MOTT (Val) Eulogy on the late John W. Francis ✕ ✕ ✕

DR. MOTT'S

EULOGY ON DR. FRANCIS.

EULOGY

ON THE LATE

JOHN W. FRANCIS, M.D., LL.D.

BEING A DISCOURSE ON HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER.

BY

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DISCOURSE.

Κρυεροιο τοταρπωμεσθα γοοιο.

HOMER.

GENTLEMEN OF THE ACADEMY:—

WHEN, in the Iliad, Achilles is visited by the ghost of Patroclus, whose funeral ceremonies have just been celebrated with extraordinary pomp and solemnity, the living hero, in the presence of his departed friend, is melted with tenderness, and laments that it is not in his power to throw his arms around the chilly shade that they may in mutual embrace enjoy the delight of grief.

In peaceful sorrow there is a kind of joy. The human heart bereaved finds gratification in mourning over its loss. Its anguish is assuaged by indulging in gentle melancholy. "Strike the harp in my hall," exclaims the mighty Fingal to the bard, "Strike the harp in my hall, and let Fingal hear the song. Pleasant is the joy of grief. It is like the shower of spring when it softens the branch of the oak, and the young leaf lifts its head."

Among all civilized nations, and at all periods of history, it has been a custom to assemble at stated times, to celebrate the virtues and perpetuate the memory of the illustrious dead. In accordance with

this ancient and universal rite, we are met here to-night to mourn the death of our late associate, Dr. John Wakefield Francis, to pay tribute to his many virtues, to deplore our own great loss, and to do what we may to perpetuate the memory of his long and distinguished life.

Providence has seen fit to order, that I, who more than fifty years ago saw him rise from the position of a devoted and industrious student to that of a popular teacher of medical science, and then successively become an eminent physician, an illustrious professor, a leading savant, and a controlling spirit in the ranks of our divine profession;—that I should also have remained to behold the close of his career, and to pronounce this night his Eulogy. It has been mine to see the dawn of his professional life; to see his sun rise in the purple chambers of the East, rejoicing like a strong man to run a race; to witness the meridian of his glory; to experience the milder radiance of his afternoon splendor; and to be present at his beautiful and tinted sunset—tinted we may say, for during his last hours the light of his brilliant intellect fell upon us, not clear and cold, and dazzling, and blinding, as it sometimes did in the earlier rationalistic period of his life; but mellowed and subdued, and split into a thousand crimson streams, by a living faith in our holy Redeemer, whose blessed name was present on his dying lips.

The lives of Dr. Francis and myself, as is well known, have run parallel, and over the same ground for more than the period usually allotted to man,

and our mutual friendship has been life-long and close! as tender, I believe, during the last years, as when more than a quarter of a century ago he called his son by the name of his friend. Together, O companion of my youth! we saw this city pass from its former simplicity to its present grandeur—together we saw the white winged sailing vessels in the bay superseded by steamers that walked upon the water, pillars of cloud by day, and of fire by night—together we saw these steamers succeeded by locomotives, compared to the speed of whose flight "the tempest itself lagged behind;" and together we saw those iron chargers succeeded by a telegraph, whose etherial messengers outstrip the very arrows of light. Together we had journeyed up the hill of life—together we had enjoyed the prospect from the summit, and together we had commenced to descend.

"But where the path we walked began
To slant to its autumnal slope,
As we descended, following Hope,
There sat the shadow feared of man

Who broke our fair companionship
And spread his mantle dark and cold,
And wrapped *thee* formless in its fold
And dulled the murmur on thy lip;

And bore thee where I could not see
Nor follow, though I walk in haste
And think, that somewhere in the waste
That shadow sits and waits for me."*

We of the Academy as yet can scarcely think

* Tennyson—In Memoriam.

him dead. It is so lately that our halls reverberated with the tones of his spirit-stirring eloquence, that the echoes seem hardly to have ceased. But our venerable friend will never return. He has passed through those gates which open not backwards; they have closed upon him, and he has trod the path beyond—the path which leads to an unknown shore. The rays of a vernal sun are already falling upon his tomb; they will call forth to renewed life the flowers that the hand of affection has planted there, but they can never re-animate his lifeless form. The amaranth will grow above him, and mingle its regal flowers with the deep green leaves of the gnaphalium! Mosses and lichens, emblems of immortality, will find root there, clothing the mound in ever-living green—

> "When spring with dewy fingers cold
> Returns to dress the sacred mould,
> She there will find a sweeter sod
> Than Fancy's foot hath ever trod."*

And yet he who during life was always so quick to appreciate the attentions of his friends, will ever sleep on in senseless apathy beneath. The footfalls of the living will be frequent above his head, but they will not disturb his slumber. The birds of spring will warble—the winds will sigh—the waves of the bay will break upon the shore with heavy beat, and slow rain drops will patter upon leaves, and all the rural sounds to which he once delighted to listen, will go on as ever in the world above, but all will be silence in his world below. His noble

* Montgomery.

heart, which was always moved in sympathy by the woes of others, is for ever at rest. The eye, out of which his genial spirit so brightly shone, has receded far within its socket, and is ever-more veiled within a leaden lid. The hand that dispensed so many charities is palsied for ever. He has gone to inhabit with kings and counsellors of the earth, with the chieftains of the mighty dead. Of what avail to him now are any earthly considerations?

