

Dr. Grafton



Griffith (R. E.)
AN

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE,

DELIVERED IN THE

ANATOMICAL THEATRE,

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND,

ON THE

(copy 4.)

1st November, 1836.

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BY ROBERT EGLESFELD GRIFFITH, M. D.

Professor of Materia Medica, Therapeutics, Hygiene and Medical Jurisprudence.

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1836.

University of Maryland Nov. 4th, 1836.

RESPECTED SIR: At a meeting of the class held this day, in the Anatomical Hall of the College, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That we regard with pleasure, the recent appointment of Dr. R. E. Griffith to the chair of Materia Medica in the University.

Resolved, That a copy of that gentleman's very chaste and beautiful address delivered before us on the 1st inst. be requested for publication, and for the execution of this object, that a committee of seven, of whom the chairman shall be one, be appointed—

CHRISTOPHER C. COX,
CHARLES A. MALLOY,
W. DURHAM LYLES,
ROBERT B. MADDOX,
DONAT McENERY,
EDWARD J. CHAISTY,
JOHN R. NELSON. } *Committee.*

EDWARD J. CHAISTY, *Pres.*
W. DURHAM LYLES, *Sec.*

University of Maryland, Nov. 5, 1836.

GENTLEMEN: In reply to your communication of the 4th inst. in behalf of the medical class, I beg leave to state, that considering the introductory lecture delivered before you on the 1st, as having thus become your property, I leave you to make such use of it, as you may deem most proper.

I beg you to express to the medical class my most sincere thanks for the honor they have done me, and to offer my warmest and best wishes for the prosperity of its members individually. I remain, most respectfully, your friend, &c.

R. EGLESFELD GRIFFITH.

TO MESSRS: CHRISTOPHER C. COX, CHARLES A. MALLOY, W. DURHAM LYLES, ROBERT MADDOX, DONAT McENERY, EDWARD J. CHAISTY, JOHN R. NELSON.

LECTURE.

THE honor conferred upon me by the Trustees of this Institution, could not fail of being highly gratifying to my feelings, and would naturally impel me to the strongest acknowledgments, for this distinguished mark of their esteem and confidence. But, in assuming the duties incumbent on the station to which I have been elevated, and in presenting myself, as an instructor in some of the most important branches of medical science, these feelings of pride and gratification are merged in sentiments of a far deeper, and more impressive character—and to the natural fear experienced in venturing on a new and untried path, is added a full conviction of the weight of responsibility that is necessarily incurred—to the Board from whom I derive the appointment, to the Faculty with whom I have become associated, and above all to those whom it has become my duty to guide in their pursuit of knowledge.

To fulfil in a proper manner, the obligations of a preceptor in any department of learning, requires no slight acquaintance with its doctrines, and the facts on which these doctrines are founded; joined to the firmest determination on the part of the teacher, of permitting no obstacle or difficulty to divert him from devoting his whole energies to the task.

But, still more is demanded from an instructor in the healing art, for medicine as a science almost exceeds the comprehension of the human mind, and to excel in it, requires the greatest exercise of intellect and discrimination. In the other learned professions, certain laws and standards exist, by which every question may be measured and determined; to acquire a competent knowledge of these, steady and well directed application aided by a good memory, are the chief requisites. Little room is left for the display of genius, where invention cannot add, nor judgment improve—but in medicine where no fixed laws can exist, and where the experience of past ages is oftentimes rendered of little avail, by the new relations that man is constantly assuming with the various powers of nature, very different is the case—in fact—every day, nay every hour presents our own age in aspects, and under circumstances, that for the purposes of practical utility and instruction, chain down the mind to the contemplation of the present, and cause existing habits and wants, with their influence on our health and happiness, to predominate over those of by gone centuries.

Hence a teacher in any one of the branches of medical science, has not only by diligent research and patient industry, to collect together the experience and observations of others, however, scattered in voluminous records or floating in a traditionary form on the shoreless ocean of knowledge; to apply to this mass of rude materials the analytical and synthetical processes of judgment, selection and combination, so as to present the soul and spirit of the various topics discussed, condensed into plain and practical results, but he must also be so fully embued with the philosophy of his art, as will enable him to lead his pupils to the discovery of those general principles, which must be always valid, and far from throwing a veil over the imperfections of the science he professes, he should be solicitous to point them out, and at the same time to direct attention to such observations and experiments as may tend to remove them. Sensible of the fervid imagination of youth, he should seek to guard them against an indiscriminate adoption of opinions, however plausible, and however high the source from which they emanate, until they had been subjected to the severe test of reason and experience, in short he should endeavor to direct their ardor in the pursuit of knowledge to the useful and practical, not to such as merely amuse the fancy, but to those which exercise the powers of observation and research.

