

SCIENCE

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1902.

THE SCIENTIFIC ASPECT OF MODERN
MEDICINE.*

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THE origin and development of medical science are contemporaneous with the origin and development of mankind. So long as man has been, so long has been disease; and whenever man has suffered, man has tried to heal. The foundations of medicine lie deep in that soil of common knowledge from which arose all the sciences, and throughout its history it has freely absorbed the discoveries of them all. From the first it has been, and it must ever remain, their common meeting-place. In proportion as its spirit and its methods have been scientific it has progressed toward ultimate perfection. Yet, notwithstanding the importance of science to medicine, from first to last medicine has been permeated by the pernicious influence of empiricism. A wise man once said that all true science begins with empiricism, and medical science is a striking example of this fact. But it made an early effort to free itself. The most brilliant epoch of Grecian history is marked no more immortally by the wisdom of Socrates; the histories of Herodotus, the tragedies of Æschylus, and the art of Phidias, than by the medicine of Hippocrates and his followers, for this represents the first re-

* An address delivered before the School of Medicine at the quarto-centennial celebration of the University of Colorado, November 14, 1902.