> "Can storied urn or animated bust
> Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
> Can honor's voice provoke the silent dust,
> Or flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death?"*

But though he has passed beyond the reach of either our praise or censure—though to him it matters not what is said of him here to-night, yet it is a pleasure to us who remain to recall the events of his life—to recount his noble deeds, and in the words of our motto, to "enjoy together our mutual grief." It seems also eminently proper, that this body of which he was one of the early Presidents, should, in this official way, pay its tribute to his memory. A sense of justice impels us to acknowledge, in a public manner, his high professional merits, while the love we bore him as a man and an associate, incites us to enumerate his many amiable personal characteristics.

John Wakefield Francis was born in this city, in Warren street, November 17th, 1789. He was the eldest son of a German grocer, who died of yellow fever in 1795, while the son was yet a mere lad.

* Gray's Elegy.

Other members of the family also suffered with the same disease on that occasion, among whom was the subject of this discourse, whose recovery, he tells us, was at one time deemed so improbable, that his coffin was brought into the room where he lay, and prepared for his reception.

His mother, in whose sole charge he was left, appears to have been a woman of more than ordinary good judgment and energy of character. She was formerly of Philadelphia, and of Swiss descent. From her he inherited a taste for literature and a love of books, which she had the good sense to encourage, and which the industry of his father had left her the means to a considerable extent to gratify.

When sufficiently grown to begin to anticipate the duties of life, the same taste led him to select the trade of a printer, and he was allowed to apprentice himself to Mr. George Long, a noted publisher of that day. But he soon found the mechanical duties of the press-room a matter quite different from the *belle lettre* he had anticipated. The longing for books and study still possessed him, and at noon, instead of going to his dinner as an apprentice boy should, he contented himself with an apple, and crept away under the press to enjoy his Latin grammar.

But apprentices whose attention is so much abstracted, and whose diet is so unsubstantial, are not apt to be of much profit to the master. The duties were evidently uncongenial to the boy. Mr. Long was a man of good judgment, and so a way was found to cancel the indentures, and John W. Fran-

cis was saved to the medical, and probably in a great measure to the literary world. However, he was always fond of recurring to this period of his life, in which he said he had followed the example of the illustrious Franklin, to whom also his friends averred and he believed he bore some personal resemblance. He was always intimate with printers, and, through life, very generally attended the annual re-unions of the typographical fraternity, and frequently graced them with one of his peculiar after-dinner speeches.

Leaving Long's, he directed his attention exclusively to a literary and professional life. He attended for a while the Grammar School of Rev. George Strabeck, and afterwards prepared for College under Rev. John Conroy, a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin. He entered Columbia College two years in advance. The amount of intellectual labor he was capable of performing at this time seems scarcely to have had a limit, for during the time he was an under-graduate we find him pursuing the study of medicine in the office of the late Dr. Hosack, and drilling the doctor's students; attending medical lectures and writing them out into abstracts; conducting, in conjunction with his preceptor, a medical periodical; and in addition to all this, composing, as the event proves, his celebrated inaugural thesis on the use of mercury. The more we study the early history of his life, the more we are assured that his success was then, as much as in after years, due to his *ceaseless, tireless industry.*

It was during this period of his life I made my first visit to Europe. On my return I gave a short

course of Lectures in Columbia College on Surgical Anatomy and Operative Surgery, illustrated by operations on the subject. The medical department of this institution was as yet connected with the literary, under the supervision of Bishop Moore, and the senior class in the College attended a portion, and some of them all, of the medical lectures.

My earliest personal recollections of Dr. Francis are connected with this course of lectures. And now, after the lapse of fifty years, I very well remember him as at that time a student, remarkable for his assiduity, for the regularity of his attendance, and the frequent use of his note-book, as well as for general intelligence and quick apprehension of new ideas.

Upon the union of the medical department of Columbia College with that of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, he was our first graduate, and consequently his name heads the list. After graduation, by some arrangement he continued with Dr. Hosack. This connexion was not only professional, but also extended to literary matters, and the labors of medical instruction. From 1810, the period at which he entered the office of Dr. Hosack, until 1814, the two conducted together the Medical and Philosophical Register, a journal which contains not only the most valuable current medical literature of the time, but also discusses with much ability collateral philosophical matters, such as steam navigation and the capabilities of canals. In this journal his thesis on the use of mercury was first published.

