PROGRESS IN MEDICINE :

Being the President's Address, delivered at the Annual Meeting of the South-Eastern Branch, June 25th, 1874.

By GEORGE F. HODGSON, M.R.C.S.Eng., Brighton.

GENTLEMEN,—I must commence by acknowledging the honour you have done me in placing me here, and in thanking you for it ; although I am aware that my position is rather the result of circumstances than of any special fitness for it on my part. However, I will gladly do my best during the year of office to justify your decision. Secondly, I have, on behalf of myself and my resident fellow members, to bid all the rest of you a most hearty welcome to Brighton. We hope that you will thoroughly enjoy yourselves, and that the opportunity may prove one for mutually reviving and strengthening old friendships, and creating new ones. I must say a word in reference to Mr. Garraway's remarks. I think he is a little mistaken in stating that the great prosperity of the Branch depends so much upon my past exertions.* I must beg him to bear in mind that I found everything in first-rate order when I took office. My predecessor, Mr. Thomas Martin of Reigate, the first honorary secretary of the Branch ; his son, Mr. Peter Martin ; and after him Dr. Holman, were all men of marked ability ; and the affairs of the Branch had ever been conducted in the most admirable manner. I had nothing to do but follow suit.

During the decade that has elapsed since the last assembling of the members of the Branch here, the town has undergone many improvements. Some of its now leading features have sprung into existence since then. Amongst those, I may mention the magnificent Aquarium, the West Pier, the Free Library and Museum, and, as interesting to some of us, the new Workhouse Infirmary, the last being, indeed, just out of the town, but yet open to the inspection of any of you, through the kindness of its surgeon and our own fellow member Mr. Richards. The County Hospital (with its 150 beds, besides relieving out-patients), equal to any of its class in the kingdom, is always worth a visit. A new feature there is a large ward entirely for children, to which the trite saying, "Better late than never", is appropriate ; though had it only been instituted a few years ago, it would have saved the Brighton public the supposed necessity of having to support a separate hospital for children. Other medical charities in the town are the Brighton and Hove Dispensary (reported to relieve between 7,000 and 8,000 patients annually), the Lying-in Institution, the Infirmary for Diseases of the Eye, an Asylum for the Blind, another for the Deaf and Dumb, and others for Orphans, besides numerous "Homes" and "Refuges".

Taken collectively, these at first sight seem monuments of good, and unquestionably great good does come of them. But, in common with similar institutions in most other parts of our country nowadays, the real intentions of the chief ones are much exceeded, and true charity thereby greatly abused. Indeed, this grievance of indiscriminate charity is probably nowhere more rife than in Brighton. A Provident Dispensary has had a languid existence here for nearly forty years, and recently it has shown more signs of life. Let us hope that it may soon develop itself, and come more to the front, and so help, in connection with an increase in the number of parish surgeons—to at least reduce the abuses of the so-called charities, and put matters on a more wholesome footing. But to this end, other things must come about first : the public must awake to a better understanding of the subject, and members of the medical profession must be less precipitate than hitherto to offer their services in such an indiscriminately gratuitous manner. That on really charitable occasions members of our profession should ever be ready to render their help, is what all of us must approve of and practise ; but it is not good either for the public or the profession that so large an amount of unpaid service as has latterly become the custom should be continued. Possibly, if all had to pay their medical attendants, fewer of the latter might be found necessary than now seems the case, viz., 135. With a population of 108,000, this ratio of doctors is unusually high, I believe. Anyhow, it differs much from what the old *Medical Register* of 1799 tells us prevailed then, viz., that, for a population of over 6,000, two medical men sufficed, who were Mr. Isaac Lowdell and Mr. Thomas Gibbit. The *Register* for 1783 gives the names of Messrs. Lowdell and Son and Mr. Kipping, and adds this note :—"Dr. Pepys of London attends here during the bathing season."

