

West Regds of John P. Murphy

THE MEDICAL
SCIENCE AND PROFESSION.

Commencement Address

—BY THE—

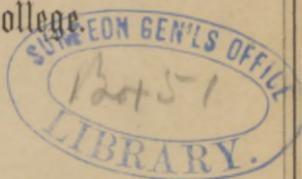
REV. N. WEST, D. D.,

—BEFORE THE—

TRUSTEES, FACULTY AND GRADUATING CLASS

—OF THE—

Miami Medical College



Delivered in Pike's Opera House, Cincinnati, Ohio,

FEBRUARY 27th, 1877.

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MIAMI MEDICAL COLLEGE, CIN'TI, March 6th, 1877.

Rev. N. West, D. D.

My Dear Sir:

The Faculty of the Miami Medical College so highly appreciates your address at the late commencement, that it has instructed me to ask you for a copy for publication.

I am,

Truly Yours,

JOHN A. MURPHY, Dean.

422 West 7th. St., CINCINNATI, March 6th, 1877.

J. A. Murphy, M. D., Dean of the Faculty of the Miami Medical College.

My Dear Sir:

Your favor of yesterday, requesting, in behalf of the Miami Medical College which you represent, a copy of the address delivered upon the occasion of the late Commencement, is received. With acknowledgments to the Faculty, I herewith put the manuscript at your disposal, and remain,

Very Sincerely Yours,

NATHANIEL WEST.

Commencement Address.

By N. WEST, D. D.

Mr. President, gentlemen of the faculty, and graduating class, and ladies and gentlemen:

I speak, to-night, in praise of the medical profession; a tribute not less difficult to be adequately brought by any one outside the profession itself, than abundantly deserved by those whose culture forbids the mention of their own merit: "Let another praise thee and not thine own lips" is an excellent rule, and we recognize as fully the justice of the permission it grants, as the propriety of the prohibition it enjoins.

To the great mass of society the profession is known only as it comes in contact with some individual want, or alleviates some individual distress. The popular conception of the "Healing Art" is, that the issues of life and death are in the physician's hands, and that, unless he performs miracles of cure worthy of omnipotence and omniscience, his practice is, for the most part, a criminal trifling with the sanctity of human life. The best practitioners are often held responsible for results which the decrees of God and inviolable laws of nature necessitate, and no human skill can avert, and the conclusion is ignorantly reached by the many that, on the whole, the profession is an injury and not a benefit to mankind. The sentiment is a reproach to the intelligence of all who entertain it, and is contradicted by the records of the world. Long ago, the line of Ovid: "*Non est in Medico semper relevetur ut æger,*"—the cure of the patient is not always in the physician's power—was an expression of universal experience, and our

modern complaints against the faculty are as little creditable to our good sense, as they are oblivious of the wonders the profession has wrought for the relief of mankind.

Unless the histories of medicine are a pure invention, like the fables of ancient mythology, the science of medicine wears a crown to-day more brilliant than that which astronomy boasts, and rests on a basis more strong and enduring than the rock-ribbed foundations of Geology itself. Next to those who bore witness to the christian truth, its heroes are among the foremost benefactors of the human race. The Egyptian Sphynx with its mystic face, the pyramids that skirt the Lybian shore, and the signal-tower of Babel, are young in comparison with this. Its date remounts to the gates of Eden, whence it arose with the science of religion itself, springing from the common ground of a moral catastrophe to which all subsequent catastrophes are due, the violation of that moral hygiene the sum of whose laws is the Divine will, and the transgression of which was the first historic cause of all human maladies and death itself. It is a profound fact—not matter of natural science I admit, but going beyond it, and resting on a divine testimony—that human sickness, disease, and death, are the result of “sin.” The natural possibility of human mortality was only incident to a perfect human creation. Its necessity, however, was a judicial infliction for transgression of the laws of moral Hygiene, a contingency against which man might have vindicated his title to perfect health of body and soul by persistence in moral obedience. The medical profession has its roots in that first catastrophe in which body and soul, alike, shared the effects of the disruption of that harmony which supervened upon the first human disobedience. Nor is it less wonderful that fundamental symptoms of disease and dying in the body are identical with those of the spirit—violent pain, feverish unrest, gloomy depression, waste, and abolition of normal functions, or that the signs of convalescence in the one are analogues of the signs of convalescence in the other. The German scientists have noticed the profound inter-relation and correspondence between mental and bodily sickness, and mental and bodily recovery, denominating the vital disturbance in both cases an “*ab-leben*,” or living down, a progressive decay, the other an “*auf-leben*,” or living-up, a progressive restoration. It demonstrates the intimate connection between Physiology and Psychology, and the reciprocal Pathology, if I