From Dr. Hosack, the medical life of Dr. Francis

took its principal aim and main direction. That celebrated man was at this time at the height of his fame, doing a large business, enjoying a princely revenue, and living in corresponding style. He was in truth one of the most eminent medical men, and one of the most able at the bedside that this country has ever produced, comparing favorably with Duncan and Home of Edinburgh. In manner he was somewhat harsh and imperious, surrounding himself with an atmosphere of formality which might be considered affected at the present day—in practice a strict constructionist; a physician after the straitest sect, who honored and magnified his office, and always looked on the more demonstrative branches of medical science, such as anatomy and surgery, as inferior in dignity to his own more metaphysical pursuits.

His peculiarities gave direction to the tastes of his students, who very generally inherited also his love of medical polemics. The columns of his journal are to this day evidence of the stately manner and trenchant power with which he wielded his pen. Dr. Francis acquired from this eminent preceptor his manner of composition and power of expression, as well as his love of medical discussion. In none of Dr. Hosack's students was the passion for anatomy or surgery ever awakened. He taught them to regard such pursuits as necessary in truth, but inelegant, and unworthy of gentlemen, and I do not believe that many, even of the most faithful of all his students, ever patiently dissected an arm or a leg in their lives.

In 1813 the medical department of Columbia College was united with the College of Physicians and Surgeons. In the new institution Dr. Francis received the appointment of Professor of Materia Medica and Botany. Dr. Hosack was promoted from this chair to that of Theory and Practice, and I was elected Professor of Surgery. Dr. Mitchell was appointed to the chair of Natural History, and Dr. McNeven to that of Chemistry. With characteristic liberality, the young Professor of Materia Medica would receive no fees for his first course of lectures, lest he might in some way detract from the interests of the institution.

Soon after he became established in his new position, he visited Europe. In London he made the intimate acquaintance of Abernethy, who was then at the height of his renown, and was influenced in his future life to some extent, by the personal peculiarities and conversational habits of that great man. It was customary then for medical men to allow themselves more liberty of speech than is considered *comme il faut* at the present day. They were also more formal in attire. Dr. Francis carried Abernethy the first copies of his works which had been published in America, and brought away some notions in regard to dress and manner which were well enough, but, in addition, some conversational habits which it cost him, in after years, trouble to discard. The eccentric English surgeon had so much confidence in the capacity of the young American, that he gave him a very cordial invitation to come and settle in London. At this time he also

made the acquaintance, and attended the lectures of the Coopers, Pearson, Brande, and others in that city, where he remained six months, spending much of his time in St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

In Edinburgh, he became acquainted with John Bell, Gregory, Brewster, the Duncans, and other eminent medical men, and enjoyed the privileges which the Scotch capital has always afforded for the pursuit of science. True to his literary instincts, he visited the poet Byron, whose passionate songs had always found an echo in his bosom, and he also turned aside from his pilgrimage to pay his respects at the shrine of Scott, the great novelist, whose romances had so often carried away captive his young imagination. Of this visit he has left among his miscellaneous papers a pleasing account.

In Paris, he enjoyed the society of Cuvier, Dupuytren, Gall, Denon, Arago, Geoffroy de St. Hilaire, and other eminent scientific men, who extended to him all those advantages of observation and experiment which the immensity of the French metropolis has always furnished.

Nor during this excursion was his pen idle. To Rees's Cyclopedia he contributed the articles *Dr. Rush* and *New York*, and furnished for his own journal at home, letters containing the first announcement of the doctrine, that one who has once suffered from the yellow fever is less liable to another attack.

On his return from Europe, he continued his business connexion with Dr. Hosack, as well as his lectures in the college in Barclay Street; though the chair of Materia Medica having been added to that

of Chemistry during his absence, his new Professorship was nominally that of the Institutes of Medicine. In 1817, he succeeded Dr. Stringham as Professor of Medical Jurisprudence, and in 1819 the chair of Obstetrics was added to his professorship.

During the thirteen years he lectured in Barclay Street, he was always heavily engaged in the duties of practice. It was during this time the foundation of his pecuniary competence was laid, and consequently, this period of his life furnishes us with less of the products of his pen. He found time, however, to write "Cases of Morbid Anatomy" (4to. 1814); "Febrile Contagion" (8vo. 1816), written from London; "a Notice of Thomas Eddy, the Philanthropist" (12mo. 1823), and to edit during the years 1822, 1823, and 1824, in conjunction with Drs. Beck and Dyckman, the New York Medical and Physical Journal.

During the last year we were at Barclay Street (1825), he published Denman's Midwifery, with notes by himself. This edition soon became the favorite text-book in this country, and thus secured to him considerable reputation as well as some emolument. It has been a number of times republished.

