

deal with, as I am not aware of any standard by which it can be determined when it is the proper time for such an institution to be established. However, to argue these points would be now unprofitable, and whatever opinions we may have held or may yet hold upon them I am confident that one great result of the establishment of the School of Medicine has been to promote immensely accuracy and thoroughness in the work of those who have been brought in contact with it. It is impossible to be a teacher without being a learner also, and the conscientious discharge of tutorial duties thus becomes a valuable means of continuing a progressive medical education that is only too apt to lapse at the close of our student days. It may be said that this can only be a matter which affects those immediately concerned, but I take it that by thus inculcating and fostering a spirit of accuracy and enquiry the benefits of a Medical School may extend far beyond the radius of those directly connected with it, may, by promoting an active and healthy *esprit de corps*, serve as a rallying point for all that is best in the profession at large. It has happened to me to visit many hospitals in many lands, and I have never failed to be struck with the superior accuracy and thoroughness of the work performed in hospitals to which schools are attached as compared with those in which the medical staff discharged their duties without the incentive for study and observation engendered by the necessity for teaching sound and accurate matter, and without the wholesome stimulus supplied by the presence of students who soon become more than potential critics of their teachers' work. To those who only see hopelessness in the chance of a successful career for some of our graduates I would answer in terms that I have used elsewhere that it may be that the struggle for existence is as severe in our profession as it is in others. All cannot succeed in it, and many will be disappointed, but there is this immense countervailing advantage, namely, that no training can be suggested which offers a better or even so good a training of the mind, such a technical education in the best sense of the term of eye, ear, hand, and muscles, in short, such an all-round equipment both of suggestive and useful knowledge, and of the means and methods of acquiring more of it than does the curriculum of our own profession. Surely as a means of education alone a medical education is worth a great deal, not to speak of the intrinsic value of the facts acquired or of their usefulness and adaptability in all climes and countries. The Medical Acts of the colony which regulate the status and practice of our profession are effete instruments which reduce to a minimum the obstacles which might be raised against the deception of a confiding public by the brazen effrontery and colossal ignorance of every quack and charlatan who may sojourn in the land. In spite of the considerable persistence and general unanimity with which the profession has sought for fresh legislation, based on the admittedly fair and reasonable grounds that while we do not desire to restrict people in their free choice of an attendant we desire and claim that the law should at least make it possible for ignorant and thoughtless people to distinguish between the qualified and unqualified practitioner, if it desires to do so, and guard themselves if they choose from the dangers of unqualified practice. There is nothing now to prevent the holders of certain degrees issued after a notoriously insufficient course of study from being admitted here on the official roll of qualified practitioners who would not be admitted in any of the other colonies. There exists no means of striking off our register the name of any member of our profession who has been found guilty of disgraceful or criminal conduct, even in cases where the names have been struck off the rolls of those bodies who originally granted the qualifications. It is still not considered necessary that death certificates should be signed by qualified practitioners. Policemen and other unqualified persons become public vaccinators. This is not the language of hyperbole, but the above statements represent the actual condition of the law of South Australia in relation to the medical profession; and surely if we have much on which we may congratulate ourselves it is not encouraging that no honest effort of our own has been able to overcome the amazing solicitude of some of our legislators for unqualified practitioners and quacks. If I may venture to speak a word of unfavourable criticism it is to express my concurrence with the regrets that have been expressed in this room that the work done for our Society is almost wholly surgical; scarcely ever do we have a purely medical paper. The very obvious and brilliant results of surgical procedures are no doubt as fascinating to us now as they were in the days of our

hospital studentship, but it is nevertheless impossible for us to not admit that the great progress of our profession in the future will be based on lines that fall within the category of the physician rather than of the surgeon. The very idea of a preventive medicine has risen into a conspicuous prominence that was unheard of not long ago. Nearly all these matters relating to the origin and causation of the class of

diseases we term infectious, which occupy so much of our thoughts at the present day, come within the scope of the physician rather than the surgeon. And if the star of surgery has been rising rapidly of late years I have no hesitation in saying that the triumphant marches of our profession in the immediate future will be made by the physician, and will have relation not only to the origin but to the prevention of several of the most fatal scourges of humanity, the results of which will surpass our most sanguine expectations. After speaking of the advantages which would accrue from the establishment of a combined Australian medical journal, the doctor continued — I have briefly touched upon what I must consider the most important factors in our medical life in South Australia, the hospitals, the schools, and our Society all of them being closely related in their effects, and all co-ordinated by the *esprit de corps* which characterizes our craft. If what I have said be true it follows that the welfare of all three should be an object of regard and solicitude, not only to those immediately concerned with them, but to every right-thinking member of the profession in the country. Change is assuredly not always progress, and the efforts towards progress often involve mistakes. Those, on the other hand, who do not advance, for fear of making mistakes and of being before their time, will probably never advance at all; and I hope I only express the sentiments of a large majority of our profession in thinking that the changes and movements of recent years have in the aggregate constituted great steps in advance towards a better comprehension of the duties, the responsibilities, and the science of our calling, and that they have affected not the few but the many.

Register July 1st 1889.

DOCTORS AND QUACKS.

In delivering his address as retiring President of the South Australian Branch of the British Medical Association, Dr. Stirling wisely avoided such purely scientific topics as would be of interest only to scientific men. Upon the great day of the Society—the day on which the public is admitted within the *sanctum sanctorum*—it is well for the High Priest to speak of things intelligible to the common people. High questions of treatment and precise details of the progress of cases towards death or recovery find their proper place in the business meetings of the Society or in the columns of that excellent, but gruesome, monthly, the *Australasian Medical Gazette*. There are always some things upon which the lay mind can keep almost in step with the medical mind, and it is upon these or some of them that a judicious speaker will address the outside audience. Dr. Stirling on Thursday spoke mainly about three such things—the progress of the Medical School, the management of the Hospital, and the question of unregistered practitioners. The greatest of these is undoubtedly the last. Upon the first subject Dr. Stirling cannot but be a biased critic. Professionally he is largely interested in the school—he is one of the leading teachers in it, and he is, moreover, one of those to whose agitation and influence the school owes its existence. It would be truistic to point out that, this being so, his judgment should be received with caution. But at least everybody who knows anything about the school and about its authors will be ready to acquiesce in the modest eulogium indulged in by Dr. Stirling “that it has been the desire of those connected with the school to make it as creditable as possible.”