Technical and Bibliographic Notes/Notes techniques et bibliographiques

The Institute has attempted to obtain the best original copy available for filming. Features of this copy which may be bibliographically unique, which may alter any of the images in the reproduction, or which may significantly change the usual method of filming, are checked below.

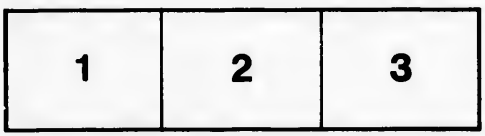
- [ ] Coloured covers/
  Couverture de couleur
- [ ] Covers damaged/
  Couverture endommagée
- [ ] Covers restored and/or laminated/
  Couverture restaurée et/ou pelliculée
- [ ] Cover title missing/
  Le titre de couverture manque
- [ ] Coloured maps/
  Cartes géographiques en couleur
- [ ] Coloured ink (i.e. other than blue or black)/
  Encre de couleur (i.e. autre que bleue ou noire)
- [ ] Coloured plates and/or illustrations/
  Planches et/ou illustrations en couleur
- [ ] Bound with other material/
  Relié avec d'autres documents
- [ ] Tight binding may cause shadows or distortion along interior margin/
  La re liure serrée peut causer de l'ombre ou de la distortion le long de la marge intérieure
- [ ] Blank leaves added during restoration may appear within the text. Whenever possible, these have been omitted from filming/
  Il se peut que certaines pages blanches ajoutées lors d'une restauration apparaissent dans le texte, mais, lorsque cela était possible, ces pages n'ont pas été filmées.
- [ ] Additional comments:/
  Commentaires supplémentaires:

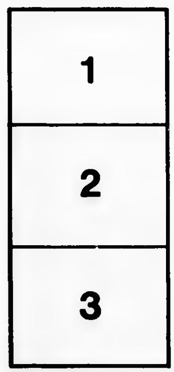
L'Institut a microfilmé le meilleur exemplaire qu'il lui a été possible de se procurer. Les détails de cet exemplaire qui sont peut-être uniques du point de vue bibliographique, qui peuvent modifier une image reproduite, ou qui peuvent exiger une modification dans la méthode normale de filmage sont indiqués ci-dessous.

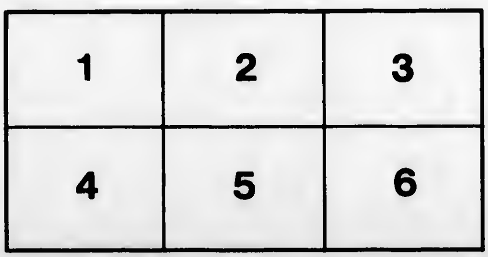
- [ ] Coloured pages/
  Pages de couleur
- [ ] Pages damaged/
  Pages endommagées
- [ ] Pages restored and/or laminated/
  Pages restaurées et/ou pelliculées
- [x] Pages discoloured, stained or foxed/
  Pages décolorées, tachetées ou piquées
- [ ] Pages detached/
  Pages détachées
- [x] Showthrough/
  Transparence
- [ ] Quality of print varies/
  Qualité inégale de l'impression
- [ ] Includes supplementary material/
  Comprend du matériel supplémentaire
- [ ] Only edition available/
  Seule édition disponible
- [ ] Pages wholly or partially obscured by errata slips, tissues, etc., have been refilmed to ensure the best possible image/
  Les pages totalement ou partiellement obscurcies par un feuillet d'errata, une pelure, etc., ont été filmées à nouveau de façon à obtenir la meilleure image possible.

This item is filmed at the reduction ratio checked below/
Ce document est filmé au taux de réduction indiqué ci-dessous.

10X	12X	14X	16X	18X	20X	22X	24X	26X	28X	30X	32X
						✓					


1
2
3


1
2
3


1
2
3
4
5
6

THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

BY

EZRA H. B. STAFFORD, M.B.

REPRINTED FROM
"THE CANADIAN JOURNAL OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY,"
JANUARY, 1900.

THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE.

BY EZRA H. B. STAFFORD, M.B.

Ad E A. M. R, Salutem. The history of medicine has not as yet been written, though many writers of exemplary patience and unbounded leisure have dallied with the ample subject.

