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**Contributors**

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*from the author*

AN

# Introductory Lecture

DELIVERED AT THE

WESTMINSTER HOSPITAL

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

OPENING OF THE MEDICAL SESSION

OCTOBER 1, 1863.

BY

CHRISTOPHER HEATH, F.R.C.S.

ASSISTANT-SURGEON TO AND LECTURER ON ANATOMY AT THE  
WESTMINSTER HOSPITAL.

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WESTMINSTER HOSPITAL

ON THE 10TH OF OCTOBER

OPENING OF THE MEDICAL SESSION

OCTOBER 10, 1850

CHRISTOPHER HEATH, F.R.C.S.

ASSISTANT SURGEON TO THE WESTMINSTER HOSPITAL

LECTURER ON THE

LONDON:

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## INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

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GENTLEMEN,

Twelve years ago, I for the first time took my seat at a medical introductory lecture, and I well remember the feeling of anxious expectation, not unmingled with awe, with which I regarded that, the very commencement of my professional career. If, however, any of my auditors who are now about to begin their studies shall derive one tithe of the satisfaction, not to say comfort, from my address, that I did from the one to which I have alluded, then, gentlemen, my highest aim will have been more than fulfilled.

But I am only too conscious that my audience is not composed solely of freshmen, to whom I might venture to speak *ex cathedrâ*; I am surrounded and supported by my colleagues, of whose unvarying kindness since I first became connected with this hospital I am glad to make



this public acknowledgment ; and I see around many familiar faces whose presence here I look upon as an indication of the good-natured forbearance which I trust to meet with at your hands to-night.

Were I to attempt to entertain (I will not say instruct) these two great divisions of this assembly for the time which has been allotted to this discourse, I should have to plunge deeply into those moot questions of anatomical and physiological science—those chemical discoveries or therapeutical investigations which the ever-active mind of the profession at home and abroad is so constantly bringing forward. But, to say nothing of my own inability for the task, such deep subjects would be not only utterly unintelligible to those as yet unacquainted with medical science, but from their complexity might produce a depressing effect upon their minds,—an impression the very reverse of that which I hope to leave when this lecture is brought to a close. I shall therefore address myself without further preface emphatically to students : freshmen with all their studies before them : students who return to-day to take up the, I trust, not altogether lost thread of last year's instruction : and, lastly, those who in a few brief months will enter on that for them most anxious time—the commencement of medical practice. A medical



student myself for more than the average period, and closely connected with students to the present time, I fancy that I am not unacquainted with most of the difficulties which beset the student at different points in his career, and I may therefore be more able to lend a helping hand to those still *in statu pupillari* than my seniors, whose student-life must long since have faded from their thoughts.

Few men enter at a medical school without *some* previous preparation in the form of apprenticeship or otherwise ; and yet, if there be any here who make *this* their first commencement, I should be loth to say they have done wrong. Those habits of application and constant steady reading which are acquired in the upper classes of a school, or the junior ones of a college, are just those which the medical student most requires in his first year ; whilst the general information and improved culture of the mind which are gained in these important years of preliminary study, will well repay their possessor in after-life. I know that men do by sheer hard work gain high positions in their profession with little, if any, general education, and with a minimum of classical or other knowledge ; but I know also that their medical studies *would* have been facilitated by this knowledge, whilst their position *might* have been more distin-



guished in its possession. Medical language has unfortunately in its process of development become both commingled and confounded to such a degree, that a classical scholar might well find difficulty in guessing at first sight the derivation of many of our medical terms; yet without *some* knowledge of the dead languages it is hardly possible fully to appreciate the meaning of a lecturer, and, therefore, I the more rejoice that those now entering on their medical career must have already given proof of their competence, by passing a preliminary examination of some sort.