may so say, of both. If any one therefore, will seek the true occasion for the rise of the medical profession, he will find no sufficient explanation of this in science itself, but in an historic fact antecedent to all science, the first violation of moral laws imposed upon man, by his Creator. It involves questions which do not belong to medical science, as such, but to a totally different department of investigation—none the less important on this account, but all the more worthy of moral consideration, as throwing a peculiar sacredness around the profession itself.

The remotest authentic account we possess of the "Healing Art" is a Biblical record; now 3500 years old, or dating 1700 before Christ. The less authentic and somewhat earlier accounts, deciphered by Egyptologists like Champollion and Brugsch, are but records of a science whose immemorial triumphs had even then exalted it to the dignity of a sacred profession. That remarkable remnant of medicine found in the writings of Moses, the system of public and domestic Hygiene, enforced by a religious sanction, is acknowledged by the lights of modern medical science to be of unsurpassed beneficence and wisdom. The prophet-legislator of the Hebrews has recapitulated a Leviticus of Hygienic precepts, whose theories of prevention, cure, and improvement, are admitted, on all hands, to rest upon principles of scientific and incontestible value. The antiquity and progress of the profession are historic proof against the charge that it is a mere trifling with sickened and dying humanity. It was the first necessity for the body, as religion was for the soul. Four thousand years, it claimed and wore a sacerdotal character. Two-thirds of that time the physician and the minister of truth were the same person, and the religious temples schools of medicine. Fifteen centuries of the christian era passed away before that necessary divorce between Sacerdotalism and science took place, which the ignorance of the former and the progress of the latter had made inevitable—a divorce of incalculable blessing to the world.

India and Egypt shone pre-eminent in medical science 2000 years before the christian era. Greece, 1200 years before Christ, reared temples to Æsculapius. The Argonautic heroes, and the chief commanders at the siege of Troy, were professional teachers of medicine. To be one of the Asclepiadæ, a descendant of Æsculapius, "the mild artificer of help from pain, the demigod that wards diseases off," was a passport through the world. The

blooming Age, or "Rose of Pericles," the classic era of Demosthenes, Plato, and Aristotle, the palmy days of the Greek republics, nearly contemporaneous with the age of Confucius, was the culminating period of Greek medicine. The great Hippocrates appeared, whose aphorisms remain to this day, imperishable memorials of his skill, and whose scientific deductions have stood, unscathed, the test of 2000 years. Roman medicine culminated 600 years later in Galen, less followed though equally renowned. His fame contributed to enhance the transient luster of the "Antonine Age" in history, the age of Marcus Aurelius, the brightest episode in the downfall of the Western Roman Empire. In the Eastern or Byzantine Empire, Paul Ægineta, A. D. 600, appeared as the last and most celebrated of the Byzantine physicians and surgeons, imparting an impetus to the science, which continued its progress through Saracenic and Turkish invasions, till the capture of Constantinople in 1453. Under the munificence of the Caliphs of the middle age, Haroun-al-Raschid standing forth as chief patron, the splendor of Arabian scientific medicine illuminated the Moslem ascendancy in its three chief centers of Bagdad, Cordova, and Cairo. Medical schools, hospitals and libraries arose, everywhere, beside the glittering Mosques. Surgery, physiology, anatomy, chemistry and pharmacy, received a new impulse. The Spanish cities, alone, boasted seventy libraries and 150,000 medical works. It was reserved, however for the era of the great reformation in the sixteenth century to inspire medical science with new life, such as never before was felt, and the influence of which will pass on to the latest times. The flight of the Greeks from Constantinople, when it fell, contributed to the revival of medicine, as well as of letters, not only in Italy, but also in England, Germany, and France. The spirit of free investigation that sparkled in the age of Charlemagne was a forelight of the blaze that burst forth in the times of Leo. X. the phospor of a coming sunrise that broke, in its effulgence, on the night of a thousand years. Ignorant Sacerdotalism had degraded the medical profession. A wooden-headed clergy had cultivated pathology and therapeutics by the syllogisms of Aristotle and the rules of the canon law; much what as if a man should study anatomy by the glory-holes of glass-furnaces and rolling-mills, geology by the debris of a brick-kiln, and botany by hay-stacks in the barn-yard and stubble in the corn-fields. The lever of Laurentius Valla, the

