

The introductory address delivered at St. Bartholomew's Hospital on the opening of the medical session, October 1st, 1856 / by Andrew Melville McWhinnie.

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Dr. Gibb

with the Author

Kind regards.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

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THE
INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT

St. Bartholomew's Hospital,

ON

THE OPENING OF THE MEDICAL SESSION,

October 1st, 1856.

BY

ANDREW MELVILLE M^CWHINNIE, F.R.C.S.

ASSISTANT-SURGEON TO THE HOSPITAL.

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INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS

St. James's Palace

THE OPENING OF THE NEW YEAR

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ALFRED WATKINS, ESQ.

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

JOHN GUTHRIE, ESQ.

MEMBER

TO

SIR GEORGE CARROLL, KNT., ALDERMAN, PRESIDENT ;

WILLIAM FOSTER WHITE, ESQ., TREASURER ;

To the Almoners and Governors


OF THE ROYAL HOSPITAL OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW ;

THIS INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS

Is Respectfully Inscribed,

BY THEIR OBEDIENT SERVANT,

A. M. M^CWHINNIE.



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ADDRESS.

MR. PRESIDENT, MR. TREASURER, AND GENTLEMEN,

THE important, and indeed solemn occasion, of our meeting here to-day, to open our Winter Medical Session, naturally brings with it all the anxieties incident to those who are either approaching for the first time, or who are continuing the study of a profession at once difficult, laborious, and responsible.

In accordance with custom, it becomes the duty of one of the teachers of the School to address and welcome here those amongst you who are so engaged, and it will be my endeavour this evening to cheer and encourage you in the path you have chosen; and, while wishing you all success in your arduous labours, to assure you that it will be our constant care, not only to guide and assist you in your duties, but to establish between us, by mutual good-will and confidence, those bonds of friendship which shall hereafter more and more closely unite us.

The several medical officers and lecturers of this great Hospital remain the same as during the past year; and the required routine of study has undergone no material change since the excellent Address delivered within these walls last October. The earnest counsel and eloquent speech on that and other occasions are at this moment returning to my

memory, and painfully reminding me of my own inability to do adequate justice to the honour conferred upon me by my colleagues this day.

During the brief space of your time that I shall hope to occupy, it will not be necessary to inform you as to the order in which the different subjects embraced by the wide field of medical education are to be brought before your notice, or to direct you as to their number and relative importance, or to the proper distribution of your time. Such subjects have been well and fully discussed here in former introductory discourses;—to these, as being fortunately in print and in our library, I have the gratification to refer you.

In the few observations I shall now submit to you, my endeavour will be to present a picture of our professional life and your future prospects, and incidentally to mark an outline of the kind of character best calculated to pursue a successful medical career. There are many excellent men among our ranks, who, having passed through the perils of a laborious life without clearly comprehending their own capabilities, and the necessary end to which their particular temper or acquirements must lead them, are in the habit of holding up a dark side of the picture to the eye of the younger member, and of representing to him our calling as a gloomy path, beset with thorns, and our best endeavours as, for the most part, crowned with disaster. There is, however, a far brighter side, if we will only consent to view our duty through a proper medium. There is surely something cheering in the considera-

tion of a life devoted to good deeds—of days spent in the service of our fellow-men;—something that may animate us in the example of the master-spirits of our art—much that should quicken our energies in the study of those imperishable legacies that the Fathers of Medicine have bequeathed to us!

I have already stated, that I do not think it necessary to speak in detail of the course of mental training recommended by the examining boards and pursued in the School of St. Bartholomew's Hospital: it is enough for me to observe, that while the Lecture-room and its auxiliary departments will supply to you all that is required in the theory of your profession, the wards of the Hospital itself will afford you the largest field in this metropolis for the observation of practice. You will remember that hereafter, when engaged in the business of your profession, you will have to bear about you two distinct lives—that is, if you would do credit to our teaching and realize our wishes concerning you,—the one a life of study and contemplation, and the other a life of action. And it is the being able to maintain a temperate balance between these two that makes the true philosopher. Now, while the Lecture-room is reflecting the image of the contemplative life, do not forget that the Hospital is the mirror of the life of action: they are both distinct realities, yet so woven together in the responsible issues of our every-day work that they become inseparable; and it should be our wisdom, as it certainly is our interest, to cultivate each in just proportion—not shutting ourselves up entirely in our philosophic cell, nor, on the other hand, launching

out altogether on the restless sea of business. And now, it may be asked, how is our liberty to be secured whilst the elements of our existence are thus chained together—what are the laws which may so fetter the worldly enterprise as to prevent its crushing the meditative spirit?

Although it may at first appear too obvious for special notice, it will be found that a clear and general conception of the subject-matter of our office is absolutely necessary before attempting to follow the duties of our profession. Many in the end either partially fail, or altogether break down, because they have never known what a clear and general conception of a subject means; or, if they have once known it, because they have neglected to keep alive in their minds the means by which comprehensive knowledge should be made to carry on the occupations of every day. An intimate acquaintance with the principles of Anatomy, Physiology, Chemistry, Botany, Pharmacy, and the other collateral sciences that go to build up the foundations of the Art of Healing, may have been formed, and their tenets committed to the memory. Moreover, the Student may be so thoroughly versed in each and all of these subjects as to pass brilliant examinations, and obtain the highest distinctions—and yet the one thing that is to turn all these to account may be wanting; and this is the habit of reasoning. It is not enough that the Physician or Surgeon should be informed on the subject-matter of the particular case before him: he must be able to estimate the sufficiency of his own knowledge; he must not be content with having the proofs of disease in

