

Abstracts from Dr. Britton's Address.

PRESIDENT OF ONTARIO MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

THIS brings me to the subject to which, for a few minutes, I wish to direct your attention, viz., the present relationship of the profession to the public at large; and, as a pre-eminent factor thereof, the standing of the profession itself, viewed, as much as in me lies, from an impartial standpoint.

Not self-constituted as such, but in the very nature of things, he who enters upon a medical career is compelled by the peculiarity of his calling to recognize himself as a guardian of the common weal, prompted by instincts the loftiest and motives superior to mere selfishness or ardent longings for the accumulation of wealth. The people claim, and rightly so, the devotion of his unflagging energy to the physical welfare of those to whose necessities he is called upon to minister. Not this alone, but his avocation stands upon a still higher plane than the relationship to the individual; the world at large is the scientific physician's parish, and its defects the supreme object of his best thought: never satisfied with what has already been accomplished by others, his leisure moments are occupied in striving to solve the problem of nature: often unsuccessful, but never without that reward which invariably follows the pursuit of the true and abiding. A Jenner, a Simpson, a Koch or a Lister once in a while towers aloft as some snow-capped Alp in the light of the rising sun invested with all the majesty of a noble creation. These intellectual giants few can ever hope to emulate; but, from the history of their lifework, the lowest and most obscure may draw such inspiration as glorifies labor with high ideals and fills the heart with burning desire for the good of others. Community of interest so intimately links the profession and the laity that it seems not unbefitting for me to dwell for a little on some features of human-life family, social and educational, as we see them in this Province of Ontario; and, in so doing, if I should indulge in a little criticism, do not for a moment imagine that I am posing as the stalwart exponent of some great reformation. Much that I shall say has already been better said and written, my object being repetition for the sake of added testimony and emphasis.

During the past two or three generations there has been in progress amongst our people a certain kind of questionable evolution—intellectual development somewhat out of proportion to physical force and endurance. Our grandparents were a hardy stock, well furnished physically for coping with life's difficulties. In those early days of