

MODERN LABORATORY TEACHING.

In the wonderful developments of all branches of science, medicine has not lagged behind, and the world generally is becoming much interested in the many discoveries in medical science which have lately taken place. Money is being left and donated in large quantities to stimulate still further exertions in the line of research; special sums are being set aside for the experimental study of the origin and cure of certain diseases, such as carcinoma, tuberculosis, etc., and immense amounts have quite recently been given by the multi-millionaires for the erection and maintenance of splendid laboratories, which are intended not so much for the teaching of students as the encouragement of research work.

The medical school is developing into a huge system of laboratories to the exclusion of the lecture, and even the hospital; for the day has not got any longer, and laboratory work takes time. We must not forget, however, that laboratories, triumphs of architecture though they be, and equipped as they are with all the most modern scientific apparatus, will not themselves produce men of science, they will only give them the opportunity of developing. Such giants as Pasteur, Lister, Koch, and the great Virchow, who has lately passed away, were not produced by magnificent laboratories or splendid inducements of fellowships, etc.; they made their opportunities and forced nature, by the power of their intellects, to give up to them her secrets; difficulties only stimulated them to put forth still further efforts. Such men are not found at will, but they are born like poets, only occasionally. To paraphrase Sir Thomas Browne: "They do most by laboratories who could do much without them, and he that chiefly owes himself unto himself is a substantial man."

One danger of this great multiplication of laboratories is that it induces men to pursue original investigation who have not the true scientific spirit, and who are utterly unfit for such work. They frequently collect and publish a mass of useless and undigested material, and therefrom draw inaccurate conclusions. All this will not redound to the credit of medical science. However, we must hope for the best, knowing a large amount of good work will be done and many valuable discoveries made. I do not wish it to be inferred that I am opposed to the addition of modern laboratories to our medical schools; they are all necessary; but they must not supplant other work quite as important to a man who wishes to become a practicing physician or surgeon. Again, we must remember that the millennium will not be brought about by laboratories, nor will all scientific problems be solved by them.

There is one laboratory which is not so much frequented now