS A CASE OF MIDWIFERY, OR AN ACCIDENT, FOR ANOTHER.

THERE seems to be no general understanding in the profession, as to what is to be done in respect to the fee; some will take it, and keep it, and occasionally the patient also if they can; others compromise the matter, and retain a portion; whilst others again persist in refusing any consideration whatever. It is perhaps more congenial with the highest notions of honour, and more consistent with true dignity, to adopt this last practice, but many inconveniences necessarily arise from it; for instance, unless it be universally followed, it leads to a great deal of unfairness. A very sensitive practitioner may always persist in refusing any remuneration, whilst he under similar

circumstances shall have every fee wrested from him: this is most unjust, and places an honourable man in a very disadvantageous position. To give another illustration of its injustice—there may be two men in a neighbourhood, the one having a very large, and the other a small practice; the chances in this case will be, that the man of small practice will do ten, or more times as much for the other practitioner, as that other does for him, so that he becomes in a measure his assistant, without the fair compensation. Again, in London, from the inconvenient practice of employing medical men at such great distances, it often happens that about the outskirts, or in the suburbs, a man may have to attend more cases for others than for himself; here also he acts the part of assistant to the more established practitioner.

Now, to obviate these difficulties, some persons have proposed to divide the fee; and amongst many this is done by a previons understanding to that effect, and if all fees were of much the same magnitude there could be no objection urged against this arrangement; but as some practitioners attend for almost as few shillings as others do for guineas, it seems unfair that he who may have paid two or three guineas should in his turn

only receive a crown, or less, for conferring a similar kindness. The inconvenience also of having a fixed remuneration must be clear to every one, as in many cases a practitioner might have to pay more than he receives.

To remove all these difficulties, we would therefore propose that, whenever one practitioner is accidentally called in to attend a labour for another—excepting amongst intimate friends, who of course will consult their feelings much better, by allowing a larger latitude of generosity, if we may use that word—he shall receive half the fee, recognizing no fee below one guinea, or above two, and that this shall in future be considered perfectly compatible with the highest notions of honour and professional etiquette, as it would appear to be consistent with equity and common sense. The same rule, with some slight modification, might apply to accidents, especially those of a serious character.

It frequently happens that a person, having engaged no medical man, sends for the nearest by chance, who being out, and having no one at home who is efficient, application is made to the next. In this case, we do not see that the first has any right to put in his claim as a general rule, from the mere accident of his being sent for first, or

that the second should not take advantage, either of greater attention to business, or being at home at the time. An exception, however, we think should be made when an understanding exists between two practitioners to attend for each other, or where the patient may have been previously recommended to a certain individual, although she may not have engaged him as yet; in these cases we submit the same rule should apply as proposed above.

CHAPTER II.

APPOINTMENTS IN CONSULTATION.

When an appointment has been made between two medical men, we need scarcely observe that both are bound in honour to keep it, and no excuse can plead for one being half an hour behind his time. Society has been considerate enough to allow the plea of a professional engagement to take precedence of all others, and an ample reason for relinquishing any present occupation. The practice pursued by some physicians of invariably being behind time, for the purpose of giving a false impression of extensive business, cannot be

too strongly reprobated; it is not simply a violation of professional etiquette, but a monstrous outrage upon the common civilities of life. We should be extremely careful of meeting a man a second time who had once played us this trick. Equally reprehensible is the habit which others have of arriving some time previously, often for improper motives.

When the appointment is between a general practitioner, and a physician or pure surgeon, it decidedly rests with these last to fix the time, although custom has properly conceded to the apothecary the right to negative it to suit his own engagements, providing they are of a professional character; but all private engagements should be made to give way.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN TWO PRACTITIONERS MEET IN CONSULTATION.

WITHOUT stopping at present to enquire into the justice, or the policy of those distinctions in the profession, which custom has introduced, and public opinion sanctioned, we would just remark,

that when consultations take place between general practitioners and physicians, or those whom habit has denominated pure surgeons, although this seems a sort of term as yet undefined, no difficulty arises as regards the meeting, or the amount of consideration due to each; but it often happens, at the desire of the patient, or his friends, another general practitioner is called in, by way of consultation: now there can be no objection to this, nor do we see why two general practitioners should not meet in perfect harmony upon a case, if there were some general understanding in the profession as to the conditions upon which that meeting should take place. As it is now, this often leads to some unpleasantness, and commonly to reluctance on both sides; it usually terminates in one of the parties giving his attendance gratuitously, though we confess we cannot perceive why he should do so any more than a physician, or pure surgeon; it is lending his sanction to a practice, which it is both his interest and his duty to endeavour to overthrow, nor indeed is it fair towards himself. Occasionally he receives the customary fee; this again is unfair towards the other practitioner: for why should two men holding the same rank, possessing the same legal qualifications, the actual experience and knowledge

pretty equally balanced, be placed in such different positions? Yet the profession may daily witness the monstrous absurdity of two men of equal grade, the one receiving his guinea, the other his half-crown, for the same services, with this difference, that he who receives the half-crown has to provide medicine in the bargain. Now to obviate this anamoly, we would suggest that when two practitioners, possessing the same *legal* qualifications (for however absurd these may be as the line is now drawn, yet they form the only criterion for us to act upon), meet upon a case, they should be received on precisely the same footing, and each have the same amount of remuneration, and at *the same time*, for that particular consultation, whether this be a guinea, a half-guinea, or a crown.

From the want of a defined line of distinction, based on something more rational than the mere possession of property, it very frequently occurs in London, that general practitioners, who have received the usual advantages which fall to the lot of the great mass of the profession, and no more, who rank with the general practitioner, and who possess no other claims to be distinguished from the mass than their financial efficiency, yet from this circumstance alone, assume a higher standing, and practise as a physician, though under the

feigned name of surgeon, and are remunerated by fees only. This no doubt would be more congenial to the feelings of every practitioner, and every man has a most decided right to adopt this plan who possesses the means; but, from the almost universal habit amongst the public (and indeed we do not know what other standard they can have at present of judging), of estimating a medical man by the establishment he keeps, and the style in which he lives, it frequently arises that such a practitioner will be called in to meet another who is perhaps his senior in years, who may have seen far more practice, and who may be better qualified to prescribe: the one who receives his full fee under these circumstances, must feel very awkwardly, if he be possessed of any sensibility at all, and would much prefer avoiding such a collision, but not being able to offer any plea for this, usually premises some apology for the meeting, such as "I came to oblige friends—people will have their caprices," and so forth. That a young man of little experience should be called in to give his opinion upon the practice of a far abler hand is so utterly farcical, that the only remedy we know of, and which we beg leave to propose (as a man in common generosity cannot refuse to meet any other respectable practitioner), is to require the

same amount of fee, and at the *same* time, which is tendered to the other; and this, too, whether that other be a regularly qualified physician, or simply practising as such under the feigned title of surgeon. This will in a great measure tend to remove the absurd preference given to one over the other.

Whilst we are upon this subject, we cannot resist the temptation of suggesting, that years should be made the grand basis on which to found distinctions in the profession: a distinction which Nature seems to have authorized in most other things to command respect, one more congenial with the feelings of all, and consistent with rationality, and which would appear to be far less open to objections than those at present existing. The principle is already recognized in requiring candidates for diplomas, both at the Apothecaries' Hall and the College of Surgeons, to be of a certain age; and why should not men as they advance in years become eligible for greater honours? It would have the good effect of preserving a competition in the desire of knowledge. The fact of a young man leaving a university to practise as physician, to teach his grandmother the elements of life, is as ridiculous as it would be to make him commander-in-chief of an army, or admiral of a fleet.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN A PHYSICIAN IS CALLED IN AT THE SUGGESTION OF A GENERAL PRACTITIONER.

THIS is a case so very clear, and so well understood by all branches, that no physician possessing common propriety, would think of calling again without the general practitioner.

CHAPTER V.

AFFECTATION OF MYSTERY.

"Ratio igitur postulat, ne quid insidiose, ne quid simulate, ne quid fallaciter."—*Cicero de Officiis, lib.* 3, *cap.* 17.

THE habit which some medical men have of assuming an air of mystery, and using technical terms in the presence of their patients, is, we submit with all deference, very unbecoming, and quite unworthy of so high an occupation; and though it may sometimes give an impression of great learning and talent, yet it must often excite ridicule and contempt. We have heard physicians use such words as "secundùm artem, ad deliquium, toastùm boastum," &c. &c., when talking to a general practitioner before others; such can

only impose upon the ignorant, and cannot fail to lower a man in his own estimation; the profession should be too proud to violate the laws of good taste and honesty, to bend to popular error. We remember some time since dining at a house where there was a lawyer at table, who, amongst many other professional terms, said, nothing was so mean as a *tu quoque;* if this gentleman could have seen how ridiculous he appeared, his countenance would doubtless have betrayed some embarrassment of the internal man.

When any person unnecessarily uses technical terms in the presence of others, who may not be supposed to understand them, we regard it as a direct insult to those persons; it is in fact laughing at them. Closely allied to this habit, is that of clothing medicinal preparations in false colours, such as mixing rose pink with linseed meal, vermilion with epsom salts, burnt sugar with goulard water, &c. &c. We know that strong excuses may be pleaded in extenuation; but we may be permitted to deplore that constitution of society, which renders such conduct almost necessary; we believe it to be perfectly incompatible with an ardent love of truth, and a glowing admiration of rectitude.

Many other practices would seem to come very

properly under this head, all which, being part and parcel of a system of deception, violate more or less the sacred sanctuary of truth. It is scarcely necessary to allude to that thoroughly beaten path, which has now become nearly obsolete from its palpable nature; such as being called out of churches during divine service, and other public places, and so contriving matters as to be riding hard by, when people are coming out, his horse foaming and sweating—poor animal! all in the cause of falsehood. But this has given way to other arts equally reprehensible, though of a more refined character, and not quite so obvious to public perception; such as singing very loudly over and above all the rest of the congregation, taking a conspicuous pew, and sometimes mounting on a hassock, in order to be well seen; giving the responses in very audible language, so as to excite the observation, "Who is that pious gentleman?" making himself very officious, particularly in the charitable department, so far as the collecting goes, more especially if there is any chance of filling a medical appointment. A petition for a charity forms an excellent plea for calling on the wealthy, and putting in a good word for number One—the more so, if nobody else will do it; bowing to every one he meets, though, per-

haps, he has never seen the person before; assuming a very religious tone according to the character he has to deal with, as, "Well, Ma'am, we have maturely considered your dear little girl, and ordered such and such medicine, which, by the blessing of God, we hope will have the desired effect:" all this hypocritical cant, if it be not criminal, is truly disgusting.

Another recent manœuvre, which is sometimes practised, is putting up counterfeit medicines, and letting them lie about the counter in the surgery or shop, so as to give a false impression of business; talking largely, and contriving, if any excuse can possibly be obtained for so doing, to introduce the name of some nobleman or baronet into all his discourse, chiefly before strangers. We have witnessed instances where some unfortunate peer, who may have accidentally got his name upon an apothecary's books, has had that name mangled most unmercifully, as, "John, has my Lord such a one had his medicine? be good enough to send that medicine to his Lordship directly; I will attend to you, Sir, as soon as I have ordered something for my Lord ——" &c. We remember hearing of a man who could not open his mouth without letting people know that he kept a horse and chaise; a bet was made upon the strength

of this, that he could not answer the simplest question without introducing these essentials of his establishment. The question put was direct enough; he was asked what o'clock it was? and answered, "When I, with my wife, passed the Horse Guards this morning in my horse and chay, it wanted," &c.

Some adopt the plan of sending medicine to the wrong houses, pretending it to be a mistake, in order to have a plea for calling to give an explanation, and so make themselves known. Others have a way of putting on their cards all the honourable distinctions which they possess, or have possessed, as surgeon to some back-garret institution, which nobody but themselves ever heard of. The most unimportant situation has afforded an excuse for adding three or four capital letters to the name: thus we see all the letters of the alphabet have been tortured to fit some office; so that it is oftentimes as difficult to tell what G. U. L., or F. O. P. mean, as to decipher some of the ancient inscriptions. Keeping patients waiting longer than necessary is anything but humane; writing up *Advice Gratis* is a mere claptrap, to make people suppose that some advantage is to be gained there, which is not at any other apothecary's. The custom of some physicians of giving

advice in the morning, and sending all their prescriptions to a particular shop, where a much higher charge is made in order to remunerate both parties, is most dishonest; because, under the mask of great liberality, they carry on a thriving trade: if it were an understood thing, of course the transaction would bear a very different complexion. It is high time that the profession should disentangle itself from all these disreputable artifices, which we submit, with all respectful deference, are totally incompatible with a straightforward course of honesty.

