

teaching, and so both of us remembering the objects of our profession, we shall endeavour worthily to walk in the footsteps of those who have gone before us, and strive to sustain the reputation of a school of medicine, which for half a century has been noted for much good work, done by both those who taught and those who studied therein.

ABSTRACT OF A

Lecture

INTRODUCTORY TO THE COURSE ON

PRACTICAL SURGERY.

By S. MESSENGER BRADLEY, F.R.C.S.,

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THE lecturer commenced by defining the meaning and scope of Practical Surgery, which he identified with the art of surgery as distinguished from the science, and proceeded by saying that the art made extraordinary progress more than two thousand years ago, but failed to advance further from lack of the companionship of science; which, however, though late, at length appeared, and now they were freely and fearlessly advancing along the difficult path of progress. In sketching the rise and progress of the art, the lecturer said that, doubtless, rude attempts at surgery must have been almost coeval with the evolution of man, but that we had no distinct surgical records for ages after the civilisation of many great nations. There were cycles, he observed, in the mental history of the world—at certain distant periods a nation suddenly bursting into the full flower of genius, and this, not in one, but in almost every branch of human knowledge. Hippocrates lived at such a time—the golden age of Grecian history. The lecturer sketched his career and dwelt upon his work, especially his treatise on Fractures and Dislocations, which he considered equal in many respects to anything that had since appeared.

Surgery thus founded under the inspiration of the Socratic philosophy, and inspired by the genius of Hippocrates, continued to advance, observed the lecturer, by the double path of observation and of reason. From Greece the art was carried to Rome, and in tracing its history we were next arrested by the names of Celsus, A.D. 50, and of Galen, A.D. 130, both of whom resided in the Imperial city. At this epoch came a halt; the people turned from the study of political liberty to a blind following of authority. An intellectual darkness slowly descended upon the nations, which was not removed until Bacon, with his inductive philosophy, revived the Hippocratic reasoning. So great, however, was the impulse given to learning by the Father of Medicine, that a halting progress continued to be made for some time after Galen's death. In the meantime a knowledge of the art of surgery had been conveyed to the Arabs, who had captured Alexandria, which was then the chief seat of learning, and the followers of the art had divided into three groups—the Empirics, the Rationalists, and the Methodists. Of these the Rationalists were incomparably the most enlightened, and to them belonged the Arab writers Rhazes, Albucasis, and others, along with the learned Greek, Paulus Egineta. In his hands, indeed, ancient surgery reached its climacteric, and the lecturer selected his treatment of varicose veins as an illustration of his mental grasp and surgical thoroughness.

With Egineta, Mr. Bradley went on to say, the progress ended; the art still continued to be practised by the Arabs, but nothing worthy of note occurred until the eleventh century, when one Constantius carried a knowledge of the art from Egypt to Salerno in Italy, which for some time continued to be its principal home.

Surgery did not, however, much benefit from the change of residence, but another and more fruitful soil was about to receive the seed; for in 1295, Lanfranc, travelling from Milan to Paris, for the first time established a school of

surgery in France. In England, the history of the art was perhaps more chequered than in France. Until 1320, when John of Gaddesden left Oxford, there was no English school of surgery, and in spite of the free intercourse between France and England, English surgery continued to be but a poor and barbarous art for some time to come. It languished in the hands of the priests, and suffered still more from falling into the hands of ignorant laymen; nor was it, indeed, until the seventeenth century that a school of surgery worthy of England was established by Richard Wiseman. Surgery here, as in France, suffered long and severely from being considered an inferior and humbler art than medicine. It was long in being emancipated from this thralldom. The physician was socially, intellectually, and educationally the superior of the surgeon, and he lorded it over his humbler brothers with a high hand. With Wiseman, however, this state of things came to an end; the art of surgery was at length placed upon a scientific basis, and in the long roll of names between that day and this we had nothing to blush for in English surgery, confided as it had been to the hands of such men as Cheselden, Hunter, White, Pott, Cooper, and by them worthily handed down to Brodie and to Paget. The lecturer, by way of illustrating the slow progress of the surgical art, detailed the history of the surgical treatment of aneurism and vesical calculus, and then passed to consider the condition of the art at the present day. He thus concluded:—

“And now, gentlemen, what is to be said of the art of surgery at the present day? We live in an age of great discoveries, of widespread mental activity. Is our art holding its own, and advancing equally with others? It may be—nay, I think it is—too much to claim such honour for our art, but this must be conceded that at no period since the ripe Grecian summer of long ago has so much been accomplished as in this our day. Barely catalogued, the recent triumphs of surgery are numerous and splendid. Ophthalmic surgery has been raised from the humblest position to the state of an almost perfect art. Laryngeal surgery in its entirety is the gift of the present age. So much has been done in obstetric work as almost to constitute it a fresh branch of our art, while this is altogether the case with ovarian operations, by which hundreds of valuable lives are yearly snatched from a lingering and painful death. In reparative surgery the process introduced by Reverdin gives us a control over large wounds previously undreamt of; while the plan of Esmarch, enabling us to take our pound of flesh without shedding one drop of Christian blood, gives us a greatly extended power in operations upon the bones or joints, or in operations upon the extremities, involving a deep and tedious dissection. Many deformities are now hopefully treated which, a short time since, were deemed beyond the surgeon's art, while most operations are so much simplified that the resulting success is materially increased. But, important as are each and all of these, they are but details when compared with the recent addition to our art of three great principles—the principles of anæsthesia, antisepticity, and electricity. All these discoveries, and many more besides, are due to the late but happy union of science with art. Until science had created a knowledge of pathology and physiology, the art of surgery was bound hand and foot; but the fetters were removed, and progress had been immediate and continuous. Still much remains to do. Of the nature of that process which lies at the root of almost every disease and almost all repair—inflammation—we are nearly as completely in the dark as ever; while over the destroying influence of malignant growths and animal poisons we possess no more controlling power than Hippocrates. Room here for the patient and intrepid explorer, who may yet advance with hope and even confidence; for, though there is much that is gloomy before and around him, yet, of a truth, ‘the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light’—the light of science—a light not uncertain or fitful, but steady and ever brightening; so that, asking, ‘Watchman, will the night soon pass?’ he may with a hopeful heart await the answer: ‘The night is far spent; the day is at hand.’”

It is announced that the Secretary of State for War has approved the appointment of Surgeon-Major F. S. B. De Chaumont, M.D., as Professor of Military Hygiene at the Army Medical School, Netley.