

YORK MEDICAL SOCIETY.

THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN MEDICINE.

ADDRESS BY PROFESSOR OSLER

The members of the York Medical Society met yesterday afternoon in the Museum of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society to hear the annual inaugural address of the session delivered by Professor W. Osler, F.R.S., Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford. The subject of his address was "The beginnings of modern medicine," illustrated by lantern slides. Dr. Stoddart (president) occupied the chair, and there were also present the Dean of York, Rev. Canon Watson (sub-dean), Alderman Sir J. Sykes Rymer, Dr. J. G. Eddison (Leeds), Dr. Bedford Pierce, Dr. Ramsay, Dr. Turner, Dr. E. M. Smith, Dr. Norman Goode (hon. sec.), Dr. Foster, Dr. Evelyn, Mr. F. Shann, Dr. Macdonald, Mr. H. C. Shann, Dr. Cattley, Rev. T. Walker, the Rev. E. Bulmer, Dr. Gaynor, Mr. Percy Gostling, Mr. W. H. Jalland, Dr. Sanderson Long, Mr. J. W. Procter, J.P., Dr. Noel Hood, Mr. H. M. Platnauer, and a number of ladies.

The PRESIDENT introduced the orator as one of great attainments, not only in medicine but in literature.

MEDICINE'S DEBT TO GREECE.

Professor OSLER, in his opening remarks, quoted the words of Sir Henry Maine—"To one small people it was given to create the principle of progress. That people was the Greek. Except the blind forces of Nature nothing moves in this world which is not Greek in its origin." Those words were as true of medicine as they were of philosophy and science. To the work of the Hippocratic physicians of ancient Greece we owe—first, the emancipation of medicine from the shackles of priestcraft and of caste; secondly, the conception of medicine as an art based on accurate observation, and as a science, an integral part of the science of man and of nature; thirdly, the high moral ideals expressed in that most "memorable of human documents," the Hippocratic oath; and fourthly, the conception and realisation of medicine as the profession of the cultivated gentleman. He went on to trace, in the most interesting manner, the progress of medical science in Greece. He said, after flowing for nearly 1,000 years through the broad plain of Greek civilisation the stream of medicine was apparently lost in the morass of the middle ages; but though choked and blocked like the White Nile by the sud three channels might be followed through the weeds of theological and philosophical speculations. One might be traced in the direction of the Eastern Empire when the great Byzantine compilers Oribasius, Actuus, Alexander of Trailes, and Paul of Agina carried away in their writing much that was of value in Greek medicine. A second stream might be traced, though with difficulty, through Southern Italy, always a stronghold of Greek thought. The third and much more important stream flowed in Arabian Channels. In Egypt the Arabs first came in contact with Greek medicine, and learnt to appreciate its superiority. Rhazes, still famous in the annals of medicine, was not only a medical chemist, but he was the first to give an accurate description of small-pox and to separate it from measles. The teaching of the Persian Avicenna, the greatest of the Arabian

(Laughter.) Referring to the work of John of Gaddesden in the science of medicine, the Dean said in his early clerical days he was a curate near Gaddesden, and it was recorded in a book of John of Gaddesden in the Minster Library that he cured the King's son of small pox by wrapping him in red blankets. He had the page from the book photographed and sent it to a cousin of his who lived at Gaddesden. (Applause.)

The vote was carried by acclamation. Professor OSLER, in reply, said he thought he owed the major part of his audience an apology. He forgot that it was to be a popular audience, and he was afraid his remarks had been somewhat involved, and that it had been a rather dull lecture to some of them, but they might have the satisfaction of not understanding it. (Laughter.) Sometimes, when he was unable to understand all a lecturer said, he felt that the lecturer must be a man of considerable attainments. (Laughter.)

THE BANQUET.

The annual banquet was held at the Station Hotel in the evening, Dr. Stoddart presided, and was supported by the orator (Professor Osler), the Dean of York, the Rev. Canon Watson (Sub-Dean), Colonel White, Mr. W. H. Jalland, Dr. Ramsay, Dr. Upton, Colonel Anderson, Dr. Long, Rev. W. O. F. Campbell, Mr. Wightman, Dr. Bedford Pierce, Mr. Hughes, Dr. Noel Hood, Mr. H. V. Scott, Professor Grunbaum, Mr. Glaisby, Dr. Evelyn, Mr. Gayner, Mr. A. Procter, Dr. Cattley, Dr. Turner, Dr. Galbraith, Dr. Raimes, Mr. H. C. Shann, Mr. F. Shann, Captain E. C. Wood, Mr. Charles Cooper, Mr. Eltenton, Dr. Foster, Mr. J. Melrose, Mr. R. F. Dunnell, Mr. H. W. Badger, Dr. Rabagliati, Dr. H. N. Goode (hon secretary), Dr. Salter, Dr. Godfrey, Dr. Acomb, and Mr. Noall.