Not quite so palpable as these is that system of being all things to all men; of studiously avoiding expressing a sentiment which may be thought not exactly to correspond with another's; of feeding the ruling passions of others, whatever may be their tendency; of holding no opinion on general or public subjects; of adopting a reservedness in all mixed society. All this may be very good policy, but there is something servile in suppressing one's sentiments, lest they should not harmonize with those of other persons; in sounding one's way with such cautious timidity, lest a rumour should get afloat that one is not of the orthodox: but, above all, would we deprecate, in the strongest terms language is capable of afford-

ing, that violation of principle in public matters which sacrifices conscience to success; a crime than which we know none greater, so utterly subversive of all the rights of society. The man, endowed with the privilege, and who goes not to the poll, is guilty of a most flagrant dereliction of duty; but he who goes and votes in violation of his conscience is such a monster of iniquity, branded so imperishably with the marks of infamy and disgrace, as ought for ever to exclude him from the pale of civilized life, and render him

> "A fixed figure for the hand of scorn,
> To point her slow unmoving finger at."

The abandoned wretch who prostitutes his political principles to his worldly interests, is sunken to the lowest depths of depravity, degradation, and dishonesty; he is a robber and assassin; and would, if he had the power, not only demolish every outpost of all the social institutions of humanity, but with fiendish spirit would strike at the very foundations of that rock on which Justice has built her Throne.

CHAPTER VI.

MODE OF PAYMENT.

So long as medical men shall continue to uphold that system of payment, by charging for every bottle of medicine and every box of pills which is sent, so long will the profession labour under the public stigma of sending in medicine for their own advantage, and not their patients'; so long will medical men be subjected to have their feelings violated by medicine being returned (we have known instances where such an outrageous insult has been offered as returning all the medicine unopened after recovery from an illness); so long will those in second-rate practice have the size of their powders and the capacity of their bottles canvassed; and those of first-rate be liable to receive polite hints that they have sent a sufficiency of medicine; so long will the occupation be debased by haggling about charges, and disputations about the quantity of medicine had; so long will practitioners be compelled to resort to law, to endeavour to recover their due, which we submit is most undignified, and identifying the profession with trades, and less exalted employ-

ments; so long will they be liable to have their characters and reputations calumniated, when their demands have exceeded the expectations; so long will they be the victims of the blackest ingratitude; so long will they be doomed to sacrifice independency to servility; so long will their dispositions become tainted by the corrupting power of circumstances; so long will the majority be compelled to wear out life amidst doubt and uncertainty, disappointments and vexations; so long will they be exposed to the basest impositions; so long will they themselves be accessary to their own discomfiture; so long will they be treated by the community as the scape-goat to be the last paid, and if there be insufficient, to be considered last; so long will their claims be disregarded by justice, improperly so called, and their hard earnings insulted in courts of law; so long must they submit to be looked upon as mere menials in the great family of man.

To do away with this absurd and revolting practice, we would propose that medical men of all denominations be remunerated by fee, *and at the time,* which we estimate as a most important point in maintaining the respectability of the profession. It may be said, that all persons cannot afford to pay fees, and those who can have not

always the means at immediate command; but fees may be as low as half-a-crown, or less; and we submit it would be far more dignified to receive even one shilling at every visit, than be exposed to imputations at the year's end of overcharging, sending too much medicine, lotions being valueless, and rubbish of this kind; and as for the other objection, our experience invariably has been, that when a person had not the means of paying a certain amount every day, they could not afford to pay seven times as much at the end of the week. Viewed in another light, it would have a most desirable influence on the public, in giving a practical lesson of providence; and if it once became general, it would be far more easy than the present plan; and we assert this, from having personally experienced both ways. We advocate the mode of paying medical men so much per annum for each person or family, according to the means and chance of casualties; this relieves the medical attendant of a great deal of anxiety about his pecuniary affairs, which he ought not to have. But this arrangement could not conveniently be universally adopted, the one by fees might, and it would draw a clear line of distinction between the actual practitioner and the chemist and druggist only. Another great

advantage arising from it would be, that people would be more considerate in sending for their medical advisers; as it is now, three or four messages will sometimes come in the course of a day for visits, where, perhaps, there exists an excessive aversion to medicine. Occasionally, we have seen bottles arranged on the mantel-piece, as a gentle hint that no further supply was wanted; though visits were always acceptable, because the visits cost nothing, but medicine is very expensive. When one comes to examine it, it really seems a most monstrous perversion of reason to charge for medicine only, and leave the visits unnoticed, when there is probably not a general practitioner in the land but who values his visits at fully twice as much as his physic.

We have the strongest possible dislike to bills; and we would respectfully refer it to the profession generally, whether the varied and ennobling pursuits of men, practically engaged upon science, ought not to absolve them from the bother of books and bills, and such like nonsense, excepting so far as noting their prescriptions? Can anything be more absurd than writing '*The Draught*' three hundred and sixty-five times over for every day throughout the year, instead of three hundred and sixty-five draughts at so much each? No

wonder people should be terrified at the sight of a doctor's bill, when they go in six yards long. Of this we are quite confident, that until the present mode of payment be altered, the profession will never be what it ought; it will never take that rank in society to which it is entitled. What could be more repulsive to a physician of liberal mind, after having paid fifty visits, to which custom would award as many guineas, than to be asked what he could afford to take off, or to be told he would confer a great favour by returning some portion of it? We have known such done.

The plan of present payment, too, would remove all that doubt which exists as to paying for domestics, which is often the source of much annoyance, and, occasionally, of legal dispute. There is a good deal of difference in the practice of persons respecting this; but from some experience in these matters, we hesitate not to say, that all respectable people do it generally; and, in equity, it would seem that a domestic, who has been some time in a family, has a moral claim, when it can be afforded without inconvenience. It is most unjust, and even inhumane, to throw a servant upon her own resources in case of illness, who may have faithfully discharged her duties for several years; yet we have been witness to an instance

where the master refused to pay the medical expenses of a servant under such circumstances, though attended in his house both by a physician and apothecary; a man of considerable property, living in Brunswick Square, and the head partner of one of the largest legal firms in London. This is quite the exception to what is customary; and in all cases, where the master or mistress employs the medical attendant, or is aware of the attendance, we think they ought to be responsible, unless they have previously intimated to the contrary; and that it rests with them to state so, and not with the practitioner to make the inquiry.

CHAPTER VII.

COMPLAISANCE DUE TO MEDICAL PUPILS.

In what are considered the more menial occupations of life, we must make some allowance for the imperfections of human nature; much may be urged in extenuation of the petty jealousies and differences which are daily manifested amongst mankind; but the study of medicine ought to exalt the mind above such trifles. Because a

student happens to be the pupil of one professor, is that any reason why he should be treated with contumely, or indifference, by another? A man cannot be the pupil of all professors, and therefore he goes to the one whom he considers will do him the most justice; he may be right, or wrong, but he acts for the best, and consequently is not entitled to disrespect. There is a feeling of jealousy too prevalent amongst the teachers of medicine, and the preferences which are often shewn partake of a littleness of mind.

We remember, some years since, a student of a private anatomical theatre, which had justly earned a very high reputation, being in the dead-house of a large London hospital, to the practice of which he had subscribed; and having made a remark, with a view to elicit information, the operating demonstrator looked hard at him for a few seconds, and then observed, that people had no business there who dissected at other schools, and did not attend the demonstrations in the hospital; still less had they any privilege to make an observation. There was something so mean, so illiberal, so paltry, so contemptible, in this, that if we did not think we should be laying ourselves open to an action, we would give the name, more especially as it was a man of rather

high family. The demonstrator was wrong, too; for the subscription to the hospital, which by-the-by is no nominal one, entitles the subscriber to enter the dead-house when any *post-mortem* is going on, and to make what remarks he pleases; and from the paucity of these, a man would suppose that when one is made, it ought at least to meet with a civil response. It proves how utterly unfit men who obtain these important situations often are of fulfilling the duties thereof, arising from the unjust laws of exclusion which exist, limiting the candidates almost entirely to the little domestic coterie, who engross the chief medical appointments of a public hospital.

Although we do not see that admission to the lectures of one professor, should give free access to all others on the same subject, yet we do think that when a pupil happens to cross the path of another professor, he is at least entitled to the same respect and civility, which society generally imposes on all its members.

CHAPTER VIII.

ATTENDANCE ON PROFESSIONAL PERSONS.

It is not at all an uncommon notion, that because a man is a legally qualified practitioner, he is thereby entitled to command the services of the whole profession, both for himself and family; and also that this privilege is to be extended to them, even after his death.

We confess that we do not see by what law, either of equity or liberality, a man can be called upon to give his services to all those who may choose to require them free of remuneration, simply because they also may be professional men. As well might bakers and butchers be called upon to spread the tables of their brethren with bread and meat; or tailors expected to clothe, gratuitously, the members of their fraternity. It is true, the professions possess this enviable prerogative, and they need have some, that they can confer benefits with less pecuniary sacrifice than most other occupations; but yet that can give no right, either moral or legal, for an individual to claim the services of his professional brethren at his bidding; for if this were to be law in the profes-

sion, the higher members might have little else to do than attend the younger branches; in truth we think there is something mean and revolting to a liberal man, in condescending to receive the services of another practitioner, of whom he knows nought but the name, gratuitously, merely because he happens to be a member of the medical profession.

If then it be inconsistent with justice and high honour, to accept indiscriminately the services of the profession for his own person, still more so is it for his family, still more for them after his death, and still more unreasonable to expect medicinal preparations also supplied. We have been led thus far, because we were present, some time back, at an action brought against a person to recover for medicines, &c. The defendant alleged that she was the widow of a medical man (though this appeared very doubtful), and as such had a recognized right to go into any apothecary's shop, and have what medicines she required. Monstrous as this assertion may appear, the jury were strongly disposed to give judgment in her favour; and we verily believe that if the judge had not possessed a little more common sense, and a little more respect for common justice, the action would have been dismissed with costs.

Now, although we have given it as our unqualified opinion, that one medical man has no right, *as pure*

matter of right, to expect the gratuitous services of another, simply on the ground of similarity of occupation; yet we admit that a great many exceptions must be made to this rule; for example, an equality of grade has greater claim to exemption than difference; thus one physician would hardly think of taking fees from another physician. We would appeal, also, to those gentlemen engaged in teaching and lecturing, whether it be generous to receive remuneration from pupils, except when the pupils may be in very different pecuniary circumstances to their teachers; though we have heard of such things having been done? We think, also, that friendship, and even professional acquaintance, should form the strongest grounds to exemption; and poverty will never plead in vain with the benevolent. That one medical man should make out his bills against another, seems certainly a most gross violation of professional etiquette; but that he should be remunerated, is no less certainly just; in fine, to sum up all we have said, or would say, we conceive the acceptance of remuneration, abstractedly, by one medical man from another, to be perfectly in accordance with medical etiquette; that it should be received by way of demand, is equally in opposition to it; that compliance with etiquette invariably requires the tender to be made, in proportion to the length of

services, &c. &c.; that the acceptance, or refusal, should be made to depend on various contingencies, such as the pecuniary circumstances, the condition in society, the mutual connection of the parties, &c. A man has surely a claim to the pleasure of refusing pecuniary acknowledgments for kindness bestowed, which in generous minds is often ample compensation. The same regulations, which apply to medical men, we think, should apply whilst they are living to their families; but not after their decease. That liberality which dispenses indiscriminately its favours upon all—the rich and the poor, the deserving and the undeserving, we strongly condemn, which often extends even to unprofessional acquaintances; we call it a wanton, wasteful, irrational, and mischievous liberality. The practice of some persons, when they happen to have a medical man at their table, of pumping him, and so getting back the value of their dinner, is mean and paltry in the extreme; and the claims which relatives often put forth, are very unreasonable and unfriendly; instead of encouraging a young professional person, they only serve to prey upon him.

