

Mendenhall (Geo)

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS

AT THE

No. 6

OPENING OF THE SIXTH SESSION

OF THE

Miami Medical College,  
OF CINCINNATI,

NOV. 1st, 1865;

ON

PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS

BY

box 6

GEO. MENDENHALL, M. D.,

PROF. OF OBSTETRICS.

CINCINNATI:

A. MOORE, BOOK, JOB AND NEWSPAPER PRINTER.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

OPENING OF THE SIXTH SESSION

MIAMI MEDICAL COLLEGE, }  
CINCINNATI, Nov. 4, '65. }

PROF. MENDENHALL,

Dear Sir—At a meeting of the Class—C. Hixson, presiding, and W. R. McAllister, acting as Secretary—it was on motion,

Resolved, That a Committee, composed of one from each State represented, be appointed to solicit for publication, a copy of your Introductory Address, delivered at the opening exercises of the session of 1865-'66.

Respectfully Yours,

- J. L. CILLEY—Ohio.
- J. N. REGAN—Wisconsin.
- J. H. SMITH, Penn.
- P. M. BIGNEY—Indiana.
- O. B. YAGER—Kentucky.
- A. A. COOLING—Illinois.
- R. E. SWEENEY—Tennessee.
- J. E. R. MILLER—Maryland.
- M. H. JORDAN—Alabama.

- A. B. BARNES—Missouri.
- C. HIXSON—Kansas.
- H. N. FOX.—Michigan.
- L. ROUSH—West Virginia.
- A. D. HILL—New York.
- F. DOWLING—Massachusetts.
- L. A. McPHERSON—Mississippi.
- J. H. CAROTHERS—California.

197 FOURTH STREET, }  
CINCINNATI, Nov. 6, '65. }

GENTLEMEN:—

I have received your kind note of the 4th inst., requesting my Introductory Address for publication. It is herewith transmitted to you to be disposed of according to your wishes.

I am Truly Yours,

GEO. MENDENHALL,

To Messrs :

- J. L. CILLEY,
- J. N. REGAN,
- P. M. BIGNEY,
- O. B. Yager

And others of the Committee.

## INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

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### GENTLEMEN OF THE MEDICAL CLASS:

It is my pleasant duty on this occasion to welcome you on behalf of the Faculty of the Miami Medical College of Cincinnati to these halls, dedicated to medical instruction. We assemble this evening for the purpose of initiating the sixth course of lectures of this Institution, and we consider it eminently proper to state briefly why this organization was brought into existence, and why it is now revived, after having been suspended.

For several years prior to 1852, many of the Profession of this city were strongly impressed with the conviction that some different system was necessary, calculated to stimulate the younger members of it to greater and more systematic efforts in the cultivation of Medical Science.

To do this the avenues to professional advancement, which were practically closed, in a great measure, by the system of foreign appointments to places of prominence in medical teaching, must be opened wider, and home capacity acknowledged.

The condition of things existing at that time tended to paralyze home efforts and dishearten the young men of Cincinnati. They needed some central object, around which they could rally, and which in turn would lend them a helping hand into places of honor and usefulness. A bond of attachment was needed between the young man who was struggling for professional advancement and the gray-haired Professor. Encouragement to labor with the hope of professional honors in the future, was necessary to stimulate him to be worthy of the positions occupied by the savans of the Profession. This reciprocal feeling did not exist; this kindly bearing between the seniors and the juniors was wanting in the training so necessary to mutual prosperity. The result was disastrous to the permanency and efficiency of the Medical Institutions of

this city; mutual disappointment followed, and frequent changes were the order of the time.

Many of us thought the remedy for these difficulties consisted in extending a helping hand to the young and rising members of the Profession, so that they might reasonably expect to be rewarded, should they by diligence and ability prove worthy. In short, the object was to cultivate home talent, by holding out inducements to industry, and not to be continually looking abroad for individuals upon whom to bestow medical honors.

In the summer of 1852, the sentiments of the Profession culminated and took form in the association of a number of gentlemen, under the name and style of the Miami Medical College of Cincinnati. It was composed of young men, mostly untried as teachers, with the exception of the venerable Professor, R. D. Mussey, father of our present Professor in the Surgical Department, who gave his great name, influence and labors for the benefit of the enterprise. The distinctive principles adopted were to give a thorough course of medical instruction; inculcate at the same time a sound code of medical ethics; and make available the medical capacity of the young men of Cincinnati in accomplishing these results. We hoped to stimulate undeveloped talent to labor in the medical vineyard and prepare them by proper qualifications for the occupancy of places of professional responsibility and honor. We hoped also to form an institution around which the junior members of the Profession could rally with the certainty of having their claims and merits acknowledged by professional advancement. With these objects in view our bark was launched on the stream of medical teaching.

From small beginnings we gathered strength yearly, until at the fifth session we had over one hundred students, and sent forth, in all nearly one hundred graduates in medicine, who are now scattered over the West, and many of whom have served with distinction in the war for the preservation of the Union.