The advantages and disadvantages of a long apprenticeship have formed such a bone of contention among the great authorities of the profession, that it is almost dangerous, perhaps, to express an opinion upon the subject; yet there are many here I feel sure, who will agree with me in believing, that much useful knowledge, much manipulative skill, are to be gained under the tutelage of an able and enlightened practitioner. There is one danger, however, against which I would guard those gentlemen who having seen, it may be, a very considerable amount of practice, and having thereby gained a very good knowledge of the nature and treatment of disease, feel inclined to devote themselves entirely to their theoretical

studies here, to the neglect of that most important part of their education,—clinical instruction in the wards of the hospital. True, they may have fully learnt the general routine of ordinary cases, and may have been fairly successful in the treatment of the patients who have been intrusted to their care ; but is it quite clear that their diagnosis has been always correct? is there not something which they may learn from the careful practice of auscultation, or the examination of the secretions of the body, under the eye of the physician? Again, the students' former patients may have been robust agriculturists or massive miners ; will the treatment of city patients, exposed from their earliest days to evil influences, differ in no respect from that of these? Even precisely similar cases may be treated differently here, and it may be more successfully than by the methods the student has previously seen employed, whilst on the surgical side of the hospital he will have the opportunity of witnessing many operations which cannot but render him more proficient as a surgeon in after years.

The student cannot keep too constantly in mind that the aim and object of all his studies is to fit him to become a medical practitioner in some form or other. But few can tell, when they commence their studies, where their lot



will be cast in later years; and it would be both dangerous and absurd therefore to modify the course of study to suit individual tastes or caprice. A certain course of study has been authoritatively marked out for both the teachers' and the students' guidance, and upon the whole I think it is satisfactory in its working. It is true that there are certain dread ordeals, in the forms of first and second examinations, to be gone through at different points of the students' career, and some are apt to fancy that their whole attention must be concentrated on these to the exclusion of all other matters. If, as some people seem to think, the possession of a diploma formed a certain introduction to practice, I should say, Devote your whole attention to the attainment of that coveted possession; but since successful practice depends infinitely more upon knowledge of the symptoms and treatment of disease, the possession of that rare commodity, common sense, and of tact, which is to be gained in some degree at least by contact with successful practitioners, I would again urge the necessity of taking a much wider view of your education than is comprised in the attendance on a given number of lectures or the dissection of a certain number of parts.

Every student must, I fear, feel a little dismayed at the number of subjects with which he



is expected to become acquainted during the few years spent here, and yet, like most difficulties when fairly attacked, this soon melts into insignificance. Without doubt, the intellects of different individuals differ in capacity, and some men find a greater difficulty in appreciating the meaning of a lecturer or the contents of a book than others ; and yet those of slower appreciation have often greater powers of retention than their more brilliant fellows, and their knowledge is therefore of a more stable and satisfactory character. Real genius is a rare, and perhaps a dangerous possession, at least if it induces its possessor to imagine that he can dispense with labour and steady application, as it too frequently does. Most of those brilliant thoughts which we are accustomed to regard as the spontaneous outpourings of genius, are in reality the result of close application, the touched and re-touched efforts of, it is true, a master mind. Hear what such authority as the great Buffon says upon the subject:—

“ Invention,” he says, “ depends on patience : contemplate your subject long : it will gradually unfold till a sort of electric spark convulses for a moment the brain and spreads down to the very heart a glow of irritation. Then come the luxuries of genius—the true hours for production and composition : hours so delightful



that I have spent twelve and fourteen successively at my writing-desk, and still been in a state of pleasure."

Do not imagine for a moment that I am recommending you to imitate the great naturalist's example and spend the whole night in your studies. Two or three hours of study every evening are ample for every purpose, but I must beg you to mark that I say *every* evening, or at least the exceptions must be few and far between.

I remember in former years to have heard fellow-students boast of having read till two in the morning, but the question naturally arises, at what time did they begin? Believe me, gentlemen, the course you are now entering upon will tax your strength quite sufficiently without midnight study, and that it is impossible to get through the labours of the session without a proper amount of sleep. Perhaps I may speak more warmly upon this subject than those of my colleagues whose lecture-hours are in the afternoon, though I may be charitable enough to suppose that non-attendance at an anatomical lecture may occasionally depend upon the inordinate consumption of midnight oil.

