

Thayer (W. H. Thayer) with Dr. Thayer's respects.

[REPRINTED FROM THE NEW HAMPSHIRE JOURNAL OF MEDICINE.]

ADDRESS

TO THE

GRADUATES

OF THE

VERMONT MEDICAL COLLEGE,

OF THE

CLASS OF 1856.

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KEENE, N. H.

1856.



ADDRESS.



GENTLEMEN:—The Vermont Medical College has now invested you with the dignity of the Doctorate of Medicine. We cannot bid you go forth from us to the active exercise of professional duties, without giving you some parting words of counsel and encouragement. In the name of my colleagues I ask your attention to some of the thoughts that occur to us upon the subject of your relation to your patients and to the profession of which you are members. Your studies have placed you in a position of far greater responsibility than rests upon most other men. Human beings are the materials upon which you will work. Health is the chief object of your attention, and life hangs upon the issue of your exertions. Such a career cannot be entered upon lightly; and we are impelled to consecrate your embarkation on a voyage so sacred, with thoughts and exhortations suited to the occasion.

All men know and acknowledge the advantage which mental labor possesses over physical. The primitive state of society was one of universal manual labor. Every individual provided himself with the necessaries of life with his own hands. Gradually the exercise of men's minds began to indicate to them the possession of various degrees of original mental power; and the attempt to devise easier methods of procuring the means of sustenance developed their powers to a still greater extent, and produced the first inequality in individuals. The shrewd and intelligent soon became masters, while the rest were servants. The continuance of mental culture and exercise from generation to generation, introduced new comforts and



luxuries to the world. With these grew the need of them, which operated as a new and constantly increasing stimulus to invention and contrivance. Inventive power was applied more and more widely—extending itself to the production of the beautiful as well as the useful. Wherever the highest civilization prevails, men's wants are fully commensurate with their possessions; and the human mind is still employed, and with an activity increased immeasurably beyond its first condition, in devising new modes of saving labor, new materials to make life happy and attractive. And while science is zealously studied, to render the mechanic arts more perfect—while natural philosophy is improving the machinery of our mills, and chemistry furnishes new metals for our implements of labor, and meteorology, by its revelations of air and ocean-currents, shortens our voyages across the seas, and saves us millions—while it is cultivated for exclusively useful purposes, it is also engaged in the pursuit of the beautiful, in feeding those lofty sentiments whose possession makes the chief difference between man and man.

All may share in the benefits that scientific studies have conferred upon the world—the improvements in the arts have simplified labor for the very poorest, and what were once luxuries have now in many instances become universal necessities. But the greatest privileges of all belong exclusively to those whose intellectual studies are procuring these common advantages. Greater than wealth, greater than all other possessions is a well-cultivated mind,—is the privilege of spending our time and faculties in the pursuit of science. A taste for study, and opportunity to indulge it, must be considered the greatest of blessings. For its tendency to the elevation of character we must chiefly honor it.

That intellectual cultivation has these advantages we have the world in evidence. With rare exceptions, it is such superiority that gives rank, station and authority. It will not be kept down. Universal mental capacity lifts its possessor at once above his fellows. He who can plan and contrive is not content to pass his life in carrying out the plans of others: his pre-eminence is soon acknowledged, and he is allowed the position he demands. Mental labor will always be superior to mere physical labor. Science investigates the principles upon which the works of the artisan are performed, and teaches him easier methods of attaining his results. This is the

natural, the unavoidable tendency of things. Equal rights all have, if they can maintain them. Wealth, learning and power are open to universal competition; but that inequality in the possession of these advantages which exists to-day, would appear again in the course of a single generation, were all men to be now reduced to a common level. Starting with the admission that true greatness consists in the purest Christian morality—and that the possession of it is not inconsistent with the entire absence of all worldly advantages—I repeat, that next to this it is intellectual pre-eminence and the pursuit of mental studies that give the most commanding position in the world.