Qualifications of this high grade I cannot aspire to, but I may venture to say, that I do bring to the task, the most ardent desire of aiding you in the great and laudable objects of your ambition—a purpose of entire devotion to the duties that have devolved upon me—and the strongest conviction of their high responsibility. Such as my talents, knowledge and experience are, they shall be unremittingly and unsparingly bestowed. In the performance of this arduous undertaking may I not hope, to be sustained by the wisdom and zeal of an enlightened Board of Trustees—by the talents, characters and tried capacities of my able and learned colleagues—by the favorable wishes of this distinguished community—and especially by the good will and friendship of you, for whom I strive, and whose approbation of my efforts will ever be esteemed as the richest reward that you can bestow.

My peculiar province in this University is to teach *Materia Medica* Therapeutics, Medical Jurisprudence and Hygiene, or rather such portions of these sciences as will be most practically useful to you, and best fit you not only to receive the honors of the Institution, but also to prepare you for the successful performance of the high duties appertaining to the career you have chosen. It must be obvious, indeed, that it would be totally impossible to give a full exposition of all the facts and doctrines connected

with these various departments of the medical art, in the comparatively short space of time allotted to the task, but I do hope to be enabled to present you such a view of them as to fulfil all useful purposes and to establish such landmarks as will serve to indicate what is to be acquired by your own labor and assiduity.

Before however, entering on a consideration of these important divisions of science, it may not be uninteresting to take a wider range and to lay before you a few general observations, intimately connected with your pursuits, and which cannot be touched upon at any time, so appropriate as the present. An introductory lecture to adopt the language of a late eloquent writer, Dr. Godman may be compared to a discussion on the state of the weather, which serves as an universal beginning to casual acquaintances, but often leads to other subjects of deeper interest, when there is that assimilation of character and reciprocity of sentiment, without which the acquaintance will prove as fleeting as the phenomena that provoked the conversation. It may in other words be considered as a hospitable welcome at the threshold, but can give no idea of the nature of the entertainment that is to follow.

To you gentlemen it is scarcely necessary to prove the vast benefits conferred on mankind by our science, or the necessity that exists, of its exercise being confined to a particular class, the business of whose lives is to examine and investigate the hidden causes of disease and the adequate modes of cure, requiring an exclusive devotion to these duties totally incompatible with other occupations, and no one but the Physician can be aware of the difficulties to be overcome or the labor to be undergone, before such a point is attained as renders him confident in the resources of his art, in averting the poisoned shafts of disease and death.

Cure me! give me remedy for the ills that oppress me! is the exclamation of all, when extended on the couch of sickness; it may be heard in the hut of the savage, and in the habitation of civilized man, in the cabin of the indigent, and the palace of kings. Medicine founded on this natural sentiment is coeval with the human race, and arose from the finest feelings implanted by nature in our organization; from that sympathetic benevolence which induces us to compassionate the sufferings of others and to endeavor assuage them. But these rude, though well meant attempts of individuals to relieve the distress of their neighbor, must have ceased, when it was found that some had acquired greater skill than others, to these as a necessary consequence all applied for assistance,—and this may in fact be considered as the true origin of our art, its utmost extent, however, probably consisting in the knowledge of a few simples.

I shall not attempt to point out the origin of the primeval learning of mankind. To guess at the wisdom inscribed on the columns, fabled to have

escaped the overwhelming deluge, will avail us naught. All we know is, that the faint, but steady light, which beamed on Caucasus, was denied to Atlas and the Andes. It can be, however, discerned through the misty vista of time, that the truths of medical science were comprehended at a very early period, at an age not very remote from that great catastrophe remembered by all nations, and which is marked in giant characters on the great surface of the globe.

The first definite records we possess of the progress of the medical art are derived from the Greeks, though as the greatest portion of ancient knowledge was by the use of symbols and types, confined to the priests and has been lost in the lapse of ages; it is impossible now to decide whether our tutelary divinity was first enshrined in the vast halls of Meroe or in the more classic fane of Delphos. But whether our science be of Egyptian or Grecian origin, it may be assumed that the great fundamental principles on which it is founded existed at a very early period in as full force as at present. We, it is true, far excel our ancestors in the development of facts, and by a judicious exclusion of principles, founded in error, and in a belief of preternatural agents and causes, which had their only existence in the heated imaginations and superstitious terrors of their authors and their disciples.