his mind's eye—he must also know why they are proofs. Otherwise, he has no rules to govern his own conduct. For instance, the art of reasoning cannot furnish the symptoms of an aneurism to the Surgeon: these are made known to him by observation, and his acquaintance with the structures involved. But it *can* decide whether his observation is correct enough to warrant the particular treatment he prescribes. Take another instance, which may help to illustrate my meaning. The so-called Chemical Physician—that is, one who has so exclusively attached himself to the science of Chemistry as not to be sufficiently alive to the importance of other auxiliary sciences—has perhaps drawn out a theory on paper, or it may be in his own mind, concerning the cause of some special phenomena in a patient, that eventually become the subject of legal investigation. The Physician is placed in the witness-box to give what is called “evidence in the case,” when “the Counsel for the defence”—a man possibly but moderately skilled in his own art, and not possessing a tenth part of the Physician's mental power and information, but still well knowing the weak points in the education of the witness—decoys him, by cross-examination, into statements that are untenable, and contrives to throw doubt upon the whole of his evidence. Again, the most acute and pains-taking observer, armed with the microscope and other appliances, may repeat—nay, advance beyond—the experiments of modern discoverers; yet, if he do not possess the amount of analyzing faculty necessary for estimating the evidence thus submitted to him, he will appear

like a pigmy in the presence of one who is acquainted with the science of the operations of the intellect. As the Art of Surgery would not be what it is if it did not include another art in it,—namely, that of constructing the instruments employed by the Surgeon,—so it is with the general art we exercise. A clear and comprehensive conception demands not only a mind stored with facts, but one armed with a knowledge of the rules and conditions to which all facts must conform, in order that safe and just conclusions may be arrived at respecting them.

The purpose of the contemplative life is to occupy itself with that conclusive process of thought called reasoning. It busies itself with drawing sound and deliberate inferences, without which the life of action would degenerate into mere empiricism. On the other hand, the life of action only can supply the food for thought; for unless we have living subjects to exercise our skill upon, our deliberative habits would be literally a dead letter, and “our meditations among the tombs,” not what they now are—investigations in Pathology—but mere fancies without form or substance. Let us, then, never forget that a clear and definite perception is the parent of executive ability; that while flimsy theories are constructed every day, and perish every night, the immutable canons of deductive science are at once the mainstay and the moving power of all external employments.

And now let us for a moment consider what effect such a discipline as I have faintly suggested would be likely to have on the character of one who proposes to make the profession of Medicine the busi-

ness of his life. I do not hesitate to affirm that the effect would be eminently and durably cheering; that the completeness and consistency of his mental training would at once place him above the common class of his patients, and enable him to deliver his opinions *ex cathedrâ*; and even in times of occasional failure (for such will happen to the best among us), there would be the approving consciousness that he had not acted solely on the observation of symptoms, but on the examination of what the symptoms prove. The habit also of thinking in a connected manner would colour all he said with the due amount of caution always to be observed when we are speaking of the probable events that may happen in the course of a disease: he would take care not to commit himself to an opinion from which he could not retreat with safety to his reputation, when driven from his position by unforeseen circumstances. At the same time, this very care bestowed upon the method of delivering his judgment in obscure cases, or on those of more than ordinary difficulty, would be conducive to the building up of a manly firmness. For there is nothing that helps to establish decision of character more than being convinced of the security of one's ground of argument; being assured that whatever happens, whether good or evil,—whether the result follow or not which we, under certain limitations, have predicted,—still, that our conclusions are fortified by the strongest protective instrument of our thinking faculty, as the surest way of inspiring the proper self-confidence that gives resolution to our designs, and enlarges our ability to act. Now, all this

will be found greatly encouraging even to the most sensitive mind. The tender conscience of the purely scientific Practitioner, that is harassed by uncertainty because the evidence before him is not entirely conclusive, will derive all the support necessary for the emergency if he have armed himself with the knowledge of the more recondite processes of reasoning. And here it may be worth our while just to glance at one or two of the sources of disappointment to which we are liable, even in the higher walks of professional life; since, by analyzing the circumstances through which we are discouraged, we may take heart and defend ourselves. We belong, as you are aware, to one of three learned professions. There are other professions, as that of Arms, for instance; but Divinity, Law, and Medicine are distinguished by the epithet "learned;" and one of the usual consequences of associating these three in the same class is the establishing a current belief that they all, as social states, possess many properties in common. Whereas, when we come to look more closely into the evidence of such resemblances, we find that our notions on this head have grown out of early-received impressions that have been gathered from the faintest analogy, and that, in reality, the three professions have very little in common except their learning. Yet we every day hear comparisons made between them, which reflect but little credit either on the discrimination or the charity of the observer. For example, how often do we hear unjust and ill-timed remarks on the Lawyer's proceedings—upon his motives and conduct as contrasted with those of the medical man! How fre-

quently have we to listen to an ungenerous clamour concerning the authoritative position of the Church, and the deference that is paid to the character and opinion of her ministers! And how apt are even the best among us to seek self-exaltation by disparaging a sister profession! Now, I confess it sometimes happens that *we* are made the objects of attack by members of other learned callings. You may have your equanimity disturbed by ungenerous satire from one quarter, or your sense of propriety shocked by unwarrantable interference from another; and you will naturally try to defend yourselves from such assaults. My advice to you, under such circumstances, is never to forget that you are Christian gentlemen; and that when others forfeit that title, there is the greater necessity for you to let your light so shine that not only the dignity of your own profession may appear in its proper colours, but that your assailants, catching that light themselves, may reflect some portion of your spirit of forbearance.

This, however, leads me briefly to examine the subject a little further; for it may reasonably be asked, what are the circumstances that have given to the other two professions that definiteness, at least, if not actual superiority, which we acknowledge to be, in some respects, wanting in our own? My colleague, Dr. F. Farre, in his admirable Address on Self-culture, tells us "we have no infallible guide, like the Student of Divinity, nor written code of precedents, like the Student of Law." I am disposed to go somewhat further than my friend's position, and attempt to show that the real and substantial

ground on which all three professions stand, or should be made to stand, is essentially the same; and you will readily perceive, from what has already been stated, that the common ground in question, and to which I refer, is the strength and power of the principles of right reasoning,

It has been said by one of the greatest living writers on this subject, himself a distinguished ornament of the Church, "that the cause of truth universally, and not least of religious truth, is benefited by everything that tends to promote sound reasoning and facilitate the detection of fallacy."* Indeed, the University of Oxford has always recognised the advantage of retaining the technical portion of the science of Dialectics, and of making it an indispensable part of her examinations. The precision and completeness of the whole Oxford system, and what has been called the objective study of the dead languages, leads the student, as it were, insensibly to the right use of his thinking faculties; and it is no answer to this assertion to say that every Oxford man does not thoroughly comprehend the value of his own training, or use it in after life in the most efficient manner. I am now only concerned to show that the University of Oxford supplies a large proportion of the ministers of the Church—gives to each of such ministers, in the degree he can accept it, the instrumental art we are considering; and therefore it is that the general character of her divines exhibits the fruit of this discipline.

