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PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE

FORTY-FIRST ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE

BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

Held in London, August 1873.

BY

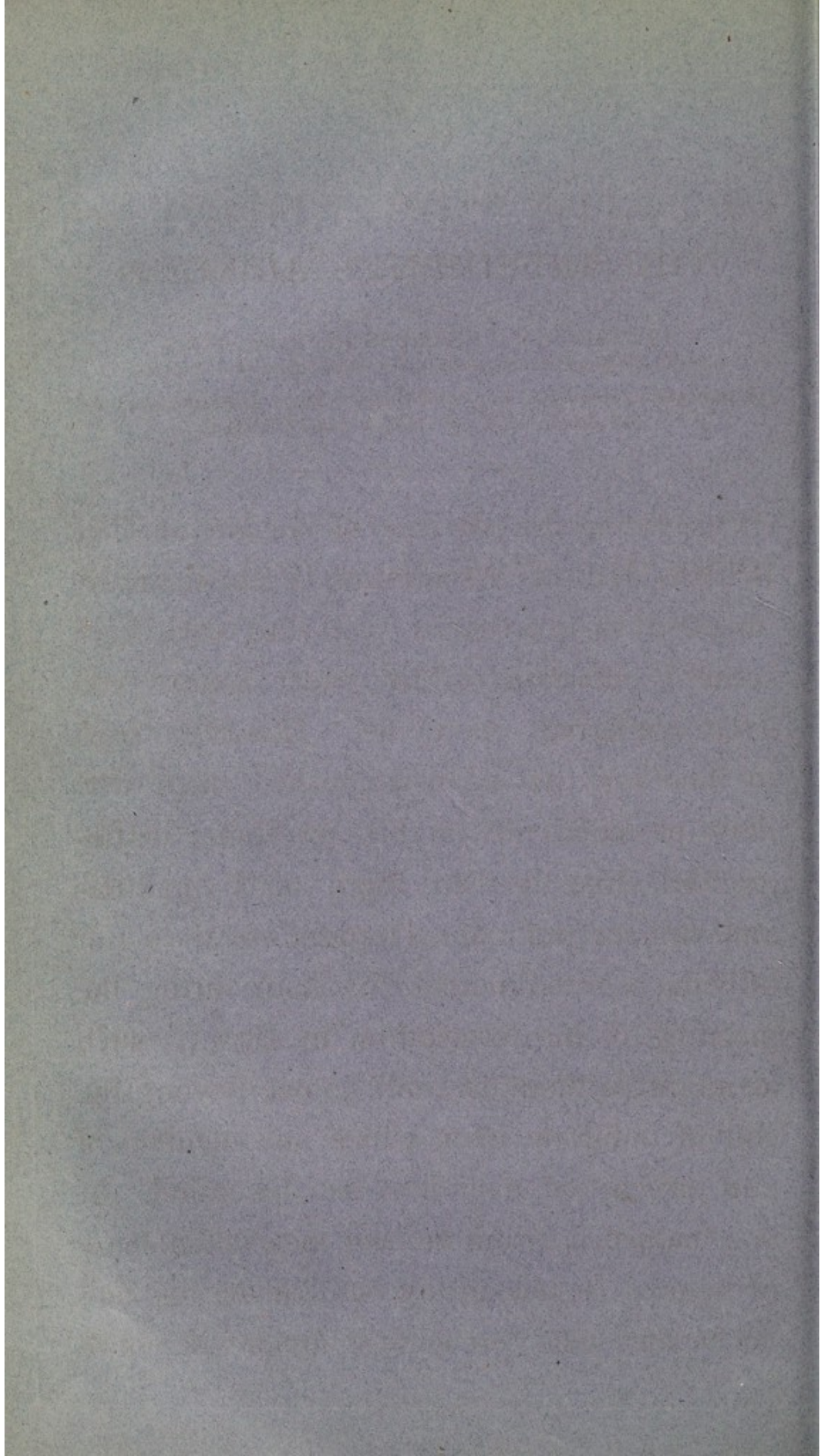
SIR W. FERGUSSON, BART., F.R.S., F.R.C.S.,

SURGEON TO KING'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL, LONDON, AND
SERJEANT-SURGEON TO THE QUEEN.

