

for him that he did not live to see the present state of things. It is curious to note, moreover, how we doctors are unknowingly compelled to follow the stream of popular prejudice. At the present day the desire is for life in towns where there is activity and energy and rivalry and companionship. A quiet life in the country is not in accord with the temper of the times, and men fly to the haunts of men.

I confess that there is no profession which has such a good excuse for so doing as ours. To make the spark, steel must rub against steel ; in order to progress, brain must struggle against brain. But, as a result, the overcrowding of our towns has only become all the more marked. There used to be many quiet old villages in England, where the doctors succeeded each other from father to son for three and four generations, and where the inhabitants did not believe there could be any doctors worth talking about except those who had supported their fathers' and mothers' heads as they lay a-dying, and who had brought *them* into the world. But those days are gone ; and our business is not to lament the past, but to do the best for the present.

Being then, face to face with the fact that there are so many doctors in our cities and manufacturing towns, that a man must live a life of incessant labour and turmoil even to exist, and that in many cases he cannot even do that, what is the disadvantage to the public in this ? For it is right to take note of them as well as of ourselves. I have heard it argued by business men that there cannot be any harm in this, seeing that competition has compelled men to exercise every mental gift they possess, so as to excel each other in manufacturing things at a cheap rate, by which means the public have been great gainers. This, I admit, is perfectly true, but, as it happens, there is an immeasurable gulf fixed between the capacity of the ordinary man or woman to judge of the value of articles of commerce, and their capacity to judge of the value of medical skill. Every man who has long taught students becomes sententious ; he invents proverbs. I have long ago invented one to the effect that in Religion and Medicine the public like being quacked ; they deliberately prefer it. Just look round the circle of your acquaintances. They understand a business bargain. You can't take them over in buying a house or a piece of land. They appreciate to a penny the wares of the greengrocer or the milliner. But you have only to take a bread pill and "bill" the intervening space from the pyramids of Egypt to the cañons of the Rocky Mountains with posters, which announce that it will cure every disease from chickenpox to cancer, and you will make a huge fortune, which you will no doubt bequeath to charities when you die, as a kind of *quid pro quo* for having robbed your fellow-men during a long lifetime. A man comes to consult you, whose ailment is clearly due to his manner of living. You give him honest advice about this, show