But to return to the subjects of study of the first-year's man. Physiology and Chemistry I must leave to the able care of Mr. Power and

Dr. Dupré, but on my own subject—Anatomy, I would say a few words which may more properly be given here than in the course of my regular lectures. I need not quote an ancient proverb as my warranty for thus preferring my own subject, since I believe all are agreed that anatomy is the basis of all medical knowledge. And yet it may occur to some of you to call to mind many a successful practitioner whose anatomical knowledge must be at “zero” now, if indeed in his best days it ever approached “temperate.” I grant it; but the generations who have gone before must not be forgotten, those pioneers whose researches have placed our knowledge on such a firm basis that men can afford, to some extent, now-a-days, to accept their facts without entering upon their arguments. Would the practitioner whose only rule for the administration of calomel, or any other drug, is a given number of pulse-beats per minute, have the satisfaction he now feels in grasping his patient’s wrist, had not the immortal Harvey gone before him and by his *anatomical* researches demonstrated the circulation of the blood? Would there be any possibility of correct treatment of any of the thousand and one diseases to which the flesh is heir, had not the anatomical relations of the different internal organs been fully ascertained and displayed by



our forefathers? I say nothing of those delicate diagnostic signs which are the triumphs of medical art, and which require both the practised finger and eye of the anatomist—be he physician or surgeon—for their detection; the common occurrences of everyday life, the detection of fractures and dislocations, the direction of herniæ, and the steps of an important operation, are sufficient warranty, I take it, for our still insisting upon the study of anatomy by our students.

How is it, then, that anatomy has fallen into disfavour, and that it seems to be a prevailing notion that a good anatomist is necessarily a bad surgeon? Denying altogether the latter part of this statement, I believe that anatomists themselves are to blame, inasmuch as they have overloaded their science with minutiae which are not of the slightest utility: have separated into systems the several parts of the human body, as if one were likely to meet with individuals composed entirely of muscles or entirely of nerves: and have so sedulously kept asunder all the practical details of surgery from those of anatomy, that the student is soon disgusted with committing to memory mere lists of names whose utility is more than doubtful.

The creature which you will have to treat in disease will be a man with his bones clothed



with muscles ; with vessels and nerves running in definite directions, but with the skin covering all. You will not be at liberty to 'reflect the skin,' 'dissect out the vessels and nerves,' and 'clean the muscles,' as the phrase is, but you must, as it were, pierce the tissues with your mental eye, and discover the secret mischief by those cultivated powers of eye and finger which it will be your duty here to acquire. And this brings me to a matter, the importance of which I have ventured to urge once before elsewhere,\* viz. the necessity for studying external form both in health and disease. How shall we recognise a dislocated joint or a fractured limb : how note the appearance of a consumptive chest or an ascitic abdomen, unless we have accustomed our eyes to view, and our fingers to manipulate, the human body in a state of health ? I say nothing of the necessity of clearly appreciating the sounds of healthy heart and lungs before attempting to auscultate diseased ones, since this will, I doubt not, be fully insisted on by our able lecturer on Medicine ; but without trenching on his ground, I may add one word as to the importance of studying the *physiognomy* of disease, and of marking all the obvious external signs in any given case, before proceeding

\* "Anatomy in relation to Physic," London Medical Review, October, 1862.



to more particular investigations. The words of Dr. Latham, which form the motto of the able "Hints for Clinical Clerks," which have been drawn up for your guidance, should be thoroughly impressed upon every one of you. "The patient being placed before me," Dr. Latham says, "I ask him no question until I have learnt everything worthy of remark which my own eyes can inform me of."