PRINTED BY

T. RICHARDS, 37, GREAT QUEEN STREET.

—
1873.



THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

BY

SIR WILLIAM FERGUSSON, BART., F.R.S.,

Surgeon to King's College Hospital and Serjeant Surgeon to the Queen.

*Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION held
in London August 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th, 1873.*

ON assuming the position of President of The British Medical Association, I feel naturally impelled to express to you the very high sense I entertain of the great honour you have conferred upon me. Looking back to the long list of distinguished men who have preceded me in this position; distinguished alike by their high social qualities and eminent professional reputation, the honor of being selected to hold this chair, during the meeting of the Association in 1873, is such as might be thought to fill to overflowing the cup of ambition upon which any member of our profession may have set his mind. It has happened to me to have received a share of honors far beyond my humble merits, and far beyond what the wildest dreams of youth

and early years could have anticipated. For these I hope that I am dutifully grateful, and for this crowning distinction which places me, for a time, at the head of the largest Association of medical men ever voluntarily banded together for the general good of our profession, I say to you with a heart full of emotion that I am thankful, far beyond my command of words to express, for this indication of your appreciation of my personal or professional merits, to hold the foremost place among you.

On such an occasion as this, it is one of the duties of your President to do more than merely express thanks for the honor he has had conferred upon him. He is expected to deliver an address which shall in some way or other be appropriate to the occasion. In the early years of this Association these addresses were, to a great extent, limited to matters connected solely with our profession in its social and practical aspect. Forty years ago, men like Hastings, Barlow, Conolly,

Prichard, Crosse, Bardsley, and others, comprising to a large extent the foremost of the provincial practitioners in England, were impressed with the conviction that the members of our profession scattered over the length and breadth of the land, were united by no stronger tie than the general one of a common brotherhood, which merely secured (if indeed it did that), professional courtesy between man and man. There seemed no other common bond; for the sources of education, licenses to practice, and degrees of distinction, were so numerous, so varied, and the local head quarters of the profession at so many different points, that the link of one with the other was of the feeblest description. The men referred to saw that the time had come when members of a great and noble profession might be held together by ties stronger, and even more appropriate than those of a common professional brotherhood. Separated as each man was from his *alma mater*, bound by no tie which could claim his strict allegi-

ance, there seemed room, almost a necessity, for an institution such as that which was founded by the gentleman alluded to. The necessity was the more marked as, at the time in question, there was not that genial community of feeling which now happily obtains between town and country. The dignitary of the metropolis occasionally affected an air of superiority which his country brother could not conscientiously admit; and so by a determined, yet graceful, display of moral force, worth, and vigour, these men of the provinces asserted for themselves a professional status which, whatever may have been in former times, is now conceded by their metropolitan brothers, and freely acknowledged by the public at large. The best proofs to this effect are, that leading professional men of the metropolis attended the provincial meetings of their brethren; that the term "Provincial" was changed to that of "British Medical"; that the Association, having held its meetings for more than a

quarter of a century in provincial towns, held a most successful first meeting in London ten years ago, and now again meets in the same city under the happiest auguries.

When Dr. Hastings—a name since more revered under the title of Sir Charles—first addressed the original members, he pointed to the necessity for such a combination, the defects in our social and technical condition, the need for changes and reforms, not only as regarded ourselves, but for the sake of the community, with a prescience that must ever redound to his credit, as having foreshadowed many of those changes in our professional work and status, which have gradually altered and strengthened our relative positions to our fellow-men. Subsequent addresses followed in similar spirit, but all seemed to hold the main features of such to be a retrospect of the leading incidents of the past year, in association with topics pertaining to our profession. Few subjects of the kind, however distant the relationship might be, were over-

