

A lecture introductory to a course on midwifery, and diseases of females and children, delivered at the Anglesey Lying-in Hospital / [G.T. Hayden].

Contributors

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A LECTURE,

INTRODUCTORY TO A COURSE

ON

MIDWIFERY,

AND

DISEASES OF FEMALES AND CHILDREN,

DELIVERED AT THE

ANGLESEY LYING-IN HOSPITAL,

BY

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MDCCCXXXII.

A HISTORY

OF THE

WIDOWS

OF THE



G. T. HAYDEN

AND TO THE

A LECTURE,

&c. &c.

GENTLEMEN,

As it is customary to preface actual business by some introductory observations, it may not be out of place to examine the question which naturally arises in every reflecting mind on entering a place for instruction—

Is the object in view equivalent to the labour bestowed in obtaining it?

Surely it is,—and eminently so. Will you not labour to acquire such information as shall not only enable you to pass certain Examinations, but also qualify you to practise *the* profession with safety and advantage to the public,—the merited approbation of your professional brethren,—the honour, profit, and satisfaction of yourself.

In examining the means of obtaining this avowedly desirable end, we shall, in the FIRST PLACE, glance at the opportunities afforded at this Institution.

SECONDLY. Consider how necessary is the knowledge of the Anatomy and Physiology of the whole frame, as well for the Accoucheur as the general Practitioner.

THIRDLY. Point out the necessity of a competent knowledge of Obstetrics, as requisite for *all* Practitioners.

FOURTHLY. I shall offer a few practical suggestions; and conclude with some observations, purporting to shew the extent and sum of information required for the safe and judicious treatment of those diseases, which are incidental to females and children.

The central situation of the Anglesey Lying-in Hospital renders it a most desirable residence for the student,—its proximity to the hospitals and schools affording him, at the least sacrifice of time, such facilities of attending those valuable repositories of information where you may study the progress of disease,—terminating, *here*, in the brightening countenance of convalescence and health,—*there* in the doleful and *Hippocratic* aspect of the dying and the dead.

From the arrangements made at this establishment, you can, as resident pupil, enjoy on the one hand as much the society of your fellow-students as you please, or on the other, by retiring to your own apartment, concentrate your attention on study, which we all know is so much favoured by retirement and seclusion.

A registry of the Midwifery cases is carefully kept—as much instruction as I am capable of giving shall be conveyed, in considering the rationale of the treatment required in each case. The Pupils shall be examined respecting the cases under their care; and when any is important or curious, it shall be fully noted, and receive a proportionate share of attention.

In fine, every thing shall be done to promote the advancement of the Pupil, and to instil that practical knowledge which becomes so absolutely necessary when left to our own resources.

From the locality of the Anglesey Hospital, and the attention which has been invariably paid to the patients, the number of Midwifery applicants is increasing daily, so as now to give an abundant supply of obstetric practice, as well as that of the Diseases of Females and Children.

The Pupil has the charge of the patient, in the majority of instances. He is thus compelled, as it were, to discover the hidden causes of disease, and, by a just and successful line of practice, bring the case to a happy termination. The *onus* of a regular practitioner sets his faculties to work, in order that he may effectually and conscientiously discharge the duties of his responsible office.

I may here inform you that few cases require more promptitude in attendance, or more decision in practice, than those which are purely obstetric.

The Compounding Department of this Institution presents the Pupil with the valuable opportunity of learning Pharmaceutical Chemistry and Pharmacy, which have been justly said to bear the same important relation to the science of Chemistry, as Dissection or Practical Anatomy does to the science of Anatomy. I would most strongly impress upon you the necessity of availing yourself of every opportunity of acquiring information in this way; it is lasting, *because* it is practical: compared with reading only, it presents as much difference as the map of a country and the country itself.

As you observe the medicines, &c. ordered at the hospital, consult your dispensatory systems on *Materia Medica* or *Pharmacologia*, from which you will learn their qualities, properties, uses, and doses, commencing with those most generally directed; and thus you will acquire, as it were by gratifying your curiosity, the knowledge of several medicines, which, if read about without being particularly sought after, would not be so tenaciously remembered.

The *Medical Establishment* attached and *auxiliary* to the Institution, for the sale of medicines and the compounding of prescriptions, has been undertaken by order of the Managing Committee, owing to the disallowance of the usual grant from the grand jury, and the consequent inadequacy of the funds for the support of the charity.