Now, let us turn to the Profession of the Law.

* *Vide* Whately's *Logic*, Preface to 9th octavo edition.

We shall here find that the largest number of our great Lawyers have been sent forth from the University of Cambridge; and we might from this fact at once be led to the conclusion, that mathematical demonstration, which is the peculiar province of the Cambridge education, is the best kind of preliminary exercise for the successful prosecution of a science that has comparatively but little to do with probabilities, and whose law of evidence is defined. I am aware that many advocates of the Oxford scheme are opposed to this conclusion, and have endeavoured to show that other circumstances, such as those connected with the temporal rewards of merit which are peculiar to each University, lie at the root of the causes that send men destined to the Legal Profession to Cambridge. However this may be, the fact I wish to point out to you is the same; namely, that in Law, as in Divinity, there is a substratum of introductory mental instruction provided for their students, which is found to be not only a powerful means of increasing the efficiency of their knowledge, but which gives them the advantage over other callings that have neglected such means.

Let us, then, consider and inquire which of the two processes I have mentioned is best suited to form the mind of one who is intended to follow our own profession—the Logical or the Mathematical. That the world is not quite agreed on this matter, is apparent from the circumstance of an University requiring one method at the hands of all candidates for its "*Testamur*," whether Priest, Lawyer, or Physician, and the Royal College of Surgeons demanding and resting satisfied with the other—viz., an

acquaintance with the elements of Mathematics from those who seek the Diploma of its Fellowship.

The time will not admit of my entering at length into all the arguments that might be brought forward in support of my firm conviction, that to cultivate the art of reasoning, in its largest sense, will be found more valuable than any mere mathematical study, to one who wishes to use his medical and surgical knowledge at the bedside to the best advantage; and, I cannot but think, you will see and acknowledge the truth of this, when you remember that, unlike those who follow in the fixed and undeviating path of Law and Theology, you have to spend your lives in fathoming the deeper operations of induction, and deal with the eliminations of chance, and the higher doctrines of probable evidence—departments of scientific ratiocination that no one versed only in geometrical and such-like axioms could ever reach. Above all things, you must never let your minds be deluded into the belief that all propositions must be what are called exact, to deserve the name of scientific propositions. In all cases of complex phenomena which will, in practice, be submitted to your daily observation, you will, perhaps, only be able to recognise tendencies, and be called upon to act on approximate conclusions: still, your deductions, made with the help of rigorous and inductive methods, may approach the highest class of scientific truths. You may have the extent of your power in this direction bounded by your observation, but within this boundary your power is immense. It is a scientific proposition founded on experience, that to delay operating for strangulated

hernia in a young plethoric subject has a fatal tendency; not that the cases so managed always terminate fatally, yet the proposition is not the less scientific and entitled to our earnest consideration, though counteracting causes may sometimes supervene and interfere with the usual result.—Take another illustration: we learn from observation that, in cases of injury of the head, with fracture of the cranium, but unaccompanied with symptoms of compression of the brain, the operation of exploring and making attempts to remove portions of bone tends to aggravate the danger; yet there are instances in which such interference has been followed by no bad result. It does not militate, however, against the more generally-recognized and safer experience of later practice, or weaken the scientific character of our proposition. Abundant illustrations of treatment, based on rigid and careful observation, might be adduced, which would tend to raise our profession far above a mere conjectural art, and bring it to the threshold of an exact science.

And here let me not be misunderstood. I do not mean to undervalue mathematical instruction as amongst the “first lines” of a medical education; it may be considered as a step to something better; all I contend for is, that mathematics cannot supply the place of a more appropriate system, and that the combinations submitted to us in our every-day work are beyond, as well as beside, the limits of mathematical calculation.

Let me now say one word on the kind of temper that would approach this subject with the best chance of overcoming its difficulties and of carrying

it out with a view to its successful application to our profession. Archbishop Whately says, "A candid disposition, a hearty desire to judge fairly, and to attain truth, are evidently necessary, with a view to give fair play to the reasoning powers."* It may with justice be asserted, that no class of men is more likely to fulfil these requirements rigidly than the members of the medical profession, sent forth as they are into the world to see both the best and worst sides of human nature; not as advocates, to defend a cause at all risks, but to discover truth, and face it, however unwelcome it may be; to examine for themselves what lies at the root of all shapes of empiricism and ephemeral conceits; to sit in judgment on their own failures, and honestly to confess their reliance on, or distrust of, the remedies they use.

These, and such like occupations of the medical man's mind, tend in a peculiar manner to remove the bias or prejudice that so often interferes with the right weighing of evidence, and qualify the understanding to receive, fairly and patiently, the principles of an abstract science.

