order, as was claimed for it in former days, but at least we believed that it had some uses—and this has been enlarged upon in many works on physiology; but this case, and some other somewhat similar cases which have been published, show that patients enjoy the best of health, digest their food admirably, if we are to judge by their improvement in weight and healthy colour, and are not specially afflicted with constipation, when very little, and sometimes no bile at all, makes its way into the duodenum. From such practical experiences, I think we are led, logically, to conclude that the bile is an excretion, and is of little, if of any, use as a secretion, in the economy of the human body.

ART. III.—*The Position of the Study of Pathology.*^a By J. MAGEE FINNY, M.D., F.K.Q.C.P.I.; King's Professor of Practice of Medicine in the School of Physic, Trinity College, Dublin; and Clinical Physician to Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital.

MY first duty on taking the Chair of the Section of Pathology is to convey to you my sincere thanks for having conferred on me the high honour of electing me to it; while I much regret that I have not at my command language adequately expressive of my feelings. No professional honour is so great, no distinction so high or so valuable, as that which one's fellow-workers and compeers confer. I can but assure you that your action has filled me with the sincerest sentiments of gratitude and pleasure—the more so as I am only too conscious that my position as President of this important Section is the exponent rather of your good-will than of my own merits.

This reflection brings with it, however, its own consolation; as, if by your kindness I occupy this chair, the same kindly indulgence and support will, I feel sure, be extended to me in the discharge of such duties as I shall be called upon to exercise during the ensuing session.

According to usage, as I am informed, and in conformity with the instructions I have been favoured with by the Secretary of this Section, one of these duties—the first, and perhaps the most difficult—is to begin this opening meeting with some remarks from the chair.

^a Being the Opening Address delivered by the President of the Section of Pathology of the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland, on Friday, November 2, 1888.

For the following remarks I crave your indulgence, knowing full well how far short they fall of what is your due at my hands.

If, however, I may be pardoned for further reference to the personal aspect of this occasion, I feel it a special honour, attended with much gratification, to be placed at the head of this particular Section, because in it—or rather in the old Pathological Society of Dublin, of which it is the direct and lineal descendant—my first essay in pathology was made, nearly a quarter of a century ago, in the presence of the leading physicians and surgeons of that day. And how well one remembers his first communication! How vivid are the recollections of the surroundings—the audience, the friendly criticism, and the encouraging marks of approbation on the part of those whose opinion was looked up to, and whose words of counsel were cherished!

In that old society, with which I was connected as, first, student associate, then member, and, lastly, councillor, our meetings were held weekly, and the communications dealt with recent specimens—unsurpassed anywhere for variety and range of pathological anatomy. As discussion was not permitted at the time I refer to, and for many years subsequently, its proceedings were, indeed, considered by some comparatively quiet—nay, sometimes even, though very rarely, errors of judgment were evident on the part of some exhibitors, and in a few instances—owing probably to want of time in the examination and preparation of the morbid specimens—many points of interest were passed over or unheeded. Nevertheless, those meetings had a charm peculiarly their own, and this charm lay in the combination of accurate details of daily clinical observation of the symptoms and progress of disease with the exhibition of the morbid conditions which produced the fatal termination; and no regular attendant could fail to learn much of macroscopic pathology in relation to diseased organs and tissues. Especially during any outbreak of epidemic disease was this the case; as, for instance, during the inroad of epidemic cerebro-spinal fever in this city in the years 1863–65, so that the severity and extent of its ravages could be accurately gauged, as well by the number of the specimens exhibited as by the various stages of disease at which its fatal influence was demonstrated before the members of that society.

In thus referring to the old Pathological Society of Dublin, which enrolled among its members and witnessed at its weekly meetings such men of learning and high professional standing as

Stokes, Adams, Robert Smith, Law, Corrigan, and others, I have done so in no spirit of disparagement towards our Section of Pathology—nay, rather, with the intention, by a healthy retrospect, to stimulate our energies to make it as worthy of the profession, and of the subject it deals with, as the old society incontestably proved itself to be in its day. Although from its amalgamation with the other societies to form the Academy of Medicine in 1882, and from the fact that the meetings are now held but once a month instead of once a week, something has been lost; and although the study of pathological or morbid anatomy cannot, therefore, be now conducted on the same lines and within the same wide limits as formerly, I would refer with confidence to the work done in this Section during the immediate past session, and the five preceding sessions, as a warrant of its vitality and an omen of its future growth. Nevertheless, I would venture to urge upon the Fellows and Members of the Academy, each as his opportunities may arise in this session, to contribute some specimen, some fact, or some well-considered theory or view, bearing upon the wide and varied subjects which are included in the term “Pathology.”