In no department of human knowledge has this propensity to attribute common events to the agency of preternatural causes, been more fully developed than in medicine. Credulity is one of the strongest characteristics of our race, and exists equally in the highest degree of civilization and in the untutored savage; in the sceptic and the believer; in the poet and the warrior. Bacon acknowledged its existence, and the stern mind of Johnson bent beneath its influence, and even in our own days, Napoleon the destroyer and overthrower of ancient monarchies, and the subverter of long established prejudices was a believer in destiny, and mingled a reliance on his peculiar star, with his mighty projects of reform.

In medicine, it would appear, that from the moment man turned his attention to the relief and cure of disease, not content with the means so amply bestowed by nature, he boldly sought to obtain a knowledge of the hidden principles of life, and hoped to accomplish the desired end by chemical transmutations, or vainly attempting to read the fate of his patients in the aspect of the heavens. This latter delusion arose to such a height, that at the birth of every individual, a certain star was supposed to preside, and whose radiance or dimness was considered as a sure indication of success or misfortune.

The most prolific epoch in extravagant speculations of this character, was during that mental twilight which pervaded the world in the middle ages

when superstition and credulity exercised an almost unlimited sway. Then arose those extraordinary delusions of fancy, and were developed those fearful dreams of witchcraft and the sympathies, of the philosophers stone and a universal medicine, which so long misled the minds even of the most learned. Some of these are far from being forgotten, and are daily re-appearing under forms better adapted to the spirit of the times. For although we loudly boast of our discoveries in science, and vainly talk of the march of intellect, and the diffusion of knowledge—we are forced to confess—so far are we from being freed from the influence of imposture—that it still pervades every division of learning and every rank of life.

A belief in these arts, is now justly considered as a proof of weakness and imbecility, but notwithstanding the increase of knowledge that has dispelled these errors, we are still the victims of other quackeries full as mischievous and degrading to our reason. Scarcely has one delusion been destroyed, when others spring forth like the heads of the fabled hydra. Although the idea of the philosopher's stone is now scoffed at, how many, even among the educated and well informed, place the firmest reliance on the virtues of some universal medicine, and panacea after panacea is produced and indiscriminately used with the same results as in the days of Paracelsus—that of filling the pockets of the projector. In vain is the spirit of quackery exercised in one form, it rises again, “with twenty mortal murders on its crown to push us from our stools.” The credulity of the public is an ample fund for all who wish to levy contributions on it. Whoever has contemplated the stream of events, during even a short space of time, will have seen bubble after bubble arise, glitter in borrowed but brilliant hues for a moment, and disappear for ever, to be succeeded by another as gorgeous and illusory.

Of the dignity of the profession under whose banners you have enrolled yourselves, I need say but little. It has stood the test of time, and although its imperfections have been a fertile subject of complaint; its theories and doctrines derided and depreciated by those who were unable to comprehend the difficulties attendant upon its acquisition, or the extent of talent and learning necessary for its successful prosecution, still its paramount utility and the high rank it holds among the sciences have never been seriously denied.

That it has its imperfections must be admitted, for it is a science so extensive, and so limited are our faculties, in attempting to explore the mysteries connected with the life of man, that our knowledge must ever be exceedingly confined. Perfection is not to be looked for, the labor of ages, will it is true, enlarge our resources, but we shall be forced to confess that although we may learn to stay the dart of death for a few short moments

it will ever ultimately pierce its victim. But if we are not permitted to taste of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, we are invited to shelter ourselves beneath its widely spreading branches, and are amply rewarded for our exertions to reach it, by the multitude and beauty of the objects we discover on our road. Let us be satisfied that it is not allotted to mortals to raise the last veil of nature's sanctuary, and that some bound has been fixed to our aspirations,—But let us also remember, that improvement is undoubtedly in our power, and that industry and ability will never want subjects for employment.

It has been the glory of medicine, that it has been the profession of literature as well as benevolence. The son of Latona is equally the tutelary divinity of healing, and the patron of the muses. In fact, no species of knowledge can, or ought to be indifferent to the Physician, since man, the great object of his care is connected with, and influenced by every thing in nature.

