

lives. Physicians of eminence and high character were not slow to appreciate the advantages which would accrue to the profession from a statute which would protect the public from unscrupulous adventurers and the educated physician from equally unscrupulous competition.

Of what value was the title of doctor if we were to share it with chiropodists, travelling fakirs, and Indian medicine-men? Thus it was a source of congratulation to all schools when the present Medical Act became a law. What have been the advantages, then, of medical registration? It is the hall-mark of fitness. A man cannot now, either in New York State or in any State, practise medicine unless he has first passed a rigid examination, registered, and received his licence from the county clerk. The law has increased the value of the capital of every physician in the State. What is his capital? It is his education, which has cost him at least six years of study, counting the work preparatory to the study of medicine which the State demands. It is his years of experience and study after graduation. These cannot now be discounted by the first glib-tongued and impudent rascal who is willing to make a fortune at the tail of a cart by retailing lies and coloured water to the credulous. I have spoken of the preparatory work required. The State has placed no unreasonable restrictions against the entrance of anyone upon the study of medicine, but it does insist that the intending student shall have more than a common-school education before entering on one of the most difficult of studies, the study of disease. When I commenced my studies, fresh from a great university, I was on exactly the same status, so far as the State was concerned, as a man who had stepped off the platform of a horse-car or left a boiler-shop to study medicine. Indeed, I knew men in another school at that time who had abandoned these very occupations for the profession of medicine. They could both read easy English and one could make out their handwriting, yet they were allowed to enter a medical school on the same terms as a university graduate, the only difference being that it took six months longer for them to get their degree. The present Medical Act, therefore, not only prevents the fraudulent use of the title of doctor, but prevents persons whose lack of education unfits them for habits of study from even entering a medical school. That this has resulted in elevating the general standard of the profession no one will doubt. It has also relieved the doctor of the illegal competition of persons who have put neither time nor money into an education for the purpose of properly qualifying themselves.

The advantages of medical registration to the public are self-evident. There is probably not a layman living who does not consider himself perfectly competent to choose a physician. On what,

as a rule, does he base his choice? A physician who has a popular manner, who has taking ways with the feminine part of the community, who knows how to tell a good story, who has good manners and a fine appearance, can build a paying practice with a minimum of knowledge. People have not yet learned that these things do not necessarily mean skill and an intimate knowledge of disease; nevertheless, most persons choose their physicians because of some of the qualities mentioned. How can it be otherwise? To properly discriminate between real worth and pretence requires special education, and this the public have not got. It is, therefore, fortunate that the State has taken upon itself to see that all persons admitted to practice have the necessary qualifications. Since the passage of the Act a man must have something more than a charming manner and taking ways to practise medicine. He must have real, genuine knowledge. Without the present system of registration it would not have been possible for the Court of Appeals to have rendered the recent decision in the Westchester cases in which they held that a minor child is entitled to proper medical attendance when sick. Before this Act was passed, who could say what was proper medical attendance? Now the State says that proper medical attendance is such as is secured when a physician is called who has received a licence from the State to practise medicine, no matter to which of the three schools he belongs. This decision will do more to break up a dangerous delusion than the denunciations of the Press or pulpit and the remonstrances of physicians.

(To be continued.)

## A Presentation.

Upon her retirement as Lady Superintendent of the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital at Sydney, Miss McGahey was the recipient of many handsome and useful presents, among which was a complete silver tea-service, suitably engraved, from the nursing staff. The resident medical officers presented her with a silver tea-kettle and stand, and from the medical students Miss McGahey received a useful present of silver candlesticks and several glass and silver trinket boxes. Sincere evidence of regret at losing her valuable services and kindly co-operation from their midst was apparent throughout the hospital. Miss McGahey's successor, whose appointment we record in another column, will have a difficult post to fill, and it is to be hoped that she will go forth prepared to enter upon her work in a tolerant and progressive spirit, leaving our proverbial parochialism at home; otherwise she will not find herself in touch with the buoyant spirit which animates our self-governing Colonies.

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