But you will say I am wandering from my anatomical text after having rather discouraged you than otherwise with regard to anatomical study. This was far indeed from my purpose, believing as I do that a knowledge of anatomy is absolutely essential for the medical man. It is not, however, the mere knowledge of dry details which might possibly be learned from books of plates that I speak of, but it is the knowledge of *tissues*, the power, so to speak, of seeing vessels and nerves before they are really in sight, which it is so important for the operating surgeon to gain; to say nothing of that perfect confidence, which nothing but the feeling of thorough acquaintance with everything connected with the subject can give. Why is it then, you may ask, that many a good anatomist is, after all, but a poor surgeon? In the first place, I believe because a man must be *born* a surgeon, whilst it only requires time and appli-

cation to make an anatomist ; then, that many a teacher of anatomy is prevented by circumstances from obtaining surgical duties at a sufficiently early period ; and, lastly, that the constant study of minutiae seems to have the effect of narrowing some men's minds, and thus of preventing their taking that wide view of men and matter which is, I believe, essential for a successful career. That a knowledge of anatomy *per se* is no obstruction to a brilliant surgical career, but the contrary, is sufficiently proved by the positions which Astley Cooper, Liston, and Fergusson, have severally achieved in this city, after being all teachers of anatomy ; and I cannot quote three worthier examples for your imitation.

It is just possible that the practised anatomist may fall into the error which Sir Charles Bell alludes to in his "Practical Essays," though I cannot say I think it a common one in the present day. "A change," he says, "has taken place in the mode of education of surgeons since the time when Mr. John Bell made his eloquent appeals to enforce the study of surgical anatomy. In this respect all has been attained, but there may be an error the other way. The young surgeon, by exercise in anatomy, acquires a workman's feelings of his subject, that everything may be accomplished by dexterity, and he



engages in operations which the powers of life cannot sustain."

This were indeed a most serious error of judgment: but one, as I have said, of rare occurrence nowadays, since I fear the present tendency is rather to avoid even necessary operations, and to shift responsibility if it be possible on to other shoulders. This "official fear of responsibility," as the historian of the Crimean War terms it, is, it is to be feared, undermining that independent character of our countrymen which has hitherto been one of the principal causes of our nation's greatness; and it is not very surprising therefore, that the medical profession should have become in some degree infected with the prevailing distemper. What was it that destroyed our armies in the Crimea, and prevented the successes of our fleets in the Baltic, but this "official fear of incurring responsibility;" and what saved our Indian possessions, and prevented the massacre of hundreds of helpless women and children, but that some men were found who could and *did* venture to act on their own authority, content to do their best and leave the results in other hands?

And this brings me to a matter which concerns the senior student more than the beginner, and most particularly those who intend, as I hope you all do, to take office here, and fulfil



the responsible duties of house-physician or house-surgeon—I mean the *proper* feeling of responsibility with regard to matters of life and death, the well or ill-doing of your patients.

Every man with a well-regulated mind must feel the weight of anxious care pressing somewhat heavily upon him when he for the first time is conscious that the life of a fellow-creature depends upon his dictum ; and that the mistake of a few hours', or even minutes', treatment, may snap the silver cord which otherwise need not have been severed for years ; but yet, if he feel that he has acquitted himself to the best of his ability, if he know that no former opportunity of acquiring knowledge has been neglected, and his conscience is clear, therefore, of any feeling of blame, he ought not, and he *must* not, if he wishes to be a successful practitioner, be cast down when the results of treatment prove untoward. But if thoughts like those I have alluded to, are apt to arise in the treatment of ordinary cases, what must the feeling of the surgeon be when about to commence a complicated and serious operation ! Much to be pitied, indeed, is the man upon whose shoulders this great weight of responsibility rests if he feel himself unworthy of it, or if his mind revert to opportunities neglected and instruction despised ; and therefore, it is that I so strongly



urge upon you the necessity for thorough acquaintance with anatomy, and for constant attendance in the wards and in the operating theatre. And yet the most accomplished anatomist, the most skilful surgeon, cannot *command* success, a higher Power than that of human hands alone can govern all results, and we must be content to bow before Him.

