

CHAPTER VIII.

"Call not on Hercules for help; his aid
Ne'er serves the man who will not serve himself.
Thine own arm must the conflict meet,
Thy purpose being the victory."

It does not require the eye of a Newton or the brain of a Bacon to discover that self-reliance and self-possession are capitally important elements of success. Nothing under the sun will cause people to believe in and rely on you more readily and permanently than to see you believe in and rely on yourself. Your own faith will promote faithfulness. Be not arrogant or self-conceited, and exhibit neither rashness nor weakness, but cultivate self-reliance and the power of thinking and acting in the midst of excitement and distracting forces, and endeavor to conceal all doubts, hesitations, uncertainties, self-distrust, and apprehensions as completely as possible.

"The wise and brave conquer difficulties
By daring to attempt them."

Never turn your cases over to "*specialists*," but keep them under your own watchful supervision, unless they present features which render it an actual duty to do so. If you distrust your own capacities, shrink and shirk and timidly refer your cases of eye disease to the oculists, your uterine cases to the gynæcologists, ear cases to aurists, surgical to surgeons, nervous affections to neurologists, throat complaints to laryngologists, mental afflictions to alienists, skin diseases to dermatologists, crooked legs and stubbed toes to orthopædists, warts to a manicure, and so on throughout the list of "ologies," you will lessen your own field of activity, and instead of gaining as much experience with one affection as another, and becoming many-sided and armed at all points,—

"Dexterity comes by experience,"—

you will soon lose all familiarity with the diseases that specialists
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treat, they will be "out of my line," and you will dwindle and degenerate into a mere distributor of cases,—

"One starts the hare, another bags it,"—

a medical adviser instead of a medical attendant,—advancing everybody's professional and pecuniary interest except your own, aiding them to gain the admiration of the community, and to make reputation and fees out of that which sinks your own individuality, robs your own purse, and throws (little) you into the shade. A good rule is this: Consult, in cases of irreducible strangulated hernia, stone in the bladder, and in all other capital operations, if you yourself are not, a good operator; also, whenever a serious case, whether in head or body, hand or foot, puzzles or defeats your judgment, or proves wholly unmanageable by usual treatment, or is so grave in prognosis as undoubtedly to require broader shoulders than yours to bear the responsibility, either call in a specialist to aid in its management, or, if need be, turn it over entirely to him. If you study all the branches, and keep yourself abreast of the times, such occasions will soon be very rare to you. Timidity, from a want of confidence in one's own merits, and rashness are both bad traits in a physician, but the former is the greater drawback, since every physician's success must be within himself and must come out of himself, and he must not only have knowledge in his head, but he must have it at his fingers' ends and on his tongue's end, and must not only know how to do a thing, but must also believe that he is able to do it.

Whenever you transfer any one from your care to a specialist's, always do so either by a consultation, a letter, or a personal interview with him, so that he may learn directly from you your diagnosis, prognosis, treatment, etc. You will thereby give him the advantage of your knowledge of the case, and also avoid the risk of any injury to your reputation from an apparently radical difference of opinion between him and yourself; it will also secure your graceful retirement from the case. At the same time, be careful to make your patients fully understand

that in turning their cases over to a surgeon or specialist you have only turned them over *for that special affection*, and do not cease to be their physician in any future sickness.

Ask for a consultation in all important cases in which singular difficulty, or obscurity, or knotty problems are presented, or where any doubt exists as to the diagnosis; also, when you are in doubt as to the propriety of a surgical operation, and in all cases in which you think either the patient's interest, his lack of improvement, the appearance of fresh or puzzling symptoms, or a division or sharing of the responsibility demands it; for then, another eye, or a different mind, or an older or more experienced hand, may be of great service. When from any cause you see that confidence in you is wavering, or that necessity for a consultation is arising, endeavor to anticipate the family by being the first to propose it.

Do not conclude that a request for a consultation always implies a mistrust of your knowledge and skill, for it is oftener due to the natural anxiety of the patient's family and friends. We often perceive the limits of our own resources, and, sympathizing with the patient's friends as to the result of the illness, are most willing and anxious for a consultation. On the other hand, when they wish a consultation, they should respect your feelings and susceptibilities, and make known their wish to you, instead of taking you by surprise by springing a consultant upon you without notice; they should, indeed, never send for a consulting physician without your express consent, yet, when it is done through their ignorance of ethics, the discourtesy had better be condoned and the consultation held, for were you to decline to join a consultation under such circumstances you would incur a grave responsibility.

Consultations lessen personal responsibility and, in some degree, anxiety. Besides, they are highly profitable to the profession in more ways than one, and conducive to the advantages of the sick. When you chance to have bad surgical and other cases, or an operation in which life will be risked, or difficult

or complicated cases of midwifery, or great or anomalous cases of any kind among your personal friends or relatives, or so near home as to involve you personally or socially; or in a neighborhood in which a group of patients is likely to be unfavorably impressed if the result be unfortunate, it is especially necessary and judicious to call in a consulting physician or surgeon to lighten your burden, even though you have him to come for but a single visit,—to satisfy, if for no other reason, the persons concerned.

