Address Before the Graduates of Washington University of Baltimore

1851

Thomas E Bond, A.M., M.D.

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Graduates of Washington University,

OF BALTIMORE,

AT THE

Twenty-Sixth Annual Commencement,

HELD MARCH 3, 1851.

BY THOMAS E. BOND, A.M., M.D.

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ADDRESS.

THERE are thoughts for which language has no words; emotions for which gesture has no sign; thoughts and emotions which belong to the earnest *heart* life of man; unutterable in speech, their proper expression is action; their eloquence is the stammering or silent tongue and the busy hand.

Of such thoughts and such emotions the present occasion is very suggestive. It is a time for hallowed stillness, and I fear that my voice will fall harshly amidst the sweet harmonies playing among these kind and gentle hearts, and break the charm that is binding them together in common sympathy for you.

The departure of a gallant ship for a distant shore is always fraught with deep and heart-stirring interest. As, one by one, the loosened sails are thrown open to the breeze, and the graceful vessel begins to move in the waters, and the last unspoken farewell is waved by tremulous hands, how many powerful emotions stir in the heart! How busily do hopes and fears, memories and anticipations course through the mind, until, all bewildered with its own creations, it finds relief in prayer and pours out its mingled feelings in fervent benediction!

Similar, though beyond description more intense, are the feelings which your presence and your relations now excite. The ship departs for a distant port, prepared against dangers well understood, and governed by experienced navigators. In a few months she will return, and if any defect have been found in her construction, or deficiency in her equipment, or error in her guidance, the evil may be remedied and she may sail again under better auspices.

But you depart for the voyage of *life;* you go to encounter unknown perils, and inexperience stands at the helm. You can make but one voyage. To this starting point you will never come again. Your defects must be repaired far away on the ocean of life, and the consequences of them must be endured to the end. And now, while I am speaking, you are casting off the last line that holds you to your moorings; in an hour you will have receded from our view, never to be seen again, until upon the other shore we mourn the wrecked, or greet the successful voyager. In all this crowded assembly there is no heart so dead to human sympathies as not to feel for you—but there are some here, and some elsewhere, who feel with an intensity unknown to earth, but felt in heaven, where the father's prayer and mother's tear have touched the mighty heart whose throbbings move the universe, summoning to your aid the guardianship of angels, the government of God.

Of all this interest you are worthy, for you are young men, the recruits of a dying generation: fresh minds sent out to relieve the jaded intellects that have stood before you in the mighty contest with a perverted world, and now, weary and faint, await but your coming that they may pass to their rest.

To men of vigorous understanding and cultivated mind has been committed the guidance of the multitude who throng the earth. Unfortunately these leaders of men have most commonly abused their trust. They have employed their powers in gratifying their evil passions and perverted appetites, and have led to wretchedness and darkness the millions whom they should have guided to happiness and light. Yet the commission has never been withdrawn, and intellect has yet the mighty work to do. Whoever feels the power of thought to stir within him, to force him out of himself and beyond the little circle formed by the turnings of his own shadow; whoever feels the longing to do something beneficial to his kind, or to undo some mischievous error; every man who feels that this is not his rest, but that armed with an Ithuriel spear he must go through life an antagonist to lies, a warrior for the truth—he is the man sent by his Creator to be a leader of men, to be a guide to the

less gifted, to guard them from evil, to bring them to peace. It matters not what may be his economical vocation, or how apparently unimportant his position, wherever he is he is a point of light shining in darkness, and as he moves steadily on, one after another of the bewildered children of men will fall in his wake and follow his guidance. Well for them, well for him if he prove not a false light, like those fatal beacons waved on inhospitable shores, to allure men to destruction, that they who wave the torch may rob the wreck.

You enter the world of action at a most interesting time: on the eve of an intellectual and moral resurrection. The dry bones in the valley of death have long been shaking; mind is stirring among the tombs, and every where are heard the muffled sounds of men awaking from a lethargy and groaning in the first sensations of intellectual want.

There is a fount about to stream,
There is a light about to beam,
There is a warmth about to flow,
There is a flower about to blow,
There is a midnight blackness changing
Into grey;
Men of thought and men of action
Lead the way!

Aid the dawning, tongue and pen!
Aid it, hopes of honest men!
Aid it, paper, aid it, type,
Aid it, for the hour is ripe,
And our earnest must not slacken
Into play,
Men of thought and men of action,
Clear the way!