With respect to the families of medical men after their decease, we do not see what other claim they possess to be placed on a different footing with the rest of the world, than the rights of friendship, and the plea of straitened circumstances. The notion

entertained by some that the relations of deceased medical men, without reference to state, possess a decided claim upon all the members of the profession, seems to us an absurd, unjust, and visionary idea. A little extension of the same principle would produce a community of property, and lead all persons to throw their labour, and goods, into the general weal; which, however disinterested it might be, we do not think would tend to advance the civilization and improvement of mankind. A habit of grasping is by no means a general failing in the profession; the fault lies a little the other way; and there are very many who much prefer indulging their liberality, than extending the lining of their pockets. These remarks have been occasioned by a circumstance which came under our observation some time since, where a young practitioner had been attending upon another much older, and in very superior circumstances, most assiduously, and so far as thanks and verbal acknowledgments went, was amply repaid; but no pecuniary consideration was offered, although the attendance had been long, and much medicine, and many things unconnected with medicine, which are usually kept in a chemist's shop, had been supplied; the parties never having heard of each other before the accidental occurrence which brought them together. To suffer this to pass by unnoticed

in any other way than words, we think was both illiberal and undignified.

To be more explicit if possible, lest we should be supposed to be laying a bait for the indulgence of avarice, as we can only propose general rules, leaving it to the good sense and good taste of each individual to see where the exceptions should be made; we consider it decidedly unprofessional for one medical man to make a demand against another, or his family, during life; that it is equally unprofessional, and incompatible with that self-respect, which every man should entertain, to allow the services of another to pass unnoticed; that in proportion to benefits conferred, and the capabilities of parties, some more substantial acknowledgment should always be made, than mere aërial bubbles, which drop to pieces if they are touched, leaving it to be accepted, or refused, as circumstances dictate.

CHAPTER IX.

ON REMUNERATION FOR PRESCRIPTIONS, AND MEDICAL CERTIFICATES.

The etiquette of charging for prescriptions, writing certificates, and putting signatures to various other records, by general practitioners, is in a very unsettled

state. No one hesitates about charging for a bottle of medicine, nor do the public think about disputing such charge; but a name is so easily written, and a prescription copied, that people look upon these things as matters of course, and never think of offering a medical man any remuneration for perusing a long document, and incurring a responsibility, sometimes of no small character. There seems to be abroad an unaccountable aversion to paying for any thing, which cannot be eaten, or drunk, or used in some way. It has always appeared to us most unreasonable on the part of the public to request, and very injudicious also on the part of medical men to give up, a copy of one of their own prescriptions which has proved extremely serviceable, without equivalent; yet it is a common occurrence for any patients, on the plea of going into the country, to request of their medical attendant a prescription of some medicine they may have been taking a considerable time, and may possibly continue to take for years.

From the foolish system of charging for attendance under the form of medicine, the general practitioner has probably been receiving three shillings for that which would be prepared at a chemist's for half, or less; of course that prescription never comes back again; and thus a medical man gives up, perhaps, a

small annuity, for no consideration! However, no one with the least pretension to liberality, could refuse a patient's making the request under such plausible circumstances, though we have full reason to believe that it is often done for the very purpose of getting it put up cheaper. A bold demeanour is not the general characteristic of the profession, and thus the majority concede to the application, though usually with reluctance; some refuse altogether upon the absurd plea that it cannot be written out, or that no other person could prepare it, and offer to supply a sufficiency of medicine for the time of absence. This would seem to be very fair, as every man is certainly entitled to the benefit of his own preparations, though it would be much more independent to state the real reason of refusing. But this cannot always be done; patients may be going abroad, or to leave the place entirely, and medicine will not invariably keep, and much inconvenience will sometimes arise from carrying or sending it to distances: now why a prescription under such circumstances should not be paid for, we cannot tell, except from the absurdity of custom.

A person goes to a physician, and gives a guinea for that which has not yet proved of any use, and even if it answers the intention, it probably only serves for one, or a few days; another goes to a

general practitioner for the same purpose, and expects, free of all remuneration, that which has been tried, and proved to be of essential service, the force of which may continue for years! We have known instances where prescriptions, thus obtained, have been copied repeatedly, and given away to one friend or another, and yet the original writer has derived no advantage. This is making a most unfair use of them. What would the proprietor of a patent medicine say, if he were asked for the prescription of his nostrum? Not that we are going to identify the profession with quackery, but we think there is a strong resemblance between the inconsistency of the two requisitions. Instead of acceding to the application gratuitously, common sense would seem to dictate that a double fee should be given in exchange; nor can we see any breach of the nicest notions of professional honour and justice, in requiring some equivalent. We therefore respectfully beg leave to propose to the profession generally, that in all cases where a patient applies for a prescription of a general practitioner of medicine, which has proved its value, on the plea of going into the country, or any other pretext whatever, a fair consideration be demanded as a matter of course, proportioned to the circumstances of the patient, and the probable use it is likely to prove of, the minimum amount being equal to a physician's

fee; and to prevent individual prejudice, that this be universally adopted, and that the profession manifest a becoming spirit when the public shew any disposition to impute improper motives to this regulation.

Then, as to writing certificates, and signing other documents, it seems to us equally unreasonable that these things should be done free of cost; but as remuneration is not a general custom, no one likes to run the risk of incurring the charge of imposition by first breaking the ice. Professors in the law will not write letters free, or incur legal responsibility without compensation; and why should medical men write certificates, and sign documents to which medical responsibility is attached, without some equivalent also?

The managers of Life insurance offices send their papers to be filled up by the family medical attendant, which are sometimes very troublesome, and no farther notice is taken of it: it is true, it does not consume a great deal of time, nor does it to give the advice for which a physician receives a guinea; but, to shew the absurdity of it in a clear point of view, we have only to carry out the principle to a great extent, and to suppose that a man has to fill up fifty of these every day, he would then see that it made a serious inroad upon his time. So that, setting aside

the consideration of personal responsibility, on the score of his time alone he has a claim to remuneration where numbers are concerned; and the same principle which applies to fifty, equally applies to one. We propose, then, as the offices pay the medical man attached to the institution, the party insuring should pay their own attendant; and that the office enclose a fee with the certificate, and charge it again on the policy, and that every certificate sent to a medical practitioner for the purpose of being filled up, from any public body whatever, without containing a fee, be returned as sent.

It not unfrequently occurs that persons about to emigrate request, certainly as a favour, of a general practitioner, of whom perhaps they know nought but the name, having never required attendance, that he will put his signature to a paper, certifying that they are in good health, which of course he cannot conscientiously do without some little examination, and some few inquiries; but if any charge were made for this, it would be looked upon as very irregular, and unjust, although he may have had the same trouble, as if he had prescribed for the individual: we should like to know why he is not to be paid in the same way, as if he had given his advice; or what the value of a bottle of medicine has to do with it?

At many public institutions it is necessary to have a medical certificate, as to the state of health, before admission can be obtained; we have been asked to give these to persons, whom we have never seen before. Then, respecting what are termed provident clubs, we have been witness to a great deal of fraud: many members apply to a medical man for advice, who are really unwell at the time, and having got the medicine, ask for a certificate, which being given, they continue to draw money as long as the club will pay them, but never come any more for advice, unless it be necessary to sign the paper again, the first being merely an excuse to obtain the certificate; and thus protract to a considerable time a complaint which might have been speedily rectified. Then there are certificates of death in consequence of the new law, which give a great deal of trouble. Undertakers, sextons, and clergymen, all receive their fees before they will stir an inch, then why should not a medical man receive his, without whose authority none of them can legally act at all? Is it anything uncommon for a clergyman to refuse performing the burial-service before he has received his legal rights? And yet the poor medical practitioner, who has had all the responsibility of the illness, and perhaps never received a farthing for his trouble, is expected to write these certificates without any acknowledgment!

All this is utterly monstrous, and part and parcel of the remnants of the old system of demanding medical evidence at inquests gratuitously. We respectfully refer it to the whole profession whether, for the future, it would not be more consistent with justice, and more calculated to support the respectability of the profession, to make an adequate charge, for looking over, or signing any paper, certificate, or document whatever?

CHAPTER X.

THE COMPARATIVE CLAIMS OF FRIENDSHIP AND PRECEDENCY.

Of course every man must have a beginning; and as a partnership, or the purchase of a practice, does not meet the views of all, a young practitioner will generally set himself down as near the bulk of his friends and relations as possible; if they happen to be pre-engaged, is he to seek to secure his services, or to give them if solicited? This is a point by no means determined in the profession, and opinions are as variable as the cast of the minds of those who entertain them. There may be something more congenial, more in harmony with the constitution of a high-minded independent spirit, in refusing attend-

ance, more especially if the offer be made solely on the grounds of friendship; but as it is our object to endeavour to divest the profession of all those practices calculated to lower its moral tone, so also would we desire to avoid running into the opposite extreme; and, by proposing what is only suitable to an Utopia, or a Millennium, justly incur the imputation of enforcing what is totally inapplicable to the present state of things.

It appears to us, then, that the moral claims existing between individuals of the same family, and also between friends, and which would seem to be instituted by nature, should take precedence simply of etiquette, which may be considered as the creation of custom only; and that it would be more in accordance with liberality and right feeling, when this happens to be known, for the usual attendants to anticipate, and tender their willingness to resign in favour of those who have the claims of Nature on their side, and so leave it to the parties to continue, or to change, as they think proper; and we consider that a person commencing practice, provided he employs no ungenerous means to eject the former attendant, shall be at liberty to avail himself of the higher claims of friendship or relationship, without any stigma resting on his reputation as a man, or his honour as a professional.

CHAPTER XI.

VILLAGE AND PROVINCIAL ETIQUETTE.

If the loftiest sentiments of professional honour are at a small premium in London, we fear they are at a sad discount in the provinces. It is lamentable to see the prevalence of illiberality in country towns and villages; the jealousy existing between individual practitioners, who frequently, under the mask of candour and professed friendship, undermine each other's reputation, and never lose a chance of sinking one another in public estimation, when this can be done with seeming good grace and kindness: these places would appear to be the very hotbeds of illiberality and selfishness, producing the plant in a state of the most morbid sensibility. Incredible as it may appear, we have heard, on indisputable authority, that such an observation as this has been made: "Mr. —— is an excellent and worthy man, but was deceived in the effects of the medicine; he was not aware it would so operate; there cannot be an iota of doubt, but that he gave it with the very best of intentions." Such a scoundrel ought to be stripped, and public indignation mark him,

> "And put in every honest hand a whip,
> To lash the rascal naked through the world."

When a practitioner has been some time in a place, he considers that he has a sort of right to the exclusive practice of that place; he looks upon it as a kind of personal or hereditary estate, and all those who attempt to encroach, though it be only to eat a few crumbs that fall from his table, are looked upon as poachers, as innovators, who must be expelled by all means lawful and unlawful. We confess we do not see why one man should monopolize a whole village, or any portion of a village; the world is open to all: but if every one who has been a certain number of years in a particular part, is to set that down as his private property, what is to become of the thousands who possess no such hereditary claim? Country places would become liable to the same abuses which arise from the hole and corner system adopted at public institutions. Nor do we conceive that competition is by any means necessarily opposed to the finest sentiments of honour; there is a professional and benevolent way of conducting it, as well as a gross and vulgar way, and when adopted with fairness is rather an incentive to improvement than otherwise.

We admit that it is very unhandsome, to call it by no worse a term, and indeed very bad policy, for a man to intrude himself into a situation where there is obviously not room, with a view to expel the pre-

sent occupants; he only injures those already there, without benefitting himself; and this conduct generally meets with its due desert in disappointment. But where there is abundance of room we do not see that one man has an exclusive right to the enjoyment of his thousands, when there may, perhaps, be numerous of his brethren, equally worthy and deserving, starving around him, unless he can shew some better title to the sole privilege than merely priority of settlement; and we would respectfully put it to the better feelings of these gentlemen, as we know they are for the most part pretty diligent in their church attendance, whether it be consistent with what is generally inculcated there, whether it be in harmony with that golden Rule of rules, whose applicability is equally religious, civil, and philosophical, and which we have chosen for our motto, "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you," to view with an eye of jealousy and aversion any person who may happen to fix his tent within their supposed boundaries, though with the best of intentions, and endowed with the highest moral qualifications?

