

THE IRREPARABLE LOSS OF UNRECORDED EXPERIENCE.

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The history of the world is a record of experience. This record has been perpetuated in many ways—in architecture, by the Pyramids, and by vast ruins; in art, by Grecian sculpture and Roman paintings; in music, by the majestic compositions of the great masters; in traditions, songs, folk-lore, costumes and habits. But none of these can compare with the records made possible by the art of printing. Without a printed Bible, the spiritual world would be in a chaotic state. The historian has enabled many to live over again in imagination the lives of the great actors who have played their part, and have passed off the stage in the world's drama. The printing press has reared an imperishable treasure-house, in which are stored many of the richest and rarest gems of literature, science, art, music—in brief, a collection of the words and works of mankind.

If the printed page has done so much for the needs of the laymen, it has been equally generous in its service to the members of the so-called "learned professions." Without his books, the lawyer would be shorn of that strength which is so much in evidence when he wishes to establish his plea by referring to weighty precedents in the statutes. Who has been a witness or a spectator at court, and not noticed the impressive pose and exultant look of the learned counsel, as he hands up the marked paragraph to the judge! The physician, since his patients accept his statements without having to be verified, may say, if inclined to be cynical, that this act on the part of the lawyer is rather a reflection on his veracity. However this may be, custom seems to have sanctioned the procedure, and reference to the printed statutes constitutes a most important factor in law courts. But, much as law is indebted to the printed records of the past, the science and art of medicine is no less a debtor, and this brings up for discussion the vitally interesting question of the "Irreparable Loss of Unrecorded Medical Experience."

The subject is a very large one, and any discussion, in a brief article, must be limited to two or three phases of it. The following three have been chosen:

1. Value of the historical records of experience to medicine.
2. Value of recorded experience to the profession.
3. Value of recorded experience to the physician himself.