

Mitchell (D.D.)

THE

RECIPROCAL OBLIGATIONS

OF

PROFESSORS AND PUPILS:

AN

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE,

DELIVERED BY

THOS. D. MITCHELL, M. D.

Professor of Materia Medica and Therapeutics, and Lecturer on Obstetrics,  
in Transylvania University.

NOVEMBER 3D, 1845.

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**CORRESPONDENCE.**

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To Prof. THOMAS D. MITCHELL :

DEAR SIR :— At a meeting of the Medical Class of Transylvania University, held yesterday afternoon, the undersigned were appointed a committee, to present their grateful acknowledgments for your impressive and eloquent Introductory Lecture, and to request a copy of it for publication.

Yours, with great respect,

WM. R. PRESTON,  
R. T. RENTFRO,  
J. H. PORTER,  
S. W. LAND.

MEDICAL HALL, LEXINGTON, KY., }  
November 12th, 1845. }

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To MESSRS. PRESTON, RENTFRO, PORTER, LAND, Committee of the  
Medical Class :

GENTLEMEN :

In reply to your polite and flattering note of the 12th instant, allow me to say, that the Lecture, to which you refer, is at your disposal.

Yours, very respectfully,

THOS. D. MITCHELL.

MEDICAL HALL, Nov. 14, 1845.

## THE RECIPROCAL OBLIGATIONS OF PROFESSORS AND PUPILS.

THE force of association is, perhaps, no where more palpable than in the days devoted to lectures introductory to a course of medical instruction. Those who occupy the place of public teachers, find their thoughts drawn away involuntarily to the period when they were wont to mingle with the crowd, for the purpose of listening to similar addresses. All the interesting and chequered scenery of more than a quarter of a century ago, bursts on the vision, almost with the freshness and force of the transactions of yesterday. We call to mind the classmates who sat by our side, and contributed to our happiness and improvement, as well as those whose indiscretions annoyed and vexed us. These, and a thousand kindred recollections, fit us to sympathise with those who, young as we were once, are now congregated, here and elsewhere, to be instructed in the various details of medical science. We welcome you, gentlemen, to this hall of learning, and fondly hope that the intercourse this day commenced, may be productive of lasting profit to all whose feet may pass our threshold.

If custom or a sense of duty restricted the teacher of a specific branch of medical science, to the exact limits of his chair, on such an occasion as this, an apology might be requisite for the departure about to be made, at this hour. The *whole* of the profession of medicine consists of more parts than those which ordinarily constitute the totality of a full course of public lectures; and the range, usually conceded to introductory discourses, offers a favorable opportunity for noticing some important items, which might otherwise be overlooked and forgotten.

You expect, as a matter of course, to be instructed in all that appertains to the elements of medical science, in the ordinary acceptation of that phraseology; but it is very seldom that the professor digresses from the straight line of first principles in his department, to descant on the ethics of the profession. It is much to be regretted, that these latter points are held in low estimation, or regarded as the mere drapery of the profession, with or without which, success, honor and high respectability may be alike attained.

I am aware, that some are of the opinion, that the previous education and discipline of every young man who enters a medical school should be such, as to preclude the necessity of spending a moment in efforts to inculcate lessons touching the morality of medicine, in such a place as this. Be this as it may. The landmarks of virtue and integrity, however broad and deep they may have been laid in early youth, are too often obscured by the mists and fogs of erroneous, not to say vicious habits, to be constantly in the mind's eye, as beacons to warn against danger, or to indicate the path of rectitude. We are all, gentlemen, whether young or old, too prone to forget our duty. We see the right, and yet the wrong pursue.

Favor me, therefore, for a few moments, with your patient and candid attention, while I attempt to trace out, somewhat in detail, a few of the more important points to which I have just referred, in a brief and concise survey of the *reciprocal obligations of Professors and Pupils*.

