

Dominion Medical Monthly

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ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

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INFLUENCE OF THE MIND UPON THE BODY.*

BY DR. BAYARD, ST. JOHN, N.B.

GENTLEMEN,—Having been requested, and having *promised* to deliver the address on Medicine before the present meeting of the Canadian Medical Association, I am reminded of the story of a trapper in the far west, who, when relating his adventure with a beaver, declared that he had chased the animal so hard that he ran up a tree. When told that beavers did not run up trees, he scratched his head, thought a little, and made answer that he guessed the beaver had got to do it that time. Now, having promised, I am very much in the position of that beaver—I have to get up that tree. Should I climb ungracefully or “stumble by the way,” I hope due allowance will be made for one who is not much accustomed to tree climbing.

I have chosen for my subject, “The influence of the mind upon the body,” not with the view of placing before you anything new, but in the hope of reminding you of “a power for good and for evil,” which, I think, does not receive at the hands of the profession that consideration which it deserves. I am supported in this statement by Sir B. W. Richardson, who says, “It is remarkable how very little the question of the origin of physical diseases from mental shock or influence has been studied.”

In commencing this inquiry, I need only to remind you that the foundation of the “nervous system” occupies and fills the skull and the spinal canal, namely, the cerebrum, the cerebellum, the medulla oblongata and the spinal cord. The cerebrum and the cerebellum are divided into two hemispheres, and proceeding from them for about an inch in length we have the medulla oblongata, and from it the spinal cord.

*Address on Medicine, read at meeting of Canadian Medical Association, St. John, N.B.