And now, Gentlemen, after all that has been said, Medicine is a profession which, I feel convinced, not many who honour me with their presence this evening would readily exchange for any other pursuit; and, surely, of all the subjects that engage the human mind, few are more agreeable and attractive—few more elevating in their character, embracing as they do those natural sciences so

* *Op. cit.*, page 172.

intimately and immediately connected with our own peculiar studies, and which it is our pride to know have been so successfully cultivated by the illustrious men who have adorned our profession. Indeed, so completely, in this way, have many of the most important arts and sciences become identified with it, that medical men are almost always referred to by the public when any point of discussion relating to them arises, showing at once the value attached to their authority and knowledge. Admitted into the bosom of every family, the medical friend is made the especial confidant, and his counsel and advice are constantly sought, even in matters not strictly professional. Rightly studied and followed, I feel, moreover, that there is no intellectual occupation which will more readily and speedily yield an honourable means of subsistence, or one less liable, particularly as years roll on, to the fluctuations of fortune; such as happen, for instance, in the sudden and ruinous convulsions of the commercial world. It is something likewise to say, that against no set of men, as a body, does there exist so little prejudice;—that none are so ready to obey a summons, or cheerfully to render their disinterested services in the exercise of their calling—a calling which engages the kindest feelings of the heart, and which especially enlists us on its side when we see that in no profession is more confided to the honour and integrity of individuals, that no one is more esteemed and more generally appealed to in his circle than the practitioner of medicine, and none whose loss is more felt, or with more difficulty repaired. Truly, its exercise brings with it its own

peculiar reward in the knowledge of the good which it diffuses ; and, as disease is the common lot of all, in the benefits it dispenses alike to all ranks and conditions. In a word, there is, in the proper exercise of the calling, a nearer correspondence with all that religion and humanity dictate than, perhaps, in any other. And if, besides this, the medical practitioner be conspicuous for his gentlemanlike deportment, his polished education, and the high cultivation of his intellectual faculties, he may, apart from his own valuable offices, render himself the most valued friend of all with whom he may be brought into connexion, including even the greatest and most intellectual of his contemporaries. Medical men of this class, by the “cordial and liberal intimacy between literature and medicine, have always been styled, *par excellence*, the friends of men of letters.”*

In the stirring time of war, as during the late struggle, every professional calling, not associated with the all-engrossing subject of men's thoughts, is thrown into the shade. The Army and Navy are glorious services, when employed in a just cause, for the honour, safety, and liberty of a country ; and they will, notwithstanding the horrors attendant on warfare, continue to attract into their ranks the sons of the high-born and the wealthy, whose youthful aspirations and patriotic ardour may hope for renown in the page of history, and the highest honour a nation has to bestow.

* See Appendix, Note A.

Limited means and other circumstances may preclude many young men of spirit from at once entering the army ; but, fortunately, a certain number are enabled to do so, at a later period of their lives, through the portals of the Medical Profession, and they can do so under advantages which the events of the late war promise to render still greater ; for we must not conceal the fact, that, although the Military Surgeons are regarded with more consideration than their naval brethren, they have not yet attained the position to which their varied acquirements, skill, and devotion, fairly entitle them.

Many of those around me, impelled by something more than idle curiosity, joined eagerly in the crowd which lately hailed and welcomed the return of our victorious regiments into the metropolis ; and they would not easily forget the thrilling enthusiasm which everywhere accompanied the triumphal entry of the soldiers. They may have been not unmindful how glorious a part our own professional brethren had taken in that struggle ; and they may have exclaimed, “ We, too, have contributed our heroes ! ” They might have done so, Gentlemen ; and I am proud to say that this Hospital has sent forth its full quota of such heroes.

Both the Army and Navy are intimately connected with us, and require to be recruited by a constant Medical Staff—a staff of officers closely identified both with the bodily and mental condition of the men who compose those forces. We all know how great, from the most remote ages, has been the value—how almost priceless the value—set upon members of the healing art, during active warfare,

both by commanders and soldiers. The actions of such men do not live only in the lines of the immortal Iliad. History is full of them, and future historians will tell us of those who have distinguished themselves in the late, as in the preceding wars of modern times, by their skill, devotion, bravery, and humanity.

At all times keeping a watchful eye over the health of the troops, the Military Surgeon (rivalling the example of Ambroise Paré* and Larrey†), by his very presence in action, sustains the drooping spirit of the combatants; by his moral courage he revives the sinking hopes of the wounded. Braving dangers‡ and hardships equally with all of them, he remains calm and collected during the strife; and when appealed to for aid promptly obeys, regardless of rank, the call both of friend and foe. Sacred duties like these it has been reserved for a generous French field officer § lately to describe in vivid and enthusiastic language. I regret that time will not allow me to quote his eloquent words; but we may justly feel that there is something eminently noble in such combinations of these high and holy attributes of man's best nature!

From the evidence given before the Parliamentary committees, and other undeniable testimony from all quarters, both public and private, it was clearly

* Surgeon to King Henry the Second, Francis the Second, Charles the Ninth, and Henry the Third of France—and the friend of Sully. See Appendix, Note B.

† The celebrated Surgeon, and personally-attached friend of Napoleon. Note C.

‡ Note D.

§ Col. Ambert, of the 4th Regiment of French Dragoons. Note F.

shown that the blame attached to the Medical Department at the commencement of the Crimean campaign was undeserved. Through untoward circumstances, familiar to you all, their power to act was paralyzed; but we may affirm that, had the hygienic measures suggested by its members been carried into effect, the losses and sufferings of the army would not have been greater than those which attend the ordinary casualties of war; and it is certain that when the injunctions of our brethren *were* duly attended to, the health of our troops soon became most satisfactory; and, indeed, at the termination of the siege they had become more free from sickness than those of our Allies.

Persevering still in my endeavours to present our profession in the most favourable light in all its bearings, it may be asserted that the Military Medical Officer possesses many advantages over his brother officers, from the more lengthened and liberal nature, and higher standard of his preliminary education, and his greater opportunities of mental improvement. He may not always share public *éclat* arising from active service in the field, or share their chance of attaining high rank or fortune. Should he be tempted to feel too keenly the artificial distinctions of such rank to his disadvantage, let him remember that it is within his power greatly to remedy the evil. A passage of Paley* occurs to me, much admired by Fox, respecting the distinctions of civil life, which the Doctor says are always insisted on too much, and carried too far,

* *Mor. and Pol. Philos.*, B. V. ch. iv.

“Whatever,” he adds, “conduces to restore the level, by qualifying the dispositions which grow out of great elevation or depression of rank, improves the character on both sides.” The Army Medical Officer, by turning to account his many resources, and doing his part towards restoring the level, may secure the attachment and respect of his brother officers, as he is known so fully to share with them the devotion of the soldiers. One of the advantages which he possesses from the numerous resources of his education I may venture to mention,—that into whatever part of the world he may be thrown, it need not be his lot to suffer the ennui too frequently complained of by the regimental officer, when, after the excitement of active service, he is doomed to the tedium and listless life of the home-camp or garrison town.