During the summer of 1857, in an unfortunate hour, a negotiation was set on foot to unite this College with the Medical College of Ohio, and which was accomplished by an equal

number of Professors from each School being appointed to fill the Chairs of that College. The Demonstrator of Anatomy of the Miami College, our present Professor of Military Surgery, was also transferred. The appointments from this College were not made because of the superiority of those appointed to those who did not enter into the arrangement, but with reference to the adaptation of Chairs for the union of the two Colleges. Those not appointed were gentlemen as highly educated and of as eminent qualifications as any in the new Faculty. The venerable Professor Mussey retired from active professional duties at that time and now lives in the enjoyment of the consciousness of a life of great usefulness, spent in doing good to his fellow-beings, at the ripe age of eighty-six years, with faculties keenly alive to everything bearing upon his beloved Profession. In his retiracy he has until quite recently devoted two hours per day in reading some medical work of interest; and the short period of interruption not thus occupied has been caused by bodily sickness. At the present time, I am informed, he is engaged actively and ardently in the study of Astronomy, although confined to his room by feeble health.

What a noble example we have here presented to those of us who are in the enjoyment of vigorous manhood!

This much and more is due to the Father of American Surgery as a slight tribute from his old associates in the undertaking, to benefit the young men of our profession.

The reasons for the union were, that the interests of both Colleges might be concentrated in one Institution, with such an infusion of the principles that controlled the Miami College, that the great objects which brought it into existence might be carried out more efficiently than by the divided action of competing schools.

Theoretically it seemed to be right, but practically it was a failure. The great objects, therefore, for which this College was established for the time being were not fully realized. Progress, however, was made, and it was clearly demonstrated that we had talent in Cincinnati worth cultivating, and capable of conducting a Medical School successfully in competition with gentlemen of ability from other cities.

Notwithstanding this progress, the necessity for a re estab-

lishment of the Miami Medical College was soon quite apparent; but the breaking out of the late rebellion postponed action. Several members of the present Faculty gave their entire time and services to their country in the struggle, while every member has given a greater or less portion of his time to the good of the soldiers of the Union Army.

Now that peace has happily spread her protecting wings over us again, and each one is left free to return to ordinary professional pursuits, the opportunity is embraced of a renewal of the organization and a return to first love and original principles. We now present ourselves again, in the arena of medical teaching, under the belief that we will not be wanting in efficiency and character, upon which alone we claim the patronage of the Profession. And to show that we are not unmindful of our professions, I will point to the fact, that five of our students are now assisting us in this re-organization. But mutability is written upon all earthly things. Death entered our circle and snatched from us one of the most esteemed members of our Faculty. Prof. J. Byrd Smith died on the 12th day of May of the present year, at the age of forty-five; and I shall be wanting in the proper manifestations of respect for my late beloved colleague, did I not devote a small portion of my time on this occasion to his memory.

He was born in the State of New York, and was the son of a physician. His father came to the West with his family, and settled in Indiana when the subject of our notice was quite young. His new home furnished him but few advantages in acquiring an education. At an early age he was placed in a printing-office for the purpose of learning the business. This position undoubtedly gave him many opportunities for increasing his stock of knowledge, and assisted in the formation of his character for future usefulness. After the termination of his apprenticeship, he entered the office of Dr. Threlkeld, of this city, as a student of medicine, and graduated with honor in the Medical College of Ohio, at the close of the session of 1844 and 45. Immediately after graduating, he was elected upon a rigid examination as Resident Physician of the Commercial Hospital. He served his term in that Institution, and at the expiration of which he went to Indiana



and practiced his profession. In about one year he returned and opened an office in this city.

Prof. Smith relied upon himself for success. With limited educational advantages and few influential friends to put him forward, he made up for the lack of these by his naturally superior mind and untiring industry. They enabled him to obtain a large practice won by making himself indispensable to the public through capacity and attention to his business, which are usually sure guarantees of success. He was always courteous, and treated his brethren in the profession with entire fairness. He was incapable of a mean act, invariably honorable, truthful to the point of extreme nicety, loyal to the government of the United States, and generous toward his fellow men. He set up a high professional standard and bent his efforts to maintain it. At the time of his death he occupied a position as one of the staff of the Commercial Hospital; was Surgeon in charge of the Washington Park Military Hospital, and was just appointed Professor of Diseases of Women and Children in this College. These positions were all accorded to him through the high estimation of professional friends, who could best appreciate his worth.

But he is gone from among us; his example remains, and we may profit by emulating the virtues of our departed friend and brother. His place has been filled by Professor B. F. Richardson, who was connected with the Miami College in the summer course of lectures, and more recently was Professor of the Diseases of Women and Children in the Medical College of Ohio. His reputation and character are a sufficient guarantee that the position of Prof. Smith will be worthily sustained.