The following are the grounds upon which the Committee rest their claims for support:

1st. The profits of the establishment will be *exclusively* devoted to the funds of the Hospital, which has relieved 16,285 of the sick poor during the last three years.

2d. The medicines dispensed are of the best kind.

3d. The compounding department presents the great and *rare* advantage of being *exclusively* conducted by a licentiate apothecary of considerable experience.

4th. The prices are more moderate than any other house in Dublin.

The foregoing measures, in aid of the funds of the Hospital, were adopted at the suggestion of one of the members of the Committee, to whom, for his indefatigable and valuable exertions,

the institution owes a deep and lasting debt of gratitude. I understand that some apothecaries have complained of the injury that this establishment was calculated to do them. As regards this matter, I am not aware that the apothecary's shop is liable to objections which do not equally apply to any apothecary who may set up business in a situation contiguous to the complainants' establishments. In either case, competition exerts its salutary influence; and the public must acknowledge that rivalry in this department, with the magic wand of opposition, has converted the formerly loathsome and disgusting shops, in which every assailable sense was outraged, into medical halls, or rather medical palaces, teeming with the fragrance of the East, and dazzling with the gilded splendour of a fairy land. But I must descend to realities. If the Committee are to be blamed for endeavouring to support, by an ordinary and legitimate opposition, a charitable institution, they have at least a right to say, that here "the end sanctifies the means." But, "even the story ran" that I had *aspired* to the station of a pharmacopolist—*O tempora! O mores!* This is almost as good a story as "*progressing backwards*," to which the foregoing detail is, I think, a full reply. But, in downright sober earnest, I must tell you that I court not the smile, nor dread the frown, of the medico-chirurgical apothecary. My motto is, *Prava ambitione procul*—"Get on by fair means;" and I also remember that of the Heathen, "The gods assist those who assist themselves."

Gentlemen, it would occupy too much of your valuable time to enter, at present, into the consideration of the causes which have operated in turning the great proportion of practice from its legitimate channel: let it suffice to mention one of the most leading—the regulations of the respective Colleges, which prevent the physicians and surgeons of this city from supplying their patients with medicines. All must admit that the general practitioner of Dublin is the apothecary. Do I censure his acceptance of this public favour? Surely not; for the error lies with those who employ him, in conceiving that, because he is qualified to practise Pharmacy, he is *consequently* eligible for the practice of *all* the branches of the profession.

It is an obvious fact, that the mass of the public must have a

general practitioner—they do not recognize the arbitrary distinctions of the profession. But it is also an obvious truth, that the man who practises every branch of the healing art should bring something more than bare assumption as proof of his varied capabilities. I must for the present take leave of this subject—ere long you will find, that the apothecaries will supply this public want on legitimate grounds, and take such degrees as will entitle them to practise in the fourfold capacity of physician, surgeon, accoucheur, and apothecary.

In considering Anatomy and Physiology, as subservient to this as well as the other branches of the healing art, I must request of you to bear with me, while I consider, what perhaps may be esteemed too much in detail, the several divisions of these subjects.

The Anatomist may not be inaptly compared to a traveller, setting out for a distant city through a strange country. In order to encourage and support each through the long, intricate, and unknown way, we must first shew the necessity and usefulness of obtaining the object sought after—and,

Secondly, We have to point out, as it were on a map, the shortest and easiest road to be pursued,—the objects to be most carefully attended to, in order that he shall not only give a correct account of his travels at the journey's end, but be able, when called upon, to retrace his steps with confidence, security, and precision.

In the first place,

Is it not almost superfluous to encumber the subject by dilating on the necessity of a competent knowledge of *Anatomy*, the basis of Medicine,—the compass of operative and obstetric Surgery? or need we tell you, to incite to the task, that upon the knowledge of this subject depend your future comfort, character, and fortune,—nay, the very lives of many of your fellow-creatures?

We will not deny that feelings are outraged,—comfort, and even a portion of health, sometimes sacrificed,—in the cultivation of this indispensable branch of professional education: but all is not sacrifice on your part; for, as you advance, the way becomes beautiful, diversified, and exceedingly interesting.

It is then with good reason that we shall first consider the anatomical details.

