

LECTURE

INTRODUCTORY TO THE COURSE OF

MATERIA MEDICA AND PHARMACY,

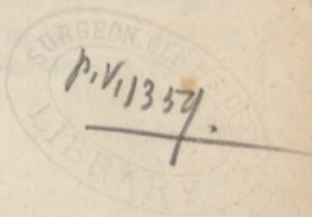
IN THE

University of Pennsylvania,

FOR THE SESSION OF 1836-7.

—
BY GEORGE B. WOOD, M. D.
—

PUBLISHED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE CLASS.



PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY T. B. TOWN, CORNER OF FOURTH AND RACE STS.

1836.

LECTURE

INTRODUCTORY TO THE COURSE OF

MATERIA MEDICA AND PHARMACY

IN THE

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

THE TWO VOLUMES OF 1888.

BY GEORGE F. WOOD, M. D.

PUBLISHED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE CLASS.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY J. B. TOWN, CORNER OF SOUTH AND BARK STS.

1888.

At a meeting of the Medical Class of the University of Pennsylvania, held on the 8th instant, T. L. Haile, T. F. Willis, J. K. Barnes, J. B. Jones, G. W. Thornton, J. A. Weidman, and Geo. W. Peters, were appointed as a committee, to request a copy of Professor Wood's Introductory Lecture for publication. To their solicitation Professor Wood returned the following answer:

Philadelphia, Nov. 9, 1836.

Gentlemen:—

The Lecture to which you allude in your note of the 9th instant was prepared for the use of the class, and is cheerfully placed at their disposal. I fear, however, that in deeming it worthy of publication, their judgment has been biased by friendly feelings towards its author. Be assured gentlemen that these feelings are cordially reciprocated by

Yours, most sincerely,

GEO. B. WOOD.

To

Messrs. T. L. Haile, T. F. Willis, J. K. Barnes, J. B. Jones, G. }
W. Thornton, J. A. Weidman, and Geo. W. Peters. }

At a meeting of the Medical Class of the University of Pennsylvania, held on the 6th instant, T. L. Hille, T. E. Willis, J. B. Jones, J. R. Jones, G. W. Thomson, J. A. Weisman, and G. W. Peters, were appointed as a committee to request a copy of Wood's Laboratory Lecture for publication. To their request Professor Wood returned the following answer:

Philadelphia, Nov. 6, 1889

Gentlemen:—

The Lecture to which you allude in your note of the 1st instant was prepared for the use of the class, and is cheerfully placed at their disposal. I fear, however, that in obtaining it you will find that their judgment has been biased by friendly feelings towards the author. He secured gentlemen that their lecture are cordially received.

Yours most sincerely,
GEO. B. WOOD

To

Messrs. T. L. Hille, T. E. Willis, J. B. Jones, J. R. Jones, G. W. Thomson, J. A. Weisman, and Geo. W. Peters

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

When, at the commencement of the last session, I had the honour of addressing, for the first time, a medical class in this school, I felt as a stranger, uncertain of their dispositions towards me, and diffident of my ability to meet the expectations they might entertain. But every feeling of distrust soon vanished. From the experience of a winter, I have learned to rely implicitly on the open and generous nature of the young; and I rejoice to be able to say, that I meet the present class with entire confidence of mutual good-will. It is a beautiful sight—that of youthful hopes and energies, engendered by the fertility of our social and political condition in every part of this wide-spread country, gathering with one accord to a common centre of action, and waiting only for approved guidance to spring forward in the great race of improvement. It is delightful to be in relations of friendship with such a congregation of sensitive and intelligent natures, to feel in your own heart the glow of kindly sympathy with their aspirations, to be sensible, that from each bosom there is a flow of affectionate interest towards yourself mingled with its gushing emotions. It is a high, I had almost said, it is a glorious privilege, to be one of the leaders of such a band in the pursuit of their noble objects. Yes, gentlemen, when I look upon this assembly, and see represented in it the best characteristics of each section of the Union, the persevering enterprise of the North, the exuberant industry of the West, the generous warmth of the South, the moderation and sobriety of our own vicinage; when directing my views be-

yond the present, I behold, in your future lives, the benefit of your fellow citizens and the honour of your country, I confess that I feel proud of the relation which constitutes me one of your guides in the path which you are about to tread.