These topics would, at this particular season, naturally lead me to touch upon the Surgery of the late war; but concerning this subject, interesting and instructive as it might be made, even with the hitherto imperfect materials that have reached us, my time, even were this a fitting occasion, would scarcely allow of anything more than a passing notice.

From a statement made by a correspondent (a civilian, I believe) in one of the public journals, it was calculated that the mortality among the wounded was as great during the siege of Sebastopol as it was at Waterloo; and it has been inferred from it, that Surgery in the field, during that interval, had made no progress. It must be borne in mind that the circumstances connected with the last memorable

siege, and those of the great battle, do not offer a fair parallel. The peculiar shape, the greater size, precision, and velocity of the new rifle shot—the much-increased calibre of the larger arms, particularly the enormous and ponderous shells, produced casualties such as had never been experienced in any former warfare. Besides all this, we must take into consideration the condition both of the *physique* and the *morale* of the men, arising from their well-known hardships and privations throughout this protracted siege, but which it is not necessary here to dwell upon.

It may not, however, be out of place here to quote an extract from a letter addressed to me by my friend Dr. Balfour,* whose authority will always be entitled to the greatest attention and respect. Alluding to the late war, and its probable effects on the Medical Department of the Army and Navy, and upon the profession generally, he says: “So far as I can learn from competent judges, there has been an amount of good Surgery which surpassed the anticipations of even the best friends of the department; and I believe we are far ahead of the French Army in that respect: it was otherwise in the Peninsular campaign. Such being the case,” adds Dr. Balfour, “the profession ought to rise in estimation in the Army. But I do not look so much to this, as I do to the effect produced by the reports of ‘our own correspondents,’ and of civilians who went out as amateurs, such as Messrs. Stafford, Osborne, Bracebridge, and others, and from the tone

* Of the Royal Military Asylum, Chelsea.

of the Committee of the House of Commons on the Army Medical Department. If the report of that Committee be acted upon, there will be a decided improvement in many important particulars. This will principally affect the junior ranks; so that, in future, it will be better worth while for a young man to enter the Service for a few years, without intending to remain in it, and make it his permanent occupation.

“I cannot say much as to the present condition of Naval Surgeons; but I believe that a gentleman *may* now enter that branch of the Service. One of Sir J. Liddle’s first acts, on his accession to office, was to obtain for the Assistant-Surgeon the rank and privileges of Ward-room Officers. The Assistants are, therefore, in the position which their friends have long been fighting for; and I have no doubt,” continues Dr. Balfour, “their position is improving every year, and that the Medical Officers of that Service will be treated more and more as we are in the Army, namely, as gentlemen.” For myself, I feel convinced that the junior Medical Officers of that noble Service would be alive, as the public ought to be, to the late successful efforts of their friends, in this and other schools, towards improving their status, and securing their just claims; and I have much pleasure in especially referring to the active exertions of one amongst us towards the attainment of this important object—I mean our excellent House-Surgeon, Mr. Allen.

No allusion, however slight, to the Surgery of the late war can be made without a word or two respecting chloroform. Both in our Army and in

those of our Allies the accidents following a very general use of it have been exceedingly rare. Its value in the field, until now, had not been tested on a large scale. Its triumph has been most complete; and however marked and striking the distinctions are between the causes and nature of wounds in civil and military practice, and however peculiar the hygienic conditions under which they are inflicted—so that we cannot often draw comparisons between them,—yet happily we have lived to see the introduction of agents for annulling pain and suffering alike applicable to all. In some respects we find this glorious boon to suffering humanity, if possible, more precious in the field than in civil life,—sustaining the system under the most severe shocks, acting as a stimulus, and raising the pulse when low—in a word, giving support to the vital powers. Its employment has thrown great weight into the scale in favour of the early removal of mutilated limbs. The fear of renewing the shock, which has deterred so many from the primary amputation, is now completely removed. We know, on good authority especially from my friend Mr. Blenkins, of the Guards, that without the aid of chloroform many severe operations could not have been undertaken or performed at all. Fewer assistants are required when it is employed: and this striking fact of itself adds materially to its value in the field.

Dr. Macleod, in the *Edinburgh Medical Journal*, says: “During the whole course of the war, there has been only one death which can, with any fairness, be said to have arisen from its effects. It is impossible to say in how many cases it has been

used; but as very few Surgeons indeed failed to employ it on all occasions, it must have been administered in a very large number of patients." I have myself been favoured with an equally satisfactory account of its action by a Russian officer; and in the *Comptes Rendus* of the Academy of Sciences, M. Baudens, in a note, reports that this invaluable anæsthetic agent has been administered in the Crimea in 25,000 instances; and M. Scrive, the Physician-in-Chief of the French Army, has affirmed that no fatal case had occurred.

The question of conferring military honours on the Medical Officers of the Army was settled in the affirmative some years ago, and has been acted upon, though with a sparing hand, during the late war: and this suggests a word or two on the often-mooted topic of honours and rewards to our body generally. Now, although it cannot be considered that the genius and talents of members of the Healing Art are altogether neglected, or their services wholly unrewarded, yet it has been the constant theme of medical orators and writers, that although the gratitude of mankind has been universally allowed to be the just due of a Harvey, of a Hunter, of a Jenner, public honours and distinctions have not been liberally or adequately decreed to our profession in this country. This will, perhaps, always be more or less the case in an art whose progress and discoveries, though conferring the most invaluable blessings, are quiet and unobtrusive. But the time, however remote, will come, and the community be benefited, when signal services in the cause of

humanity will have their just and proper recognition —when those amongst us who devote their lives to good and civilizing deeds will be held in still more lasting and grateful remembrance, and will receive their rightful distinctions. “For Heaven’s sake,” says the poet Wordsworth, “let all the benefactors of their species have the honour due to them. Virgil gives a high place in Elysium to the improvers of life, and it is neither the least philosophical or least poetic passage of the *Æneid*.”