sledge-hammer of Luther, and the broad-axe of Calvin, brought the blind idol of dogmatic authority, in things too high for it, down to the ground. All along the Mediterranean shore, the murmur of a new conflict went sounding through the nations, and woke to life the spirit of a new investigation which ran, magnetic, through all the European Universities. The deliverance of Europe from sacerdotal interference in science was a victory which transferred the center of the scientific empire from Rome to London and the institutions of Great Britain and Germany, and afterwards to those of France.

It were folly to think that a profession so vast and difficult, threading its way by the clue of observation and experiment alone, through mazes, compared with which the labyrinth of the Cretan Minotaur was a joke, and contending with astrological and necromantic superstitions, dark as night, should not be amenable to the accusation of serious mistake. It never boasted that it was Minerva panoplied in perfection from the brain of Jove, still less that it is a divine revelation and its practitioners infallible men, and still less again that it is proof against all imposture, or the wicked disgrace of its own diplomas by unworthy men. Medical science is a *creation*, built upon other sciences to which the profession gave birth in order to find the means necessary to bring itself to perfection. It behoved other sciences to exist and contribute their treasures back to their parent source. Every question settled was a question planted around which new questions were continually springing, a mystery solved opening a score of new problems. For this time, accumulation of facts, and practice, with cautious test of new methods, were necessary, all which the pretender despises, and not mere theory, blind conjecture, and sharp trade, all of which the pretender employs. When, therefore, disease and death put on new forms, the opportunity presented itself to the rash speculator, not less than to the daring pretender, and greedy empiric, to proclaim their philosophy, display their nostrums, advertise their inventions, pursue their treatment, and carry off their ill-gotten gains. "*Galen dat opes*,"—"medicine makes rich,"—was their supreme motto and inspiration. Like Mephistopheles in Faust, they thought "the spirit of medicine is easy to be caught," and that "he who avails himself of the passing moment, is the proper man." What wonder, if the public disappointment should provoke the brilliant shaft of Voltaire, and

the satire of Moliere and Montaigne, and that the proverb, "flee doctors and drugs if you wish to be well." "*Fuge medicos, et medicamenta, si vis esse saluus,*" should actually have been fathered by one of the medical profession himself? From such abuse of science charlatans have their genesis and pedigree. But to cast reproach on the profession for this, is unjust as to say that the science of theology is a sham because so many who profess it know nothing of what it requires, or the pulpit a fraud because so many are incompetent who wear the clerical title. Society has but one duty to perform toward the medical pretender, the pill-and-worm doctor, the slow poisoner, bone-setter, witch-finder, patent medicine vender, and advertizer of high crimes against God and man, motley hybrid of imposter and vagrant, wandering about sometimes in the garb of "country-clergyman," at others, in that of a "city philanthropist," whose only right is to a lamp-post and halter. It is to treat him as the outcast of his profession, a murderer of innocent victims, excommunicated for his depravity and crimes against yourselves and your children—a violator of that commandment "Thou shalt not kill," whether by slow poison, lies, or quick steel—a commandment the most readily recognized by all as of universal obligation. I think you will be pleased to know that in Egyptology, the hieroglyphic character that represents a charlatan in medicine is the figure of a "duck," that waddling spoon-billed fowl of the barn-yard, the phonetic translation of which is—"Quack!"

