

to group and to combine, gives prominence to what may be unimportant; and fails to recognize what is of value. It is with medicine as with politics. We have two classes of politicians in this country; the one, versed in the science and art of government, and in the ethics which concern human actions, and capable of an abstract view of the contentions of parties; the other, a mere transcript or copy of the last editorial in the journal of his party,—unequal to methodically arranging or digesting facts, or to comprehending the laws and principles which govern party and party issues. To which class of mind—apart altogether from party—would you most willingly entrust the guidance of the concerns of state? I anticipate your answer. To which, in like manner, should be entrusted, not party issues, nor the interests of a party, but what is of far greater moment,—the health and life of the people,—but to intellects formed and disciplined for the perception of those phenomena, the causes of which, even to the best trained minds, are far from obvious or indubitable?

I have ventured to say this much, even at the risk of fatiguing you, in favour of a liberal education, for the time is come when physicians can no longer hope to retain their position in society without that perfection of the intellect which is the result of education; which, as Newman says, "is the clear, calm, accurate vision and comprehension of all things, as far as the finite mind can embrace them, each in its place, and with its own characteristics upon it." In the days of Samuel Johnson the physician was admitted to be the most cultivated and learned in any society. In how many countries in the world could that be said with truth to-day? Could it in Canada? There are some countries where the physician is still among the best educated gentlemen, and his social status is regulated accordingly. Notably is this the case in Ireland. Dr. Stokes, with whom I conversed on this subject in 1867, and to whom I remarked the high tone; the gentlemanly bearing; the friendly relation one to another; the easy, well-bred familiarity which characterized the members of the profession in Dublin, said: "It is easily explained; nearly all our graduates in medicine are graduates in Arts. Of the last 98 all had degrees in Arts." There are some other countries where the same condition obtains.

If the cultivation of the intellect was necessary when men were content to observe, and to base practice on observation, how much more necessary is it now, when the most acute logical minds are sorely puzzled between what are claimed to be scientific truths, and what are bold reckless assumptions.

SCIENTIFIC ASSUMPTION.

This is unquestionably the age of bold, reck-

less, I had almost said impudent, assumption in matters of science. While it is generally conceded that our "ideas of the intrinsic elements that constitute beings in the physical as well as in the moral order are very limited and imperfect," we now boldly assume the mutual dependence of things upon each other when we could logically establish nothing more than co-existence or succession; as if co-existence or succession necessarily implies connection or relation.* Look at the writings of a Spencer and a Huxley for illustrations of what I state. They, with Tyndall, have occupied a larger share of our thoughts than have many hundred more scientific writers who preceded and accompanied them. Yet what but bold assumption and word painting have we gleaned from the first of these; and a plausible but illogical mode of drawing conclusions.

SYNTHESIS IN MEDICINE.

While medical writers during the past and early part of the present centuries analysed, divided and separated diseases, and gave prominence to qualities and features by which one disease differs from, and is distinguished from another, (thereby clogging and oppressing the memory with varieties of dissimilitude,) there is a tendency now to synthesize, arrange and group in a more general way, diseases which may present some features of variance, but many of similarity and resemblance. Markedly is this the case in Cutaneous Medicine. Just one century ago, Shenck, of Vienna, completed his arrangement of cutaneous disorders. Willan wrote some twenty years later; and Hebra, also of Vienna, a half century still later. Compare the earlier with the later Vienna school, and we shall see that diseases are now classified on a sounder pathological and anatomical basis; that the skin is identified with "the rest of the organism;" and that the study of its diseases is clothed with a more scientific and philosophical character. And what are the advan-

* We have had those assumptions on a large scale in Tyndall's assertion recently, that the blue of the sky, as seen from the highest elevations, and above possibility of contamination with earth, is caused by vast numbers of foreign bodies floating in the atmosphere, so small as to be undistinguishable by a microscope magnifying 1500 diameters. Dollinger produced a magnifying power ten times that asked for, and assumed to be sufficient, but the minute germs still declined to exhibit themselves even to this powerful observer.

We have had the same thing on a small scale in our midst. We had in Canada predictions about the weather *many months in advance*, which were received by the thinking public with a smile of incredulity; but by the curious with avidity,—*Julce est errorari*. Had these been confined to foretelling the occurrence of the seasons, promising us much cold in winter, much heat in summer, many showers in spring time, and frost and falling leaves in autumn, we should have applauded so wise a reticence. But more definite prognostications were required by the public, and were given; still the heat came and went—and the "*froid vidait son sac*," with a wantonness and nonchalance regardless of the feelings and interest of Mr. Vennor.