looked, and each orator for the year was deemed a sort of Hippocrates, a Galen, or a Celsus, who should display an amount of concentrated knowledge such as might be expected in a well appointed university. It is marvellous to me how many of these orators distinguished themselves in languages, science, philosophy, medicine, and surgery, and their addresses, to say nothing of the collateral knowledge we have of the men otherwise, speak highly of the accomplishments of those who were our immediate predecessors and the founders of the Association which we now represent. A feeling must, I imagine, have gradually arisen that such a retrospect as was then expected from the president of the year was something which overtaxed the energies of the best men in our ranks, particularly if, as often happened, these men were deeply engaged in ordinary practice, and soon it was thought advisable that this extensive range hitherto prescribed for one man should be looked for

from two or more, and hence arose the custom of separate addresses on Medicine, Surgery, Physiology, and other subjects, irrespective of what might be expected from the President. As the Association increased in numbers and importance, a necessity for sections was felt, and now, however strange the statement may appear, we have within our body the very concentration of specialities. Our annual meetings constitute as it were a university of specialities. This isolation, as it may be called, seems a necessity of the times. The results of special investigation seem more than an ordinary mind can comprehend, and the structure of our Association, built upon varied elements of importance, seems the natural development of thousands of minds worthily bent on showing that our profession combines as much of human knowledge, in a concentrated form, as may be found in any other. From time to time some of my predecessors assumed the task of discoursing on matters which they had made

special objects of study,—epidemics, fevers, small-pox, cholera and what not. Theories of the preceding year were dwelt upon as if the true foundations of our physiological knowledge had been laid for the first time. A study of these addresses induces a reverent respect for most, I may say of all of these authors, yet it is mortifying to think that much which they considered of importance has passed into the oblivion which has engulfed so large a proportion of the so called philosophy of our profession.

There are few annual professional addresses delivered in this country more interesting than those by eminent physicians and surgeons appointed for the purpose by this Association. The custom with Presidents of Sections making special addresses is a modern and valuable addition to the interest of our meetings; and, in the course of these changes, the President of the Association for the year feels himself so surrounded by specialists that he can hardly

consider himself an authority on any subject. At any rate, whatever he may select, there will likely be a number of experts present whose authority may probably be estimated above his own, and so he has no firm standing anywhere.

I imagine that few physicians or surgeons of the present day, who might be honoured with the post of your president, would venture upon such extensive ground as that taken up by many of those who gave presidential retrospects at early meetings of this kind. Doubtless "there were giants in those days," for they did their work well; but it may be claimed, on behalf of the like men of the present day, that the field of observation is now greatly extended, and that few can hold themselves as thorough masters in all departments.

On looking to those who have to deliver special addresses on this occasion, and considering the characters of the gentlemen who will preside over our sections, I confess my-

self at a loss to determine what I shall say to you, or how I can in any way give interest to this Inaugural Address. I have a most pleasing recollection of the President's Address last year. Mr. Baker left the ordinary beaten path, and, like some of his predecessors, adroitly seized on a subject which possessed, for the time, an interest even more exciting than ordinary professional subjects. The town of Birmingham and its surroundings, the topography of the district, its great factories, its deep mines, out of which so much of the wealth of England has been developed, were themes which proved most attractive, and every one present felt that he was listening to a story of England's greatness, described by one whose lifelong residence in the district, and whose talents and acquirements, qualified him in a high degree for the duty he undertook. Conjecturing what I might say to you on this occasion, I naturally, from the local example of last year, thought what a subject I had before me were I to

take London and its environs. With a history well nigh as old as our knowledge of the Island of Great Britain, with a progressive aggregation of humanity larger than the world has ever seen, there are materials for hundreds of addresses, although possibly none might be so appropriate to our senses as the subject selected by our last year's President; and it may be allowed that the valley of the Thames, however beautiful as regards its surface, or interesting as the largest and most populous in our Island, lacks much of that special interest which engrosses the attention and occupies the labours of modern men in reference to the mineral products from underground. There is nothing in the London clay, nothing in the geology of the valley of the Thames, which can compare in interest with under surface matters in other parts of the country.