An incorporated medical school is, in a certain and very important sense, public property. Its very existence, and, above all, its success is dependent on public approbation and regard; not on the whims and caprices of the selfish, the conceited, and the arrogant, who are incompetent to judge of the merits of any public institution, but on the good sense of the well informed, the well meaning, and the judicious portion of society. It is a sort of temporary substitution of public discipline and control, for that which has long been exercised under the paternal roof, or in the office of the well informed private preceptor. And, however obvious it may be, that the same general rules which have been enforced by the principal, should be rigorously yet prudently exercised by the substitute, there are now, and there always have been those, who regard the period allotted to a course of medical lectures, as a sort of moral chasm, a season of impunity, a time when men may live as they list, cast off the restraints of virtue, and let loose every vicious propensity. And it is with the deepest regret I am constrained to admit the charge of delinquency on the part of teachers in these respects; and to say, that while some have exhibited, in most felicitous relief, the moral character appropriate to our profession, there have been those whose habitual course had no other tendency than to confirm the ardent, wayward and inexperienced youth, in the demoralizing practices in which he had thoughtlessly embarked.

In the family compact, there are mutual obligations and responsibilities, equally binding on the parties. It would be preposterous to calculate on the spontaneous flow of filial affection, where parental

regard was not manifested; or to expect a compliance with rules violated by daily example, in direct contrariety. Nor can the medical pupil be required to demean himself with propriety, by the professor who disregards or violates the obligations which rest upon him, in virtue of his official oath, to say nothing of the demands of moral rectitude.

In the further consideration of this subject, I shall take a cursory view of the following propositions. *First:* It is an imperious duty of professors; to be prepared to communicate the requisite instruction in the department which it is their province to fill. This may appear, and certainly is, a mere truism; and it may be deemed a trespass on your time to introduce it. But, gentlemen, there have been instances in all countries where medical schools have been established, of the appointment of unqualified teachers; and what is yet more to be lamented, the incumbent has often been defective in those habits of study and application, the prompt and persevering exercise of which might countervail very much, that inherent, native deficiency, which is the calamity and not the crime of its victim.

It would seem, that a strictly conscientious man would not accept an appointment, for which he has neither natural, nor artificial qualifications; unless, as it may happen, his vision of himself be so obscured by overweening vanity, as to induce in him a totally false estimate of his powers. And, even though a man possess some kind of qualifications, it will not follow that he is therefore suited to the post. An individual may be eloquent, he may possess a pretty ample fund of general information, he may even talk fluently; and still it may not follow that he is, after all, just the right kind of man to fill a professorial chair. It is not enough that he was once a student; that he has actually read a good many books, and can talk with volubility about others he never read. In our profession, and especially in the business of teaching, an old capital will not suffice. That, to be sure, is valuable; and yet, it is only available, as it is burnished and augmented and fortified by daily additions to the stock. The true, legitimate character of study, as respects the professor, is like that of the perennial plant, which, although more beautiful to the eye at one season than at another, survives alike the withering heat of summer, and braves the rigor of the wintry blast. In the language of a celebrated father in medicine, the physician, and much more the teacher, should be a student as long as he lives. On him devolves the duty, most emphatically, of laying all nature under contribution, to help him in his momentous undertaking. His eye, his ear, his hand, every power of his

soal must be pledged to the enterprise. Even though mutation were not stamped on all terrestrial objects, he must be a perpetual student. How much more imperative the obligation, when he knows that change is deep infixed by the finger of the Deity, on every thing below the stars; that even his own dear self is not the same in all respects, that it was a year ago. The hourly development of new facts and the constant displays of the newly discovered resources of Nature, demand the incessant exercise of vigorous intelligence, careful observation and persistent reflection. He, therefore, who ventures to the conflict, armed only with the rusty weapons of past experience, will speedily realise, to his extreme mortification, that truth, in her onward flight, has left him far in the rear.

Nor should the professor be impelled simply by the feeling of ambition, so peculiar to men of science. The claims of common honesty, based on the giving of an equivalent for value received, should have their due weight; and in addition to this, he should possess a sufficient share of the *esprit du corps*, to stimulate him to every honorable effort, by which the welfare of the school with which he is identified, may be fixed on a firm basis.

*Secondly:* As the term allotted to a course of lectures is too brief to permit an extended view of any subject, justice demands of the Professor, to direct the attention of his pupils to such points as are best suited to qualify for professional usefulness. It is well known, that few Professors succeed in a complete presentation of their full course of lectures, in one session. They intend to do so, but they often fail. Contingencies, sometimes unavoidable, operate to disappoint reasonable expectation, and the desired end is not fully attained. But when a Professor, from undue partiality for some special topic, not at all dissociated with his course, dwells on it at unreasonable length, he necessarily does injustice to other themes, and some of these, it may be, are of great practical importance.