The great privileges which science confers upon her votaries impose upon them important obligations. If you enjoy advantages of which many have no knowledge, it is your solemn duty to use them with industry, and to render them of the greatest possible benefit to mankind. The point you have now reached is not the terminus of your studies. In the period of pupilage you have but scanned the general outlines of medical science. We believe you to be so faithfully prepared in the rudiments of medicine, that you may be safely entrusted with the care of the sick. But the most industrious application for a long life-time will fail to exhaust all the knowledge of the various departments of our science. All that is known in medicine is not in the possession of any one individual: the three-score years and ten of one man's life are not sufficient to gather all its treasures. Indeed, the field is boundless: what is known is little in comparison with all there is to know. The extension of scientific research in any direction opens new and illimitable seas for exploration. It is not an imaginary infinity, as with the traveller whose weary limbs are "spent with the march that still lengthens before him,"—it is a reality. Pathological anatomy had hardly begun to exhibit a degree of clearness which admitted of generalization, when the application of the microscope to the animal tissues left us far behind, and showed us the intimate constitution of abnormal structures, of which we had hitherto seen as it were only the outside. And every day's experience with this wonderful instrument proves how vast a work we have undertaken. Half a life-time may be spent in acquiring only the alphabet of microscopy. The common appearances of anatomical tissues and elements, which ap-

pear so plain in description, we sometimes fail to recognise after long use of the instrument ; and the manner in which the natural tissues are created is still a subject of dispute among physiologists. What stronger evidence can we have of the obstacles that lie in way of microscopic research than the differences of opinion among such men as Rokitansky and Paget, Kölliker and Virchow ?—or the constantly recurring fact of voluminous works published, entertaining certain explanations of phenomena in physiology which were revealed by the microscope, rendered obsolete by subsequent researches, even made by observers no more careful than the first ? Let me not be understood to speak in disparagement of the use of the microscope. Far from it. Natural science is too deeply indebted to it to allow me to suggest a doubt of its value. The discoverers of a new country carry away false impressions of what they see, and it remains for repeated explorations to correct one error after another. So in the operations of nature which come under the view of the naturalist—phenomena must be presented again and again to the eye and the mind, and seen in various connections by different observers, before we can reach absolute truth.

Side by side with the microscope advances Chemistry ; and while the magical instrument discloses the cells and the fibrillæ of fibrine to our eyes, chemical analysis separates one of these fibres into Carbon, Hydrogen, Oxygen and Nitrogen. In the blood it detects the atom of iron in every blood-disc which the microscope has revealed—the blood-disc so minute that twenty thousand of them laid side by side will make a line only an inch in length. And in this other science we stand again upon a new spot, from which paths of light radiate like sunbeams in every direction, each one a fact ; and, like the sun's rays, growing broader by expansion and subdivision as we advance. The boundaries of science are thus constantly extending, and it grows daily more and more difficult for any one man to be master of all.

We are not on this account to fold our hands in despair. We must comfort ourselves with the assurance that every fact gained, if it discovers the existence of many more facts and relations, renders the acquisition of them at the same time more easy. Thus it is that Agassiz, undoubtedly the most learned naturalist living, with his vast basis of scientific learning, seizes upon new observations and puts

them into their appropriate place in science, with a readiness that seems intuitive. One fact elucidates another. And every scientific man owes it to his fellow-men to devote himself zealously to the prosecution of the studies for which he has been training himself.

Doctores in Medicinâ! Teachers of Medicine! If teachers, certainly students. Students now, and through life.

Every mechanic above the most ordinary capacity bends his mind upon the improvement of his tools and his plans of work. And what art is there which needs more such attention than does the art of medicine? Stand as well as you may at this point in your lives—be qualified howsoever well for the diploma you have this day received—if you now lay aside your books and your habits of study and observation, your practice will soon be a mere routine, an empirical application of remedies learned in the lecture-room.