This much it has been necessary for me to say in explanation of our position.

And, now, gentlemen, permit me to say that the Profession which you propose to enter has been called into existence by the imperfections and necessities of our race; its honorable history may be traced back into the traditions of by-gone centuries, and our earliest writers have been proud to rehearse its glorious achievements.

The relation which we are about to form, as teachers

and pupils, involve mutual responsibilities. On our part we engage to conduct you through the intricacies of the pathway to the Medical Profession; and your presence here to-night would seem to imply that you have weighed well the subject of taking upon yourselves an obligation to labor for the purpose of becoming honorable members of it. An important landmark in life (that of choosing a pursuit) is about being passed, and from which you ought to look back with scrutinizing eye, and review your preceding course of action, and determine whether the step is wisely taken; whether you are fitted for the new undertaking upon which you propose to enter. This subject should be carefully weighed and fully settled in your minds; and if, after a careful scrutiny into your own determination and capacities, should doubts enter as to its propriety you had better withdraw now from the contest. Having concluded to engage in this work as a matter of propriety and duty, then let hope cast her anchor into the depths of futurity, and invite you to engage with ardor in your new undertaking. Bright prospects of usefulness and success will open to your mental vision, which we hope may be more than realized.

Our official connection which commences this evening, will bring with it an interest in your welfare which will exist increasingly in after life: it can not be terminated by our separation when this course of lectures is brought to a close. As your medical teachers, we shall feel that we are involved to some extent in your future history; your success and usefulness will always contribute to our happiness, while, should perchance misfortune overtake you, our sympathies on your behalf will not be withheld. Do not think, therefore, we are transcending our proper limits should we from time to time, while you are under our instruction, take upon ourselves the functions of guardians by making suggestions in reference to your future course of life. We hope to have the assurance, while you are with us, that you appreciate your advantages, and that at the close of our connection, we can cheerfully and heartily accord to you the honor of your *alma mater*, won by assiduity and diligence in the prosecution of your collegiate labors. Success can not be attained without labor and vigilance in any department of life; many difficulties will have

to be encountered and conquered; in short, life, to be successful and happy, must be interspersed with difficulties, which require great exertion to be overcome: ceaseless and indefatigable industry must be the price of success. "The proper element of man is constant activity. The waters of life are like those of the Bethesda pool:—it is only when they are agitated that they are healthful."

Permit me, therefore, briefly to point out to you some of the difficulties besides those in acquiring your profession, which you must necessarily encounter; together with the means for overcoming them. Among the most discouraging obstacles which the honorable, young and ardent lover of truth will find opposed to his success, is *Quackery*.

It will be met with in two forms. 1st. Under the imposing title of "Systems of Medicine." 2d. Irregularities and violation of medical ethics in those who profess to adhere to scientific medicine; or as commonly understood, belong to the regular profession. The prominent characteristics, however, of all forms of quackery are uniformly the same, and they may therefore be easily recognized. It is defined by our best lexicographers to consist in "the boastful pretensions, or mean practices, of an ignoramus." These "mean practices," however, are sometimes indulged in by the intelligent, as well as the ignorant. The verb, "to quack," means to boast, to talk noisily and ostentatiously; and the term quack designates one who boasts, or who ostentatiously pretends to skill or knowledge of a very superior kind, whether he possesses it or not.

It is "an *ignis fatuus* that bewitches and leads men into pools and ditches." With these definitions I trust you will have no difficulty in recognizing this *hydra headed* monstrosity under any guise it may assume. Whether shielded behind an ostentatious display of learned or unlearned nonsense in the form of a pretended new "system of medicine," or under the cloak of a dignified regular, who,

"Like the Devil can cite Scripture for his purpose—

An evil soul producing holy witness

Is like a villain with a smiling face:

A goodly apple rotten at the core,"

Even though he may claim fraternity with the legitimate household of scientific medicine.

The multifarious forms of development of the principle defy computation; although the characteristics of vain-glorious boasting will ever serve to distinguish quackery from true science. Its origin may be traced to the earliest ages of medicine, although the first of its votaries of great renown, the prince of the sect was Paracelsus, who boasted of his power to render man immortal. He styled himself the "Monarch of Physicians," and arrogantly claimed that the hair on the back of his head knew more than all the authors; that the clasps of his shoes were more learned than Galen or Avicenna, and his beard possessed more experience than all the teachers of his time. The value of his medical panacea, the tincture of life, which he claimed would prolong life indefinitely, was sufficiently well attested by the death of its originator at an early age! A singular point in the history of this man is, that his family name was *Bombastus*; the appropriateness of which has been remarkably preserved in his numerous followers. "Man," says Southey, "is a dupeable animal. Quacks in medicine, quacks in religion, and quacks in politics, know this, and act upon that knowledge. There is scarcely any one who may not, like a trout, be taken by tickling."

