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VIRCHOW.*

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HE who is chosen by his colleagues to deliver the opening lecture of the session is apt to view the situation with mixed feelings. At first with pride at being so selected, but as time passes, with growing uneasiness and doubt as to his ability to carry out the task assigned; and he ultimately reaches a point at which he wonders whether they wished to spoil his holidays or only hoped to make their own more pleasant. It is not an easy task to choose a subject for an opening lecture. There is an *embarras des riches* which makes selection difficult. Medicine, with its fascinating past, linked at every point with the history of the development of human knowledge, and its glorious future so full of promise for the human race, is not wanting in many and varied themes for such a lecture.

The lecturer is peculiarly fortunate when the date of his address falls with an epoch in the history of the institution; and in that fortunate position I find myself to-night.

Since the opening of the Biological Department of the University in 1890, each succeeding autumn has seen this theatre filled with ever-increasing crowds of students, gathered upon the first day of the session, to hear the opening lecture. And since that date, the Biological Department has filled a peculiar place in the history of the Medical Faculty and of its students. Here the students begin their work and within its walls the Faculty meets each month during the session.

* An address delivered at the opening of the sixteenth Session of the Medical Faculty of the University of Toronto.