

Clinical Case-Taking.

Such was the title of the inaugural address given by Sir John Moore, M.D., D.Sc., F.R.C.P.I., at the Meath Hospital, Dublin, on the opening of the Session last week—a title which apparently covers only a small portion of a medical student's work, but in reality embraces the wide fundamental basis of a physician's training.

At the outset Sir John alludes pointedly to the hurry, the scarcity of time for quiet thought, in this twentieth century, and sympathises with his hearers in facing the amount of work to be accomplished in a given time, as well as the hardships, self-denial, and, perhaps, disappointments which await them in the calling they have chosen. And here he quotes from an introductory lecture given by the great Abernethy in St. Bartholomew's Hospital, who, after being received as usual with great applause, quietly cast his eyes over the assemblage, and said in a tone of deep feeling, "God help you all! What is to become of you?"

Starting with the commencement of his career, Sir John laments that a University training and Arts Degree are no longer necessary for the student of medicine. "A liberal education in Arts is indispensable," he says, "if we wish to turn out the best brand of physician or surgeon. The intellectual powers must be carefully drawn out; . . . the mind can be developed only by constant practice. The student's powers of observation must be trained day by day till they become part of his being—even his second nature. He should learn to reason about observed facts, to arrive at a diagnosis from symptoms and physical signs."

The speaker then proceeds to insist on the paramount importance of a regular daily attendance in the wards. He has not the least wish to decry the work done in the dissecting-rooms, laboratories, and lecture theatres, but the "preparation for the life-work of a doctor is to be found in the out-patient department, the clinical wards, the operating theatre, and the *post-mortem* room of a well-equipped general medico-surgical hospital." Quoting from Dr. Osler's address to the Academy of Medicine at New York, "I envy," says that eminent Professor, "for our medical students the advantages enjoyed by the nurses, who live in daily contact with the sick." And Oliver Wendell Holmes, in an introductory lecture delivered in 1867, expressed the opinion that "the most essential part of a student's instruction is obtained, not in the lecture-room, but at the bedside. Nothing seen there is lost; the rhythms of disease are learned by frequent repetition; its unforeseen occurrences stamp themselves indelibly on the memory."

Sir John observes that there is a growing tendency to neglect the opportunities of acquiring

knowledge and experience in the wards. "Case-taking, in particular, has not kept pace with other departments of medical study. The attendance at hospital has become spasmodic and intermittent." On inquiring for absentees from the clinical classes he is invariably met with the reply, "Oh, they are reading for such and such an examination." Some members of the class are content with arriving punctually in the morning, and mechanically following the physician or surgeon through the wards, only showing real attention when some rare or "interesting" case is reached. Others appear late, and waste precious time looking for the whereabouts of their clinical teacher; or they come one day and stay away the next, thereby losing all continuity of work in the wards. "Those who thus attend hospital will never gain *Experience*—that priceless possession which at one time was within their reach, had they but realised the fact, but which, perhaps, they have for ever lost."

In conclusion, he points out the desirability of studying literary composition—the practice of expressing oneself clearly, and avoiding faults in writing, illustrating his meaning with some amusing errors culled from the works of various medical writers. "And yet," Sir John maintains, "there have been, and are, masters of English in the ranks of the medical profession. What more graphic descriptions of disease exist than those to be met with in the works of Thomas Watson, Robert James Graves, James Paget, Charles Murchison, or Charles Hilton Fagge, to say nothing of living medical writers?" Finally he exhorts his hearers to remember that "Knowledge and Experience are the two pillars which support the Temple of *Æsculapius*—that is to say, the Healing Art." Seek to acquire both.

"Who loves not knowledge? Who shall rail
Against her beauty? May she mix
With men and prosper! Who shall fix
Her pillars? Let her work prevail."

—Tennyson's "In Memoriam."

N. E. G.

Mental Nurses.

Lady Ure Primrose, wife of the Lord Provost of Glasgow, who distributed to the nurses and attendants of the Gartnavel Asylum diplomas and badges, on a recent occasion, subsequently delivered a short address on mental nursing. She claimed that the women who were needed as mental nurses were gentlewomen. The days of misconception and suspicion in relation to mental disease were passing away, and further it was found that with efficient nursing, and skilful treatment mental trouble, like physical disease, could be more or less cured. She was delighted to know that so many young women were now offering themselves for training in this important branch of nursing.

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