The Professor should not be over anxious to make a display of his various reading, during his course of lectures, further than reference to authorities may be needful to fortify his positions. It is much more within the scope of his duty, to give his pupils correct views of all the subjects he thinks it important to teach; and these should be deduced from copious reading and abundant study; and he can do all this without manifesting undue anxiety, to be thought a kind of walking library.

To be successful as a teacher of medicine, it is absolutely indis-

pensible that words and phraseology be so employed, that no sane man can fail to understand the speaker. And that the ends of teaching may be fully realized, two qualities at least, must be joined in every professor, who would be successful and satisfactory. In the first place, he must understand the subject himself; and in the second place, he must be able, so to teach, that his hearers may understand it, if they will. A man may be as wise as Solomon, and if you please, ten times wiser than he, and he may have no aptness to teach. Have we not all witnessed cases in illustration? One of the most learned professors in America, a man whose reading and research far outstripped that of all his colleagues, was, beyond controversy, the worst teacher I ever heard, or ever expect to hear. His efforts in the task of instruction, were laborious and faithful; but succeeded only, in making confusion worse confounded.

*Thirdly.* The professor should ever evince a scrupulous regard for all the rules of morality, and the precepts of the Christian religion. At profanity he should stand aloof, nor give it countenance for a moment. The teacher who, within or without the walls of College, scruples not to obtrude upon his auditory the vulgar and indecent oath, is unworthy of public confidence. Unworthy of public confidence, did I say? that does not meet the outrage. He should be made to feel the indignation of an insulted community burning on his forehead, and fixing its seal upon him. With falsehood, duplicity and hypocrisy, the professor should have no fellowship. To remember the Sabbath day, and keep it sacred, is an obligation that binds him as a good citizen, and an obedient subject of his country's laws and institutions. He should hold in perpetual abhorrence, the blasting, withering, degrading vice of intemperance; that Pandora's box, that curse of curses, that moral Upas, that despoiler of hopes present, future and eternal, in comparison with which, war, pestilence and famine are non-entities.

I have known the time, gentlemen, when Professors had their bacchanalian revels, in which teachers and pupils were alike besotted, and sunk far lower than the brute. But I felicitate myself that a happier era has dawned upon our country; and that the remnant of intemperate habits that yet mars the beauty and order of our social compact, will ere long vanish forever; and that a *drunken doctor or professor* will be classed with the obsolete terms, the mere repetition of which shall hereafter excite emotions of utter disgust.

The moral excellence of the public teacher should embrace, not

only a deep-rooted, unyielding abhorrence of profanity and intemperance, but it should have respect to every amiable quality that enters into virtuous character. In all these points, however multifarious and difficult in practice, the professor should endeavor to be a pattern to his class, never forgetting the magic spell of influence, and the resistless power of example.

Again: The professor should be the friend and confidant of his pupils. For the most part, the individuals who compose a medical class, are unknown to the community, with whom they are destined, for a short season, to be sojourners. They have bid adieu to all the delightful associations and endearing sympathies of home and relatives and friends. Far from the paternal roof, and away from the salutations of friendly counsel and admonition, they have taken a temporary residence with strangers. To whom, under such circumstances, may they so fitly apply for advice in regard to their studies, their associations, and all the considerations that may seriously affect their welfare, as to those, who, in the capacity of teachers, are now to stand in the stead of parents and guardians? In all these respects, gentlemen, your teachers feel that you have a claim upon them; and while they cheerfully acknowledge their duty in the premises, they hope to realize the privilege of extending to you the kindnesses of life, and all those friendly offices by which civilized man is distinguished from the rude, untutored savage.

I rejoice to say, that in no city in America, are students of medicine more kindly received than in Lexington. I do not except even my native place, the city of brotherly love, as it is called, in this regard. Medical pupils who conduct themselves with propriety, (and I fondly hope there is not a gentleman before me who will do otherwise,) will have no difficulty in realizing, that they are in the midst of a people who understand the proprieties of social life, and the kind bearing that should be extended to strangers. Lexington is too proud of her medical school, and of her other institutions of learning, to withhold from any honorable pupil, the respect and attention to which his deportment entitles him. The really intelligent and truly respectable of our community, without an exception, are deeply sensible of the high value of these her jewels, to treat with indifference or contempt, any who come hither to share in their rich treasures.