An adequate knowledge of the osseous system is obviously indispensable at the outset, as it is not only the basis of all the other systems, but it is also the basis of anatomical knowledge. He will surely proceed in the right way, and erect the most lasting superstructure, who first of all carefully attends to the solidity and perfection of the foundation.

The bones must be known, in order to understand the soft parts; for the latter will be wholly unintelligible to him who is unacquainted with the parts of the osseous system to which they bear such important relations. The sailor learns the names and relations of the parts of the ship to which the ropes are attached, before he attempts to conclude on the motions produced by the actions of the several ropes either separately or conjointly. Is not this mode of proceeding more called for in the complicated human fabric? You will soon learn, that, without a perfect knowledge of the pelvis, the Physiology and Pathology of Obstetrics would be wholly unintelligible.

The bones being learned, you should proceed by synthesis, or Promethean Anatomy, and ascertain how the parts of the *natural* skeleton are held together, their various motions facilitated, and the injurious consequences of frictions and shocks obviated.

In the contrast of the male and female pelvis, you will have ample opportunity of observing how admirably the peculiarities of the latter are adapted to the exigencies of the case.

The bonds of union of the solid parts,—namely, the cartilages and ligaments,—being considered, the active agents of locomotion, the *muscles*, should next in order claim attention, together with their appendages, which will be best studied by viewing them with those parts, the discharge of whose functions they so materially influence. The great importance attached to a just knowledge of the locomotive apparatus must evidently appear, as well to the accoucheur, from the dangerous, nay, fatal consequences of mal-formation of the pelvis, as to the surgeon, from the numerous accidents of every day occurrence which come under his care.

The broken bone, the dislocated member, will be scientifically restored to their natural situations by him who, from his anatomical knowledge of the muscles, will resort to such position of the part as will best relax those on the stretch, or spasmodically contracted. What, but the knowledge of the measurements of the pelvis, enables the accoucheur to rectify mal-position of the foetus?

Who feels not gratified to see the well-informed surgeon, by a judicious position of the limb, reduce a fractured or dislocated bone, which wholly resisted the efforts of him who, by actual force *only*, vainly attempted to produce the same effect?

Having finished the *locomotive apparatus*, I would next turn your attention to those organs the discharge of whose functions is more directly necessary for the preservation of the individual—these are the organs of assimilation.

We would lead you through nature's own way in this particular, and have you consider generally the digestive apparatus first, by whose agency the nutritious portion of the food is eliminated, and the excrementitious part expelled; and also endeavour to point out to you the extensive relations of this important part of the system. The intimate knowledge of the anatomy of the cavity which contains these organs will be the best guide, not only through the many and varied surgical operations which are every day performed on its walls, but it will also enable us to refer with a great degree of confidence to the precise seat of its Proteous diseases, whether functional or organic. What but the anatomy of the parts explains to us the epigastric and hypochondriac tenderness on pressure resulting from liver disease, or the apparently inexplicable cause of pain in the right shoulder as a consequence of the latter affection.

We are no longer at a loss to account for the discharge of calculi or pus by the rectum, when we reflect that from the previous symptoms disease had existed in the kidney or liver, and found, by an all-provident disposition of parts, a contiguous outlet by the intestinal canal for the product of morbid action.

The next system we would introduce to you are the organs of absorption, more particularly that part of it which forms the conductors of the nutritious fluid from the alimentary canal to

the centre of the circulation. How interesting must be the anatomical description and relations of those organs which are the agents for transmitting the material that is to form the basis of repair and growth, and source of supply during utero-gestation,—on the one hand acting as the subsidiary of the arterial system, on the other as its direct antagonist,—and thus, by bearing away the old material, keep up the equilibrium, which would be otherwise lost in consequence of the constant deposition of the new!

In this system, the light of anatomical research has shone most resplendently in the labours of the lamented Shekleton, in whose untimely fate science and friendship have to deplore a loss indeed.

We are next led to the fountain of the circulating system,—the heart. In the discovery of the circulation by the immortal Harvey, Anatomy has had her most splendid and glorious triumph; for on what but the anatomical structure of the circulating apparatus does this discovery rest,—amply proving that Anatomy and Physiology stand in the same relation as means and end? Or let us view the latter as the beautiful offspring of the former, and deigning to bestow her favours on those only who assiduously follow the path pointed out by her less prepossessing parent.