If possible, always select high-minded, honorable physicians as consultants, who will second your efforts by their skillful knowledge, and at the same time be likely to harmonize with you in the management of your cases; for their kindly sympathy and co-operation may be highly necessary to the welfare of the patient and to your own reputation; but, when a consultation is held merely to satisfy a patient or his friends, it is then better to throw the selection on them, and to accept whoever is offered to you, if he be a regular physician and a gentleman.

When you happen to be the one consulted, do not enter the sick-chamber, or examine the patient before your conferree's arrival, or ask him questions, except in the presence of your conferree, and have all communications in his presence.

Be punctual to the minute in keeping consultation engagements. You have no right to waste another's time in such cases, or to impose upon him the necessity of awaiting idly for you at the place of meeting.

Under ordinary circumstances it rests with the consulting physician and not with the regular attendant to name the hour of meeting.

In your earlier consultations you will often feel no little anxiety and suspense while waiting to see whether the consultant will act fairly toward you and strive to hide your demerits, or whether he will, by nod or wink, hint, question or innuendo, expose your deficiencies to a few, to be told to many, until you

are reduced to a mere cipher in the estimation of those to whom the case is related. To the honor of our profession be it said, that the vast majority of its older members are not only punctilious, but really kind on these occasions, as if still remembering the anxieties and responsibilities of their own early professional lives.

A radical change of diagnosis and of treatment, or a reverse and opposite course in any respect, as the result of a first consultation, often and very naturally impresses the laity with the idea that the previous diagnosis or treatment has been either faulty or actually wrong, and, therefore, unless some real necessity demands it, no material change should be proposed or allowed *at that time*. As a rule, the fewer the apparent changes resulting from a first consultation the better for the family attendant, and especially if he be a *young* physician with insecure reputation.

No physician who has the least regard for honor or principle will persist in an error of which he is aware. If you are ever brought into contact with a colleague who, through what appears to be lack of wisdom, or from self-conceit or sinister motives, persists in differing from an opinion or course that you are sure is correct, or insists on doing what you believe to be maltreatment, or shows culpable neglect, and you fear he may injure you thereby, either withdraw, or insist on calling some eminent member of the profession into the conference, that he may decide between you. After that is done, if you think your interests require it, you can retire from the case without discredit.

When a consulting physician or a surgeon is designated and called at your request, you should see that the payment of his fee is not neglected, and you might with propriety broach the subject to those who are to pay the bill, before he quits. This can be done by privately informing them that his charges will probably be somewhat less if paid at his last visit than if they wait for him to send a bill, which might then be for the maximum amount.

To prevent misunderstanding, it is, in many cases, wise to say a word or two about consultant's fees to the patient or his friends at the time the subject of having a consultation is first mentioned.

You can, in such a case, speak much more plainly on behalf of your brother physician called at your instance than you could for yourself. His relations to the case presuppose him to have nothing in view but the welfare of the patient, and to be thinking only of the scientific and therapeutical aspects of the case, and not of his expected fees. Prompt settlement of the consultant's fees will sometimes conduce, moreover, to a more prompt payment of your own.

Never make yourself responsible for the payment of another's fee. Aid him in a proper degree to get it, but do nothing more.

It is, for several reasons, better for the consultant to send his bill before the regular attendant sends his; when the latter sends his first, it looks as if he is more anxious for the safety of his fees, hence is in a greater hurry than the stranger is.

Unless the consultant gets his fee cash after the consultation, or you are aware that special arrangements exist for its payment, be careful to inform the people, as soon as his attendance ceases, or at any rate before the time arrives for sending them *your* bill, whether he will render his bill separately or not. If you neglect to explain this to them, they will almost surely think you ought to pay him out of your charges, and a misunderstanding will result as to whether you or they should pay his bill.

Whenever, to please the patient or his friends, you are forced to set aside other duties in order to meet another physician in consultation, it is right that you should charge twice as much for such service as for an ordinary visit, or perhaps even as much as the consultant does, inasmuch as consultative meetings not only involve extra time, but the carrying out of the details will devolve upon you and entail additional trouble, and consequently you are entitled to extra compensation.

In dispensing with the services of the consultant when no longer necessary, take care to secure his acquiescence, and make him see that it is done with a feeling of amity and good will.

In consultations it is proper for the regular attendant to precede the consultant in entering the patient's room, and to follow in leaving it.