In keeping steadily before him the elevation of the school to which he is attached, the professor consults not merely his own personal

gratification and comfort, but equally so, the present good and future eminence of his pupils. A medical school, apart from its teachers and pupils, if such a thing be possible, is a mere automaton, useless and ephemeral from the necessity of the case. But, under proper organization, all the parts being dependent on each other, and moving together in delightful harmony, an identity of character and interest is established between pupils and their alma mater, that nought but the blasting hand of death can efface.

And when I speak of the professor having his mind fixed on the elevation of his *own* school, do not for a moment misunderstand me, as affirming or insinuating, that he is at liberty to commence and carry on a deliberate system of opposition to every other, or to any other school, or that he has a right to defraud another establishment for the aggrandisement of his own. He may not raise his voice against an honorable, noble competitor. If he be a man of truth and integrity, he will not. The cause of science everywhere and at all times, is the cause of humanity, and he who possesses the right spirit, will rejoice in its steady progress. But at the same time, and with all this frank concession, it is perfectly consistent to strive for excellence, to raise our standard high and to seek the greatest attainments in a good cause. The professor may therefore, while extending all possible courtesy to sister associations of honorable bearing, press his whole energies that are pledged to science, to elevate his own school to the loftiest point of excellence. Away with that mean and grovelling spirit, that prompts some who are invested with the professorial office, to insinuate and falsify in such a way as to inflict a wound on the character of an institution of higher order and nobler bearing than their own.\* The man who can stoop to such things for the sake of a little paltry pelf, is unworthy a place in any institution of learning; and if Transylvania cannot be sustained, save by the use of weapons that truth and justice alike

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\*The Glasgow, Mo., News, of November 6th, copies the base and premeditated lie of the Louisville concern, published in their oracle of October 9th, with the following comments:

“Now this is altogether untrue. Dr. Mitchell has always been acknowledged one of the ablest lecturers and scholars in the Western Faculty. Whether or not, it is judicious for him to fill two chairs for the present, his co-laborers have decided. But the object of the article in question was evidently to put him down *unfairly*, just as students from abroad were going on to attend medical lectures. We must say, that we are grieved and mortified at this *levelling* system—this cutting off of the *tallest heads*—the base meanness of blasting the reputation that one cannot honorably rival.”

repudiate, let her go down, and her name be blotted from the earth. The flag under which we sail spreads out to the view of the world the glorious motto, *virtue, honor, and independence*. That flag is nailed to the highest pinnacle of the topmast. It is identified with our existence as a school, and we neither ask for, nor expect success on any other basis.

A call has lately been made, through our medical journals, for a grand national convention in May next, in the city of New York, to consider, among other things, the best methods of improving medical schools, as a means of elevating the medical profession. It is expected that all the institutions in our country, in which the science of medicine is taught, will be represented in that body. And it may be well in this place, and at this time, to descant a little on the merits of this question.

It will be conceded by all, that it is impossible to invent any sort of expedient sufficiently potent to control base and unprincipled men. And if any are so Utopian as to dream of the practicability of making laws for the government of professors who are compounded of intrigue, flattery, and falsehood, they will soon realize the fallacy of their calculations. Not less chimerical would be the effort to regulate the whirlwind and the tornado, by penal enactments. The honest, the candid, the well disposed need only to be apprized of duty, in order to its due performance. They will ever keep their faith inviolate, in any agreement by which they may consent to be bound. But it is far otherwise with those who pray for wholesome, rigid laws, which they have no intention of observing, and to evade which, is a part of their settled policy.

So little faith have I in any expedient that can be devised by a convention, to keep some men one month in the straight path of rectitude in this matter, that I despair of any happy results from the projected gathering of medical men. The time has come for most rigorous measures, if any course of policy shall be deemed expedient. And I would respectfully suggest, that whatever is agreed upon by the convention to elevate and dignify medical schools, should be backed by a statute of that body, providing for the public denunciation and disowning of any school, found guilty of a violation of the compact. Let the plan for tabling charges and trying the institution charged with such offence be lucidly laid down, so that there shall not be a solitary loop-hole, through which the criminal may escape.\*

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\*We invoke the special attention of the profession in America to this matter. We could name an establishment, called a medical