There are, however, certain features connected with the valley of the Thames, which seem to me worthy of special attention; and

naturally, among men educated as we have been, questions may fairly be raised as to the hygienic condition of the locality. I suppose there can be little doubt that those who planted London as a post or capital looked to the ground on which the Tower now stands as a good commanding position on the estuary of the Thames, and that little was thought then of the teeming millions of subsequent inhabitants who would populate the town and valley above. At that date there must have seemed a world of waters sufficient for all after years; the question of drainage would then be little thought of. In primitive times, springs, river sides, and shallow wells, were the chief immediate sources of water supply. As years rolled on, where population increased, these resources were found deficient, and additional ones, in a higher style of engineering, were required. For my own part, I am more impressed regarding the civilisation of the Romans, by what they have left indicative of their efforts

to give supplies of water when required for health and comfort, than by any other features now extant. The great conduits which testify to the engineering skill of the time, as also to the expenditure incurred in regard to this necessity of life, and the remains of their baths, are ample proofs to this effect.

To many it may seem strange that I should refer specially to such a subject on this occasion. It may be thought to pertain chiefly to water companies, engineers, and rate payers, but in reality it pertains to the public at large, to public hygiene, and in the latter respect peculiarly to our profession; and for such reasons I know of no section of what is now often called State Medicine more interesting than that of water supply where men do congregate. It is right and fitting, in my opinion, that at a meeting such as this some special reference should be made to the subject. Next to the treatment of Disease and Accident, it seems to me to stand foremost in our professional minds, for water is

as much a question of food as any other dietetic material that can be named. Our supplies of vegetables, of fish, of animal material, come possibly second in importance to this necessary of life. Mother Earth herself takes nourishment from her own direct produce—effete vegetation, from the decay of fish, and the *debris* of animal life; but all these would count for nothing if she were deprived of water nourishment. Rational physiology may be called the philosophy of life, and we, claiming physiology as one of the highest departments in our special profession, may claim, as the most skilled conservators of public health, that our opinions regarding water supply should hold due influence over the public mind. We say we are a meeting of “The British Medical Association”; we might as well say that we are a hygienic congress of medical men; for all our efforts are towards the amelioration, the mitigation, the suppression of disease. It is to the honour of this and all other similar

meetings that, almost every paper in our sections is devoted to such purposes. In law, man deals with what man has done or chooses to do. In diseases, we deal with causes and courses which I may say, in general terms, are far beyond the ken of man, we come in contact or into collision with nature in varied aspects and phases which the wise thinker in our profession would hardly venture to explain. It is at this point, perhaps, that our profession has from time to time broken down by attempting too much. Who among us knows what miasm is? What sense is there in the idea that it may be averted or obstructed by coverings, or nets, driven away by fires, or frightened off by artillery? Yet all such theories have obtained more or less favour in our profession, even in the nineteenth century. Who among us can positively, in reasonable terms define the physical condition of miasm as it once prevailed in the fens and swamps of Lincolnshire, or possibly even now lingers,

if it does not dwell, in horrid perfection, on the banks of the Niger? Let us hope that our profession may in time be able to appreciate the palpable physical qualities of the great enemy in this shape. We have learnt empirically in time how to knock him on the head by force of quinine, but he is as impalpable to us now in these days of dengue, as in the time of Hippocrates.

But, to return to common palpable matters. Irrespective of rivers of Biblical, classical, or strategical interest, there are few to compare with Father Thames. The wealth carried on his surface below London Bridge well-nigh defies calculation. Besides the large share of what may be called our domestic wealth, the argosies of every country in the world are welcome to his waters. There lies the true greatness of the Thames. There seems no exaction that man could ask from such a father which has not been granted; yet it is most worthy of consideration how far those who have lived and now survive on his banks

have dealt fairly with the great stream. The Thames, in his lower course, is one of the greatest highways of commerce ever known to man. In his upper reaches he has been one of the best or worst abused streams that the world has known. He has been at once called to be one of the essentials of life to the inhabitants on his banks, and the cloaca of human aggregation. His streams have been run shallow, and his clear waters have been dimmed by the filthiest pollutions, until the sense of man has, in a manner, revolted at the work. The river thus abused was, in the days of Henry VIII, declared by Parliamentary document the finest salmon-stream in his Majesty's dominions. This polluted upper stream is a large source of the water-supply of the south and west of London.