The fact, in all its seriousness, that such a history *might* be written, or ought to be written, seems first to have struck the German mind; and a large number of writers of this nationality have soberly addressed themselves to the congenial task. Probably a German scholar's ideal of earthly happiness is to be calmly engaged in writing a work, published by volumes from year to year, and of such a nature that the writer need have no apprehension of ever getting to the end. Casper Neumann's Chemistry may be taken as an example of this sort of work, which, carried on slowly, without unseemly haste, through the first half of the eighteenth century, covered eventually seven comfortable quarto volumes of about eight thousand pages, and came, only with the author's death, to a yawning termination, not unlike the mediæval notion of the edge of the earth.

And who shall have the audacity to say that Neumann's work is not eminently interesting? "Tin," he pauses to remark, "is called in the Syriac and Chaldaic languages 'Bragmanack,' that is, the kingdom of Jupiter: whence are deduced, 'Bratman,' 'Britman,' 'Britannia.'" From a reflection so flattering to the English, the deliberate author composedly passes on to a consideration of the tin-pans of various countries, and, as a digression, devotes a few pages more to an almost enthusiastic description of the proper steps one should take to infuse a dish of tea in one of these same tin cans.

A *magnum opus* of this description has a great advantage over the Encyclopædia Britannica, in that it is all on one subject, while in the Encyclopædia the enchanted reader is constantly vexed by being wrenched here and there from one subject to another. The dream of Casper Neumann was to write on through eternity on the one subject, with the same circle of readers patiently following him *in sæcula sæculorum.*

To writers of this class the history of medicine offered a field of satisfactory vastness, and presently, through the sombre penumbra cast by the subject into the limitless spaces of oblivion, a gloomy constellation of German literary men began to heavily move in slow circles.

A little work on the history of medicine had, it is true, already been published in England by Dr. Freind, who, it will be remembered, was the same Freind who was imprisoned by Walpole for making some unseemly remarks in the House of Parliament about a bishop; and released at the instigation of the great Dr. Mead, to whom Martyn, the old professor of botany, dedicated his edition of Virgil's Georgics, a work replete with notes and marginaliæ, of which every other paragraph has some admiring reference to Dr. Mead's private library. Dr. Mead was not only a man of literary culture, however, but also a man of action: and though Freind was a foe in the lists of science, he was after all a physician, and as the professional blood was then, as now, thicker than water, Mead fervently desired to see Freind out of the Tower, after which, in all probability, he would settle scientific differences, but not till then. So he waited until Sir Robert had another attack, most likely of gout, and had called him in, whereupon, plucking up a brave spirit, more especially as the Prime Minister's was at that time probably very weak, he told Sir Robert flatly that not a pill nor a plaister should he get from him until he had let Freind go free. Even so they importuned Pharaoh, and, like Pharaoh, Sir Robert let go the peccant Freind; and, we hope, was amply benefited by the treatment which, after such an act of atonement, was no doubt at once forthcoming from the propitiated and magnific Mead.

But Freind's "History of Medicine" was only a little trifle in a couple of large, fat, leather-bound volumes, and the German authors saw that the subject had not been properly handled and was capable of more voluminous and comprehensive treatment. I fancy they must have been disgusted with Freind.

However, after a couple of tentative attempts by Heinrich Schultze and Ernst Hebenstreit, Gabriel Hensler formally opened the new field of activity with an unpretentious bagatelle of ten or a dozen volumes, just to show what the capabilities of the new subject were. And he showed it to be, without a doubt—to use the words of Charles Stuart Calverley, in his poem on the "Cock and the Bull":

> "A thing Imagination boggles at,
> And might, odds-bobbs sir, in judicious hands
> Extend from here to Mesopotamy."

At this stage Kurt Polycarp Joachim Sprengel suddenly began to show painful exacerbations of uneasiness. It did not exactly strike him that Hensler had done his best; or, at all events, Hensler's best was not what Sprengel's soon should be. At this juncture "Sprengel developed a perfectly marvellous activity," remarks his admirer, Hermann Baas; and the remainder of Sprengel's life was devoted to deliberately amassing the most bulky history of medicine that had ever been written. *Facile princeps* from the standpoint of *area*, it looms forever like an enormous pyramid in the silence of the Egyptian darkness.