But if the office is honourable, it is one also of great responsibility. It involves something more than the mere duty of imparting knowledge. To inculcate sound professional principles, to inspire high professional feeling, to cherish every nobler impulse, and cheer on exertion to its loftiest aims—these also are duties of the station which cannot be neglected without a betrayal of trust. While gathering the rich fruits that cluster around you, should you not be warned against the poison vine which threatens to render them useless by instilling disease and death into the constitution? When tempted from the pursuit of true knowledge by the glitter of paradox or speculation, of sensual or imaginative pleasures, should you not be told, that, though beautiful to the eye, they turn to ashes in the mouth? When disposed to flag under the accumulating burthens which are placed upon you, should not the refreshing hopes of future usefulness, reputation, and honorable competence be held out to quicken and support you? In relation to myself, I feel strongly this obligation to serve up, for your benefit, the cautions and incentives of experience along with the repast of knowledge. I do not know that, at present, I can better effect this object, than by placing before you a sketch of the character of an accomplished physician, such in professional attainment, in mental cultivation, in principles of conduct, in qualities of mind, heart, and manner, that he may be deemed by the most fastidious an honour to his associates, and a model for the imitation of the young.

From the earliest period of life at which self-agency may properly begin to be exerted, there should be some definite and well-understood object of pursuit. The youth who abandons himself to the current of events may possibly be carried into some safe and desirable harbour; but he will more fre-

quently be thrown up with other floating rubbish upon the shore, or borne onward to the great ocean of eternity, without leaving a track behind him. To work out successfully the great problem of life, we must begin at the beginning. Having, after a sufficient examination of the whole range within view, determined upon the object of our aim, we should first make ourselves thoroughly acquainted with its nature and bearings, and afterwards arrange and steadily prosecute our plan for its attainment. Success may then be considered as certain as any thing connected with the variable course of human events. It is at the same time one's own work, and is attended with the pleasing consciousness of skill and energy properly applied, and duly rewarded. How different from that fortuitous consequence which is occasionally attained without plan or effort, which, if enjoyed for a moment, soon ceases to gratify because unconnected with any interesting or agreeable association, and which is apt to glide away from the feeble grasp as unexpectedly as it came! But, important as it is for the young to understand fully the nature of the object which they have in view, it is often impossible for them to gain this knowledge without the aid of those more experienced. Falsehood dresses herself in the garb of truth, and their unskilled eyes are not able always to detect the counterfeit. Show sometimes passes for substance, and meretricious glitter for the high polish of sterling worth. By various distorting media yet unknown to their experience, the object as it meets their sight, is thrown into some false position. Is it then surprising, that, with the steadiest aim and most vigorous effort, they should sometimes fail widely of the mark? You cannot but be sensible of the importance of comparing your own views with those of persons who have preceded you in the same course, and of correcting errors which may be rendered obvious to you by the comparison. If, in the sketch which I propose to offer, you should find nothing calculated to give you clearer or ampler conceptions of the claims and duties of your profession, you

will attribute the result to anything rather than to a want of zeal on my part to advance your true interests.