I praise the profession for its matchless victories compared with which all its honest mistakes are as light dust of the balance. To medicine the planet is indebted for the arrest, and well-nigh complete expulsion, of those fearful scourges with which the dissolution of morals, and convulsions of dying nations, have visited humanity. How realize, to-day, the Peloponnesian plague, so vividly described by Thucydides, contemporaneous with the corrupt decline of Grecian life; or those described by Roman authors contemporaneous with the death-throes of the western empire; or that nameless Arabian rot sprung from the Mohammedan invasion of Europe; or that spreading leprosy which spotted the crusaders' time? How measure, to-day, those fearful and outbreaking diseases of insanity, lycanthropy and vampirism, or the untold horrors of of the three appalling epidemics the "black-death," "sweating-sickness," and "small-pox," which closed the gloomy night of the

middle age, and left their marks this side of the reformation? Find fault with the medical faculty! As well find fault with the final charge of Wellington's guards at Waterloo, or the English light horse at Balaklava! When death, like a huge dark vulture, hovered, sailing in the air, and shook plague, poison, and disease, from its wings, all over the face of European society, and a pestilential breath swept like a blast from the fetid nostrils of the destroyer;—when 3,000,000 a year, of human victims succumbed to their fate—when dissolution defied arrest, and the mortuary pall hung over every home now a sepulchre, and despair alone answered the piteous cry for help; it was then the medical faculty came to the rescue of suffering humanity, and Europe, to-day, redeemed by its skill, celebrates in statues and monuments, the deliverers of its cities and homes from præternatural foes no armies could conquer. Over six thousand devoted practitioners, whom the malaria of death could not deter from danger, fell a sacrifice to their heroic fidelity and zeal. And then came Jenner!—I am proud to know he was the son of a clergyman. Jenner! born and reared in the cow-pastures of Gloucester—fame has no niche in her temple too lofty for *him* to occupy, the nations no trumpet too loud to sound his praise! The “gilded butt for piercing arrows of detraction,” he spent his fortune and his life for the salvation of men! Orion in the heavens is not more illustrious among the constellations, than he in your scientific galaxy. Sooner shall Lyra loose her strings and make music no more, and Andromeda exchange her shining veil for mourning, than the name of Jenner shall be forgotten! What bloom untarnished, and what beauty, has he left upon the maiden's cheek! What purity infused into the yeoman's blood! What health and happiness in homes where Variola knocks to find an entrance, and Jenner, by the living and protecting mouth of the profession, thunders *No!*

During the last century, medical science has been redeemed, to such an extent, from superstition, speculation and empiricism, that it now stands among the exact sciences, built upon the solid basis of fact and demonstration. Paré, Bœrhaave, Berzelius, Morgagni, Harvey, and Linnæus, have each been followed, respectively, in surgery, materia medica, chemistry, anatomy, physiology, and medical botany, by a shining train of scientific observers who have achieved universal renown. Once, the physician stood outside the temple of the human frame, baffled to find his way to the interior.

“Post mortem” was his only guide. Now, he masters all. The laws of light, heat, and sound, electrical and chemical test’s, lenses, and a forest of new instruments, with new methods, enable him to read the interior of the living man more truly than if dead. He puts his instrument upon your eye, and spies the secret of your brain, and upon your breast and tells you the condition of your heart and lungs; the way you breathe, the circulation of your blood. It is as if a man should look down the chimney and describe the contents of the cellar, plant his ear at the front door and repeat the whisper in the garret or the parlor. Your whole nervous structure is so completely at his will, that he can measure the velocity of thought and sensation along the telegraphic lines inside. He maps you out accurately as the engineer a mountain. His microscope unfolds the structure of your finest tissue. His spectroscope pursues the drug he gives you, to the remotest corner of your frame. The precise force of each muscle is determined, the feeblest pulse-beat, the faintest sigh, the transformation of your food at every step, the disposition of every vital organ and process. He sends new currents through your languid frame to give you life, and, by the vapors of his anæsthetic agents, extracts a tooth, resets a fractured limb, or cuts away a shoulder-blade, or splits a skull, with perfect safety, and without a consciousness of pain. It is all the triumph of pathological anatomy, organic chemistry, electro-physiology, and conservative surgery. In materia medica and therapeutics, the drugs, or agents of remedy, once occupying the chief place in the remedial armament of the profession, have been remanded to a subordinate position, the result of physiological research, chemical analysis, and clinical experience. It is fortunate for us, and for the druggist too! The old prescription was a whole apothecary’s shop, a whole dispensary in itself, born of compounds and farragos, like that illustrious and historic “Theriacum,” composed of sixty-six different ingredients, some of which I name, to be taken twice a day for seven years, if necessary, externally, internally, and eternally, “dose doubled at the full moon,” in desperate cases; to-wit, some twenty different vegetables with as many minerals, balsams, and gums, with squills, carrot-seed, liquorice, turpentine and cayenne pepper, powder of roasted brass, poppy-juice, white wax, calamus root, rhaponticum, castor-bean, gentian, horehound, attic honey, ginger, paregoric, Lemnian earth, owl’s blood, and Falernian wine!—said to be *excel-*