In 1826, the whole faculty of the College of Physicians and Surgeons in a body resigned, and five of them, Drs. Hosack, Mitchell, McNeven, Francis, and myself, went into the faculty of a new institution, Rutgers' Medical College. It was in this organization that Godman the naturalist, so elegant and refined, but alas! so short-lived, held for a while the chair of Anatomy. Like his own, the career

of the institution with which he had identified himself, was short but brilliant. Its graduates have always ranked among our most eminent medical men, and, I believe, they universally refer to their Alma Mater in terms of love and respect. Indeed, they have some reason to be proud of their lineage; for, stimulated as we were by a lively and talented competition, we labored with as much energy as any medical faculty in this country, and the enthusiastic spirit of the professors was caught to such an extent by the students, that the supreme power of the State, when interposed, was hardly sufficient to arrest us. But we were running under a New Jersey charter though located in the State of New York, and a way was found, through Legislative interference, to close our doors.

With the career of Rutgers, terminated the labors of John W. Francis as a public teacher. He never afterwards held a professorship in any of our Colleges, but devoted his time more fully to his large medical practice, and his numerous literary labors.

As a Medical Lecturer, Dr. Francis was always an impressive speaker, uniformly animated, and frequently eloquent. His personal appearance was prepossessing. In stature, though not above the ordinary height, he was of strongly built frame, with a massive head adorned with a profusion of locks, which during the latter part of his life were of snowy whiteness. Of late years, when he appeared before an audience, dressed in his white neckcloth, and garments of antique fashion, but of faultless fit, his venerable aspect might lead them to antici-

pate a prosy discourse, or at least a dull prologue. But nothing was further from the fact. He plunged at once into the middle of his subject, opening up avenues and letting in light upon the matter from quarters least expected. In conformity with the rule of Horace,

> "Semper ad eventum festinat, et in medias res,
> Non secus ac notas, auditorem rapit."

His nervous system was large and predominant in action. Hence, in manner he was enthusiastic, his eloquence resembling the mountain torrent, which accumulates behind obstacles, and removes them by its own force, rather than the quiet stream which steals under them and dissolves away their support, and leaves them to fall by their own gravity. If not always persuasive, he was convincing. If his speeches were not certain to be easy and graceful, they were always powerful and effective. If there was at first a little feeling in his audience that their pleasure was costing him an effort, it was soon dissipated by some signal stroke of argument, or brilliant flash of wit, in which the speaker was lost in the subject. Of anecdote and incident, his resources were inexhaustible, and he used them profusely for illustrating whatever matter he discussed. Whether he viewed a question analytically or historically, in a professional or secular light, his learning made him equally familiar with it, and his sound common sense enabled him to take the route which led most directly to the point he wished to attain. For these qualities of mind, he was always greatly respected by students,

while the amiable and benevolent qualities of his heart at the same time secured their affections.

During the four years he was connected with Rutgers College (from 1826 to 1830) he has left no literary remains. A reason for this may be found in the fact, that he was married in 1829. This alliance was with Miss Maria Eliza Cutler, a lady of refined tastes and social position, and we may presume that his attention and spare moments during the interval, were devoted to more congenial pursuits. The conjugal union was to him a life-long source of felicity. Mrs. Francis proved to be a woman of mind, of strong affections, and complete devotion; able to comprehend his plans, and competent and efficient in assisting him to carry them out. She made his house not only pleasant for him, but also attractive to his friends.

While a bachelor, he had acquired a taste for the drama, and had been intimate with most of the leading actors in this country, who were now welcomed to his family circle. Men of eminence or ability in other professions were also invited to his house, so that No. 1 Bond street soon became the centre of a literary as well as scientific circle. Here were congregated statesmen, such as Clinton and Webster; clergymen, such as Hobart and Hawks; poets, such as Freneau and Bryant; and novelists, such as Irving and Cooper; as well as actors, such as Cooke and Kean.

And yet amidst all his social as well as professional engagements, he in some way found time to resume his literary labors. In 1830 he delivered

an address before the Horticultural Society, and in 1831 an address before the Philolexian. In 1834 he published a letter on Cholera asphyxia, also observations on the Mineral Waters of Avon, and a paper on the Anatomy of Drunkenness. In 1841 he delivered a discourse before the Lyceum of Natural History. In 1847 he was elected President of this Academy, which office he held during two terms. He gave addresses to this body during the years 1847, '48, and '49. In 1850 he addressed the Typographical Society on the Life and Character of Dr. Franklin, and also on the Printers and Publishers and Editors of New York. During this year he received the doctorate of laws from Trinity College, Hartford. In 1854 he read before the Historical Society a memoir of Christopher Colles, a portion of which is quoted in Duyckinck's Cyclopædia of American Literature, together with a portrait and a sketch of his life.