The *respiratory system* is one of deep interest to the Accoucheur, as the muscles of this function are the active agents in parturition, as well as in other important offices. The general anatomy and physiology of this system must ensure our attention, whether we view the whole as a beautiful piece of mechanism, admirably calculated to receive and act on the *pablam vitæ*, or to produce those varied tones, the harmony and expression of which cannot be equalled by the instruments of human contrivance.

The vascular supply of the pelvis and its contents should next claim your attention. The position of those arteries, the seat of operation with respect to this cavity as well as elsewhere, must be deeply engraven on your recollection—otherwise the operations for aneurism, and the rational mode of suppressing uterine and other hæmorrhages, the triumph of modern surgery,

could not be judiciously undertaken. The termination of the arterial system naturally leads us to the veins. Those whose position or functions are of obvious importance should receive their due consideration. The peculiarity of the uterine veins is a fact remarkable alike in Anatomy, Physiology, and Pathology.

The *urinary apparatus* should next claim your attention. I need but mention two operations, in order to point out the absolute necessity of a competent knowledge of the anatomy of these parts,—the introduction of instruments into the bladder, and the operation for the extraction of stone from its cavity, or the breaking down of this foreign body. It may be a question not easily determined, whether the average of chirurgical operations, as they have been generally performed, on the pelvic organs, should be considered as the means of ameliorating the condition or increasing the sufferings of mankind.

The diseases of these organs are an every day concern—the treatment of them is calculated to make many enemies, or many friends. Mal-practice, whether actual or imaginary, is like an injury done to the beauty of the fair sex, for both are equally irreconcilable offences.

The next class of organs for consideration are those for the *preservation of the species*. The examination of these, in both sexes, offers a number of intricacies, but at the same time interesting grounds for observation and inquiry.

The anatomy of the female pelvis and its contents has been shewn to be not less interesting and useful to the obstetric practitioner, than that of the male to the lithotomist or lithotritist.

The organs of the *sensitive functions* may next be considered: their important relations and affections, as respects obstetrics, are many and various. This brings you to the anatomical and physiological considerations of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and skin. In these organs we see the beautiful adaptation of means to end,—of structure to the discharge of the varied functions which they are destined to fulfil.

The anatomy of the eye presents us with a beautifully constructed optical instrument, free from the imperfections which are inseparable from human contrivances. This organ, and the ear, will furnish the curious and diligent anatomist with a wide

field of inquiry ; and for this he will be amply repaid by acquiring the knowledge necessary for the performance of those important operations which are to produce no less an effect than the restoration of sight to the blind—hearing to the deaf.

The anatomy of the nose is also important to the operating surgeon—witness the introduction of instruments into the openings communicating with its cavity, and the sudden arrest of hæmorrhage by the plugging of the posterior nares.

The *tongue* must be examined with considerable attention when we understand that it is so essentially connected with the discharge of the three important functions of *taste*, *deglutition*, and *respiration*,—that it beautifully illustrates, by its nervous supply, the distinctions between the nerves of *sensation* and those of *motion*,—a physiological discovery that has had its birth, growth, and confirmation in minute anatomical research.

The anatomy of the *skin*, and its relations with the uterine functions, must be always considered highly important, whether viewed in a physiological or pathological point of view—the seat of *touch*, and that important secretion, the suspension or interruption of which is an attendant upon, or consequence of almost every disease.

The next part of the sensitive organs which shall occupy our attention is the nervous system. The anatomy and physiology of these important parts should be minutely considered, and in such manner as would best explain the views given by modern physiologists, which are supported by the structure of this intricate and interesting system, whose functions are so varied and extensive. How beautifully and wonderfully this commissure of all the systems links each part, ever so remote, in intimate connection with the whole,—and thus accounting for the apparently electrical velocity with which sensations are conveyed by the nerves, and which Hunter has so expressively denominated the *chordæ internunciae*.

