

**LECTURES ON THE PRINCIPLES AND
METHODS OF MEDICAL
OBSERVATION AND RESEARCH FOR
THE USE OF ADVANCED STUDENTS
AND JUNIOR PRACTITIONERS**

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Lectures on the Principles and Methods of Medical Observation and Research for the Use of
Advanced Students and Junior Practitioners by Thomas Laycock

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PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF MEDICAL OBSERVATION AND RESEARCH

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AND JUNIOR PRACTITIONERS.

BY

THOMAS LAYCOCK, M.D., F.R.S.E., F.R.C.P.
PROFESSOR OF THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE, AND OF CLINICAL MEDICINE IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH, ETC. ETC.

*Homo, naturæ minister et interpres, tantum facit et intelligit quantum de naturæ
ordine re vel mente observaverit;—non amplius scit aut potest.*



PHILADELPHIA: .
BLANCHARD AND LEA.
1857.

TO THE STUDENTS
OF
THE EDINBURGH SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
THESE PAGES
ARE VERY GRATEFULLY
INSCRIBED
BY THE AUTHOR.



PREFATORY NOTE.

WHEN about to enter for the first time upon his duties as Professor of Clinical Medicine, and to deliver the summer course of Clinical Lectures for 1856, in the University of Edinburgh, the author looked about for some elementary work on the inductive philosophy which he could recommend to his class, for their instruction and guidance in clinical observation and research. He found several sufficiently able manuals of *physical diagnosis* adapted to students; and good elementary works on the uses of the microscope and on the *routine* of the clinical wards, with systematic instructions "how and what to observe." But he found none which instructs the medical student in a simple and easy form how to use his reason; none which explains to him in especial the nature of the men-

tal processes by which knowledge is acquired in his particular sphere of labor; none which teaches him the applications to practical medicine of those aids to the intellectual powers which modern inductive philosophy uses so commonly and so efficiently. The student would inquire in vain for a short and practical exposition of the numerical method of research, in its special applications to practical medicine, or of that still more effective and philosophical method, the *analogical*; a method which, when once understood, is singularly easy of application, and equal (the writer is deeply convinced) to the solution of all the problems of life and organization that it is possible for the intellect of man to conceive, however profound they may be. A method, in short, of unlimited powers, and specially adapted to the needs of medical science.

It is quite true that numerous well-written works on logic and mental philosophy are accessible to the medical in common with other students of science; but the medical student requires something more peculiarly adapted to his special need. He is, in truth, in an exceptional position in the

scientific world. The difficulties of medical observation and inquiry "can be adequately conceived" (as Sir Henry Holland most truly remarks), "by the medical man alone. Neither those accustomed to legal evidence only, nor such as have pursued physical science in its more simple material forms, can rightly apprehend the vast difference made by the introduction of the principle of life; or yet more, of the states and phenomena of mind, in connection with bodily organization. WE HAVE HERE A NEW WORLD OF RELATIONS, occult and complex in their nature, to be reasoned upon and resolved, with a principle of change, moreover, ever operating among them, and deviations from nature, under the forms of disease, which render all conclusions liable, in a thousand ways, to error." Such difficulties are not smoothed to the medical student by the works referred to, very able though they be. Undoubtedly there are works devoted expressly to "medical logic." Thirty-five years ago Sir Gilbert Blane published such a volume; and very lately (1851) the council of the Sydenham Society printed a translation by Dr. Whitley, of Oesterlen's "Medi-