

among preventable maladies, to occupy our labors ; but there are two reasons which explain the relative numerical increase in the profession in spite of the great decrease in the number of certain diseases. The development of specialties has given employment to many extra men who now do much of the work of the old family practitioner, and again people employ doctors more frequently, and so give occupation to many more than formerly.

It cannot be denied that we have learned more rapidly how to prevent than how to cure diseases, but with a definite outline of our ignorance we no longer live now in a fool's paradise, and fondly imagine that in all cases we control the issues of life and death with our pills and potions. It took the profession many generations to learn that fevers ran their course, influenced very little, if at all, by drugs, and the £60 which old Dover complained were spent in medicine in a case of ordinary fever about the middle of the last century is now better expended on a trained nurse, with infinitely less risk, and with infinitely greater comfort to the patient. Of the difficulties inherent in the art, not one is so serious as this which relates to the cure of disease by drugs.

One of the chief reasons for this uncertainty is the increasing variability in the manifestations of any one disease. As no two faces, so no two cases are alike in all respects, and unfortunately it is not only the disease itself which is so varied, but the subjects themselves have peculiarities which modify its action.

With the diminished reliance upon drugs, there has been a return with profit to the older measures of diet, exercise, baths, and frictions, the remedies with which the Bythenian Asclepiades doctored the Romans so successfully in the first century. Though used less frequently, medicines are now given with infinitely greater skill ; we know better their indications and contradictions, and we may safely say (reversing the proportion of fifty years ago) that for one damaged by dosing, one hundred are saved.

The physician needs a clear head and a kind heart ; his work is arduous and complex, requiring the exercise of the very highest faculties of the mind, while constantly appealing to the emotions and finer feelings. At no time has his influence been more potent, at no time has he been so powerful a factor for good ; and as it is one of the highest possible duties of a great University to fit men for this calling, so it will be your highest mission, students of medicine, to carry on the never-ending warfare against disease and death, better equipped, abler men than your predecessors, but animated with their spirit and sustained by their hopes, " for the hope of every creature is the banner that we bear."