We have thus inquired into the utility of the object in view, and have seen that it is equivalent to the labour bestowed in obtaining it. Our *next* step has been to look to the means of attaining the end in view—this, for the present, has led us to Anatomy. We have already endeavoured to shew how

indispensable, and consequently important, it must be in practice. We have, lastly, endeavoured to point out the shortest and surest road in which to pursue anatomical studies, endeavouring to shew, in a cursory manner, the advantages resulting from an orderly mode of study, and the importance to be attached to each system. After this particular and separate consideration, you should next examine the systems conjointly, and attend to relative, regional, and surgical Anatomy. In considering this important subject, the intimate knowledge of which is absolutely essential to the operating surgeon and accoucheur, you will see the usefulness of having considered each part separately in order to have a correct idea of the whole. When you have acquired this information, the great *desideratum*, you will almost cease to view as intricate the consideration of the group of tissues and systems, which you must examine collectively, if you study the human body as it presents itself to the bold and enterprising knife of the surgeon, the inquiring and scrutinizing eye of the physiologist, and the patient, anxious, and unwearied observation of the pathologist.

Being fully impressed with the importance of this subject, my talented and classical friend, Doctor Staunton, now of the Ordnance, and myself, undertook the translation of Velpeau's admirable work on Regional and Surgical Anatomy. Two parts of this book were translated and published, when we discovered that we were anticipated by Dr. Stirling of New York, who brought out the translation complete in two volumes, several copies of which have been imported from America by the proprietors of the Medical Literary Institution. I cannot forbear from now speaking of this establishment. In 1827, I published the Student's Synopsis, and in that work I mentioned the want that this city experienced in not having a good Public Medical Library, where the *student* might reckon with certainty upon obtaining the work he required, either at the reading rooms, or from the circulating library at home. This *desideratum* the Messrs. Fannin supplied, at my suggestion; and I feel no small share of pride, that, on my opinion and judgment, these gentlemen undertook such a weighty establishment, the expenditure and outlay upon which has been so very considerable. It is to me

a pleasing sight to enter the Reading Rooms of this Institution, where every thing conspires to render its members comfortable and studious. Silence reigns there—every grade of student has his appropriate help. You see one, intent on the osseous system, examining with care the ingeniously constructed skeleton, and tracing on the bones before him the attachments of ligaments which he also observes delineated in the plates that he here studies with such advantage, before he realizes the subject of his inquiries in the dissecting room. Another turns his attention to myology: you see him, to-night, studying on the full-sized muscular figure, and with the aid of the most correct plates, the part which he will dissect to-morrow with so much advantage, owing to his previous preparation. Should a third make the contents of the cavities his study, here he will find each organ and its relative position given in plates with great accuracy—even the latter are so contrived as to imitate the progress of dissection, and he may examine the parts *stratum super stratum*. In pursuing the dissection of the arteries, the nerves, and the absorbents, he obtains unrivalled aids from the labours of Scarpa, Sæmerring, Walther, Tiedeman, Mascagani, Cloquet, and a host of others. I would have you remember, that I by no means inculcate the doctrine that the study of plates and figures *only* will suffice to teach you useful Anatomy! far otherwise—but I look upon these aids, in conjunction with actual dissection, as most valuable and instructive; and when the latter cannot be obtained, they must be esteemed of paramount importance. He is an acute observer who recognizes a countenance from mere description; the likeness of the individual, provided it be correct, very much facilitates the task; but the original, carefully observed, leaves an impression not readily effaced,—which comes simply to this, that there is “nothing so like the thing as the thing itself.” And hence actual dissection is the best, but plates are the second best way of learning Anatomy. The plate, like the miniature of an old acquaintance, renders vivid fading impressions, and, by an inexplicable chain of associations, recalls ideas connected with the subject that had long since lain completely dormant.

In this unique establishment, similar aids and advantages may

be obtained in Medicine, Surgery, Obstetrics, Pathology, and all the other various collateral branches of Medical Science. The sale of Messrs. Weiss's surgical instruments at London prices, together with the considerable reduction made on the sale of books,—all must tend to render this extensively useful institution the universal resort of the medical profession of this city.

I trust I shall be excused for making this digression, so much in detail, in favour of an institution established at my suggestion, which presents in its internal economy so many advantages, and more particularly since the kind and accommodating dispositions of the proprietors have rendered so much stronger their claims for the patronage of the medical public.

It has been justly observed, that he can know but little of the living man who does not often look into the dead; hence, with regard to Morbid Anatomy, you should embrace every opportunity of inspecting the organic changes which the several structures undergo during disease, and contrast the healthy organ with that in the former state.