Whilst we are rather disposed to encourage Competition, as being favourable to the development of mind, we would draw a very strongly-marked line of distinction between this and Opposition, against

which we enter our most unqualified protestation. Opposition may be very well for lower occupations, though not very amiable; but nothing approaching to it should enter into the character of gentlemen laying claim to honourable feeling. We have heard it recommended to young men to set themselves down by some eminent physician or surgeon, so that his name in time may become associated with theirs; but this is a very mean and paltry way of getting into practice; let each depend upon his own intrinsic merit, and wait the product of time; and if he cannot afford this, let him give it up, and follow some other occupation. Thus, whilst we condemn the system which some have of endeavouring to squeeze themselves where there is obviously not room to play comfortably, we do think that it is no violation of professional etiquette for a man to seat himself where there is abundance of room; nor do we consider that the mere act of a medical man, fixing his abode in a country village, is a sufficient ground for an immediate declaration of hostilities, to be carried on with all the inveteracy of personal hatred, in the most ignoble and ungenerous way, not by open warfare, sword in hand, but by sapping and undermining, intriguing and manœuvring.

CHAPTER XII.

WHEN A PRACTITIONER IS ACCIDENTALLY SENT FOR TO THE PATIENT OF ANOTHER.

This is the case to which we made allusion in the Preface; that, in consequence of the regular attendant being out of the way, and the family should refuse to see an assistant, another practitioner is sent for, who, on discovering the position of affairs when he arrives, and having prescribed for the patient, of course takes his leave in favour of the family practitioner; but they, pleased with his manner and address, and from some real or fancied neglect of their own medical adviser, request him to continue his visits: he declines on the plea of its being unprofessional; but they, in order to induce him to comply with their desire, assert, that if he refuses, it will make no difference so far as their original attendant is concerned, for they will send for some other person.

When this is really urged with truth and sincerity, and not out of complaisance, we cannot see that any stretch of honour requires a man to forego attendance, because this would lead to a most overbearing, tyrannical custom; it would, in fact, be tantamount to saying to the public, that whatever practitioner you choose to employ in the first instance, him you shall

continue to employ: this would be an insufferable dictatorial measure. The public have an undoubted right to send for whom they choose; and if they feel dissatisfied with one man, they are privileged to send for another; and no reflection, under these circumstances, can equitably be cast upon a practitioner, provided he has done nothing directly or indirectly to bring the former one into disrepute. But here we feel particularly anxious not to be misunderstood; for our own part, we should be very reluctant to obtain a patient this way; much suspicion will always attach to such a case; nor do we consider that a patient, so acquired, will ever reflect much credit on the possessor. Persons are often capricious, and feel mortified if a man has happened to be out of the way once or twice; and some trifling excuse made for him will mostly rectify matters, procure the apologist the esteem of both parties, and more especially the sanction of his own conscience (we shall, perhaps, be thought to be wandering in the wilds of a visionary Elysium; but we would reiterate, that we are only writing to men endowed with the moral qualifications of practice); and at any future time, if he happens to be sent for first, he unhesitatingly goes without the possibility of the most distant reflection being cast upon his character; but by construing the dissatisfaction ex-

pressed, which may only be temporary to his own advantage, he most justly lays himself open to the reception of similar treatment from others.

Some persons have a habit of getting patients this way under the mask of liberality: we were present at a case of this kind not long since, when the second party, who was sent for, in consequence of the family practitioner being from home at the time, assumed the highest tone; he had no desire to repeat his visit unless it was particularly wished; in fact, he was a great advocate of liberal conduct; he was ever ready to do anything for a brother practitioner. Of course, out of common politeness, they could do no less than request him to look in the next day; and sounding his way like a skilful tactician, the more the family urged his attendance, the more reluctance and liberality he could afford to assume. No doubt he thought he had obtained a rich prize; but the previous attendant calling soon afterwards, dispersed these bright visions for ever. This is the meanest of all arts, for hypocrisy is blended with dishonesty; it is what we term attempting to steal a patient.

We shall be told by many in the profession that necessity has no law; that it will not do to be over nice about trifles in such times as the present; that a little underhand conduct is pardonable when a man

is pushed hard. If this is to be law in the profession, why then, in the name of justice, let all make it the Standard of their conduct, and let each professional banner be inscribed with the words, "*Catch who can;*" if it is not, then let every man be considered as an outlaw by his brethren, who may be found guilty, be his rank what it may: no one, however high, can long resist the force of public opinion.

We have seen men, moving in the best circles, receiving great outward deference, who ought to be exterminated, not only from the profession, but from all civilized society; for until the public take cognizance generally of misdemeanours, which are not recognized by law, but often more injurious in their tendency than many which are, we cannot expect to make much advancement in morals. Necessity, we acknowledge, will plead much in extenuation of wrong, but can be no justification. If medical practitioners would occasionally leave their lofty pursuits, and look abroad into public matters, they would probably find some tangible cause for the depressed state of the profession; but if not, how much more noble would it be to subtract a little from their trappings, or resign the profession altogether, than urge necessity as a plea for conduct which they themselves condemn, in order to support a system

of outward deception! The respect, almost reverence, which is paid to external show, divested of all internal worth, is a very mischievous error in society; and so long as a handsome carriage, with a pair of fine bred horses, is allowed to cover such a multitude of failings, so long will such be sought after with avidity by individuals as the chief good, and law, justice, humanity, and the rights of society insulted and trampled upon in order to obtain them.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHEN A FORMER PRACTITIONER HAS BEEN UNHANDSOMELY DISMISSED.

This question will, perhaps, at first sight appear somewhat contradictory to the last, but we shall endeavour to preserve a consistency; it is a delicate point of inquiry, and it may be rather unreasonable to expect the profession to take so high a stand, as to make an injury to another a ground for non-attendance. Quixotic views of morals we fear are not very fashionable at the present day; but yet we feel strongly disposed to put it to the more cultivated portion of the profession, whether it be not conniving at ill-usage, to condescend to give attendance where there has been a manifest outrage

upon common decency and humanity? It is in reality courting the same treatment for themselves; for we have found, without exception, that those who have injured any individual, will not hesitate to adopt the same course towards others, when it becomes their real or fancied interest to do so.

All the relations of life have their particular duties; and, for our own part, we consider that moral claims are more binding upon conscientious individuals than legal; nor do we think that when persons have been some time dealing with a tradesman, they have a right to desert him from pure caprice: any reason, however trifling, may be a sufficient excuse, as being better or more cheaply supplied, a desire to divide the advantage, convenience of locality, &c. &c. Far less do we think that families or individuals are privileged to discard their medical attendants, without assigning, or at least having, some cause; for if all persons were to act in this capricious way, society must cease to exist; all the relations of life would be torn asunder. In our opinion, when a practitioner has been attending a family or an individual some time, he holds a moral claim to continue his services until he has forfeited it, or something has occurred to break the connexion; and if he be arbitrarily dismissed, we regard that man as an injured individual, and as one who, in a moral

sense, is as much entitled to damages, as if he had suffered an injury recognized by law. A circumstance of this kind might be his ruin; for instance, let him be sent for to attend one branch of a large connexion, and after some time capriciously discharged, the world observes the fact, and naturally infers that something or other unpleasant must have occurred; and thus it is made to bear an erroneous construction, which operates seriously to his disadvantage. They were not obliged to send, but having sent, a moral relation is established between them, which caprice ought not to be allowed to destroy. A person has no remedy at law, but that does not alter the case; the injury inflicted may prove far greater than many recognized by law; and we view it as an index of a very defective state of moral improvement, that man is compelled to have recourse to law at all. And in proportion as Moral law takes precedence of Statute law, so we submit is it a proof of advancement in civilization; and in the purest state of civilization to which it is possible for man to arrive, the moral law, or the law of Abstract Right, will have acquired such exclusive control over the public mind, as completely to nullify all written law, and render legislation a mere sinecure.

We would leave it, then, to the candour and intel-

ligence of the more enlightened, whether, by adopting such a course as we have hinted at, it would not only raise the profession in popular estimation, and in the estimation of the members themselves, but also exalt the moral and intellectual character of the occupation itself? The profession, as a body, constitutes, or ought to constitute, the most liberal and talented section of mankind; their bearing in consequence upon society generally might be very considerable; their power also over it for good could be made so to work as to improve, and to elevate the whole of society from that state of moral degradation into which it would seem to be so deeply plunged. The practical Lessons thus given sink much deeper into the moral constitution, and possess a far more influential operation on society than abstract and didactic discourses from the pulpit, or enactments emanating from the legislature. If society is to be regenerated, and to rise in the scale of excellence, it must rise by its own internal moral buoyancy; it cannot be forced, or blown upwards.

It argues a most imperfect state of civilization, where all the actions of men are ruled by the laws of the country, however wisely they be framed; they form but a poor standard of moral rectitude; for it is not possible for the statute law to take cognizance of all those nicer claims which are en-

forced by morality. Parents are compelled by law to support their children, *i. e.* to find them in food and clothing, but it makes no provision for what is equally necessary both for their present and future welfare, education; yet the parent who neglects this duty, is as guilty before God, as if he had put his child away to starve from hunger and cold. Morality has stamped this claim upon the child as forcibly as those recognized by the laws; indeed, all the higher and more important rights of society necessarily escape the coarse views of legislators.

This reasoning may, perhaps, be thought by some to be very tyrannical, but that only proves their crude notions of real liberty. The present laws, of what is called civilization, are an improvement upon those which regulate the conduct of savages; and though men are not allowed to roam about in that unruly way, there is more real liberty enjoyed. Property, though only in its rudest definition, and Person are protected, but that is all; the more important interests of man are wholly neglected. Now, under a system of moral laws, supported by public opinion, there could scarcely be an act of injustice committed; there would be more powerful restraints laid upon men to respect the rights of others, 'tis true, but a far greater degree of liberty would be the portion of all; earth would be turned

into heaven; the Millennium would be realized—not that we are mad enough to suppose this is at hand—but only that the nearer we approach to it, the greater will be the amount of happiness enjoyed; for the higher the law, the more perfect our freedom, else let us discard it altogether.

We would now appeal, with all that solemnity which the importance of the thing demands, whether the members of the medical profession would not do well to take under their protecting care the glimmering embers of morality; for if they do not, Who shall? Should the Law make the attempt, it would be like nursing a serpent at her very bosom; for moral law and statute law are at total variance; the one of a high, noble, refined, and elevating character; the other of a low, mean, grovelling, and outreaching nature, the demoralizing tendency of which is but too apparent in the majority of its professors. The Church! But when has Sectarianism shewn herself favourable to the development of mind? When has she proved herself capable of taking those large and extended views of human nature, which comprehend the whole race? Church history has hitherto been little else than one continued series of oppressions, of prejudices, of tyrannies, of usurpations, of the blackest description. We fear that the mild and delicate Plant of morality would wither under the protection of Sectarianism,

which, however admirably adapted for sowing the seeds of dissension in families, and fanning the flame of civil discord, is wholly unfitted for this nobler function. The Educator! the natural Ally of morality, to whom society would look as to a parent for assistance—but what has he as yet done, but train some for oppression, some to oppress? From the contemptible remuneration, and the low estimation, or rather the suspicious aversion, with which he is generally viewed, his profession has become merely the refuge of the mean-spirited and the destitute, where vanity, jealousy, and dogmatism are the prevailing passions. Alas! Thou poor Morality! If thou art deserted, and forsaken by the only men capable of throwing a shield of protection around thee, and infusing new vigour into thy spirit, the members of the medical profession, what hope hast thou? Nay; despair, and die!