Hic, manus, ob patriam pugnando, vulnera passi :
 Quique sacerdotes casti, dum vita manebat ;
 Quique pii vates, et Phœbo digna locuti :
 Inventas aut qui vitam excoluere per artes :
 Quique sui memores alios fecere merendo :
 Omnibus his niveâ cinguntur tempora vittâ.*

You have selected for your place of study and education this venerable seat of learning and science, consecrated by the illustrious names of Harvey, Pott, Abernethy, and a succession of great men, who have advanced the several departments or enriched the literature of Medicine and Surgery, and who have continued down to the present time to sustain the reputation of St. Bartholomew’s Hospital throughout the world. To them we may apply the eloquent language of our distinguished surgeon, Mr. Lawrence, who, in one of his Hunterian Orations, says, “It well becomes us to take every proper opportunity of doing honour to the memory of these great men, for they have exalted us. Their genius, their labours, and their public services shed a lustre upon our common profession, raising its intellectual cha-

* *Æn.*, Lib. vi. 660.

racter and the social rank of its members ; whilst their names are conspicuous on that roll of master-minds, the proud inheritance of our land and our race, whose influence and whose fame extending over the whole globe, are destined to live as long as genius shall be held in reverence and science itself shall endure."

Our School, which, as well as the Hospital, can boast of being the oldest in the metropolis, still continues to maintain its reputation with the public. The registration list of Students shows that, during the last year, it has also been the largest. Through the munificence of the Governors, both the Museum and Library have recently been materially enlarged. The splendour of this noble charity, the completeness of its various departments, the wide field and advantages presented to the Student, need not my humble commendation. Permit me, Sir, however, in behalf of my colleagues and myself, to convey to yourself, to the Treasurer, the Almoners, and the Governors, an expression of our thankfulness for the ample means you have placed at our disposal, and for the confidence we receive at your hands ; believing that we cannot make to you a more grateful, a more acceptable return for the honourable position in which you have placed us, than by affording you the assurance of the continued prosperity of the Medical School over which, by your favour, we preside.

Dr. Black has quitted the College as Warden, after a tenure of that office for nearly five years, during which our expectations have been fully realized.

The spirit with which he superintended it impresses us with a lively and grateful recollection of his services. Whilst following as he has so worthily done in the steps of his distinguished predecessor, the Collegiate establishment has derived a lasting benefit from the influence of his precept and example. To the advantages of a graceful education Dr. Black joins the most perfect probity of heart and mind, and we congratulate ourselves that he is still amongst us as one of our teachers. The special subject of which our colleague treats, viz., Jurisprudence, may, according to the definition of Justinian, be said to include "moral injunctions, as well as positive ordinances." "*Juris præcepta sunt hæc: Honestè vivere, alterum non lædere, suum cuique tribuere.*"* We may paraphrase this pregnant sentence into the Christian golden rule of doing to others as we would be done by. The observance of which maxim, so inculcated by our friend, but unhappily too frequently neglected amongst us in our professional relations and intercourse, would, after all, contribute more towards increasing our mutual respect for each other, and raising us in the public estimation, than all the honours and titles that could be bestowed upon us.

On the occasion of the appointment of a new Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, the Chief Secretary,† who had been in office also with his predecessor, observed in my hearing, "that he had found himself placed between the pleasures of memory and those of hope." In our own case, whilst indulging

* Note E.

† Lord Carlisle, now Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

in the pleasures of memory, we may feel ourselves inspired with something *beyond* hope in the assurance that Dr. Martin, in the discharge of his responsible duties, will fulfil the expectations both of the Committee of Governors and of the Medical Staff.

I have the gratification, Sir, to announce to you, that during the past year the Students have shown in their conduct an amount of zeal and industry such as to merit your fullest approbation,—thus manifesting a resolution to maintain, at the same time, the character of their school and of their profession. Many would be stimulated by the recollection that they are following in the path trodden by their parents and tutors, to whom they would desire to do credit, and whose example they would emulate. All would be encouraged by the great and venerated names which have adorned their *Alma Mater*.

In the competition for prizes and honorary distinctions, too, it is satisfactory to state that the number of candidates has exceeded that of any former year, and that the best proof of talents and attainments has been evinced. Such rewards, Sir, and recorded distinctions will, we doubt not, be permanent and pleasing mementos of the past, and an earnest of continued exertions, as well as of future success; for a glance at the published list of prizemen during the last twenty years plainly exhibits the distinguished position at which many of their predecessors have arrived throughout the empire.

From the acquaintance and intercourse I have

had with many of our young friends, I am fully persuaded that generous sentiments will be the attendants of success; and they will be taught humility by reflecting, that whilst unremitting labour and constant improvement, through life, are absolutely essential for efficiency in practice, every step they make tells them the more that they are only on the frontiers of knowledge. They must bear in mind that the greater their talents, the more will be expected of them.

But the less fortunate Student should not be disheartened. A present disappointment may, in the end, be productive of great good, by giving rise to increased efforts. He may reflect, that extensive usefulness and great influence for good do not necessarily depend upon brilliant talents, any more than upon high station. All will be held equally responsible for the means entrusted to them. All may become respected members of an honourable profession, and ensure a lasting claim to gratitude and esteem.

Here I have the pleasure of being reminded that, in addition to the rewards and honorary distinctions hitherto given, the Treasurer, ever watchful over the interests of all departments of the Hospital, now offers a prize to the Student of the first year who shall make the best dissection, and pass the best examination in Anatomy.

I have thus, Gentlemen, endeavoured, however feebly, to present to you a sketch—I mean it to be a cheering one—of student and professional life. I wish to point out to the Student of Medicine the

means by which he may acquire and maintain the high position to which his studies and pursuits should lead him. I wish to impress upon him the importance of striving to realize in his own career that union of the life of contemplation and action in which Lord Bacon places the perfection of human nature, and which, in all ages, has ever produced the grandest and most beneficent results in every intellectual calling.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A. (*See* p. 20.)