lent also as a tooth-powder! It is one of the glories of the profession that, notwithstanding the reputed virtues of the compound, commensurate with the cure of the whole Iliad of Trojan woes, it was consigned to its grave 500 years before the Reformation, with the head-stone "died of exhaustion," the whole pharmacopœa standing round as chief mourners! Peace to the shades of Dioscorides and his Theriacs! The profession accepted progress? I beg pardon of the profession—the scholastic era will furnish our medical friends with a heavier illustration against the theologians! The revolution in materia medica and therapeutics has made the recurrence of illusory compounds almost impossible, and established practical medicine upon the immovable basis of clinical experience alone. It has done more by its profound study of physiology and pathology, anatomy and chemistry. It has made the *foresight and prevention* of disease the great and final aim of the profession. To this end all scientific study is concentrated. Hygiene, and not medication, is the word that rules the hour. It is the harmony of science with art, theory with practice, and experience the key-note of both. The signal triumphs of that branch of the profession, of such unspeakable importance to the birth of the human race, and redeemed from profane hands by the labors of Recamier, Atlee, Meigs, Sims, and Battey, I pass by.

The profession is not less meritorious, as one of the noblest auxiliaries to natural religion, and the high verities of the christian revelation. I am aware the charge of materialism, atheism and infidelity has been brought against it, and the announcement made that its scientific conclusions subvert the three great truths of natural religion, viz: God, the Soul, and Immortality, and by consequence christianity itself. I am aware also, that some of the profession in common with others, have asserted this folly. But medical science as such is no more responsible for this than are theology, metaphysics, ethics, astronomy and geology where like folly has been committed. Astronomy is not atheistic, because La Grange boasted he could not discover God through his telescope, nor is medical science unbelieving because Moleschott and Maudsley cannot find the soul beneath the scalpel and microscope, or Bastian and Büchner detect it, by chemical tests. The bloom of a rank sun-flower planted over a grave, or the trump of fame, or the perpetuation of personal influence, or the succession of generations, is not the only immortality, because Oken and Spiller view it in this

way. Thought, moral emotion, and religious belief, are not secretions of matter, as bile is from the liver, as Cabanis thought, or the result of currents of electricity generated in the cells of the gray matter of the brain,—illusions like phosphorescent “will-o-the-wisps” and “jacks-o-the-lantern,” floating on the quagmires and bogs,—because Vogt went mad. This is not science, but the perversion of science. I submit it is not the province of the medical science as such, to decide upon the evidences of divine revelation, any more than it is the province of theology to decide upon the facts of science. I submit also that faith in a divine testimony is one thing, and faith in conclusions drawn from the study of physical phenomena is quite another, and that there is no conflict between them. The limits of the natural sciences are all girdled with dark boundaries of mystery into which science cannot penetrate, while yet the light of science blends with the light that bursts by revelation, from the dark and deep beyond.

The maxim that “*to the physician as a physician, the soul is unknown,*”—“*medico, qua medicus anima ignota est,*” is untrue even in a scientific sense. From the beginning to the present time, the intelligent spirit has ever been recognized by the profession, as an independent self-conscious personality, endowed with will and power, distinct from matter, and accepted by the physician, as a co-operating cause, either with or against his treatment, according as he has taken a right or wrong view of its relations to the body, in sickness and disease. It is Aristotle’s “Sailor in the boat,” the “Unknown Agent” of Hippocrates, Galen’s “Mover of the Body,” Stahl’s “Vital Principle,” Broussai’s “Algebraic’s,” and Carpenter’s “Immaterial Essence whose determinations react on the living organism.” The collective phenomena of life are not all explicable merely by mechanical, chemical and animal action. Many mysteries of nutrition, growth, disease, morbid affections and cure, admit only of explanation by recognizing it as a distinct factor, different from the house it inhabits. It is another of the glories of the medical profession that it has demonstrated the impossibility of the materialistic hypothesis which makes human faith and thought dependant on matter, and throws the whole force of science in favor of a self-conscious spirit surviving its decay and dissolution. It has established the fact that no possible explanation of *mental* phenomena can be founded on the hypothesis which attempts to evolve or derive these phenomena from *physical* processes. The skillful

anatomist will cut away a whole hemisphere of the brain, slice by slice, and find the Apostle's Creed or the Ten Commandments, faith in God and hope of immortality, with all the mental faculties, just as strong as before the chloroform and knife began their work. The living spirit is the same, its creed the same. Its ethereal essence survives the knife, the martyr's flame, the tomb!

