

In developing this subject, I shall require to use some plain speech, because between the degradation, but alluring effect of the establishment of certain polyclinics or post-graduate schools, where, to quote the Carnegie report, "the training is of a practical, not of a fundamental, or intensive kind," "calculated to teach the trick," or perhaps better to exhibit an instructor in the art of doing it," and on the other hand, the desire of the wearied practitioner to get into something "easy," this country is threatened with becoming burdened by a load of ill-trained specialists.

Believing that, in the words of Oliver Wendell Holmes, "fear of open discussion implies feebleness of inward conviction, and great sensitiveness to the expression of individual opinion is a mark of weakness," and disclaiming all intention to offend, I invite your attention and forbearance.

A specialist has been defined as "one who knows as much about all parts of his subject as any, and more about one part of it than any other," but I would paraphrase this definition and bring out its meaning more fully. A specialist is one who, *after* completing the usual time of medical study and obtaining his degree, pursues a further course of instruction over a number of years, in some limited field, and abandoning the practice of every other branch of medicine, confines himself solely to that branch in which he has thus become qualified to speak with authority. No one has a right to pose as a specialist who has not proved his title to do so by such a prolonged course of special study, and let me remind you that the cards which some of our numbers permit to appear in the advertising columns of the newspapers, reading somewhat as follows: "Dr. ———, Physician and Surgeon, graduate of the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (as if he could practise at all without this). Special attentoin given to Diseases of the Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat," are strictly unethical, according to the code of this association, and in my personal opinion, beneath contempt.

The backbone of our profession is the general practitioner. As Osler writes, "There never was a time in our history in which he was so prosperous, so much in evidence, in which his prospects were so good or his power in the community so potent. He still does the work, that great mass of routine practice which brings the doctor into every household in the land, and makes him, not alone the adviser, but the valued friend. He is the standard by which we are all measured. What he is, we are; and the estimate of the profession in the eyes of the public is their estimate of him. A well-trained sensible doctor is one of the most valuable assets in a community, worth to-day, as in Homer's time,