By way of concluding this chapter, we would observe, that we think those persons are in error, who attribute such vast power to governments as the moral advancement of nations. The power of governments is of a negative, not a positive character—for harm, and not for good. They possess no power to force education upon the people; all they can do is to take especial care that no impediments stand in the way of their improvement; they

may occasionally indirectly assist, but they have no immediate agency on the conduct of society. Truth and religion cannot be forced into men's brains, as the sword is down their throats; morals are not bayonets, or to be handled in the same way. So far as the active improvement of a nation is concerned, we believe governments to be perfectly powerless; in truth, all the supposed mighty functions of a government may be condensed into this one single act, *the faithful and impartial administration of justice, in its largest and most comprehensive sense, to every individual of the community, from the Throne to the most humble Cottage.* The work of substantial active reformation must commence at every man's domestic hearth.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN A SECOND PARTY IS CALLED IN TO DECIDE UPON THE TREATMENT OF ANOTHER.

Nothing can be more agreeable to a rightly constituted liberal mind, than to give an opinion in confirmation of the judicious treatment adopted by another; but when it happens that there has been most palpable neglect, or most decided maltreatment, a conscientious man is necessarily thrown into a very

unenviable moral dilemma. Strongly reluctant to infringe in the least degree upon the claims of generosity, or to lay himself open to the slightest imputation of illiberality, he yet feels a moral responsibility resting upon him to give his honest opinion; what is he to do? He must apply for assistance to Moral Philosophy; she will teach him that truth constitutes the great bond of union between man and man; and that however adverse to his feelings, yet his duty to society, his duty to himself, his duty to the individual soliciting his opinion, call upon him to declare his real sentiments.

It has appeared to us that a very common notion which has gone abroad, that under all circumstances the previous treatment of a patient is to be supported and confirmed, has its origin in a very false refinement of feeling; and when duty and feeling clash, we apprehend there will be few who will hesitate an instant which is to be paramount. When it is considered how differently the time which ought to be devoted to the acquisition of knowledge and experience, is passed by different individuals, it is not fair that the man who has devoted his whole time, morning, noon, and night, to his profession; who has been an unceasing attendant in the dissecting-room; who has sat for months over offensive subjects, until their revolting appearance through habit had almost become

attractive; who, whilst his hands have been employed in laying open the works of nature, has thrown the whole force of his mind upon the subject to explore her more recondite operations; who has let no opportunity slip of collecting new facts, and arranging those in his possession; it is not fair that such a man should have no advantage over him, whose whole thoughts have been centred in most opposite things, to whom the Theatre, the Ball-room, and the Card party, have presented more alluring attractions than the Chamber of sickness, or the Portals of death.

The profession of medicine, like all other professions and occupations, has its tares amongst the wheat, and if the wheat is to thrive with full vigour, the tares must be cleared out; but in so doing great care should be taken that the wheat be not injured. This is what we feel we cannot impress too strongly upon the higher branches of the profession; their decisions, so far as our experience has gone, have not been guided by the intrinsic merits of the treatment itself, so much as by the station and connexions of the individual adopting it. We trust the above observations will not have laid us open to the imputation of that which we have expressly taken up our pen to deprecate; and that whilst we have been anxiously endeavouring to warn others off, we may not appear to have fallen into the pit ourselves. Jus-

tice has been our landmark, and in our desire to promote concord and harmony amongst the several branches of the profession, we would most scrupulously avoid trespassing upon her sacred rights.

But after all that has been said, from the conjectural character of the science itself, there cannot be a great many cases, which will not admit of two opinions; and when this is the case, and a second is called to pronounce upon the treatment of another, it becomes him to do it with that modesty and hesitation which are the necessary consequences of a conviction that he may be wrong, and the other right after all. The science of medicine seems peculiarly adapted to illustrate the ancient adage—that the more we know, the less we think we know; that it is not until we are about to quit the world for ever, we first discover we are learners. It is very certain, that as a man acquires knowledge he becomes proportionably modest, because each discovery he makes but tends to shew him how much more he has yet to learn. A decided and unequivocal assertion in medicine is worth nothing. We have heard an eminent surgeon of the present day, second in richness of mind to none in Europe, attached to one of the largest hospitals in London, decline giving an opinion upon a case at all, on the plea that he was so much out a little before on an apparently similar one; and we well remember the

most popular surgeon in England, in his old age, express his opinion, before a numerous assemblage of students upon a case of supposed stone in the bladder, that there was none; but added, that it was *only* an opinion, and there might be, notwithstanding his inability to find it.

With these illustrious examples before one, how utterly contemptible and laughable it is to hear a young man descanting with all the boldness of a veteran upon the treatment of others, and giving his unqualified opinion upon the state, and future termination of a case! That system adopted by some, of assuming a dictatorial and self-confident manner, cannot be too strongly reprobated—it is the sign-post of ignorance, and betrays a mean and grovelling mind: the plea which is offered, that it secures the confidence of the public, is a very poor apology, for confidence which can only be obtained this way is not worth having; it often recoils with aggravation upon the person condescending to employ it, and makes him the laughing-stock of the by-standers. In illustration of this, we will relate an instance or two: a child, with an eruptive fever just commencing, was brought to a general practitioner, who, on seeing it, immediately pronounced most unhesitatingly that it was a case of measles. As measles had been prevailing in that neighbourhood, he supposed it could

be no other, and by his decided manner obtained the credit of wonderful sagacity, but two or three days more produced a case of confluent small-pox. Another instance which happened at a large prison in the metropolis, at the time when cholera was so prevalent: the surgeon, on going through one of the sick wards, after examining very minutely a patient, who was labouring under the most severe symptoms of cholera, so as to induce an impression amongst several medical men and students, who happened to be present, that his account was about to be wound up, observed—in order we imagine to produce an idea of extraordinary acuteness, in which there was not much chance of his being detected—that, *the man would recover;* when lo! and behold! bear testimony all ye who were then present to the ever memorable astounding fact, worthy to be recorded in the imperishable annals of fame, that to your own motionless surprise—to the paralyzing amazement of the great Solomon himself, before he had left the prison, ay, before he had reached the end of the ward, nay, before he had arrived at the next bed, a herald proclaimed, in all the imposing majesty of thunder, that *the man was dead!*

CHAPTER XV.

CANVASSING.

The strong contest which is always created when any vacancy occurs at a medical institution, is a proof of their great value in public estimation: we believe this to be a very erroneous notion; but be that as it may, we would put it with all deference to the profession, whether these contests are consistent with that personal respect which every man owes himself, and that dignity which at the college he is sworn to maintain? There is something indecent in trying to force oneself into a public situation against the general feeling; all this may be very well for beadles, parish clerks, and collectors; but how much more dignified would it be in medical practitioners to wait until a requisition is tendered, than endeavour to forestall it! What would be thought if, the moment a bishopric became vacant, a hundred applicants attempted to carry it by storm? They seem to understand in the clerical profession the nature of true dignity, for they wear the outward semblance of modesty, whatever may be the internal sentiments. When a person is about to be installed into a bishopric, he is asked whether he is willing to be

made a bishop? It is a part of the form to say that he will not; and, in consequence of his modesty, is thrust into the office. Public medical situations are seldom filled by the most competent persons, and for this reason, that they are too proud to go about from house to house canvassing for interest.

In all public situations, the obligation ought to rest upon the electors, not upon the person elected; it is he who confers the favour in consenting to work by contract, and undertaking the responsibilities. Persons impressed with a due sense of the moral responsibility attaching to all public appointments, and who would therefore conscientiously fulfil the duties, are seldom over anxious about possessing them. The expense necessarily entailed on all candidates to carry on a successful canvass is a disgrace to the electors: it is in reality equivalent to selling the office to the highest bidder—it would be far more honest to put it up to auction. The number of candidates for a situation, however unimportant it may be, serves to shew the public that medical men are at a discount, and therefore may be treated with slight and disrespect with impunity. The usage to which surgeons are subjected on board ship is often most disgraceful; and we believe it entirely arises from the eagerness with which a vacancy is sought after by the numerous applicants, and the favour

which is therefore supposed to be conferred in giving it. These shipowners, instead of treating the man with complaisance whom they are about to entrust with the lives of those who have the management of their property, when engaging a medical man, if they condescend to see him at all, put on all the hauteur and indifference which they would in engaging a groom, or a footman. The avidity with which appointments to the union workhouses are seized upon, is anything but calculated to command respect, and the strong competition brings down the remuneration so low, that when obtained they scarcely afford bread and cheese. If practitioners would cease to set so high a value upon these worthless situations, and allow themselves to be sought, instead of seeking, they would command a far greater degree of public respect, and also of remuneration.

CHAPTER XVI.

KEEPING SHOPS.

Respecting the keeping of open shops, there is a strong difference of opinion; some consider it a sufficient reason for disowning a man as a professional brother: we have heard the remark made in contempt, "Who would think of sending to a shop for a family

doctor ?" That it is not congenial to a man's feelings must be admitted by all; the annoyance of attending to various matters about which he has no right to be troubled, and which a shop necessarily entails, is more the fault of circumstances than of the individual who bends to them. How it can possibly in any way affect a man's respectability, we are at a loss to discover; if we mistake not, it is not the outward aspect which a man wears, and the station in which he moves, that constitute his respectability, but rather the general tenor of his conduct in that station, else the greatest rogues will often prove to be the most respectable. It is not the occupation that sinks the man, but the man who raises the occupation. Many of the highest and most able men in the profession, have commenced life by keeping shops, and still recommend that course to all young practitioners who do not possess superior advantages; but if a man's means enable him to dispense with this, so much the better for him, but how that can render him a more qualified, or more respectable man, we candidly confess our senses are too obtuse to perceive. According to this doctrine, a man may be respectable one day, and the reverse the next, and *vicè versâ*; in truth there would be no such thing as character in the world, it would become more evanescent than property; like the chameleon, it would be black one day,

blue the next, green or colourless the third, and so on. We view the character of Charles the First in the same light, whether seated on his throne in royal splendour, a prisoner in the hands of his enemies, or yielding up his life on the scaffold, and entitled to the same respect.

That affectation displayed by so many young men in their reluctance to touch a mortar, or even to be seen behind their own counters, lest it should tarnish their respectability, must possess a respectability of a very sensitive, and even doubtful quality, which cannot afford to brook such trifles as these. We consider the keeping a shop, provided that shop be conducted honestly, as more compatible with professional etiquette, than maintaining a more imposing outward appearance at the expense of the strictest honour and integrity; and, admitting the conduct to be unexceptionable, we do not see that a shop has any more bearing upon a man's respectability, or the estimation in which he should be held *by his brethren*, than the size and cut of his coat, or the shape of his hat.

It appears to us a strange perversion of language to apply the term respectable, if respectable means that which deserves respect, to a man, because he may happen to have always half a dozen idle lacqueys at his elbow, and yet be the greatest scoundrel under

heaven; and monstrous folly that respect should be paid to men in proportion to their annual expenditure. We have known a person severely rebuked for his deviation from this senseless custom. "You must not speak to that man so, Sir, *he is worth two hundred thousand pounds,*" was the reproof to one, who was speaking with the freedom of equality to another, of whose finances he was ignorant, or else was unorthodox enough to imagine a statue of gold to be no better than one of marble, if the workmanship were not superior.

If society still wills this to be the law, then in the name of justice let every man wear his figure on his back, or some other conspicuous part, in order that he may receive his due share of respect; and let tables be constructed for the benefit of the public, shewing the exact proportion due to each particular amount; and in case of the infliction of a property tax, we suspect that the treasury would experience the advantage of such an admirable plan.

Of course we cannot expect to alter the standard of the public in estimating professional acquirements; but our object is with the profession to rest its dignity and respectability upon infinitely higher, and more substantial foundations than coaches and horses, parks and villas, footmen and servants, wines and parties, blanc-manges and jellies, and such like flimsy

materials; and until these are looked upon as secondary matters, the profession cannot expect to make any very important improvements. We should regard a private practitioner indeed with envy on account of his mind being more free, and better enabled to devote all its energies to the interests of his profession, did we not know how much embarrassment and difficulty is frequently entailed upon him to preserve that state, and which in a great measure counterbalances the disadvantages incurred by a shop.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONNEXION BETWEEN PRACTITIONERS AND CHEMISTS.