When you think of physicians, remember that Linnæus the father of botany, Cuvier the constructor of the most comprehensive system of the universe, and Sir Humphrey Davy the brilliant chemist, were physicians who like Volta, Kepler, Galileo, Bacon, Leibnitz, Newton and Faraday in other departments, were religious men, and that in the ranks of no other profession are found brighter examples of the christian faith. It is Sir Humphrey Davy who says: "I envy no quality of the mind or intellect in others, be it genius, wit, power or fancy; but what I deem most delightful and useful to me is a firm religious belief, for it makes life a discipline of goodness, creates new hopes when all earthly hopes vanish, throws over the destruction of existence the most gorgeous of all lights, awakens life in death and from corruption and decay calls up beauty and divinity." It will be sometime before the medical profession consent to regard these sentiments of the great chemist as combinations of oxygen and nitrogen, hydrogen and carbon, illuminated by streaks of electricity shooting through the gray matter of the brain!—or that, "in the beginning" an imperial quart of oxygen, at 92° Fahrenheit, "created the heavens and the earth!"

The dignity and sanctity of the medical profession call for universal acknowledgement. Its chief excellence is, not that it is scientific, but that it is redemptive. The physician is not only the interpreter of Nature inquiring at her oracle and with a noble independence of mind sacrificing all prejudices and theories for the sake of truth, but he is the minister of Nature ordained to preside in her temple, proclaim her mysteries of healing, and offer up his life as incense at her shrine. He is more. He is a messenger of mercy to man, not less than an angel of knowledge, in the sanctity of a service which consoles the sufferer, takes from disease its pain, restores health to the dying, and robs death of its temporal sting. "The profession of the physician," says Thomas Carlyle, "is radically a sacred one, not only in itself considered, but is connected with the highest priesthood of healing the world ever saw, and is itself, the acme and outcome of all priesthoods and divinest conquests here

below." I endorse that sentiment, not only as just, but is founded on historic fact, and add with Dr. Russell of the Royal College of Physicians in London, that "In the modern estimate of civilization, sufficient value is not given to the medical profession, the most God-like function that can be exercised by a human being,—a function discharged in its ideal perfection only by the Son of Man!" In graphic and beautiful words, DeQuincey describes the sanctity which attaches to it, in Eastern lands. "From Barbary to Hindoostan, from the rising to the setting sun, no traveler is more secure than the *Hakim* or physician. As he advances on his route, the news flies before him. Disease is evoked on as by the rod of Amram's son. The beds of the sick of every rank are ranged along the road sides, and the dispenser of health, or relief, moves through the prayers of hope on the one side, and the praises of gratitude on the other." But above all, it is the "Kohinoor," the central gem of the profession, that the most benevolent Being who ever trod our planet, introduced himself to the attentions of men as the good physician, and consecrated the healing art, as a symbol of the saddest pathology in which "sin" is the one disease, and that miraculous therapeutics in which "*Himself*" is the one medicine for mankind. Since then, the aroma of his name has floated around it, like the scent of the rose around the vase and it perfumed adorned. In the words of Dr. Willis, "the servant of religion hath not more of true sanctity about him than the good physician. Of old, the practice of medicine was a service rendered in special temples to the deity. It is not extinct yet upon earth, but has its ministering priest, ennobled by Christianity, in every worthy member of the profession." In the name of humanity, in the name of civilization, in the name of every sacred interest, why is it that enlightened society does not rise in its might, and compel a legislation, from all our Capitals, which shall protect a profession of such sanction and dignity, built on such science, and pervaded with such high responsibilities,—a profession whose very name is the trumpet-note of rendezvous for the helpless and ignorant, the diseased and the dying,—from the prostitution of the advertising impostor in religious and secular journals, and from the mercenary practices of the marauding and murdering charlatan? In all the older civilizations, the measure of respect and protection for the physician, not less than for the prophet, was the index of the moral weakness or vigor of the social state. From this alone the fate of nations was foretold.