Worshipping from afar, it struck Baas that a minute vest-pocket compendium of the subject might prove of utility to those who prefer to read while they run. In humble guise, therefore, and not as an original genius, so much as a fervent admirer of the vast accomplishments of his predecessors, Baas put forth, in due time, his trifling synopsis or epitome of the subject, which, in the abridged translation, has been so compressed as to only fill twelve hundred pages of close diamond type in a little imperial octave volume. This chaotic work, though in no sense of the word a history, is crammed with the material out of which histories are made, and is admittedly the most satisfactory literary effort of the sort at present available; and like all labors of love should, perhaps, pass unscathed by criticism.

Analogies are often helpful to a bewildered person, and I accordingly consulted with my respected Semitic friend, Mr. Isaac B——, who follows the rag and bone business, for an apt analogy. Isaac very courteously enlightened me upon many points which bear upon the scope and methods of the rag and bone business.

It would seem in the first place, from what Isaac says, that everything that is palpable to the senses has some value, sometimes not very much value, but always, if properly exploited, capable of definite profit. A broken teacup, a dead alligator or a pile of ashes—all are sacred. But Isaac has the Midas touch by which he transmutes all things whatsoever into—much-soiled bank notes. All cannot do this. I cannot do it. The reader cannot do it. But Isaac and Sprengel held the mystic secret.

That the pen is mightier than the sword is an assertion frequently made by those who have shown moderate facility in the use of the former. But Sprengel's armamentarium was a shovel. He worked, as has been shown, with a will. And into this history of his, the honest, vigorous fellow conscientiously shovelled every possible object from the lanes and alleys of literature that had, to his somewhat perverted olfactory sense, the remotest smell of medicine. Biographical old clothes, the dried offal of obsolete disputes, the ghosts of ten thousand fools, the mildew of occult superstitions, the cadaver of forgotten greatness, the broken umbrella that once shaded the head of pomposity, the pots and pans of academic pretentiousness the rags and tatters of all time. In the dismantled mausoleum of Herodotus a stolid scavenger with his donkey cart has stored the arkana miscellanea of his devious pilgrimages.

And to repeat the words of Isaac, whom I admire, "The rag and bone business is the independentest and also the happiest occupation which one can follow among men." No ideals are necessary—it is simply a question of keeping occupied all the time. "Sprengel *developed* a perfectly marvellous activity."

Thomas A. Wise was another true believer. Dr. Wise believed in the ancientness and the authenticity of the medical writings of the Ayur-Veda as preserved in fragments scattered through the writings of Charaka and Susruta. I sincerely trust that he did not live to hear Max Müller's ruthless "aside" in regard to these Sanscrit writings. It really would have hurt him so very much. Since then, I know, various historians of medicine have contended upon the opposite sides with varying applause—some that Charaka and Susruta (Oh, bitter spite!) had in reality obtained their medical knowledge from MSS. or pupils of Hippocrates imported into Hindostan; and others, like Wise, that Hippocrates had, as a matter of fact, travelled far more extensively than was generally supposed, and under the sun of India had at last paused in awestruck admiration at the golden truths with which he became for the first time familiar in the writings of Charaka and Susruta. As it may. In his history of Oriental medicine Dr. Wise has bequeathed to posterity, if not a work of transcendent historical value, at least a record with all the charm and busy quaintness, and the same partiality for a tesselation of names which still endears the Anatomy of Melancholy to readers of otherwise the most antagonistic tastes.

To this partial enumeration might also be added Bettany's Sketches of Eminent English Physicians—idle, personal gossip, it is true, yet charming to readers, professional and lay, for the same reason that the series of little books entitled "Masters of Medicine" is charming—because, without going to the centre, all alike play in an easy superficial manner upon the trivial little matters that in the field of biography always seem to possess the greatest interest. Berdoe's popular volume may also be mentioned here; not so much because he has succeeded in writing anything that approaches to a history of medicine, as because his intentions were certainly good even though his execution was deficient.

Park's Epitome is not a volume of original research at all, but a compressed outline of the particular field of medicine already covered by Hermann Baas. As a series of biographical memoranda, and a repository of dates and names it will be found exceedingly useful for reference, and, as perhaps the most convenient handbook on the subject, may be consulted with advantage when one is in search of some point.

Baas wrote in a party spirit. Like so many of that untutored race, he confused the violence of his prejudices with soundness of thought. Of a few of his own compatriots he speaks benignantly, but of most aliens, sourly, contemptuously often, and seldom with any sympathy whatever. To this grave infirmity add the fact that the Muse of History abode not with him, and one sees a reason why his book is not a living whole, entire, self contained, perfect, but a scrappy miscellany of stale odds and ends, lacking outline, light, cohesion or color.