Represent to yourselves a Physician in the middle period of life, without peculiar personal advantages, with no great superiority of native talent, indebted to himself for whatever excellence he may have attained, and therefore offering a model which all may imitate. Let us endeavour to imagine the qualifications which would render such a man in all respects worthy of imitation. In relation to his attainments, he should be obviously possessed of extensive general information, with the faculty of expressing himself clearly in correct and polished language. It should be evident that he has either received in youth a good education, or, convinced of its importance in later life, supplied early deficiencies by extraordinary effort. On all general topics which can interest an intelligent company, whether moral or physical, social or political, foreign or domestic, relating to the past, the present, or the future, he should exhibit himself, if not perfectly at home, at least so well informed as to be able to participate in the interchange of sentiment without appearing to disadvantage. Thus qualified, he would experience in the expansion of his mind and heart, in the multiplication of his sources of interest, in the increased and strengthened links connecting him with the various concerns of society, a full reward for the time and labour expended in intellectual culture. He would moreover find advantage in the favourable opinion of intelligent men, who judge of professional attainments, which they cannot directly appreciate, by superiority in points that fall within their comprehension. He would then be in a condition to despise the folly which infers the possession of medical knowledge from the want of every other, and to relinquish heartily to the ignorant pretender all that he can gain by a solemn face and a silent tongue.

Among his literary acquisitions, you would infer an acquaintance, to a certain extent, with the languages of the ancients,

from his accurate use of his own. Strange as it may seem to those who are little versed in philology, few are imbued with a thorough knowledge of the English tongue, who have not drank at the fountain of Roman literature. To the physician, the numerous facilities afforded by a knowledge of Latin in the prosecution of his professional researches, and the neatness and accuracy which it ensures to his written prescriptions, are additional grounds of satisfaction at its acquisition.

But the individual whom we would propose as a professional model, must not be supposed to have confined his labours in this field to the languages of the ancients. Those of the scientific nations of modern Europe should also have attracted his attention, especially the French and German, in which so many rich professional treasures are laid up, and are still accumulating.

I need not tell you that one thus accomplished in the ornaments of the profession, would not be likely to be deficient in those attainments which constitute its substance. With all the knowledge which has a direct and practical bearing on the treatment of disease, at least with all belonging to that department to which he may have more especially devoted himself, he must be supposed to be thoroughly conversant. I do not say that he should have read every treatise which has been written on the subject of medicine. Such an attempt would be futile. The labour of a life would scarcely be adequate to the work, and, if devoted to it, would be quite thrown away; for the mind which dwells constantly in the thoughts of others, loses at length its own powers of thinking, and turned about by every varying opinion which it encounters, can arrive at no settled conclusions, and can apply its energies, therefore, to no practical good. The true plan for the medical aspirant is first to make himself familiar with all the elements of his profession, and having thus laid his foundations deeply and securely in facts, to select for the superstructure, out of the immense mass of materials before him, such as, in his own judgment

and the riper opinion of enlightened counsellors, combine the advantages of intrinsic worth and adaptation to his peculiar wants. He thus secures, in his professional attainments, a combination of solidity of structure and congruity of arrangement, which, while it adapts them admirably for useful application, enables them to resist the ordinary causes of decay and overthrow. From this citadel of well-ascertained fact, and well-matured opinion, he may make frequent excursions into the regions of medical literature, directing his course wherever his commanding position may have enabled him to discover some rich or highly ornamented spot, and returning from every sally with new additions to his stores. But he should not be content with the knowledge to be derived from the experience of others. Every opportunity of interrogating nature for himself, and of comparing her answers with the statements of authors and the suggestions of his own judgment, should be seized with avidity, and improved to the utmost. He should carry the torch of inquiry into the darkest caverns of disease; wade through the dreariest scenes of filth, and vice, and wretchedness, in search of the flower of his pursuit; enter boldly into the haunts of pestilence, with the hope of unveiling her fearful mysteries; and, in the very hot-bed of death and corruption, seek out the germs of healthful vigour for suffering humanity. Years of his early professional life, before the smile of public favour shall have begun to brighten his path, should be thus devoted to the great object of fitting himself for the discharge of those high duties which he has assumed. His course, you may be well assured, will not be unobserved. Watchful eyes will be upon his steps; sounds of approbation will occasionally cheer his progress; from day to day, as he advances, new voices will join the chorus of praise, till it grows at length to fame; and the full blaze of prosperity will break out upon him long before that evening period of life when it can warm no more, and serves only to throw deeper shadows upon the past.