I am fully aware that it has been asserted by many persons of no slight influence and standing in the profession, that general information is not only useless, but even that it is highly prejudicial to the student, as it tends to withdraw his attention from those topics, to which alone he should direct his thoughts, this carried out to its full extent, would be to assert that the soundest divines are those acquainted with nothing beyond the dogmas of their own sectarianism, that those were the best lawyers whose whole reading was confined to the isolated points, detached cases, and mere practical details of jurisprudence, and to bring the subject more home, that he would be the most expert and trust-worthy Physician who knew little beyond the every day routine of practice.

Nothing is more untrue, or fraught with greater evil. The real, the legitimate inference should be, that the man who was unacquainted with any thing beyond the mere conventional details of his calling, is unfit to pursue even that, with credit to himself and advantage to others. I would therefore most earnestly impress upon you, that it is the duty of every mind, to grasp at the acquisition of general knowledge as the best instrument of action during life, to strengthen by the best cultivation of your reasoning powers, all those principles of moral rectitude, (founded indeed on a higher ground of obligation,) which form at once the basis and cement of all social prosperity and happiness. The flimsy garniture required for the mere business of life, like the net of the retiarius can only be employed in the attack, whilst the substantial panoply that qualifies its wearer for every emergency, like the arms of the soldier give a form and an energy to the limbs that command respect and ensure success.

In fact, learning has no other use, than to render man more wise and more virtuous, than to be the weapon and instrument of manly, honorable,

and upright action upon the great theatre of the world, than to enable the student to pass through his earthly career as an effective member of the community, who is to answer for his actions at the bar of conscience in his own bosom, and at the high tribunal of honor and fame, both present and future.

It is to be deeply lamented that it has never been made an essential part of education, to teach the mind how gradually and effectually to develop its own natural faculties, by an habitual observation of external objects aided by a regulated system of study. To an understanding properly organized and rightly disciplined, every part of nature affords objects upon which its faculties might be usefully employed, and all its powers of perception heightened and enlarged. It is a source of instruction always at command, and it is only by an ever present attention to what passes around, that an individual can acquire that prompt and vigorous versatility of mind, and that extended stock of knowledge, so requisite to his own success and fame, as well as to the comfort and happiness of others.

That acute observer and rigid moralist, Johnson, has observed: "He that can converse only on questions about which but a small portion of mankind has knowledge sufficient to make them curious, must waste his days in unsocial silence and live in the crowd of life without a companion. He that can only be useful on great occasions, may die without exerting his abilities, and stand a spectator of a thousand vexations which fret away happiness, and which nothing is required to remove but a little dexterity of conduct and readiness of expedient." An elevated genius thus employed, to use a simile of Longinus, like the sun in his evening declination, his splendor is lessened, but his magnitude is retained, and he pleases more though he dazzles less.

But still more is requisite in a student than this attention to natural objects, and the passing events of the day; for however great may be his talents, his acquisitions would be but scanty, were he to rely exclusively on individual observation. It is therefore necessary to acquire the habit of diligent and systematic reading, by which alone he can collect that fund of useful information so requisite to fit him to appreciate the doctrines of his preceptors, and to test their truth and practical utility.

These extended views are peculiarly applicable to those who, like yourselves, are preparing for the exercise of one of the most liberal of the learned professions, to excel in which, as has heretofore been observed, requires a greater compass of knowledge than is necessary in any other science; for it may be truly said, there is scarcely any branch of human learning with which it is not more or less connected with it, in a manner that cannot be broken with impunity. The sciences, like the graces, walk hand in hand, and

nothing would be more vain than an attempt to pursue any of them separately. They may, in truth, be viewed as forming a beautiful piece of mechanism, from which it is impossible to abstract any of the parts without destroying the order and usefulness of the whole; and however perfect in itself our frame may be, it makes but one integer of the general system, and is subjected to the action of all the powers by which it is surrounded. Hence, although no one function of our organs, or the effects of remedial agents upon these organs, can be explained by the laws of inert matter, or on mere mechanical or chemical principles, it does not necessarily follow that these very laws and principles are wholly without their influence, for all actions and operations of the body are the result of a variety of powers, some of which are well known and appreciated, whilst others are only recognized by the phenomena that result.

But even granting that the reverse were the case, and the animal system stood isolated and unconnected with the rest of nature, still general knowledge is necessary to the physician, for it must even then be admitted, that medicine, like every other science founded on experience and reasoning, is capable of acquiring from induction principles applicable to itself alone.

At the same time it should be borne in mind, that however our art is connected with the other branches of human learning, and however useful and even necessary a proper acquaintance with the doctrines and facts of these may be in elucidating the phenomena of vitality, they should never be permitted to exercise an undue influence on the theories and duties of the profession.

