

THE FUTURE OF MEDICINE

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649189274

The future of medicine by Sir James Mackenzie

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Cover @ 2017

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SIR JAMES MACKENZIE

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BY

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LONDON

HENRY FROWDE HODDER & STOUGHTON
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS 20, WARWICK SQUARE, E.C.4.

1919

PUBLISHED BY THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF
HENRY FROWDE AND HODDER & STOUGHTON
AT 17, WARWICK SQUARE, NEWGATE
STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.

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1919

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE VISCOUNT KNUTSFORD

A zealous friend of Medical Science.

WHOSE INTEREST IN MEDICINE IS NOT ONLY PERSONAL
BUT HEREDITARY, AND WHOSE DEVOTION TO THE RELIEF
OF SUFFERING HAS LED HIM TO TAKE AN ACTIVE AND
SYMPATHETIC PART IN THE PROGRESS OF MEDICINE.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
KING AND JARRETT, LIMITED,
HOLLAND STREET, BLACKFRIARS,
LONDON, S.E. 1.

PREFACE

MEDICINE is a subject slowly evolving out of a past in which facts and fancies, faiths and beliefs, and even superstitions, were strangely commingled. During the past few centuries it has been gradually shedding many of these beliefs and is daily becoming more exact in its methods, and basing its practice more on reason and less on faith. The subject however is so vast in extent, and its aspects so numerous and varied, that it is difficult to comprehend all its bearings. Advance in knowledge is taking place on such a wide front, that the question may arise whether the concentration of the forces upon one part of the field which, for the time being, is yielding some fruitful results, may divert the movement into paths that are not best suited to achieve the great purpose of medicine. It behoves us to pause, from time to time, to consider what we are doing and whither we are tending. Such a review I have undertaken and the conviction has been forced upon me that the conception of medicine dominant to-day does not direct the pursuit of it by methods best adapted to attain its chief aim.

In order that the reader may understand the conception of medicine, which is the outcome of this review, I give in the first Chapter an outline of the argument, which will be developed with some fulness in the rest of the book. After indicating what is the

chief purpose of medicine, and showing where the methods pursued to-day fail to attain that purpose, the argument proceeds to describe the limitations in education, in practice and in research. From a description of personal experiences, certain inferences can be drawn, which form a basis on which a constructive policy can be developed, and which it is hoped will place the prosecution of the knowledge of medicine on lines helpful to a better knowledge, till it is superseded by another conception. I recognise quite clearly that dealing with such a vast subject, and possessing a dim perception of only a portion of the field, it is vain to suppose one can tell what the morrow may bring forth.

J. M.

New Park,
St. Andrews, N.B.

July, 1919.