And now let me say a few words respecting those opportunities of practical acquaintance with the business of your future lives which will be offered to you in this hospital ; and first, let me advise you to let nothing prevent your regular daily attendance in the out-patient rooms, or in the wards. The various lectures are specially so arranged as to leave two hours perfectly free for this important purpose, and you ought to avail yourselves thoroughly of the opportunities thus afforded. I do not ask you, as is often absurdly done in discourses like this, "to live in the wards," because I know very well that the lecture-theatre and the dissecting-room will claim your attendance for the rest of the day, but I *do* say that these two hours should be thoroughly devoted to clinical work. It may appear a little egotistical in me to say so, but I believe that the student may learn as much in the out-patient rooms as by the more formal visits to the wards ; and fortunately it is quite



possible to combine the two, or to take them on alternate days. Custom has established a sort of rule that first-year's men should attend surgical practice, and the more advanced student medical practice or both: and it may be well for the first-year's men to confine their attention to the surgical *wards*, though I would by all means advise their attending the physicians', as well as the surgeons' out-patient rooms. In the large number of patients who annually apply here for advice, you cannot fail to see all those common disorders which form the staple of medical practice, whilst you will have the advantage of watching the treatment pursued, and contrasting it and its results with what you may have been familiar with before. It is a great mistake to suppose (as seems to be the case in some quarters) that seeing out-patients is a mere matter of routine; it certainly may degenerate into that in the hands of inefficient officers, but I for one know no reason why the diagnosis and treatment of disease should be less accurate among out than among in-patients. Nothing, however, is a better stimulus to the energies of medical officers than the presence of students, and, therefore, it is, I believe, the very best policy of the governors of charitable institutions like this, to foster the medical school attached to each hospital. The best clinical teacher



must, of necessity, pay most attention to his patients, or he cannot instruct his class, and, therefore, on the score of humanity, if on no other ground, you, gentlemen, should make that class as large as possible.

But you must not be content with watching others labour, you must each engage in clinical work on your own account, and great opportunities are here offered you by the large number of clinical clerkships and dresserships which are open to you, which offices I trust you will all be anxious to fill. Nothing will so lastingly impress upon your memories the details of a case as the having yourselves extracted them from the patient, and recorded them in the case-books, and you will be able in after years to recall with hardly an effort their treatment when about to undertake the charge of similar cases yourselves. To the surgical dresser there is the additional advantage of becoming practically acquainted with all those minutiae of surgical manipulation, which it is most important for you all to acquire, and the perfection of which marks the accomplished surgeon in after-life. Whilst on this subject, let me call the attention of those gentlemen who commenced their education since October 1st, 1862, to the fact, that by the new regulations of the College of Surgeons they will be *obliged* to fill some of these



offices before they can receive their diploma—a regulation which will, I think, effect much good.

There is one other duty to which I would also urge your careful attention, and that is, to be present at the *post-mortem* examination of all such patients as die in the hospital. If you have carefully watched the symptoms and treatment of their disorders, you cannot but feel an interest in those morbid changes which unfortunately baffled the physician's skill; but even if it should happen that you have never seen the patient in life, you cannot fail to learn *something* from the careful inspection of his body after death. There is another thing, too, which, if borne in mind, will increase your zeal for pathological study, which is, that none can tell how soon he may himself, when far away from more experienced pathologists, be called upon to examine, and give a decided opinion as to a case of suspected poisoning, or violent death from other cause. It must be at all times an anxious duty to have to give an opinion upon which the good fame, nay, even the liberty and life of a fellow-subject, will depend; and a medical man's mind is not fitted to form a calm judgment and arrive at a just conclusion, unless it shall have been frequently exercised on similar occasions. It is curious, and at the same time



humiliating, to notice how frequently medico-legal inquiries are rendered obscure, or even abortive, by the imperfect manner in which the *post-mortem* examination has been made : and it therefore behoves each one of you to be as thoroughly acquainted with the manipulative, as with the more purely scientific portion of your duties.