Friends of your stubborn-case patients, who have special confidence in their own physicians, will often persuade, and sometimes convince, them that you do not fully understand their affection, and strenuously advise them to call in their favorite. In such cases remember that you have no right to object to a patient's having the advice of any one whom he particularly desires in addition to your own whenever he insists upon it; but also, that you have a like undoubted right to refuse to consult with an irregular or any one who is antagonistic to the profession, or whose conduct you deem unprofessional, or who is unfitted for the case; also, any one who is highly objectionable to you for any other reason, or in whose keeping you deem your reputation and interests unsafe. If you are attending a case, and such an one is pressed upon you, you have a perfect right to retire, and should at once offer to withdraw, and thus afford your patient the liberty of choice between you and your rival. Fortunately, such dilemmas are very rare.

Do not refuse to consult with foreign physicians, doctresses, colored physicians, or any other regular practitioners; for you, as a physician, hold a quasi-official position in the community, and, in the discharge of your duties, should know nothing of national enmities, race prejudices, political strife, or sectarian differences. RESCUE! is our battle-cry, and you, as a physician, belong to the world of mankind, and have no moral right to turn your back on sick and suffering humanity, by refusing to add your knowledge and skill, on a plane of real and brotherly equality, to that of *any* honorable, liberal-minded person who practices medicine, if his professional acquirements and ethical tenets give him a claim to work in the professional field. It is

not only unmanly to make a class distinction and throw obstacles in the path of the less favored, but such a spirit is wholly incompatible with the objects of our profession (which is a liberal one), and at direct variance with the spirit of science (which is cosmopolitan), and in its efforts to diminish suffering and baffle death recognizes neither caste, pride, nor prejudice, and knows no limits except those of truth and duty.

But while you bid "All Hail!" and give the right hand of fellowship to every honorable, unrestricted physician, and become the friend and brother of all the friends of rational medicine, no matter what their misfortunes or how great their deficiencies; you must, on the other hand, remember that medicine is a liberal profession and not a mere trade, and refuse to extend the hand of brotherhood to any one belonging to a party or association whose *exclusive system*, narrow creed, or avowed or notorious hostility to our profession, prevents him from accepting every known fact and employing all useful remedies, whether dug from the earth, taken from the air, or wrested from the sea,—to any one and every one who cannot honestly say his mind is wide open for the reception of all medical truths, and that his hand shall not refuse to use anything and everything under the blue vault of heaven that may be needed to relieve suffering and save the life of a human being; as that constitutes a voluntary disconnection from the profession. When called in to a case in which the medical attendant cannot do this, you cannot agree with him, and must let his retirement be one of the conditions on which you will assume charge.

You may, however, be called to a case of pressing emergency, such as an alarming hæmorrhage, poisoning, drowning, choking, convulsions, or difficult labor, and find on your arrival that an irregular practitioner or quack is in attendance, with whom you are thus brought face to face. In such urgent cases the path of duty is plain, for, owing to the great danger to life, the higher law of humanity will require you temporarily to set aside

ethics and etiquette, and to unite your efforts—head, heart, and hand—with those of your chance associate. Treat him with courtesy, but studiously avoid formal consultations, or private professional dealings, or whispering conversation with him, or any other act that might imply association in consultation.

Thus, you see, there is not only no antagonism between medical ethics and humanity, but that they overlook all questions of etiquette, and allow and cover any and every act honestly performed for the benefit of humanity.

Fortunately, the indications for rational treatment are generally so very clear in such cases that no one can ignore them. If the Irregular has assumed charge before your arrival, and is pursuing proper treatment, or assents to the proper treatment suggested by you, that is all you can ask; for instance, if the patient has received a terrible burn, and linseed-oil and lime-water or a strong solution of soda are being applied, or other rational treatment, indorse it, and advise its continuation; but if your accidental colleague is a hydropath, and wrongly insists on a wet-pack because he is morbid on the use of water, or one who obstinately advocates a lotion of cantharides because they burn and blister people in health, it is your duty to your patient, and to yourself also, unyieldingly to insist that a rational course shall be pursued if you are to take part in the case. Be cautious and firm in dealing with such contingencies, and it is a duty which you owe both to yourself and to your profession that you terminate the accidental and unnatural connection—in a gentlemanly way, of course—as soon as the pressing urgency will admit.

