The brilliant, almost audacious, achievements of modern surgery and the beneficent triumphs of practical and preventive medicine inspire our admiration and stimulate our zeal. In the rapid movements of our noble profession along all the lines of advanced development, we find it difficult to keep our leaders in sight; star-eyed science certainly does not encourage loitering on the part of her votaries. But while we strive to keep in touch with this spirit of progress in all that belongs to our domain as physicians, let us not forget the claim which the Commonwealth may properly make upon us as citizens. Let us seek earnestly, each in his own community, to illustrate the highest ideals of loyalty and fidelity. So may we, in a double sense, as physicians and as citizens, discharge our duty to humanity.

Original Articles.

THE AMERICAN PHYSICIAN.¹

BY WILLIAM EVERETT, PH.D.

I FEEL that there is a peculiar right in a society of physicians to call on any man for a speech, when I reflect how completely it is owing to their mercy that one is able to speak at all, or even to exist.

When I sit down to this well-provided board, and am allowed to eat as much or as little as I want to, I cannot but reflect on the times when the doctors of the elder generation would not let me eat half enough, and the doctors of my own wanted me to eat a great deal too much; and I rise to thank them for all their mercies in preserving my life against the consequences of my own folly.

In old times, gentlemen, you are well aware that your profession was associated with that of the barbers, who in more ways than one tried to avert "the natural shocks that flesh is *hair* to." I suppose no man ever got up out of a barber's chair, and heard the cry of "next," without being devoutly grateful that his Figaro had not revived the recollections of his predecessors, the barber-surgeons, and experimented on the precise distinction between the carotid and maxillary arteries.

It is said that the illustrious James Otis, when stricken with dementia towards the end of his life, was under very severe petticoat government, and on one occasion returned thanks after dinner in the form: "We thank Thee for all Thy mercies, and especially that we have not had our noses bitten off." I thank you, gentlemen, to-day, individually and collectively, that I survive to this hour, in possession of the great majority of my physical organs, and the enjoyment of their normal functions.

But I desire to say again, as I have said in public before, that I have exceedingly little sympathy with the popular jokes on the medical profession. They are not even chestnuts, — they are nothing but horse-chestnuts, bitter, but utterly devoid of nourishment. I believe that no theory can be more false than that Nature cures her own ills, or the ills in which man's ignorance and wilfulness involve her, without the aid of science. Worse than false, that theory is wicked which believes that the ignorant practitioner has any secret revealed to him, which the man of medical

science does not attain much better by study, by experiment, by observation, by instruction.

Quackery and patent medicine could not survive for an instant, if they did not furnish excellent means for evading the prohibitory laws, and soaking their votaries' frames in alcohol and opium, under the name of bitters and sarsaparilla. I believe, sir, that your educated physician is no ignorant tamperer with half-known drugs and less known bodies; he is the true son of Apollo, the god of light and prophecy. Talk of your Faith Cure and your Christian Science! the true faith cure comes when the sensible patient trusts himself implicitly to the accomplished physician; the true Christian Science is that promulgated by the great army of healers who tread in the Master's steps, who go about doing good, and turning the Sabbath to its nobler use.

I have been in my life, sir, often in the hands of physicians; and I have been disposed to bless the sickness which taught me the meaning of devotion, of patience, of friendship. I have found that they knew every secret of my frame; I have found that they were competent to deal with those deeper secrets which anatomy and physiology, chemistry and bacteriology do not reveal. They were able to deal with the very cases wherein Shakespeare declares the patient must minister to himself. They could extirpate the nerves of morbid sensibility; they could apply a ligature to an aneurism of self-esteem, and divert the current of ambition to a healthier passage; they could dissolve the rasping calculi that obstructed the channels of generous purpose, and they could detect the foramen between the corrupted and the purified chambers of the soul, which is apt to infect the nobler passions of man long after the focal heart has closed. Yes, sir, after their skill has set me on my feet, after they have nerved my flaccid arm, brightened my lack-lustre eye and cleared my tuneless voice, I have loved to seek their company, no longer for the paid services of a physician, but the priceless comfort of a friend. I may not introduce here the names of the living, but I should be destitute of all sense of reverent obligation, if I did not record my dues to Henry Holland and James Jackson; and I trust it will be many years before the members of the Massachusetts Medical Society fail to follow one who drops a tear of admiration and love over the grave of Frederick Winsor.

The skill and kindness of the medical profession is one of those eternal facts to which the heart of man bears unshaken testimony. That single line in Homer (you all know Greek; you're not fit to be doctors if you don't),

ἑγρὸς γὰρ ἀνὴρ πολλῶν ἀντάξιος ἄλλων,

"One healer counts for many another man,"

those three blessed words of Paul, "the beloved physician," tell more truth than all the satires of Rabelais and Molière.

Even in the days of starving and blood-letting which seem so strange and cruel to us, the physician was still revered and loved for his kindness. I know no nobler tribute to the profession than that of Sir Walter Scott:

"I have lain on the sick man's bed,
Watching for hours for the leech's tread;
I have listed his words of comfort given,
As if to oracles from heaven;
I have counted his steps from my chamber door,
And blessed them when they were heard no more."