It may be said by some, attached to the healing art, that, as they do not intend to become Accoucheurs, lectures and practice in this department of surgery are not at all necessary. The reverse appears to be the opinion and full conviction of those who framed the By-laws of the several Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons; for certificates of attendance are invariably required from Lecturers on this subject. We will suppose you are destined for country practice, and that you meet with a case of unavoidable hæmorrhage—that another of retention of urine, from displacement of the uterus, calls for your attendance—we will suppose you decline either case, as you are not a midwifery practitioner: thus death, or pain the most excruciating, may be suffered by the unfortunate patient who has fallen into such powerless hands. It will be said, why not send for an obstetric practitioner? but he may be miles distant, and the unfortunate patient falls a victim to the ignorance of the man who professes surgery, and who cannot, on such an occasion, give the necessary assistance. A case is commonly cited, in order to prove the necessity of the practitioner being prepared to act in the double

capacity of physician and surgeon, whenever occasion requires; and as the surgeon and accoucheur may be looked upon in the same point of view, I shall relate the case as illustrative of my position.

A gentleman in the country is seized with inflammation of the chest; he sends for a surgeon; the latter arrives, finds the case a medical one, and declines departing from his peculiar province. The surgeon retires—the physician is called in—he perceives at once that blood-letting is the sheet-anchor in this case, but, being purely a physician, the surgeon has again to be sent for, in order to perform venesection—a considerable time elapses before the return of the surgeon, who finds on his arrival that the inflammation had terminated in empyema (a collection of matter in the cavity of the chest)—the surgeon gives place to the physician again, as the case has now become medical—the physician reappears, and prescribes *paracentesis thoracis*, in order to give exit to the contained matter. The surgeon is a third time sent for to perform this operation, and arrives, not to perform it, but to receive the last sigh of his expiring patient.

We would say to the surgeon ignorant of midwifery, *Mutato nomine, de te fabula narretur*.

There are numberless sympathetic diseases, which are only to be known by a consideration of obstetric practice, and those Proteous symptoms only to be accounted for by referring them to their proper source.

A knowledge of Midwifery renders the practitioner more eligible for any situation that may offer, such as the Army or Navy; and for dispensaries, and country practice, a man must be a perfect factotum.

It is a common, but no less erroneous opinion, that any man can make a good accoucheur—that it requires little or no talent and industry: but the soundest head will find full employment in the study of midwifery, and ample field for patient research and diligent observation—witness the works of Doctor W. Hunter, and of the immortal Harvey, who studied and practised this branch of the profession with unrivalled industry, ability, and success. “The man of genius will thus find an open for invention—the industrious man’s patient observation and research

are not uncalled for, to improve on the plans and suggestions of the former ; and thus, by legitimate induction, furnish us with those useful conclusions which are to form the general guides and principles of practice."

In no branch of the healing art is there more necessity for great kindness of manner,—for inexhaustible patience and long-suffering,—steadiness of deportment, and rectitude of conduct: being a married man is almost a *sine qua non* in this practice. A late practitioner of this city presents us with a solitary example of an accoucheur making an immense fortune without being a Benedict. The practice is precarious and slavish ; and, no doubt, character may be disposed of by the old ladies, when no blame is attributable to the individual—the *mens conscia recti* is then the only consolation left for the unfortunate practitioner. Great confidence is usually reposed in the profession at large, but more particularly so in obstetric practice. The reputation of many, in very numerous instances, depends on the secrecy of the accoucheur : communications with him are to be esteemed as confessions, the unwarranted disclosure of which should justly stigmatize the betrayer as a disgrace to the profession.

The accoucheur should most studiously avoid all allusions to his profession in general society ; he should not let the crotchet and forceps be seen on these occasions, like the surgeon who, I am told, had always a bougie sticking out of his pocket, I suppose on the same principle as a barber erects a pole at his shop door, to invite the passing customers. You will be frequently asked your opinion of medical men. Do not say, such a man is very clever, but Mrs. — died under his care—I am quite sure no blame was attributable to him. This is a good-natured sort of way of damning a character. People in general are good judges of the charitable act, and will invariably think the worse of you for detracting in this manner from the merits of perhaps a deserving individual. Let the golden rule of life,—*"And as you would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise,"* Luke vi. 31,—be preserved in mind, as applicable to professional as well as every day concerns.

It will be perhaps only right to cultivate an acquaintance with a newly married couple ; but do not make a practice of thrusting

yourself into their society, by visiting day after day, in order to secure the case, as it is called, or rather not to give them an opportunity of selecting another.

