

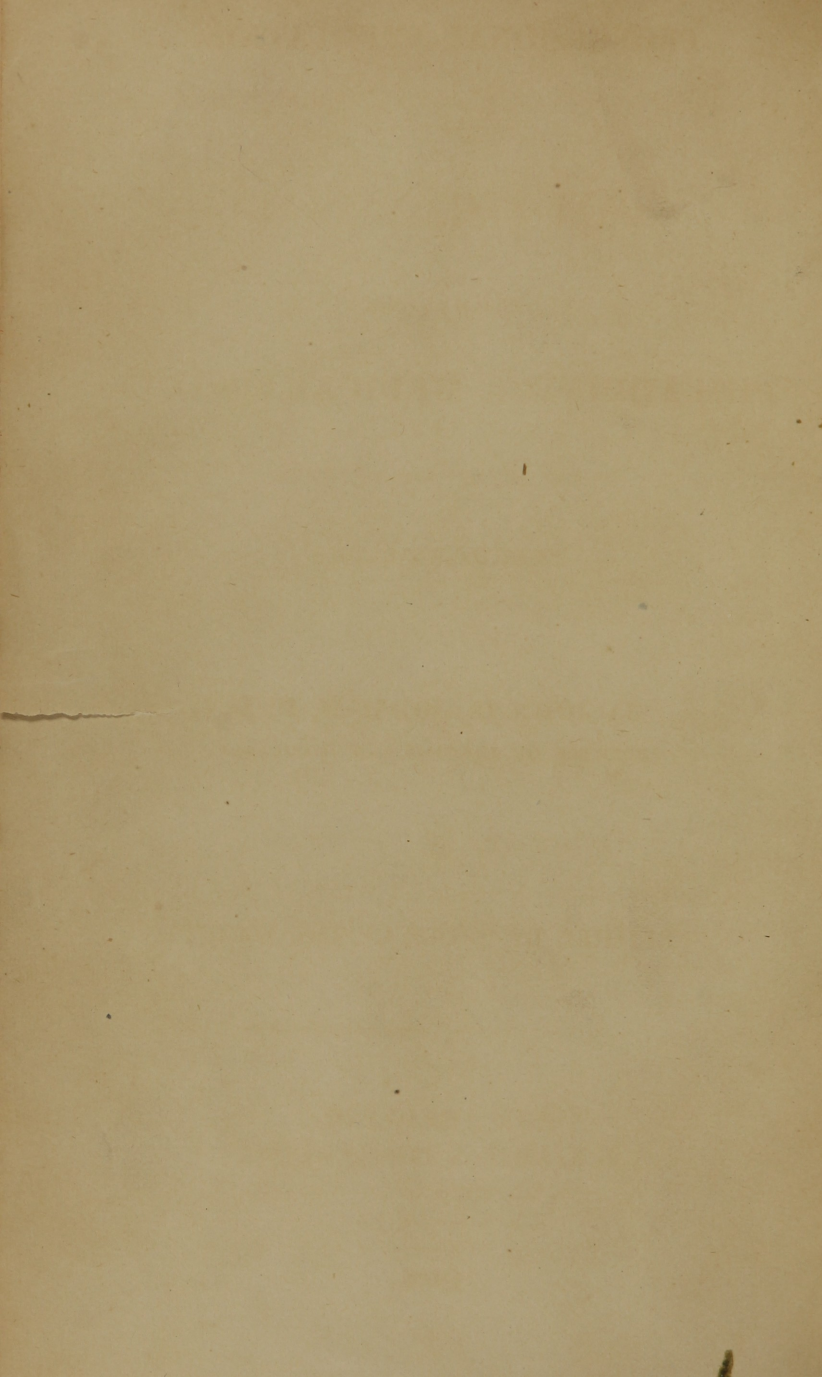
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PROFESSIONAL REPUTATION.

AN ORATION

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

PHILADELPHIA MEDICAL SOCIETY,

PURSUANT TO APPOINTMENT,

FEBRUARY 8, 1826.

BY JOHN D. GODMAN, M. D. .

LECTURER ON ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY.



PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE SOCIETY.

