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THE
INTRODUCTORY LECTURE,

DELIVERED AT

KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON,

ON OPENING

THE MEDICAL SESSION OF 1848-49.

BY

WILLIAM FERGUSSON, F. R. S.,

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TO

COLONEL FERGUSSON, ROYAL MARINES.

16, George-street, Hanover-square,
October, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR,

WHILST writing a part of this address, I could not but remember the obligations which I owed to you for your conduct towards me in early life. The continued friendship with which I have been favoured since my years of boyhood, has been to me a source of much gratification, and a proof that you have not deemed your disinterested kindness bestowed in vain.


Permit me to dedicate these pages to you, as a tribute of friendship and respect.

Sincerely wishing you many years of continued good health, to sustain the honours which you have yourself acquired in your own profession,

I remain, my dear Sir,

Your affectionate Nephew,

WILLIAM FERGUSSON.



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INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

GENTLEMEN,

The duty devolves upon me, as Dean of the Medical Department of this College, to open the Session of 1848-49, as usual, with an introductory address.

We are about to commence a new year of teaching and study, and there is certainly no period of a session more appropriate than the beginning, for the interchange of those amenities which give character and charm to social life. Let me, therefore, for my colleagues, and on my own part, greet you all with those friendly feelings, which it is as much our inclination as our duty to display towards you, now and at all periods, during our peculiar relationship. We welcome our former pupils with the cordiality of established friendship ; and to those who come among us for the first time, we, in all sincerity, express our wish that there may speedily be established such reciprocal feelings of respect, esteem, and friendship, between us, as shall tend to the satisfactory fulfilment of our mutual duties.

There is, perhaps, no time better than the present, to take special notice of those duties to which I have

just applied the term "mutual." The youngest among you will, doubtless, suppose that you fully appreciate the duties of the teacher ; that it is to him you must look for that knowledge which pertains to his department, and that, therefore, it is his duty to instruct you in this knowledge. To a certain extent, this estimate is correct ; but, it may be feared whether an equally stringent view is taken by the pupil of his duty on the occasion. He is but too apt to suppose that he has only to look and listen, and so do his part of the mutual compact. Herein, however, he commits a great error ; it is only the most superficial knowledge which is acquired in this way, and that too,—through forgetting many points in a lecture,—of a most limited sort. It can only be by thought and study elsewhere, that proficiency is to be attained ; and the student who wishes to become accomplished in any single department must trust as much to his own exertions as to those of his teacher, however eminent that individual may be. In short, to attain this accomplishment, he is in duty bound, as much as his teacher is, or has been, to give a share of study to his subject greater than that which may be evinced in the ordinary attendance upon lectures. We, as your teachers, know, from past experience, how great a responsibility we undertake in professing to teach you medicine ; but you, who are young, and just beginning the responsibilities of manhood, cannot, as yet, appreciate all that is expected of you. We hesitate not to say, then, that whilst with every confidence we can undertake for your

sakes, all that may be incumbent on teachers, we must look to you for the due fulfilment of your duties. There must be "mutual work." We have all laboured unseen, and perhaps without any specific object in view, ere we were fortunate enough to obtain our present public appointments ; and, whatever may be your fate in life, let us entreat you to rely more upon your own industry for that knowledge which is to make you accomplished medical men, than to any exertions of ours, however strenuous, in your behalf.

An address, such as the present, is intended more for beginners than for pupils already somewhat advanced in their labours, and I must therefore request the special attention of those who are about to commence the study of medicine. You are now about taking upon you the first, and, perhaps, the greatest responsibility of early manhood—a responsibility which will, in all likelihood, only cease with your lives. That responsibility must be viewed in various aspects : first, as regards those to whom you are indebted for having brought you thus far in life ; next, as regards yourselves as men and members of the community ; and thirdly, as regards that noble profession with which you are now voluntarily connecting yourselves.