In many respects, a "water question" is one of the most interesting in social life. It is as great now as when Moses struck the rock; water is an absolute necessary of life. Many of what are called comforts and luxu-

ries might be absolutely dispensed with; but, without water, both vegetable and animal life would cease, and in a hygienic point of view we are professionally interested in such a question. Here, as in many other public and national questions, there is great diversity of opinion. The sources of supply, the quantity, quality, and expenses thereof, form separate heads, of which various classes of the community take special notice. The quantity and quality are the features in which perhaps we are most interested. The public at large probably look upon the sources and expenses as the most important features; but even here we, as ordinary citizens, are as much interested as are our fellows. In regard to quantity and quality, all seem to agree that there should be the largest and best imaginable of both; no stinted time supply, but a continuous run of the finest. It seems, however, next to an impossibility to have such in this locality. The Thames cannot afford a sufficient supply unless his

main stream were nearly run dry ; nor does it seem possible, under the circumstances, to render the purity of that quantity such as should satisfy all. Filtering in great tanks on the river-side, in cisterns or vases in houses, scarcely seems to accomplish this ; and I am here tempted to say, that possibly a fault lies on our side that we expect too much for ourselves, and lead the public to expect too much, on the score of what may be considered quality and purity. Moreover, we differ largely among ourselves in regard to these points. As educated chemists, in reference to animal life and nourishment, we talk and write learnedly about elements. The purest water may be defined as that which holds least saline, animal, vegetable, or earthy material. The Physician thinks so highly of this feature that in a fluid dose of medicine he orders the bulk of the potion of distilled water ; yet in that water he probably congregates an amount of saline, animal or vegetable material, which no

natural spring, or unpolluted stream, can be compared with. He sends his patients hundreds or thousands of miles to partake of waters where the converse of purity is generally the chief feature of the fluid. But this, it will be said, is in accordance with the science of combinations and a just appreciation of the efficacy of salines, especially those compounded by nature in the bowels of the earth. I do not object to these impregnated waters as curative agents in certain forms of disease ; I do not quarrel with the Physician when he orders distilled waters as the purest fluid for his compound,—but in either instance he cannot fancy that his patient is about to drink pure water,—it may be admitted that he has no such idea, yet the same man insists stoutly on the necessity for unexceptionally pure water for ordinary drinks. This “Adam’s wine” may be filtered, boiled, distilled, yet certain so-called impurities will hold their place or speedily reappear. Vegetable matter, animal matter, earthy or

saline matter, are the bugbear of those who want pure water for man. Even the presence of a few fleas, to use a familiar expression, dead or alive, in a great natural basin of water, has been held as an influential objection to a scheme offering a double supply.

Supposing that the greatest chemist in the world places a pint of pure water, absolutely without alloy, at the meal of his fellow-man, be he poor or be he rich, let us, as medical men, do what the community at large cannot—trace this fluid until it is no longer palpable. Take as a type the pet of the day, the “working man,” allow him to be a model teetotaller who has taken a vow against alcohol and all fermented liquors. He takes his frugal meal—say water and bread, trace that meal as far as your physiological imagination can, down the intestinal canal and into the blood, and fancy from your knowledge the affluents thereon. Can “pure water” be recognised beyond the teeth in this downward course? Mucus, saliva, tonsillary secretions, mucus

again, and gastric juice, and pancreatic, and biliary, all join the ingredients of the simple meal. But let us suppose that the working man indulges in the luxury of a bit of beef or mutton, with some of the usual adjuncts, potatoes, turnips, greens, cabbages, peas, or beans; what is the fate of the pint of pure water which is deemed the grand feature of this excellent fare? Here vegetable and animal matter are joined with pure water to an extent a thousand times beyond the imagination of the pure water theorist, and the bread and water system is simplicity itself compared with this. I take a grade of society above that of the "working man"; go to the "upper ten thousand", where in reality pure water-drinkers abound, and consider what are the associations of the half pint or pint of pure water, ere fluid can no longer be traced. Look even at the condition or risk of the epicure whose means permit him to indulge in the high-flavoured grouse or daintily managed venison, and suppose him

