

That he was a brilliant student is shown by the fact that in his undergraduate career he obtained the highest honours in Chemistry and Physiology for the B.A. degree of the University of London, the medal and exhibition in Chemistry for the first M.B. examination, and later, the gold medals in Physiology, Comparative Anatomy, and Medicine, of that university. Gaining his M.B. degree in 1853, he studied for some months in France and Germany—a somewhat unusual course for an English physician of those days. As a sequel was his intimate and unusual acquaintance with continental medical literature.

This very course, excellent as it was and explaining as it does his later successes, told on him both favorably and unfavorably. Just as his training was distinctive, so his modes of work and thought throughout life remained independent. It may be that the provincial physician, like the colonial, labours under singular difficulties in making his work known and appreciated at headquarters and thence reflexly throughout the length and breadth of the empire, but something is due to Roberts' voluntary independence and isolation that his sound and valuable researches did not more rapidly become integral parts of current medical knowledge. During the greater part of his career, he cared little about making himself and his results known among his confrères at society meetings in London and elsewhere, or in the medical press. So, also, though for close on thirty years he was an active teacher, I do not think that the ordinary student appealed to him or gained the fullest benefit from his lectures and clinics, which, rather, were to be appreciated—and were appreciated—by the best men of each year. As a consultant, however, he had always that to say or to advise which was apt and valuable, and so expressed as to linger long in the memory.

In 1854, he was appointed house-surgeon to the Manchester Royal Infirmary, and so remarkable an impression did he immediately make, that the following year, when he was but twenty-five years old, he, a comparative stranger, was elected without opposition a full physician on the staff—a circumstance almost unique in the history of so large an English hospital. That same year he was appointed lecturer on anatomy and physiology in the School of Medicine, and from 1855 to 1889 he remained in intimate connection with these two institutions, becoming eventually senior physician to the one and professor of medicine in the other. Other appointments he did not seek; nor, indeed, did he actively seek private practice: it came to him. His first ten years in Manchester were spent very largely in the hospital wards and in his laboratory, but the results of his long period of strenuous study and research led to his being surely recognized in the middle of the "sixties" as the leading physician in the North of England, a position which he retained for twenty years or more, Clifford Allbutt, in Leeds,