PHILADELPHIA :
BENJAMIN & THOMAS KITE,

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AN OCEANOGRAPH

PHILADELPHIA MEDICAL SOCIETY

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LECTURES ON ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY

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NO. 20 NORTH THIRD STREET

PAID BY THE SOCIETY

1826

PROFESSIONAL REPUTATION.

AN ORATION, &c.

THE honourable, though arduous, office assigned me on the present occasion, while it elicits the most grateful emotions, naturally awakens a regret that my efforts must fall so far short of my own wishes, no less than what is due to such an auditory. To follow, where so many highly gifted men have preceded, allows but slight hope that aught of novelty remains to be gleaned; to address those who give this Society its rank and strength, by the professional eminence they have attained, the speaker should at least be nearly equal, if not superior, in years and attainments. How then shall I venture to interest your attention—unless by taking advantage of the fact, that the Society contains a large number of youthful members, whose improvement and future respectability she is most solicitous to insure: to these members, therefore, my observations shall be exclusively directed, and if deficient in every other respect, springing as they do from the sincerest desire to be useful, and the deepest conviction of the importance and truth of what is uttered, I may hope for the lenient judgment of my hearers.

Our profession is coeval with the distresses and sufferings of the human race, and its respectability is

as universal as the benefits it is capable of conferring, when rightly administered; those engaged in the discharge of its duties having always been tacitly considered by their fellow men, as beings peculiarly set apart from the rest of mankind, and worthy of an estimation, not conceded to persons employed in merely secular affairs.* The real excellence and usefulness of our art, (when *worthily* practised,) has always tended to increase the confidence and admiration of the public; and, if medicine have not attained a degree of perfection and immunity from censure, equal to its venerable age and importance to society, this results from circumstances, which, however they may have injured, are entirely extrinsic to the profession.†

Yet, our useful and excellent Science presents a great number of obstacles and difficulties to her votaries, which are only to be surmounted by well-directed and most persevering efforts. A mistake made in the outset, may exert its prejudicial influence on the whole of your subsequent course; therefore it is desirable that your principles and views should be both early and correctly formed.

The members of our profession are subjected to many temptations from ambition, which are scarcely to

* “El medico, en fin, que *es medico*, es digno de grande estimacion, porque es el conducto por donde Dios embia à los enfermos vn bien tan precioso como la salud: es el instrumento de que vsa la mano de Dios para hazer el mayor de los bienes corporales, y es en la tierra como vna cosa soberana, que se anda haziendo vidas.”—*Don Iuan de Zabaleta*.

† See the translation of the law of Hippocrates at the end of this discourse.

be resisted. Few, perhaps none of us, are willing to look upon our art as a mere mode of obtaining subsistence, whatever be our situations; we hope to gain a reputation, or fame, by the exercise or improvement of it, and this is the unseen but ever operative cause, which urges us forward in our variously deviating careers. This desire of FAME, this hungering after the approbation of the wise and good of our species, this wish to be singled out and placed above the great mass of our fellow creatures, is a perfectly natural feeling, and of kin to immortality. To this cause we are indebted for the noblest exertions of human genius; it was this feeling which incited all the great of former days to the actions which still live on the page of history; and the same breath will continue to enkindle from their ashes, fires which shall warm, cherish and enlighten universal society.

There are two kinds of fame, between which it is necessary for you to know the distinctions. The first, and only excellent, is that which tempts the wise and good man to become GREAT; whose influence is not only felt during the existence of the possessor, but leaves behind it a holy light, undimmed and undiminished by the lapse of ages. This fame is built upon the solid basis of usefulness, genuine worth, and high desert. Its growth is not rapid; but, its maturity is perfect; at first, it is the applause of those who are emphatically called "the few;" it is not gained until many privations and toils have been endured; yet, like the ascending sun, it surely attains a meridian altitude, and disperses by the potency of its irradiations, all clouds which would obscure or intercept its brightness.