The first years of a physician's life are rarely much occupied with practice. There are daily many hours of leisure. This is golden time, if well employed. This is the only time he will ever have for laborious study. His few cases will give a direction to his reading; and if he studies systematically the best authorities within his reach upon the subject in hand, he will be able to attain to clear ideas of medical principles by the opportunity to witness their application, and will at the same time be forming studious habits which will never desert him. Thus the first years of practice will want the tedium that is inseparable from the life of the idler while waiting for business. Thus only will he be enabled to compete successfully with the man of riper years, who is usually preferred as a medical adviser. A large practice is sometimes picked up by him who spends his idle time in street-gossip, in bar-room good-fellowship, and in mixing himself up in the private affairs of his neighborhood. But occasions come when real worth and exact knowledge bear away the palm. And though the people are often attracted to the one whose chief merit is in companionable qualities, yet, when exact scientific knowledge comes into competition with these characteristics, in some case where great anxiety is felt, the man of genuine learning is found out for his true value. A late periodical contains the following extract from the letter of a young practitioner—too apt an illustration of my remarks to be omitted here.

He says:—"I settled in this place about two years since, under

the shadow of an old physician who had long monopolized the practice of the town. During the first year and a half I had nothing to do ; but, undaunted, applied myself diligently to a careful review of my studies, and the perusal of the best medical periodicals. The opportunity finally offered, for me to apply my knowledge to good account. I was called to visit a man with dislocated thigh, which the old man, my rival, had in vain attempted to reduce with pulleys, after torturing the patient for several hours, to the horror of the bystanders. Before visiting the patient, I carefully reviewed the admirable, and to me invaluable paper of Dr. Markoe, in the *N. Y. Journal of Medicine*, on reducing dislocated femur by manipulation. I found the patient and friends alarmed, and fearful of having instruments again used. I placed him in the proper position for manipulation, and, in the presence of a multitude of bystanders, began the required movements of the limb. Without causing the slightest pain, I carried it through the proper circle, and was about to bring it down, when the head of the bone slipped gently into its socket, to the great relief of the patient and the satisfaction of the friends. I need hardly add, that within one month of that operation, I had all the business I could do."

You should not treat any case in this early time of your practice without thorough reading on the subject. But let not this be all your study. Continue your investigations in anatomy and physiology. The study of comparative anatomy is always at hand, in the dissection of every animal that falls in your way. It furnishes recreation as well as useful occupation. If you are the fortunate possessor of a microscope, hours may be profitably spent every day in the use of it. Go over again a course of systematic reading, on all the subjects of your preparatory studies. Where you were before confined to general treatises on practice, and works prepared for text-books, you may now select the best monographs. They should always be the best, however. Prefer those which are the result of observations rather than hypothetical treatises. You want no man's theories of any disease, unless he present his grounds for your judgment. And as you are not at first qualified to select for yourselves, you may be governed in your choice by the opinions of the best Journals. In the well-conducted medical periodical, too, you will find a very valuable and indispensable variety of reading—you will find

the newest discoveries of the best men, many of which will enable you to correct the errors of previous study—errors in some degree inseparable from the pursuit of medical science.

Write! Record your observations. Publish them. But not unless they are carefully observed and faithfully recorded. The exercise of writing will render you more exact in observing, and the necessity of exposing yourselves to public criticism in the pages of a Journal will strengthen you in a good course, or aid to correct a false one. If you look forward to preferment in the profession, to the enjoyment of the only honors to which medical men are likely to attain, or which they can enjoy consistently with scientific pursuits—of which the Professor's chair stands almost alone—nothing is so well calculated to secure the accomplishment of your wishes as the publicity acquired by successful authorship, whether in the periodical or otherwise. I speak with visions before my eyes of the tide of wretched medical literature with which we are flooded—of the many medical periodicals whose contents are not worth the paper they have stained. In spite of all the tiresome experience of much of medical writing, I say "write." Not to benefit your profession, but yourselves. You will not be read by those whose good opinion is worth having, unless you have written what is worth reading.—It your first attempts fail, persevere, and in time, success will crown your efforts. The art of writing well is, first, to have something to say; and, secondly, to say it in the fewest words and plainest manner. In composition there should be no flowers but those of spontaneous growth. It is only the long-practised writer who can safely attempt to ornament his periods with the figures of rhetoric. And especially in scientific papers it is desirable to confine yourselves to a plain, unadorned statement of facts and arguments.