And as part of this plan, I would also propose a revision of all existing laws, touching the conferring of degrees in medicine, so as to authorize, and require every medical faculty to cite before it any alumnus, charged

*school*, whose settled policy has been and now is, to multiply its numbers, at all hazards. By its agents sent to all points, and by its *traveling* Professors, it holds out the inducements of a *grand cheap shop*, where goods can be had, at any price, or no price. Young men are sought out, and matriculated, whether they can read or not; (see Resolutions of 21 Physicians of Louisville,) and furnished with tickets of admission, on credits varying from *eighteen months to three years*. Those who have attended at another school, and are in debt for their first course, are hunted up, received as candidates, and at length graduated, in utter disregard of all the rules and qualifications, observed in schools of honorable bearing. The *cheap shop* to which we refer, has done more to disgrace the profession of medicine in less than ten years, than ten conventions could do in the way of reform and elevation. Its trickery at home and its trickery abroad, are now matters of public notoriety; and we warn the unwary, that they will neglect no device that may avail to augment their show of numbers. Who can doubt that doctors made at such an establishment will partake, more or less, of the characteristic marks of the proprietors?

The present organization of this *so-called* Medical School has been so seriously assailed by the most respectable physicians around it, that great fears are entertained, lest the desired change in the City Council may thrust out the entire Faculty, and give the institution to honest men. Moved by this appalling prospect, one of the *caitiffs* of the concern has made extra efforts, traducing the characters of men whose talents he envies, because he has none that any honorable man would like to possess; and governed by his all-absorbing quality, the love of money, he has put himself forth as the little intriguer for the Faculty, ready to visit steamboats, and hotels and coffee-houses, to impose on young men who have money by false statements, and to seize on such as can pay nothing, in order to swell the catalogue to such dimensions as to intimidate the City Council, and prevent the dreaded revolution. The immortal author of the "Course of Time," has well-delineated this non-descript, *chemical nothing*, in the shape of a man:

"His tongue was set on fire of hell, his heart  
Was black as death, his legs were faint with haste  
To propagate the lie his soul had framed.  
Yet did he spare his sleep, and hear the clock  
Number the midnight watches, on his bed  
Devising mischief more: and early rose  
And made most hellish meals of good men's names."

It is high time for the public to know the true character of the great *medical cheap-shop of the West*, and to see to it, that the machinations of the establishment shall no longer decoy their sons, and disgrace the medical profession, so irrecoverably, that its ultimate position will be as inferior to that of the humblest mechanic art.

The Medical School of Transylvania disclaims the glory of a *great cheap-shop*. She prefers to be *paid* for 150 to 200 pupils, who, from the *fact of payment* will better estimate their profession, than to have

by common fame with repeated and flagrant violations of professional propriety, and, on conviction, after a full hearing, to annul his diploma in the most public manner, and thus to declare him no longer a doctor of medicine. This course is substantially pursued in the profession of the law, and is the only expedient that can avail in the profession of medicine.

Thus, gentlemen, I have noticed very cursorily some of the obligations of Professors in medical schools. But you are to remember that as yet, I have exhibited but one side of the picture. The moment you enrol your names on our book of matriculations, you place yourselves under solemn responsibilities, positive or implied, from which you cannot be released but by honorable acquiescence. Every institution has its code or system of laws, in some form or other; and the individual who identifies himself with its interests, is bound to yield a cheerful obedience to all its requisitions.

Why are you here to-night? this is not your own dear home. The beloved fire-side of the old family mansion, the sweet scenery of your native hill and valley are not here. And wherefore have you abandoned all these tender associations, and why do I behold your sparkling countenances in this hall? Have you encountered the perils and the toils of a long journey over mountain fastnesses, and the rugged byways of the wilderness, to come hither to indulge in revelry and dissipation; to waste your hours, to despoil your health in the scenes of temptation that make up the black spots in every large city? Are these the objects for which the aged sires and venerable matrons that so painfully bade you farewell when you passed from their embraces, never perhaps to return, were willing to appropriate their funds with liberality? Conscience responds, no. Your presence here to-night reiterates, no. You have embarked in an enterprize that forbids such profanation of the narrow span of life. You have felt a laudable solicitude to embrace the best opportunities for the attainment of a noble object; and hence you have resolved to place yourselves under the

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300 or 400, gathered by all sorts of chicanery, for no other purpose, than to defeat the *projected transfer* of the school to other hands. Let it be known every where, that we are determined to make our Medical school subservient to the grand design of *elevating* not of *scandalizing* the profession. No consideration, save a high regard for that profession could have induced this exposure of baseness, that has heaped its proofs almost mountain high, during the last eight years. The *so called medical school*, to which we have referred, has so utterly outlawed itself, that longer silence would be unpardonable.

guardian care of the medical department of Transylvania University.