Health has ever been looked upon as the first of blessings, and the fortress of strength among quacks, therefore, is their pretension of superiority in *curing* disease, the ultimate object of all medical inquiry. Sick people love prophets who prophecy good things; and when the candid physician, sensible of human deficiencies, can not venture to promise a favorable result with *boldness* and *décision*, he is often set aside for one who, Bombastus like, boasts a never-failing remedy.

Without character to loose, and reckless of responsibility to truth, the charlatan deals in reiterated bold and unblushing assertions, which captivate the sick and inspire them with confidence, forgetting that,

"When wicked men make promises of truth

'Tis weakness to believe them."

When you take upon yourselves the active duties of administering to the sick, you may be under the humiliating necessity of competing with these dishonorable rivals, and even of

witnessing their temporary success. These trials will sorely perplex and discourage you in carrying out laudable resolutions

Notwithstanding the deformity and abomination of quackery, it is not an unmitigated evil; the vilest creature that crawls the earth has its uses; and so have quacks. It serves the purpose of professional sewerage, by which unclean elements are drained off, and the boundary between the good and the bad is more sharply defined. It is wonderful, also, with what alacrity a large portion of mankind will subject themselves to the experiments of these adventurers, from which sometimes important positive and negative facts may be established; the mischief they occasion avoided, and the benefits, if any, appropriated to useful purposes. The quadrature of the circle; the multiplication of the cube; perpetual motion; the philosopher's stone; magic and judicial astrology, known as the six follies of science, have been attended with much benefit to mankind. Their study has been in vain, and the results futile in reference to these points. Notwithstanding this, they have incidentally been the cause of many discoveries of great importance to the human race. So it may be with the follies of medicine. From the profusion of these extraneous growths of what is called medical systems, they are destined to an early decay; like rank weeds, they tend to mutual destruction, and may also like them become valuable by their death and decomposition, even if worthless or noxious when in vigorous existence. A *debris*, in some cases, may remain with which the thoughtful medical philosopher can enrich his profession.

All quacks are exceedingly fond of persecution and martyrdom; they will construe an honest expression of opinion against them in this way, and fatten upon it, expanding like the frog in the fable, until they imagine themselves to possess real greatness.

Another obstacle to your progress will be found in the deep-seated ignorance and superstition upon medical subjects, which to a considerable extent, pervades all classes.

It is not confined, as you might suppose, to the ignorant and uneducated; but is probably even more rife among persons of some education and refinement, whose general knowledge is

so respectable that they presume to judge of subjects about which they have not taken the necessary steps to obtain proper information. Medical facts must be acquired just as scientific knowledge is imbibed on other subjects difficult of attainment; that is, by patient investigation.

A little medical learning is peculiarly a dangerous thing; it begets presumption in those whose medical knowledge is too superficial to render the darkness visible that surrounds them. Such persons are the fit receptacles of medical superstitions and extravagant theories. Did time permit, we might allude to some of the ridiculous phases they have assumed, including Alchemy, Astrology, Talismans, Amulets, Charms, Royal Gift of Healing, Sympathetic Cures, and many others equally ridiculous. Old superstitions may become obsolete, but the history of the world shows that the form only changes, while about the same amount of credulity has pervaded the public mind for many ages; and now past the middle of the nineteenth century, there does not seem to be much abatement.

Many circumstances will also arise in your personal intercourse with the world, and particularly with the sick portion of it; which may tend to discourage you; among these ingratitude for faithful services rendered, may rank foremost.

“For vicious natures when they once begin  
To take distaste, and purpose no requital:  
The greater debt they owe the more they hate.”

The popularity of a physician often depends upon trivial circumstances, and may librate upon a very delicate pivot; one side or the other preponderating according to the caprices of the sick, or the fancies of the attendants.

Neglect to give a definite name to a disease sometimes results in dismissal, although the pathological conditions may be well understood; the therapeutical indications clearly established and met by appropriate treatment. Many persons have a peculiar fancy for hard names, whether intelligent or not, is a matter of no consequence. The prescription of disagreeable or painful remedies, however necessary they may be, is often attended with inveterate displeasure, and particularly if unsuccessful. Sugar pellets and powders of diluted

moonshine are easier for children and imaginative persons to swallow, and hence thought to be preferable.

Making light of a disease will seldom be tolerated by the anxious mother or capricious invalid. When a physician is called they prejudge serious illness and necessary dosing; and wo unto him who has the independence to advise a different course.

Dr. Rush says that persons who become elevated in the world from poverty to wealth, generally dissolve their connection with the physician who attended them in obscurity, and particularly if the service has been rendered gratuitously. They are forcibly reminded by his presence of the small tenement, dirty rooms, and obscure location, in which he visited them and administered to their necessities. It grows out of a principle, which is too commonly found in human nature, that allows them to forgive an injury, but not an obligation.

Absence of a physician from his office, from any cause when called for, and particularly if in pursuit of pleasure, often lays the foundation of a separation from his patients.

