

UNION UNIVERSITY.

VALEDICTORY

Albany Medical College,

DEC. 22, 1874.

HENRY E. MERENESS.

Mereness (H.E.)

Union University.

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

Henry E. Mereness,

AT THE COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

OF THE

ALBANY MEDICAL COLLEGE,

DECEMBER 22, 1874.

box 6



ALBANY, N. Y.:

VAN BENTHUYSEN PRINTING HOUSE.

1875.

VALEDICTORY.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Through the courtesy of my classmates, I have been chosen to address you—to express, as far as I may be able, the sentiments which cause our hearts to beat in unison to-night, as we bid farewell to the scenes and associations of our college days.

To us, this occasion is full of interest. We have reached the goal for which we have so long been striving. As members of a noble and learned profession, we are to go out upon the great world-stage, and act the part assigned us in life's eventful drama.

We gratefully acknowledge the interest and sympathy which you manifest by your presence, cheering us with the assurance of your confidence and favor as we enter upon our chosen calling.

Would that I were able to grace this occasion with words expressive of the deep

emotions which arise within, with language befitting the time, the place, and the culture of my audience. But this pleasant office belongs rather to our brethren of the department of law, who have been trained to charm the ear, and captivate the heart, by the ready art of speech.

It is the province of our profession to act, not to speak; to live in deeds, not words; in feelings, not in figures. We are to count life by heart-throbs, to minister to the physical, not to the intellectual nature. Our study has been directed, not to the analysis of mental or social states, but to the functions and needs of our living and life-giving organisms.

But my task, this evening, calls for no display of logic or oratory; it is simply to speak the parting word to our instructors and to our friends of this dear old city, the home of our college days. Task, did I say? Farewells are ever sad, and as pupils and guests, we have become deeply attached to the associations of our student-life; but as the purpose of these associations is accomplished, it becomes an agreeable duty to mingle with our expressions of regret, words of heartfelt thanks for your kindness, sympathy and support.

Our individual homes are widely separated, but as a class, this is our home, in which we have established new and enduring associations—formed new ties, which, wherever we may go, will hold us in fond remembrances of the scenes we are about to leave. As residents of Albany, we have acquired a deep interest in all that concerns her. We take pride in her staunch old institutions. We eagerly watch her increase in prosperity and greatness. We have grown with her growth and strengthened with her strength, and the impulse, I trust, will be repeated in our lives, which, God grant, may never disgrace the home of our pupilage.

Gentlemen of the Faculty:

No words of mine can fitly express the sentiment, which, I am assured, inspires each breast, as the class of seventy-four takes its leave of you; memories of the past crowd thick upon us, and with each memory comes a heart-beat of gratitude for the many favors and marks of personal regard which we have received at your hands. Yours has been a parental care, ours should be a filial respect and love. The deference

you have shown our wishes—the sympathy you have manifested in all our endeavors, have won our hearts, and bound them to yourselves, and to Alma Mater, with cords hard to sever. Since last you met, on an occasion like the present, one of your number, one of the fathers of this institution and of our profession, has passed away. When, three years ago, we came before him, time had already furrowed his brow, stamped its impress on his noble form, and placed a crown of honor over all. Yet we had hoped to set out upon our life-work, cheered by words of encouragement and advice from one who had served so long in the ranks we are about to enter. But Providence has willed it otherwise. Our venerable teacher and standard-bearer, Prof. McNaughton, has bowed to the stern destroyer, death, over whom he was wont to gain so many victories, and has entered upon the rest which awaits God's most faithful servants. And now there is left but one* of that sturdy band of pioneers, who, forty years ago, laid the foundation of an institution which has risen to a position second to none of America's professional schools. Well may your venerated professor, now president of the faculty, look with pride upon

* Prof. Armsby.

the results of his life-work, and may the day be far distant which shall separate him from the scenes of his triumphs in the cause of humanity. As our best words, eulogistic of the departed, must seem poor and trivial, when compared with the mute, yet eloquent, testimony of yonder silent walls, so must any commendation of you, the living, seem empty and common place to those who, in the associations of the past three years, have learned your true worth as instructors and friends.

*Mr. President and Gentlemen
of the Board of Trustees:*

Although your official relation is less intimate than that of our instructors, yet our sentiments toward you admit of no cold and formal farewell. To you, Mr. President, as the head of our University, which under your brief administration has attained so proud an eminence among the educational institutions of America, we would express our deep sense of your wisdom and justice, and our gratitude for the zeal you have manifested in the promotion of our best interests. It is not long since the schools over which you preside were

united and assumed the rank of a university. But long enough has it been to assure all of the wisdom of the plan and to lend force to the trite maxim, "In union there is strength." Each department has received an impulse awakening to a new life, a new energy, and well may we be proud to stand in the period like the present, and in the ranks of a class which, in all the departments of the University, has won the right to mark the beginning of a new era in the history of "Old Union."

And to you, citizens of Albany, among whom may yet be seen several of the venerable founders of the Medical College, we would express our sincere regard and reverence for your liberality and disinterested devotion to the cause of science; for your zeal in promoting the welfare and happiness of your fellow-men; to your wide and generous philanthropy we are largely indebted for the advantages we have enjoyed, and it is with pleasure that we take this opportunity of giving a public expression of our gratitude and esteem. May you long be spared to minister to the happiness of humanity and to enjoy the "luxury of doing good."