The overcoming preponderance of a particular science has always been highly detrimental to the advancement of the others, and it has been unfortunate that each has not been restricted to its own sphere, where alone it was useful, and not allowed to enroach on the province of another, where its only tendency has been to mislead and perplex. It has thus happened that medical systems have put on different aspects according to the various lights they have received from other departments of human inquiry, but these reflected rays have always proved too weak to dispel the darkness, and have only produced indistinct and oftentimes distorted images.

The history of medicine abounds in proofs corroborative of what I have said. Thus soon after learning began to assume a prominent situation, and to be eagerly cultivated—the metaphysical doctrines and hypothetical subtleties of the school of Aristotle reigned triumphant, these carried as they were to a visionary extent greatly contributed to embarrass and confuse the exact sciences, every thing was accounted for on logical principles, and on a single and unsubstantiated dictum of the Master, the most elaborate systems were erected.

This sway of metaphysics was long, and its influence almost universal, owing to the speciousness of its doctrines and the total neglect of experimental inquiry, when however, in the process of time, this was resorted to, the whole fabric, beautiful and fanciful as it was, fell to the ground, for like the tower in the parable it was based on premises that yielded to every attack.

As is usually the case, it was succeeded by a system diametrically opposite, or the mathematical philosophy, this accounted for every action of the body on mechanical principles, science was then deluged with diagrams and calculations, tending to establish conclusions as erroneous and a system as defective as its precursor. The celebrated Borelli carried his enthusiasm to such a height, as to assert, that he acknowledged no other secondary powers in nature, and was fully persuaded that a full knowledge of the wonderful laws that govern the human frame might be acquired through the medium of geometric calculation.

When the great and important discoveries in chemistry attracted the attention of the civilised world, they were immediately grasped at as affording a solution of all that was mysterious and obscure, and the chemical notions of Paracelsus divided the empire with the archeus of Van Helmont. During the prevalence of this doctrine we find every medical writer speaking of lentor and thinness of the blood, fermentations, acidity and alkaliescence—constituting cacochymia of the fluids, and introducing the irritating spiculae of saline substances. This inundation of vague and unfounded ideas and phrases, could not long maintain its ground though supported either in whole or in part by the names of Boerhaave, Sydenham, and others of almost equal weight.

I might go on and adduce a host of minor influences exercised on the theories of our profession by the auxiliary sciences, but what I have said will I trust be sufficient for the purpose.

There is another point connected with this subject, that I approach with some reluctance, though I esteem it of such momentous importance to the maintainance of the high rank we have, and must continue to occupy, that I should feel that I was wanting in duty both to you and myself were I to disguise my sentiments. What I allude to is the time and preparation considered as sufficient to fit a young man for the performance of the arduous and responsible station of a practitioner of medicine, and not merely such as will with common assiduity enable him to obtain a diploma.

Without arrogating to ourselves more than is our just due, it may be truly said that in no country are more ample means afforded to the student for the acquisition of medical knowledge than in our own. But with numerous schools, the professorships of which are in most cases filled by individuals

who hold the highest rank, and who from their talents and learning are fully competent to perform their task with honor to themselves and advantage to their pupils, with hospitals and other public institutions where the student can verify in practice what he has heard from his preceptors, there is still much wanting.

One great fault in the system is the shortness of the period required, this in the United States is never more than three years, of which but eight months need be spent in the schools. That this time is too short is evidenced by the eagerness with which students avail themselves of other sources of instruction, why is it that private lecturers are almost always able to command a class? because the thirst for knowledge implanted, fortunately implanted in the breast of youth is not to be slaked on the public fountains. The great characteristic feature in medicine that distinguishes it from what it was in former times, is the spirit of investigation displaying itself every where, the determined search for truth that has manifested itself, and the ardor and zeal of those who seek to be admitted into its ranks, and I feel assured that most of those who now hear me, do not look to the mere honors of a degree as the aim and object of their ambition, but are using the most strenuous efforts to obtain that knowledge and to fill their minds with those treasures, which alone will fit them for the responsible stations they are hereafter to occupy.

The time was when a moderate degree of knowledge, properly directed, was enough to ensure to its possessor a large measure of emolument and reputation, though it should be recollected that too often such reputation was but the halo created by the mists of ignorance.