Difference in religion, or politics, often prevents the employment of a physician, and may also lead to dismissal when discovered. I once knew an eminent and learned physician, of undoubted skill, in an eastern city, who had an extensive practice, but who lost it almost entirely by changing his religious belief.

Engaging in pursuits not directly connected with medicine, is generally attended with a loss of professional popularity, and is destructive of the interests of the physician. There is yet another relation of a delicate nature that must arise between physicians and their patients, which frequently leads to difficulty. I allude to the communication of a hint that the "*quid pro quo*" for professional services would be acceptable; That a little of this world's medium of exchange is wanting to complete the comfort of the medical attendant. A compliment has been paid your professional skill by calling it into requisition, and it now remains to be seen whether this will be rendered substantial by "material aid." The response will often be most gratifying; while it can not be concealed

that sometimes it will be the reverse, and a reasonable claim for medical services becomes the occasion of an interruption of friendly relations.

Agreeable manners, personal appearance, and style of dress also, have much to do in influencing persons in their choice of a physician, independent of merit.

From what has been said, perhaps you may conclude that the choice of a physician is governed wholly by caprice; that professional success is a lottery in which chance has as much to do as solid merit. Such, however, is not the case; good sense and knowledge are almost sure to receive their reward sooner or later, when united with ordinary prudence, and an avoidance of such conditions as tend to produce failure in other occupations of life. This much for the difficulties and trials which beset your path; what lights can we place before you which will enable you to overcome them? What instruction and word of hope can we whisper in your ear that will guide you to professional success?

In assuming the responsible duties of practicing the healing art, one of the highest obligations you will owe to the community in which you may reside, is to look well to your professional knowledge. The exercises of this evening imply that you are here with an enthusiastic determination to obtain such knowledge and qualify yourselves to fulfill the obligation. It will not be sufficient that you rest satisfied with attainments made during your collegiate course under our instruction, but you must swear on the altar of medicine eternal devotion to its highest interests in the future.

A conscientious regard for the interests of the sick who may be placed under your care, renders it imperative that you shall not eat the bread of idleness. Recollect the aphorism of the Coan Sage, the Father of Medicine—"Life is short, and the art long; the occasion fleeting; experience fallacious, and judgment difficult."

Lay, then, now the foundation broad and deep, by every means in your power to qualify yourselves in the performance of your sacred duty in the cause of humanity. Our science and art are in a state of rapid progression, and it will be necessary for success that the training within these walls shall



be considered as preparatory to keeping pace with their rapid advancement. When beyond the influence of our teaching you must be diligent in study; not books alone, but *nature*, whose huge volume is ever open before you, and inviting you to the acquirement of knowledge. Let her laws be studied and indelibly engraven upon your minds by direct teaching and unerring precision. Books are useful and not to be despised; the labors of others will serve to enlighten your path, although a blind subserviency to authority and opinion must be cautiously avoided. You must, then, be your own teachers, and exercise a close scrutiny that you do not have laggard and incompetent masters.

Directly connected with this subject a few words will not be amiss in reference to *some* of the means by which professional improvement may be promoted.

In the beginning of your career commence with the habit of recording important facts and studying closely your cases for that purpose. Physicians seldom remember the particulars of a case of disease so that they can be relied upon for accuracy two years after its occurrence; and more frequently they are forgotten much sooner. So that unless a record is made at the time, the principal part of our experience is very soon sunk into oblivion. In making a record it should be done with minuteness and exactness; not only in regard to the symptoms and history, so far as can be ascertained, but all the attending circumstances, and real or supposed causes, should be fully detailed.

Upon the occurrence of Epidemics, their rise, progress, symptoms, decline, and various modes of treatment employed; together with *every* thing connected with these mysterious visitations of disease, should be carefully noted. It is only in this way that accurate knowledge can be accumulated, and a comparison made with other places where the disease has prevailed.

We may in this way be able to ascertain in what respects there is uniformity and dissimilarity; so as to separate the essential particulars from the accidental; and thus deduce the true nature and causes of each disease. A record of this kind

becomes of great value, and which is enhanced greatly by every addition which may be made to it.

The examples set us by Hippocrates and Sydenham are worthy of our imitation. Their records of disease will be appreciated as long as Medical Science is cultivated by an enlightened profession; and it is to their faithfulness in delineating what they observed in reading the book of nature, that they owe their great celebrity.

To be useful you must be ever vigilant; and when the time comes for a failure of your powers, let them bear the evidence and exhibit the fruits of actual service, rather than the rusting of idleness. Many young men in commencing life, commit a serious error by relying upon active and influential friends. If you have not done so already, I hope you will at once, and for all time, divest yourselves of expectations of this kind. They will prove fallacious, and end in bitter disappointment at the time you are expecting them to sustain and advance your interests.