Thus cultivating the intellect and acquiring learning, by study and by composition, you are securing in the surest manner the confidence of the community. To inspire general confidence is, some cases of lucky accident excepted, a work of time. That it is so, is the earnest of the stability of your own reputation when you have earned it. As one generation will be slow to desert your elders in practice now for you, so will you be the long-trusted advisers of the next. Where your competitors are deserving of success, honest and able, faithful to their patients, and fair in their dealings with you,

well-educated and sound in their scientific principles, you cannot complain that business is slow to pass from their hands into yours. But there are times when your temper and patience will be tried, and with reason. You will see ignorance successful because it is aged, and quackery encouraged for its large promises, by the least discriminating and judicious part of the community. Are you to attack the fallacies in opinion and the absurd practices that you meet with in regimen and medical treatment? Are you to enter the lists against any of the follies of the day, to unmask the deceptions of homœopathy and expose the shallowness of the "water-cure?"—Are you to carry on war with every phase of charlatanry as it arises? No. Men cannot fight with so unequal weapons. You may as well undertake to reason with your horse, as to address arguments to those who are totally ignorant of science, whose empirical rules are like the baseless fabric of a vision, growing out of the eccentricities of a dreamer, and owing their encouragement to the love of novelty and the credulity of the ignorant. But when ignorance willing to be enlightened comes in your way, it is your duty and your privilege to instruct it. Few persons are without favorite notions,—popular views in regard to disease, embodying some fallacy which leads to errors in living or in medical treatment. We should waste our time, if we tried to correct the false *principles* which prevail among persons. It is not necessary nor to be expected that those without the medical profession should be acquainted with the principles of pathology. Good sense will save them from very gross errors, and especially leads them to seek advice when they are ill, rather than to tamper with themselves. Sensible men are content to receive directions from their medical friend, and leave the reasoning upon the case to him. With such persons it is easy to correct erroneous views and mischievous habits. But it is not in general advisable to combat false medical *theories* among extra-professional men. Now and then we meet with a person of high intelligence, whose tastes have led him to the study of medical science, and with whom it is a pleasure to discuss principles. But ordinarily it is a debate with knowledge on one side and ignorance on the other, and no less absurd than it would be for one of us to argue a point of law with an attorney.

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Medicine differs from every other occupation in one respect—it is eminently a benevolent profession. We take it up as a means of earning a living, but we practise it with the understanding that our services are never to be refused to those who are too poor to buy them at their rated value. It is proper that the regular fees should be liberal, and exacted as strictly as those of any other men, of those who are fully able to pay for our services. But the poor must never be turned away from your door, because they are poor. Day and night, summer and winter, sunshine and storm, affect not the promptness and constancy of your attendance upon the affluent; let them make no difference to the poor. They should see as great alacrity in answering their calls, as marked respect for their human nature, as constant, unremitting and cheerfully rendered attendance, as if they had the means of compensating you fully for your labor. Perhaps I need not dwell upon this point. if I can read your hearts from my own, there is no call for lengthened exhortation here. “The poor are my best patients, for God is their paymaster,” says one of our profession. You will find it true. The greatest happiness derived from my professional life has been, I think, in the care of the poor,—when poverty has been graced with genuine christian trustfulness, and the outpourings of a grateful heart towards the physician. Such kindly relations we may of course have with other than the indigent, but in their case we can indulge in cordial communication with them, without being exposed to the charge of mercenary motives.

