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DR. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES'S RESIGNATION OF THE PARKMAN PROFESSORSHIP OF ANATOMY IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

SEVERAL weeks since we announced the report that Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes had sent his resignation of the Parkman Professorship of Anatomy in the Medical Department of Harvard University to the University authorities. This report has since been confirmed and the resignation made public, and we therefore feel at liberty to take fitting notice of an event, which marks not merely an approaching change in an important professorship of a foremost centre of medical instruction, but also a retirement from a professorial service of thirty-five years, and therewith from direct connection with the medical profession, of one who has succeeded in performing the, to many, somewhat dry and prosaic duties of a teacher of anatomy, whilst devoting much time to the demands of general literature, and producing, both in prose and verse, some of the most delightful and original contributions which have been made to English literature on this side of the Atlantic.

After graduating from Harvard, Dr. Holmes first applied himself to the study of law, but this proving ungenial he turned his attention to medicine, devoting himself to its study at home and abroad from 1834 to 1836. In 1838, two years after receiving his medical degree, he was elected to and accepted the professorship of anatomy and physiology in Dartmouth College, which he exchanged for the same position in the Harvard Medical School in 1847, succeeding Dr. John C. Warren. He has taught and lectured through successive years since, his instruction being given more especially in anatomy. Physiology was made, a few years ago, a separate department under another professor.

Dr. Holmes has been careful, industrious, and punctual in the discharge of his duties, — brilliant he is sure to be in what he undertakes, — and has made anatomy interesting to his classes, and something more than a mass of dry bones, ill-smelling muscles, long names, and musty relations, which is too apt to be the light in which it is regarded by the average student. His personal qualities and acquirements — his broad views, his clear, incisive well-chosen English, his nervous, animated delivery, his wit even — have unquestionably, as we have said, increased the reputation of the School with which he has been connected, and rendered the branch which he taught more attractive

to its students; but, on the other hand, it is only fair to say that we think there can be no question that the studies and duties of the professor have been of no little profit to the author, and that possibly a certain tendency to wander among metaphysical speculations has been modified by the acquisition and imparting of a branch of learning based, as anatomy is, upon observed facts and analogies deduced therefrom.

Dr. Holmes practiced medicine for some years, but withdrew from its practice in 1849; he was also for a time connected with the Massachusetts General Hospital as a visiting physician, and was a member of various medical societies. His relation to Medicine, apart from his duties as a teacher, will be best seen by a glance at a list of what he has written and published on medical subjects.

In 1838 his Boylston Prize Dissertations for 1836–37 were published. That for 1836 was on Indigenous Intermittent Fever in New England. In 1837 the two prizes for the two subjects proposed were taken by his essays, one being on the Nature and Treatment of Neuralgia, the other on the Utility and Importance of Direct Exploration in Medical Practice. A review of these essays appeared in the *North American Review* for July, 1838; the first one, that for 1836, on Intermittent Fever in New England, retains very considerable interest and importance for professional and general readers at the present moment.

Two lectures on Homœopathy and its Kindred Delusions were addressed to the Boston Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, and appeared in 1842, and a report on Medical Literature was published in the Transactions of the American Medical Association for 1848. An essay on Puerperal Fever as a Private Pestilence should not be omitted from this list, for it manifested much sound scientific judgment and reasoning; this was first printed in 1843, and reprinted with additions in 1855. Some More Recent Views on Homœopathy appeared as a contribution to the *Atlantic Monthly* for December, 1857.

When the old custom of delivering formal introductory and valedictory lectures to the students at the opening and closing of the winter's work at the Harvard Medical School still obtained, several of these were given by Dr. Holmes, and published by the classes who were privileged to hear them in pamphlet form. The introductory lecture delivered before the medical class of Harvard University in November, 1861, after some slight revisions, was published in book form in 1862, under the title of *Border Lines of Knowledge in Some Provinces of Medical Science*. In March, 1858, Dr. Holmes delivered a valedictory address at the annual commencement to the graduating class of the Harvard Medical School.

This lecture and the essays and papers previously referred to, except the Boylston Prize Dissertations and the report on Medical Literature, were published together in book form in 1861, the volume becoming well known and widely read under the title, *Currents and Counter-Currents*.

The productions hitherto referred to are all of a professional character. An address entitled *Mechan-*

ism in Thought and Morals, delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard in 1870, has a semi-professional character, and has gone through six editions in book-form, with notes and afterthoughts, as a separate publication. The chapter on the History of Medicine in Boston, in the Memorial History of the city, published in 1880 on the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of its founding, was written by Dr. Holmes and Dr. S. A. Green.