The other kind of Fame, is “base, common, and popular.” It is never the result of great intellectual exertion—often it is produced by accident, and it frequently is awarded to great vice. At first, it may *appear* bright and dazzling; but this light is the phosphorescent gleam hovering over putrefying substances, compared with the intense, steady, and sun-like ray of that first mentioned. This second fame, is the clamorous plaudit of the deceived or ignorant crowd; it is sustained solely by the breath of the vulgar herd, and would sink forever in a purer atmosphere.

The fame that *you* should desire to win, is that which rewards the exertions of generous and virtuous minds. But, you should not only feel the proper emulation—you must be aware of the best mode of attaining your object. Let the intellectual capacity be what it may, or the impulse of ambition never so strong, much time may be wasted in ill-directed and desultory efforts, without the proper training and preparation; even giant strength may be rendered worse than useless, for want of skill to direct its exertions.

A first requisite to your success is a good education, concerning the best mode of gaining which, wise men have differed in opinion. As the great object is to enlarge the mind, stock it with images, and train it to habits of investigation and sound reasoning, “a classical education” may be stated, as of the various modes, one of the best adapted for the discipline, and development of the intellectual powers. Of this education, we consider the study of those languages, whence not only our technical phrases, but our mother tongue itself are derived, as a most essential and vitally important part.

In speaking thus, I am conscious of advancing an opinion directly opposed to notions, which of late are becoming very general and fashionable. It is easier, however, to declaim against the ancient languages, than to learn and employ them; as to the indolent, it is far more agreeable to demolish a noble edifice than to erect even a comfortable shed.

The correctness of the opinion we have advanced, is not supported merely by assertion; it will bear close examination, and equally resist the subtilties of sophistry or the ruder shocks of ignorance. Other preparatory branches of education have their specific value; by the aid of mathematics, the mind is sobered, sharpened, subtilized—taught to abstract itself and become concentrated on a point; to reach out and grasp the almost inconceivable combinations of numbers, or the ineffable extensions of space. But, it is with MAN that physicians have to do; in all his varieties—his excellence, his errors, and his sufferings; it is with the hidden springs of the passions and emotions of our race that we wish to become acquainted; it is with the defaced, not destroyed image of the Creator, that we are to be continually engaged. We cannot comprehend man better, than by understanding the manner in which he communicates his sensations and wishes to those around him; learning from the context of his thoughts and modes of expression, the nature of the mind whence they spring, and having gained thus much, become better able to make ourselves and our profession more useful and acceptable.

We can neither acquire, nor impart knowledge, without the use of words. These, however imperfect, are the signs of our ideas; hence, he who is acquir-

ing a language, (if taught aright,) is, at the same time, accumulating a vast store of objects for the future exercise of his intellect, and is also forming habits of reflection and discrimination rarely to be attained in any other way.

Independent of other advantages, the languages of Judea, Greece, and Rome, are particularly worthy of regard, as containing the most sublime exertions of genius, the most valuable body of truth; and, moreover, as being the fountains, whence the now widely flowing streams of knowledge gushed forth to animate and adorn the world, after the prolonged and dreary periods of its cheerless gloom. In the tongue first mentioned, we see language in its ancient and original form, venerable alike for its simplicity and force. By it are we instructed of the origin of our race and the commencement of human society. In the Greek we see language refined to the highest degree, and are furnished through it, with models in almost every exercise of human intellect. It is not only the tongue by which the invaluable observations of the primitive father of our science, are preserved; but, we have also delivered to us in the same language, the words of HIM who spoke "as never man spake." In the Latin tongue we have an inexhaustible storehouse of intellectual gratification; it is, moreover, the true language of science; the ideas attached to the words being fixed, and freed from the mutations to which a living language must always be subject; it is the *key* to a great number of living dialects; forms a large part of the body and substance of our own tongue; and constitutes, along with the Greek, almost the whole mass of the language consecrated to the use of our profession. Hence, those who enter upon the study of

medicine, without having learned either of these languages, necessarily meet with numerous difficulties, which the instructed have not to encounter; and even with the most assiduous attention, a large amount of their professional reading must remain unintelligible.