Medicine stands on a different basis from other professions, in the relation which exists between physician and patient. In all professional intercourse the feelings are more or less enlisted on both sides. We are selected with great deliberation, taken on trial—and when we prove skilful, and are received into confidence, it is bestowed without reserve, and with a degree of warmth which is found in hardly any other profession. The attachment of a woman to her physician—I speak of woman because it is with her we have most frequent dealing in the sickroom—her attachment to her physician is one of the strongest she knows. And the benefit his attendance confers upon her is much increased by this bond. The drugs he administers have a magical influence; the advice he gives is more palatable than that of all others; general doubts and want of faith do

not include him; the clouds of despondency that have gathered thickly around her couch in the night-watches are dispelled by his entrance—

His "morning visit in itself combines
The best of cordials, tonics, anodynes."

Mercenary calculations have little connection with such feelings.

The nature of our relation to our patients involves a knowledge of their affairs such as is not revealed to others. We soon learn, of course, all those peculiarities of temper which rarely appear in public, but are kept for the unreserved intercourse of home. Vanities and weaknesses come to light, which we had never connected with their possessors. Those who are ordinarily troubled by trifles, often grow strong and brave in the time of affliction; and many a one gives way to slight trials, in whom we expected fortitude. For us the general mask is stripped off: vice is painted in vain; the modest veil of virtue cannot hide her from us.

Many of those who consult us, come to pour out their private griefs: our known acquaintance with the woes of life, suggests us as those most easy to confide in when they are in trouble.

The success of medical treatment depends so much on our thorough knowledge of all the circumstances of a patient's life, the mental influences to which he is subjected, as well as his bodily condition, that we necessarily demand his fullest confidence. The perplexities of business, the consciousness of crime, or even any of the lesser troubles which need not be enumerated, all are poured out into our ears and hearts. We know the whole. Then only can we

"Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And, with some sweet oblivious antidote,
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous grief,
Which weighs upon the heart."

Then only can we apply to the body the remedies suited to its relief.

By the frequency of such confidences, we become worthy of them. Confidence begets honor. The temptation to retail the affairs of our patients cannot long continue with any one who has a spark of honorable feeling.

We should also avoid talking of the medical history of those under our charge. It is a miserable, a contemptible way of getting

notoriety. It may be very agreeable to excite the wonder and admiration of a crowd of idlers in the town lounging-places, at the relation of your successes in medical treatment—but it is a taste that had better not be cultivated. You will secure some patients—but you are contributing your part to induce fickleness in them, unfounded confidence and equally unfounded distrust. If all our profession were honest, and no one claimed to have special and peculiar power and ability—if that part of our code of ethics were universally regarded, which places us all on the same honorable level, using the same remedial means and enjoying equal opportunities of acquiring a knowledge of diseases—the learned and unassuming would not be so often deserted for the ignorant pretender.

It is indeed too often the fault of the educated physician that he is left for the ignoramus: had he never claimed unusual power, had he not spoken of himself as one whose opinion was better than that of other men, no more would be expected of him, and his efforts, when unavailing, would not occasion so bitter disappointment. It is from our promising more than it is in the power of man to perform, that people lose confidence in medicine. The power of prognosticating in disease is the most valuable that a physician can possess: to foretell correctly the result of a case, wins him more fame than anything else he can do. It matters not whether the result be in life or death—if he predicts it, he will gain the confidence of his patients. And justly—for nothing is more important to their happiness, and nothing indicates more acumen in him or more thorough study and observation. Be careful then not to give a prognosis more favorable than the case warrants. Do not excite in your patient and his friends expectations which are sure to be disappointed. Do not expect that you will be able to control a disease which has hitherto proved incurable. It is such wanton and ignorant blunders that have brought great opprobrium on our profession, and lost for medicine so much of the general confidence. It is this which has given rise to many of the prosecutions of surgeons in courts of law. They have promised complete restoration of injured parts, where such restoration was impossible from the nature of the case, or have neglected to inform the patient at the outset that a perfect cure could not be made—and in either case have been held responsible for the result. Do not therefore excite expectations which can

never be realized—do not promise more than medical art can accomplish—for it is this which brings it into disrepute.