Several shorter communications on medical subjects and biographical notices from Dr. Holmes's pen are scattered through the pages of this journal, to which he has been a frequent and ever-valued contributor, a warm and constant friend and supporter.

But several more important contributions within the last few years, which have not yet been republished, deserve especial mention. The dedicatory address at the opening of the new building and hall of the Boston Medical Library Association, of which Dr. Holmes is the president, was a scholarly and characteristic production on the congenial subject of books and libraries, offered to a congenial audience of old friends and associates. It was read December 3, 1878, and was published in this journal.¹ His reply, in the same official capacity as president of this Association, on the occasion of the presentation of the portrait of Dr. J. B. S. Jackson, also appeared in these columns;² and in the same volume,³ a little later, the poem written for and read at the Centennial Anniversary of the Massachusetts Medical Society, June 8, 1881. Dr. Holmes's last contribution to the JOURNAL, and almost his latest appearance in print, was a lecture on Medical Highways and Byways.⁴ This lecture was delivered before the students of the Medical Department of Harvard University, May 10, 1882, and in some respects was an outgrowth and amplification of his lectures on Homœopathy and Kindred Delusions thirty years earlier before another audience.

Dr. Holmes resigned his professorship that he might have more leisure to devote to literary work of an especially congenial nature, and not, we are glad to understand, from any consciousness of decreasing strength. If we are correctly informed, a finally revised edition of his works will be prepared under his personal supervision, than which there can be no more agreeable or suitable occupation for the green years following the threescore and ten of an author who, though having written much, has given nothing to the world of which he has cause to be ashamed.

Although Dr. Holmes has severed the chief link connecting him directly with the medical profession, we still hope he may long be spared to us as an eminently happy and characteristic type of the best products of New England.

— The President has appointed George E. Waring, of Newport, R. I., a member of the National Board of Health in place of Dr. Charles F. Folsom, of Massachusetts, resigned.

¹ Vol. xcix., page 745.

² Vol. civ., page 560.

³ Page 577.

⁴ Vol. cvi., page 505.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SURGEON-GENERAL, U. S. A.

THE Report of the Surgeon-General of the United States Army is always an interesting document, but more for its allied interests than for the figures of casualties and sickness in our present army. It deals in reminiscences to a certain extent. The severest work of the Department has grown out of the war of twenty years ago, and the portions of the report of most general interest refer to the Pension Department and the literary labors now being accomplished under the direction of the Surgeon-General.

In the Record and Pension Division information has been sought in regard to 61,630 cases during the year embraced in the report, which was an excess of 6590 in excess of similar applications the previous year. Answers have been furnished in 61,079 cases.

Reference is made in this connection to a progressive increase in the difficulty of search for record of the hospital treatment of soldiers who served in the late war. As time elapses claimants appear to be more than ever unable to furnish definite information concerning the date and place of their treatment. There is much evidence at hand to establish the fact that this difficulty does not arise from defective memory alone. It is to be regretted that there is too often a manifest failure on the part of those preparing declarations for pensions in pressing inquiries upon these important points, as it is the cause of much of the delay hitherto charged to this Office.

The detail of any sufficient number of clerks upon the very important work of copying the large number of worn and mutilated records now on hand, and rapidly accumulating, has been prevented by the increasing demand for replies to the Commissioner of Pensions. With the prospective addition to the clerical force, it is intended that this work shall at once be taken up, and the preservation of evidence contained in these important volumes be made secure by their duplication, so far as may be practicable and consistent with the object for which the increase of force is provided, namely, the final adjudication of all pension claims within a limited number of years.

The idea of a complete alphabetical index of all names borne on the records of the office has been considered and abandoned as impossible of accomplishment without a suspension of all ordinary business. A special examination, with the view of enumerating the names borne on records-in-chief, has been undertaken. On these registers-in-chief there already have been enumerated seven million four hundred and thirteen thousand eight hundred and forty-seven (7,413,847) names of sick, wounded, and deceased soldiers; and when it is considered that these are contained in less than one fourth of the number of volumes known to be on file, the magnitude of the work projected will be more justly appreciated.

The use of the library by the medical profession throughout the country is steadily increasing. Over three hundred requests for information were received during the year, coming from all parts of the United

States, and the total number of letters sent from this branch alone was over one thousand.

The manuscript of volume iv. of the Index Catalogue, which will include the letter E and part of F, is nearly ready, and the first part of it is now going to press.

An estimate has been forwarded for printing volume v., and it is specially desirable that this appropriation be granted in order that no delay may occur in the issue of this work, the practical value of which becomes more and more apparent as successive volumes are published.