IN Norfolk-street, for upwards of thirty years, lived Dr. Brocklesby, the friend and physician of Dr. Johnson. Physicians of this class may, *par excellence*, be styled the friends of men of letters. They partake of their accomplishments, understand their infirmities, sympathize with their zeal to do good, and prolong their lives by the most delicate and disinterested attentions. Between no two professions has a more liberal and cordial intimacy been maintained than between literature and medicine. Brocklesby was an honour to the highest of his calling. In the course of his practice, his advice as well as his purse was ever accessible to the poor, as well as to men of merit who stood in need of either. Besides giving his advice to the poor of all descriptions, which he did with an active and unwearied benevolence, he had always upon his list two or three poor widows to whom he granted small annuities, and who, on the quarter-day of receiving their stipends, always partook of the hospitalities of his table. To his relations who wanted his assistance in their business or profession, he was not only liberal, but so judicious in his liberalities as to supersede the necessity of a repetition of them. To his friend Dr. Johnson he offered an establishment of £100 per annum during his life; and upon Dr. Johnson declining it, which he did in the most affectionate terms of gratitude and friendship, he made him a second offer of apartments in his house, for the more immediate benefit of medical advice.

To his old and intimate friend, Edmund Burke, he had many years back bequeathed, by will, the sum of £1000; but recollecting that this event might take place (which it

afterwards did) when such a legacy could be of no service to him, he, with that judicious liberality for which he was always distinguished, gave it him in advance, *ut pignus amicitiae*. It was accepted as such by Mr. Burke, accompanied with a letter which none but a man feeling the grandeur and purity of friendship like him could dictate.

NOTE B. (See p. 22.)

AMBROISE PARÉ.—This famous Surgeon having been urgently sent for by the Duke de Guise, besieged in Metz, to attend the wounded of his army who were in want of assistance, Ambroise Paré was shown to the frightened soldiers at the breach. Upon this they immediately filled the air with shouts of the most lively joy, and cried out, “*Nous ne pouvons plus mourir, s’il arrive que nous soyons blessés, puisque Paré est parmi nous !*” Their courage revived, and their confidence in this skilful Surgeon contributed to the preservation of a place before which a formidable army was destroyed.—See Cooper’s *Dictionary*, art. “Gun-shot Wounds,” and *Œuvres Complètes d’Ambroise Paré*, par J. F. Malgaigne. Paris. 1840.

NOTE C. (See p. 22.)

BARON LARREY, the celebrated Surgeon, and personally attached friend of Napoleon throughout his great campaigns and battles of giants, as they have been termed. The ardour, intrepidity, and endurance of this great man were proverbial; and he was tried in all,—whether, as General Petit says in his *Eloge*, “under the fire of a hundred batteries, or in the silent perils of pestilence and famine.” He was ever undismayed by fear in any danger, and his genius and humanity commanded the respect and admiration both of his own and of hostile armies. He suffered many very severe wounds, especially when engaged with the Army of the Rhine in 1793, as well as at St. Jean d’Acre and at Waterloo. He constantly saw his professional companions fall by his side; and in the sanguinary cam-

paign in Syria he lost thirty of his surgeons and assistants. Whilst serving in the Army of Italy, he induced General Buonaparte to order the construction of the *ambulance volante*, for the reception and conveyance of the wounded; and Larrey formed the three divisions *d'ambulance* described in his *Mémoires de Chirurgie Militaire*. Since that period, it has always been customary in the French armies, on the day of battle, to make every preparation for necessary operations as speedily as possible. "The mere sight of these ambulances, always attached to the advanced guard, says Larrey, encourages the soldiers, and inspires them with the greatest courage."

A statue, in bronze, by David d'Angers (the famous sculptor of those of Ambroise Paré and Bichat), cast from the cannon taken in the different great battles in which this heroic Surgeon immortalized himself, was raised to his memory, by subscription; and Marshal Soult, Duke of Dalmatia, then Minister of War, decided upon its being erected in the *cour d'honneur*, the grand square of the Hôpital du Val-de-Grâce. Larrey is represented in his uniform, pressing to his heart the will of Napoleon, on which is inscribed the sublime eulogium of the Emperor, "*C'est le plus vertueux et le plus honnête homme que j'aie connu.*" (See Larrey's *Mémoires de Chirurgie Militaire et Campagnes*, and the *Eloges* by General Petit, Messrs. Dupin, Roux, Bégin, Baudens, &c., at the inauguration of the statue.)

Whilst attending the 'service' at the Military Hospital during the three glorious days of July, 1830, amongst other interesting incidents connected with those events, M. Larrey himself told me, when assisting him in dressing the wounds of one of the Grenadiers of the Garde Royale, over whom he delighted at that moment to throw the protection of his popularity, that on the eve of some of the battles during the Empire, in which many of these very wounded had been engaged, he had frequently slept in the tent, wrapped in the same cloak with Napoleon.

It might appear invidious to specify names from amongst the many of our own military medical brethren who have distinguished themselves in the field, and advanced military surgery; but the name of Guthrie, whose loss we have had so recently to lament, cannot be omitted. This eminent Surgeon was conspicuous for his zeal and activity in the Peninsular campaigns, and honourable mention is made of him in the Wellington Despatches. His numerous writings are well known and esteemed, and will always be referred to and quoted both at home and abroad.

The earnest and patriotic manner in which this veteran Surgeon came forward with his vast experience, and urged his counsel and advice on the Government and the public during the late war, will be in the recollection of all.

NOTE D.

THE very first object of interest which attracts the attention of the visitor on entering the Hunterian Museum tells of the Medical Officer slain in battle.

It is a set of instruments in an antiquated box, on which is written :—"These instruments were the property of the Surgeon of the 69th demi-brigade of French Infantry, who was killed by a cannon-ball, in an attack made by the 54th British Infantry of the Line on Fort Mirabout, four miles west of Alexandria, in Egypt, on the 19th of August, 1801, and given by the Grenadiers of that regiment, who took the Fort, to Mr. Morlen, their Surgeon."—"French Army, Egypt, 1801."

NOTE E. (See p. 31.)