Let me ask you, gentlemen, to look back upon the few years which as yet sum up the date of your lives, and reflect upon what has been done for you in that brief time. Think of the care and anxiety with which your earlier years were tended,—of the parental solicitude which has never ceased from your infancy to the

present time. Consider what you owe to that mother who, with affectionate regard, fondly anticipated your every want—to the father who, from the gains of his occupation of life, has cheerfully set aside a considerable portion in your behalf. See, then, the responsibility which rests upon you that some return be made for all the anxiety, care, and expense, already bestowed upon you. If there be any among you who have unhappily lost a parent in early years, do not consider that you are the less bound to keep these matters in view. There are others to whom you have been equally indebted—perhaps even more so—for the ties of relationship may not have prompted such solicitude. To these, then, you are equally bound to shew your grateful remembrance for past kindness; and, let me add, that no more appropriate offering to the memory of a deceased parent can be made by you than an adherence to the line of conduct which it is my object to inculcate.

Hitherto you have placed reliance—indeed you have been taught to do so, chiefly upon the exertions of others in your behalf, but, from this day forth, you have to trust in a greater degree to your own exertions: the years of manhood are fast approaching, and you are now changing the occupations of the boy for those of the man. You have selected that path which you are to tread in life, and are now to prepare yourselves to enact those duties whereby you may become useful members of society or citizens of the world. The relative position which you are to hold in future,—

your Degree of manhood and your worth to your fellow-creatures, will, in a great measure, be determined by the manner in which you fulfil the duties of a medical student.

These are matters on which I doubt not you may already have pondered and resolved, and you may perhaps, too, have thought of the influence which your conduct and actions may exert upon the profession of medicine. It would ill become me, on such an occasion as this, were I to permit the opportunity to pass without referring particularly to this most interesting subject. It is to be hoped that you have not heedlessly resolved upon entering the profession of medicine, but that you have calmly and deliberately taken the step. You wish to become members of a section of the community which exercises a most important influence on social life, and you must devote yourselves regularly, industriously, and honourably, to fulfil the mission which you now undertake. By enrolling yourselves as junior members of the medical profession, you become the guardians and champions of its honour. You are bound to see that no act of yours shall tarnish the unsullied character of that profession which the ancients so venerated as to deem of God-like origin. Each act of yours—your whole course of life, must now be influenced by such considerations ; and, as a man is interested in the welfare and good reputation of his own family circle, so are you with regard to the larger community to which you now attach yourselves.

Let me impress upon you too, gentlemen, that you

will owe a duty to the Institution with which you are now connecting yourselves, in which we, your teachers, are peculiarly interested. There are few men who do not look back with fond remembrance upon their early home. If the years of boyhood have received a parent's watchful care, the recollection of that happy period will be so much the more pleasing. So also will the man look back upon the institution wherein he has acquired the elements of the profession in which he is earning his livelihood. Much of the gratification of such a reminiscence will depend upon the condition of that home or seat of instruction, and much upon the mutual conduct of the seniors and juniors towards each other. Let me remind you, gentlemen, that this home, this seat of instruction and of learning, is no unknown or untried establishment. It has its basis on the surest foundation:—"Sancte et sapienter" is its motto. The most elevated, the most noble, and the most learned in the land, have given it their sanction, and time has tested and evinced the efficiency of the instruction given within its walls. The characters of your teachers are established; and, should there unfortunately be any defect in your own which can be attributed to the period of your intimate connection with us, the shame and blame thereof will assuredly rest chiefly with yourselves. You owe it as a duty, then, to support to the utmost of your power those friendly relations which have heretofore obtained between your predecessors and this College, and so to conduct yourselves that that affection which the parent has for the

child shall not be rudely shaken ; for, by so doing, you will best cherish those sentiments in your own minds which, I doubt not, will in due time develop that enthusiasm for your *alma mater* which it will be the anxious wish of your teachers to encourage and see realized.

On such an occasion as this we are privileged to speak of ourselves with an assurance and a self-complacency, which, under ordinary circumstances, would appear misplaced. It is the principal part of my duty this day to explain ourselves, as it were, and to bring under notice such features of our arrangements as may require to be specially alluded to.

Gentlemen, it is my good fortune to open our session in a year, during which more important changes have taken place in the medical department of this college than have ever happened since the foundation of the establishment. I say good fortune, because it gives me a theme for a part of this address, which, while it is extremely pleasing to myself, must, I am sure, be equally so to all who listen to it.