a "pure water" man, what becomes of the water as soon as it is swallowed? what about the pleasing adjuncts to these delicious articles of food, and what (to those who are always referring to salts in waters) about the common salt which is consumed in quantities so palpably larger than those pointed out by the chemist in so-called saline waters? What can we, as medical men, say of the refinement in diet of the savage who prefers animal food in a putrid state to that recently killed, and uses such surface water, or any other kind, as chance may put in his way?

I believe that the public look largely to us for opinions on such subjects. I fancy that the pure chemist is often taken for one of us; I fear that many of us affect too much the airs of the pure chemist. Do we not but too frequently jumble up chemistry and physiology, so that the characters of each seem to suffer? Are we not in reality too fastidious about "pure water"? Whilst the public—no doubt considerably influenced by

the opinions of the doctors—haggle over this feature, the more important of ample supply, for all the purposes of man, is overlooked. Although water for drink is essential to our existence, how small in proportion is that, compared with the requirements for sanitary purposes otherwise, such as cleaning, washing, in arts and manufactures. I have often thought it an unfortunate use of words when a water supply to a town is illustrated by the statement that it is equal to so many gallons per head. From thirty to thirty-five gallons seems to be held as that absolutely required in good modern views on the subject. To those who do not think about it, the quantity seems enormous. It may be doubted if a couple of quarts of drinking water per head in any population is taken into the stomach, in the course of twenty-four hours, and making allowance for ablutions, baths, clothes, and household washing of all kinds, it would be difficult to convince a family of ten people in ordinary citizen life, including do-

mestics, that they consume between four hundred and five hundred gallons of water per day. They simply will not believe it! and, judging chiefly from their own experience, they think that the call for more water than that which they imagine forms the daily consumption in the house is extravagant, both as regards themselves or neighbours. Would it not be better if water engineers and water companies would let it be known what the water is really required for in a community, instead of making the statement that each individual has allotted to him from thirty to thirty-five gallons? There is no doubt, I suppose, that such a quantity as this implies is actually used in those towns where water supply is efficient, but if every individual in the community chose to amuse himself by running to waste that which is his allotted quantity, I fear that social economy in regard to water supply would be terribly disturbed. Arts, manufactures, breweries, steam-power, would be well nigh para-

lysed or arrested. How would town horses, cows, and dogs fare? If these matters were held fairly in view, I venture to think that there would be less discussion regarding the quality of water for general use than invariably arises when the question of additional supplies is raised. For man's stomach, the requisite quantity of wholesome water is so small that the trouble and cost of purifying by filtering and otherwise would be as nothing compared with the advantage of having what might be called a superabundance. If that superabundance was what the simple housewife calls soft, the water desideratum would be fulfilled. I have heard on the best authority, that in Glasgow alone, with a population of nearly half a million, where a large and wise expenditure has been incurred, there has been a saving of something like forty thousand pounds a year for soap, owing to the softness of the water from a natural reservoir, which doubtless is formed by the water-shed of the dis-

trict in which it lies. The good folks of Glasgow tapped the side of one of the most beautiful and classical of Scottish lochs, and brought the water through conduits some forty miles long, to place it at public disposal. The loch is none the worse, and the benefit to the citizens of the second city in the kingdom is perhaps incalculable.

It seems almost by instinct that, in the humblest of our cottages, and in most of our moderate unpretending dwelling houses, there is a desire to have a supply of rain water. The pump, or the nearest open well or spring, may be resorted to for water to drink, but the small quantity that can be caught from a stone, tile, or slate roof, is eagerly sought by the judicious housewife.

