

When a member of a family is seized with a severe illness, how dependent we are upon the skill, good judgment, and attention of the physician! How often the result depends on such care and skill!

Then, taking a broader view, how many of the diseases which afflict humanity are of a preventable character! How often the spread of epidemics has been prevented by the adoption of scientific measures! To be convinced of this, one has only to compare the present age with two or three centuries ago. Then plagues and pestilences sometimes swept away a third of the inhabitants of a city in a season.

As a result of bacteriological investigation, we find that consumption is a contagious disease, and that its virus may be introduced into the system in milk and other forms of food. At the recent International Medical Congress, Dr. Koch, the discoverer of the bacillus tuberculosis, made the announcement that he had found an agent which would cure the disease, but that he had not yet made sufficient experiments to allow him to publish the discovery. With such knowledge this fearful scourge will no doubt be materially lessened in the future.

Thanks to the investigations of Pasteur, the prevention of rabies is now an accomplished fact.

The use of bichloride of mercury in anti-septic surgery is the result of scientific experiment. There are thousands to-day who owe their lives to the employment of this agent.

We cannot conceive to what extent disease in the human family may be lessened or robbed of its worse features.

I will here give a quotation from a letter recently written by Prof. Huxley to the *London Times* on the subject of Medical Education, as it bears out the points which I have been endeavoring to make. "The happiness, the usefulness, the very existence of each of us may at any moment depend upon the knowledge, sagacity, and technical skill in the use of eye, ear, and hand, of a medical practitioner. Every case of sickness or injury which presents itself to him must in the first place, be the subject of an investigation, which, if it is to lead to a successful result, must be conducted according to the canons of those methods of observation and experiment, inductive and de-

ductive reasoning, which are nowhere so amply and clearly exemplified as they are by the different branches of physical science; while the first three but rarely find any exercise in the province of literature.

"It would seem, therefore, to be almost a self-evident proposition that the educational training for persons who propose to enter the medical profession should be largely scientific; not merely, or even principally, because an acquaintance with the elements of physical and biological science is absolutely essential to the comprehension of human physiology and pathology, but still more because of the value of the discipline afforded by practical work in these departments, in the process of observation and experiment, in inductive reasoning and in manipulation. But the inestimable advantages of this practical scientific education are to be obtained only at the cost of the expenditure of a great deal of time upon it. It is a delusion to suppose that listening to lectures for two or three hours a week can confer a scientific training. Such a process may instruct, it cannot educate."

From this extract it will be seen that Prof. Huxley would demand a much deeper and more extensive knowledge of the physical sciences than is yet given to medical students in this University.

While on this subject I would like to refer to an address given by Mr. Lawson Tait at the recent meeting of the British Medical Association, at Birmingham. We agree with many of the views he expressed on that occasion, and would go quite as far as when he states: "One who has to follow the craft of Surgery ought to be taught how to use his hands. I should send him so many hours in the week to the shop of the village carpenter, and I should have him trained to use a saw, a plane, and a skew, so that he should be able to make a long splint as well as to put it on, and into the blacksmith shop he should go till he knew how to strike properly with a hammer."

But when Mr. Tait undertook to criticize the teaching of physiology and anatomy in the University of Edinburgh his address gives ample evidence of a want of accurate knowledge of the subject upon which he wishes to enlighten others.