Our excellent and much esteemed colleague, Dr Todd, in the exercise of that strong judgment which he brings to bear upon the department of "physiology," has thought that much advantage might result to the College and to the pupils, if he were permitted to have an associate, who might relieve him of part of his labours, and secure, for the sake of the lectures, that amount of research, inquiry, and constant superintendence, which is so essential to this particular department ;

one which, if not beyond the scope and power of a single mind, might at all events be more efficiently conducted in the manner proposed. The Council of King's College, in acceding to this suggestion, had neither long nor far to look for such a coadjutor. Fortunately, there was in the establishment itself, the very man who of all others was, perhaps, most admirably qualified for the appointment. I need not tell you that Mr. William Bowman was at once and unanimously pronounced as the individual ; nor need I add, that such honour never fell upon one more worthy. It would be out of place were I to attempt to eulogise Mr. Bowman at the present moment ; suffice it to say, that he has, even in early youth, earned for himself an enviable reputation, and the highest rewards of merit conferred by the Royal Society—that he has long been conjoined with Dr. Todd in those literary and scientific pursuits for which that professor is distinguished ; and that he has long been known to the pupils of this establishment as an efficient demonstrator of anatomy, and a man looked up to as in all respects worthy of the highest honours in the profession. It is satisfactory to add, that Mr. Bowman has received his collegiate professional education in this establishment, and is among the first of its distinguished medical alumni who has achieved a professor's gown.

Whilst thus rejoicing in Mr. Bowman's well-merited advancement, we cannot but regret his loss in the anatomical rooms, where he has long been esteemed as

an able teacher and warm friend ; that regret is, however, pleasingly tempered by the circumstance, that Mr. William Brinton has been elected by the Council as principal demonstrator. Of Mr. Brinton I need say little. Among the recent pupils of the College he is known as the most distinguished. By his own talents and efforts, he has raised himself from a stranger here to the most elevated honours which a pupil can receive—he has been the first prizeman in every year of his pupilage—is a senior scholar and associate of the College ; and the trust which has now been reposed in him by the Council has been acknowledged to be most admirably bestowed by the unanimous approbation of the professors.

Last season we had to deplore the loss of an esteemed member of our staff, in the person of Mr. John Simon, who, in the capacity of demonstrator and assistant-surgeon to the hospital, had earned such reputation, that his name and fame were coveted at another establishment of ancient renown. The inducements to accept the appointment offered were such that Mr. Simon could not reasonably refuse, and he retired from King's College with the esteem and sympathy of all his former colleagues, coupled with their fervent wish that his success in his new position might be commensurate with his eminent abilities.

In seeking for another assistant-surgeon to the Hospital, we have been fortunate in securing the services of Mr. Henry Lee. From amongst many candidates, eminently qualified for such an office, Mr. Lee was selected, on account of the high testimonials which

accompanied his application. In addition to these, the favourable knowledge which the parties, most interested in the election, had of Mr. Lee's amiable character and gentlemanly deportment, rendered their task the less difficult ; and when, moreover, it was considered that Mr. Lee had been one of the earliest of the pupils of the College—a prizeman, and the first house-surgeon to King's College Hospital, an office which he filled with great credit to himself and advantage to the Hospital, it will be readily granted that a more eligible person could not have been selected for such an appointment.

Within the last twelve months then, three most important appointments have been made in the teaching department of the Medical School. No favouritism has been recognised in these elections ; and it must be a matter of congratulation to the friends of the College to perceive, that the selection in each of these instances has fallen upon those who have received their education within its walls ; and who, I may add, in the language and sentiment with which I commend this address, have “done their duty to their friends, themselves, and the institution wherein they have acquired the rudiments of their profession.”

These appointments, gentlemen, coupled with the additional experience which all of us have acquired during the past twelve months, may be characterised as the new intellectual arrangements which have been made chiefly in your behalf ; and much though we pride ourselves upon them, they are (for the time per-

haps,) less conspicuous in their palpable advantages than others to which I have now to draw your attention.

It has long been felt by the friends of this institution, that the accommodation in the Hospital has not been equivalent to the resources for teaching within the College. Much has been done in that building to alleviate the bodily sufferings of the poor; and much, too, I conscientiously believe, in furtherance of Medical science. But when that house was selected for the purposes of a Hospital, to be in connection with this College, it was not anticipated that it would so speedily be overcrowded almost beyond endurance. In the first year of its establishment there were 4,834 patients who resorted to it for advice. In seven short years the number of patients had increased to 19,154. A large and suitable portion of ground has recently been purchased as the site for a new Hospital; and it is pleasing to contemplate, that now there is every prospect that ere long we shall have a building commensurate in all respects with the wants of the district, the acknowledged character of the Hospital, and with the high standing of King's College itself.