Some unreasoning people may think you are illiberal in refusing to fraternize and consult with Irregular practitioners, regardless of the fact that they have voluntarily divorced themselves from the profession and boastfully assumed a name intended to notify the public that their system differs from ours; and, moreover, that they are hostile to it and to us. Bear in mind that our refusal does not arise from a false sense of

dignity or from prejudice, but that the great principle which underlies it is this: as lovers of *all* medical *truths*, we have no fixed, no unchangeable creed, but hail with delight every etiological and therapeutical discovery, no matter by whom made, and take by the hand and recognize as a brother *any one* who is liberal enough to consecrate his life's labor to the relief of the sick; but when we know that a certain person, even if he has an armful of diplomas, circumscribes himself to half a truth and practices a botanical system *only*, or, like a pigeon with but one wing, a vitopathic system *only*, or a hydro-pathic system *only*, or an omniopathic system *only*, or an electropathic system *only*, or any other one-idea system *only*, and is so tied down and limited to that, by his love, bigotry, or prejudice that he *denies* the usefulness of all other known and legitimate means of aiding the sick, and endeavors to poison the public mind against all other therapeutics but his own,—all rational physicians esteem such an one as *too illiberal* to be a true physician, and justly exclude him as unworthy of fellowship with those who profess to love all truth, and, whilst he remains imprisoned within his own ball-and-chain system, themselves endeavor to steadily pursue, with perhaps less zeal, but with more sense, the path of true science and progress.

If, on the other hand, he uses the remedies that rational medicine supplies, yet adopts the cloak of an "ism" simply as an advertising dodge,—

"Blow, blow, bugle blow,"—

to make the public believe that he practices in some manner diametrically opposite to our system, and thereby assists our opponents to lessen public esteem for legitimate medicine and to create aversion to us as its followers, he is guilty of fraud, and you should, therefore, even on the ground of morality, refuse to countenance him.

When people ask you "what system of medicine you practice," you may very properly reply that you are simply a DOCTOR OF MEDICINE, a PHYSICIAN, a member of the regular un-

restricted medical profession, that you have no fixed orthodoxy, belong to no sect, and are limited to no "ism," "pathy," or "ology;" that you stand on a broad, UNSECTARIAN platform, and are at liberty to think whatever you may, only seeking to do your best for every sick sufferer who trusts to your skill and honor; that you accordingly try to be *rational*, and, like the bee, take the honey of truth wherever you find it; that as rational, liberal physicians, the regular medical profession, to which you belong, has no branches, no sects, no dogmas, and bears no man's name, for it is simply the work of the human race, and is held together solely by the common bond of rational medicine; that it maintains perfect freedom of opinion and practice, selects any remedy it pleases, in whatever dose it pleases, and under whatever theory it pleases, and, unlike the various "limited schools," has no articles of faith which it imposes on any one, but accepts all truths, whether winnowed from the store-house of centuries, or discovered, either scientifically or empirically, in our own day; and that you, as one of its representatives, stand ready to embrace and utilize any and every valuable discovery, no matter when or by whom made.

"I shall this good lesson keep,
As watchman to my heart."

This freedom and latitude explains why UNRESTRICTED MEDICINE IS ONE OF THE THREE LIBERAL PROFESSIONS, and why the humane and benevolent physician of the body takes rank with the learned expounder of the law and with the worthy man who inculcates religion, all three uniting to protect the interests of soul, body, and estate. Bear proudly in mind, however, that our useful and excellent science is the only one which regards the entire man, physical, intellectual, and moral; for the lawyer looks on a man as a being possessing certain rights, and subject to certain duties to his neighbors, whilst the divine looks on man simply as a moral, responsible being, who has, or should have, a conscience, to which he directs his ministrations.

To this triad of professions was long ago applied the term

"LIBERAL," because for their pursuits, preventing and curing sin, preventing and curing disease, and preventing and curing legal wrong, each of the trio requires the utmost perfection of character, and because the high-souled sons of law, religion, and medicine have in all ages pursued their avocations as freemen, with hands unfettered and tongue untied, subject to no bonds except those of TRUTH; and yet, as if to blur the grandeur of the picture, law has its shysters, religion its hypocrites, and medicine its quacks. If at any time during your career any sect, schism, or one-sided school arise, no matter how great or how humble its pretensions, if it have even one grain of life-saving or health-guiding wheat to its bushel of chaff, it is your duty to seize the grain of wheat, plant it in the domain of rational medicine, and to cast the chaff, brambles, and thistles to the winds. This determination to enlarge our field of knowledge from all possible source is our life-blood, our invincible strength, and our distinction, the saving element that will cause regular, liberal, rational medicine to exist as long as there are sickness and suffering in the world, and the great feature that distinguishes genuine medicine from all "new schools," "isms," and "pathies."

Remember that we have no secrets, no patents, no monopolies; and that our books, our colleges, our laboratories, our lecture-rooms, our medicines, and the door of the profession itself, are open not only to the newly graduated and the regularly initiated, but to every one who has the necessary educational and moral qualifications, even though he may have been an outsider, allied, whether from ignorance or choice, with schools which are antagonistic to the profession; in the latter case it is only necessary for the applicant to drop his distinguishing creed or system, abandon the hostility to the profession which it implies, and to allow ethical rules to govern his conduct; therefore, no conversion, no standard of orthodoxy, no surrender of private opinion or of favorite theories, or hypotheses, or of unlimited freedom to practice as he chooses, is at all necessary, and each and all such should be individually invited to