There is a class of people of which you should be particularly cautious, who from their constant attendance upon the sick have the power of influencing them by inuendos, and even in many instances by direct advice—I allude to nurses. I can assure you that in many, very many instances, the nurse will say, “Aye, he has written his prescription, for they all do that; but if you take what I’ll give you, you’ll soon be well.” In several instances, you will discover that the nurse’s prescription is adopted and the practitioner’s rejected, even by patients who, in other respects, you will find, are rational enough. Do not on any account hold unreserved communication with nurses; for any thing you may say will be sure to travel, with a load of falsehoods ingeniously mixed up with the truth.

There is an indecisive way of proceeding which characterizes some practitioners, that is calculated to injure them very much. Every patient conjectures something as to his case and the mode of treatment: if he observes the attendant undetermined as to the line of practice he will adopt, his confidence is shaken, and he no longer values his prescriptions, nor perhaps follows them. When any misgiving of this kind is observed, whether from your own indecision or as attributable solely to your patient, I would say, prescribe boldly, and let it appear that you are fully conscious no other line of practice would succeed. This indecision should neither appear in your manner nor your prescription: an erasure ought never be seen in the latter—if it should, rest assured, it will be said, “He sat down to write his prescription undetermined as to its precise contents.” The late Doctor Johnson of this city (a man of no mean ability and observation), was in the habit of asking his patient, “Don’t thee think I will cure thee?” and if answered in the affirmative, he was sure to make a more favourable prognosis.

Be not over-anxious to commence your campaign in midwifery by a first case of accouchment. There is the greatest difficulty, under these circumstances, of persuading your patient that you cannot hasten judiciously the process of nature.

When you are once employed as the attending accoucheur,

nothing but mal-practice or indiscretion can possibly dislodge you ; for though the ladies are not proverbial for constancy, they are as averse to change their doctor as you can be to dismissal. The midwifery practice leads to that of the whole family ; for if mamma thinks favourably of the doctor, he will be certainly employed : but you must have the necessary information, and stamina to keep the general practice, and hold the place which a favourable introduction, good management, or fortune, has thrown in your way. There are numerous examples at present, in Dublin, of the first general practitioners commencing with midwifery, and making it the means of introduction to the other branches of the profession ; and thus has the practice of midwifery led to the knowledge of “ full many a gem,” which, but for this opportunity, might have lain in obscurity.

You must be content to sacrifice a great deal of time to this practice. The list of grievances must be listened to, though you may not be able to afford much or any alleviation of their ills. In fact, whether in the practice of midwifery or general practice, the patient must be heard out, or full satisfaction is never given. It is only by such men as the late Mr. Abernethy, who will be consulted no matter what their impatience may be, that the following line of proceeding could be adopted. It is told of this celebrated surgeon, that being consulted by a lady remarkable for loquacity, and having heard as much of her case as enabled him to prescribe with effect, the garrulous lady, not being of precisely the same opinion, continued to din her impatient prescriber with her pains here and pains there, until at length Mr. Abernethy, finding every method to procure silence ineffectual, desired the lady to put out her tongue and keep it so : in the mean time he hastily wrote the prescription, occasionally glancing at the tongue, in order to convince her of the necessity of keeping it protruded. His work completed, he pulled the bell,—thrust the prescription into the astonished lady’s hand,—and pushed her out of the room, saying, at the same, “ The apothecary will give you directions.”

Regularity in the disposal of your time will be found absolutely necessary, and punctuality in your appointments, as far as the nature of your business will admit. No man’s time is more

precarious than that of a midwifery practitioner; and, on this account, he must not be blamed on all occasions for not keeping an appointment with such precision as other men. You should make a note of your business for the day, and parcel out your time accordingly; but you must not be content to carry tablets—you must consult them also, and make a habit of it; for it is a common complaint, made by every one, that he forgets to look into his memorandum book. It is an unprofessional and an ungracious thing to say to a patient, you utterly forgot you promised to visit on this day or that day—a press of business is an apology every one should receive, as this cannot, like the former, be esteemed the result of negligence or inattention.

