

gress,—shows unmistakably the ever-increasing tendency to drift off into smaller and smaller channels of medical thought and research. In the infancy of medicine ailments of all parts of the body were attempted to be brought within the scope and intellectual view of the professor or practiser of the healing art; and in Great Britain, until some years ago, the duties of even physician and surgeon were commonly united in the same person. But when they became separate, the physician alone took the title of doctor; while the latter declined any other appellation than that of Mr. In this country, notwithstanding the attempt in some places at division and separation, the generic is common to all. And so pleased are some by slight gratifications, and the title of doctor so relished, that it, with the uberosus M.D. are found, the former heading the more formal documents; the latter constantly met with at the foot of letters, private and friendly notes, legal documents, notes of hand, and perhaps, for aught I know, clothed with the appellation of honor and dignity making love to Nedar's daughter Helena: and if Demetrius why not John Smith, M.D.?

But this distinctive appellation—this sign of difference, if not always of eminence or even of dignity, will not long be equal to the purpose for which it was created. If English surgeons denied themselves, or were denied, the distinguishing mark of their calling, thinking it belonged more by right to the *medicæ doctor*, why should it be appropriated by scientists deeply learned, forsooth, in the knowledge of a bicuspid? How will it be with him who deals but with the, let us say, the epiglottis, the epidermis, or the epididymis? Were it as it might be, and as it should be, the *educated* man possessed of a sufficient stock of general information, following the bent and inclination of his mind into some channel, however shallow, however narrow, however intricate; tracing it step by step to a higher and a higher elevation till it seemed to resolve itself into the mist which was its source, we could only approve and admire. But it would appear as if every portage or resting place in every current that could afford a foothold was seized upon as vantage ground where gain and profit could be best secured. And like another Miltonic character:

As in a cloudy chair ascending rides Audacious.

For, as Sir James Paget well observes, "the fault of specialism was not in narrowness but in the

shallowness and the belief in self-sufficiency with which it was apt to be associated."

It is greatly to be deplored that the *materia medica*, that commissariat of the physician, was not so organized and complete as to permit a special applicability to a special organ, or to a special part of an organ, without passing through the general system, every part of which had already been parcelled out and ceded to others—and it might be in legal phraseology added, "with the limits of which he was content, having seen and viewed the same." But when it is borne in mind that no one part can be reached without traversing another, and to the specialist perhaps a foreign and an unknown part, the difficulties in the way of the specialist are greatly increased. Holman the great endeavored to take a short cut to one of the organs, and with his pad to disperse and dissipate the "blood, choler, phlegm and melancholy" that hovered round the liver. But he forgot the muscles which belonged to one; and the ribs which had been ceded to a second; and the skin and its contained nerves and blood-vessels which belonged to many a dozen more. But the rape was made nevertheless, and with pecuniary advantage. A Scotch judge many years ago, it is related, had before him a malefactor who had stabbed a soldier. The judge, brimful of goodness, could find an excuse for what to us would appear the chief act in the drama, the stabbing of the *person* of the soldier; not so, however, with our Dogberry, who was prepared to receive excuses for that, to him, the minor offence, the mere stabbing of the person; but what he could not, and would not, admit excuse for, was the culprit's having propelled the "lethal weapon through the belt which the soldier wore which was His Majesty's." It must not be supposed that in my divergence I am convergent towards specialists (if I may be permitted for the nonce to coin a word), who, whether from choice or from aptitude, choose to confine themselves within one of the more limited divisions of medical science, while having a *fair general* knowledge of what is collateral and interdependent. Indeed it must be evident to us all that a division of labor has become necessary; and that it is impossible for one engaged in the general work of his profession to materially advance any section of it. But methinks the interests of the public generally would be better served by the intelligent general practitioner, who had familiarized himself with the general working of the economy, than by the specialists who