The quality of this water suits domestic purposes better than the brightest from well or pump. Largely though this little luxury is indulged in,—for the water butt abounds in every district—it is curious how this sort of instinct, as I have called it, has been neg-

lected by many who have catered for the supply of water on a large scale. If this water is so esteemed by poor cottagers, why should it not be available to the whole community? If the rich man, with a big roof over his head collects it at considerable expense for his baths and washings, why have we not more of it? But here I touch the margin of an important question regarding water supply to large communities. Is such a supply, supposing it to be the most desirable, to be had at reasonable cost? That it is desirable can scarcely be doubted. There are many who approve the project of increasing the supplies of Manchester, Birmingham, and other midland towns, including London, from the natural lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland. But might not something be done, less stupendous, yet equally effective? Natural lakes, of sufficient bulk, are not to be found in many districts, but might not artificial ones be constructed, which would largely supplement

our present water supplies? In most of the upland districts in this country there are spaces, hollows, ravines, and valleys, where, as much of the surface is otherwise worthless, the water might be dammed up, and lake above lake might be made to appear on the landscape. This is, as we all know, no new proposal. It has been acted upon in countries of ancient historical date, where we fancy that civilisation was never equal to that we now boast of, and the custom prevails to a considerable extent in this island. But all that has yet been done in this way among us is but little better than the action of the poor cottager who is content to catch from the fleeting shower, a pitcher, or tub-full, of the precious gift of nature. Look to the rainfall of a season in this country, and consider how much, or how little, of this gift from heaven is actually used by man. Of all the necessaries of life, this is the one which comes upon us in this island most bountifully, and yet how much it is neglected!

Instead of letting the floods damage our best alluvial soils, destroy vegetable and animal life, endanger man himself, and finally flow uninterruptedly to the sea, might not much of this flood be impounded on our water sheds, and there form small and large reservoirs and lakes, which would be ample supplies of the best water at every season of the year, and even keep in fair volume some of those primitive streams, which doubtless were the attraction of those who originally settled on their banks? It is distressing to see, in some of our large towns, to what condition these once fair streams have been reduced; the water is taken off above until the bed of the river has been dried, and then let on again in every imaginable degree of pollution. Under such circumstances, the water thus taken from the stream might be supplemented by the upper stores, or, better still, these stores might be relied upon for most of the requirements of large communities.

Spring waters, although much prized by some for medicinal qualities, and others for seeming purity, are not in such quantity as to supply the wants of large populations in civilised life. It may be doubted if the deepest borings would suffice. From springs and wells the water is filtered from earth's surface, and the filter beds are beyond the control of man. Doubtless, river water is more serviceable under many circumstances, but it is constantly liable to be, for the time of floods, unfit for the use of man or beast, unless precautions are taken to filter the supply immediately required; and at all times, when the population is dense, as on the banks of the Thames, it seems beyond the power of man to avert entirely such pollutions as are incidental to masses of population.

It seems sad to see the bed of a streamlet or river actually dry because man chooses to divert it from its natural course, never to be returned again except in diminished quan-

tity and polluted condition. For certain arts and manufactures, distilled water is indispensable; yet there are curious instances in which it is objectionable. I fancy, however, that we might all agree that distilled water, if it could be had in sufficient quantity, would pretty well suffice for man's wants. But no system of distillation which we could devise would suffice for the quantity required. It appears to be overlooked by the general community that the waters of large and deep lakes are chiefly the product of distillation. In these natural reservoirs we have accumulations of such fluid. There may be springs in their bottoms or sides, but who can doubt that the chief supplies come affluent from the watersheds around, frequently many miles away? These sources, springs, and rivers, all come from rain, and rain is probably the purest of distilled waters. How few of those who pass our flooded valleys during rainfalls, seem to know that the muddy streams they see below

are in reality condensed from impalpable vapours in the air; literally evaporated or distilled waters restored to the surface of the earth again in solid form, holding in a floating condition only dusty and earthy *débris* for a few hours or days. Such muddy streams produce no effect on the main volume of a good-sized lake or reservoir; and when this pollution—if the term be correct—subsides, the pellucid fluid left is probably as useful for all general purposes as man could desire.

