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## ON THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING TEMPERA- MENTS.

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On being requested a short time ago to give a lecture before your society (of whose existence I am bound to admit I was until then in ignorance), I was led at once to consent on observing the words of your motto, 'Prevention is better than cure.' I saw in this motto the germ of a principle which, if developed by an active society, might grow and fructify in every sphere of life. I am ignorant of their origin, but these words convey to my mind one of the most profound and important of doctrines, since they are applicable to man's being, whether he be treated physically, morally, or socially. They are as familiar to our mouths as household words, but perhaps there are none less acted upon, the masses of people and the ignorant never rising to a due conception of their meaning. The object conveyed in these words is the very highest at which the physician can aim; they interpret the thought of the best men in the medical profession when they attempt to frame a true doctrine of disease and its rational treatment. A society with such a motto is at once setting itself against quackery, for the word 'prevention' is put as it were in opposition to 'cure,' and the idea of cure lies at the bottom of all quack systems. They are all alike in this, that they do nothing else, and profess to do nothing else, than cure existing ailments, that is, to give a remedy for the alleviation of some present trouble. Now, as the tendency to quackery is in proportion to ignorance, it is clear that the idea of 'cure' is low-born and common-place, whereas the sentiment expressed in your motto is significant of a higher intellectual advancement. To per-