It was in this year, that Dr. Francis was destined to receive a stroke, of whose severity he had no previous conception. Around him had sprung up like shoots about the parent stem, three sons of uncommon promise, who were then reaching manhood. The eldest, who bore his own name, was destined, he believed, to transmit that name to posterity with increased honors. How carefully he had watched over his early education—how fondly he had entered into all his juvenile joys and sorrows—and how he had centred his hopes and anticipations upon him, only a father can know. And now, just as this favorite scion of his house was blossom-

ing into usefulness, a frost suddenly fell from heaven, and blighted and destroyed him. To the father the stroke was terrible. It was the first severe trial of his life. The oak which has stood longest and spread its branches widest, is most injured by the hurricane—smaller trees bow before the blast and allow it to spend its fury. In his agony, he was almost ready to impugn Providence. As I led him away from the death-bed, when all was over, he uttered a passionate exclamation of grief, that he who had saved the lives of so many less worthy, should have lost his own son. The shaft had sunk deep into his heart, and for two years he brooded over his wound and refused to be comforted. Indeed, he was never afterwards quite the same man.

In 1857 he had sufficiently recovered from this shock to publish his "Old New York; or, Reminiscences of the last sixty years," a second edition of which, enlarged, appeared in 1858. In this year he also delivered a discourse in Bellevue Hospital on the rise and progress of Anatomical knowledge in this city, which traces the history of this branch of medical science from an early date to the present time. His final literary achievement is his sketch of the Life of Governeur Morris, published during the last year; and in this year, Columbia College, his alma mater, conferred on him her highest honor.

The sympathies of Dr. Francis were always readily enlisted in any movement for the advance of science, or the relief of suffering humanity. When Dr. Sims came to me with his newly invented metallic suture, and demonstrated its adaptation to

the treatment of a class of diseases which had up to that time been considered almost the opprobrium of surgery, I requested him to call, in addition, upon Dr. Francis, who recognised at once the great value of the new treatment, and soon became one of the most enthusiastic and effective supporters of the movement for a woman's hospital. Of the executive board of the institution which eventually became established, he was chairman from its first inception until his death.

To the advance made by Dr. Richards in the intellectual treatment of idiots, he gave his cordial support, and wrote to the Commissioners of Public Charities, asking them to place some of these unfortunates under the doctor's care.

During the last summer, he visited Binghampton, and in conjunction with the Hon. Edward Everett, laid the corner-stone of the new Inebriates' Asylum, of which institution, within a week of his death, he was elected President.

Not only was he connected with public and professional charities, but his private life was a continual round of unostentatious beneficence. He did not his alms publicly, to be seen of men, but silently and secretly there flowed from him a stream, constant as the stream of time. His ear was ever open to the cry of sickness and distress, and his hand was ever ready to supply the wants of poverty and destitution. When his friend, Professor Dewees, of Philadelphia, was dangerously ill, to obtain reliable information of his condition, he sent a messenger to that city at his own expense. On another occasion

he might have been seen in a sequestered portion of this city, attending the funeral of a child, walking alone with the afflicted father, following a person carrying the coffin, both he and the father with their heads uncovered, the doctor, I venture to say, having paid for the coffin.

Some of his donations were of large amount. To the Historical Society of this city he has contributed at different times, more than $8,000—an enormous sum for a single individual.

He was in an eminent degree the physician of the poor. The dying outcast, in his squalid tenement, was sure of his attendance at any hour of the night, if he thought his presence could in any degree alleviate the mortal struggle, or soothe mourning sorrow. We all remember how the extremes of society met at his funeral, by what a miscellaneous multitude we of the Academy were surrounded. How the poor in their faded and threadbare habiliments crowded the aisles of St. Thomas, to obtain a last view of their benefactor. On what physician was there ever pronounced a more touching eulogy? From *them* he could have received no pecuniary reward.

> "The soul that's filled with virtue's light,
> Shows brightest in affliction's night;
> To pity the distressed inclined,
> As well as just to all mankind."

The conversational powers of Dr. Francis were of a high order. In social intercourse he was eminently pleasant and genial. He possessed the faculty of being ardent in an easy and familiar way, and

though naturally of an enthusiastic temperament, was always gentle aud courteous in manner. His memory was of wonderful tenacity; and reaching back as it did through a long series of years, and to details the most minute, he readily caught the attention with some quaint anecdote or singular fact, while his sound sense and rich stores of knowledge made his conversation instructive and delightful.

In the sick room he was kind and affectionate, but less affable than some physicians. The soft footstep and kind word with which he approached the bedside were admirable, and at once secured confidence. Though he was not quite as ready in medical practice as men who have had a long hospital experience, yet his prescriptions were eminently scientific and successful. In consultation, when he brought the full powers of his mind to bear on a case, he threw such a flood of light upon it, as at once to secure the admiration of his associates. He seemed, in fact, a living library, a walking encyclopædia of knowledge. His opinion was sometimes given with formality, but it was with no more than he believed due to his high office.