JUDGE BLACKSTONE, in the Introduction to his famous *Commentaries*, Section II., says, in reference "to the eternal immutable laws of good and evil, to which the Creator himself in all his dispensations conforms, and which he has enabled human reason to discover, so far as they are necessary to the conduct of human actions :—Such, among others, are these principles—*that we should live honestly,*

should hurt nobody, and should render to every one his due; to which three general precepts Justinian has reduced the whole doctrine of Law."

Professor Christian, in his note on the above passage, says, "It is rather remarkable that both Harris, in his translation of Justinian's *Institutes*, and the learned commentator, whose profound learning and elegant taste in the classics no one will question, should render in English, *honestè vivere*, to live honestly. The language of the *Institutes* is far too pure to admit of that interpretation; and besides, our idea of honesty is fully conveyed by the words *suum cuique tribuere*. I should presume to think that *honestè vivere* signifies, to live honourably or with decorum, or *bienséance*; and that this precept was intended to comprise that class of duties, of which the violations are ruinous to society, not by immediate, but remote consequences, as drunkenness, debauchery, profaneness, extravagance, gaming, &c."

NOTE F. (See p. 22.)

COLONEL AMBERT, of the 4th French Regiment of Dragoons. —His admirable article first appeared in the *Constitutionnel*, and afterwards in the *Union Médicale* of October, 1854. I have borrowed to a great extent the spirited translation of a correspondent, "A. M. A.," of Dumfries, which forms part of an interesting paper "On the Military Surgeon," in the *Lancet* of June 28th, 1856. One may almost imagine the gallant Colonel, in "his picturesque eloquence" in one passage, to have had in his mind Shakspeare's description of our Henry V. at Agincourt,

"Walking from watch to watch, and tent to tent," &c. &c.

See *Henry V.*, Chorus, Act IV.

"Following these long files of soldiers, we observe a man modestly clad, and walking on foot. Like them, he is on the road to battle; but he is not, like them, on the road to glorious renown and fortune. His duties will be unattended with *éclat*; his vigil will be unremembered; and even though

he should prove a hero, as did Bécourt on the field of Eylau, he may probably not, like him, be personally rewarded by the Emperor. But an hour will come when this man will be the chief amongst all the multitude. It is in the hour after the battle! During the fight, he will brave death as fearlessly as any other one. Without sharing the excitement of the combatants, he will be a great actor in the bloody strife. He will be calm and reflective when all around him are agitated and disturbed. He denies himself emotion, for his hand must not tremble; his glance must be penetrating, and his judgment must be prompt and unerring. In an atmosphere of grape-shot and smoke, he is as collected as in his cabinet. The shrieks of the wounded, the booming of the cannon, and the crash of shells around him, disturb him not; his hand is as steady as in the operating theatre of an hospital. All ranks appeal to him for aid, and he obeys as promptly the call of the poor soldier as of the mighty general; he succours the fallen of the enemy as well as the wounded of his own army. The mangled and dying bodies of his companions and friends are laid before him; yet he must stifle in the birth every rising emotion, that he may remain master of himself, for the eye of the Surgeon should never be veiled by a tear! Kneeling on the bloody straw of the ambulance carriage, he coolly issues his orders, and his moral courage revives the sinking hopes of the wounded. From his looks, which every one is eager to read, there breathes forth that supreme calm which fills their souls with confidence, and spreads over their wounds the divine balm of trust and hope! In these solemn hours the Military Surgeon is the repository of great mysteries. The dying man entrusts him with tender messages for his distant friends, and touching farewells sacred to the home afar off; one confides to him his riches, another his profoundest secrets. After the battle, the general, the officer, and the soldier hear only the shouts of triumph and songs of joy; but the Surgeon alone has to listen to the long and plaintive groanings of mangled sufferers. Night comes,

and all are asleep—save him; a vigilant sentinel, he is awake amongst the wounded. Next day, though exhausted with fatigue, he sets out with the ambulance; he goes to one and to another, here hastily exploring a wound, there searching for a bullet perchance in the cavity of the human chest. He goes about giving hope to all—sowing life, so to speak; wrestling in despair with death; inventing and improvising a thousand methods; supplying material means of aid by the power of his intelligence and skill; transforming planks and cords into apparatus; tearing even his own clothes into rags to stanch the bleeding wounds of his devoted soldiers. His is the struggle between the blind force of destruction, and the intelligent power of conservative science.

“Such is the man whom we have seen modestly walking at the left of his regiment!

“Honour, then, to him! His mission in armies is a thousand times sacred! Wives, mothers, sisters!—ye who, in the silence of the home-hearth, tremble for those who, far away from you, are engaged in the glorious duties of war,—calm your anxious fears! Science and charity watch over those you love!—Fellow-citizens! ye who were so moved at the heart-rending sufferings of your soldiers in the East, be proud, be happy—the Military Surgeon has saved your sons, though he himself may have died at his post—the heroism of science has equalled, if it have not surpassed, the bravery of the field of battle!”

THE END.

and all the while—save him; a vigilant sentinel, he is
 twice amongst the wounded. Next day, though exhausted
 with fatigue, he sets out with the ambulance; he goes to
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 to speak; stretching in the path of death; inventing and
 improving a thousand methods; supplying material means
 of life; the power of his intelligence and skill; transfor-
 ming plans and words into operations; turning even his
 own exhausted body into a machine for the healing wounds of his
 fellow soldiers. This is the struggle between the blind
 force of destruction, and the intelligent power of conserva-
 tion.

Such is the man whom we have seen modestly walking
 at the head of his regiment. He is the man who, in the
 "Honor" then, to him! His mission in arms is a thou-
 sand times greater than that of any other man who, in
 the service of his country, is called upon to do his duty.
 The army from you are the glorious heroes of
 war—such your actions! Such and chiefly written
 over these you have!—Fellow-soldiers! ye who were so
 moved at the heart-rending language of your soldiers in
 the East, be good, be happy—the Military Surgeon has
 saved your sons, though he himself may have died at his
 post—the business of science has equalled it; it has not
 surpassed, the purity of the field of battle.

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