Brighton is blessed with an abundant supply of water, which it procures from two wells, situate about three miles apart, in valleys among

the Downs, and of such purity as to need no filtration or other treatment whatever beyond the bare hydraulic processes necessary for raising it from its bed and distributing it to our houses, etc. Nature has favoured us, too, with a salubrious atmosphere, which fairly good drainage, natural and artificial combined, has prevented our refuse from tainting to any prejudicial extent of late. Many people predicate that a better time for the doctors is at hand, now that the large intercepting sewer is being brought into use. This drain is nearly seven miles long, and about the same number of feet in both vertical and transverse section for the greater portion of its length. It is planned to deliver the entire sewage of Brighton and Hove into the sea, four-and-a-half miles eastward of where we are now sitting. Unfortunately, its fall is only one yard in each mile, which, it is apprehended by some, will prove insufficient. The Town Council, with wise forethought, have bought up the waterworks, wherewith, in the event of this huge *cloaca* failing to evacuate itself, they may have the means of plying it with copious enemata. Let us hope that, if necessary, some other expedient may be devised, so as to avoid the spilling of so much good water upon bad. Possibly some of the briny contents of the vast natural reservoir in front of the town might be utilised for the purpose.

It has been customary on these occasions, for your President to give more or less of a *résumé* of such professional topics as may have excited special interest during the past year. I do not propose to detain you for this purpose :—1. Because it will be very much better done at our parent annual meeting at Norwich, in August ; 2. Because our Branch is so organised, that such matters are being discussed by us all the year round at our district meetings ; and 3. Because the few hours you have here may be much better spent in enjoying the sea-breeze. Nevertheless, that I may not be open to the reproach of not making any attempt to advance professional knowledge, I will allude briefly to three subjects, which have made some impression on my mind.

Many invalids come to Brighton to convalesce (sometimes to die). Amongst such as come under my notice, one every now and then turns up who has been mercurialised, and that for non-specific disease. It is against the perpetuation of such a mistake that I wish before this considerable assemblage of medical men to protest. Of course, in common with all the rest of you who have attained to middle life, I was trained by my teachers to consider mercurialisation as indispensable in the treatment of all acute inflammations. The classical lectures of Dr. Watson forcibly impressed this upon us, and, in equally powerful and elegant language, Dr. Latham's clinical lectures made it a *sine quâ non* ; but these were about the last physicians of celebrity who so taught. About fifteen years back, Professor Bennett of Edinburgh and the late Dr. Todd of London both taught and published the uselessness and the banefulness of this treatment, in a manner that could not be refuted. Dr. Habershon and the late Dr. Tanner (a pupil of Todd's) followed with valuable publications in the same direction ; and now, I suppose all our leading physicians and surgeons are unanimous on the subject. Sir Thomas Watson himself has lived to acknowledge its soundness likewise. How is it, then, that some men still adhere to this old-fashioned and injurious practice ? Four-and-twenty years ago, on account of a deep-seated affection of the eye, caused by overuse of books and microscope, I was treated by a famous oculist (Mr. Dalrymple) with a prolonged course of mercury, which seemed to render my eye worse instead of better, and certainly grievously impaired my general health. Consequently I became a ready disciple of Bennett and Todd, and ever since that time I have entirely abandoned the use of mercury in all inflammatory disorders, whatsoever organs might be affected ; and, I may add, with an immensely more satisfactory result than previously. The cure of the disease has been surer and quicker, and the dreadful *anæmia* and prolonged debility, consequent on a long mercurial course, have been avoided. So recently as in the penultimate number of our JOURNAL, a gentleman narrates a case of general paralysis in a man, consequent on an injury to the head, which he says he "treated with mercury until the system was affected". On what grounds, I cannot understand.

I hope that you have been, or will be, interested in the collection of instruments. Thirty years ago, a reliable galvanic instrument was scarcely procurable, and the knowledge of how to use it was, perhaps, rarer. The instruments in the adjoining room fairly represent, I think, the apparatus of modern electro-therapeutics, save the absence of a plate or cylindrical machine for generating *frictional* (or Franklinic) electricity ; but not many private medical men need that form of instrument. You may also perceive that there is no specimen of the magneto-electric machine, turned by a winch or by clockwork, which has been largely imported from America of late years, and sold in this country. They are being superseded by the Volta-magnetic machines, now supplied by all the makers, of such superior workmanship as to admit of their currents being delivered and graduated with excessive nicety. In addition to the last mentioned, most of us should also possess one form at least of

