BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAYS

content only to see. But at last came the age of the hand—the thinking, devising, planning hand; the hand as an instrument of the mind, now reintroduced into the world in a modest little monograph of seventy-two pages, from which we may date the beginning of experimental medicine.

No great discovery in science is ever without a corresponding influence on medical thought, not always evident at first, and apt to be characterized by the usual vagaries associated with human effort. Very marked in each generation has been the change wrought in the conceptions of disease and in its treatment by epoch-making discoveries as to the functions of the body. We ourselves are deeply involved to-day in toxins and antitoxins, in opsonins, tulases, and extracts as a direct result of the researches in bacteriology and in internal secretion. There were sanguine souls in Harvey's day, who lamented with Flover that the discovery had not brought great and general innovations into the whole practice of physic. But had the old Lichfield physician lived he would have seen the rise of a school based directly upon the studies of Harvey and Sanctorius, the brilliant reasonings of Descartes and the works of Bellini and Borelli. The mechanical school rose in its pride on solid foundations which appealed to practical men with singular force. Very soon that 'beatific epitome of creation', man, was 'marked out like a spot of earth or a piece of timber with rules and compasses', and the medical terminology of the day became unintelligible to the older practitioners who could make nothing of the 'wheels and pulley, wedges, levers, screws, cords, canals and cisterns, sieves and strainers', and they cracked their jokes on 'angles, cylinders, celerity, percussion, resistance, and such-like

330