In your visits to midwifery cases, it may not be always esteemed necessary to examine the patient very accurately, or to look to the state of the pulse and tongue, the great *indices* of the state of the circulation and of the digestive apparatus; but I have heard it observed that this practitioner is very negligent—“Only think,—he came to see me, and prescribed without ever feeling my pulse: how can he know any thing of the state of my health?” In very many instances, certain forms must be gone through, because they are customary, not because they are always necessary.

Do not be fond of a simple form of remedy—it is not valued unless it have something mystical about it. The crooked *R* is not without its virtues. There is another circumstance connected with prescriptions, which you may not be fully aware of—it is this,—that, unless you are paid for your trouble, an injustice is done to yourself and the profession, and injury to your patient. The last part of this assertion may seem somewhat paradoxical; but I will, I think, shew you that it is founded on just observation and on fact. Is it not an obvious truth, that what is obtained without trouble or expense is rarely if ever valued. I will illustrate this by a case in point. A friend calls on you who requires your professional advice—a fee is offered, but, from one or from twenty reasons, it is not accepted: what is the consequence? The prescription is put into his *coat* pocket, with this determination—“The next time I pass my apothecary’s, or send that way, I’ll get the prescription

made up"—well, it lies in his pocket, undisturbed and forgotten. Take another case. You take the fee—the patient carefully deposits the prescription in his *breeches* pocket, because it is a guinea's worth, and proceeds *himself* forthwith to an apothecary—the medicine is regularly taken; and thus the desired effect is produced, in its three legitimate stages—1st, You are paid for advice; 2dly, The apothecary for his medicine; and, 3dly, The patient, in being restored to health, has value received for the payment of both. But in the first case your friend is worse; for he has not taken the remedy, because the advice cost him *nothing*. Will he come to you again to prescribe for him? No; for he says, though you are a very good-natured and clever fellow, he will not go to you again; for, some how or other, he lost the last prescription. He goes to another, who prescribes and is requited—your friend is cured by another, and you thus lose, not only a patient, but also the good offices which he might perform for you amongst his friends; for he will most assuredly recommend the man who has cured himself.

There is no branch of medical practice for which a man should be so well paid as in Midwifery. Such a sacrifice of time is necessarily incurred, and usually most unseasonably, that in all cases a man should get a fair equivalent for this important article. It has been justly observed, that "*Time is money*;" for surely, if properly disposed of, it must bring in this necessary fruit. I would not be understood as inculcating the doctrine of being paid for attendance and loss of time without reference to the circumstances of the patient; for surely there cannot be a more hideous monster, or a greater disgrace to a liberal profession, than the man who pockets his fee, reckless of the distress and misery of the family from whom it has been wrung.

From the brief observations I have made, the necessity for the study of the Obstetric branch of medicine, whether you be a declared practitioner in it or not, will, I hope, appear to be decidedly called for. If you are ever so exclusively a Surgeon or a Physician, you may be called on to practise as an Accoucheur, in order to save a life,—relieve or remove the sufferings of a patient in a situation most interesting, and one that calls for the deepest commiseration. On the other hand, the

necessity for the Midwifery practitioner being possessed of Medical and Surgical knowledge is a still more obvious conclusion; for surely the treatment of lying-in women, previous to as well as after confinement, requires no small share of information in those branches of professional education. The knowledge of Medicine, Surgery, and Midwifery, with all their collateral train, must be concentrated in the same individual—the distinction into Physician, Surgeon, and Accoucheur, is arbitrary and unnatural, as if he who practised the healing art should take such a partial view as to think he can practice one effectually without knowing the remaining two. What has placed the late Mr. Abernethy's practice in the deservedly high estimation it holds? Purely because it is medico-chirurgical. Professor Thomson, in speaking of Physic and Surgery, says, "These arts have had the same origin, and they have the same end. The human body is the sphere of their exertions, and whatever can affect it, in matter, vitality, or mind, is the object of their researches."

Remember, then, that the practice of Midwifery is not to be looked upon in an insulated point of view, but as an important branch of the great tree of medical knowledge; for, if it receive not its support from the parent trunk, this branch must wither and decay; but if it derive its due proportion of nourishment, its healthy growth will give ample proof of the source of its supply, while its abundant and useful fruit will render it the pride of the tree of medical knowledge. You thus perceive that the study and practice of Obstetrics require as much *acumen* as any pursuit you can undertake,—great industry and patience,—much observation,—and a large share of prudence, good sense, and good-nature.

THE END.

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