

**LECTURE, INTRODUCTORY
TO A COURSE OF
CLINICAL MEDICINE**

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Lecture, introductory to a course of clinical medicine by Samuel Wright

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SAMUEL WRIGHT

**LECTURE, INTRODUCTORY
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CLINICAL MEDICINE**

LECTURE,

INTRODUCTORY TO

A COURSE OF CLINICAL MEDICINE,

DELIVERED IN

THE THEATRE OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE,

BIRMINGHAM,

ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER THE FIRST, 1846.

BY

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Physician to Queen's Hospital, and Professor of Clinical Medicine in Queen's College, Birmingham;
Physician to the General Dispensary; formerly Professor, of *interio*, of Pathology, in the
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Fellow of the Botanical Society, &c.

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MDCCKLXVII.



TO THE

REV. JAMES THOMAS LAW, M.A.

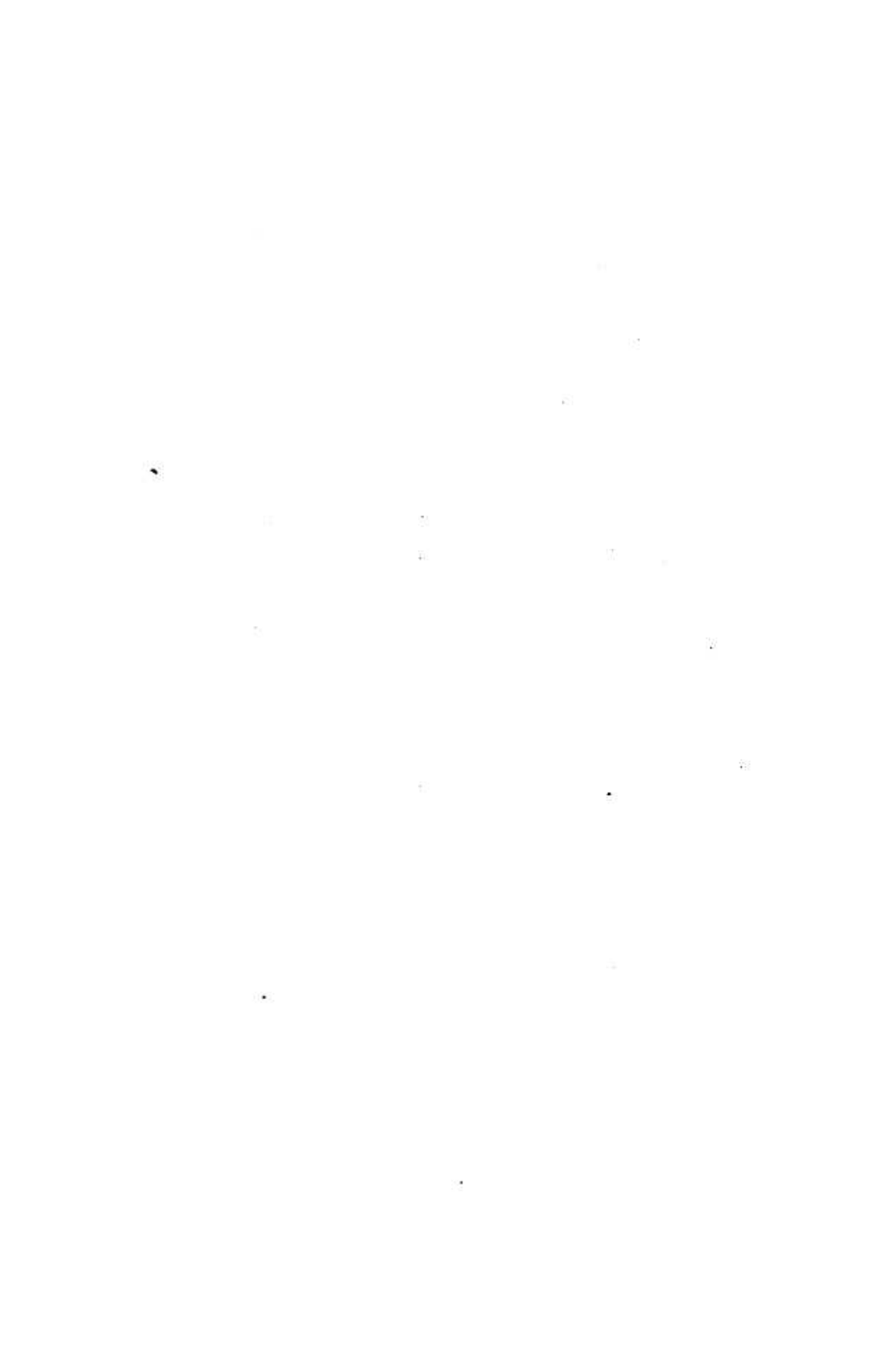
Chancellor of the Diocese of Litchfield.