Suffer me therefore, gentlemen, in the spirit of unaffected friendship, to make a few suggestions, the right estimate of which cannot fail to facilitate your progress in the important enterprise in which you have enlisted, and to the details of which you expect to devote your life.

Let it be your unwavering purpose to pay a scrupulous regard to all the rules of college. It is not necessary to apprise you, that they are calculated to promote the welfare of the pupil, as well as the comfort of the Professor. They partake of the nature and essence of the best regulations in domestic economy, and without them confusion and disorder must be universal.

In an especial manner, and as lying at the foundation of order in a public institution, I would urge the propriety of punctual attendance in all the lecture rooms at the specified hours; and a fixed determination to profit by all the instructions. It is much to be deplored that in all our medical schools, both teachers and pupils are seriously interrupted by the irregular attendance of a few persons, who seem to be regardless of self respect, as well as the comfort and convenience of others. The late Mr. Dwight, in his very interesting volume of Travels in the North of Germany, has recorded an important fact touching the University of Gottingen. May it be the good fortune of some future historian, to make as favorable a record in reference to all the medical schools of this country. "The lectures," says the author, "commence ten minutes after the sound of the clock, and terminate the moment it strikes; the professor detaining the class no longer than to finish his sentence. To a greater delay they would not submit, not even to finish a paragraph; as that might prevent them from reaching the lecture-room of some other professor in time; *it being considered indecorous for a student to enter the room after the lecture has commenced.*"

It should be viewed not only as a trespass on the rights of the teacher, to enter a lecture room out of season, but an offence against the pupils already assembled. Some professors are so well balanced, that occasional irregularities of this sort cannot annoy them. There are others, however, who seem to have been cast in the mould of super-sensitiveness and who lose the thread of their discourse, if it be extemporaneous, from the most trifling disorder around them. The noisy approach of a few delinquents will give to such a teacher a sort of neuralgic fit, almost paralyzing his mind, as well as his tongue. The results in such cases must needs be pernicious to all concerned. And you may

rest assured, gentlemen, that irregular habits of any kind will exert an unfavorable, even though it be an almost imperceptible, influence on your progress. All such habits, if not the legitimate fruits of a moral deformity already incurable, will, sooner or later, fix indelibly the character, and give to all your plans and operations that fluctuating tendency, which is the invariable attendant of a reckless disregard of system and rule.

Permit me further to guard you against the waste of time, by embarking in any enterprise whose tendency may be to transfer your attention from the subjects that have a paramount claim upon you. He who appropriates to study here as large a portion of his time as the various topics of lecture demand, will soon realize that he has not a moment to trifle away in frivolous and contemptible pursuits; that he must some times trespass on the season appropriated by nature to repose, in order to keep even pace with the instructions of the day. There is here but one prominent object to elicit your attention, and every thing that may tend to divert you from that, should be sedulously avoided. Resist, therefore, every motive and enticement that may be thrown across your path, that savors of an invitation to associate for any purpose that may retard your studies. Let patient, diligent, persevering study be your motto. Give to it, not only the time that will be necessarily spent within these walls, but every moment of your leisure that can be appropriated in consistence with a proper regard to health. Thus demeaning yourselves, not an hour will hang heavily upon you, and you will ultimately reap the happy fruits of untiring industry.

Once more. Do not think it strange that I should insist in this place, on the importance of a regular attendance on public worship on the Sabbath day. One of the most distinguished physicians of America was wont to dwell on this momentous theme. He did more. He was seen, even during the full tide of a very extensive practice, at some house of religious worship, on every first day of the week. He was more devoted to method and punctuality, than any physician I have ever known; and on no topic was his passion for these virtues more remarkable, than in respect of the point now before us. He felt it his duty, as you may learn from his published writings, to give all the force of his influence and example in favor of an institution, which he always regarded as essential to the stability of our government and the happiness of society. There are few matters of duty capable of exerting so powerful a tendency to systematize human character and conduct, and to identify punctuality with our very nature, as the regular

practice of attending public worship. Nor do I know of any habit better calculated to fix your character in the judgment of the people. Locate where you may, the men and the women who mark you as a punctilious observer of this duty, will hold you in higher estimation, than the physician who neglects it. The sentiment is irresistible, that he who is conscientious in this matter, is worthy of confidence; and he is sure of success. Of the moral tendencies, it is quite unnecessary to say a word, as these are conceded by all.