The manuscript of the third surgical volume of the Medical and Surgical History of the War is now sufficiently advanced to allow the volume to be completed during the coming session of Congress, if no unforeseen delay in the printing occurs.

The great necessity of a fire-proof building suitable for the accommodation of the Army Medical Museum and Library, and their preservation, still exists. We have yearly noticed the annual statement of the Surgeon-General in regard to this matter, and we again join him in the hope that Congress may be induced to appreciate the great value of the museum, and provide for the fire-proof building required to place the collections beyond the chance of loss or injury.

THE MEDICAL BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.

THE dinner of the Medical Benevolent Society, of which we have spoken in another place, and to which we called attention some time ago, was a most agreeable and noteworthy occasion. The funds of the Association are not large, the recipients of its bounties are not numerous, nor are the sums bestowed large in amount, but its charities are as unobtrusive as the strictest obedience to the scriptural injunction could require, and its object is one of special interest to the readers of the JOURNAL.

No exact account of its origin was given, but the act of its founders in establishing such a society before its charities were required showed the wisest foresight. They had already learned that the life of a physician from a financial point of view was one of little promise, and took steps which should lighten somewhat the burden of poverty, not for themselves or theirs, but for any needy among their fellows in the State.

The growth of their funds from the small annual contributions and occasional donations shows most careful hoarding. Nor does their charity seem open to the reproach of taking away the pride of self-support by fostering dependence. The small number of beneficiaries and the inconsiderable amount bestowed forbid such an unfortunate result.

The accounts of the financial results of the busy lives of medical men as given at the dinner were sufficient to make the most careless and the most prosperous realize the propriety of providing for the future of those left dependent by failure of health or sudden death. That life is the highest which is a conscious

voluntary sacrifice; but if, worn out by the self-sacrifice, it becomes dependent on the charity of a forgetful and ungrateful world it may be one of the most miserable, and we know no object more worthy the contributions of medical men than the alleviations of the misfortunes of their fellow-workers.

One of the results of the anniversary of the Society will be, we doubt not, a more careful attention to the necessary provision for old age on the part of its individual members; but a result we hope to see will be an enlargement of the usefulness of the Society by a notable increase in its funds.

MEDICAL NOTES.

— It is said that the heaviest brain ever weighed in the United States was taken from James H. Madden, who died in Leadville, Colorado, last July. The weight was sixty-two and a quarter ounces. The man was a professional gambler.

— Some of the druggists of Philadelphia have of late got into trouble by substituting in prescriptions ingredients of their own devising for what physicians have ordered. Two of the proven cases are in the practice of a veterinary surgeon, who in one case wrote for sulphate of quinine for a dog, and obtained sulphate of cinchonidia, and in the other received borax instead of boracic acid which he had ordered. A third druggist dispensed eserine sulphate for the eserine bromide that the prescription called for. The local press have been showing up these acts, and the apothecaries have received an advertising more extensive than complimentary.

NEW YORK.

— Thirteen women were graduated at the training school for nurses at Charity Hospital, Blackwell's Island, on the 26th of October. The exercises, at which ex-Mayor Wickham presided, were held in one of the large wards of the hospital, and addresses were made by Mr. Wickham, the Rev. Dr. Colyer, and Commissioner Isaac H. Bailey. Two essays on nursing and a valedictory address were read by the graduates, and a number of prizes were presented.

— At the meeting of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment held October 26th, the Department of Charities and Correction was voted an appropriation of \$1,621,847.50 for the ensuing year, an increase of \$309,347.50 over last year. The commissioners desire to obtain more efficient service in the institutions under their charge, and in order to do this have asked for this increased appropriation to pay the larger salaries necessary for the purpose. The Board of Health was allowed an additional amount of \$10,000 for an increased summer corps of physicians, \$20,000 for contingent expenses, and \$13,000 for hospitals.

— There will be no lack of opportunities for post-graduate instruction in New York this winter. On the 7th of November the first course of lectures will commence at the New York Polyclinic, which has been organized for the purpose of teaching purely