As a writer his style was elevated and exuberant, his sentences flowing and ornate. Though critics have asserted that he was sometimes artificial, and even ostentatious, they have always admitted him to be clear and forcible. He chose to present his thoughts to the public in full dress, and that practice is nowhere more allowable than in medico-literary composition. If the garb was not always of the newest fashion

and plainest form, it was at least rich and elegant, and pleasing. The City Hall and the Custom House may be a little antique in appearance, but they are not less beautiful than many of the buildings of the present day. That his writings were acceptable to the public we may conclude from the fact, that a prominent publishing house in this city lately offered him ten thousand dollars for the services of his pen on a single work—his autobiography.

We come now to the closing scenes of his life. In the summer of 1860, his nervous system began to show signs of failure. He complained of insomnia to such an extent, that he was able to sleep only two or three hours out of the twenty-four. He spent the warmest part of the season at Staten Island, and at my suggestion, also made a visit to West Point.

In the autumn he removed his residence to Sixteenth street, and after being settled in his new home, his health seemed to be returning. But in the early part of December the carbuncular diathesis appeared. A slough occurred upon his back, not so large as of necessity to prove fatal, but of sad import.

The process of suppuration commenced and went on favorably; but while recovering from the first a second appeared, a little lower down, and extended until it became as large as two hands, and this, in a few days, was surrounded by numerous smaller ones. Such a mass of carbuncular disease I have rarely seen. His mouth now became aphthous, and digestion failed. Still, his naturally strong constitution

stood up bravely to the work, and made preparation for clearing away the whole of the diseased mass. The digestive disorder was relieved, and when we had again succeeded in conveying supplies to the beleaguered garrison, we fondly hoped the fortress might yet hold out and make a successful defence.

But while we were congratulating ourselves, an extensive induration made its appearance in the popliteal space, and a chill and paroxysm of exhaustion told too truly that insidious mischief had again commenced. The suppuration proved extensive, and on being opened, the abscess discharged a large amount. Periods of collapse now supervened, in which the very foundations of life seemed breaking up. At these times the pulse became frequent, the breathing hurried, and the surface cold and clammy, indicating impending dissolution. Yet again and again he rallied, and encouraged our hopes, so strongly did nature cling to life. He saw his own danger, and understood the probabilities. "If it had been God's will," he said to me one day, as I sat by his bed, "I should have been pleased to live a little longer," and he added that "he would have been satisfied to sit in the chimney corner and write." The flickering flame of his life we supported as well as we could, and screened it from whatever might extinguish it, but the taper was evidently burning down into the socket.

A little before daybreak on the morning of February 8th, his final hour came. Surrounded by his

weeping family, his physician, and his spiritual adviser, he saw that the time of his exit had arrived. Murmuring a blessing on the name of his Saviour and his God, he asked to be turned on his side, and without a struggle or a pang, John W. Francis breathed out his spirit.

> "His life so gently ceased to be
> It lapsed in immortality."*

Into the religious belief of Dr. Francis it is scarcely necessary for us to enter here to much extent. What speculative ideas he may have entertained in regard to divine truth, or what peculiar views he may have had of abstract doctrines, is of little consequence, so long as we know his whole life was a continual exemplification of the cardinal maxims of the Christian religion—*love toward God and charity to man.*

Supposing that it might be of more interest to this assembly, to hear the history of his religious life from a different professional source, I addressed a note to the Rev. Dr. Hawks, on whose ministrations he attended while living, asking him to communicate to us some of the incidents of the later religious experience of our deceased friend, and have received the following reply:

NEW YORK, *April* 11, 1861.

DR. VALENTINE MOTT:

MY DEAR SIR—As to our late friend Dr. Francis, I would say in reply to your note, that to *you* who were so intimate with him, both professionally and as a friend, I can say but little that you do not know already better than I do. Of his professional attainments and standing, I would not be so presumptuous as to speak,

* Montgomery.

save to say, that to his kindness and skill I have been deeply indebted more than once; and the respect shown to his memory by his medical brethren, furnishes a better testimonial to his high professional character than any I can give. As a man, I think I include the elements that made him so much the object of affection to his many friends when I say, that I never knew a man with a more large and loving heart.

But I presume the object of your note was to obtain information as to the closing scenes of his life, which you naturally suppose I can communicate, as having been his spiritual adviser and friend during his last illness. To these closing scenes my thoughts often revert with melancholy pleasure, and I very willingly write for you what I suppose you seek to know from me.

The long intimacy of both of us with our deceased friend could not but teach us how keen was the relish with which he enjoyed life. No man entered with more heart into the passing events by which he was surrounded, or sympathized more deeply with that which was of interest to our common humanity.