Roswell Park, on the other hand, is a successful surgeon, but not having sufficiently familiarized himself with the *dramatis personæ* of the healing art, an end which could only be accomplished by long intimacy with that goodly company, they are, many of them, but names to him still, I fancy, like so many visiting cards, and Park displays therefor no sympathies and no hatreds, for he does not know enough of the inner life of the people of whom he speaks to feel either. In the construction of his book, therefore, he has shown the surgeon's skill rather than the historian's intuition, and has cut and clipped out, and sewn and sutured together the dry facts of the past as gathered from the "most authentic sources." The result is before us. These facts, as I have already admitted, are useful. The exploit, as a literary operation, is a neat one. But it is not literature it is not history.

Many local histories of medicine also abound on both sides of the Atlantic, which need not be particularly mentioned here; consisting, as they do, merely of long chains of personal memoranda, and written chiefly for the felicitation of the individuals celebrated, or their families, who are usually the only willing purchasers and the sole readers. Indeed, it is worthy of note that unskilled writers, when girding themselves for a so-called historical work, invariably fall into petty biography, and lose themselves and the yawning reader in vapid maunderings concerning the personal characteristics of an obscure throng of mediocre and commonplace nobodies whose chief claim to immortality lies in their passive respectability and the willingness of their posterity to subscribe for five copies of the book.

To this class may be added, furthermore, those numerous works which treat of the history of one special branch of the healing art, or of the progress made by medicine during a given time; as, for example, "South's Craft of Surgery in England," or the writer's modest volume on Medicine in the Nineteenth Century Series. Such works cannot be regarded in the serious light of history any more than the German haystack school of literature already referred to; but all go together, let us hope, to form a vasty bulk which patiently awaits the Rontgen rays of the historian that is yet to arrive among us.

"I do not see why one should speak disparagingly of a history of medicine," Dr. Lewellys Barker remarks in a letter; "it seems to me that the historical side, more than any other, is what is neglected." It is of the histories, and not of the history, that I have been speaking in the foregoing; but to turn now to the latter, it certainly is neglected in more ways than one.

The whole fabric of law is built up of historical precedents. It has no past, for the past of law, strictly speaking, is a vital part of its present. In theology the same fact holds good t similar, or even a greater degree. The *beaux arts* in like mann carry their history with them through all their revolutions and into every new field of fancy, living over and over the doctrines of the past, and repeating periodically both their blunders and their triumphs. as Mr. Tress, of London, repeats every decade or so the contour of discarded silk hats. Poets and hatters, lawyers and painters, ecclesiastics and musicians alike batten perpetually upon the glory and stupidity of their past histories; and while this may be, and I think is, an indication of their limitations, the benefit is still very great in the case of all, especially the latter, keeping warm the enthusiasm in the subject, spurring on the ambitious to new feats of strength or audacity, and lending a pride and an *ésprit de corps* to all the members of each separate guild.

But in medicine, behold the dispiriting contrast! The day of the boldest or of the profoundest medical thinker can only be ephemeral. As a horse is damned by its teeth, so the great and brilliant medical work, that basked for a brief space in the noisy applause of the profession, presently succeeds in eliciting only a reluctant respect, rapidly sinking into a position of tacit, and then of outspoken contempt, and too soon into utter oblivion. Then, indeed, it goes down unnoticed into the Hades of the second-hand bookseller's cellar, into which shadowy realm of spectral sadness the present writer, like Dante at the heels of Virgilius Maro, has often descended behind Mr. Albert Britnell, bearing a flickering lanthorn into that zone of shadow.

Eheu! fugaces. O Reynolds, Holmes, and all thy silent train! Heberden there I saw; the august Boerhaave, oh, heavy change: Cullen, with his masterly description of the best method of practising variolous inoculation; Rokitansky, fallen on evil days; Schwann, the apostle of cells who had been thrust down by Jove into a cellar; Sydenham, Brodie, Andral and Bichat were there, and also Marshall Hall, too disgusted to even pick a quarrel; Galen and Hippocrates with their pig-skin bindings gone beyond repair: Francis de le Boë—but

> Multis ille bonis flebilis occidit,
> Nul.i flebilior quam mihi.

