

fly in the stethoscope. An older hand might have heard the "murmurs"—perhaps with his ear at the wrong end of the stethoscope—but he certainly would not so artlessly have taken the patient into his confidence. We have known a "colored person" diagnosed offhand to be suffering from Addison's disease; and a dark spot, which subsequently proved to be amenable to simple treatment by soap and water, pronounced "at first thinking" to be melanotic sarcoma. Absurd mistakes are often due to nervousness rather than precipitancy. Students attending their first midwifery case, sometimes go astray in making the necessary examination. Shyness has made a young practitioner mistake an india-rubber bag for an ovarian cyst. Perhaps the most appalling misadventure of this kind befell the physician of the Emperor Rudolph the Second, who, in trying to feel his illustrious patient's pulse under the bed-clothes, grasped a different part of the Imperial anatomy, and was informed of his mistake by his Majesty in the following dignified words:—*Erras, amice, hoc est nostrum imperabile membrum*. How the doctor got out of his embarrassing position is not recorded, but presence of mind will often save an apparently hopeless situation. If a student who finds himself exploring the rectum instead of the vagina, will calmly rebuke the patient for not paying more attention to the condition of her bowels, he will change an imminent defeat into victory. Coolness will extricate a man from almost any difficulty. We have heard a story of a distinguished surgeon who began to amputate the body from a limb, and when his attention was called to the fact, carried it off by telling the assistant to take his hand out of the way. Danton's maxim *De l'audace* finds its application in medical practice under such circumstances. The possession of this quality is the secret of success of many second-rate men, and the lack of it accounts for the failure of many otherwise admirably equipped.—*British Med. Journal*.

PROFESSOR BROUARDEL ON THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.—One of the great questions of the day undoubtedly is, What shall we do with our sons? In the profession with which we are more immediately concerned there are at the present moment close on 33,000 gentlemen with British qualifications practising the science and art of medicine in all parts of the world, but chiefly within the narrow limits of our own small islands. The plethora of *alumni* in our schools is truly alarming, and yet we have cause to congratulate ourselves that matters in this respect are not so bad with us as they are elsewhere. In the United States, for instance, the medical student roster last year was said to contain no fewer than 38,850 names; being an augmentation of more than 5500 since 1892. In France the overcrowding of the

medical schools is also excessive, but in this connection we cannot do better than quote the remarks delivered by Professor Brouardel at a recent meeting of the Association des Médecins du Département de la Seine: "Two years ago I drew your attention to the fact that the number of medical students was increasing rapidly. The augmentation still continues unabated. In all the French faculties our future *confrères* are now twice as numerous as they were ten years ago. The same kind of thing is going on in Germany and likewise in England. Various causes have been invoked in explanation of this state of affairs; many people thought that the law regulating military service was to blame in the matter. There is no reason whatever for this supposition. The laws have not been altered in Germany or in England, and yet the rate of progression remains the same. In France the female midwifery candidates, who have nothing to do with military service, have doubled their numbers in the last five years. For my part I am convinced that it is the publicity accorded to the achievements of science which is responsible for the illusory ideas entertained by heads of families. Day by day in their newspapers they see the great importance that on all sides is attached to public health, civil and military, and logically enough imagine that the persons charged with the solution of the great problems involved receive a proportionate compensation. They conclude that their offspring will derive both honor and profit while pursuing this grand career. They would be much astonished if anyone were to point out how the efforts we make to render houses wholesome, to root out epidemics, to improve medical charities, all have the effect of narrowing more and more the field wherein the medical man was formerly wont to garner a meagre harvest. Now, in ten years' time the number of reapers will have doubled. I do not want to forecast the consequences from the point of view of medical practice, but there is one thing of which we may be perfectly sure: if the number of medical men has doubled, the number of unsuccessful practitioners will have increased threefold." The eminent French sanitarian doubtless correctly estimates the motives that induce his fellow countrymen to enter their sons in medicine. All communities are alike and, although many-headed, are not endowed with a corresponding amount of intelligence. And yet it is difficult to conceive how any reasoning being can suppose that the average medical man's life is either an easy or a lucrative one. There is no other profession or calling in which the hours are so long. A busy practitioner (and if he has to live by his labor he is compelled to be busy) must remain on duty twenty-four hours out of the twenty-four. At no period of the day does the happy moment arrive when he can put his business on one side