Yet in the light of modern science, it seems amazing

¹ Remarks made at the Dinner of the Massachusetts Medical Society, June 8, 1892.

that the citadel of Sir Walter's constitution survived the alternate assaults and starvings whereby it was besieged. Yet even under the thin gruel and draining lancet he and his contemporaries loved and trusted their doctors :

"Pleased to the last, they cropped the floury food,
And licked the hand just raised to shed their blood."

Gentlemen, I beg you to hold fast to this sacred attribute of kindness. I have had some fear in this respect of our younger friends, who like Sol. Gills, are so "chock full of science," that they are apt to look upon the human frame too much as a field for experiment rather than as the residence of a sensitive, quivering soul. They are so proud of their new processes, that they like, I am afraid, to experiment on *corpora cara* as well as *corpora vilia*. I confess I have a preference for physicians of at least my own age, who have more knowledge of patients, if they have less of diseases. I feel nervous about entrusting a case of colic to my young friends and former pupils for fear they should suspect typhilitis, and perform laparotomy before I could turn round. I am afraid in those famous hospitals of Europe, whatever else they learn, they find as Dr. Holmes once said at this very board :

"Kindness untutored by our grave M.D.'s."

I read an interesting paper in your *Medical and Surgical Journal* the other day (which I read every week, and immediately feel the symptoms of all the diseases described there), wherein a rising practitioner declared he actually discovered, if he administered ether, especially to children, gently and slowly, instead of forcibly and abruptly, he not only got rid of some distressing tracheal irritations, but positively produced more perfect anæsthesia and found the operation proceed more favorably, than if he clapped the towel peremptorily over the reluctant nostrils. I should hope so ! But it is sad that any of our young doctors should have ever been trained to think otherwise, or should suppose that mechanical roughness of operation can facilitate their work, instead of, in fact, hindering it.

It may be well, sir, for purely pathological or physiological purposes, to send our medical students to Europe. It may be that Prussia is the best climate in which to track the bacilli which are most likely to infest the air of Boston, or that an Austrian hospital, in wards crammed with what your illustrious *confère*, Dr. Oliver Goldsmith, called "the rude Carinthian boor," presents exactly the field in which to prepare for the diseases of New England. It may be that European practitioners and teachers have a keener eye, a defter hand, a more powerful spirit of guidance than our own. But you cannot acquire among them, what if one does not keep them up there is danger of losing, those qualities so precious for a physician, in which America yields to no nation in the world. The time, I believe, will come, sir, when Europe has learned to know us better, that Vienna and Berlin and Paris and Glasgow will send pupils here to study the highest standard of a physician's dealings with his patient, unknown in the old world ; that humanity which treats with equal courtesy and gentleness the poorest and meanest son of God ; that chivalry, lost to the monarchies and commonwealths of Europe, but living, thank heaven, among us, which treats every woman with tenderness and propriety, and sees a sister and a princess in every daughter of the great King. It is possible, sir, that for scientific training to the physi-

cian's work we yield to other nations ; in moral and sympathetic fitness, I believe we surpass them all, and that we should allow nothing to deprive us of this glory.

THE FOUR YEARS' COURSE AT THE HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL.¹

BY R. H. FITZ, M.D.

In examining the handsome and instructive catalogue of the Harvard Medical School Association, recently published by that body, evidently under the personal supervision of its talented and versatile President, Dr. Chadwick, it appears that more than two-thirds of its members are residents of Massachusetts. I am easily convinced that nearly all of this 700 are members of our greater Society whose annual meeting we delight in attending. It is therefore eminently fitting that a teacher in the Harvard Medical School, however ill prepared he may prove, should make some report of its progress to those who have been satisfied with it in the past, and who, it hopes, will be proud of it in the future.

Only once before in its existence has so radical a step been taken as during the present year. Many of you remember the powerful address of that most illustrious of American surgeons, Henry J. Bigelow, delivered before this Society, in 1871. The discussions in the medical faculty which preceded that discourse were those which led to the establishment of the graded course of medical study extending over three years. The success of that step, then so uncertain even in the minds of some of its oldest and best friends, is now a part of the medical history of this country.

In the meantime a generation has been born and has attained its freedom. Our *Alma Mater*, Fair Harvard, although she denies the right of suffrage to her medical offspring, has decided to keep them a year longer under her maternal care. Perhaps by this means she may learn to place such confidence in their interest and devotion as to be willing to take their advice and aid even in so important a matter as in the selection of overseers. Let us hope that the graduates of the four years' course in the medical school may be considered no less worthy of this honor than their younger brothers who have spent a like number of years at her side, perhaps, in preparing to enter the Medical School.

In and after September, 1892, every student entering the Harvard Medical School, before receiving its degree of Doctor of Medicine, will be required to complete a four years' course of graded medical study. The statement is simple enough but the result has been arrived at only after years of discussion and of patient waiting for the time when such a policy might be regarded as other than suicidal.

It has not been undertaken as a forlorn hope to rescue the school from a stress of financial depression, but has been agreed upon in a season of prolonged, pecuniary prosperity, and at a time when the number of its students is the largest ever assembled.

It has not been announced with the thought that it might result in large benefactions, or as the condition of gifts which would ensure its success. On the contrary, it has been decided upon in the face of a probable diminution in the number of students, a loss which

¹ Remarks made at the Dinner of the Massachusetts Medical Society, June 8, 1892.