It was this trait which caused the young to gather around him, under his hospitable roof, and to enjoy his society quite as much as the old did. He never permitted his *heart* to grow old, and hence he was always to the young even as one of themselves.

In the many unreserved conversations which we had in our friendly intercourse of more than thirty years, when from lighter discussion we passed (as we often did) to graver topics, it was this strong hold which he had upon the life here, that had to be tempered down before he could say as he wished, all that he would, of life hereafter; and I was often struck with the fact, that the social qualities of his generous nature, and the genial sympathies of his loving heart, entered largely into his thought of future existence, and seemed to him to belong as naturally to eternity as to time; for he always spoke of the great and good, and of friends whom he had loved on earth, as ministering to the enjoyment of a future world, by the privilege which their presence then would afford of associating and conversing with them. Almost one of the last things he said to me was, that he would see and know personally in another world "dear, good Dr. Watts," as he termed him.

There was another very striking trait in his mental organization,

not indeed peculiar to him, but uncommon enough to deserve notice. He was diffident of his own powers of mind, and too distrustful at times of his intellectual strength. He was not easily satisfied with his own productions, and articles from his pen (on unprofessional subjects, I mean), of which others thought well, did not always please him. With this distrust, he yet had an intense desire so to write, as to be remembered and quoted by posterity. I have mentioned these particulars thus fully, because they illustrate what I have yet to say.

For about a year before he died, I had observed, in my interviews with him, an increasing seriousness of thought and feeling; and he more than once reverently expressed to me his sensibility at the conviction that, in the natural course of events, he could not but expect that, ere long, his race would be finished.

When, in the commencement of his illness, I called on him, I found that he was doubtful of his recovery, and that his mind was dwelling on matters of eternal import. He was perfectly calm and self-possessed, however, and talked with me as rationally as he ever did. There was nothing like agitation or alarm produced by the expectation of dying; but his mind was evidently full of serious thought. Frequently too, those about him could perceive, from his manner and whispered expressions, that he was engaged in secret prayer.

I spoke as plainly as I could to him of Christ as the only Saviour; and, knowing as I did his strong enjoyment of life, and his feelings as to posthumous reputation, I particularly alluded to the worthlessness of both, as sources of solid comfort, in such a situation as his then was. To my great delight I discovered that he had *renounced both*, and he told me not only that he felt them to be valueless, but had discovered also that nothing was truly valuable but Christ. He then repeated a stanza from one of Newton's Hymns, which spoke of Christ as "the great physician." I asked him if he felt the truth of it, and that this great physician had treated his spiritual maladies and cured his soul.

He answered that he was sure there was no other physician, and that he humbly hoped he had effectually ministered to him. He added that he saw matters in a new light; "I am an altered man," said he.

At another time, he said that though he was perfectly resigned

to God's will and ready to go, if God so pleased, yet he would be thankful to have another year of life, that he might let his friends and acquaintance see that he was an altered man, and had learned new truths and better hopes in Christ. He wished the world to know it.

He retained his calmness and his reason to the very last moment, and his final words were uttered as composedly as if he had been well. To the sad circle that surrounded his bed, he said "it is a very solemn thing to see you all around me; how characteristic of an exit!"

After a few moments, addressing himself to his kind physician and friend, he exclaimed: "God bless you, Dr. Kissam! Blessed be God! Blessed be Jesus Christ!" He then asked his son, Dr. V. Mott Francis, to assist him in turning over. He did so, when he almost immediately said, very distinctly and solemnly, "I'm gone! I'm dead!" and breathed his last.

These few details will, I hope, furnish you, my dear Sir, with materials for forming your own opinion as to the spiritual state of our departed friend. For myself, I believe that he is in peace and rest with the faithful dead who have gone before him.

Very truly and respectfully your friend,

Francis L. Hawks.

To that cold and sceptical philosophy which can follow our friend no further than the grave, let us extend no fellowship. We will rather believe with him, that he still lives, and that he has gone to join the throng of great and good men who have preceded him into the presence of God, where new and higher intellectual powers have been conferred upon him, and the great fountains of knowledge have been opened up to him—so that he who, while living, was such a diligent searcher after the unknown, does now "know even as he is known." It is probable, too, that new sources of pleasure have

been granted him, as well as greater capacity for enjoyment.

Of the exact conditions of this spiritual existence, it is true we are ignorant. No mortal eye has seen the light of heaven, nor on any mortal ear has fallen the cadence of the celestial music. And yet we are assured of such a state by testimony of the highest order, even that of the second person in the Trinity, who made himself manifest in the flesh to bring us the glad tidings. He said to the dying thief, "this day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," and he proved the truth of his word by his own subsequent resurrection.

> "Our faith takes hold on thee,
> Thou Lamb on Calvary,
> Saviour divine."

