AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE OPENING OF THE SECTION OF DISEASES OF THE TEETH.

By EDWIN SAUNDERS, F.R.C.S.,
President of the Section.

GENTLEMEN,—Before assuming the duties and responsibilities of President of the Odontological Section of this great Congress, permit me to thank you for the honour you have conferred upon me in electing me to that high office; and let me assure you that it will be my earnest endeavour to justify your choice, however I may fail to satisfy my own, and your, well-warranted expectations. And, indeed, were it not that I am sustained by the kind co-operation of two vice-presidents and a secretary, in whom our profession feels a just and legitimate pride, I might well feel oppressed by the onus of doing full justice to the position on so august an occasion. Nor was it, I am free to admit, until I had the permission of the Executive Committee to call around me, as a Council, some old and tried associates in professional work, that I began to experience the requisite energy and confidence. And having made this personal avowal and confession, I turn to the distinguished company before me, who have done us the high honour to visit our too great, but not too gay, capital, and to become for a too short time, and for our signal profit, our guests at this great intellectual banquet. Permit me, gentlemen, on behalf of the English members of the Congress, on behalf of our largest society, the Odontological Society of Great Britain, now in the twenty-fifth year of its somewhat chequered, but, on the whole, prosperous existence, and on behalf of the whole body of the dental profession in England, to offer you a hearty welcome, and to assure you of our earnest desire to render your too brief visit both profitable and pleasant. We hail the happy occasion of our friendly intercourse, and we trust that friendships begun under such benign auspices may continue and progress in interest through many prosperous years. Such gatherings as these, with the pleasurable amenities they involve, do much to soften and refine the manners, to quicken the intellect of all concerned, and to remove misconceptions of national or individual character which are apt to be engendered by isolation and want of friendly intercourse. Congresses such as that at which it is our privilege at this time to assist, serve a great social purpose apart from the intellectual and scientific aims at which they are more immediately directed. It is much that they afford an opportunity and a stimulus for intellectual effort, which might otherwise, with man's proverbial procrastination, never be called into action. But in these days of an ever-teeming press, and of facilities for the free intercommunication of ideas, this is subordinate to the advantage of personal knowledge of the individual, and the living interchange of thought. The modern Congress, which seems now in high favour, owes its existence, or shall it not be said, its revival, to the intellectual activity, joined with a wide eclecticism, which is a characteristic of our times, and which seeks to assimilate to itself whatever is of value in the past, or in other lands, whether in social manners and customs, in matters of dress or daily life, in schools of architecture, or in the realms of science or art. The generally accepted idea of a Congress is, if I mistake not, more than a fortuitous assembly of persons engaged in similar pursuits and drawn together by community of thought and interest. It is the deliberate coming together of distinguished men or of experts, of set purpose and for a specific object, the persons constituting the Congress being invited and selected with a due regard to their knowledge of the subject for the consideration of which it has been convoked. This is especially evident in political affairs, and notably in a recent instance in a northern capital, where the great countries of Europe, represented by their most distinguished statesmen and diplomatists, met in solemn conclave for the rectification of national frontier lines, and for the determination of other questions of vital importance which must otherwise have been left to the rude arbitrament of the sword. And may we not indulge the hope, in the interests of an enlightened humanity, that this high function may be more extensively employed to interfere between the unbridled ambition and lawless rapacity of states, more powerful than just, and the resolute resistance to subjugation or spoliation on the part of the oppressed, protracted, it may be, to the bitter end through years of carnage and misery? So might the world be spared the sad-

dening spectacle of "man's inhumanity to man", and the fair page of contemporary history be unsullied by the foul blot of the blood-stained record. Ours, however, is a congress of peace, and we are happily not called upon to compose animosities or to adjudicate upon conflicting claims. The triumphs which we are met to celebrate are those of man's skill in limiting and repairing the ravages of disease, our victories, those over nature herself, when she is forced to yield up another of her secrets as the reward of patient research or of well-conducted experiment. Our international reunion may be regarded as a periodical taking stock of the gains of science, of improved appliances, of more accurate means of diagnosis and of more efficient modes of treatment in the various departments of medical practice. And for the better and fuller carrying out of this intention, it has been found advisable, having regard to the present advanced state of medical and surgical science, to divide the work of the Congress into sections.