It is still, and will remain, the test of our intelligence, our manners, and strength.

The moral, confidential and self-denying relations of the profession to society claim our highest regard and utmost consideration. Its universal benevolence, untiring devotion, its perpetual burdens and trials, the tax on its sympathies, anxieties and cares demand a recognition, among all classes, which only the basest ingratitude can withhold. When we reflect on what it has done for the human race, and that now every family, with scarcely an exception in christendom, is more or less visited by a physician, that no sooner does nature call for help, or injury and disease appear, than the physician is summoned to our aid, that wherever wretchedness and death confront us he is at once by our side to minister to our relief. I say, when we remember these things, there is no recompense too great, and no esteem too high for us to render, or for him to receive. What intimate relations, and what serious responsibilities! He enters into our most secret domestic sanctities. He comes to us when caution is disarmed by affliction. Our sources of disease are oftentimes domestic and mental troubles, and he becomes the custodian of what we would hide from our nearest friend. We receive him as an angel of God, to do us good. His honor, as a gentleman is the guarantee of our trust and our peace. We look on him as the friend of religion and morality, and feel safe in his hands. He mingles with all varieties of men, visiting not only the mansions of the rich but the hovels of the poor, opening human hearts, dispensing remedies, and scattering sunshine in his path. He "heals our diseases, and redeems our life from destruction." "In all our afflictions, he is afflicted." The complaints of the sick, the murmurs of the impatient, the criticisms of the uncharitable, the moan of the sufferer, and the lamentations of the bereaved, are ceaseless in his ears. Calamity strikes us, he becomes our friend, and seeks to relieve our spirit by consolations imparted from his own. He makes our wishes and wants, our interest and advantage, his care. With scarce an hour, or a home, he can claim as his own; he waits, a servant at our call. By day and by night, in summer and winter, in sunshine and storm, early and late, at midnight or noon, distant or near, sick or well, he moves among us, living not to himself, but to us, burdened with a thousand anxious thoughts, pondering the mysteries of our own ailments, and how the soonest to restore to us the blessings of health and enjoyment of family and friends. He

“keeps vigil over mortality.” He presides at the birth of the human race, attends by its side every step of its way, and stands at its bier. The cradle and the grave are the bounds of his practice, the living and the dead his debtors forever. He is the hope of the suffering babe, the strength of the old man crowned with silver hair, the mother’s life, the father’s gratitude, the brother and sister’s joy. To him the eyes of the wounded are turned on the field of battle, and on the hospital bed. The prisoner in his cell, and the culprit on the scaffold, alike acknowledge his care. I avow it. On every side, the memorials of the benignity of the medical profession, arise in every place, to attest its self-denying fidelity and zeal. The breath of its universal benevolence salutes all mankind. No ministry has done more to extend the boundaries of human knowledge, none more to alleviate the sufferings of the human race. Humanity has no wealth adequate to its compensation, no gratitude sufficient for its reward.

Let society cherish then, and exalt its medical community. Treat your physician as your friend, a brother in your house. Accord to him his rightful place, side by side with the true and honest servant of religion. Let “Epaphroditus” and “Luke” be equal brothers at your social board, and equal sharers of all your hospitalities and regards. You might lose an estate and live well without it, a place of influence or trust, and time would restore it. But, what compensation can family or society offer for the lack of a good physician, in a critical hour? How many eyes now sparkle with the luster of life that, but for him, had been closed in darkness and death! How many pulses throb warm with affection which, but for his skill had been silent and cold! And when misfortune shall come, and remove some object dear to your heart, and the decree of God render void the physician’s skill murmur not at the Divine Will nor sink below the noble Socrates who when condemned by the judges to drink the hemlock, made an offering to Æsculapius in memory of the mercies received from the medical profession.

“Honor the physician with the honor due to him. Of the most high cometh healing, and he shall receive honor of kings. The skill of a physician shall lift up his head, and in sight of the great he shall be in admiration. In thy sickness, order thine hands aright. Give the Lord a sweet savor, a memorial of fine flour, and make a fat offering; then give place to the physician, for the Lord hath created him, and thou hast need of him.”