The PRESIDENT gave "The King," which was loyally received.

Dr. GODFREY proposed "The Church," which he said was a toast peculiarly appropriate in an ecclesiastical atmosphere such as York, and one such as would be received cordially by those present. (Applause.) There was no doubt that medical men were a part with the clergy in intimate association in the mission of healing, and medical men owed a great deal to the clergy, particularly in the sad cases where they came to the end of their resources, and the clergy brought the message of comfort and hope to the dying. (Applause.) They could help the medical man most materially beyond that, and in a national sense by teaching the people, particularly the poor, lessons in sanitation and hygiene. (Applause.) In country villages and the purlieus of cities they were met by prejudice, gross superstition, and terrible ignorance, and it was owing to that they had the high mortality, particularly amongst infants, which was so deplorable and disastrous to the masses of the poor. They had amongst them the Dean of York, one who was loved and revered in York almost as much as York Minster. (Applause.)

THE CHURCH AND DOCTORS.

The Dean of YORK, on rising to reply, was received with loud applause. He said: It is always agreeable to me to receive the kind greetings of the members of the medical profession, many of whom have been my valued friends in the past, but your greeting this evening is not of a personal character, nor even of the communion to which I specially belong, but to the Church, which I would venture to interpret as not only the Church of England but the Church of Christ. (Applause.) The Church universal

men and notable figures in medicine and medical science they had had for 19 years past come to York to deliver the inaugural address at their annual meeting few indeed had attained a higher or greater distinction than their guest of the evening. (Applause.) He gave a sketch of Professor Osler's career, and said that they welcomed him as their guest and hoped it was not the last time they would meet him. (Applause.)

Mr. W. Wilkinson, of the Minster Choir, sang the Canadian National Anthem in honour of Professor Osler's birthplace.

Professor OSLER, who was received with applause, said he thanked them for placing on the programme the National Anthem of the land to which he belonged, in fact to which they all belonged, for there was no difference. (Applause.) He never got on his feet in England without feeling the missionary spirit come over him to urge as many as possible to add to that little country. It had everything it needed but population. They had not the teeming millions which this part of the Empire had, and it seemed a pity that they could not add to the broad acres of Canada, particularly in the North-West, many of the poor people that lived in Great Britain amongst so many disadvantages. (Applause.) He felt very uncomfortable under the long dissection which Dr. Ramsay gave of his career; he was glad that he did not know it all. (Laughter.) It gave him great pleasure to be in York. They had had a wonderful profession in the city; a splendid set of men. Martin Lister was a great credit to the city and did a great work for them in York during the latter part of the 17th and early part of the 18th century. Then he had been interested for many years, as no doubt they had, in the original of Dr. Slot, that wicked thing of Sterne. He (Sterne) could not help it; it was the way in which he was brought up. Dr. Burton came in for as bitter a handling as Dr. Slot, but Dr. Burton was a great man and he was a great honour to them in York, for he was not only a distinguished physician but one of our four greatest archaeologists. (Applause.) Then York had produced the only English medical Rabelais, James Atkinson, who was unique in his profession. There was no other man like him; no other man who had put into one volume so much good fun on a dry subject. (Applause.) The fourth man he was interested in was that great credit to the clerical cloth, Laurence Sterne, who really should have been a doctor, for he was so interested in medicine. He had after all contributed to the gaiety of the nation, and he was a great literary character, his bi-centenary coming no very soon, and he needed a fine large monument, which he (Professor Osler) would like to design. (Laughter.)

THE GUESTS.

Dr. NOEL HOOD proposed "The Guests," to whom the society extended a very hearty welcome. (Applause.)