Sir James Paget, than whom, on this subject, no one is more competent to give an opinion, said last year (Path. Soc., London) that “Pathology, as distinguished from practical medicine, used to be regarded as scarcely more than morbid anatomy, but now there is in it work not only for the anatomist and physiologist but for the clinical observer, the experimentalist, the minutest microscopist, the statistician, the chemist, the naturalist, the historian, the psychologist, and yet more.”

In a field so wide, taste, ability, and scientific interest must surely find opportunity and scope for good work in one or more of the avenues which lead to the Temple of Truth.

Leaving to others who are more competent to discuss many of the branches of the subject detailed by Sir James Paget, I, for my own part, would lay particular stress upon the advantages and usefulness of recent specimens of gross pathology of organs whose clinical and ætiological features have been carefully watched and recorded. In this combination lies the influence for good which pathology yields, and hardly too much stress, in the present day, can be laid upon its advantages to the practical physician and surgeon in the diagnosis and treatment of disease. There has been of late perhaps, more particularly among the juniors of the profession, a tendency to ignore macroscopic pathology, and to view the subject

in the more limited field of the microscope, and to suppose that relatively to the power used is the interest enhanced. There is, however, a great deal more to be learned of general pathology by observing the effects upon the circulatory and nutritive changes in the body produced by, for example, a tumour than by deciphering the histological characters of the tumour. The hand, the eye, and the scalpel will be quite sufficient, in the vast majority of *post-mortem* examinations, to afford a clear comprehension of the pathological changes and their effects, local and general.

I trust, therefore, in the coming session no one will be deterred by a feeling of insufficient microscopical opportunities or knowledge from coming forward and illustrating by specimens the causes of or the ravages made by disease. In our Section every help is welcomed—every effort to advance the science of medicine has its place. Nay, further, the very fact of making an autopsy and discussing the morbid products at our meetings must tend to make us better physicians and surgeons, and at the same time less over-confident in diagnosis and self-asserting in prognosis and treatment.

Our position in the Royal Academy of Medicine, it has often occurred to me, is at once unique and yet in touch with those subjects more properly belonging to the other Sections. We are at variance with none; we can help all. It would seem to me that the Section of Pathology is the centre round which revolve in wider or narrower circles Medicine, Surgery, Midwifery, Anatomy and Physiology, and State Medicine.

I suppose everyone will readily acknowledge the intimate relationship between Pathology and Medicine and Surgery. Is there any doubt as to a like bond of union with State Medicine? There certainly should be none, for State Medicine—including Preventive Medicine and Sanitary Science—is, as you know, directly concerned with the spread of disease, its origin, and modes of propagation. Will it not be conceded that the study of general pathology is the basis of the revolutions produced by antiseptic surgery; the triumphs of Pasteur in relation to human, bovine, and avial disease—the inestimable benefits of vaccination; and the immunity from disease of zymotic and parasitic nature, by securing purity of the water we drink and of the air we breathe?

More striking still—because our knowledge in this department is daily advancing—is the insight we have obtained by pathology as to the physiology of many organs in the body—as, for example,

the mechanism of the cardiac second sound, the arterial and venous collateral circulation in cases of occlusion by an embolus of a main vessel of a limb, and the absence of such circulation in the terminal vessels of the spleen, the lungs, and parts of the brain. But perhaps in no region of the body more than in the central nervous system is this point better illustrated. What the dissecting knife and armamentaria of the physiological laboratory have failed to demonstrate, has been made plain to the senses of sight and touch by the morbid changes which have been termed "secondary degenerations." Be the primary lesion (traumatic or inflammatory) in the brain above or in the cord below, the motor or sensory paths can be accurately investigated through the pons and the medulla by means of the tracts of descending or ascending degenerations, and, as Dr. MacEwen aptly says, "it is now accepted beyond controversy—what were before chimerical speculations—that there are points in the human cerebral cortex intimately related to motor and sensory functions of certain parts of the body."

And now, as a close to these desultory remarks on the position of the study of Pathology, and as a striking and conclusive commentary on its practical value in Medicine and Surgery, I would briefly refer to the work of the last session in relation to brain surgery—a subject of peculiar interest to the physician—and would point to the communications of Dr. C. B. Ball, Sir William Stokes, and Mr. Thornley Stoker, as brilliant illustrations of the value of pathology in forming an accurate diagnosis and in guiding the surgeon's knife and tréphine to the particular seat of disease within the skull. Advances in this direction are being made "all along the line" in other parts of the United Kingdom, so that by the felicitous combination of diagnostic perspicuity, surgical skill, and a sound pathological knowledge, many a sufferer from localised cortical lesions has been saved from death, and paralysis or epileptic seizures have been removed.