And now, perhaps, I have urged hard work upon you almost *ad nauseam*, let me therefore pause for a moment to speak of the rewards which you can attain. I speak not of the reward which every honest heart cannot fail to recognise when the years of study are crowned with success, nor of those greater rewards of wealth and position which I hope you will all more or less attain to in after years : but I speak of the rewards which await you as students here. A sense of duty, or a real pleasure in your pursuits, may sufficiently urge most of you to buckle to with all your might to the work you have in hand ; but we have other incentives to offer you which may prove boons, or simply pit-falls, in proportion as they are used wisely or the reverse. Class-prizes have always a tendency to induce the pursuit of one branch of study to the neglect of others possibly more important, and therefore, though encouraging you to compete for all the prizes you can, I



would caution you against giving too strong a bias to your studies. But, as some of you know, we have the advantage of an endowment from a most liberal-minded lady, which offers still higher incentives in a pecuniary view, and at the same time guards against the errors to which I have alluded. The student who gains the "Chadwick Prizes for General Proficiency," must prove himself a good man and true in all the subjects of medical study, and hence the distinction is one to which the ablest of you may well aspire. But after all, gentlemen, prize-books of whatever nature are but vanities, gratifying no doubt to the recipient, and admired by his friends, but yet having little effect upon his professional career. We have, however, three prizes (for such they really are) to offer you, which are the most valuable gifts a young man can receive : the proper use of which will stamp his after-life in a manner which no other prize can do : and which, therefore, I most heartily commend to your ambition. I mean the appointments of house-physician, house-surgeon, and assistant house-surgeon to the Westminster Hospital.

For my own part, I still look back with pleasure and fond regret to the days when I was house-surgeon to a metropolitan hospital : to the time when responsibility and pleasure



were so well commingled: when friendships which will last my lifetime were made: and when, last though not least, I gained a stock of practical information which I should have acquired in no other way. I do not hesitate to say that it is quite possible to recognise in after-years a practitioner who has held such offices as these, by the more methodical and accurate manner in which he performs his work; and though there are of course brilliant exceptions, you will find that most of our leading men have filled them at some period or other of their careers. The days are happily gone by when parents paid a thousand guineas with their sons to entitle them to hold such appointments as these; and *we* are in advance of many institutions which still demand *some* payment for similar offices. Merit is the only passport necessary to these high preferments, and I need say nothing more in their behalf.

And now to pass from things strictly medical and to come to the more social relations of the medical student. I ventured in commencing this Lecture to divide my audience into three classes, and now would address a few parting words to each.

To the student who is soon about to enter upon practice I would say, do not imagine that you have completed your studies because



your three or four years here have expired. Ripe experience is necessary for your perfection, therefore observe diligently, record carefully, study constantly; study not merely books but men, and not merely men in disease but men in health and in their social relations, that you may be prepared to take that high position which, as successful practitioners of a noble art, you will be justly entitled to.

Entrance to practice may from force of circumstances be more difficult to some than to others, but if you have (as I trust you all have) availed yourselves of the instruction which has been here given you; if you will bend your minds heartily to the business of your profession, and at the same time lead honoured and respected lives, you cannot fail with God's blessing to attain respectability and competence, or even high position and wealth.

On the student who is yet in the midst of his studies, I would urge the concentration of all his energies on the business of his education. If, unfortunately, opportunities have hitherto been wasted, let redoubled energy now make up for past deficiencies; if theoretical studies have been cultivated to the exclusion of the more practical ones, or *vice versâ*, let the even balance be restored; if pleasure has encroached too much upon the solid business of your life,



let her be resolutely thrust back into her proper place. Study to gain knowledge, not merely to pass examinations, and fill in the outlines of knowledge sketched in your first year, with the solid colouring of thoughtful study and careful reading.