These sections carrying on their work simultaneously, and the work of each section being complete in itself, greater fulness and accuracy of detail are secured without any sacrifice of the unity of the one grand result, as the work of each section is the necessary complement of the whole. In that with which we are more immediately concerned, one of the youngest departments of surgical practice, and which for the first time enjoys its own distinct and prominent position, considerable interest will attach to the question of education and the regulations which in each country govern the entrance into the profession. The former part of this very important subject will, I trust, shortly be brought under the notice of the Congress by one, than whom none is at once more fully informed and more entitled to speak with authority—I mean Mr. John Tomes, who has in this direction, during the last quarter of a century, done much to advance the interests and to establish a strong claim on the gratitude of the profession. Nor would the English sense of justice and fair play be satisfied without an acknowledgment of the more recent services of his colleague in this good and great work—Mr. James Smith Turner, without whose unsparing devotion of time and energy it could not have been brought to so successful an issue. To the joint action of these two gentlemen, to the lawyer-like precision and forethought of the former, no less than to the vigilance and promptitude of the latter, is the profession indebted for that invaluable piece of legislation—the Dentists' Act of 1878. It must not be forgotten, however, that to our foreign friends the nature of the enactment is of greater interest than the means or the persons by whom it was obtained. By the provisions of this Act, then, which came into operation on August 1st, 1879, it is forbidden to any one to use the word dentist, dental practitioner, or other title implying that he is qualified to practise dental surgery, unless his name appears on the *Register* of that body; thus giving to the dentist the same protection and privileges as are enjoyed by the physician and surgeon in this and other countries. By this measure, the opprobrium was removed which so long rested on the dental profession in this country, that it included a large proportion of ill-qualified practitioners, and in many cases persons who were unsuccessful in other pursuits, and who were attracted to it by the absence of restrictions or of preliminary examination. By provisions of this Act introduced by Sir John Lubbock, not only are the public preserved from the extortion and malpraxis of the ignorant and unprincipled, but a grave discouragement is removed from the educated and honest practitioner. For it is only in human nature that high aims and honest zealous work should languish in the atmosphere of indifference and lack of appreciation. In thus obtaining legal sanction for the organisation of the profession, it was desired strictly to maintain its connection with the Royal College of Surgeons, as it was rightly felt that separation from that body would involve abdication of the status which it had hitherto enjoyed. And when the College had been memorialised on the subject, showing that the curriculum for the diploma for general surgery, which was the only qualification then open to him, did not comprise certain matters of the first importance to the dental practitioner—that, in fact, the entire subject of dental surgery found no place either in the teaching or at the examining board—an arrangement was accepted for more fully meeting the requirements of the case. Accordingly, a conjoint board of examiners, consisting of half surgeons and half specialists, was created for the licentiatehip of dental surgery, with a corresponding modification of the prescribed course of study, eliminating much that was of little value, and substituting what was regarded as specially necessary in that particular line of practice. Thus, by varying but not lowering, the educational standard, an arrangement has been effected, which, if not in all respects perfectly satisfactory, goes far to meet the reasonable views and wishes of those who have the welfare of the profession at heart. With this bare outline of our proceedings in reference to the organisation of the profession before us, we shall listen with interest to what has been accomplished in other countries in

the same direction, not, it may be hoped, without mutual profit and advantage.

Gentlemen, I feel that I ought not longer to tax your attention; but, having declared this section of the Congress open, that we shall prepare ourselves to listen with appreciation and enjoyment to those varied and valuable contributions to the literature of our speciality with which we are so liberally favoured both from home and foreign sources. And first your attention will be asked for the always welcome utterances of one whose contributions to science during a long series of years, many of them having a direct interest for our own speciality, and almost unparalleled for number and value, have made his name a household word in both hemispheres—I mean Professor Owen. We feel grateful for his presence here to-day, which will confer *prestige* on our proceedings; and we tender him, with our thanks, our sincere felicitations that he has been able to witness, in unimpaired health and energy, the realisation of his hopes and wishes in the completion of that noble structure, the Museum of Natural History.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE OPENING OF

THE SECTION OF PUBLIC MEDICINE.*

By JOHN SIMON, C.B., F.R.S., D.C.L., LL.D.

GENTLEMEN,—In considering what should be my first words in the position which I have the honour to occupy, I fortunately recollect a word of ancient wisdom: "What shall the man say who cometh after a king?" Already to-day, the Chrysostoms of our English branch of the Medical Profession have, with their usual felicity, expressed, on behalf of all of us, the feelings which all must equally entertain on occasion of so great a meeting of our professional brotherhood. I therefore need not, on behalf of the officers of this section, say more than one word of cordial friendship and congratulation and welcome to those whom we have the pleasure and honour of seeing here: whether they come from within the limits of this United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, or be our fellow-labourers from other lands. If I may add a word specially for myself, I would beg to say how peculiarly gratified I am to know that there will sit on the benches of this section many of those workers and masters of our craft from whom it has long been my own daily privilege to learn.

My colleagues in the provisional service of this section, and persons of authority in the general management of the Congress, have pressed on me their wish (which I find equally flattering and embarrassing) that I should occupy part of this half-holiday afternoon by addressing to you some general talk in relation to the subject-matter of our section. I may confess myself to have believed, till almost the last moment, that my best presidential contribution to our meetings would be to sit as a respectful listener; but, on the other hand, I should so much regret to appear merely indolent in regard of what has been desired of me, that, on that ground, though reluctantly, and with unaffected apologies for what I fear may prove a tedious occupation of your time, I defer to the wishes which have been expressed.