The Rev. Canon WATSON returned thanks and said there was no vocation more honoured and respected than that of the medical man. They were not only the medical attendants, but they were the trusted friends and wise counsellors of a great number in their troubles which did not always come within their purview as medical men. (Applause.) Their influence on the general life of the public could be, and he believed was, very happy and very wide. The degradation of the medical profession would be a very serious blow to the national life of the country. (Applause.) Their profession and the one to which he belonged had been for long more or less connected. There had been time in the far past and in the middle ages when they had to break away from the clerical profession and pursue their own scientific course as well as the knowledge of the day would permit them, but he was glad to find that the men who threw in their lot with the advancement of medical science were men of their own Church. (Applause.) There were new ideas and strang

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THANKS TO PROF OSLER.

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masses of the poor. They had amongst them the Dean of York, one who was loved and revered in York almost as much as York Minister. (Applause.)

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The Dean of YORK, on rising to reply, was received with loud applause. He said: It is always agreeable to me to receive the kind greetings of the members of the medical profession, many of whom have been my valued friends in the past, but your greeting this evening is not of a personal character, nor even of the communion to which I specially belong, but to the Church, which I would venture to interpret as not only the Church of England but the Church of Christ. (Applause.) The Church universal, the gathering of all who profess and call themselves Christians throughout the world, and that you hail them, not as your guests but as fellow-workers together with yourselves in the blessed work of healing or mitigating the many ills which flesh is heir to, whether by accident or diseases. (Applause.) In a word, that you recognise the spiritual as well as the physical element in dealing therewith, and you trust that we are doing our part therein as you are doing yours. And for the really effectual treatment of those many sufferers it is most important, in my opinion, that these joint agencies should be equitably recognised—(applause)—neither opposing the other, neither ignoring the other, but hand in hand and heart in heart working together. (Applause.) If I look back into the long vistas of my past life it seems to me that, in my early days, this was overlooked. There was an easy assumption that things were going their appointed courses, and a willingness to take it for granted that all were doing what they ought to do, and were doing what they ought to do, and that there was no occasion for the world in general to trouble themselves in other people's concerns. Charles Dickens, I think, with his inimitable pen, first drew attention to the fact that there was much to be remedied and much to be supplied. Bob Sawyer and his friend Ben Allen, Mrs. Gamp and Betsey Prigg, and the Rev. Mr. Stiggins (in double exaggerations and caricatures) nevertheless suggested the consideration as to whether things were altogether what they ought to be, and whether they might not be improved. (Applause.) The first efforts to infuse a more distinctly religious tone into the treatment of the sick was animated by zeal, but not according to knowledge. If the doctors and surgeons were not to be absolutely required to be ecclesiastics, the nurses as a rule were to be members of sisterhoods, and nursing to be regarded as an essential feature of the religious life, while on us (your clergy) the visitation of the sick, in season and out of season, was impressed as a vital portion of our duties. As time went on the rapidly-developing skill and knowledge in medicine and surgery seem to require that all the intellectual faculties should be concentrated therein. (Applause.) No men, not even clergymen or medical men, are perfect, and perhaps the well-intentioned efforts of surgeons or sisters tended, sometimes, to stimulate, and not govern, the emotional feelings of patients, and thus hinder, not help, the medical practitioner. (Applause.) I don't speak from my own experience, but there was an impression amongst many of the clergy that their visits were discouraged, and that while many of the nurses were admirably fitted to discharge the medical or surgical duties required of them, they were unable or unwilling to render those conditions and encouragements which are so invaluable to the sick and suffering, especially in the long, long hours of loneliness and weakness throughout the nights. (Applause.) But another development, perhaps, consequent on this has succeeded, and the medical and surgical practitioners are banished from the room, and the relief or cure of the sufferer entirely transferred to spiritual agencies. I will not detain you by elaborating or discussing Christian Science, as it is called, but it seems to me alike a perversion of Holy Scripture and a discord of human life. (Applause.) I fail to see in the Word of God that all human effort is to be supplanted by faith, and I cannot understand why if these principles are true of one thing they are not true of all. And if the needs of sickness are to be derived wholly and entirely by prayer, why not the needs of health? (Applause.) They are as much derived from God, Whom we are daily to ask, "Give us this day our daily bread." And yet no one would fancy that a life of entire inaction and prayer would secure him the food convenient for him. I recognise with all respect

men. (Applause.) Their influence on the general life of the public could be, as he believed was, very happy and very wide. The degradation of the medical profession would be a very serious blow to the national life of the country. (Applause.) Their profession and the one to which he belonged had been for long more or less connected. There had been time in the far past and in the middle ages when they had to break away from the clerical profession and pursue their own scientific course, as well as the knowledge of the day would permit them, but he was glad to find that the men who threw in their lot with the advancement of medical science were men of their own Church. (Applause.) There were new ideas and strange weird theories were promulgated in the present day. From his reading now and when a young fellow at the university he could not help but come to the conclusion that there were forceful, moral, mental, and spiritual, with which the science of the future would have to deal in any way, which was not yet. (Applause.) They must make up their minds to that, and in the development of knowledge in the future there was no profession which could give sounder or better aid than they could on the lines of the human thought of to-day. (Applause.)