HAVING said so much upon shops, we now come to consider a practice which is becoming more and more general, viz. an arrangement between a medical man and a chemist; for the former to prescribe at the chemist's certain hours per week for a given remuneration. From the secret manner in which this is always done, it would seem as though it were commonly considered even by the parties themselves as *infrâ dig.* If it be inconsistent with etiquette to adopt this openly, it savours somewhat of dishonesty to have recourse to it secretly; for our own part, we cannot see why a physician, or medical man, should

not sit in a shop for a small annuity, as well as prescribe at a dispensary at a fixed salary, and in a similar way. There seems to us to be no difference, except that the one is a public institution, and the other a private; and a private one is far more likely to be conducted with ability and conscience, inasmuch as it must depend in some measure upon its own intrinsic merit for success, whereas public ones being irresponsible, or nearly so, are often the theatres of great neglect. Why one should be considered a place of honour, and the other of degradation, we cannot tell, except by that perversion of the judgment which we so hourly witness.

A man puts up for a dispensary yielding £50 per annum, where he has to sit two hours during three days in the week; he is defeated, and afterwards makes an arrangement with a chemist to the same effect; we should only like to see the ingenuity which could point out the nicety of distinction. We shall perhaps be told, that the one is elected on account of his superior talents: but before a man urges this, he must divest himself of all modesty, or else imagine his hearers to have just dropped from the clouds. If we may be allowed to draw a comparison between public and private dispensaries, we would decidedly give the preference to private, for this reason, that they inflict no moral injury upon the

receivers of the supposed benefit; they destroy not that spirit of independence so essential to the healthy condition of a community, and which it is the tendency of all public charity to annihilate.

We think we can see a strong analogy between public and private dispensaries, and public and private anatomical theatres; and there can be but little difference of opinion in the profession as to which of these possesses the advantage. But we would not have it imagined that we are defending the system of connexion between medical men and chemists; all we say is, that persons must very forcibly strain their judgment to discover honour in the one, and disrepute in the other. With regard to physicians having a share in a business, notwithstanding the general impression of its inconsistency with etiquette, we will be bold enough to ask the question, as to the difference between holding shares in any business, and holding them in railroads, banks, or any other companies? And we presume no one will deny the legitimacy of a physician having interest in these things; but it will be said that he sends his prescriptions there: of course he does, if he can, and most strange if he did not; we see nothing more unreasonable in this, than in a general practitioner sending his medicines from his own surgery. As it was said before the passing of the late anatomical bill, the

crime of exhumation consisted in being discovered, so here the disgrace arises from its secrecy. If a physician sends all his prescriptions to one place on the plea of their being better prepared, and with purer drugs, drawing an unfair comparison between that shop and others, it is not only unprofessional, but most dishonest; but if it be generally known that a certain physician has an interest in a certain shop, and is in the habit of recommending that shop in consequence, no injury can accrue to any one: people are not compelled to go there if it does not suit them, and no false impression is given. The practice in no way interferes with the functions of a physician, therefore let it be recognized in the profession, and then it will be done openly instead of secretly.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DISPENSARIES.

This naturally leads us on to say something of dispensaries and medical charities. We have observed with the deepest concern and melancholy, the rapid increase of these institutions of late years, and the great public interest which they excite. We have read advertisements with palpitating hearts of great dinners to be given, and balls to be held, and sub-

scriptions to be raised, and ostentatious details of large sums subscribed, and speeches delivered, in support of them, which, with all due respect to the motives of those who contribute, we cannot but regard as possessing a most demoralizing tendency. Individuals who make no hesitation about giving guineas after guineas for these supposed charities, generally move their purse strings very slowly in the cause of private beneficence; they would shun as a monster the friend who wanted a trifle to advance him in the world, and are scrupulously exact in their dealings with men of probity and industry; in making bargains with an honest workman, or engaging a domestic. But if a person applies who has nought to offer in exchange, he meets with a ready response. This proves there to be a pleasure in the exercise of beneficence. It is a pity that so beautiful a trait, and one so deeply rooted in the human mind, should not be able to find worthier and more fruitful objects on which to display its activity, instead of allowing it to run at random, and waste its richness on rank or barren soil.

So far as the persons are concerned, for whom these institutions are professedly founded, the tendency is decidedly bad and immoral. If the inculcation of provident habits be an important desideratum in raising the character of the lower

orders, here is a most fatal blow struck at the very foundation of that improvement. If food, and clothing, and lodging, could be had with as much ease as medicine and advice, where is the man who would work? And whilst sickness is provided against, what man, unless he be higher minded than the generality, will save a trifle of his earnings? The strongest motive of the majority for working, we presume to be to procure a livelihood; and the strongest practical motive to providence, we take to be, to provide against times of sickness and old age. If this be a correct view, then it necessarily follows that the public medical institutions with which London swarms, must be most demoralizing, inasmuch as they offer a premium to extravagance and waste.

That they are unjust in their operation is no less equally clear, and when we say this, we hope we have shook their stability; they are unjust, because they hold out an advantage to those who are the least worthy; they confer their benefits, if benefits they be, on the idle, the reckless, and the profligate, and they withhold them from the steady, the frugal, and the thoughtful. Is it just that an industrious man who has been working all his life, and has saved a small pittance, who has even denied himself rational recreation, should be in no better condition than one

who has squandered his earnings in riot and profusion? What encouragement has a man to a course of steady sobriety, when he sees it amounts to the same thing whether he works or not? The moral principle must be very strong indeed, when it is allowed to overcome such powerful inducements to reckless profligacy; and when this principle does exist so strong, the possessors do not trouble dispensaries.

We can tell the supporters of these institutions, from having had a long experience with the working classes and poorer orders, that it is not the steady working man, the useful member of society, who profits by their beneficence; but the very scum, those who spend the earnings of the week on drink and debauchery, who roll along the streets on Saturday nights in glorious oblivion of the past, who rise on the Monday pale and wan, in the lowest state of depression; these are chiefly the persons on whom their munificence is expended; and to support a career of crime and folly, is the system upheld. The man of sober and industrious habits, who possesses a true sense of his own dignity, scorns to solicit for charity at a public institution: he works, and slaves, and denies himself rest and food, before he will submit to such degradation, and when the evil day comes, and absolute necessity compels him to apply

for assistance, from that day, from that very hour that he first receives relief in the form of public charity, like the "*King's shilling*," it has damned him for ever; he feels that his self-respect and self-reliance have received a blow, from which they will never recover; he feels that a stigma is attached to him destined to haunt him through life.* He would have worked skin to bone before it had come to this, but having passed the Rubicon, like a woman who has lost her honour, each slip becomes more and more easy; and having nothing to protect, he cares for nothing, but becomes wild and careless, fit only to herd with slaves and swine. What we have been here urging, is not the fruit of idle speculation and reverie, but the result of a conviction obtained by a

* We cannot in this place resist the temptation of exposing one of the absurd fallacies by which this nation has been misruled; it proves how uncongenial a state of war is with the cultivation of sound principles of philosophy. Will it be believed, at the present day, that a prime minister of England, during a great part of the reign of George the Third, William Pitt, could have betrayed such profound ignorance of the human mind, as to have given utterance to the sentiment, that the acceptance of public charity should be esteemed an honour? Is it credible that any individual could have imagined that he had power to twist about human principles and feelings at his pleasure; to make that honourable which Nature in her wisdom has stamped, imperishably stamped, with the marks of disgrace?

long and close observation of facts passing in the world, and which any one may see if he will only open his eyes and look.

The existence of any public charitable institution is a proof of a diseased condition of society: they are all species of the fungus tribe, and indicate something rotten at the heart. A community in a healthy state, can require no fixed establishments of charity; in all large societies there will be occasional temporary distress, but in the absence of permanent institutions, private beneficence will be found far more than amply sufficient to rectify it; and he who would thus libel human nature as to deny this, would at once prove himself to be ignorant of mankind and facts relating to history. England is notoriously the land of charity, yet we can scarcely leave the door but we meet distress, nay, it is waiting there, and pursues us to our innermost apartments; but the misery which is so evident to the outward senses, is nothing when compared to that which is pining away in modesty behind the scenes, apart from every human eye.

If a man be adequately rewarded for his labour, what does he want with public charity? We think it must be obvious to any reasonable mind, that God never formed one half the world to have their necessaries doled out to them, in the form of public charity,

by the other half. The institution of public medical charities, like all other public charities, we strongly suspect is prescribing for an effect only, entirely overlooking the grand cause, which they rather fan and inflame, than weaken; and if we may be again allowed to digress a little, we would refer it to the more reflecting, whether they are not calculated to loosen the base of our social constitution, and in the end endanger the government itself? The strength of a government, if it be just, will always be in proportion to the freedom the people enjoy: now, freedom we take to be utterly incompatible with the acceptance of public charity. Then it follows of course that the more these institutions increase, and the more recipients there are, the more precarious will become the foundations on which a just government is built. How many thousands are there annually brought into the world by charity! from the moment they receive the breath of life, they are nursed by charity; they are educated, if we may be pardoned such a flagrant misuse of that word, they are educated by charity; they are afterwards supported by charity; they give life to others by charity; and they eventually go out of the world by charity. Are such as these ornaments to society, or can they exist in any very large numbers but to the endangerment of the state? We would ask any one acquainted with the simplest

elements of the human mind, if it be possible to impress such persons with any rational notions, or love of liberty? All the idea of liberty they have, is a liberty to break down and destroy, to lead a wild and reckless life, to infringe the liberties of others, and disregard the rights of property: it would be as reasonable to expect to "gather grapes of thorns," as to think to instil a conviction into such persons of their individual moral responsibility to that great family of which they form a part. It is the direct tendency of public charities to nurse and to cherish this mischievous system.

Now having said thus much against the policy of dispensaries, so far as the recipients of the benefit are concerned, and society generally, we will view them as the appointed medical attendants are affected, which is much more to our purpose, and see if they are calculated in any way to raise the character of the profession, or the reverse.

In the first place, the canvassing, which necessarily presupposes the requisition of testimonials, and when obtained, the hawking them from house to house soliciting votes and interest, often meeting great rebuffs, occasionally something worse from the mighty lords of wealth and influence; this surely is any thing but congenial with personal dignity and respect: but as we have fully discussed this in our chapter on

Canvassing, we will say no more about it now. It occasionally happens that medical officers are obliged to submit to great indignities from the patients; when some persons are made the dispensers of other's bounty, a degree of jealousy is naturally excited in the receivers to see that it is dispensed fairly, and a fancied neglect will sometimes call forth a volume of the real genuine: we have heard the like of this—"A pretty fellow, when he is paid by lords and ladies, to give away the physic gracious *(gratis)*, to treat the people so, but we'll get him discharged." The poor look upon what they receive in the form of *public* charity as a right, when it has become habitual to them, and they are extremely tenacious of their supposed rights: we have been present when a subscriber has been asked for a letter of recommendation to a medical charity as a matter of course, with all the *nonchalance* and confidence that would have been displayed in purchasing a loaf of bread, the mere asking being considered a sufficient claim to possession.

We now come to a very important part of our subject; and as we prefer working upon data, we shall make the altercation which occurred a few years back in the Aldersgate-street Dispensary, the ground of our remarks. It will be remembered that, in consequence of an alleged impertinent interference on the part of the governors, all the medical officers

simultaneously sent in their resignations; and a meeting was convened at the Freemasons', at which we were present, and which was largely attended for the purpose of giving some public testimonial of its approbation of their conduct. One gentleman, whilst descanting very warmly, and with great eloquence, upon the necessity of supporting the dignity of the profession, which the public had shewn a disposition to assail, observed, "What! are we, the élite of society, men of honour and of good occupation, to submit to be dictated to by a parcel of petty tradespeople?" Without stopping to animadvert upon the propriety or good taste of such language, and at a public meeting, we would just remark that we agree with the gentleman in the sentiment, that the profession ought not to submit to the dictatorial decrees of those much below them in rank, or much above them either; but what is it to do? Here comes the unfortunate dilemma. The subscribers and supporters of a public medical institution have an undoubted moral and legal right to elect the public officers, and to manage their own affairs; and if they feel dissatisfied with one medical officer, they are privileged in equity to dismiss him, and elect another, and make what regulations they please; the institution is their's, and the medical officers, as well as all other officers, their servants.