You are aware that qualifications such as I have represented do not come by inspiration. Intellectually as well as physically, man is destined in this world to earn sustenance by the sweat of his brow. He who wantonly consumes in pleasure, during the spring of life, those natural energies which were garnered up within him as the seeds of future usefulness, or suns himself in idle enjoyment while evil propensities are choking the crop of early promise, cannot expect to gather a harvest for his autumn and winter. Intellectual penury through life is the almost certain result of habitual self-indulgence in youth. He who would obtain merited distinction, should be early sensible of this truth. Pleasures may sport about his young steps and beckon him to join their giddy circle; folly may laugh at his earnest efforts; scorn may point her malicious finger, and sneer at his premature manliness; but he must resist alike seduction and ridicule, and without rendering himself odious by ill-timed gravity or silly assumption, must go steadily on his own way, satisfied for the present with the pleasing consciousness of duty performed, and looking to the distant future for the full reward of his labours and self-denial. He should feel, moreover, an obligation beyond the gratification of his ambitious hopes. Conscious that the lives of his fellow-men are to be confided to his charge, how can he devote to idleness and dissipation, the time and abilities which are requisite to prepare him for his high trust? A youth of sensitive conscience shudders at the picture of future misery which his imagination paints as the probable result of a neglect of his present duty. Every moment thrown away in unnecessary self-indulgence, appears to him fraught with the pangs of some perishing invalid; and the tears of widows and orphans mingle in every cup of unlawful pleasure. Such fearful associations turn the sweets of idleness and sensual enjoyment to bitterness in his fancy, and enable him to resist temptations under which self-interest alone might succumb.

I have hitherto represented to you but one side of the medi-

cal character. I have spoken only of attainments. It remains to develop the attributes of manner and deportment which belong to the exemplary physician, and the principles which regulate his professional conduct and intercourse. You may suppose that mere deportment is of little consequence; that the sole duty of a physician is to cure disease; and that, if he possess the requisite skill, no matter how uncouth may be his exterior, how awkward his movements, or how offensive his peculiarities of manner, the patient will seek his aid from a sense of its importance, and will have no right to complain when his object is accomplished. But you may be assured, gentlemen, that this is a mistaken notion. In no profession or business is attention to the courtesies of life and the decencies of conduct and appearance, more important in relation to one's own comfort and success, or more obligatory in relation to the comfort of others. Moving, as we do, in a crowded and perpetually varying circle, coming into close intercourse with every diversity of feeling and opinion, and often encountering sensibilities rendered excessively acute by disease, we stand in need of the nicest management to escape injurious collisions, and with a rugged manner, can scarcely avoid wounding others and ourselves. The refinement of high breeding, and the delicacy of finely constituted natures, shrink from the touch of rudeness within their own polished shell, and offer nothing but a smooth and cold exterior to the pursuit which offends them. A man must possess extraordinary talent, or be favoured by an extraordinary combination of circumstances, who can raise himself from the slough of ill-breeding to any desirable eminence, with all the filth of his early habits hanging about him. Besides, the truest politeness is but the expression of a benevolent heart; and conventional forms are merely a copy which may partially answer the purposes of the original, when the latter is wanting. He, therefore, who would cultivate good manners most effectually, must cherish generous and kindly feelings, a disposition to postpone his own gratifica-

tion to the claims of others, and a warm participation in the pleasures and pains, the hopes and fears of those around him. Thus, while aiming at the improvement of the exterior, he essentially improves also his internal nature, and becomes, at the same time, a more agreeable and useful, and a better man.