Mr. H. V. SCOTT, in felicitous terms, proposed the health of the President, which was received with loud applause.

The PRESIDENT briefly replied, and said that the Society had entered its 79th year, and had done much to foster a kindly feeling and to promote good fellowship amongst its members. (Applause.) He spoke of the admirable work done for the Society by the hon. secretary, Dr. Norman Goode.

Between the speeches Mr. W. Wilkinson, of the Minster Choir, sang with great taste several ballads, and Dr. Wightman sang a "medica ditty" of his own composition, which was greatly enjoyed. Mr. A. Sample proved a most capable accompanist.

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THANKS TO PROF OSLER.

Mr. W. H. JALLAND proposed a vote of thanks to Prof. Osler, and said when he consented to come to York to give the address they all felt sure that it would be one of deep interest, and he felt that they would agree with him that it had been. (Applause.) They would probably remember Prof. Osler's association some years ago with a particular phrase, namely, "The chloroform age of man," but no one would be bold enough to say that he had reached that age when he should be chloroformed out of existence. (Laughter and applause.) They would agree with him that Prof. Osler had given indications of a marvellously young mind, and the prospect was that if he lived to a very old age he would never be anything but a very young man. (Applause.)

Dr. J. G. EDDISON seconded the motion. He said that it was a very great pleasure for him to be there, because for a great number of years he had known Professor Osler only in print; he had never seen him before that day, and they would readily understand what a pleasure it was to him. He spoke of Professor Osler coming from America to Oxford, which Matthew Arnold said was "The home of lost causes." They would understand how in the whole of the United Kingdom everybody thanked the fates that had brought him to Oxford and congratulated English medicine on the fact. (Applause.)

The Dean of YORK supported the resolution, and humorously said that those who had already spoken represented the faculty, whilst he represented the priestcraft which had early trampled out the beginning of things. (Laughter.) It was a great pleasure to him to meet the Regius Professor at Oxford, especially being an Oxford man himself. He was at Brasenose, which was also Roger Bacon's College, and Bacon wrote a book on "The cure of old age." He (the Dean) was an old man, and if he could get that book he might obtain a few useful hints from it.

of all. And if the needs of sickness are to be derived wholly and entirely by prayer, why not the needs of health? (Applause.) They are as much derived from God, Whom we are daily to ask, "Give us this day our daily bread." And yet no one would fancy that a life of entire inaction and prayer would secure him the food convenient for him. I recognise with all respect the motives of those who are thus actuated by, I am sure, conscientious convictions, but I fail to justify their proceedings, as alike in harmony with their duty to God and to themselves. (Applause.) But, as Frederick Robertson observed, there is always an element of truth in the differences of human nature, and therefore rather than dismiss them as altogether unreasonable and fallacious, the wise course is, I think, to promote the efficient and peaceable observance of the two important elements in the treatment of the sick and suffering, the spiritual and the physical. (Applause.) As regards the latter I can say nothing, and as regards the former it is our part to see that our ministrations are tempered with care and wisdom. (Applause.) We must not act independent of each other, or in opposition to each other. The due treatment of sickness and suffering is, I believe, the outcome, not of either only, but of both, and the more we are brought together and know each other and understand each other's motives, objects, and see our side from the other's standpoint, the more effectual will be the work done. (Applause.) We welcome each other as guests; we acknowledge each other as friends—(applause)—and the more we feel that we are not only that but fellow workers in one and the same work, each with a share, but only a share, of a great whole, the more efficient our share will be. (Applause.) Sickness and accident have their influence remember, not only for time but for eternity, not only for the life which now is, but for that which is beyond, and in proportion as we are true and loyal to one another they will be for the welfare of both. (Applause.)

THE ORATOR.

Dr. RAMSAY proposed the toast of "The Orator." He said amongst the distinguished