Friends are often useful, but to be reliable you must lay a foundation upon which they are friends from a conviction that you are independent of them from the possession of solid merit. To be available, you must place yourselves in a position that your services become *indispensible* to your friends and the public, or at least promotive of their interest. Upon this foundation alone can you build hopes of advancement from the recommendation of others. No greater drone exists in society than the man who lives in a constant condition of great expectations on his friends for the advancement of his interests. I have known many men of superior ability, ruined in their prospects of success for want of relying upon their own will and energy. It is a principle of our nature, implanted by the great Creator of us all, to help those who help themselves.

All men are influenced by self-interest; and when you place yourselves in such relation to those who surround you, that your services contribute to this principle in them, then you may rely upon their friendship, patronage and influence. While on the other hand, should you become burdensome, or weary them, you may expect soon to be treated with cold

neglect. Another point which will contribute greatly to your success is the cultivation of a habit of making a definite and clear diagnosis in every case coming before you; never rest satisfied with a superficial examination; investigate carefully until you obtain definite views of the pathological changes. Habits of making accurate diagnosis before prescribing, ensure much greater certainty in the appropriate therapeutic applications of remedies, and hence contribute essentially to the success of treatment.

In visiting patients arrange your calls, if possible, so that you may see them at different periods of the day, and thus be able to judge of the diurnal changes occurring in the disease; night visits are often necessary for this purpose. When the changes are liable to be sudden or frequent, the visits should be adapted to the variable character of the affection; while at the same time unnecessary visits may lead to vasilation of treatment, and may also bring you under the imputation of unnecessarily enlarging your bill.

Never be found in that class of the profession who are in the habit of denouncing and finding fault with it. It is undoubtedly easy to point out many things which ought to be reformed, but the co-operation of superior minds can always be obtained in honest efforts to accomplish it. Every man who thinks the profession is degraded, should leave it at once, and not hold a membership, while he gives its enemies comfort by traducing as noble a calling as exists on the face of this wide earth. Never be afraid of speaking to a brother of its imperfections, but there is no principle of ethics which requires you to publish them to a censorious world. When you become members of the Medical Profession, let your great aim and mission be to elevate it; and when you shall receive the final call to render up your accounts, may you have that satisfaction which will bring peace in your departing moments, that you left the profession in a better condition than you found it.

In this connection let me enjoin upon you to identify yourselves with the profession in whatever place your lot may be cast. Stand not aloof from its organizations, but merge yourselves with the general interests of the brethren. Join local societies if they exist, and if there be none, use your

influence for their formation. State and national societies are also entitled to your hearty support. These unions and re-unions may be made productive of a vast amount of social, scientific, and professional advantage.

Another injunction which can not be too strongly impressed upon medical men is the necessity of secrecy in reference to the diseases and affairs of their patients. They have a right to demand that every thing entrusted to their physician shall be sacredly kept from the world. The relation of physician and patient implies a confidence reposed in the former which is as deep and abiding as if made under the solemnities of an oath. Any reference to the maladies of patients, unless in a general and careful manner, is highly reprehensible. To do this the temptations are some times exceedingly strong; a feeling of ambition to speak of the treatment of serious and difficult cases; and particularly if the subject be a prominent individual, may betray into indiscretions of this kind, unless the language is strictly guarded. So completely is the physician admitted into a knowledge of the family arrangements and incidents, that an unguarded word escaping his lips might endanger permanently the peace and harmony of a large circle of individuals. Tattlers are always despicable characters; no gentleman is ever found in their ranks; and certainly no physician of exalted character can indulge in the reprehensible practice of tattling. So sacred do I hold the knowledge obtained by a physician in his intercourse with the sick, that I think it ought to be guarded by legal enactments, and not extorted from him even on a judicial examination, unless required by great public interests. Confessions made to clergymen and lawyers, of a private character, are held sacred, and under reservation on taking an oath, and I can see no reason for withholding the privilege from physicians. A free communication of confidential facts may be just as important in one case as in the other. I profess to be a law-abiding citizen, and to have the highest respect for legal enactments when the rights of a healthy conscience are not trampled upon; but when they require us to divulge secrets necessary to the successful application of remedies, I think our professional prerogatives are invaded; and I would suffer the penalties of the law rather than violate the confidence of

my patient, unless under circumstances of great and pressing public necessity.

Let me also advise you when you assume the responsibilities of the doctorate, to devote yourselves faithfully to the interests of your patients. There is probably no pursuit in life in which the opportunities for deception are more frequently presented, or the *apparent* inducements greater at times, than in ours. The comparative ignorance in community upon medical subjects, together with the deep solicitude of the friends of the sick, renders them extremely liable to gross imposition. As an evidence of this, I need but to point to the vast amount of deception successfully practiced upon the confiding invalid. The close relationship and confidential intercourse which should exist between physicians and patients, often place the latter in positions where advantage may be taken of them in various ways. The defenceless and dependent relation produces obligations which can scarcely be higher in any human relation. Every man in the practice of medicine should, therefore, feel himself bound by the most sacred obligation to faithfulness in the discharge of the high trust reposed in him. His *sacred honor* is pledged, and every solemn consideration points to the necessity of preserving it unsullied. The man who would betray a trust incurred by the professional relation, should be branded with infamy and excluded from intercourse with the respectable portion of his species.