I am not aware that it has yet been calculated how much water is allowed to pass thus on its way to the sea. I have, in my time, seen several severe droughts in this country, and have occasionally wondered what might be the result to animal life—man and beast—if the general distress should continue a few days or weeks longer. This involves a great hygienic question; and interested as we are in it professionally, taught as we all are in the virtues of water—home-distilled, nature-distilled, home-filtered, nature-filtered,

looking to the value of water to man as regards his internal and external bodily wants, I do not know any point of hygiene of more interest. Fish, sheep, and cattle can be brought in reasonable quantity—hundreds, it may be—in conserved condition, thousands of miles, but water cannot be fetched such distances in sufficient quantity at reasonable terms. And here I cannot but again express my opinion that we, in our professional capacity, may err grievously in making trivial and questionable objections to the quality of water, when there seems a fair prospect of getting that which is most desirable for man's use, a full, ever-flowing quantity which might give a perpetual current, day and night, well-nigh fresh from the dew of heaven.

But I dare not dwell longer on this topic! and, as it is, I have to apologise for venturing upon a theme which to many may seem little associated with the department of our profession in which I have been chiefly engaged. However feebly my humble views

may influence you, I firmly believe that water supplies for large communities, are among the most important features of hygiene which can interest us on behalf of our fellow creatures. There is perhaps not a single department of hygiene in which we are not in the foremost ranks. Drainage and sewerage are most closely allied with this theme, and in modern times, when the Legislature has determined that officers of health shall be in every district in our land, and that such office bearers shall belong chiefly to our profession, I trust that I shall not be considered to have gone beyond the proper bounds of the position in which you have placed me, or of the intentions of this great meeting of medical men.

There are many other professional subjects in which we are all interested, which may or may not attract attention in our sections, and to which I might venture to call attention, but time will not permit me to do so. It is, however, peculiarly my duty to congratulate

you upon the commencement of another yearly meeting of this Association. After forty years of similar gatherings, in most of the large towns of England, we meet for the second time in the great metropolis. From a beginning nobly conceived, and cherished by the brightest luminaries in the provinces, you have expanded into a large and cosmopolitan institution, and carry on your rolls the names of almost every man of note in the metropolis. Beginning with a few hundreds in number, you muster more than five thousand highly educated men. From your professional standing, great social and moral influence, you are the arbiters of a large portion of human happiness. Let us hope, indeed we cannot doubt, that the proceedings of this meeting will add greatly to the status of our profession, and we may fairly anticipate that our present efforts may bear comparison with those of former years. The hand of time has pressed heavily upon kind

hearts and bright intellects which graced and enlightened bygone meetings ; yet, whilst avowing our admiration for our predecessors, let us fondly trust that there are hearts and heads among us still to uphold the character, in every varied aspect, of our noble profession.

Never has this Association met under more favourable auspices. Through the generous liberality of the Council of King's College, you have at your disposal all the accommodation in respect of halls, meeting rooms, and lecture theatres, which is required. The Chief Magistrate of the City—the Lord Mayor of London—will grace us with the hospitalities of the Mansion House. The Royal College of Surgeons of England will give us a hearty greeting, and throw open its halls, libraries, and unequalled museums for our inspection. One of the most gratifying events of the occasion is the courtesy of the Benchers of Lincoln's Inn,—comprising many of the most distinguished lawyers of the day, including the Lord Chancellor of Eng-

land,—in permitting the use of their splendid hall for our dinner festivity. Never, perhaps, has there been such a blending of Law and Physic before; a happy omen of our times. Her Majesty's great castle at Windsor, the episcopal palace of Lambeth, the mansions of many of our nobility and gentry, are thrown open to permit inspection of æsthetic collections, possibly not to be surpassed in the world. Our fourth evening's entertainment will spring from the generosity of the Council and Professors of University College, where, as professional men, we shall meet in harmony on the premises of one of the most distinguished and efficient of our modern Medical Schools.

We have begun our work this morning holily, under the dome of St. Paul's; let us conduct it wisely, and thus fulfil the well chosen motto for King's College, within whose walls we are now met, "Sanctè et Sapienter".