Among the most important of the changes effected since last season, I have to draw particular attention to the Dissecting Rooms. The former rooms have been re-modelled—a new one of equal dimensions has been built—there is now ample space, excellent light, complete ventilation, the fullest collateral accommodations, and all, in short, that Dissecting Room luxury can rea-

sonably demand. You may smile at the term which I use ; but the modern student of anatomy can have little idea of the privations which were experienced by his predecessors in this respect.

There is no doubt that an efficient Anatomical Department constitutes a most essential feature in a Medical School ; and it is sincerely hoped that you will avail yourselves of all the advantages which are at your command, and zealously prosecute this section of your professional education.

The last, though not the least, of all the changes referred to, is that which has been made for the accommodation of resident pupils. Twenty-three new rooms have been added to those already in use ; and by the liberality of the Council, there is now an opportunity of carrying out, on an extensive scale, that Collegiate System for medical students, which this College was the first to offer as a boon of no little consideration to both the medical profession and the public. The best proof of the estimation in which this system is held is, that it is now followed by some of the older Metropolitan schools, as worthy of imitation ; and I am not without hope that, before many years have passed, the Collegiate System will become one of the most important features of the Medical Ethics of this country.

A stranger might imagine from these various announcements that heretofore our institution had been very imperfect, but those among you already acquainted with its nature and character will perceive

that these novelties are only, after all, slight alterations, additions, and amendments on an establishment already of great magnitude, and almost national importance.

Gentlemen, in the early part of this address I have dwelt on the necessity that you should, with all diligence, apply yourselves to those duties which are incumbent upon you as pupils of this establishment and students of medicine. Let me now draw your attention to the aims and ends contemplated during your studies, and after they have been completed.

It has been said by one of the greatest of medical philosophers* that wherever civilization extends, there, too, will the use of ardent spirits and gunpowder be resorted to. It is a more pleasing view to take, that wherever civilization extends, there will there be a demand for education, for mental accomplishments, for the full development of all those social and moral attributes which give to man the pre-eminence in the scale of creation. In this age—an age unparalleled in the history of the world, when the human intellect has soared beyond what the brightest genius in former times ever anticipated even in imagination ; when the four elements of the Aristotelian philosophy have been, if I may so express myself, subjugated and converted to the daily and hourly use of man ; when space and time, as recognised by our forefathers, have in a manner been annihilated ; when a journey to the Antipodes may be accomplished with as much ease and

* John Hunter.

security almost as a man might formerly have travelled from one end of this island to the other ; and when a man's thoughts may be communicated a hundred—a thousand miles with the rapidity of lightning itself—in such an age, at such an era in the history of this world, is it your lot to be cast, and at such a date do you commence your vocation of manhood. Hitherto your education has been such as is common to all in civilized life, in accordance with their means ; but now you are to devote yourselves to that department wherein you are to take your station in the great family of man.

The community at large is portioned out into a thousand different callings, each being required for the general comfort of the whole ; many of these callings are of the most humble sort—that which you are choosing is recognised, by the general concurrence of all, as one of the most intellectual to which the mind of man can be devoted.

Among all the wonders and mysteries of the creation what is there more wonderful or more mysterious than the physical, moral, and psychological condition of man ? It is the privilege—the imperative duty of the medical man to inquire into such questions, and what occupation, what study can be more noble to man than the study of man himself—not in the mere worldly acceptation of that phrase—not solely with reference to the motives and actions of the being of the day—but with reference to this, that it is his province, while in the pursuit of his proper avocations, to inspect

the most wonderful and the most perfect object of God's creation ; to look upon the structure and mechanism of Nature—created in the formation of man himself—before man's mind had action or influence, structure and mechanism not the result of man's mental energies and physical labours, composed of materials not allied to each other as the result of chance or the war of elements, but emanating from the Almighty God. And what can be more interesting than to study and investigate life itself, to ponder upon that mysterious influence which constitutes vitality, to appreciate, and if possible alleviate “the thousand ills that flesh is heir to.”

