

late (and no one, I believe, can justly take exception to it), it forms a strong point in our argument, that the physician must take control of the coming education; for his culture, and his alone, enables him to judge rightly of man, his interests and requirements. This is his peculiar office, the highest and most ennobling of his duties, and, in the use of the term education, we have expressly extended its application to the broadest limits, and have excluded its subordinate and narrow features. * * * *

Hitherto the medical profession has had but an indirect influence in education, but that influence, by the constant perfecting of their own studies, and the supplying of an essential knowledge, has undoubtedly contributed to the change which is now taking place in our educational systems. The state of things, to which they have thus indirectly contributed, now invites their direct guidance and control. It may be objected that the education demanded of the profession themselves in this country falls far short of the high requirements which have thus been set upon their office. Science and civilization it is said are advancing, and yet you demand but a little more culture in medicine than when its alliance with science had not been established. There is some truth in this objection, and it is deplorable that it should be true, as well as humiliating to make the confession. But this does not invalidate the force of the argument, which is based not on the *degree* but the *direction* of the culture. And besides, this is an evil which will rectify itself in due time. The exigencies which called for the establishment of medical schools in this country, allowed a very low degree of culture, and demanded very inferior qualifications on the part of the student. The influence of this state of things has been perpetuated, and is to-day evidenced in the manifestly-inadequate requirements for entrance into the profession.* Our thinking men have long been

* "The great evil of modern medical education," said the late Prof. Syme, in the concluding lecture of his course on Clinical Surgery, delivered at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh in 1867-'68, "is, that it has become a preparation not for discharging the duties of a profession, but merely for passing examinations which, for the most part, imply neither an accurate knowledge of facts nor the possession of sound principles, being simply affairs of memory loaded with dry terminology, to be thrown overboard at the earliest opportunity."

When so candid a confession as this comes from a representative man like Syme, and from a country where the requirements for entry into the profession are confessedly far higher than with us, we may well blush for the average standard of our own medical attainments. But my faith is firm and abiding that the time will come when this manifest evil will be corrected, and when it will no longer be possible, without fear of contradiction,

convinced of the necessity of reform, and this conviction is spreading over the minds of the entire profession; and it is no prophecy to assert that the day is not far distant when the standard of qualification must be raised and made to accord more closely with the important responsibilities of the office. The corrective must be applied in two ways: 1. By demanding a high scientific education before admitting the student to the study of medicine proper; and 2. By lengthening the time of that study, and taking up the separate branches in their natural and progressive order. The present system of medical teaching is more senseless even than superficial; but we may confidently expect, in view of the progressive spirit of the age, that we shall yet establish a more reasonable and adequate curriculum of medical studies. * * *

More than two centuries ago, Descartes, one of Europe's keenest thinkers, said:—"If it be possible to perfect mankind, the means of doing so will be found in the medical sciences." With a far-reaching prescience, he anticipated the influence with these sciences, then in a crude, almost chaotic condition, would inevitably exert. We, to-day, have only to look around us, to see this influence manifested in a thousand different ways and directions. And, although we are yet far from perfection, and may never reach it, it cannot be denied that the influence of these sciences is tending toward that end, toward man's improvement, mental, moral, and physical—the most ennobling duty and privilege, perhaps, of the new education.

CONDITION AND PROSPECTS OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

By JOHN WARE, M.D., late Hersey Professor of Theory and Practice in Harvard University.

It will occur, perhaps, to some, that by requiring a higher education, we are rendering entrance to medical life more difficult, and putting out of the power of many persons of limited acquirements and narrow means, to gratify the ambition, so common among us, of enrolling themselves in the ranks of a profession. This is true. It *will* be made more difficult to become a physician. But is it not now too easy? It will diminish the number of those who become physicians; but is not the number now too great? I put it to the good sense

to fling squarely in our faces such a bitter taunt—all the more bitter because true—as that uttered by Prof. Eliot, now President of Harvard, in his article on the new education, *Atlantic Monthly*, February and March, 1869.

of this audience, whether this objection has any weight. Is it any advantage to the profession, or to the community, that entrance into it should be so easy? Should the prizes of life be made so easy? Do we not thus undervalue our calling? Is not the standard of professional character, as well as of acquirement, lowered by this facility of attaining its honors? Is not our profession injured, not merely as it regards the honest worldly reward of its laborers, which no man ought to pretend to despise, but is not its duty to the community imperfectly performed as a consequence?

It is, to be sure, popular to talk of making education cheap, and of making the avenues to honor and profit open freely to all. . . . But when we come to the education of men for particular stations in society, the case is very different. Even then, let the education be made as cheap and easy as it can be; but not cheap and easy by making it poor. Do not let us deluge the community with a flood of half-learned professional men, who drudge heavily through life, half-employed, half-paid, half-starved, far less respectable in their vocation than a substantial farmer, an honest trader, or a skilful mechanic, because we choose to be blinded by a falsely so-called republican maxim, which it may answer very well to bandy about at a political caucus, but which should never pass current with those whose aim is the true respectability of their profession, and the real good of the community.

But in order that we should deserve and perpetuate the confidence of mankind, not only is it necessary that those who are to enter the profession should be highly educated; it is also necessary, that we, who compose it, should exhibit to the world a spirit of improvement and progress—a disposition to employ faithfully all the means we now possess in the practice of our art—and that, free from a primary regard to personal emolument and reputation, we should be ready to examine with a fair and candid spirit, all and any suggestions, however they may arise, and from whatsoever quarter they may come, which hold out a fair promise of increasing those means.

“INSPIRE yourselves to perform with zeal and honor its duties, by taking first of all a just view of its dignity and usefulness. * * * No man can do well any work unless he does it from high motives and with a lofty spirit. No man can adorn a profession until he first honors it by feeling that it honors him.”—*Rev. Thomas Hill, D.D., 1865.*

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THE AIM OF THE TRUE PHYSICIAN.

ONCE again the Editor of this JOURNAL steps aside from the beaten track, the weekly routine of professional journalism, to extend the hand of fellowship to you who are about entering medical life. This we do the more readily, both for our own sakes and for the profession, in order that we may assure you of the kindly feeling which we entertain for the coming medical man; and that we may have the opportunity of placing before you incentives to that excellence of professional character which shall make you the peers of the worthiest of the fraternity. We are confident that the medical profession, than which none is more honored or more honorable, will gladly welcome you to its ranks, so long as the position you maintain is a worthy one.

With the present year the students of the Harvard Medical School have had offered them opportunities for study and improvement of a character never excelled in this country. What these privileges are you have already learned from the Announcement made by the Faculty.

In order that you may retain a vivid recollection of the wisest method of using these opportunities—in fact, how best to study medicine—you have now before you once more the excellent address of Dr. Cheever. Its suggestions, we are sure, will take a deeper hold on your minds by re-perusal. Not less important is the advice given in the extracts which we have made from the writings of various members of the profession; they will give you right views of medical life and an elevated conception of the position which the true Christian physician should aim to reach. The practical compendium of information in the subsequent portion of the JOURNAL will be valuable, containing, as it does, a statement of the clinical and professional advantages which Boston offers for your studies.

What, now, are some of the cardinal points which shall aid you to attain a position, earnestly to be desired by every conscientious man—that of the true physician? We give you three. First, *be true men*; determine to be honest and true members of society, and to deserve the appreciation of your fellow-citizens. Then *be honest and faithful members of the profession*; have a just and wise recognition of its honor, and resolve to maintain it. Finally, *be earnest and diligent in your work*, not only during your