As a physician you should be hopeful, and not indiscreetly abandon cases usually considered hopeless. Hope creates ideas, generates new expedients, brings up useful reflection, and leads to fresh endeavors. Indeed, it has been said that the only way to get cured, and render impossibility possible, after a physician loses hope and gives you up, is to give him up.

The faculty of keeping hope and confidence alive in the bosom of the patient and of his friends is a great one, and the look with which you meet them has much to do with this; a bright, fresh, thoughtful countenance, and an easy, cheerful, soothing, professional air and manner are powers that will well-nigh always impart tranquillity and repose to your patient's mind and carry him with you toward recovery. A cheering word sometimes rekindles the lamp of hope, and does the timorous and despondent as much, or more, good than a prescription. It is, therefore, your duty to gain and retain the confidence of your patient and his friends by all honorable means,—to be gay, pleasant, amusing, serious, or sympathizing, as occasion requires.

It is often very pleasing to the sick to be allowed to tell, in their own way, whatever they deem important for you to know; allow to all a fair, courteous hearing, and, even though Mr. Humdrum's and Mrs. Lengthy's long statements are tedious, do not abruptly cut them short, but endure and listen with calm, respectful attention. A patient may deem a symptom very important that you know to be otherwise, yet he will not be satisfied with your views unless you show sufficient interest in all the symptoms at least to hear them described. When, for want of time, you cannot listen further, or where the recital grows too tedious and becomes too irrelevant, do not lose temper or manifest any annoyance, or check him by a rude order to "stop," but quietly ask him a diverting question about his sickness, or to show his tongue, or feel his pulse, as if completing your examination. Such expedients often serve the purpose with hypochondriacal men, garrulous women, and tedious chronics in general.



To be quick to see and understand your duty, and equally prompt and self-reliant in doing it, as if possessed of inborn acuteness of perception and of intuitive skill, is one of the strongest points you can possess, and gives easy advantage over Dr. Lazi, Dr. Dragg, and Dr. Dullhead, who mildly and formally perform their part, and are as painfully slow, undetermined, and cautious, as if every pebble were a rock and every molehill a mountain. People invariably admire and appreciate the man who can take the responsibility in critical moments; indeed, a bold, prompt act, done at the opportune moment, with steadiness of mind and nerve, if successful, often creates a species of faith bordering on professional idolatry.

Capital operations in surgery illustrate this: the manual parts—expertness with the knife, etc.—are deeply impressive, and receive vastly more praise from the crowd than knowing when to operate and how to conduct the after-treatment. Indeed, the public imagine that the comparative scarcity of surgeons is because but few of our number dare to do great operations. The truth is, almost every physician does minor surgery,—adjusts fractures, reduces dislocations, etc.,—and would prepare to perform capital operations but for the reason that only a few are required to do all there is to be done, and only a very few can live by it. A large city with its hundreds of physicians will have less than a dozen who are prepared to do capital operations, and the majority of these have a great deal more medical than surgical practice.

If you know a patient's ailments so well as to sit down and tell him and his friends exactly how he feels better than he can tell you, he will be apt to believe all you afterward say and do. Mind-reading, or the study of character, is part of your duty. To be many-sided; to possess flexibility of temper and suavity of manner, self-command, quick discernment, address, ready knowledge of human nature, and the happy genius of honestly adapting yourself to varying circumstances and to all people, at the couch of splendor and the squalid cot, are great necessities

in our checkered profession. You will meet patients of various and even of directly opposite temperaments and qualities: the refined lady and the hod-carrier, the clergyman and the beer-seller, the aged and the young, the hopeful and the despondent, the bold and the diffident, the profound and the superficial. Let each and all find in you his ideal. Seek to penetrate the character of each, and to become an adept in adapting your manner and language to whoever and whatever is before you.

If you also have the self-command to control your emotions, temper, and passions, and to maintain a cool, philosophic equipoise and inflexible serenity of countenance, under the thousand irritative provocations given to you by foolish patients and their querulous and rude, or fidgety friends, who rile at your coming too early or too late, too often or not often enough, or accuse you of giving the wrong medicine or in the wrong doses, of being too fast or too slow, it will give you great advantage at the critical moment over nervous, quick-tempered, and excitable physicians who unguardedly blurt out with "——,:;—— !! ?? ——* ? !!! ——!! ——?", and will generally redound both to your advantage and credit.