And is this well? Would not even the student at his clinic take a more enlightened interest in the case of pneumonia if he knew the story of Count Leopold Auenbrugger, the old Viennese physician, or called to mind as he adjusted his stethescope the weird boyhood of Hyacinthe Laënnec, walking while a tender lad amid the camps and the hospitals of the French Reign of Terror, and forming there the foundations of his character?

In the pages of a few of the medical writers of the present day kindly homage is rendered to the names of those who have adorned the history of medicine. In Erichsen's noble work on Surgery there are very numerous references to the surgeons of past time. Hilton Fagge, also, in his Practice of Medicine, was not forgetful of those who had added lustre to the science, while in America, Osler, though restricted in space to a single volume, still finds it possible to acknowledge the labors of earlier investigators.

In the majority of the smaller text-books, however, the writers' facts must commend themselves to a favorable reception for the same reason as do the eggs of the huckster. Freshness is all in all, and then, brevity. Possibly this may be due to a certain extent to the medical book market (an implication that the author writes for the publisher and not that the publisher publishes for the author), for this book market consists largely of very practical practitioners, and haunted medical students, the latter frantically hurling themselves from examination to examination; and, if they fall, falling heroically with a cram compend in each hand. The practitioner in his haste and the student goaded by terror are not in a mood for leisurely retrospect or placid reflection, and to them the history of medicine will never probably appeal, under any circumstances. On the other hand, as has been shown, even those most interested in the subject have much reasonable fault to find with the solemn dulness of the performances already put forward; for the style is rambling, and the matter, though sufficiently ancient, yet insufficiently illuminated as ancient things ought to be. "It is," in fact, to apply the words of Touchstone, "the right butter-woman's rate to market. For a taste:"

From the most remote times (with Touchstone's grimace) the healing art was practised by priests and kings, and among the Chosen People a considerable degree of medical knowledge was early displayed. Indeed, no race of antiquity evinced so prudent a regard for the laws of sanitary science; and though the Egyptians, as Baron Larrey and the Parisians do vainly boast, engaged very extensively in the practice of *post-mortems*, contrast with such a vaunt the knowledge of *Comparative Anatomy* which the Levitical priesthood would gradually acquire through the practice of making burnt offerings of the cattle of the laity; on which occasions the abdominal viscera alone were burnt, and the remainder, with the exception of the hoofs and the horns, solemnly devoured by the sacred brethren, a custom in gastronomy, as far as rejecting the hoofs and horns and intestines goes, which succeeding ages have sedulously copied from that sacred origin. Nor are other instances wanting to clearly indicate a sagacity in the rules of hygiene which more than anticipates the discoveries of modern times. Take, by way of example, that noble utterance in Sacred Writ (Deut. xiv. 21) where the inspired writer admonishes the Holy People as follows:

"Ye shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself; thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates that he may eat it: or thou mayest sell it unto an alien, for thou art an holy people."

Here we see beautifully exemplified—*Pace*, Wilford Herriman—a candid dislike to the use of animals as food which have fallen dead of disease.

The historian having been supposed, in this strain, to have also said all that is to be said regarding medicine in Egypt and in Babylon, the beaten track of medical history leads straight to Hindostan, where the Shastras of the Sanscrit medical writers should be assailed in either the Wise or the Müller spirit; then back to Hellas, on to Rome, through the Arabian interregnum of Avicenna, Rhazes and Avenzoar, across the Middle Ages by way of Salerno and the Universities to the Iatro-Physical and the Iatro-Chemical schools, and behold—Rosicrucianism lies moribund!

Expiring Vitalists fade away into shadows! Phlogiston has become a thing of the past! Leeuwenhoek turns in his grave for Amici has got his lenses to working at last and we are face to face with modern medicine! Into this splendid realm may we on the present occasion, like Moses, discreetly die rather than enter.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter." Here we have an art which is older than all others. The graduate of the vernal equinox now approaching will be able to look back through forty centuries, and find before him the same difficult duties that perplexed the followers of the Memphian Imhotep, the identical problems that drew the lines of care on the brow of Hippocrates. Surely with the more pride he will claim membership in a profession less open to the charge of mercenary cunning or petty selfishness or vulgar hypocrisy than any other; a profession which with venerable dignity towers far above the extraneous farcical elements with which all professions are inevitably surrounded; a profession which, as it is assailed now on all sides by discordant cries and ludicrous pretentions and pseudo-sciences and multiform impostures, has ever been so surrounded by a similar Circean rabble from century to century, and has outlived the menaces of them all, for these are but the ephemeral gnats that hover about a statue of stone.