Your whole time, also, belongs to your profession, and you must be watchful that it be not diverted into other channels. If you expect success engage in no other business; you will find that the study and practice of medicine, if properly attended to, will leave no intervals for devotion to other means for a livelihood.

There is another subject that I approach with more reluctance; but a deep and abiding sense of its importance urges me to bring it before you; and that is total abstinence, in health, from all that intoxicates. The propriety of this may be too self-evident to require mention; and others may see in it an interference with their rights; and therefore, both classes may possibly deem this subject out of place on the present occasion. Formerly intemperance was much more frequent

in our profession than at the present time. There is probably no class of persons more tempted to contract habits of drinking than physicians. Exposures to inclement weather, irregularities in rest and refreshments; importunities sometimes, by females, to take a glass in the sick room; and the social position in which we are almost hourly placed, all contribute to render the temptations peculiarly strong. To be able to resist them, and not give offence, you must possess firmness of purpose, with the manners of a gentleman.

The importance of a steady hand, and an unclouded intellect, are of too much consequence to permit them to be risked at the shrine of Bacchus. A single glass not only weakens the resolution to abstain at a future time, but it may be the commencement to a rapid movement on the downward road to ruin. It may, perhaps, have been taken under the influence of a friend of superior mind, or a female who loved you affectionately, or even a parent who doated upon you with all the fondness and affection of such relation; yet the result is liable to be the same.

It has been urged that young men should taste so as to become disgusted with the folly of the use of intoxicating drinks, and thus be able to resist temptation by their strength of mind, firmness, and free will. But One who was wiser than man has said, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Remove this temptation, and there will still be sufficient unavoidable exposures to vice, upon which you can strengthen your free will and powers of resistance. You may hear the remark that gluttony is a sin of equal magnitude; but while I can make no apology for the man who worships his appetite, I may ask if any comparison can be found between the results?

"Does a full stomach cause theft and arson, fratricide and parricide, with every other form of moral evil that affects the earth? Ask the records of our courts, the reports of grand juries, the newspapers; ask the jailor and the hangman; ask the many miserable wives and children—are you so poor because your husbands and fathers gormandized?"

But what can be said of the poisonous bowl, the contents of which men "put into their mouths to steal away their

brains?" It is a perfect Pandora's box, scattering ruin and devastation in profusion all around.

The Jewish priesthood were forbidden the use of wine during the time they were in the tabernacle, and engaged in the services of the altar. Now, every physician's practice may be considered as *his* tabernacle, and we are fully persuaded that strong drink should form no part of the beverage of those who administer at the altar of Hygeia.

The drink prepared by God himself, and which he caused to gush from the rock of Horeb, smote by Moses in olden time, should supply our wants in health,

"So that thou mayst live, till like ripe fruit, thou drop  
Into thy mother's lap, or be with ease  
Gathered, not harshly plucked, for death mature."

Having firmly established yourselves in the habits of total abstinence, you have *yet* a duty to perform toward your fellows; your influence should be felt in the community in which you live. You will be bound as faithful physicians, to watch over the health of your neighborhood. Hygeinic conditions are legitimate subjects for your influence. On this ground alone, irrespective of the moral aspects of the subject, your position requires you to do the utmost in your power for the abatement of the most fruitful source of disease, degradation, and misery in the world. You must guard diligently the portals of drunkenness, and not only do nothing by which others will be seduced within the enclosure, but you will be required by the sacred duties of your Profession to use every means in your power to turn them away from the path which leads to destruction. Many opportunities will be presented, and great will be your accountability if they should not be improved.

Habits of drunkenness have been sometimes contracted from the prescriptions of physicians, when wine and other intoxicating drinks have been recommended. Great caution should, therefore, be observed in the use of such articles, and prescribed only when the interests of patients will not admit of a substitute. Even then, it will be preferable to form such combinations as may accord with the result intended, and by which the taste will be rendered less attractive.

Never let it be said that you have, in any case, by example

or prescription, lent your influence to swell that mighty host which no man can number, who become bereft of the intellect given them by their Creator, for the purpose of exalting them above the rest of his works. The superior intelligence of man, with the immortality of his soul, are his grand characteristics; and when one is destroyed, and the other cast down into eternal perdition, surely the great objects of existence are subverted.

Take heed, therefore, that ye be not partakers in this iniquity.

And here let me entreat you to cultivate carefully the personal qualities and manners of the true Christian medical gentleman. Place your standard of ethics at the highest point; and live up to it in your daily practice.

