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INAUGURAL LECTURE IN THE FACULTY OF COMPARATIVE
MEDICINE, MCGILL UNIVERSITY, OCTOBER, 1894.

BY

J. G. ADAMI, M.D.,

Professor of Pathology in the McGill University, Montreal.

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INAUGURAL LECTURE IN THE FACULTY OF COMPARATIVE
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Professor of Pathology in the McGill University, Montreal.

Gentlemen—In this Faculty, as in that of medicine, it is the old established, time-honoured custom, and a kindly custom at that, to have, as it were, a little ceremony of welcome at the beginning of each new academical year in the shape of an inaugural meeting and an inaugural lecture. It is in this way that you, the new students just entering the school, see before you, passing, as it were in review, the body of your teachers—that we, your teachers, make our first acquaintance as a body with you. Some of us, naturally, you have seen before, as you have been hovering in a state of uncomfortable unrest round the precincts of the college; just as, according to the old poets, those about to be born hover disconsolate in Hades. To one at least of us you are already personally acquainted through that simple operation of enregistration; but as a body you are unknown to us until now, and we are complete strangers to you.

Thus this inaugural lecture serves to both parties concerned, to you and to us, a very useful purpose, and speaking for my associates I may say that individually and as a body we all of us are more than glad to have this opportunity of meeting you, of making, even if rather formally, your acquaintance, and of striving from the first, not simply to put you at your ease, but what is more and of higher import to make you feel from the start that you are not coming into the camp of your enemies, but that you have in us a body of those earnestly desirous of being your friends in the highest sense of the term, of helping you on and of making each one of you one of us; one, that is to say, in spirit and in desire to do good work and honest in what is among the very greatest and noblest of the pro-

fessions. I say advisedly one of us, for now you have passed a stage further in your career by the ordeal of matriculation ; you are no longer members, as you must have been in the old days, of isolated schools, but by matriculation you have become members of a University, and in this way you are members of a large corporation which, though at first you may feel inclined to regard as composed of two wholly dissimilar elements, of teachers and students, I would nevertheless have you from the start regard as being a single united body ; for in the university it is that the student cannot live without the teacher, the teacher is of no effect unless he has students, and the more these two elements, elements of co-operation, work together towards one common goal, the greater must be the power of the university, the greater its harmony, the greater the work by it performed. We, your professors that are to be, and you are separated by no wide gulf ; on the contrary, we are more nearly akin to each other than is possible, I suppose, for you at this moment to realize, and while at the very start I would point out to you, the scholars, that it is wise that we the teachers receive from you, as I know we shall, all that respect befitting those who occupy a senior position, a position of authority ; nevertheless, at the same time I would ask you to believe that we, like yourselves, are human and have like feelings and similar aspirations.

It seems to me but a very little while ago, and yet when one comes to measure the time it is long years back since I, like you, made my first entry into university life and sat in the theatre in which all was new to me, surrounded by those who were to be the friends and rivals of the next few years, and listened to the inaugural lecture introducing me into my new career. I still see clearly the scene, see the strange faces around me, the body of professors trooping in one after the other, see the old principal of the college stuttering out some general statements with regard to what had been happening during the last few months in college and hear him give a few words of welcome, and

then see before me the professor to whom was allotted the delivery of the inaugural address. How I remember as clearly as though it were yesterday the awe that fell upon me in listening to him, the feeling that here was one belonging to another world immeasurably superior; the wonder, too, that any ordinary man could attain to such knowledge as was evidently his. I remember wondering, too, what it all meant, what the future would be, how I should stand in relation to those students, my opponents that were to be, how possibly I could gain any respectable place in the contest with those keen-faced, intelligent young fellows, whose capacity I did not in the least know, but of whom many had intellect written on their countenances; wondering, in short, whether I was to be a success or a failure and whither this career I had just entered upon would carry me. Well, gentlemen, it has carried me here, and now I am occupying the position towards you that that dread professor of my first inaugural lecture bore towards me. Whether you in this new country feel quite the same awe and reverence towards your superiors as has become the habit of the old country I do not feel now inclined to discuss; but I will say to you, speaking for myself, that during the years that have elapsed since the moment of my green entry into the ranks of the freshman I do not feel that I have undergone personally in myself any great transformation, and I fancy that each one of my colleagues would tell you the same; we feel older, it may be, we know more of the world, but the longer we live the humbler we become as to the extent of our knowledge, the more we work at our respective branches of medical science, the wider appears the field of the unknown that looms before us. Nevertheless, that which gave me pleasure as a freshman I can still appreciate, that which gave me annoyance or pain does so equally at the present time. I have still the same feelings in me of admiration and respect for manly conduct, of disdain for that which my conscience tells me or told me then was not quite manly, and just as in those old under-