A brusque, tornado-like manner, or eccentric rudeness, is fatal to a physician's success unless sustained by unquestionable skill or reputation. A simple, humane, gentle, and dignified manner and low tone of voice are suitable to the largest part of the community.

"Manners gentle, discourse pure."

Remember that a rough, unfeeling, abrupt, indelicate, sour, or arbitrary manner, as if the heart were a butcher's, or made of marble, is quite different from the serene composure and intelligent sympathy acquired by constant attendance upon the sick and suffering. The former is brutal and unprofessional; the latter is essential to enable you to weigh correctly and manage diseases skillfully.

If you chance to inherit any slight but pleasant peculiarity of character or singularity of manner it will be noticed,



and, if not disagreeable, will do you no harm;* but never assume one for the sake of making an impression on the public, for the counterfeit is easily detected by all sensible men and women. Be not only a gentleman, but also a gentle man, and act out your own natural character everywhere and at all times, among the rich and the poor (no man has two natural manners). Besides making himself ridiculous, a physician who assumes a fictitious, mysterious, or rude manner must either be wrong-hearted or weak-headed.

If, moreover, you possess fluency of language, or the gift of conversational power, or gentleness or tenderness of manner, or great natural courtesy, or a never-failing stock of politeness, facility of expression, or a talent for illustrating your points by apt comparisons, or a bold, resolute way of encountering professional puzzles, or of deftly cutting the many Gordian knots so often encountered, it will help you decidedly. If, on the contrary, there is any point in which you are deficient, study and practice until you attain it.

When you reach a patient's house ascertain, if possible, from whoever meets you, his condition, etc., that you may know with what manner to approach him, especially in cases of severe illness, in which it is important to show him no surprise, nor to disturb him with questions that can be avoided.

Never leave a bedside before qualifying yourself to communicate your ideas and opinions of a case to the inquiring friends of the patient clearly, in well-chosen and faith-inspiring language, in case they should be asked.

Never utter a diagnosis or a prognosis in a hurry or flurry. Give your opinion only after sufficient thought, and, if possible, do not afterward change it. Also, to prevent being misunderstood, avoid making varying statements about a case to different inquirers from time to time, but, as nearly as possible, use the same tactful words and apply exactly the

*It is said that the *thee* and *thou* of Dr. Fothergill, of London, was worth £2000 per year to him.

same terms to the disease, and even more particularly in consultation cases.

Act toward timid children and nervous patients so as to remove all dread of your visits. Avoid a set, sad countenance, and a formal or funereal solemnity of manner, as these would excite thoughts of crape, hearse, undertaker, and tombstone, and a fear of you, especially if you associate them with a corresponding style of dress. If you have a lengthened, severe visage, simulating

"A walking prayer-meeting,"

or your air and movements are awkward, sombre, severe, smileless or singular, offset them by enforced cheerfulness, suitable dress, etc.

When you visit a patient, neither tarry long enough to become a bore and give rise to the wish that you would go, nor make your visit so brief or abrupt as to leave the patient with the impression that you have not given his case the necessary attention.

To evince an earnest, anxious, tender interest in the welfare of patients, and serious attention to the nature of their disease, and sympathy with their sufferings, as if you were present in mind as well as in body, is another very strong, faith-inspiring quality. To find occasion to assure a sufferer that you will take the same care of him as though he were your "own brother," or, in case it be a female, as if she were your "own sister," or to assure a female in labor that you will be as gentle in making the necessary examinations as if she were an infant, and similar truthfully-meant expressions of sincere sympathy and interest, and letting your conduct be such that they may feel it is so, inspire great confidence, and are often quoted long after the physician has used them.

"A little thing often helps."

The world is full of objects of pity, and it may be that no really busy physician can devote full time and exert his utmost skill in every case that appeals to him, or throw into it his



whole heart, undivided force, thoughts, feelings, and intellectual strength; or even feel deep interest in the agonies, the woes, the bruises, the afflictions, and sufferings of every patient to whom he is called; if he did, the endless chain of misery with which he is brought in contact would prove to be too great a strain on his sensibilities, and, through overcare and grief, would soon unfit him for active practice. But you can, and should at least, make a careful examination, in a grave and thoughtful manner, manifest humane anxiety and intelligent interest, and show uniform kindness in all cases, and avoid exhibiting a rough, abrupt manner, unfeeling, thoughtless haste, or chilly indifference in any. Be careful to approach the sick, rich and poor alike, with noiseless step, with kindly, hopeful greeting, and gentle, thoughtful speech. The possession of a feeling of true humanity, or the lack of it, in a physician, can in no way be so accurately judged as in his questioning and examination of the sick; the soothing voice, the tender touch, and the sympathetic feeling tend not a little to soften the pillow of sorrow and affliction.