It is the fashion of the day to speak of what are called the “liberal professions ;” and there is none, I verily believe, so liberal as ours. Our education, as regards the temporal affairs of man, is, perhaps, more extended than that peculiar to any other profession—we are second to none in deeds of charity and good will towards man. While some

“minister to a mind diseas'd ;
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow ;
Raze out the written troubles of the brain ;”

and

“Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff,
Which weighs upon the heart ;”

while others protect man's social rights and interests ; while all classes of the community administer to the temporal want and gratification of the animal being, it

is our happy privilege to dispense that physical comfort—to administer, under Providence, the blessing of health without which, all the wealth, all the luxuries of the earth go for nought.

Need I tell you, gentlemen, that it is your duty to see that you keep progress with the spirit of the age, and that the high character of medicine, as one of the liberal professions, shall not suffer in your keeping.

Notwithstanding the magnificence of our subject, it must be admitted, that in the exercise of the profession there is a common-place routine connected with it, which strips it of some of that sublimity which I have endeavoured to pourtray in the few inadequate terms just delivered ; and, perhaps, of all the professions, there is none which enters so deeply into the ordinary cares and anxieties of daily life. However much the medical man may incline to philosophise, there is a reality in the circumstances amidst which he performs his ordinary duties that he cannot overlook, and which demands of him the strictest attention to what are termed business habits. Now, gentlemen, there is an object in your early connection with the profession, and in joining such an institution as this, over and above the acquisition of technical knowledge, and that is, that you may be trained to those habits of business which are to serve you in after life. The economy of Time forms one of the striking characteristics of the most efficient man of business, and there is no profession in which this is so greatly conspicuous as our own. Without arrangement, method, and punctuality, we

could not conduct an amount of practice sufficient for individual maintenance ; in fact, a person disposed to attempt practice without these needful qualifications, would have no chance of success. If, for a time, he seemed to make good progress, it would be but temporary ; for, as soon as his defects were discovered, he would be avoided by all parties, whether engaged in pleasure or business, as an individual who sacrificed the time of others for his own selfishness and vicious habits. It is, then, of the utmost importance, that you should acquire, at the earliest possible opportunity, correct habits of business ; and if you have not already been judiciously trained in this respect, you have now the opportunity of making amends. It has always appeared to me that teachers, and heads of colleges, have never sufficiently insisted upon this most important matter. It is true, that days and hours of lectures have been most punctually appointed, and means have been taken to insure the attendance of pupils. I cannot but fancy, however, that, whilst admitting the importance of regulations on such subjects, the student has generally been left to suppose that such stringency has had reference solely to his period of pupilage. But the regulations of an institution like this ought to be looked upon in a still higher light, for it is by them that the character of the future man will, in a great measure, be formed. If the regulations be bad in themselves, evils must result from them ; but if they be good, as ours are firmly believed to be by many most competent judges, then assuredly a strict adher-

ence to them must be of essential service to him for whose guidance and governance they have been framed.

All educated people admire that natural bent and force of mind to which the term "Genius" is applied. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to define the meaning of that word to the satisfaction of all ; for whilst one mind might display an extraordinary amount of intelligence with reference to certain subjects, it might actually be far below the average upon other matters. It may suffice for my purpose at present, however, to take it in its common acceptation, as implying an unusual amount of natural ability. Now, all experience goes to prove that unless this endowment be under certain powers of control, also inherent, the natural gift, great though it be, is in a manner worthless to all. The vulgar idea of "genius" is, that it can accomplish all things with the smallest possible amount of exertion, and that whilst others have to plod and labour as ordinary mortals do, the possessor of "genius" may take everything quietly and easily, under the assurance that when the effort is required the supremacy of natural talent will effect the object in view by a path shorter and less laborious than that trodden by others. Unhappily many who are thus highly gifted fall into the great error of acting on this idea, and as unfortunately, too, this talent is often joined with a certain amount of eccentricity, which induces its possessor to enact rules and regulations for his own guidance, irrespective of all

other considerations, the result is that such individuals, instead of taking a lead among their fellow-men, actually fall below the standard of excellence, lose their position in society, and contribute nothing to the general good. This conceited, self-willed, and so-called "genius" is soon lost sight of; unless, indeed, he has displayed some surpassing brilliancy, there is no regret expressed for his fate: if there be regret at all, it is that such talent should have been so utterly wasted.

