

ON THE TEACHING OF ANATOMY TO MEDICAL STUDENTS.  
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ON THE OPENING OF THE COURSE IN  
ANATOMY AT THE MEDICAL FACULTY OF MCGILL UNIVERSITY,  
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BY

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After welcoming the new students and the old and giving some good advice, the lecturer then spoke on the subject of "Anatomy as a Science, and Anatomy for Medical Students." He said:—

The physiology of one vertebrate animal is exactly like that of another. Human physiology is not, one would say, specialised. But it is very different with anatomy—the anatomy of the human animal is very much specialised and his anatomy, for obvious reasons, has to be learned for medical and surgical purposes in a more exact and minute way than the anatomy of the lower animals.

Although approving of teaching anatomy from a morphological point of view when taught as a pure science, still, for medical students, with their multitudinous subjects and the yearly increasing amount of new work, a little morphology goes a long way. Of course it adds interest to the course, as does the introduction of comparative anatomy,—it clears up many obscure points and the reason of apparently useless structures is explained. For the more advanced students morphology has its uses. However, to the average students, who find it hard to keep up with the work gone over daily, the essentials only of anatomy should be taught, his memory should not be loaded with useless details, such as the anastomoses of arteries about joints, the minute description of such bones as the palate, wrist bones and many other points which will suggest themselves to the senior student.

It is argued that the learning of such things is a good discipline to the mind, but there are many more important things that may be dwelt on for that purpose. I always hold that the dissecting room is the place where a student should learn his anatomy. In the lecture room he is told how and what to learn, and now-a-days the lecture is more of a demonstration than anything else. The introduction of a beautifully dissected subject is useful to the student after the lecture, but to try and show a large class special points in the dissected subject is impossible. It is in fact a survival of the time when subjects were only obtained at long intervals, and when obtained, all the neighbouring medical