VICE-PRINCIPAL OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, BIRMINGHAM.

THIS LECTURE IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR.



LECTURE.

GENTLEMEN,

IN appearing before you, for the first time, as a teacher of Clinical Medicine, it becomes me to introduce myself and my subject by a few preliminary observations. To head a course of lectures by a specific introductory address, is not usually in good taste; and for the simple reason, that, such form of address is likely to comprehend a certain amount of irrelevant or unnecessary matter; whilst the lecturer, in thus enforcing the claims of the science he teaches, is particularly apt to exaggerate its importance. Fortunately, on this occasion, I am somewhat exempt from a liability to these errors; for a preface to my particular duties is required of me at this time; and the subject of those duties so paramountly concerns yourselves, as students and future practitioners, that I cannot too strongly advocate the necessity of its cultivation.

The position I hold, as one of the Professors of Clinical Medicine in this College, is consequent upon my Physicianship in Queen's Hospital. When honoured with that appointment, I was apprised that it involved also the responsibility of clinical instruction. To this I assented; and I am now happy in the opportunity of proceeding, to the best of my ability, with the fulfilment of my obligations.

I cannot, with a prefatory license allowed me, lose the present occasion of congratulating the Patrons, Professors, and Pupils, of this College, on its recent improvements, its present flourishing condition, and its prospects of permanent

and increasing celebrity. The untiring and most laborious exertions of its Founder; the wise counsel and active superintendence of the noble Lord, its Principal; and the generosity, judgment, and personal attention, of the Worshipful Chancellor, its Vice Principal; have contributed to give it a title to eminence amongst the schools of learning and science, and lead us to hope, that, it will hereafter stand alone as the source of medical instruction for the midland district of England.

Particularly do I congratulate the junior part of my auditory, on the facilities for classical and mathematical studies, with their several appliances, which are now afforded in this institution. It cannot fail that great benefit will be the issue of this most judicious provision. It has been an opprobrium of our profession, that, though claiming the distinction of "learned," the justice of the claim is rather an exception than a rule. Unhappily, we are not yet in a position to prove that the opprobrium is altogether undeserved. We meet with frequent proofs how much wiser, and better, and more generous to each other, we shall be, after the education preliminary to the study of medicine, shall have increased in amplitude and refinement. The many who desert our ranks for the quarters of quackery, and the many more, who, under a seeming propriety, cast a constant shadow of disgrace upon our honourable calling, are painful proofs how wanting we yet are in those accessory studies, which not only improve a man's mind, but his morals also. Scarcely a week passes, but our periodicals have to tell the tale of some practitioner forgetting his duty to himself, or to another, and perpetrating such acts as would lead to his instant expulsion from any community rigidly governed by an honourable system of laws. Such offenders would not pass unpunished, were we, *toto cælo*, an incorporated body, provided with the means of exposing or expelling those

who do us dishonour. In the absence of this great desideratum, which I fear will never be supplied, we can only, in rational hope, fall back upon the influence of education. It is in the want of this, that is chiefly to be found the origin of unworthy character. As a rule, men are not good, or are not learned, because they have not been properly disciplined.

"T is education forms the common mind;
Just as the twig is bent, the tree 's inclined."

Infuse right precepts into the *boy*, and see that he loves and cherishes them—and you have good ground for prejudging the character of the *man*.

The great source of our profession's prosperity and advancement, must be the efficient tutoring of the future practitioner. Medicine is now, a very different subject to what it was half a century ago—its disciples are growing wiser and better every day—and we hail the time when it shall fully realize the dignity which should peculiarly distinguish it. To this most desirable consummation, education will be the only sure contributor. We raise a constant cry for reform in the profession, but depend upon it, if we are to begin at the beginning, we must reform our individual selves. We, as integrants, being made better, the sum of us will necessarily be better also.

It rejoices me to be able to say, that, the great scheme of improved and extended medical instruction, especially the preliminary part of it, is in no school better, and in few schools so well, provided for, as in this. The introductory discipline and tuition, under our accomplished resident masters, without being severe, is yet sufficiently strict, to ensure that the *alumni* committed to their charge, shall have secured to them the choicest advantages of classical and mathematical study. Privileges like these, gentlemen, you cannot too highly prize. If you rightly avail your-