To take a better and a higher view of "genius," look to the history of the mighty intellects of the world,—of men who, though dead for ages, have left behind them reputation that never dies,—the greatest warriors, the greatest statesmen, the greatest philosophers, the most renowned of authors, the most eminent of medical men,—to whose memory especially we delight to pay homage and honour, have been as much distinguished by their modesty of character in early life, their conformity to rule and discipline, and their habits of industry, as by the preponderance of their natural endowments, and, where the reverse has happened, the characters have always been faulty.

It would not accord either with our time or the occasion, were I to dilate on such a topic; it will be sufficient for my purpose when I say, that we recognise no genius in our profession which has not been allied with industry. From Hippocrates and Galen to the men of the present day, it has been industry which has stamped the character of genius. Galen is said to

have been the author of 200 volumes. Harvey spent a long life in developing his great discovery of the circulation. Jenner was no less industrious in his immortal researches : and one of the greatest natural geniuses of whom the profession in this country can boast, John Hunter, laboured incessantly during his whole time of manhood, scarcely permitting himself a natural period for repose.

If there be genius among you, gentlemen, as I doubt not there is, happy shall we be to see it bud forth in due time ; but still more gratified shall we be by your faithful attention to those rules which are here laid down for your guidance, for, by punctuality, steady application, and correct conduct, you will establish that character for yourselves which will be of infinite value and service, as well during the period of pupilage as in after years.

This, gentlemen, may be said to be the first object and aim which you should hold in view at the beginning and throughout your studies. I need not here do more than refer to the curriculum of study, which is required by the various public bodies empowered by government to give you the licence to practise your profession. Whichever body it may be your intention to join, you must, as a matter of necessity, follow the course of study which is enjoined ; and not unfrequently you will have to adapt your studies to meet the views of two or even more of these bodies. It is to be regretted that the elementary course of education for medical men should not be the same in all our colleges and

public institutions. For honours and special acquirements there might be additional accomplishments demanded ; but these are matters which it would be improper to discuss here : and I allude to the curriculum, not for this purpose at all, but, whilst intimating the necessity of adhering to some of those systems, to request you not to fancy that merely by doing so you are fulfilling your duty as students of medicine. Unless you can shew proof to these bodies that you have complied with their regulations, you cannot be admitted for examination. If you do get your schedules properly filled, you are then in this respect eligible for examination ; but will you be so in all other respects?

I fear, gentlemen, that my experience among medical students and my duty to you must cause me to reflect on many former friends, and to say that, even where the terms of the curriculum have been to all appearance complied with, there has nevertheless been a deficiency of the knowledge required by such bodies. It is but too often that we see young men so arranging as to secure the usual certificates from their teachers, who nevertheless take so little interest in the lectures or subjects taught, and so neglect their private studies, that they are totally unfit to undergo any examination of the slightest stringency. Some only discover this when they are rejected, but others become aware of their own imperfections perhaps some six or twelve months previous to the date of their application for their diploma. Such an individual may pass or not, as chance may have it ; but what an unhappy condition

of mind is such a man in! He must feel that he is a sort of impostor, and if possessed at all of honourable feelings, must be aware that he has endeavoured to push himself into a profession — an honourable community—to enter which he had no just pretensions. It is, I am afraid, too much the custom among young aspirants to the profession to fancy that their principal duty as pupils is to fulfil the regulations of such public bodies as they may wish to attach themselves to, and that the summit of their ambition is to acquire the diploma or licence of such body. Now, I believe that this is a most erroneous and pernicious view for a young man to entertain, and I trust, gentlemen, that your aspirations will be of a far higher character. I have not hesitated to state what we expect of you as regards this College. It is as much from personal motives towards you, as from selfishness towards ourselves or this College, that I have, on my own part and for my colleagues, insisted upon one of the essential advantages to be derived from your proper attendance to duties here. Rest assured, gentlemen, that these various public bodies entertain an equally strong impression on such subjects. As great corporations they may be supposed to legislate for the profession and for the community, and do not, I beseech you, suppose that such bodies demand of you certificates of attendance upon lectures, the passing of certain forms and years of your life in specified modes, merely as a sort of purgatory before you are permitted to enter the profession! The

grand object of all is that you shall in a manner be forced into those positions, where, by the most moderate use of your faculties, you must of necessity acquire a knowledge of the profession ; and let me therefore entreat you to take this view of these regulations.