* In leaving the Chair, Mr. Garraway had said that "the prosperity of the Branch was mainly due to the zeal and energy of Mr. Hodgson".

the voltaic (galvanic, or "constant current") instrument, as it possesses therapeutical properties which the volta-magnetic does not. Excellent guide-books on this subject have been published by Dr. Russell Reynolds and Dr. Tibbits, and a larger treatise by Dr. Althaus. The medical staff of the National Hospital for Paralysis, in Queen Square, London, graciously invite members of the profession to visit their electrical room, which I can assure you, from having repeatedly availed myself of it, is worth your doing. When I state that by one or other form of electricity you may stimulate or soothe either nerve or muscle, restore lost voluntary movement, relieve pain, heighten flagging temperature, recall sensation, coagulate the blood, dissolve or slowly cause the absorption of tumours, increase the secretions, promote nutrition, or cauterise and destroy, I need not make any excuse for bringing this subject so prominently forward.

Of the instruments for treating diseases of the ear I will not say much, as I am afraid that not many of you will care for such a speciality. And yet they illustrate how that intricate organ has of late been unravelled, as it were, and its labyrinth and bony recesses made to yield up their intricacies. By the combined exertions of English, Continental, and American aurists within the last comparatively few years, great advance has been made in the pathology and diagnosis of aural disease, and its successful treatment has therefore correspondingly advanced. The galvanic instrument on that table is on the Daniell-Muirhead plan, and yields the most gentle and constant current procurable. Consequently it is well suited for aural application. It was made by Mr. Pickard, a mechanician at our railway works. It is time I should speak of ourselves—the Association.

Our Executive Council's report of the affairs of this branch during the past year will be read to you presently; but I cannot refrain from anticipating it with a word or two—mainly of congratulation. The good work which Dr. Parsons is well known to have done for East Kent district for several years, he is now repeating on a larger scale as honorary secretary and treasurer to the Branch. The Branch, therefore, continues to prosper. Six summers back, it numbered two hundred and fifty-five; now they are nearly as many again, viz., three hundred and seventy. Our Branch stands third in respect of numbers. The Metropolitan Counties Branch having six hundred and five members, and the Lancashire and Cheshire Branch four hundred and seventy. The funds of the Branch also accumulate. The balance in hand, six years since, was £35 odd; now it is £80, within a few shillings. I advert to the last point, because it will be for you to determine at this meeting whether this balance shall be diminished, and, if so, how; whether, by lowering our present annual subscription of four shillings, we shall gradually draw on this balance, and so use it for the purposes for which it has been subscribed; or whether a gift shall be made from it to some charity, especially the British Medical Benevolent Association. To solve this question to the general satisfaction of the Branch, will require your best judgment.

The parent Association has latterly progressed very remarkably in all ways. The recent change in the *locale* of the secretary from Birmingham to the office in London, where the main business of the Association is done, and the requirement that the whole of that officer's time should be devoted to the Association, have worked such a wholesome change that this year, for the first time since the death of Sir Charles Hastings the former treasurer, about eight years ago, the Committee of Council have the satisfaction of being able to state that the Association is not in debt to its printer. Moreover, there is every prospect that this sound financial condition will continue to prevail, and result in a handsome balance in hand annually, available for the prosecution of scientific research. The present number of members is 5,700, resident not only in all parts of the United Kingdom, but in nearly all countries, and we are united by our own weekly journal, which is so ably contributed to and edited, as to be in the van of medical journalism. What a source of power is here! The British Government is aware of it. The army, navy, and the Poor-law service are all getting to know it. The possession and the wielding of this power have a responsibility attached, which we must never forget either collectively or individually. Indeed, we are united in a calling most noble, not to say divine. This being so, how sad the reflection—that is sometimes forced on one by a careless observation in regard to what our future will be. But of our future we need have no doubt if we follow in the footsteps of our Lord, who went about healing the sick. Would that the time for scientific men to be sceptics were gone by! Apart from revelation, it seems hard to suppose that after practising this high vocation, and enjoying these lifelong fellowships, we are to die like dogs, and be no more seen. But, my brethren, we know that such is not to be our end. Our calling, indeed (though noble it be), is only for time; but our brotherhood, if we will, and God helping us, may attain to a higher sort, yea, it may become hallowed and blessed and endure through all eternity.

