being his only serious rival. But even when most fully engaged as a consultant, with much of his time spent in the train rushing here and there within a radius of one hundred miles of Manchester, his chiefest interest and his main source of relaxation lay in his laboratory.

In the middle of the century, laboratories of physiological and pathological chemistry were unknown in connection with British medical schools, and, the trend of Roberts' investigations being chemical, he was forced to establish his laboratory at his own house, nor when, later, the ample laboratory accommodation at the Owens College was at his disposal, would he take advantage of it. Thus his long series of studies upon the digestive ferments and artificial foods, upon uric acid and the urates, gravel and gout, were made in his own house during the course of a singularly active professional life; and, what is more, each laborious step in the preparation, weighing, and measuring of his material, was performed by himself, unaided by any assistant. "Far and few" are the men possessing the energy and tenacity to establish such a record. There is, 'it is true, a rising young New York physician, known to many in Montreal, who, upon the topmost storey of one of the Madison Avenue palaces, keeps and feeds and ultimately analyses a select herd of swine. Sir William Roberts' little den was of an earlier age and could not compare with the New York installation; if I mistake not the largest animals ever kept there were oysters.* That New York physician promises, by the present importance of his researches, to be a second Sir William Roberts, nay, it may be a greater than he, but, granting this case, it still remains wonderfully rare to find the busy and popular consultant making time to prosecute, singlehanded, subtle researches in organic chemistry.

As for the published work of Sir William Roberts, a few words must here be said. That by which he made his mark was his well-known *Practical Treatise upon Urinary and Renal Diseases*, of which at least four editions have been published since 1865. This was, and, I think, remains, the most original and most thorough discussion of the subject in our language. To Roberts we owe the simple and curiously accurate yeast fermentation test for diabetic urine, as well as the basis of our knowledge of the action of solvents upon urinary calculi, together with observations upon the ultimate relationship of uric acid, the urates, and the quadriurates, or, more exactly, between the forms in which uric acid presents itself in the blood, the urine and the tissues,* observations as valuable as they are minute and painstaking, which are of elementary importance for the comprehension of both gravel and gout. This

^{*} This, in the course of his studies upon foodstuffs, in which he proved that oysters—live oysters—are the most digestible of food in that, their liver or gastric ferments continuing active in the human stomach, they accommodatingly digest themselves. Thus, gastronomically speaking, it is a crime to cook the oyster.

⁺ Croonian Lectures, 1892.