

Discussion also developes what some one calls *mental friction*, presenting questions in a different light to that in which they have hitherto appeared to some, and bringing out new points to all. Such meetings unite the members together more than hitherto; they know each other better, and often ill-formed judgments disappear, as well as jealousies and unjust notions are prevented, which would otherwise exist. When the profession is so united its influence is greater; for what weakens a body more than violent dissensions and squabbles between its members. The influence of highly educated and enlightened medical men, either individually or as a body, is becoming more felt every day, and there is reason for it. The great advance in medicine and surgery of late, has impressed itself upon nations and is being recognized by governments and the public. In Berlin, there has recently been erected the first public monument to a private person, that is, one not a royal personage, or of military or political renown, and it is to Von Grafe, the surgeon and oculist. In England, if I am not mistaken, they were ahead in that, for there has been in London for many years a public statue to Edward Jenner. There are more medical men in public life both in Europe and America than formerly, and these should make their influence felt. In our own Province we have not much reason to complain on that score, although when they get into Parliament, whether at Fredericton or Ottawa, they seem to devote themselves,—like the unscientific members,—mostly to legislating for some railway which will pass by the back door of their constituents homes. It is amusing to read in the *Saturday Review*, of London, its congratulations on the occasional appointment of a doctor to be a justice of the peace, as a proof of the rise of the profession in public estimation. Well, perhaps in England the position may be a more important one than it appears to be here. It is curious that popular or representative governments should usually be antagonistic or indifferent to the promotion of scientific investigation, while despotic governments aid and foster it. It is true that in this province some legislation has lately been done as regards Public Health and registration, and as a beginning it ought not to be criticized too closely, but we may well hope that each year the machinery may be perfected and the scope extended. But in our legislation everything seems to be looked at from a commercial point of view. A small sum of money may be granted after considerable political engineering and petitioning, and may be a delegation, for a Natural History Society or a Public Hospital, or a starved University, and perhaps, as in the latter case, a continual fire kept up as to its being a waste of public money, while at the same time half a million, more or less, is thrown recklessly away with no more consideration sometimes than is bestowed on one of these small grants, on some visionary scheme, so long as it has a balloon in the shape of so much stock divided into so many shares to make it go up. Heretofore the Board of Health could obtain only a

miserable sum to carry out its most pressing sanitary work, and was crippled in every way for want of means; the responsible officers doing the work year after year, without any pecuniary reward for their loss of time and frequently unpleasant duty, because public men could not see the necessity of granting some money to prevent disease being propagated. Occasionally an epidemic would frighten them and then a little would be spent, such as that on public vaccination, and none I may say was ever spent with more positive, useful and successful results.

Grainger Stewart, of Edinburgh, said recently that "Physicians are first, the Guardians of the Public Health; second, advisers of the general public in their most personal and private affairs; third, investigators of disease; and fourth, teachers of the rising generation of medical men."

The relations of the profession to the public could not be more shortly or comprehensively stated. The third relation may interest us the most at present, that is, the investigation of the causes and the prevention of disease. As practitioners of medicine, most of the gentlemen of this society are constantly confronted with the problem of the origin of disease, but from the press of ordinary work they find it hard to give such continuous attention to one line of investigation of facts, as to make the subject conclusive. Their facts and observations are isolated, and require more generalization than can usually be given. Before they are able to do much at one subject their attention is called off to another class of cases. It is, therefore, more at the great centres of education that these matters are successfully pursued and scientifically.

No one can fairly dispute the assertion that the science of medicine and surgery has made great advances during the last half century. These advances have been pointed out of late on many public occasions, but in no department has there been such progress made as in that of the investigation of the causes of disease. If the causes can be clearly traced, there is every reason to believe that prevention will be much promoted. Of the practical outcome of such study we have only to instance such diseases as typhus fever, which having been shown to be due to overcrowding of people in places with little air and light, has nearly been exterminated in many large cities, such as London, where it formerly prevailed and carried off a large portion of the population. We seldom hear of ship-fever or jail-fever nowadays, because measures are enforced to prevent them. And since the causes of *typhoid* are better understood, the preventive measures have to a great degree been successful in preventing it when these measures are intelligently put in operation.

The propagation of scarlet fever has been proved to have been caused in many instances of epidemics, by its infection from milk.

In these cases the explanation has been that the milk has been infected from cases of the disease existing in the families or neighborhood of the milkmen or dairies, and doubtless often this has