

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

June 28
1910

Opening of the Nottingham Society's New Club and Library.

BENEFITS OF CO-OPERATION.

June 28

The doctors of Nottingham and the district, who have organised themselves under the auspices of the Nottingham Medico-Chirurgical Society, opened their new club and library last evening at 64, St. James's-street. The premises are extremely convenient and comfortable, and should supply the need which has been very urgently felt during the many years the Board-room at the Dispensary has been the society's meeting-place. The society has now a membership of over 180, with Dr. A. Fulton as its president, and Dr. H. B. Tawse and Dr. F. H. Jacob as its secretaries. Peculiar interest was invested in the opening ceremony last night by the visit of Professor Osler, of Oxford University.

Dr. Fulton, who presided over a very large attendance, gave a brief outline of the history of the society and of its predecessor, the Nottingham Book Club. The first record of the latter, he said, was in 1823, when it was founded under the presidency of a Dr. Howitt. For a time the members met at each other's houses, afterwards became established at the old "Journal" Office on Long-row, and in 1885 moved to the Dispensary. It was then that its name was changed to what the president described as its present "jaw-breaking" style—the Nottingham Medico-Chirurgical Society. Dr. Fulton quoted one rather interesting record of 1853, which showed that old Dr. Ransom gave notice of motion—"that in the opinion of this society canvassing for patients through the medium of the public Press shall be considered contrary to the dignity of the profession." The motion evidently encountered considerable opposition, for Dr. Ransom withdrew it.

It was in 1883 that the present society, after a period of "suspended animation," was resuscitated, and from then until this year its headquarters were at the Dispensary Board-room. "Board-rooms," said the president, "are usually as cold and cheerless as the charity they administer."

In formally declaring the new premises open, Professor Osler remarked that in connection with such an enterprise as this everything they did benefited not simply themselves and their profession, but the public, and they should go to the public and ask their support in this effort to establish and endow a home for the medical profession.

On behalf of the society, Professor Osler then presented to Mr. Smithurst, who for 57 years was their librarian, a piece of silver as a mark of recognition of his long and faithful service.

In his address to the members of the society, Professor Osler urged that no body of men needed more than the medical profession the benefits of co-operation, and yet they were, he said, the most difficult units to unite. Once separated from their college they lived isolated lives, and many of them lives of great loneliness. There was a profession which could not be placed on a commercial basis. The lawyer had to consider his head and his pocket; the parson his head and his heart (he had no pocket—laughter); while with the doctor head and heart and pocket were all engaged. In every part of their profession the amount of unremunerative work was enormous. Apart from what was done in the hospitals, the specialist or the consulting or general practitioner constantly had his heart involved, and his "loans to the Lord" amounted to a generous sum each year.

Hints by Professor Osler.

Pointing out the need for better organisation of the profession in Nottingham, Professor Osler said that as a basis they had two institutions—the society and the General Hospital. Around these the chief interest of the local profession centred. Singly or in cliques its members had fallen apart, covered with the ashes of discord, jealousy, and faction. That society would promote unity and friendship, and would add dignity to the profession. Much depended upon the attitude of the seniors. Amongst

practitioner constantly had his heart involved, and his "loans to the Lord" amounted to a generous sum each year.

CUSA17/109.94 212

Hints by Professor Osler.

Pointing out the need for better organisation of the profession in Nottingham, Professor Osler said that as a basis they had two institutions—that society and the General Hospital. Around these the chief interest of the local profession centred. Singly or in cliques its members had fallen apart, covered with the ashes of discord, jealousy, and faction. That society would promote unity and friendship, and would add dignity to the profession. Much depended upon the attitude of the seniors. Amongst Professor Osler's hints were: "Listen to no tales. Shut it up more particularly if told by a patient. Be quite sure that the same tale told of 'Dr. Smith' will be told about you to 'Dr. Brown.' Tell no tales yourself, though you may be itching to do so. Believe no tale even though you know it to be true."

The General Hospital, said the Professor, ought to be made of the greatest advantage to the medical profession. First-class consulting physicians, surgeons, and specialists could not grow up in any community without a first-class hospital, and the profession needed these men just as much as the public. He would like to see the Nottingham General Hospital a consulting centre for the profession of the whole district—a place where, when in difficulty, a man might turn for advice and counsel. They should feel when they had a bad case that it was to the hospital not that they should "send" the patient, but that they should "take" the case. The Hospital should be a genuine post-graduate school in all its departments. A doctor without post-graduate work was stale in five years, was in the rut in ten years, and in twenty years so deep that he could never hope to get out.

Professor Osler paid a warm tribute to the Nottingham General Hospital, which for a century had kept a good reputation.

On the proposition of Dr. F. R. Mutch, seconded by Dr. Cattle, Professor Osler was cordially thanked for his address.