

THE MEDICAL SCIENCE OF THE ANCIENT GREEKS.

GENTLEMEN GRADUATES, When I was asked to address you on the occasion of this Convocation I had great doubts as to whether I should undertake anything so dangerous as to speak to a well-trained body of men on their own subject about which I know so little. Yet I felt also it would be better that anything I had to say should bear as closely as possible on those professional studies which you have just completed, as far, at least, as this University is concerned. I reflected also that after all there was, perhaps, one side of your subject about which I might venture to say something, although I am well aware that even on that side my knowledge is very imperfect and wanting in the professional touch. The side I mean is the history, or more properly the ancient history of medical science, and I propose to read to you to-day a paper on the great Greek physician, Hippocrates, usually styled the Father of Medicine. That is going a long way back, you will think, in the history of your profession for a subject, and some of you may be of opinion that there is not much to be learned from the works of a physician who lived 2,300 years ago. That depends, however, on the way in which you study them. You may not find much that adds to your scientific knowledge of medicine in the strict sense of the words. But you may still get many valuable hints from Hippocrates for the study of disease by natural methods of observation, you will still find something to help you in the sound methods of investigation which he employed, and there certainly ought to be something inspiring for you in becoming acquainted with the spirit in which the greatest of the ancient physicians laboured in his profession.

From another point of view, also, it is a very proper thing for a member of a learned profession to be acquainted with the history of his subject and the labours of the great men who laid its foundations and helped to maintain its reputation