graduate days I enjoyed an occasional, shall I call it "ballyrag," and felt guilty if any damage was done in the course of that row, so now-a-days, in my heart of hearts, I feel the old sympathy for any form of hearty amusement, only now under the somewhat altered condition when I find myself in a responsible position, instead of feeling guilty when harm is done, I must frankly confess, feel irritated and ready to come down upon the offender. That is inevitable with the assumption of responsibility and is right.

You see thus, gentlemen, that I am giving to you, as it were, the inner feelings of a professor, and am wishful to make clear to you that the professor is a human being, anxious to make you assured that we, your teachers in the years that are to come, are beings of clay like unto yourselves ; so that if the in coming years in the first place you begin to think that our decisions in matters relating to you are worthy of discussion by you, I would ask you always to remember that those decisions have been arrived at by those, not your antagonists in any way, but by men who are still students, still of yourselves, only differing in this, that we are burdened with responsibility, whereas you, happily, for the next few years are relatively free from great responsibility. And in the second place I would without arrogance, put all this before you in order to encourage you in the thought that if in the course of your study of this great subject of comparative pathology and comparative medicine, you gain the desire to do good work and high work, work that shall be for the benefit of your fellows in their treatment of dumb creatures, you may not be discouraged by the idea that there is a great gulf fixed between those who are teachers and investigators, and you who are students and undergraduates. For we are all students. I, in the old days that I have mentioned to you, had not the remotest idea that I should ever be found worthy to assume the responsible position of a University teacher, but somehow, as I say, and largely owing to the encouragement and kindly advice of my old teachers, I find myself here in this high position addressing you, who

now, coming from places, many of them long distances apart, are met together in a body for the first time.

You are at this moment on the threshold of a new and in many respects a larger existence than has been yours previously. During these next three years that are to come, you will be finding your level, will be testing yourselves and others as to your relative capacities, and while acquiring a knowledge of a profession which you intend to be that of the rest of your lives, you will of necessity be acquiring a larger and wider education at the same time.

Leaving aside for a moment the subject of the profession and of your competition and endeavours to obtain a worthy position in that profession, let me for a few moments address you upon the subject of this larger University life. I want you at the outset to feel that in becoming the undergraduates of a university you are doing something more than merely attempting to assure for yourselves a good professional education in the narrow sense. The great advantage of the university education as distinguished from the school education, and still more from private study, that indeed which, in my opinion, is the very salt of university life, is the fact that in the university to a far greater extent than is possible in the confined limits of school, you gain that knowledge of men and manners which will give you a stamp throughout life, which must throughout life distinguish you from others who have not during the early years of manhood had the opportunity of mingling freely among all sorts and conditions of those of their own age. During these years of early manhood, it is that one has the largest opportunity of forming intimacies ; never again will you find it so easy a matter to form friendships—never so easy a matter to get to know men intimately, to read their thoughts, to see clearly the mainspring governing their actions. You and your fellows are at this stage in what may be termed a highly receptive condition, and the virtue of the university life is that at this receptive period of your existence you are thrown in communion with, and into contact with, a

larger body of men, equally receptive, impulsive and transparent, and from this very fact, having a large amount of material to draw upon, you can begin to apprehend easily their motives and their methods in life, and from this comprehension can form your model ; so that insensibly the practical lessons that you now gain in men and manners must mould and affect your whole future life. In rivalries, in the pleasant associations also outside the class room with your fellows, you learn how to conduct yourselves towards them, you see and learn what course of action it is that best commends you to them, and from example, and from hard experience you learn thus how to conduct yourselves well and honourably towards all men. This is, as I say, the very salt, it seems to me, of a university career, and I have little doubt that the more you keep this in mind, the more, to look at the matter from the very lowest standpoint, you will profit in the future. As the old motto of one of the oldest of the English public schools has it : "Manners makith man." And I have little doubt that from a purely commercial and self-seeking side, as well as from the higher ground of self-respect and mental content, you will in your future life experience the truth of this saying.