Opposers of classical education object, that the time necessary for the acquisition of learning, might be more profitably employed, as if the student were not learning to *think* and *judge* correctly; at the same time, filling his mind with ideas, and becoming well versed in the history and characters of men. Let it be remembered, that any or all of these languages may be studied while the memory is vigorously retentive and the judgment unformed. The exercise afforded by such studies, develops every faculty of the mind; the memory is replete with words, and, if the studies be correctly pursued, the mind becomes acquainted with the things to which they relate; the habit of patiently investigating, and understanding the philosophy of modes of expression, teaches proper care, and gives us greater skill in our own language; and the attention is awakened to its true value and meaning, which otherwise might be neglected from habit.*

You may inquire how the acquisition of such knowledge is to assist *you* in becoming distinguished in your profession? The answer is easy; nothing is

* In urging the importance and necessity of classical learning to those destined for the profession of medicine, it is no part of my intention to state, that the *manner* in which the languages are most generally taught, is either the best or even the true one. It is but too common to ascribe the faults of *teachers* to the thing taught; to prejudge and condemn an unexplored region, because the *ways* leading thereto chance to be foul.

more essential to the success of a physician than a facility of communicating his own sentiments, as well as of understanding the sentiments of those who consult him. He must approach persons of every rank in society, and commune with every variety of intellect. Possessing a well grounded knowledge of language, fully acquainted with the true value and nature of his own, which is derived from various other tongues, he is always prepared; whether by speech or writing, he addresses those with whom he is concerned successfully, because he is sure of making his wishes or opinions plain and intelligible to all. Classic learning has another influence, not less powerful nor beneficial, on the human mind: the books, which should be studied, continually present the most excellent sentiments and morals, conveyed in the most refined style, and the superiority of such refinement, over coarseness and vulgarity, will imperceptibly lead the student to a habitual imitation of them. The virtues of the good and the wise, and the examples of the truly great, will invite to a similarity of behaviour; while the *conduct* of an elegant *scholar*, will be a perpetual recommendation to the intelligence and acquirements of the *Physician*.

Every commender of the learning we have spoken of, exposes himself to the charge of being prejudiced, or having too much veneration for mere antiquity. Instead of attempting to disprove such an unfounded accusation, let me employ the words of a celebrated author on the same subject. "I have, (says he,) a great reverence for posterity: nor do I think lightly of the learned men of the present day; there are many, I know, who adorn our age, who would have

ornamented any period; yet among the whole number I have not known one who did not cultivate and honour ancient learning, whose wisdom was not similar to that of the ancients, or who did not admire and observe their precepts; from which, in proportion as you depart, you wander from nature and truth.”*

Many of the younger members of the society, now present, are, ere long to receive the honours of the profession, as a testimonial of their diligence and faith-

* Magna interim ducor Posteritatis reverentia: non ideo tamen minoris æstimo doctos viros qui hodie vivunt; multi sunt fateor, qui seculum nostrum exornant, qui priora potuissent exornare; in quibus tamen ne unum, quidem novi, qui non honoret et colat antiquos, cui non idem quod illis sapiat, aut qui eorum præcepta non observet; unde quantum aberraveris, tantum ab ipsa natura et veritate discesseris. [Neque verear confirmare non esse difficilius sine luce oculis objecta perspicere, quam solidam laudem adipisci et ingenium excolere, aliis rationibus quam quas Græci et Romani nobis præscripserunt.”]

AND. DACIER.

The following observations of the learned HARRIS, on this subject, may be offered in support of what Dacier has advanced above. “To be *competently* skilled in the ancient languages is by no means a work of insuperable pains; the very progress itself is attended with delight, and resembles a journey through some pleasant country, where every mile we advance new charms arise. It is certainly as easy to be a scholar as a gamester, or many other characters equally illiberal and low. The same application, the same quantity of habit will fit us for one as for the other: and as to those who tell us with an air of seeming wisdom, that *it is men*, not books we must study, to become knowing; this I have always remarked, from repeated experience, to be the common consolation and language of dunces. They shelter their ignorance under a few bright examples, whose transcendent abilities, without the common helps, have been sufficient of *themselves* to great and important ends. But, alas! “Decepit exemplar, vitiis imitabile.” HERMES.

fulness as students, and will then be preparing to take their stand among the guardians of the public health. The boisterous sea of the world is attended with comparatively few dangers, to those who have not trifled away their time, and who set forth under the guidance of correct principles. Though you know not in what haven you may ultimately cast anchor, the possession of a sound, and moral professional education, will insure your safety through all the turbulence you may be exposed to, during your voyage.