Confidence readily bestowed is easily withdrawn. If you make friends, you will make enemies. You cannot avoid it.

“Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow,
Thou shalt not escape calumny.”

The language that Hamlet addressed to Ophelia is applicable to us all. A physician's course is peculiarly open to remark: his cases are discussed from one end of the village to the other; his merits are canvassed by all the empty-headed gossips of the town. Where the actions of others excites only distaste in their neighbors, the physician often gets downright hatred. He has been too near his patients, too much in their confidence, to be discarded with any more moderate feelings. Rivalry between two members of our profession is often strong enough to enlist active parties, which embitter the life of the town with their criminations and recriminations. Actions are commented on, severe remarks made, reputations stabbed, confidence destroyed. It rests with you to prevent this. If you are so unfortunate as to be the subjects of calumnious reports, you may give them a continued life or not, according to your manner of treating them. He who is anxiously inquiring about his public reputation will certainly hear what is disagreeable; and if slander is busy with his name, it will grow stronger whenever he notices it. Disregarded, it sinks into contempt, and is soon forgotten. No man's reputation was ever protected or restored by his talking about it. If you are calumniated, live down the slander; prove by your course that it is not true. If you do not talk about yourselves and your affairs out of doors, people will not mention them to you—and they will very soon grow tired of discussing you among themselves.

A little undeserved abuse—ay, a great deal—is useful. It teaches you to depend less upon the opinions of others, to look within for the direction of your course, and not to desire chiefly the approbation of men, or to dread their displeasure.

One evil, indeed, sometimes arises from being the mark of undeserved persecution. It is that our friends, in the warmth of their regard, take up our cause with unwarrantable ardor. They magnify our virtues to a degree that is trying to a sensitive person, as well as eventually detrimental to his reputation.

Always discourage their well-meant practice of sounding your praises for the performance of the ordinary services of our profession. Friends will cease talking extravagantly in your favor, when it is apparent that it is distasteful to you. Men cannot be altogether insensible to public opinion—nor is it desirable they should be so. All of us owe a certain degree of allegiance to the general views of the community and the world; it is no more than a just compensation for the privileges of society. But conformity is only binding on us in degree. Its excess is *the American vice*; individual thought and action are swallowed up in it. We dare not differ from others in the least of our habits—we sacrifice grace, comfort and health to the tyrannical dictation of fashion. So too in higher matters than dress and social habits, we see the same slavish propensity to follow other men, the same dread of standing alone. The independent thinker gets hardly decent treatment from his fellows. First scoffed at and ridiculed, and finally quite overlooked when we are tired of laughing at and abusing him, he grows strong by being driven to his own resources and forced to depend solely upon himself. Great deeds and great thoughts are never the work of a multitude—they must be wrought out by individual minds, acting alone. Whatever people may say, whatever may be the public sentiment on any subject relating to you, it is clear that when the time of action comes, the whole responsibility rests upon you alone. It is therefore far more for your peace of mind that you should acquire a decision of character which will prevent your waiting to know what your friends think, before you take up a course of action, or listening for the remarks of your enemies after you are committed to it.

But I am treading ground that is common to every profession; to all mankind. Let us return, for a brief space, to matters that pertain exclusively to ourselves. In the few remaining moments let me add one more hint upon your strictly professional relations.