And here with regard to this mingling with your fellows and the advantages that accrue therefrom, let me impress upon you the fact you have become members, not merely of a Faculty of the University, but of the University itself, and urge upon you to seize all the benefits that can be gained in this larger field. There is I find in too many of the universities of this continent the tendency of the undergraduates to wholly overlook the fact that they are members of a larger whole, and to content themselves with entering heart and soul into the affairs of their Faculty alone. I own that it is difficult to overcome this Faculty feeling, and I don't wish to imply that in itself it is not most praiseworthy, as praiseworthy as it is natural. You are inevitably thrown into most intimate contact with those who are pursuing the same course as are you yourselves

With them you have common interests and the strongest bond of union. But let me point out how much you lose if you let this override everything. You have, it is true, the same interests as have the other undergraduates of your Faculty, but these are what must be your interests throughout life; and never will you be able to tear yourselves away from them wholly. Never again will you have the same opportunity as will now during the next three years be yours of meeting on terms of frank intimacy those of different interests, different modes of thought, different aspirations, of obtaining so easily an insight into and sympathy for the controlling impulses of those who are embryo doctors, lawyers, theologians, engineers and would-be members of each of the learned professions. The more you learn to appreciate and comprehend the different minds of men, and the diverse modes of thought associated with each line of life, the better and more capable men do you become—and as I say, never in all probability will you at a later period have such an easy opportunity of acquiring all this. Thus it is that I would beg you with all earnestness, while entering with eagerness into the concerns of your own Faculty, and while making your most intimate friendships within the walls of this college, at the same time to embrace every opportunity that leads to making you feel that you are members of the university. Meet and mingle with the students of the other faculties in games upon the campus, in the sports, in the debating and musical and other university societies, and again outside the university, and at all these points of contact with the other students do your very best to make them through you respect your Faculty and your profession that is to be. For remember this, that it is very largely through you of the younger generation that veterinary science is to gain a more complete acknowledgment in the country, a greater meed of respect. That acknowledgment will come freely when you show yourselves, each one of you, the equals of the students of other faculties—of the members of the other learned professions.

You have a large and worthy task before you ; embrace every opportunity of preparation for the task. >

While treating of this matter of manners and mingling with men there is in this university life another advantage that I wish to bring before you, the advantage namely, that in it you learn the benefit of being a member of a corporation, of a well-defined body, of those having similar aims and similar ideals. If you pass in review the whole animal world you will see well exemplified the benefits of belonging to a corporation, for you will in such a review certainly make this out that it is those classes of animals which are gregarious, which have learned the benefit of combination for common ends and for the preservation of the species, that have preserved the species and have thriven most. Observe the strength and security that is obtained by relatively defenceless animals, such as the various classes of cattle and sheep, not to mention the smaller ants, bees, herrings and so on, by their gregarious mode of life. A sheep alone is an almost absolutely helpless animal, and the species has been preserved and has thriven purely in consequence of the fact that the members of the species seem at a very early period to have realized the truth that union makes strength, and in this way the species has endured, or to put it otherwise, the individual sheep have prospered. So it is with men: for any class of individuals to be strong and to make its influence felt there must be co-operation and combination. The individual alone and unaided easily succumbs to adverse influences ; he gains strength and support so soon as he realizes the benefit of living, not for himself, but for the species ; so soon as he realizes the truth of the paradox that in subordinating the desire for his own immediate gain to the good of the body of which he is a member he ensures his greater gain. And here during these undergraduate days it is that you will acquire that feeling that you are one of a class, and will acquire it so strongly that even in the years to come, when you as practitioners are isolated one from another and scattered over the length and breadth

of the land, the feeling that you are a member of a university, a McGill man and a member of a school that has always had a high ideal in veterinary matters, will endow you with a strength and power that time after time you will find to be of the greatest possible help.