Classmates of '74:

Our college days are past, the time has come when our relations as students and classmates must be severed. The degrees which are about to be conferred place upon us new and peculiar responsibilities. Let us resolve to prove ourselves worthy of the honor that will to-night be bestowed upon us. We cannot lightly esteem this inheritance of public and social favor.

The legal period of our pupilage is ended. We must now take our places and measure our abilities with those who have gone before us, to fill positions of honor and usefulness.

But let us not forget that our lives must be largely devoted to study, to work, without which we are nothing, we can be nothing, achieve nothing, fulfill nothing. Work is the weapon with which to win honor and success.

Our profession, more than any other, calls for earnest, persevering students, eager to reap the earliest fruits of scientific investigation, and ever as ready to proclaim the laws of health, as to minister to the necessities of sickness.

We are now to go from the tutelage of a

learned faculty into the new and untried school of experience, to war with doubt, disappointment, but not, I trust, with failure, in striving for the possession of a true knowledge of the healing art. Let us not falter before the frowns of fortune. Determination, backed by industry and good sense, must surely win us success. Ours is a noble calling, an exalted mission. It demands the best qualities of mind and of heart—courage, firmness, gentleness, and, above all, charity.

The physician must stand unmoved amid all the storms of human passion, forgetful of self-interest, in the one absorbing desire to follow the path of duty, and to secure the highest good of his fellow-men.

When pestilence walketh in darkness, desolating homes and bringing terror upon all, it is ours to go out fearlessly against the foe, and struggle manfully for precious lives, sacrificing our own, perchance, at the shrine of heaven-born charity. Yes, in the blessed name of charity, we must enter the hovels of poverty and degradation, bringing hope to the hopeless, and glad tidings to hearts cast down in sorrow and despair. By us is to be preached the "gospel of humanity" to many souls now groping in selfish blind-

ness, and deaf to the pleadings of want and distress.

To many hearts and homes may we not hope to bring light and happiness, and become endeared by many offices of holy trust reaching from the cradle to the grave?

It may be ours to gain wealth; some among us may be crowned with honors, but let us not presume to weigh with gold the precious treasures of gratitude which each of us may hoard in human hearts, nor compare the applause of the world with the promptings of the still small voice within us.

And now, classmates, brothers, we must part. Away upon the broad sea of life we launch our barks, trusting to the favor of fortune, who just now seems so propitious. But we shall not have gone far from port before winds and waves will arise to test our untried strength and skill. We shall have to trust to ourselves, and struggle manfully to weather the storms which we should welcome and defy. But in every trial we may feel assured of the sympathy of each true heart in '74.

The friendships which have grown out of our association in the pursuit of knowledge will, I trust, ever remain, binding our hearts

to each other, and to the memories of our student life.

But here, doubtless, we shall not meet again. We go out to lives which have no holiday—to fields of labor widely separated. In memory only may we live again our buoyant, joyous, college days, and in imagination alone picture again the scenes of to-night. But God grant that in another world—a world to which humanity in every age and in every land has turned in hope and faith—we may meet in a glorious and happy reunion, and when the story of our lives resounds through the mighty arches of our Father's house, may no discordant note mar the harmony of the strain which is chanted by the tongues of angels and of men.

And now to all assembled here, instructors, classmates, friends, *Farewell*; “a word that must be, and hath been, a sound that makes us linger; yet, farewell.”

[APPENDIX.]

UNION UNIVERSITY.

ALBANY MEDICAL COLLEGE.

MEDICAL FACULTY.

JAMES H. ARMSBY, M.D.,

PRESIDENT OF THE FACULTY,

Prof. of the Principles and Practice of Surgery and Clinical Surgery.

JOHN V. LANSING, M.D.,

Prof. of the Theory and Practice of Medicine and Clinical Medicine.

WILLIAM P. SEYMOUR, M.D.,

Prof. of Obstetrics and Diseases of Women.

HENRY R. HASKINS, M.D.,

Prof. of Anatomy.

GEORGE T. STEVENS, M.D.,

Prof. of Ophthalmology and Physiology.

MAURICE PERKINS, M.D.,

Prof. of Chemistry and Toxicology.

WILLIS G. TUCKER, M.D.,

Prof. of Materia Medica and Pharmacy.

WILLIAM HAILES, M.D.,

Prof. of Pathological Anatomy.

HENRY MARCH, M.D.,

Curator of the Museum.

The Lectures commence on the first Tuesday in September, annually, and continue four months. The fees for one course of Lectures are \$100, or a Perpetual Ticket, \$150; Matriculation, \$5; Graduation, \$25.

The Alumni Association hold a meeting on the last day of the term; elect officers, and have The Annual Festival in the Evening.

The last class of Matriculated Students, and of Graduates, was larger than ever before.

The College Building, its Lecture Rooms, and the Museum, have been greatly improved.

A new private Laboratory, with the most perfect specimens in *Materia Medica*, and a Micro-photographic Gallery, for the illustration of Pathological Anatomy, have been added to the means of instruction.

The Albany Hospital, near the College, has been enlarged and improved. More than \$50,000 have been expended during the last two years in improvements.

Clinical Lectures are delivered three days in the week, in the Hospital, during the Lecture term.