To the first-year's man, whose inexperience of London and its ways may lead him into error, whilst his difficulties as a student are at their greatest height, I must give a few special words of advice, both general and medical. In the first place, then, let me beg the first-year's student not to imagine that he can afford to waste his first year in idleness, or that the following ones will be amply sufficient for the attainment of all the knowledge he will require. Each year has its allotted amount of study, and unless the student lay a good foundation in his first, he will never be able to raise a solid superstructure of knowledge in his second and third years. Fortunate, I take it, are those students who have resided in this city before their hospital-study commences, since they will be less liable to fall into those temptations which lead astray many an unwary youth; twice fortunate are they who have the advantage of a home in their student-life, where they may have pleasant society in the intervals of study. For you will find it impossible,



gentlemen, to keep the bow always on the stretch ; you must have *some* relaxation from your labours (though a little will go a long way with a really diligent man), and it is in seeking this relaxation that the student must be especially careful.

I am far from recommending you an ascetic life, which would, in fact, be the worst preparation for your after pursuits ; I would say, have companions, but be careful in their choice, select those who will work as well as play, and you will gain both advantage and amusement from their friendship. Again, relaxation may be fairly sought from time to time in those entertainments which this city offers in profusion, and which, if used aright, far from doing harm, will render the student more capable of after-work. To use them aright, however, you must use and not abuse them, that is, let them afford a few hours' change from study, but do not let them become the business of life ; let them be enjoyed for a few hours, and not interfere with your necessary rest, or the labours of the following day. Good, bad, and indifferent as these amusements are, in every sense of the word, each man must choose those he will employ ; and if he will let the feelings which live in every gentleman's breast be his guide, he can never doubt as to his selection.



This is neither the place, nor am I the person, to deliver a sermon, but I would beg to guard the young student who now, perhaps for the first time, is his own master, against the notion prevalent in some quarters, that it is necessary for every young man to "sow his wild oats." Upon this subject, however, the manly author of "Tom Brown at Oxford," has expressed his views so much better than I can hope to do, that I shall venture to quote them in this place, agreeing fully with his every word:—

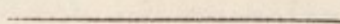
"In all the wide range of accepted British maxims there is none, take it all in all, more thoroughly abominable than this one, as to the sowing of wild oats. Look at it on what side you will, and you can make nothing but a devil's maxim of it. What a man—be he young, old, or middle-aged—sows, *that*, and nothing else, shall he reap. The one only thing to do with wild oats, is to put them carefully into the hottest part of the fire, and get them burnt to dust, every seed of them. If you sow them, no matter in what ground, up they will come, with long tough roots like couch-grass, and luxuriant stalks and leaves, as sure as there is a sun in heaven—a crop which it turns one's heart cold to think of. The devil, too, whose special crop they are, will see that they thrive,

and you, and nobody else, will have to reap them; and no common reaping will get them out of the soil, which must be dug down deep again and again. Well for you if, with all your care, you can make the ground sweet again by your dying day. 'Boys will be boys' is not much better, but that has a true side to it; but this encouragement to the sowing of wild oats is simply devilish, for it means that a young man is to give way to the temptation and follow the lusts of his age. What are we to do with the wild oats of manhood and old age—with ambition, over-reaching, the false weights, hardness, suspicion, avarice—if the wild oats of youth are to be sown and not burnt? What possible distinction can we draw between them? If we may sow the one, why not the other?"

And now, gentlemen, in conclusion, let me beg you all to be in good heart as regards your studies and your future career. We all, I suppose, at one time or another, feel inclined to despond and look at the black side of things; but depend upon it he who does so least is at once the happiest and most successful man. If the student allow himself to become despondent in his early studies, how will he ever overcome the still greater obstacles which await



him? If the more advanced student shirk his first examinations, how will he ever become a practitioner? But it is as practitioners perhaps that this 'equal mind' will be most necessary for you, since it may affect not merely your own, but your patient's welfare. The man who is over-anxious unnerves himself in some degree, and is thus less fitted to take that calm view of his own affairs, or of those of others, which will be most conducive to a good result; and therefore I say again, Be of good heart, not forgetting, moreover, to put your trust in Him who 'ruleth all things.'



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