It is scarcely to be supposed that this knowledge of a future state could have been attained by man from the light of nature alone, and yet it is pleasant to feel that nature through all her works sanctions and encourages it. Let us notice a few of these analogies.

How closely does sleep simulate Death! So closely, that poets speak of it as "the total extinction of the enlightened soul,"* or aver that "the soul is dead that slumbers."† Nor can the most penetrating physiology detect any specific difference in the nervous system during sleep; so that sleeping and waking are in reality psychological instead of physiological terms.

And yet from sleep we every morning experience

* Thomson. † Longfellow.

a resurrection; our intellectual part, unlike our physical, is regularly intermittent; being suspended during each night, to resume activity with the recurring day.

Now, do the laws of analogy suffer any violence by the supposition that, from the deeper sleep of death, we may awake to a higher and a nobler state of life?

Again—When we study the geologic record, and notice the successive forms of animal life that at different periods have inhabited the globe, and learn that man represents the latest and highest of these forms, is it not natural to conclude, that all this wonderful series of progression is not necessarily just now at an end; but that there are higher existences yet to occur?

And when we have singled out the main one of these various forms of animal life, and followed him from the ovum through the embryonic state to the condition of perfect existence, with all his wonderful metamorphoses, is it not possible to conceive how death may be only a spiritual translation?

Or when we reflect that this body is after all only a machine by which the spirit communicates with external objects, and that the size and shape and weight and capacity of this machine are governed by the conditions of external Nature, by the presence of air, light, water, gravity, etc., can we not the more easily imagine how a different body may be substituted to meet the different conditions of another state of being; how, in the words of the great apostle, "there is a natural body and there is a

spiritual body," and how "the glory of the celestial is one and the glory of the terrestrial is another?"

But not only have great and good men immortality in the Spirit world; the name they leave behind them has also an earthly perpetuity. In their writings they continue to live. Mausoleums and monuments are, after all, of little avail to keep in remembrance the name of the departed; marble crumbles to dust and betrays its inscription; bronze is corroded by time, and the record is effaced, while the transitory leaf on which has been inscribed a thought of value continues to exist. Who ever inquires for the cenotaphs of Paré and Hunter and Jenner? The benefits they have conferred on mankind continually keep their names fresh in our memory.

It is a laudable desire for this posthumous reputation that mostly incites men to noble deeds. Show him the path that leads to military fame, and without stopping to enquire the cost, the agriculturist leaves his plough, the artisan drops his hammer, the merchant abandons his ledger, and the author his pen.

Nor is our own profession an exception to the universal desire. The medical man, however depressed, however embarrassed, however worn down by toil, is always sustained and soothed by the belief, that he is earning for himself a reward of more value than mere gold in the good opinion of his fellow men. It was this ambition which to a great degree stimulated our departed brother, and enabled him to accomplish so much, that the name

he leaves behind him is in itself a priceless treasure.

This posthumous fame of the physician is in an especial manner committed to the keeping of the medical profession. In whatever estimation the world may temporarily hold a medical man, his character must be eventually settled by the judgment of his peers, and it then becomes a part of the common property of the fraternity. Who of us is there whose heart does not throb more proudly at mention of the names of Bard and Hosack, and Post and Physick, and Rush and Warren, and Wistar and Mitchell and Godman and McNeven, and Griscom and Francis?

In the Scandinavian mythology, the religion of our remote ancestors, Walhalla or Heaven was the abode of heroes only. Up to it their spirits ascended by means of the rainbow, the bridge Bifrost. The same name was given by Ludwig of Bavaria to an edifice which he built in the early part of the present century at Ratisbon, on the banks of the Danube, to perpetuate the memory of those who had deserved well of their country. The *adytum* of this temple, the Hall of Expectation, as it is called, is devoted to the reception of the busts of those who have served their fellow-men in an eminent degree, but who may be still living. When Death finishes the record of their lives, and places his seal on their illustrious deeds, their effigies are removed to the inner temple, where they are arranged on consoles in alcoves, each alcove being presided over by the figure of a winged Valkyria or genius.

We are met then to-night, O our deceased brother! to take thy name from the roll of the living and add it to the list of the dead—to take thy representative form away from the *Hall of Expectation*, where it has stood now these many years, and bear it to its proper place in the alcove of *Medical History*.

Gently and lovingly do we take thee in our arms, and tenderly and mournfully do we bear thee away from the companionship of the living, and place thee high on thine own console among our other illustrious dead. With Physick and Rush, and Warren and Bard, and Hosack and Mitchell, and Godman and McNeven—rest thee. Though like them thou art dead, yet like them thou art not speechless—though like them thou hast passed away, yet thy memory, like theirs, shall be ever present with us. Henceforth thy name and reputation are ours, and this Academy, representing as she does the Genius of Medicine, like another Valkyria, will guard thy fair fame, even as the angel guarded the gate of Paradise.