MEDICAL AFFAIRS:

Being the President's Address, delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Northern Branch, June 30th, 1874.

By ANDREW LEGAT, M.D., South Shields.

GENTLEMEN,—You have been pleased to elect me to the high position of President of this the Northern Branch of the British Medical Association for the coming year.

The honour thus conferred upon me is, I hope, rightly appreciated, and if thanks, genuine and sincere, be any adequate return, I tender them to you most gratefully. I have accepted the chair from a sense of duty rather than of fitness; for, although my best efforts to further the interests and success of the Branch are placed at your service, a knowledge of my own unworthiness stands prominently before me, and causes me to fear that my shortcomings are more likely to occupy the foreground. I, therefore, beg that the kindness you have shown in placing me here may be extended to me in the discharge of my duties, and that I may rely on your generous support in my endeavour to sustain, so far as I can, the dignity of the office. I feel that I labour under a disadvantage of no ordinary character in following so closely your late excellent President, Dr. Heath, who occupies so distinguished a position as a surgeon in Newcastle and neighbourhood. Other men also, highly gifted, and with large opportunities within their reach, have gone before me, and have made it a somewhat difficult task to follow in their footsteps; and, when I think of them, my thoughts revert in sadness to the memory of one who will no more grace these meetings with his genial presence, interest us with his eloquent narratives, nor aid us in our anxieties and difficulties with his sound and matured professional experience. We are all painfully sensible that a dark shadow rests upon us now, through the recent and wholly unexpected death of our distinguished and esteemed friend Dr. Charlton.

"Leaves have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath,
And stars to set; but all—
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, oh Death!"

After having received a highly liberal education, he turned his attention at the usual age to the study of medicine, and graduated at the University of Edinburgh in 1836. His devotion to his profession, his scholarly attainments and pleasing address, soon made him a favourite practitioner in Newcastle and neighbourhood. The death of Dr. Headlam, the removal of Dr. Cargill from Newcastle, and, at a later period, the death of Dr. White, left Dr. Charlton in possession of a very large field of consulting practice. No man worked with greater freshness and spirit than he did. When we met last in consultation, about two months ago, although the work he referred to as being before him that day (and which, I have no doubt, was but a repetition of the work of most other days) seemed arduous, requiring both physical toil and mental strain, yet the countenance and the step betokened health of no common kind. But the enemy was insidiously at work, and, after two days' illness in the middle of May, with his harness still on him and in the flood-tide of his professional reputation, he was snatched from us at the comparatively early age of 59.

It may seem almost superfluous, among those who knew him so well, for me to dwell at length on his merits. It was my privilege and pleasure, however, to know him for upwards of twenty years, during which time I had much pleasant and advantageous intercourse with him; and I feel constrained to say that I found in him ever the same warm friend and safe adviser. His highly cultivated intellect and well digested store of professional knowledge, his gentle and considerate demeanour by the bedside, his accuracy of diagnosis and suggestiveness as to treatment, his invariable courtesy to his professional brethren, his unflinching punctuality in his engagements, and observance of those rules which ought to guide all who hope to tread successfully in the higher walks of his profession, were the chief points in his character which made up in him the accomplished and desirable consultant. They gained for him, no doubt, his widely extended reputation and practice in that capacity.

"The prime qualifications of a physician", writes Dr. John Brown, in his *Horæ Subsecivæ*, "may be summed up in the words *capax, perspicax, sagax, efficax*. *Capax*, then, must be room to receive, and arrange, and keep knowledge; *Perspicax*, senses and perceptions keen, accurate, and immediate, to bring in materials from all sensible things; *sagax*, a central power of knowing what is what, and what it is worth, of choosing and rejecting, of judging; and, finally, *efficax*, the will and the way, the power to turn all the other three—capacity, perspicacity, sagacity—to account in the performance of the thing in hand, and thus rendering back to the outer world, in a new and useful form, what you had received from it. These are the intellectual qualities which make up the physician, without any one of which he would be *manus*, and