

most super-human efforts have been made, and the man stands at the brink of the grave, how exceedingly paltry and small does his stock of knowledge appear. He feels as if he had gathered a few of the pebbles only from the shores of the knowable, while the vast ocean itself stretches out before him unexplored. "I live joyless in my eighty-ninth year," writes the great Humboldt to his friend Varnhagen, "because of the much for which I have striven from my youth, so little has been accomplished." So it is, and so it always will be! Despite his loftiest attainments, man always feels an intellectual want that must be satisfied, an intellectual void that must be filled. And, what is most singular, the more varied and profound his knowledge, the deeper he may have penetrated the arcana of nature, the richer and more glorious the truths he may have brought from thence, the more weak and ignorant does he appear to his own scrutinizing introspection. What distinguished talent! What indefatigable perseverance! What rare industry! What accumulated stores of learning has such a one, exclaim a wondering public, who are conscious that an incalculable distance intervenes between their own acquirements and his. Whilst he, the scholar and wise man, according to the testimony of all, in view of the higher and still higher heights of truths remaining to be scaled, and whose outlines are appreciable to his exalted sense alone, in view of the ever-widening and ever-lengthening vista that opens up before him as he pursues his travels into regions of thought and territories of investigation which were never before penetrated, bewails his own littleness, his want of energy and mental vigour, for knowledge, as a rule, certainly has the effect of making its most favoured votaries, the humblest and least self-conceited of men. He regards the three score years and ten allotted to man in this state of existence, a mere fleeting point of time, all too short a period in which to grasp even a tithe of what presents itself for investigation, and he, therefore, looks hopefully forward to an infinite future, where his soul may bathe without check or limit in the pure, unchangeable waters of truth.

The desire for knowledge, then, has doubtless brought you here. And the knowledge you seek is of that special kind included in what is termed a medical education. It is not necessary for me to enter upon a particular description of the different branches into which medicine is divided, as you will soon become practically acquainted with them. Suffice it that I make a few very general remarks on the causes that have originated and perpetuated medical knowledge, and on several of the obstructions that encumber its path.

Man must die! Such is the fiat that has gone forth from the counsels of the Almighty. He comes into the world, he is here, and he is not. From the moment he emerges from the womb, and even before, he is exposed to influences which have a tendency to bring his existence to a termination. There is, I believe, in all the human race, an instinctive dread of death, of that dissolution of man's component parts which all know they must submit to, of that resolution of the mere material portion into its original chemical constituents; the extinction of vitality, and the unknown flight of the psyche or soul to enter on an untried state of existence in "that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns." A brave and courageous soul a man may have, but still he shrinks from laying himself down to sleep that sleep from which there is in