

It has been said that we all go through the world backwards. We see clearly the path we have travelled, but what is to come is either absolutely unknown, or indicated only by that shadowy knowledge our experience has given us. When we see others in whom we are interested coming blindly along the way we know so well, the impulse to shout back a warning or two is almost irresistible. Let this be my excuse for inflicting on you a little, a very little, of what is recognized in our profession as advice gratis. I do so entirely from a sense of duty, knowing full well that you will not be long here before you get more advice than you will know what to do with. It will pour in on you from all sides, and it will all bear the stamp of the genuine, disinterested article. I shall make this part of my address very short, as I am in full sympathy with that class of healthy-minded young men to which the great majority of you belong, who think twice before asking advice, and then think again before acting upon it. The first advice is: Do not let anything you hear from me stand you in the place of your own thoughtful observation and enquiry. Think out your own view of the profession honestly, liberally, and truthfully. You are entering a profession; you must, therefore, cultivate perfect freedom of personal judgment, and be conscious of your own responsibility. Your time is short; divide it up economically, and do not waste your odd half hours. Be particularly careful of your health; nothing is worth so much to you as that. Do not fear your examinations; above all, do not cram for them. This stuffing your brain with shapeless masses of unorganized learning is the worst possible preparation for examinations. Do not try to commit your text book by rote. No text book, not even Grey's Anatomy, has any claim to be verbally inspired. Make the thoughts on every page your own, and you will find no trouble about clothing the ideas in words.

I have selected as a topic for this lecture one which, though bearing on my own special department, will, I trust, be of sufficient general interest to justify its discussion on this occasion. The subject which I have taken is "The Place of Chemistry in a Medical Education."

First of all let us examine for a few moments the influence that chemistry and the study of chemistry have had on the development of medicine.