The greatest evil to be guarded against, when you commence your efforts for professional distinction, is impatience and instability of purpose. It will be wrong in you to anticipate that business, can in any situation, immediately follow your annunciation of being ready to receive it, more especially, where you are to meet with competition from a member of the profession already established. The first half year of a young physician's residence in a strange place, is the most trying part of his probation, for should he mistake fewness of calls for neglect of his merits, or suppose that he will never be employed, because he is not immediately preferred to another, he is in danger of becoming unsettled, restless, neglectful of his books, society and acquaintances, thus sacrificing the very means of his eventual success. If however we recollect how much people are prejudiced by education and habit, we shall find no fault with them, for not employing a stranger on his first arrival, neither should we suppose their prejudices to be immovably fixed. A proper degree of patience, and an improvement of those opportunities that are every where presented of winning confidence, will in no long time, yield us that

opening, which is the great requisite to future profit and eminence. Wherever we attempt to establish ourselves, except under very extraordinary circumstances, some time must be passed in acquiring the confidence of those around us, by the recommendations of our friends, by our own deportment, and the event of such cases as may be incidentally thrown into our hands. However unimportant any such particulars of conduct may individually appear, they are of great moment collectively viewed; as every circumstance in the appearance, conversation, and character of a newly arrived physician, is of deep interest to those among whom he wishes to remain.

It will be unjustifiable to trust your success in the slightest degree to accident, because accident has occasionally given currency to men neither remarkable for education, talent, nor judgment. Accident *has*, at times, given a man of the highest merit an introduction to extensive business; but, we must never forget, that accident cannot sustain our reputation, nor minister to our continued success. Our greatest care must be to acquire reputation, by a diligent cultivation of our talents; though we should never neglect to improve any accidental success, in all honourable ways, to forward our professional views. If a character for skill and discernment be acquired suddenly, we must not attempt to increase it, by endeavouring to extend this reputation to the utmost stretch of possibility, but by displaying new instances of talent and intellectual strength, thus substantially augment our capital of fame. The fortuitous elevation of men destitute of true greatness of character, is almost universally followed by reverses as sudden and severe, as this eleva-

tion has been great. This is frequently exemplified in the fate of those who have a great air-built reputation, and much verbal fame; who, instead of modestly refusing a part of the honours, proffered them, and exerting themselves *to prove* that they are worthily praised, receive the whole as no more than their right, and leave their admirers in a short time to discover that their extraordinary pretensions are unfounded, and that their reputation is nothing better than the gratuitous offering of ill-judging and partial friends.

Next to an acquaintance with the principles* of the profession, and correct moral feeling, the young physician should most rely on the exercise of what may be summed up, by the word *manners*. This embraces his general intercourse with society, in which he should display that habitual ease and cheerfulness, which results from correct habits of thought and action; and that kind attention to the wishes, prejudices, and necessities of those he associates with, which shows that he possesses the most generous and elevated feelings. To be accessible and attentive, without familiarity or cringing; to be mild, gentle, and forbearing, without sinking into tame submissiveness; to be ever ready to act, when called on,

* “ I would not be understood in what I have here said, or may have said elsewhere, to undervalue EXPERIMENT, whose importance and utility I freely acknowledge in the many curious nostrums and choice receipts with which it has enriched the arts of life. Nay, I go further—I hold *all justifiable practice in every kind of subject* to be founded in EXPERIENCE, which is no more than the *results* of many repeated *experiments*. But I must add withal, that the man who acts *from experience alone*, though he act ever so well, is but an EMPIRIC or QUACK; and that not only in medicine, but in every other subject.”—*Harris’s Hermes*, 352.

without being officious or intrusive ; and, to do full justice to all those with whom he is professionally concerned, will insure a physician a degree of public respect, that may at length amount almost to idolatry ; filling every bosom with kindness towards him, and every mouth with his praise.