Allow me, in a few words, to represent to you the deportment of our imaginary model. It is sufficient to say, in relation to his intercourse with general society, that he is an accomplished gentleman. On all professional subjects, though open to inquiry, and ever ready to give his views clearly, without the pompous formality or technical obscurities in which ignorance loves to conceal itself, he is yet scrupulously careful to avoid obtruding them upon others, and would scarcely be recognized as a physician by any peculiarities of speech or manner. He never enters the social circle without being assured that he leaves the odour of the shop behind him. In the house of sickness, on the contrary, his bearing is always professional. He neither proclaims his indifference by an offensive levity, nor alarms the fears of the patient or his friends by the assumption of a severe or solemn aspect. His deportment is characterized in general by a composed seriousness becoming in one upon whom interests so grave and important are devolved, softened by a feeling of affectionate interest in his patient, and not unfrequently relaxing into cheerfulness or deepening into sadness, as the current of his sympathies receives the one or the other direction. He never forgets that in sickness, the strength of mind sinks with that of the body, that individuals who in health are proud and confident, now feel the necessity of comfort and support, and absorbed in their own feelings, do not always pay due attention to the feelings of those about them. Towards his patients, therefore, his manner is at the same time tender and encouraging; and, though firm in all essential points, he never allows himself to be vexed by trifling irregularities, or occasional disregard of courtesy. With the attendants upon the sick, who often most

grievously try his patience, he maintains the necessary authority by a quiet firmness, which, while it makes all due allowance for ignorant good intentions, and under no circumstances degenerates into passion, permits it to be clearly seen that he will submit to no purposed usurpation of his rights, and that, having the whole responsibility upon his own conscience and reputation, he will retain the reins steadily in his own hands. With thoughts too full of his professional duties to permit the habitual intrusion of indifferent objects, he is never guilty of gossip or scandal. He would sooner perish than betray unworthily the confidence of his patients, or abuse for interested purposes, or for the amusement of his companions, the free access which he enjoys into the inmost recesses of family secrets. He considers the honour of a physician, on this point, as delicate as the honour of woman. It should be free not only from the stain of actual guilt, but from the blemish of suspicion. No object is more degraded than the physician who exchanges his manly garb for the petticoat, babbles out at each stopping place the intelligence he may have gained in his daily rounds, and in his itch for tattling, steps over the boundary of professional honour, and permits himself to serve up secrets not his own, for the greedy ear of ridicule or malice. I know gentlemen, that you need no caution against conduct so base; but the young practitioner cannot be too strongly guarded on the point of indiscretion; as even a slight violation of confidence, the result, perhaps, of levity or thoughtlessness, may leave a stain on his character which all his subsequent efforts may be insufficient to wash out.

In regard to his practical duties, the correct physician feels himself under obligations of the very highest nature. Goodness of heart, and regard for his interest might by some be considered sufficient guarantees for the strict performance of the offices requisite for the relief or cure of his patients; but they who know from experience how much self-denial, how much intellectual and physical labour, these offices demand;

they who have felt the temptations of rest in fatigue, the occasional listlessness of an overworked mind, the irksomeness of renewed labour at the moment of expected enjoyment, or in the midst of necessary bodily refreshment, are sensible that the support of strong moral principle is essential, and that without it scarcely any resolution would be found proof against the assaults to which it is exposed. I cannot conceive of a good physician, in the proper sense of the term, who is not a conscientious man. Far from limiting himself to that degree of attention which may be sufficient to protect his reputation, he is never satisfied unless with the full conviction that he has done all within his power to rescue or relieve his confiding patient. He investigates the case patiently, and by all the lights which he can bring to bear upon it, watches its varying course with a persevering attention, reflects maturely on the indications which it offers, and having satisfied himself as to the proper course of treatment, allows no weak fears or false tenderness to prevent him from proposing it to the patient, and no personal inconvenience, from carrying it fully and promptly into effect.