Well, now, to pass on to the other side of the question that I left over, I refer to the educational advantages of this university life. You will, I doubt not, already be attempting to gauge, or at least will be wondering as to, your own capacities, your own powers in relationship to the capacities and powers of those you see around you—will be wondering how it will fare with you during the coming years. Some of you will be confident of success; others,—I trust they are but few,—merely satisfied that you may be able just to scrape through and obtain your qualification with a minimum amount of work coupled with the maximum of comfort and personal indulgence. I trust, as I say, that this last class is a very small one. I am not going to flatter you by declaring my belief that it does not exist, for after all you are but human; but if there is any one here whose conscience tells him that he belongs to the latter class, I would earnestly ask him to reconsider his position—ask him to remember not merely for his own eventual good, but also for the good of that body to which he has voluntarily joined himself, that such a line of proposed work, or want of work, is in itself as utterly harmful and emasculating to him as an individual as it is destructive to the advance of this school, of this Faculty, of which all of us are proud, which is in its days of trial, though success has come to it, and greater success is assured to it, but which can only keep that extended reputation by the combined and determined effort on the part of *every individual* connected with it. For this Faculty to make itself felt throughout the length and breadth of America, it is necessary there should be a long pull and a strong pull and a pull all together; and surely it will be a matter of no small self-satisfaction in the years that are to come, when the name of the school is celebrated everywhere, for each one

of us to think that we have had some part in the making of that name and in the keeping of it.

I will not say to you that all of you can do equally well and make an equal mark ; I will not say, as one is apt to say on such occasions, that you have all equal powers and that it is the fault individually of each one of you if he is not at the top of his class. To say so would be absurd ; men are not born alike, men are not endowed with equal powers. As Carlyle, I think, has remarked, men are no more equal than potatoes are equal. But while some, it may be, have had given to you ten talents and some five, there are none of you who are absolutely talentless ; the very fact that you are here, that you have elected to take up as your life-work so onerous a profession is in itself an evidence that you know yourselves to have at least a talent.

But if, then, the number of talents allotted to each of you varies, you can during the next three years learn this, how best to employ those talents that are yours to the best advantage. It is in this competition with your fellows that you will find the solution of that problem. You will find that you have gifts rather greater than your fellows in some one direction, and discovering this, my advice is that you employ them with the greatest assiduity and thereby to the greatest advantage. And this is another good of an university education : you learn not only to know others, but to know yourselves. You learn that it is useless to repine because others appear to have greater gifts, and that your own highest personal good is to be discovered in the discovery of how to fit yourself into the scheme of things—how, in fact, the peg you are to find and to fit the most convenient hole.

Your years of school life have been most important it is true, but the three years that are to come must form the critical period of your existence. Those years of school life gave you, as it were, a general training, and it was during them and during the latter period more especially

that you began to realize in what direction your faculties would find their best play. But during them you learned little that had a direct bearing upon the subject of comparative medicine. It is during the three years that are to come that you will make your special preparation for what is to be, I suppose, the life-work of each one of you; and very largely according as to how you profit by these three years will be determined your success in the profession you have chosen. Mind you, here again I do not wish to raise false hopes; I have known, and you must have known, men who have been slack students, whose education has been a miserable one, yet who somehow or other have gained positions of great importance in the profession, and have amassed no small fortunes. I have known also others who have been thorough students to make comparative failures of their professional careers—failures, that is to say, from the monetary side—but I would ask you to compare the inner conscience of two such men, the man who has little knowledge of his profession and the one who has a large knowledge, and to picture to yourself the habit of mind of each of those. Think of the mean estimation in which one of the former class must hold himself when his life is practically one of continued deceit—think of the constant confession he must have to make to himself that he is absolutely ignorant of the principle adopted in his treatment, and of the self-contempt that in his sober moments such a man must have when he considers that his professional life is but one long game of brag. And on the other hand, picture the honest pride there must be to the sincere student when he can feel that although the opportunities that come to him may be ever so much fewer, nevertheless he makes, or attempts to make, the fullest use of each opportunity. He endeavours to treat every case to the best of his ability, not by chance means, but by means that he has carefully thought out. I met one such student, a graduate of this college, during this last summer, and it was a genuine pleasure to me to be in his company and to see how although, at present, he is still young, and the

opportunities that he has are not very numerous, yet each opportunity was utilized to its fullest extent; to see how each case gave him food for thought and for study, and I may add it was extremely pleasant to hear him speak of his old teachers, and state with emphasis that it was the course of lectures which in the opinion, I know, of some of the older students has no direct connection with veterinary science, I mean the course of physiology, that had given him most room for thought, and strange as it may seem to you that constantly from the lessons and suggestions thrown out in that course he had illumination in the most unlikely kind of cases.