And this the history of medicine teaches: the unity of aim, the singleness of purpose, the undeviating allegiance to an unchanging ideal through long ages, that can be claimed by no other art, no other fraternity. The spirit is always the same—a note not without a quaint yet despairing touch of humor.

"Medicine is of all the arts,' the Coan practitioner observes in his Law, or gnomon, by which true physicians are to be distinguished from the false, "of all arts the most noble; but, owing to the ignorance of those who practise it, and of those who inconsiderately form a judgment of them, it is at present far behind all the other arts. Their mistake appears to me to arise principally from this: that in the cities there is no punishment connected with the practice of medicine except disgrace, *and that does not hurt those who are used to it.* Such persons are like the figures which are introduced in tragedies, for as they have the shape and dress and personal appearance of an actor, but are not actors, so also physicians are many in title, but very few in reality."

In the Oath also, for Francis Adams' translation of which, in a richly embellished, and, in spite of one or two anachronisms, most artistic illumination, we are indebted to the kindness of Mr. R. L. Gibson of this city, the same dignified spirit is manifested.

Nor in their ethics alone, but in the actual practice of their art also the early physicians display the same qualities of mind with which one associates the best physicians of the present day. In this manner, for example, Aretæus, the Cappadocian, sets down (in his work on Therapeutics) various prescriptions by which the comfort of patients afflicted with cardiac disease may be ensured, letting slip, in his earnest admonishments, a quotation from the national epic: "Mix together some of the hair of wormwood, and of myrtle, and of acacia, and of the manna of frankincense, all sifted; which, being all rubbed up together, are to be added to the cerate of wild vine. But if the sweat be not thereby restrained, the juice of wild grape is to be added to the mixture, and acacia, and gum, and the edible part of sumach, and alum, and dates, and the scented juice of roses. All these things, along with nard, and oil of wild vine are to be applied to the chest; for this, at the same time, cools, and is astrigent. Let him lie in cool air, and in a house having a northern exposure; and if the cool breeze of Boreas breathe upon him, '*it will refresh his soul sadly gasping for breath.*' The prospect should be towards meadows, fountains and babbling streams, for the sweet exhalations from them, and the delightful view, warm the soul and refresh nature. But if from want one is not fortunate enough to possess these things, we must make an imitation of the cool breeze, by fanning with the branches of fragrant boughs, and, if the season of spring, by strewing the ground with such leaves and flowers as are at hand."

"The Physician," quoth dear, pious John Allen, many centuries later, in his *Synopsis Medicinæ*, "The Physician Administers, Nature Heals, and may God, in the meanwhile, mercifully grant his Blessing."

One might continue indefinitely from age to age, and from school to school, turning the pages of the writers on medical doctrine, and ever finding the same purpose, the same altruistic ideal; never, it is true, ostentatiously published and set down, but rather, as in the foregoing, unconsciously admitted, and more to be inferred than definitely apprehended.

And though by considerations of this kind the futile attempt is not made to mantle the fact that, as at the Shearers' Feast, so here, many despicable and base persons, unscrupulous, and urged by the most vulgar motives of gain, have contrived, through all time, to thrust themselves into this serious company of worthy men; the truth still remains that the medical profession has exerted an influence during the past century more beneficent to the human race than any other. Setting its signet upon health and morals, in the scientific sense, it has laid a restraining hand upon the very Fasces of Justice, and by its disinterestedness and its sincerity has appealed to the purest and most exalted feelings of the race.

In every Scene, from Act to Act, and until the dark curtain slowly falls upon the Drama of life, the physician is present and plays a leading part, as well in the most solemn as in the gayest situations. Once, as the cannon slowly cooled all night long, his work was upon moonlit battle-fields, operating in the ominous silence by the flickering light of a lantern. In the purer and more serene civilization which is dawning, and in the last bitter conflict between the grotesque monstrosities of Superstition with which Truth unarmed is still confronted, his place will be in the action itself. Nor upon Marathon nor upon Waterloo hung more palpably the authentic destiny of man.