Gentlemen, I do not scruple to affirm that, in this College, we entertain the opinion that it is doubtful if any man, as a student, can attain higher honours—can achieve a character for himself more likely to be of advantage to him in after life, than the approbation of the authorities in this institution. I do think, in addition, that it is one of the crowning efforts that a young man can make, when he takes his degree, diploma, licence, or honour, which initiates him into the profession ; but I, at the same time, feel bound to declare, that the grandest object of your conduct here, including your compliance with regulations, and your probationary occupations of four or five years, should be that of acquiring a thorough knowledge of your profession. It is not a residence at any given place, nor the possession of any particular degree or diploma that will altogether stamp your characters as professional men. It will be your abilities and acquirements which will truly characterise you, and you will be judged of afterwards, more by the professional knowledge which you can bring to bear on the exercise of your avocations, than by any such accidental characteristics. I do myself hold a strong opinion that what is called a “respectable” degree or diploma may be of some service to a man in after life, and so may the

name of the school in which he has been brought up ; but, trust me, gentlemen, these alone will not suffice ; the party must have more,—for, besides the *éclat* of having been a member of a certain eminent school, of possessing a degree of high reputation, unless he really possess the more sterling qualifications of high professional knowledge, he will reflect little honour on the relationship which he may shew, and will do little for the profession in which he is an enrolled member.

Gentlemen, although the time permitted for this address has already expired, I cannot part with you without some further allusion to medicine, and to its high standing as a liberal profession. Let me entreat that, whilst you remain students, you will view the art and science of medicine under this one title,—take no particular heed of special departments, but endeavour to acquire the greatest possible amount of knowledge in all. Remember that during your pupilage, you are merely preparing to enter the portals of the profession ; and whatever special department your taste or circumstances may induce you to select, as your future walk in life, rest assured that he who has laboured most industriously in the elements of the profession generally, will be the best fitted for the special course in which his path in life may be cast.

It cannot but be that some men become enthusiastic about their own special department. I believe that, without such enthusiasm, greatness cannot be achieved in any way with us. I, therefore, deem it highly laudable, and I conceive that it may be carried to any

reasonable extent without disadvantage. Let me warn you, however, to draw the distinction between just enthusiasm for your own department, and foolish or malicious slander of your neighbour's. Unhappily such distinctions are not always made, and hence arises that want of unanimity among the various corporations and members of the profession, which all well-wishers to Medicine must greatly deplore.

Gentlemen, I might to-day have taken advantage of my position, and endeavoured to have raised your enthusiasm in favour of the special department called Surgery, but I have preferred that my allusions should refer to Medicine as a whole ; for it is as a whole that our profession is estimated by the public. If disgrace befall one of our members, if renown be acquired by another, the whole of us are estimated accordingly. It is not now inquired whether it was a Physician or Surgeon who discovered the circulation of the blood, or who first applied a ligature to stem the current of life from an open artery. It is sufficient that Harvey and Paré are known to have belonged to Medicine. No one asks whether Jenner was physician, surgeon, or general practitioner—he belonged to Medicine. Wells, Jackson, Morton, and Simpson, have all practised in special departments, but the whole medical community claim the authors and promulgators of anæsthesia—that singular and simple influence whereby man has acquired the power of nullifying even the most agonizing of physical pains ; a discovery, probably, one of the most remarkable in the history of Medicine, of

which we may, perhaps, be the more proud, as it has occurred in our own times.

Gentlemen, I must conclude. One of my great objects in this address has been to excite your enthusiasm for the profession of Medicine. I trust that I have already done so ; but I believe that one of the grandest features in our history remains yet to be alluded to. While the legislator enacts laws, which very generally add to the occupation of the lawyer, while the churchman, in promulgating the word of God gives additional occupation to the brethren of his own profession, the medical philosopher of the present day is leading in the van of that great sanitary movement, which, if fully carried out, must sweep away many of the known sources of his own dearly-earned gains. He is thus carrying out to its fullest extent his own mission on earth ; he is literally “doing good to all men”—not content with treating disease as it shews itself, he is endeavouring to avert the cause of all such evil. Gentlemen, it can be said of only one human being of all that ever lived, that millions have been saved from an untimely end by his genius. That man belonged to medicine ; and what mighty potentate, what magnate of the earth, what man is there in the civilized world who does not pay homage to the name of Jenner ?

THE END.