All persons holding official situations are the

servants of the public, and the public are bound in conscience to look after them, and see that they do their duty. Medical men are not to trample down the ramparts of right, in order to maintain their supposed dignity. If they will condescend to seek these situations with such avidity, they must submit in common justice to the dictates of their masters, be they ever so tyrannical, and emanating from petty tradespeople, and such like beings, or what is far worse, from the insufferable domineering spirit of wealth.

The existence of public dispensaries necessarily offers this alternative to medical men: either they must be guilty of violating the laws of justice, or else they must occasionally submit to see the dignity of the profession suffer injury in their persons. We suspect the nature of true dignity is not sufficiently understood, nor are we disposed to set a very high value upon that, which is so extremely sensitive to the slightest puff upon its reputation; people who are in the constant habit of talking about, and extolling any particular virtue, are generally conscious of some weakness there; like all other lofty moral qualities, dignity is too much mixed up and contaminated with external show and absurd assumptions, instead of being allowed to rest upon its own inherent native excellence.

We submit that the altercation in question tended in no way to raise the profession in public estimation, but rather that its true dignity suffered great damage; for by the tenor of a few extracts now before me, taken from the leading journals of the day, it would seem that the public regarded the conduct of the medical department, to say the least of it, as most dishonourable, if not fraudulent; and nothing was more common at the time than to hear in society the "*high medical tone*" spoken of in burlesque, in truth, it had almost become a cant phrase: so that inasmuch as the respectability of the profession is concerned, these institutions are no acquisition, and as the public are affected by them, they are most mischievous and immoral. Of course we have studiously avoided entering into the merits of that particular case, as it does not bear upon our subject.

CHAPTER XIX.—Part I.

A FEW REMARKS ADDRESSED TO MEDICAL PUPILS, AND ASSISTANTS, AND JUNIOR PRACTITIONERS.

We should, perhaps, be considered remiss were we to confine all our observations to the elder branches of the profession, without reserving any for the

younger; and we trust they will be received in the same spirit in which they are offered, as we are thoroughly persuaded the more strictly they are observed, the greater will be the benefit derived by the individual.

We shall first address ourselves to those who have just entered the profession, of doing which there are several ways; some go at once to the hospitals, others are bound as pupils to private practitions, others again are put into shops. Of all these various modes, we are rather disposed to think that being in a shop a short time, at least, makes a man a more perfect master of his profession; gives him an insight into all the different branches; the elementary part of prescribing, dispensing, and chemical action, is better seen there; and the active employment which it affords is good for the health; and it, in a great degree, relieves a youth of that quantity of idle time which is generally thrown upon his hands at a private practitioner's, and which often generates habits of indolence.

The first duty indispensable to every young man is to acquire good general habits of business, always appearing to understand what he is about, and to take an interest in his occupation; moving with activity, and not as if he were labouring under paralysis; displaying a quickness of mind in taking mes-

sages, which should be noted immediately in a book kept for the purpose, with as much as can be prudently ascertained of the nature of the illness, whether sudden or not, and the patient, whether child or adult: this information will frequently guide a practitioner as to the urgency of his attendance. In case of an accident an opportunity is afforded to a pupil, or assistant, to prove his worth: if he is uncertain where to find the principal, or the distance be too great to seek him, he should request the attendance of any medical friend, who usually officiates in such absence; if one cannot be found, let him proceed at once to the house, offer the best assistance he is able; and if this be done with an earnestness and urbanity of manner, and without manifesting impatience at any little want of confidence which may be expressed, he will, in nine cases out of ten, be the means of saving a patient, and gain himself much credit for his promptitude. In habits of business attention is implied; an open shop, or even accessible surgery, should be left as little as possible; when deserted a very bad impression is conveyed to strangers; many people, in little matters, frequently prefer coming to the surgery, and not finding a ready access will sometimes go elsewhere.

There is a feeling, very natural in young persons,

that a profession, standing so much higher in public rank than other occupations, ought to exempt them from anything which does not bear directly upon it; thus, the washing out a bottle or a mortar is far beneath their dignity; but it is a foolish sort of pride, which nobody will appreciate but themselves, which will stand much in the way of their advancement, and which they should be *too proud* to indulge. We have known pupils prefer standing idle, looking at a boy whilst so employed, when they might have done it better themselves in half the time; we have ever found that the best apprentices and best assistants have not been above these things; such have always acquired the most respect, and proved the most talented in after life. We shall, perhaps, have some influence with our young friends, when we tell them, that the extreme nicety of distinction which some draw between what does and what does not come within the pale of their duty, when they manifest such a jealousy of their supposed immunities, they are identifying themselves with the occupiers of the kitchen; for there a regular peerage is established, and it would require the acuteness of a metaphysician to discern all the delicate little shades constituting the duty of each.

We are now about to allude to a subject, which by many students will be considered a sore point;

we wish our observations to be considered general, and to apply to all medical students, apprentices, and assistants—we refer to the abuse of the domestic circle. Most articled pupils are received by medical men with the understanding that they are to be treated as one of the family; this of course relates to the domestic arrangements. Now we consider it a gross perversion of this privilege when young men neglect their surgery, or study, to intrude themselves uninvited upon the family. We have known some young men so ignorant of what is proper, as to imagine that their presence was always necessary to complete the family group; and others so obtuse as to be unable to take a hint, when it has been requisite to give one to procure their absence. We hold it to be an axiom with all well-educated youths, that they should not encroach beyond the regular hours of meals, which may always be considered to be finished after the removal of the cloth; and to continue beyond that time, without an especial invite, or a previous understanding, shews extreme ill-breeding; besides, nothing tends sooner to defeat its own object, and to alienate a young man from the kind consideration of a family, than an undue intrusion upon their private conversations. He may depend on this, that if his company be agreeable, it will be requested; and to force it unasked, proves a

great deficiency in common self-respect. We have seen so many instances of want of delicacy on this point, that it has been necessary to intimate broadly that there were duties in the study or surgery requiring immediate attention.

On the other hand, we would recommend more liberality of feeling on the part of many principals, and that they should not adopt the other extreme, which amounts to a total exclusion from the family; a great deal must depend upon the nature of the business and the youth. But there are occasions when a pupil or assistant might naturally look to be invited, to identify himself as one of the family; and this ought to be equally gratifying to the principal and to the student; and, inasmuch as it establishes a good understanding between them, may be said to promote their mutual interests.

The entrance to the hospitals generally proves a strong trial to a young man's constancy: there are various guides, so far as the acquisition of professional knowledge is concerned; but our business is with the moral department. The more steady and retired in his habits a youth may have been previously, the more danger is there, presuming on his supposed security, that he may run upon the rocks. With many young men, it is the first time that they have felt irresponsible to any but themselves; re-

lieved from the wholesome discipline exercised under a father's or a master's roof, the first sensation of perfect freedom has a most intoxicating effect upon the mind, like the sun bursting forth in all his splendour at noon day upon the captive just liberated from the gloomy cell of a prison-house; and many fall victims to its maddening influence. The variety of amusements and delights with which London abounds; the temptations presenting themselves at every turning, soliciting indulgence with the sweet irresistible voice of a syren, present trials of no ordinary magnitude, before which the strongest fortified principle is in danger of falling. The best way of avoiding the snare, is always to bear in remembrance the object of attending the hospitals; that every hour ought to be devoted to the acquisition of information; that time, now lost, is irrecoverable; that, what with lectures, study, and dissections, the mind should never be allowed to wander in idleness; but, above all, to be especially careful in forming associates, for characters will be found of every shade.

Whilst we are upon this subject, we cannot resist appealing to the professors and lecturers at these institutions, as fathers of families, as members of society, as individuals filling most responsible situations, as having the care of hundreds of young men

whilst the character is forming, and, therefore, more susceptible of outward influence, whether it be consistent with that occupation to which men of the first rate minds have devoted themselves; whether it be consistent with that refinement which it is the tendency of the study of nature to create; whether it be consistent in the demonstration of the last, and noblest work of God, to introduce those low and obscene allusions which we remember to have so frequently heard in our time, for the purpose of obtaining a little temporary applause?

CHAPTER XIX.—Part II.

Our concluding remarks will be addressed to those young men, who are about to, or have actually commenced, practice for themselves. It is another important era, fraught with care and anxiety, perhaps, the most momentous of a medical man's life; inasmuch, as the words,

> "There is a tide in the affairs of man
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune,"

would seem to apply with peculiar force to that time, his die is cast; for if a man is unsuccessful at the commencement, the probability is, he will

never recover it. Thus we see the medical profession presents more instances, than any other employment, of men constantly changing their residences, when they have once made a false move. To avert this calamity as much as possible from future practitioners, we will endeavour to point out where the shoals and quicksands lie.

In the first place, and paramount in importance, is that of never forsaking oneself, for our friends will be sure to betray us when they find we have opened the gates to the enemy; on the ground then (if we may be pardoned for quoting a somewhat vulgar, but very faithful and very appropriate adage), *viz.* that it is a principle with John Bull to feed the fat sow,—we would urge the necessity of giving the impression, so far as it can be done with truth, of success: never to despair; and if desponding thoughts should occasionally intrude, to conceal their effects from others. Another cause, which has been the ruin of thousands, is raising the expectations too high. Most men commence practice with sanguine dispositions, especially if they are very young, having just acquired a large mass of information, which appears the greater from comparison, and in possession of a number of ill-sorted and ill-digested facts, they think that they have but to apply the match to the Thames, and that it will instantly blaze

up; as one, who has suddenly come into the command of a large fortune, imagines that all are to bend to him, as though he had supernaturally received a rich heritage of wisdom with his wealth. The result is, they meet with disappointment; they suffer this to annoy them, to prey upon their minds, and it becomes obvious to those around; it destroys their ability to pursue their occupation with energy, and one evil often generates another; they become disgusted with practice, and change their situation with the absurd hope of improving their condition. In a short time they meet with the same annoyances, and change again, and thus life is frittered away without any good result; when this happens it is all over.

Now, to prevent this consummation, we would advise that a young man should commence with very moderate expectations, and not to imagine that the moment his signal is hung out, his door is to be beset. Persons to whom he may have been strongly recommended, and are well disposed towards him, generally like to observe how he goes on for a while; and relations are not usually over ready to advance a helping hand, until they think they possess a clear view of the aspect of affairs; for, however unamiable a trait it may be in the human character, it is as true as truth itself, that

Dr. Johnson's illustration of Lord Chesterfield's conduct towards him,—leaving him to struggle with the waters in the midst of the stream, but extending a helping hand when he had already reached the shore,—applies to the whole human race.

From that absurd and unjust custom of running bills, of which we have fully treated in another part, young practitioners generally become the victims of the most infamous impositions. Judging of others by themselves, and imagining that people would rather defraud any than a medical man, they treat all the world as honest, until they discover, to their bitter cost and disappointment, the erroneous impression under which they have laboured; so that, when a man fancies he has commenced very auspiciously, it often turns out he has been doing worse than nothing: this is another fruitful source of annoyance.

Some practitioners, possessed of very sensitive minds, suffer much from the caprice of the public; and it must be admitted to be extremely trying, when a man is conscious of having acted to the best of his judgment, and done the fullest justice, to meet with dissatisfaction, and sometimes reproach; but there is no help for it. These things must be borne, and borne too with patience and philosophy, and not suffered to fret and vex the

mind; the best way is to endeavour to forget them, or regard them as part of the necessary conditions of existence.

Another overflowing fountain of disappointment is a fancied deficiency in the respect which is his due: it is a common error with young men to suppose themselves better qualified than others, an error which subsides with years; and really, when we have heard young persons, mere lads, speak with the most unbounded assurance of their abilities being sufficiently great to procure them a practice any where, we have scarcely been able to refrain from breaking the rules of politeness. The early age at which many enter practice, lays them more open to these disappointments than if they had waited a little longer. We consider it a great mistake, the instant men have obtained the legal qualifications, to rush into practice, with little practical experience of medicine, and still less of mankind; but, heedless of the advice of older mariners, anxious to shew their prowess, believing their skill to be infallible, they run their vessel into the midst of the billows, and are immediately stranded on a rock; and thus it is, that at an advanced age, so many have to commence life a second time.

