

## ADDRESS IN MEDICINE—CANADIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.\*

By R. E. McKECHNIE, M.D.

*Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen.*—In asking a member of the profession residing in the far West to deliver the address in medicine, I feel that a compliment has been paid, not so much to myself, as to the West. To demand that we, living so far away from the centres of learning, from the great teaching institutions of the East, should nevertheless be expected to keep ourselves abreast of the times and in touch with the latest discoveries, is surely expecting a great deal; and then to expect that one, living under such barren influences, should be able to give you an address equal to this occasion, containing some food for thought and pointing out the pathway of duty and practice, is to look still further for a miraculous manifestation. But the genius of the West is ever equal to all occasions. It has grown accustomed to the knowledge that the best wheat in the world grows in our North-West; that our forests can supply the hugest sticks of timber known to commerce; that our fisheries can supply the world with illimitable quantities of salmon, halibut and other delicacies; always the best, the hugest and the illimitable, ever the superlative. So it is not strange that a strong egotism has developed out here, sufficient even to accept this task, and hoping, but with misgivings, that its self-sufficiency may not suffer in the attempt. Personally, I feel that a great honor has been conferred on me, and I most sincerely thank the Association for its kindness, and trust that its confidence may not have been misplaced.

As to-day we seek to adapt treatment according to the cause of disease, so, looking back to the remotest ages, we find the human instinct groping along the same pathway. But in the early ages of the race science was unknown, and miracle was seen in every unexplainable phenomenon. Hence, disease was attributable to the wrath of a good being or the malice of an evil one, and treated accordingly. Among the ruder tribes the Medicine-man has ever held sway; but even in higher civilization we find that in Egypt the priests of Osiris and Isis claimed powers over disease; in Assyria, the priests of Gibil; in Greece, the priests of Aesculapius; in Judea, the priests of Jehovah. While these have ceased to exist with the decay of their respective religious systems, the ruder primitive tribes have persisted. They are found among the aboriginal tribes of Africa to-day, as also on this side of the Atlantic. Parkman,

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