

"Men must be taught as though you taught them not,
And things unknown proposed as things forgot."

In brief, the golden rule was the rule of conduct in consultations.

In those good old days the crowning disgrace of latter day consultations was utterly impossible. A man who then proposed in consultation (as has been openly advocated in a journal published in St. Louis, Mo., in the interest of the most absurd and irrational of all so called specialties, Abdominal Surgery and Gynecology, and as has been done, I am told, by at least two practitioners in our midst) that an operation should be performed by the consultant and a commission be extracted from the patient for the benefit of the practitioner referring the patient, would undoubtedly have been arraigned before a competent tribunal on a charge of conduct infamous in a professional respect; yet this line of conduct is now openly urged on the plea of equity and justice to the family physician. Truly the commercial spirit, the instinct of the tradesman has infected a once noble and honorable profession with a destructive, nay, a fatal virus.

Now I venture to group these two crying evils of our time—the overcrowding of the profession and its decadence in scholarship—together, because I believe the remedy for both is one and the same. Hear again what Mitchell Banks says upon the subject:

After referring to the failure of attempts to suppress quackery and illicit practice by legal process owing to technical quibbles and the sympathy of juries stimulated by the cry of oppression, and the inability of the General Medical Council to put down all the rascals in the profession, even if they sat all year round, he urged upon the attention of his hearers the expensiveness of the process, citing one case in which the attempt to secure legal conviction cost the profession £600 and accomplished nothing. He then directs his attention to the suggestion that the severity of the professional examinations should be increased, and on this point he says: "I can confidently affirm (from my experience in the General Medical Council and in the College of Surgeons) that it is not possible at present to add to the burden of examinations which the medical student has to bear without doing more harm than good.

You can go on, no doubt, adding subject to subject, and examination to examination, but by doing so you only drive the student into further and further cramming. His serious defect at present is that, owing to the eternal cramming to which he is compelled to have recourse in order to master his subjects he loses all power of thinking or reasoning for himself. He is being reduced to a mere grinding machine, which has to be stoked up with scientific pabulum.

"Well then, you ask, what is my remedy? My remedy consists simply in stiffening up the entrance examination. I hold that there ought to be a rough sieve applied at the very beginning, and that all who cannot get through this sieve should be cast on one side. As things stand at present any man who gets through an