On entering into business, we would decidedly urge that a man should put on an humble appear-

ance, unless he possesses peculiar advantages, which do not fall to the lot of most, and rise gradually. If a practitioner begins with a shop, and then takes a private house, and so enlarges his establishment by degrees, it tends to fix an impression of his stability; but no important move should be made too rapidly; this would defeat the object. If a man seems to rise faster than the world will give him credit for, it will regard him as playing a game at hazard, and staking his all upon the last throw. Thus, we have frequently observed men, who were in too great a hurry to drive their vehicles, obliged to relinquish them; whereas, if they had been contented to wait a while, they might have continued them. This has a very bad appearance; nevertheless, if they cannot afford to keep them without trespassing upon the rights of others, the most honest and independent way is to put them down. A chaise is a pretty thing enough, but is more often kept for show than business: the public are on this point very guilty; for on account of the dislike of many to see a medical man come on foot to their houses, practitioners are too frequently led to pamper this folly, and to go beyond the bounds of justice.

With respect to conduct to patients generally, and in the sick-room, of course the same behaviour which is adapted to educated persons, would only

excite the contempt of the ignorant; therefore, that must be formed according to the individual. Some like a rough, independent manner, bordering upon rudeness; others a calm and quiet demeanour; some will bear very plain unvarnished language; to others this is disgusting; but kindness of manner and attention are usually attractive, though there are some on whom these would only provoke insult. A sense of sympathy, warmly expressed, excites good feeling in the sick; examining the tongue minutely, and feeling the pulse, and looking to various other little matters, whether it be necessary or not, is always good policy: patients look to these trifles more than to the operation of medicines, and form their judgment accordingly; and if a practitioner neglects them, acts with *hauteur*, always seems hurried, goes into a sick-room with his hat on, asks more than once the same question, manifests a greater exactitude in sending his medicine than paying his visits, treats all in an offhand way, answers inquiries affectedly, and with impatience, he must not expect to meet with success.

When a highly fortunate practitioner of this town was asked to what he considered he was most indebted in his professional career, he replied, to his attention; because not one patient out of twelve could judge of his skill, but all could judge of his atten-

tion; and if they received this, they would give credit for the skill. An anecdote bearing upon this point was related to the writer a short time since: an elderly lady residing a short distance from town, was attended by a gentleman of some standing in her neighbourhood, but who had never thoroughly had her confidence, and one day entirely lost it by the following ill-timed remark. His carriage was standing at the door, which was near a turnpike, and whilst he was apparently feeling the old lady's pulse with much attention, he was fumbling in his pocket with the other hand, and then suddenly exclaimed, "How stupid I am, for I have forgotten the halfpence for the gate." She sent for a friend of the writer soon afterwards, and told him she should never think of employing Mr. —— again, as she was certain, that he was thinking much more of his own purse, than her pulse: a remonstrance against this idea was in vain, and from that period the gentleman lost a good patient.

Unquestionable talent may be allowed to indulge in extravagancies which sometimes have an imposing effect, and it will generally command success; but the public will not tolerate such in other men; and as they will not concede this talent to all, whatever the individuals may think, the majority must be contented to confine themselves within the regulations of so-

ciety; and as a general rule, we would say, that behaviour is the most becoming which is the least affected and most natural to the man; and if he has not had his kindly feelings and sympathies destroyed by uncongenial circumstances, he will not be likely to err, if he follows the instincts of nature. When a man possesses the means, we would decidedly give the preference to a partnership or a private practice, over a shop, even at commencing; for although, as we have elsewhere stated, it cannot possibly affect a man's character individually living in one house or another, and ought to have no influence with his professional brethren, yet the public look at these things very much; and we hesitate not to assert, that there are few persons who would not prefer giving a private practitioner twenty shillings, rather than ten to one having a shop; and there are very many, who simply on this ground would decline employing a medical man at all. It must be confessed, that an imposing private residence, guarded by a footman in livery, has a wonderful effect in obtaining the confidence of the ignorant, which indeed is a most comprehensive term; but we would by no means advise any one to hazard embarrassment for the sake of public estimation.

In purchasing a business or a partnership, too great caution cannot be used; the buying and selling

medical practices has become a regular trade, the far greater portion of those advertised for sale being got up, like Peter Pindar's razors, purposely for sale, and not for use. In partnerships, we think the most eligible plan for a young man is, to serve a short time as an assistant, where it can be done: it gives him an insight into the true character of the practice, and enables him to feel his way with the patients, especially in the better practices, as opinion is frequently so strong in favour of the principal, that an assistant acting up to him in most matters, will make more way than even a partner.

In conclusion, we would say a few words upon the subject of marriage. Of all the occupations of life, there is certainly not one which could urge so strong a plea for the necessity of marriage to success as the profession of medicine, and perhaps none where so great reluctance is manifested. It is a common saying, that a medical man could keep a wife for nought, but this is nought to the purpose: the moral responsibilities incurred by marriage are very great, and it is we apprehend from a conviction of these in men better educated than the mass that the reluctance arises; but, although we are thoroughly persuaded of its important assistance to success, if even it be not indispensable, we would advise no young man to incur the responsibility, until he can

see his way clearly. And in this place we are unable to resist laying a heavy accusation at the door of the public, of a most serious crime against the laws of morality: from that unreasonable feeling of not liking to employ an unmarried medical man, pervading almost all the better classes, who ought to possess more sense, many are hurried into an act which proves the path to ruin. The first question put relative to a medical man is, is he married?—not is he steady, is he able, to be trusted? but is he married? As if that were the climax of all that is good!

Instead of giving encouragement to persevering industry, and permitting a man to see his way, they compel him in a measure to hazard that responsibility; and what, with the anxieties produced by a young and increasing family, and those necessarily connected with the practice of the most arduous and care-creating of professions, a man is frequently worn out long before his time, and weighed down with mental depression: the thought of leaving a wife and family unprotected, which ought to arouse him, increasing the depression still more; and he sinks into an early grave, realizing the most formidable of all his fears. Alas! how frequently do we witness the young widow of a medical practitioner thrown unprotected upon the world, with a small

family, and with means scarcely sufficient to provide all the necessaries of life! And all this owing to the ridiculous and reprehensible feeling, that unmarried men are not to be trusted. We hesitate not to give our most decided and unqualified opinion, founded on some experience, and much observation of these matters, that there is more steadiness, more honesty, more consciousness of responsibility, more straightforwardness, and more refinement of mind in single men than in married. The explanation is not very difficult: married men are generally older, and their longer intercourse with the world has somewhat blunted the sentiments; their ideas of honour are not so acute as those of young men; whilst they are deterred by policy, young men are actuated by higher principles, and marriage does not invariably tend to refine the ideas. When any public exposure has been made of a violation of professional confidence, has the delinquent ever been an unmarried man? Has he not always been of maturer years, and either married, or a widower? We think this will be found to be the case, and yet single men are constantly to be regarded with suspicion!

CHAPTER XX.

RESPECTING MINOR POINTS.

THERE are a great many trifling questions, about which there seems to be no general understanding, and it is to be hoped there never will, as they are quite unworthy of notice. It may, perhaps, be as well to allude to two or three, just to illustrate our meaning, such as, whether prescriptions should be written in English, Latin, Greek, or double Dutch? Whether it be lawful for one practitioner to decipher the prescription of another? Whether medical men should dress in black, or brown; wear kid, or Berlin gloves; eat peas, or beans, or go without if they cannot get either? Whether physicians should refuse their fees, if they are not wrapped up in writing-paper, and sealed with fancy wax, and put into the right hand? Some persons have a very coarse method of paying a professional man, bouncing a sovereign down upon the table, making it ring in his ears,—but this only proves it to be good, which we submit with all deference is an important thing to know in taking a sovereign, and the sound of money gives a pleasurable sensation to some people, although it be the sound of the parting knell. Others will pay a bill

in silver, which, though it may be rather cumbersome, yet, in the absence of gold, we presume will be found very useful. Whether practitioners on entering a house should put the right or the left foot first? Whether they should wear gold watch-chains, or simply ribbons? Whether they should dine at two o'clock, or ten in the evening? Whether it is etiquette to attend their own wives, or not? All these things of course are matters of taste and feeling. Whether a physician may bleed, or even carry a lancet, or prescribe in any surgical case, or whether a *pure* surgeon may prescribe in any medical case? It appears to us a most outrageous piece of tyranny that a physician should not be allowed to bleed, or anything else that he thinks proper; on the contrary, we think a man must make but a poor physician who is unable to bleed, and that he is bound in honour and conscience always to carry a lancet in his pocket—a circumstance which has recently occurred in high quarters, producing some little noise at the moment, would seem to support this opinion. We lately read a statement, that at a public institution in a provincial town, the surgeons refused to act any more with one of the physicians, because he had prescribed in a surgical case. We lament that the profession is still infested with so much rubbish; such paltry conduct is beyond the reach of contempt, and tends to illus-

trate the truth of what we have elsewhere asserted respecting the medical appointments to public institutions.

CHAPTER XXI.

SOLICITATION.

Before we conclude this treatise, we do not consider that we should be doing justice to the subject, if we were not to make an allusion to a practice, which is becoming far too universal, and in which the interest generally of the profession is deeply concerned. We refer to the custom of solicitation, which long continued habit in country towns and villages seems to have sanctioned, and which would appear to be spreading its contagion to the metropolis. We are aware that this is a tender subject, inasmuch as it is practised by the higher class of practitioners, or more correctly speaking, by practitioners moving in a higher sphere. Now we would earnestly appeal to these individuals, whether it be consistent with their high calling, with the dignity, or self-respect which naturally belongs to men engaged in one of the noblest of employments—we would even go farther, and appeal to them as men, whether it be consistent with that moral responsibility, which ought, and does

attach to them as members of society, exclusive of any occupation, to go about entreating to be permitted to attend families, and thus as it were forcing their advice. To say that this is levelling the profession with the lowest of trades, is by no means saying the whole truth; for there are a great many persons in business who would scorn to go about seeking, or begging for customers; it is levelling the profession with the trade of a common beggar; for we should like to see by what sophistry a man would prove to us the difference between a person actually asking alms, or selling matches for halfpence, and another begging to be permitted to provide professional advice and medicine, for shillings?

There is something more mean, more repulsive to a modest and ingenuous mind, in soliciting to be allowed to attend upon an individual's person, than in requesting permission to supply provisions, or any other articles; and such a practice, we submit, with all due respect to the profession, cannot but be calculated to diminish the public estimation in which the profession is held, to bring it even into contempt with the more discerning classes, to lessen the standard of morals amongst the members themselves, and to render the vocation less attractive to nobler and more exalted minds. To look at it in another light, it is unfair, for it gives a most decided supe-

riority to the man who practises it, over him who scorns to descend to such ignoble means; and must eventually tend, if it is to be legitimatized and acknowledged in the profession, to drive nearly all the more independent spirits from it, or else compel them to lower their moral tone in order to meet with success. The occupation will thus become of a demoralizing character, offering a promising harvest to the reckless adventurer, and spreading its infection amongst the members of the community, instead of turning its power to account in elevating the tone of society.

In close alliance with solicitation, is that of calling upon new comers into a neighbourhood, under pretence of paying their respects, but in reality to see what can be got out of them; if complaisance can in any way plead an excuse for this in the country, yet in London it cannot possibly do any such thing. It may be part of the duty of a clergyman to call upon strangers, especially if they are of his congregation, and this attention only manifests an amiable and sociable disposition; but we submit it would be far more dignified, under all circumstances, for a medical man to wait until his attendance was requested; he does not know that his company may be acceptable; and round about London the new settlers have generally plenty of friends, if not in that immediate part, at least in visiting distance: and we hesitate not to

say that it is most unworthy and unprofessional, for men practising about the suburbs to be constantly on the watch for new families, and forcing their way into the house, though it be only *to leave their cards;* and when we hear of a practitioner receiving a sharp rebuke for his impertinent intrusion, we confess it is no source of mortification to us. We know that the meaner orders of tradespeople are in the habit of thrusting in their cards in such cases, so that by the time a man is settled in his house, it often happens that he has all the addresses of the place, and possesses as good a knowledge of the inhabitants, as if he had the Directory before him. We are always sorry to see encouragement given to this system of immodest pushing; but when medical practitioners descend so low, we feel ourselves contaminated by the degradation, which, as belonging to the body, may be said also to involve us in a measure.

FINIS.

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