In examining the sick, be especially careful to use *the professional touch*, and avoid inflicting pain in delicate and painful parts, and assuage their fears and oversensitiveness by assurances that you will not cause any more suffering than is unavoidable, and then proceed to make good your words. He who possesses such manner and tact naturally will not, cannot, fail to gain devoted patients, who will willingly trust and retain him in preference to all others, even though they know his general reputation for skill to be far below that of professional neighbors.

Human life is precious above all on earth; but some persons think that being so often in contact with sickness and death naturally makes physicians less alive to life's value and more callous to suffering than other men, and nothing is more gratifying to all, and especially to such as are interested in one who is lying sick, than to hear the physician expressing a lofty

estimate of the value of human life in general, and why the life then at stake is specially valuable, and worthy of an earnest determination on the part of all to save it if possible.

For ultimate success you must, of course, depend chiefly on your skill in curing the sick. You will find, nevertheless, that but few patients—probably not one in twenty—can estimate the amount of technical and scientific knowledge you possess. The majority are governed by the care and devotion you exhibit, and form their opinion and rate your services by the little details of routine attention, which is additional evidence that mere skill is not all that is necessary to make a successful physician.

While civil and urbane to all, without distinction, be especially courteous to female attendants on the sick; for woman, noble woman! as true to duty as Diana, with voice soft, gentle, and low, and the look of heaven in her face, is, and ever will be, the angel of the sick-room,—

"Sweet is her voice in the season of sorrow,"—

and you, as a physician, cannot fail to witness many touching evidences of her tender ministrations; and heroic, unselfish devotion as mother, wife, sister, daughter, nurse, or friend to the sick and suffering, watching around the bedside by day and by night, and ministering with an angel's spirit, even at the risk of her own life.

"Woman, fairest of creation, God's last and best gift to man."

After a patient convalesces, or when it is not necessary to visit him daily, if, when you chance to be attending in his neighborhood, you send to inquire how he is getting along, it will not only give you the desired information, but will also impress him and his with a grateful sense of your interest in the case. Having a sick child taken up for examination, carrying your patient to the light that you may see him fully and examine him carefully, also having his urine, or his sputa, or the blood spat, etc., saved for examination, will not only give you much necessary information as to the patient's condition, but also satisfy him and the family of your interest and solicitude, and of your anxiety to fulfill your duty. A like effect is also produced by paying one your first visit in the morning, or the last at night, or staying, in urgent cases, to see that the medicine produces the desired effect, and such things help to make the cure.



You will find that, in times of sudden sickness and alarm in families, there is a peculiar susceptibility to strong impressions, and kindness and extra attention shown them in such emergencies is doubly appreciated. Often even a single kind expression, opportunely uttered, is long remembered. Indifference, coldness, a slight offense, an inopportune remark, an unlucky word, or an impatient ejaculation, may, on the contrary, sever attachments and terminate friendships that have existed between the physician and the family for years, in as many moments. Many a young physician gains a hold on the hearts of a good family, becomes beloved, and secures the family permanently by the exhibition of good, hopeful intentions, and simple kindness and assiduous attention in those dreadful accidents and emergencies that alarm friends and distress families; and, also, in cases of colic, convulsions, and the like; or by sleepless anxiety and faithful, devoted, and unwearied attention, trying to steer here to avoid this rock, and there to escape that eddy, in cases of typhoid fever, scarlet fever, etc., where, perhaps, life hangs, day after day, as if by a single thread.

A powerful lever to assist in establishing your professional reputation will be found in curing the long-standing cases so often seen among the poverty-stricken. Many of these poor, disease-ridden sons and daughters of poverty are curable, but require greater attention in regard to the details, and a great deal more care, strength, and personal superintendence than old-established physicians, whose time is monopolized by acute cases, can possibly devote to them. If you are seriously in earnest, use your best judgment, and persevere with them until a cure is effected; your special interest and anxious attention will