It sometimes happens that differences and misunderstandings arise between members of the Profession. This may occur between those who are well disposed, or it may be otherwise. I exhort you to beware of these differences; nip them in the bud; settle them before they acquire magnitude. Should you conceive that you have cause of complaint against a professional brother, go to him in a friendly spirit and state the grounds of your complaint. Give him an opportunity to explain and defend himself, or acknowledge his error if he be in error. In a great majority of cases the difficulty will be settled, you will understand each other; both *may* be found to be somewhat wrong, or if the fault should be on one side, an apology be made by which former friendships will be renewed. Should this mode of settlement fail, refer the case to mutual professional friends with as little notoriety as possible; and when this can not be done, or the nature of the case is too glaring to admit of it, then pass by those who have injured you silently, and protect yourselves by non-intercourse.

In some way or other, our Profession has acquired the reputation of being quarrelsome. I fully believe the charge is untrue. It grows out of the fact that whatever differences occur become more notorious than in other relations of life, and the friends of each party are apt to take sides in the controversy. Whether this view is correct or not, always use your best endeavors to put an end to professional misunderstandings.



The liberality and fraternal regard existing among the members of our Profession toward each other, I believe, to be more general than exists in any other calling or profession, not excepting the clerical, to which we are all taught to look for the highest condition of fraternal regard. For one I here publicly acknowledge my experience to be that physicians, as a body, exhibit the highest condition of perfection in the development of the Christian virtues toward each other that can be found in any Association, all insinuations to the contrary notwithstanding.

As for my own experience, I freely concede that whatever I have attained to of professional success, I owe more to the courtesies of my professional brethren than to any other influence whatever; and I hope I may not be unmindful of this obligation in my intercourse with them, and particularly with the junior portion.

In regard to communication with your patients, I can not do better than recommend to you the study and imitation of the character of Sydenham, one of the greatest and best of men who ever adorned our profession. Attainment and reputation in science are not sufficient to make a physician truly reputable, without exalted moral excellence. "It is not," says Sydenham, "acting the part of a *good* man to convert to his private advantage what might prove eminently serviceable to the public; nor of a *wise* man to deprive himself of the blessings he might justly expect from Heaven for endeavoring to promote the public good."

Again he says: "Whoever takes up medicine should seriously consider the following points:

Firstly, That he must one day render to the Supreme Judge an account of the lives of those sick men who have been entrusted to his care.

Secondly, That such skill and science as by the blessings of Almighty God he has attained, are to be especially directed toward the honor of his Maker, and the welfare of his fellow creatures; since it is a base thing for the gifts of Heaven to become the source of avarice or ambition.

Thirdly, He must remember that it is no mean or ignoble animal that he deals with.

Lastly, He must remember that he, himself, hath no exemption from the common lot, but that he is bound by the same laws of mortality, and liable to the same ailments and afflictions with his fellows. For these and like reasons, let him strive to render aid to the distressed with the greater care, with the kindlier spirit, and with the stronger fellow feeling."

Sentiments like these, if properly acted upon, will produce salutary results. They will destroy pride and vain conceit of

knowledge, they will tend to develop the "wisdom of the serpent with the simplicity of the dove," which, according to the illustrious Rush, does not produce more solid advantages in any human pursuit than it does in medicine.

Remember that true science promotes humility, and that ostentation and affectedness of manner as certainly indicate superficial attainments.

Sir Benjamin Brodie remarks that "He never knew any man attain much merit, or do any real good in the world, that did not begin life with a considerable portion of humility. The greatest men are humble. It leads to the highest distinction, because it leads to self-improvement; and it is the only foundation for a just self-confidence."

Neither ought you to be content with simply practicing your profession, and giving health to the sick; but you should strive to add greater certainty to the art, and should so direct your course that the science of medicine with your aid may grow day by day more clear and more efficient. And when the shades of the evening of life are lengthening and thickening around you, you may be able to say with the illustrious Dr. Pott, "My lamp is nearly extinguished. I hope it has burned for the benefit of others."

It must be apparent to you all, that your expected vocation is of a high and responsible character; and that to some extent the protection of its honor and usefulness is assumed by you this evening. The extent of its relations are almost unbounded; every thing both moral and physical, which relates to the well being of man, is more or less intimately associated with it. It includes the wonderful development of the universe from the minutest microscopic object, to the most magnificent heavenly body; all of which may directly or remotely affect the physical and intellectual condition of the human family.

*"Humani nihil alienam."*

That you may be able when you go forth from these halls with the evidences of our confidence, to meet these responsibilities with credit to yourselves, and advantage to your patients, and thus reflect credit upon your teachers, we feel strongly assured.

In conclusion, and on behalf of my colleagues, let me assure you that we will use our best endeavors to instruct you in the various departments of that Profession, "the foundation of which is science, and has for its end the good of mankind."

May you improve your opportunities, and merit the richest blessings of Providence while here, and finally be gathered home in the evening of life, rejoicing that you have lived, and not afraid to die.