Assuming that the members of the section would not expect anything new in what I might say, I have speculated whether, perhaps, in directions which are not new, I might say anything which would suggest useful thought to outsiders interested in our proceedings. I have remembered that, in our section of the Congress, we may peculiarly take for granted that the general public overhears what we say. Many of our matters of debate are matters of immense public concern; and the arguments relating to them are in many parts such as the laity can follow equally with ourselves. It has struck me that, as your President on this occasion, I may perhaps usefully have regard to that consideration. Chiefly, then, in that point of view, and with intentions which I hope may explain themselves as I go on, I shall offer you some general remarks on the meaning and on the scientific method of State Medicine. I trust that the thoughts and convictions which I shall express will be fully as much yours as my own, and will thus be far more deserving of public attention than if I pretended to call them original; and, indeed, as regards one practical purpose which I have in view, there is nothing I would so much desire as that I may be deemed merely your mouthpiece or interpreter.

* Parts of this address were shortened in delivery.

First: a few words on what may be called the general theory of our subject-matter. The term "State Medicine" corresponds to the supposition that, in certain cases, the Body-Politic will concern itself with the health-interests of the people—will act, or command, or deliberate, or inquire, with a view to the cure or the prevention of disease. Before any such supposition can be effectively realised, the Science of Medicine—that is to say, the exact knowledge of means by which disease may be prevented or cured, must have reached a certain stage of development; and unless the science be supposed common to all persons in the State, the existence of State Medicine supposes a special class of persons whom the unskilled general public can identify as presumably possessing the required knowledge. Thus, given the class of experts to supply the required exact knowledge, the Body-Politic undertakes that, within the limits of its own constitutional analogies, it will make the knowledge useful to the community.

I have intimated that, in State Medicine (just as in private medicine) the medical function may be exercised either in curing or in preventing disease; but practically these two departments of State Medicine are not of equal magnitude, nor are dealt with in quite the same spirit.

As regards curative medicine, modern governments have in general found it needless to interfere in much detail in favour of persons who require medical treatment. It is true that for cases which may be deemed exceptional—the case of the destitute poor, and the cases of districts under grave pestilential visitation, modern governments seem universally to acknowledge that it is their duty to provide, at the public charge, such medical skill and such appliances as may be needed; but, apart from those exceptions, the only action which the State takes in regard of curative medicine is that which consists in its authentication of a skilled Medical Profession, and in the distinctions which it sees fit to draw, as regards rights and privileges, between those who have been duly declared competent to treat disease, and those who have not been so declared.

Larger and far more various than the action taken by the State with reference to the cure of disease, is that which it takes in regard of prevention; and it is particularly of preventive medicine that I propose to speak. In its legal aspect, it is represented by a considerable mass of statutes (nearly all of them enacted within the last thirty-five years), and by an army of administrative authorities and officers appointed to give effect to those enactments. I need not describe in detail the laws and administrative machinery to which I refer, but I may remind you of the largeness and variety of their scope, even by quoting only the terms in which I was able, twelve years ago, to speak of the public health law of England.—"It would, I think, be difficult to over-estimate, in one most important point of view, the progress which, during the last few years, has been made in sanitary legislation. The principles now affirmed in our statute-book are such as, if carried into full effect, would soon reduce to quite an insignificant amount our present very large proportions of preventable disease. It is the almost completely expressed intention of our law that all such states of property, and all such modes of personal action or inaction, as may be of danger to the public health, should be brought within scope of summary procedure and prevention. Large powers have been given to local authorities, and obligation expressly imposed on them, as regards their respective districts, to suppress all kinds of nuisance, and to provide all such works and establishments as the public health primarily requires; while auxiliary powers have been given, for more or less optional exercise, in matters deemed of less than primary importance to health; as for baths and wash-houses, common lodging-houses, labourers' lodging-houses, recreation-grounds, disinfection-places, hospitals, dead-houses, burial-grounds, etc. And in the interests of health, the State has not only, as above, limited the freedom of persons and property in certain common respects; it has also intervened in many special relations. It has interfered between parent and child, not only in imposing limitation on industrial uses of children, but also to the extent of requiring that children shall not be left unvaccinated. It has interfered between employer and employed, to the extent of insisting, in the interest of the latter, that certain sanitary claims shall be fulfilled in all places of industrial occupation. It has interfered between vendor and purchaser; has put restrictions on the sale and purchase of poisons; has prohibited in certain cases certain commercial supplies of water; and has made it a public offence to sell adulterated food or drink or medicine, or to offer for sale any meat unfit for human food. Its care for the treatment of disease has not been unconditionally limited to treating at the public expense such sickness as may accompany destitution; it has provided that, in any sort of epidemic emergency, organised medical assistance, not peculiarly for paupers, may be required of local authorities; and, in the same spirit, it requires that vaccination at the public cost shall be given gratuitously to every claimant. The above survey might easily be extended by referring to statutes which are only of partial, or indi-