But he has other duties also which claim a strict observance. To his fellow members in the profession he is bound by ties less strong only than those which connect him with his patients. The business of physicians is of such a nature as to lead, unless carefully regulated, to a perpetual conflict of individual interests, and consequently to frequent disputes, derogatory to the character of the profession, and injurious, in a scarcely inferior degree, to the community at large. The necessity of obviating such results has led to the gradual formation of certain rules, which, though without any other sanction than that of their obvious propriety, have gained the general assent of medical men, and may be considered as constituting a professional code of honour which cannot be violated without disgrace. By this code the intercourse of physicians is so regulated that all their movements are made harmoniously, the most opposite in-

terests touch each other without violent concussion, and the whole machine works well both for the profession and the public. We sometimes hear it remarked that medical etiquette consists of a set of fantastical observances, which serve no other purpose than to occasion unnecessary trouble, and in which the community ought not to acquiesce. But such remarks proceed from ignorance or prejudice. It is the position maintained by means of this very etiquette, which enables the profession to command the secret respect of the persons who pretend to undervalue it. It is an essential part of that discipline which distinguishes us from the irregular hordes which occasionally break in upon medical civilization, and spread devastation in their unprincipled course. Every correct physician, therefore, feels himself bound by its obligations not less than by those of positive law. He would as little think of violating the rights of a professional brother, of unjustifiably taking his patients, or interfering with his practice, or of endeavouring to undermine his reputation, as he would think of breaking into the house of his neighbour, or purloining money from his purse. He esteems it far better to be the object than the agent of such practices, and, in any doubtful point, prefers submission to the claims of others to the risk of unjustly maintaining his own. He acts in this way from a high sense of duty and a delicate feeling of honour; but he would do the same were self-interest his only object; for he is convinced that, as in affairs in general, so also in those peculiar to his profession, honesty in the end is always the best policy. There have been instances of individuals setting out in life with a determination to push their fortunes in the path of medicine at every hazard, to trample upon the rights and defy the enmity of those who might appear to their shortsightedness to interfere with their prospects, even to make this very enmity an engine for their purposes by raising with the public the profitable cry of persecution. Such men have in general miserably failed in the very outset, because their resolution and talents have proved

unequal to their presumption and wickedness. A few, by extraordinary perseverance, by the exertion of abilities, industry, and zeal, which would have insured them a much higher elevation in an honourable course, have seized upon the golden prize which seemed so fair and desirable to their young ambition:—but they have seized it to find it dross in their possession; and this is all they have to counterbalance the withering contempt of high-minded men, the ill-will and enmity of those whose interests have been sacrificed to their success, and the ever present consciousness of their own unworthiness. Gentlemen, I adjure you, above all earthly considerations, except only those of duty to your patients, with which it never conflicts, to regard your professional honour, to shrink from no present sacrifice which it may require at your hands, and to seek no apparent good, however great, which may conflict with its obligations. I will venture to assert, that no physician, at the termination of his life, however unfortunate it may have been, has ever looked back with dissatisfaction over an unsullied past; while few, under the same circumstances, could be found, who would not gladly sacrifice useless splendour for the clear fame and peace of mind at the expense of which it has been gained.

But the relations of brotherhood which bind together the regular members of the profession, do not extend to those empirical practitioners whose only claim to the title of physician is the impudence with which they have assumed it. Towards these our duty is silent contempt. They are as unworthy of our resentment as they are beneath our respect; and we equally err whether we encourage them by our countenance, or elevate them into a coveted notoriety by public animadversion. Every physician should endeavour, in the circle of his own professional intercourse, to promote sound views in relation to the practice of medicine, and, by enlightening the judgment of those who respect his opinions, enable them to appreciate for themselves the presumptuous folly or impudent knavery of