It is unnecessary that you should now be reminded with how much greater prospect of success we may attempt to ward off the attacks of disease than to attempt to cure it. If the medical lectures in this College have failed to convince you of this truth, a few years experience in practice will satisfy you that the subject has not been misstated. Bearing this fact in mind, be persuaded that your greatest duty is to instruct those in your professional circle in all the dai-

ly habits of life, which have a bearing on the health. It will be your fault if your patients and neighbors live with an entire disregard of those physiological laws, whose observance is required to preserve their vigor and activity, and to train their children into robust men and women. Your duty does not permit you to confine your advice to the sickroom; but the families which employ you as a medical adviser have a constant claim upon your counsel, and you will be highly culpable if you suffer them to continue in the practice of physical abuses without remonstrance. In matters of public concern,—the erection of public buildings, the construction of aqueducts and the selection of water, and in the drainage of towns, for example,—be ready to watch over the general interest, to point out the manner in which dangers may be avoided and nuisances abated. Make it appear that these things are of vital importance, and that you are ready to join in the adoption of every means to improve the general health. In a village the physician may become the worthy oracle of the place, if he shows a lively interest in what most concerns the comfort of his neighbors.

But one thing more is requisite—a matter less often thought of than the imparting of instruction. It is that his example should accord with his teaching. Let him regulate his own life and household in conformity with his doctrine, that all may see that he believes what he teaches. It is idle to tell men that excesses in eating and drinking are ruinous, that sickness comes of improper food, careless exposures, and still more foolish confinement, if we live no more wisely than our neighbors.

To the faithful discharge of the duties of the sickroom, add a constant thoughtfulness on the means by which a higher grade of health can be obtained, and by which disease may from year to year become a greater stranger to our doors; and, like Jenner, you will win an undying name, and the still higher rewards that wait on duty well-performed.

We can bear to be reproached with failure to discover specific remedies for disease—for we have prouder monuments. The careful study of the natural history of diseases has robbed many of them of factitious terrors. The self-sacrificing labors of medical men have introduced improvements in the sanitary regulations of towns and cities, by which health has been improved and bills of mortality

have grown less formidable. Fevers that kept on their deadly march in defiance of the whole artillery of the Pharmacopeia, have struck their colors at the summons of the goddess that presides over health. The simple elements of nature, which have been so sedulously denied to the sick, ~~is~~ overlooked in negligence, are exhibiting their powerful influence as healing agents. Water, light and air are recovering their merited place, and the traditionary errors of opinion which denied them an entrance to the sickroom are falling gradually but surely into complete discredit.

For all this we claim the meed of praise. If, almost discouraged that Panacea so seldom heeded our prayers, we have allowed ourselves to neglect her worship, we have become devout and faithful votaries at the shrine of Hygeia.

Gentlemen! how can I in an hour do justice to the subjects which naturally occur to us all as appropriate to this era in your lives? I can only sketch a few hints of the most prominent of the thoughts that crowd upon my mind.

We are like travelers in a new country, sending back to you who are setting out on the same journey the results of our experience. As we mount the hill whose foot you have just reached, our position gives us a more comprehensive view of the whole region through which you are about to pass. We can see many spots where we were met by trials and disappointment; there are far more whose sight brings the recollection of unalloyed satisfaction. We well remember the feelings with which we entered upon professional life—when the future was filled with beatific visions, when success, popular admiration, honors and preferments were marked out in glowing colors on the chart of our future career. As one point after another was passed, disrobed of the enchantment which distance had lent it—when the light which had drawn us onward proved a mere ignis fatuus—we were fain to sit down sometimes in despair; till some new beacon light far onward aroused us to new efforts, in which disappointment was changed to success.

And thus, with honest purpose, with energy and perseverance, shall we all sooner or later attain to the supreme object of our just desires. Whatever in life or eternity is worth possessing, deserves

labor and strife. Through difficulties bravely encountered, is all true progress made.

Go forth then, friends, with our cordial "God-speed," ready to sustain your part in the great battle of life! Armed with faith and hope, you are proof against the daily trials that will surround you. Nay, by resisting them you will grow strong—until, by a long and honorable course in your profession, having won the crown of honor, the success, and the respect which you shall have richly earned by continued effort, you stand at last

"As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm—
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head!"