The sagacious Lord Bacon has given a rule for increasing our knowledge, and insuring conversation with all sorts of persons, which is one of the best that could be devised, and one more positively conducive to popularity can scarcely be imagined. This is to learn something from all persons, whatever is their occupation, when we chance to be with them ; this is always to be accomplished by inciting them to speak of what they know. As every man is better acquainted with his own business than we can possibly be, by inducing him to converse on the subject, we not only gain some valuable ideas, but we win his regard by manifesting an interest in what so peculiarly interests him. By adopting this method of Lord Bacon's, you need never suffer from tedium in the company of unlettered men, nor need you in the slightest degree descend from your place, while judiciously exciting their remarks. This is not merely applicable to your intercourse with persons of inferior standing in society ; the most learned, refined, and accomplished men are equally pleased to find, that their pursuits, avocations, and interests, are interesting to you. You may frequently induce such persons to display before you a stock of knowledge which otherwise would have been withheld, and you will part mutually satisfied, instead of being in ignorance of, or prejudiced against each other.

This rule may be observed with the utmost sincerity, and without the slightest approach to the meanness of flattery. The information thus to be acquired, will in general, be far more easy of attainment, as well as more valuable than can be gathered from many books; and, you will at the same time be forming a more profound acquaintance with human nature, and also be gaining friends. Kindness, uniformly produces kindness; confidence, inspires confidence. If we examine ourselves, we shall find that we are as excitable in this way as others, for we never deliver our thoughts with more force and feeling, than when we reply to interrogations on subjects in which our minds are most deeply engaged.

In all your intercourse with society, no less than in all your thoughts and actions, cultivate an habitual tenderness of regard for TRUTH. By this I would not pretend to warn you against the disgrace of *falsehood*; but, that you should guard against a habit, which is almost as common as the human family is numerous, of suffering apparently harmless exaggerations to escape. *Truth* and *falsehood*, (like light and darkness,) are opposite extremes—the one is as excellent, as the other is base. But there are a great many aberrations from TRUTH, which the world does not consider to be absolutely FALSE; as there are many deviations from HONESTY, which, by a similar laxity are not considered as positively *dishonourable*. If my wishes could influence, you should begin your career with resolving to adhere to the *full purity* of truth, and the perfect *honourableness* of honesty; so that when the day of your success arrives, you may look back on

the means by which it was attained, without breathing a sigh of regret, or suffering one blush of shame.*

Our profession has long been subjected to the charge of "envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness" among its members; and unfortunately too much of the charge is well founded. We cannot, at present, enter into an investigation of the causes by which this state of things has been produced, although it does not affect the profession to the degree which persons commonly suppose.† To lessen this evil and avoid meriting such an accusation, make it a rule never to speak of a professional rival, unless you can speak to his advantage; if he have merit, allow him the whole of it, and give your sentiments of his talents, with the unaffected earnestness of truth. Do not imagine that your acknowledgment of his merits, will hide his defects, or obscure your own good qualities. Grant that he adopts a contrary course, speaks ill of you, or throws

* "Si rectam rationem sequens, id quod instat, agas diligenter, firmiter, æquo animo, neque instituto negotio alia admisceas, sed tuum genium sincerum conserves, perinde ac si jam is tibi dimittendus esset; atque ita si perseveres nihil expectans, nihil fugiens sed eo quod in præsentia secundum naturam agis, et HEROICA in dictis VERITATE contentus; bene vives."—MARCUS ANTONINUS; ex versione Xylandri.

† "Cierto que en parte merecen esta pena los buenos medicos, pues tienen parte de culpa de que *se admitan al uso de la medicina tantos hombres* que no eran buenos para Albeitares. ¿Porque no avian de reparar mucho los medicos doctos, los de la primera classe à quien està cometido el examen de todos en las meritos de los que aprueban? ¿Cosa es tan sin precio la estimacion del arte? ¿Cosa es de tan poca importancia la salud de los hombres, que se pueda poner en las manos de vnos Echacantos? En *faltando la estimacion à LA FACULTAD, falta vn motivo grande para aprenderla.*"—DE ZABALETA.

out insinuations intended to be prejudicial to your interests;—then is your triumph complete. Think you that men will not contrast his mean and soulless conduct, with your manly and honest candour? Think you that he will not more deeply damn himself, by attempting to misrepresent *you*;—that society will not visit his ungenerous conduct on his own head, while the profession silently spurn him from their confidence?