the quack. So far as his influence extends, he will take from empiricism the very ground upon which it stands by making evident the facts, that apparent cures are very often merely the natural termination of disease, that the system is in most instances able to work out its own relief if not impertinently interfered with, and that the medicine or treatment which appears to have removed a formidable complaint may have been the real cause of its danger. Once convinced that, in the treatment of disease, a sequence is by no means necessarily an effect, the intelligent mind will be able to appreciate at its true value that abundant testimony which is always brought forward in the support of empiricism, and, relieved from the mist of apparent fact, will see clearly the danger of trusting to pretensions, associated with glaring ignorance of almost every thing to which these pretensions have reference. As the various circles in which physicians severally move make up together the whole intelligent community, it follows that, if each physician will pursue the course recommended, an almost universal impression unfavourable to quackery will result; and an evil which only grows the faster under open and violent hostility, will fall before the secret and quiet influence of truth. But, in order that our representations may have their due weight, we must ourselves, in the advancement of our personal interests, abstain religiously from every empirical art. Men will judge of our professions by our practice, and if the latter do not correspond with the former, they will pay little heed to words which must appear to flow from any other source than that of honest conviction. We should accustom ourselves not to consider money as the chief good even in this life. The respect of our associates, an honourable reputation in the world, a well-earned social influence, and, above all, the consciousness that we are living up to the capabilities, and fulfilling the purposes of our nature, are objects of far nobler pursuit, and more true satisfaction in the attainment. By keeping such objects constantly in view, we shall guard ourselves against all

those irregularities and meannesses which have their root in an overweening desire of gain, and shall be able to look, without a feeling of envy or the remotest desire of imitation, upon the wealth and splendour of the most successful empyric, purchased as they are at the expense of honour and conscience, and at the risk of incalculable evil.

The practice of medicine can never be on its true footing while regarded merely in the light of a profitable business. Physicians should cherish a professional spirit which looks to the honour of their calling as identical with their own, which shrinks from whatever would disgrace it as from the touch of infamy, and flushes with a proud complacency at every new accession to its general credit. Empyrieism, which flourishes only in an atmosphere of sordid feelings, would droop in the prevalence of such a spirit. It would either perish for want of nutriment, or driven from the daylight of intelligence, would seek a refuge in the murky haunts of ignorance, and shed its venom only on the stupid and the vile.

I have thus endeavoured to convey to you adequate conceptions of the character and aims of the profession with which you are about to be connected. I know, gentlemen, you will agree with me in the opinion, that, viewed in its true light, and exercised according to its true spirit, it is a most noble profession. None calls for a more expanded or more cultivated intellect; none affords a wider field for the exercise of native talent. Embracing almost all nature, moral as well as physical in its scope, it presents, in its different departments, diversities adapted to every variety of taste and genius. It claims and at the same time fosters in its votaries, the kindlier and more elevated traits of character—benevolence of heart, generosity of spirit, a high sense of honour, an ennobling love of distinction. Its aim is the general good. It searches the whole earth, explores the experience of past ages, ascends the loftiest heights and penetrates the deepest recesses of intellect, in the pursuit of means for the relief of human misery,

and the promotion of human happiness. Following everywhere the devastating march of disease, it ministers to the prostrate victims, sheds hope and joy in the place of despair, and soothes and animates where it cannot save. It is the great earthly antidote vouchsafed by a kind providence for the miseries entailed upon our race by its fallen nature. How glorious to the physician to be the worthy instrument of such a blessing! and how ample too is his compensation! Every where, a cordial welcome awaits him. The languid eye of sickness brightens at his approach, and the sinking heart of affection, with a trembling confidence, seeks comfort in his look. How often does he open the door upon pain, anxiety, the most gloomy apprehensions, despair—and leave behind him nothing but gladness! Even upon the house of death, his presence sheds melancholy consolation. Gratitude and affection attend his departing steps; and his remembrance is enthroned in the bosom of his patients along with all the kindest and most endearing emotions. He lives amidst universal respect:—he dies, and the regrets of a whole community follow him to his reward. May it be your lot, gentlemen, to realize this picture in your own experience.