

MASTERS OF MEDICINE

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ERNEST HART, D.C.L.,

Editor of "The British Medical Journal."

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Large crown 800., cloth, 3s. Bd. each.

Medical discoveries more directly concern the well-being and happiness of the human race than any victories of science. They appeal to one of the primary instincts of human nature, that of self-preservation. The importance of health as the most valuable of our national assets is coming to be more and more recognised, and the place of the doctor in Scciety and in the State is becoming one of steaddly increasing prominence; indeed, Mr. Gladstone said not many years ago that the time would surely come when the medical profession would take precedence of all the others in authority as well as in dignity. The development of medicine from an empiric art to an eract science is one of the most important and also one of the most interesting chapters in the history of civilisation. The histories of medicine which exist are for the most part only fitted for the intellectual digestion of Dryasdust and his congeners. Of the men who made the discoveries which have saved incalculable numbers of human lives, and which have lengthened the span of human existence, there is often no record at all accessible to the general reader. Yet the story of these men's lives, of their struggles and of their triumphs, is not only interesting, but in the highest degree stimulating and educative. Many of them could have said with literal truth what Sir Thomas Browne said figuratively, that their lives were a romance. Hitherto there have been no accounts of the lives of medical discoverers in a form at once convenient and uniform, and sold at a popular price. The "Masters of Medicine" is a series of biographies written by "eminent hands" intended to supply this want. It is intended that the man shall be depicted as he moved and lived and had his being, and that the scope and gist of his work, as well as the steps by which he reached his results, shall be set forth in a clear, readable style.

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