Thus, then, gentlemen, I say to you again that it is these three years that are to come which are the critical and all-important years of your life, and according as to how you employ these years, so will you be in the years to come, an honest student and an honest practitioner in your profession, or, I will not say a dishonest, but assuredly an unsatisfactory member of the same. In fact, gentlemen, we may say that your school days are like the unsettled indefinite wandering of the children of Israel in the wilderness, that seemed to lead nowhere in particular, but which was all the time a preparation for the Promised Land; and that the three years to come are like the years passed immediately before the entry into that land, when, in order to take possession, Sihon, King of the Amorites, and Og, the King of Bashan, had to be conquered and possession to be taken of all the land of the Amorites on this side Jordan. It is now that you are about to come into possession of Gilead and all on this side Jordan and that, like Moses, you will have to ascend Pisgah, whence you will observe the Promised Land. Unlike Moses, you will be permitted to enter into it; and I would add that the higher you ascend this Pisgah, the more clearly will you be able to map out the rivers and the dales and the hills and the lakes of that Promised Land, even unto the utmost sea; the more clearly will you see the relative positions of the various strongholds scattered through the

country. So that the higher now you make your ascent of Pisgah, the more successfully will you traverse that Promised Land when it is permitted you to enter into it ; for the more sure will you be as to the relationship of one region thereof to the other.

There are yet one or two other points that I would like to bring before you :—First of all with regard to the subjects that you work at ; while I would ask you to work hard while you work, I would also suggest that early in life, in addition to the study that is requisite for your profession, you select also some hobby, some subject that takes you wholly outside your own veterinary profession—some hobby that is not horsey, but which in the riding will fully exercise your faculties. As a matter of experience I have found that the most successful men and at the same time the most powerful and interesting men that I have come across, have one and all had their hobby wholly apart from their life work ; I have known great physicians whose hobbies have been such subjects as 17th century divinity in one case, etching in another, horticulture in another. I have known great railway magnates of whom you might firmly believe, if you met them in their leisure moments, that the study of porcelain or of pictures was quite the absorbing passion of their lives ; and the amount of fresh, healthy interest that these men have taken in their hobbies has been something remarkable. So, too, I would ask you to take up something of the nature of a hobby ; it is impossible to suggest what you should take up, simply because every one's hobby is different from other people's, just as the trend of that man's mind and thoughts is different from the trend of other men's minds. The only thing I can suggest is this, that if you find there is some subject which excites in you more than a passing curiosity, you cultivate that subject ; in your leisure moments work it up, hunt up in your libraries and elsewhere a knowledge of anything that relates to that subject. And this very having a hobby will make broader men of you, and also will give you an entry to

an extent that will seem remarkable to you, into societies and acquaintanceships of those whose professional rank is entirely different from your own ; in fact, outside the world of your profession, you will have created a new and delightful world for yourself.

Mind you that in this I am not advising you to take additional work ; your hobby will not be work, it will be recreation. Remember this, that the true and the best holiday is not stoppage of work, but change of work ; it is turning the mind away from that which generally occupies it into totally different channels.

These suggestions that I have laid out to you, gentlemen, are not arranged, I am sorry to say along any definite lines ; I am ashamed they do not form any consecutive whole ; nevertheless I have attempted to lay before you thoughts that have often been in mind, thoughts gained from experience and observation rather than from the reading of books, thoughts which have originated either from my own personal experience or from the observation of others, their mode of life and their success in life. Perhaps, if you will attempt to sum them up you will find that practically they can be summed up into this. My own experience has led me to think but poorly of the man who is a book worm and nothing else ; to think even more poorly of the man who is slack ; and to see that neither of those classes of men do good in the world or achieve true success. It is those men who throw themselves heartily into work and college life outside of classroom that I find happiest and most successful in their future careers. And finally, I have learned to appreciate most those who have the widest range of interests, and the greatest eagerness in the pursuit of those interests, and to see that it is those men, who, provided they pursue those interests at right times are not merely the happiest, but are bound to make a mark in this world and to do good, not simply to their own immediate surroundings, but to those distant, not merely in place but also in time.

Finally, gentlemen, let me once more assure you, on the part of my colleagues, that in us your teachers you have those who, as a body and individually, are your friends, willing to counsel, aid and support you to the best of our individual ability, and that we feel, and wish you also to feel, that by combination and hearty union we shall do the best work and you will be the lasting gainers.