clinical medicine and surgery, didactic lectures forming no part of the plan of instruction at the institution. A portion of the college building, which is located in East Thirty-Fourth Street, is occupied by a free dispensary under the management of the Faculty, and the class, which will be divided into sections of a limited number, will, in addition, receive bedside and operating-room instruction in the various hospitals and other medical institutions with which the members of the Faculty are connected. There will be five sessions of six weeks each during the season, and thirty-six clinical lectures will be given on each subject during each session. In order to enable students to attend at whatever time will be most convenient to them they will be admitted at any date, and each ticket will be good for six consecutive weeks. Among the directors are Drs. J. Marion Sims, Frank H. Hamilton, Fordyce Barker, T. A. Emmet, Alfred L. Loomis, and Leonard Webber; and among the members of the Faculty are Dr. James R. Leaming, Professor of Diseases of the Chest; Dr. John H. Ripley, Professor of the Diseases of Children; Dr. E. Darwin Hudson, Professor of General Medicine; Dr. Louis Esberg, Professor of Laryngology and Rhinology; Dr. Landon C. Gray, Professor of Diseases of the Mind and Nervous System, and Electrotherapy; Dr. Andrew R. Robinson, Professor of Dermatology; Dr. John A. Wyeth, Professor of General and Genito-Urinary Surgery; Dr. Paul F. Mundé, Professor of Gynecology and Obstetrics; Dr. David Webster, Professor of Ophthalmology; and Dr. V. P. Gibney, Professor of Orthopedic Surgery. There are also adjunct professors in nearly all of the departments. Dr. Leaming is the president, and Dr. Wyeth the secretary, of the Faculty.

On the evening of Thursday, November 2d, Drs. J. Marion Sims and Harry Marion Sims will give a large reception at the Hotel Brunswick, in honor of Prof. Samuel D. Gross, of Philadelphia.

Miscellany.

THE MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.

THE meeting of the Medical Benevolent Society took place on Thursday evening, October 26th, at Young's Hotel. The guests who sat down to the long tables filled the dining room of the hotel. The menu was excellent, and the company were appreciative.

DR. WILLIAMS, the President of the Society, presided with accustomed grace, and after the clatter of forks and spoons had grown somewhat less energetic, and the smoke of the fragrant Havana was being wafted upwards like the incense of a thank offering, he called upon Dr. Langmaid to illustrate the perpetual youth of music.

In response to toasts to the State and city, letters were read from Governor Long and Mayor Green.

To the third toast, "As an offshoot and auxiliary of the State Medical Society, this Association offers its salutations to the Commander of the Faithful, Alfred

Hosmer, President of the Massachusetts Medical Society," DR. HOSMER responded, speaking of the necessary association of medicine and benevolence. The practice of medicine requires the practice of charity both in a pecuniary and moral sense. The votary of science is more likely to be generous than he is to be rich.

DR. WILLIAMS then gave the following account of the Society from its foundation:—

Twenty-five years ago a few physicians of the Boston Medical Book Club united in organizing this Massachusetts Medical Benevolent Society.

Not, however, as a Mutual Insurance Company, to secure, for its members only, future benefits in a time of distress. Its assistance is extended to all such of the profession or of their families as may need and deserve its aid; and, in fact, thus far but one member has become a beneficiary; all the other recipients of the Society's charity have been from outside its ranks.

Few of the public are aware how scanty is the recompense received from their toilsome labors by the major part of the medical profession in Massachusetts. Some acquire a moderate competency; many obtain a comfortable support during their term of full activity, but can make little provision for disability or waning age; whilst many others have a life long struggle, without being able to secure a hopeful future for those they leave behind them.

Unlike most other corporations, even those organized for benevolent objects, we have no expenses. Our treasurer has kindly served, year after year, as the almoner of our modest bounty, so that the whole amount of our income can be distributed, in all parts of the Commonwealth, in unobtrusive help to those stricken down by infirmity, in comforting the widow, and aiding the fatherless. It is but little we have been able to bestow, but, as we shall be told by our treasurer, even so small a sum as sixty dollars yearly has lightened many a heavy burden and called forth warm thanks from grateful hearts.

The amount of our own contributions has been increased, and our efforts have been encouraged by legacies with which the Society has been endowed by benevolent persons, physicians and others, who have become acquainted with its work. For ourselves, we have not only the pleasure of rejoicing with those whom we have caused to rejoice, but, in our association for these unselfish ends, we have knit still more closely the bonds of professional fellowship. It was thought that this twenty-fifth anniversary should be celebrated in a manner to bring together a large number of the Society, and make the occasion pleasantly remembered, and in order that by an announcement of the results already accomplished the members may see that they have not labored and contributed in vain.

The treasurer, DR. MINOT, then gave some account of the finances of the Society. During the twenty-five years of its existence its property has slowly but steadily increased, and now amounts to \$21,000. The income from this, aided by the annual assessments, enables us to distribute about \$1000 annually among sixteen regular beneficiaries, and a few others who receive occasional aid. The allowance to regular beneficiaries has been raised from \$40 to \$60 yearly, as the state of our funds permitted. The Council has now decided to increase it to \$80. Small as this amount is, it is most gratefully received by the beneficiaries, all of whom are in narrow circumstances. It should be remembered that