In tendering you the counsel which it has been a chief aim of this lecture to impart, it is not needful to assure you that the motives of the speaker have been pure and honest. He has learned enough of human nature, from observation and experience, to be able to speak out plainly and confidently on topics, such as those which have been urged upon you. If each member of the class will receive the admonitions in the same spirit that has dictated them, and henceforth reduce them to daily practice, I venture to predict, that the session on which we have now entered, will be full of profit and interest to all, and that every pupil will return to his home, delighted with his temporary abode in Lexington, and fully satisfied with the instructions of Transylvania.

Who among you sighs not for eminence and distinction? Are you ambitious of mounting to the topmost round in fame's towering ladder, that you may fill a niche of glory in the proud temple of your country's history and the world's remembrance? Emotions like these are spontaneous gushings from the youthful breast; and when moderately indulged are not unlawful. But, gentlemen, there is no royal highway to this splendid and bewitching goal. It is a desideratum too costly to be purchased with the gold of the universe, were it all your own. The influence of family and the power of caste are utterly impotent in such an enterprise. Thank heaven, the poor and the rich, the high and the low, meet here on a common level. Mind is the jewel that calls on you for perpetual vigilance, while it laughs at the arbitrary distinctions found in society. Take care of that possession, according to its true value, and it matters little whether you are blest or unblest with wealth and plenty. Take your stand, firm as the everlasting hills, on the side of virtue, order, knowledge, truth. Be studious, industrious, untiring in your quest of learning; and if there be any thing certain in this scene of fluctuation and change, never cease to cherish the conviction, that your career must terminate in the actual possession of the respect and confidence of the truly great, and in the delightful consciousness of having accomplished something for the happiness of man.

The position which I am to occupy in the present session, is novel and interesting in all its relations. In addition to my ordinary duties in the chair of *Materia Medica* and *Therapeutics*, it has fallen to my lot, to stand in the breach that death has made, and to engage in another field of duty. He who sat with us on this rostrum, and filled his place at this desk a year ago, is now numbered with the dead. The instructions based on a practical acquaintance with his subject through the long period of thirty-five years, will never again be heard in this Hall. His numerous and intelligent pupils scattered over the face of this great valley, have listened to his instructive lessons for the last time. And I, who, least of all perhaps, anticipated such a revolution in the wheel of Providence, am destined to make an effort to fill the chasm created by his lamented decease. That my best efforts will be devoted to the performance of the duties, so ably discharged by my departed colleague, it is needless for me to assure you. Nor is it requisite to ask your kind indulgence, in the peculiar circumstances in which I am placed. I expect to teach reasonable, intelligent, common-sense pupils, who will not withhold the need of praise where praise may be due, nor censure imperfections that have their very being in the exigencies of the case.

To the two-fold duties that devolve upon me, gentlemen, I invite your careful and constant attention. Let us all embark in this enterprise with the unalterable purpose to become wiser in our profession. Be it our constant aim to learn more and still more of the mysteries of our own nature, that we may become more useful in society, and more honorable in our profession.

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#### OUR MEDICAL SCHOOL AND VACANT CHAIR.

WE are happy to announce to our friends, that, notwithstanding the mean and dishonest efforts of the Louisville Institute to ruin the reputation of the Lexington School, the present class is larger than that of last winter. The number of those who are entitled to be candidates for graduation, is between 60 and 70.

At this date (December) we have 23 applicants for the vacant Chair, from eight States of the Union. Some of the applicants are Professors in other Medical Schools; and the final choice will be much embarrassed by the great amount of talent and professional respectability, presented to the Faculty and Trustees, for a selection. The result of the deliberations in the case will be made known, early in February.

It may be well to add, that Prof. M. will probably publish the *Western Practice of Midwifery*, based on the lectures and cases of the late Prof. R———, together with a biography of the deceased.