Should you be eminently successful after others have failed, avoid pushing your triumph so far as to wound the feelings and outrage the pride of your less fortunate competitors. Your success is sufficient for you, and by judicious deportment, you may compel a man to respect, if he does not esteem, who might otherwise cherish against you a spirit as stern as hate—as inexorable as the grave. If after such success as we have alluded to, you hear of disparaging suggestions made against you, by one you have set aside or overshadowed, you are neither obliged to know, nor resent it;* you would owe it to the dignity of your own character, to recollect that some allowances are to be made for mortified feeling, as well as that no malicious insinuations can stand against the daily repetition of actions, which prove you exempt from a grovelling and miserably irritable disposition.

That you will not attain the professional elevation you desire, without struggling against hosts of difficulties, and encountering every degree of opposition, is most certain. It may be, that the iron grasp of po-

* “Ulciscendi optima ratio est, ne similis fias ejus qui injuriam fecit.”—MAR. ANTON.

verty, for a considerable time, will impede your progress and enfeeble your efforts. Against rivalry and opposition, your armour of principles and determined perseverance will afford every security, and poverty itself, may be made to minister to your success, by urging you to the display of your noblest powers.* Look at the men of talents, who now lead the van of our profession and are considered as its ornaments. Who are they? Men born to fortune, and reared in the lap of luxury? No. Men who have been elevated by protection and patronage? Who have been favoured by circumstances, or raised by accident? No. They are, most frequently, those who have emerged from poverty, if not obscurity. Many of them have been nursed in sorrow, and baptised with tears;—they have protected and patronized *themselves*, until the great and powerful have become proud to rank as their friends: they have *made* the very circumstances, which superficial observers suppose to have been the *causes* of their elevation. It is the triumph of talent, of genius, to rise in proportion to the magnitude of difficulties; to trample the opposition of malignant mediocrity into the dust; and gaining its merited elevation, to raise the profession it has chosen to a corresponding degree of eminence.

In addition to all other means of augmenting your

* “Tales excelsioris animi homines laborem ardua et obstantia quæque non metuunt non solum sed spernunt et pro nihilo habent. Hi, eo genere militiæ militant, quo, tanquam ad certissimam tendentes victoriam, nihil desperandum esse putant. Hos nihil detertere potest, quantivis etiam periculi plenum; neque quicquam tam alte a natura positum esse arbitrantur, quin suam virtutem eo attingere posse certi sunt.”—REINWARDT.

true fame, the observance of one circumstance will be of great importance; this is the unremitted exercise of humanity towards those who seek your professional aid, whatever be their conditions. The character of a truly good *physician*, is one of surpassing excellence, and his reputation is the most exalted we can hope for. He is the friend of the wretched and woe-worn; the cheerer of the despondent; the solacer of the broken-hearted. His soul is the empire of benevolence—his actions the result of a principled charity, and unaffected good will. He is a blessing conferred on the society in which he lives, and an honour to the human race. Wherever the afflicted dwell—wherever the voice of suffering is heard, he is to be found. The diseased find cheering and consolation from his presence, and the sounds of sorrow are stilled. Even when hopes of life can no longer be given, he calms the tumultuous grief of relatives, by recalling their thoughts to that better world, where sickness and sorrow are to be no more—“where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.”