In the early settlement of this country, and indeed until within a few years, it was not to be expected that much time would or could be devoted to preliminary studies, where the demand for professional services was urgent and incessant. But a new condition of things has commenced, the ranks of the profession have been nearly filled, and those enrolled are obliged to exert every endeavor not to be passed in the march. Owing to the rapid diffusion of knowledge, the character and attainments of medical men are now measured by accurate standards, and precisely in proportion to the facility by these may be estimated, will the standard be elevated.

Talents and learning are appreciated according to their real amount, and neither ignorance nor prejudice are permitted to magnify or lessen their true proportions. Let it ever be borne in mind, that although in years past a reputation for skill and proficiency may have been readily acquired, it can now only be obtained and kept up by long and close application to study, and industrious habits of observation, and those who neglect either, or who content themselves with the comparatively meagre attainments of their pre-

decessors, betray not only a neglect of the progressive improvements of the age in which they live, but also a contempt for the intelligence of the public which will not fail to award a true verdict, whenever claims to favor and support are brought before its high tribunal.

Another and perhaps a more important cause of complaint is the want of the proper groundwork on which the future edifice is to be reared; how many have commenced the study of medicine with no other qualifications than an imperfect knowledge of the mere rudiments of learning, and yet on such slender foundations they are permitted to heap a mass of materials without order or attention to consequences. To students thus circumstanced, the road to the temple of science is steep and rugged, and although by the most strenuous efforts they may at last reach the desired eminence, it is but to find that they have been outstripped and anticipated by those who came fully prepared for the undertaking.

I am willing to admit, that some peculiarly gifted minds, on whom nature appears to have lavished her choicest gifts, have risen to the highest honors of the profession, shedding a brilliant light on every object they approached, and whose intrinsic talents have supplied in some measure the place of application and a preparatory education, but they can only be considered as rare exceptions to a general rule, and even in their case, whatever might have been the lustre of their genius, and however astonishing their success, a proper course of mental discipline would have enabled them to have passed through their career with additional glory to themselves and increased utility to their fellow citizens. Great native talents are the gift of the Creator, and he on whom such advantages are bestowed is unpardonable if he does not improve them to the utmost, by all means within his command.

Lord Bacon complains that the full growth of the human mind was much retarded if not wholly checked by the pernicious custom, then prevalent of permitting young men to enter upon the exercise of the learned professions at too early an age, how would he be moved were it possible for him to behold, with what unmeasured precipitancy, the new world pours forth swarms of unripe youth to assume the onerous responsibilities of public life, often alas with minds too immature and judgments too little exercised for the tasks that await them.

At this vernal period of their existence, however, they are deemed competent to prosecute the business of active life, and even to attempt rash experiments upon the deepest and most important points, involving not only the vital interests of man in his individual but his collective condition; what are the frequent consequences of this precocious launch into the troubled sea of life;—a superficial education, and an entailed disability of developing the natural powers of the understanding to their fullest extent, as the mind must

be unavoidably narrowed by being prematurely absorbed in the minute but necessary details, which the practice of every profession entails upon its followers.

But it is attended with far more serious disadvantages in the healing art, than in any of the other liberal sciences,—the jurist can still pursue his studies, and if called upon to exercise his vocation, is so restrained by certain rules and prescribed limits, that he cannot seriously injure the fortune or jeopardize the life of others, and the divine if he faithfully execute the commands of his Great Master, is as good and faithful a servant as if he possessed the eloquence of Massillon or the learning of a Parr. But with the young Physician far different is the case, from the moment he enters on the duties of his profession, he is to grapple with disease and death, and if unprepared by previous study and laborious research, and yet confident in his powers, he will press on, regardless of the destruction he may occasion, till dear bought experience reveals to him, when, alas the mischief is irreparable, the darkness in which he had been groping, and the misery he had occasioned.

The narrow limits of the time allotted by custom to a discourse like the present, will not allow me to dwell longer on this and other topics of an analogous character, and I will merely add that I am far from wishing in what I have said, to discourage your efforts, my main wish, my most ardent desire is that you should look upon the profession you have chosen as of the noblest and most exalted character, and that you should aid in every endeavor to render it still more perfect and universally respected.

In conclusion permit me to add, that since the date of my appointment, I have spared no exertions to fit myself for the performance of the duties it involves, what success has attended these exertions, you will hereafter be the best judges, but with the fullest determination of devoting myself to your service, and of identifying, if possible, my feelings and hopes with yours, whatever defects or omissions you may perceive or imagine, believe me there is no one who will experience a deeper interest in your success and welfare, or who is more anxious to unite the duties of a preceptor with the warmer and more enduring ties of esteem and friendship.