Such are the common offices, and frequent exercises, in which he is engaged. His character, even under ordinary circumstances, may be contemplated with gratifying emotions. But there are conditions, in which he is presented in a more sublime aspect. It is when the lurid breath of pestilence scatters destruction, desolation, and dismay throughout the land, and death tramples with indiscriminate fury over the people—when the ties of relationship and affection are sundered by the violence of fear, and utter selfishness seizes on the hearts of men: then the good physician unmoved by such examples—untouched by terror—

regardless of himself, is seen actively discharging every duty. Then, he becomes the father, the brother, the friend, of the destitute: his steadfast attention smoothes the pillow of the dying; he inspires the desolate with hope, and, like a beneficent angel, wherever he goes is a dispenser of good. Who can estimate the feelings, or measure the fame of such a man? Who would not imitate his example, for such a reward? What is there in death's most frightful forms, that could withhold us from attempting to deserve it? It is a glorious privilege which our profession confers, of inscribing our memories, not on perishable marble, but, in the living affections of our fellow men, to be cherished as long as our race shall endure.

Since the commencement of the present session of the society, some of our young friends, who entered on the career with hopes as warm, and eyes as bright as ours, have been called away to the "narrow house," and their spirit-stirring bustle of youthful expectation, has been exchanged for the solemn quiet of the tomb. While we sympathize with such as mourn over youth snatched away in its blooming, and warm hopes chilled by the icy hand of death; while we sorrow over the mental anguish of those, whose far distant parents were not permitted to minister to their last earthly wants, or receive their dying sighs, let us not forget to be thankful, that we are still spared to usefulness and virtue. Yet a little while, and the mighty ocean of oblivion will overwhelm us in its fathomless depths, sweeping away every trace of our existence. This is not matter of regret;—all nature tends to one common point, disintegration and change

of form;—the cloud-capped and tempest-braving mountains, towering in seemingly indestructible grandeur, are hourly yielding their atoms to the earth and to the air. Virtue ALONE survives all change; the immortal mind bids defiance to the destructibility of matter.

Build then your monuments, imperishably, on the love of mankind; by sincerely devoting yourselves to the cause of humanity; to the honour of your profession and country; to the faithful service of your friends; to the humble worship of GOD: thus, the necessary evils of life, will pass over you unheeded; and the inevitable shaft of death, while it stills forever all mortal disquiets, shall be unable to disturb the serene and exstatic composure of your intellectual being.

ἹΠΠΟΚΡΑΤΟΥΣ ΝΟΜΟΣ.

[Ex recensione VORSTII.]

Law of Hippocrates.

Medicine is the most excellent of all arts ; but, on account of the ignorance of some who practise it, and of others who rashly judge, it is esteemed among the lowest. This error, appears chiefly to arise from this cause : it is peculiar to medicine, that it has no punishment but disgrace, which affects not those who spring from ignominy. Physicians of this kind are very like the mutes which are introduced in tragedies. As these have indeed the figure, dress, and appearance of players, though they are none ; so there be many persons both by title and reputation *physicians*, while there are very few such in reality. Whoever wishes to devote himself truly to the science of medicine, should strive to fit himself for the study both in disposition, learning and place ; by early education, attention, industry and time. The first requisite is certainly disposition, (or nature,) for should this be repugnant, the rest are vain ; but, when disposition urges us on the way, the most excellent learning of the science may be attained. It is necessary to evoke this disposition prudently, so that it may flow from early education, in a place naturally accommodated for such discipline. But the greatest industry should be exerted, and that for a long time, to the end that discipline may be ingenerated and changed to nature, and produce fruit happily and copiously.

The same consideration may be applied to the study of medicine, as to things which are produced by the earth. Our nature, [or disposition,] is the soil: the precepts of teachers are the seed. Education squares with the comparison in this, that the seed should be sown at a proper time. The place in which the discipline is pursued, is like the ambient air, affording nutriment to the plants springing from the earth. Study is cultivation; lastly, time strengthens the whole, that they may be perfectly matured. Were these circumstances observed in relation to medicine, and properly engaged in its study, we should then have walking in our cities, physicians, not only in name, but in truth. Unskilfulness is a bad treasure, and an unfortunate opulence; those who possess either the reputation or reality of it, being devoid of tranquillity and ease of mind, as it is the nurse both of timidity and audacity. Timidity argues weakness, and audacity ignorance of our art. Science and *opinion* are two; the former instructs, while the latter makes us ignorant. [Sacred things, however, are to be communicated to sacred persons; it is unlawful to do so to the profane, or those who have not been initiated in the mysteries of science.]