There is sublimity in the sea, heaving its mountain surges from unfathomed depths and tossing its wild spray to the sky. There is grandeur in the mountain, bearing up its ponderous load of rock and forest and bathing them in the clouds. There is power in the mighty river rolling its wild waters to the sea—but there is in young and vigorous life, first girding itself

for action, something more sublime than the sea, grander than the mountain, more powerful than the river!

What is the ocean, moving its unconscious waters, compared with the deep emotions swelling up from the unknown profound of man's moral nature, moving and elevating and sustaining in higher life the conscious beings around him?

And what the mountain, as passively it bears its unfelt load, to him who stands unshaken before his God, while burdens to all seeming beyond human strength are heaped upon him, and bearing them up towards the skies, makes even of these ponderous things new means to communicate with heaven?

And what is the mighty river, whirling its waters to the sea, to the power of man's intelligence, beating in resistless force upon every barrier, and sweeping away in its rapid course every obstruction by which its progress has been stayed!

Gentlemen, you have a mission; a high, a holy mission! Never forget it! When the cares of life are heaviest and pleasures are fewest, and hope is least hopeful, remember your mission. Remember that as, in physics, violent compression is sometimes necessary to make bodies luminous, so in morals a crushed spirit may emit a clear and beautiful light never perceived before. In the domestic circle, in the walks of professional life, remember your mission! If in the disposition of the lots any one of you shall find himself in an obscure and uninfluential position, do not for a moment suppose that you are on furlough from God: be as watchful over your steps as though the eyes of all men were upon you. You cannot tell why you are posted there. As the rose blooms in the desert, as the rain falls upon the thirsty sand, as the sun shines upon barren rocks and frozen snows, so let man do the bidding of Him whose unerring wisdom knows the effects of these apparently wasted powers. Look up at the heavens and let the mute stars instruct you. There, ever since the world was, have these huge magnitudes been sweeping their almost eternal rounds through the universe. For many years their light was lost in the vast ether, and now that it has reached us, it is but as the flicker of a farthing candle. And yet these tre-

mendous orbs roll on as cheerily as when the mighty Creator moulded them with his fingers and kindled them with his breath and rolled them forth in their eternal spheres! And so let man shine on in his allotted sphere. Whether to others he be a sun or a spangle, his true magnitude is known to God, and He who has employed such stupendous machinery to produce a mere luminous point in the nocturnal sky, may have reasons equally good for employing gigantic moral force to accomplish what to us may seem a most insignificant and disproportionate result.

Gentlemen, you have chosen the profession of Medicine as your pursuit in life. Its studies, its thoughts and its practice are to be the chief, almost the exclusive occupation of your future days. It is idle now to inquire whether you have made a judicious choice. I suppose that your decision is final, certainly it ought to be so. No man should enter upon the profession of Medicine with a divided heart, and I warn you all that you should never permit yourselves to suppose that any circumstances may require you to abandon it for another pursuit.

This day, before these witnesses, take your profession for better or for worse, and be faithful to it until death. A half hearted husband who marries with a feeling that he may have an ultimate remedy for matrimonial unhappiness in a bill of divorce, will hardly make a successful conjugal experiment, and a physician who begins to practice, uncertain as to whether he will persevere in it, and indulging some residuary project of another pursuit, will rarely make a happy or successful practitioner. The sense that the relation is unalterable is the great disciplinary agent to break men and women to the mutually accommodating paces of married life; so the knowledge that we must continue to be physicians exerts a controlling influence over our dispositions and tempers, enables us to endure with patience the ills from which we cannot flee, and to subdue our desires for other pursuits which always appear to us most advantageous when our own is most discouraging.

You will save yourselves from a great deal of repining, a

great deal too of that most painful of all mental conditions, uncertainty, if you will determine at once and for ever that, sink or swim, or, to be less poetical and more practical, succeed or starve—you will be physicians and nothing else. Indeed, gentlemen, however harshly it may sound, I think I may say—as expressing at least a general truth—that you must make up your minds to be either good physicians or good for nothing.

Supposing, then, that you are fully determined to make Medicine your one and continual business, it is not necessary to remind you that you have chosen a profession of the utmost importance to mankind, and one which involves interests and responsibilities of immeasurable magnitude. You have chosen to be antagonists to death. You have volunteered to possess yourselves of all the opposing means yet known, and to stand for your stricken fellows in the terrible conflict with the king of terrors. In the fearful contest you must be governed by your own understanding—you must select from many powerful instruments those which you shall judge most applicable, and you must use them according to the determinations of your own reason. Your patient, whose life is the prize or forfeit, in helpless dependence must leave his all with you. He cannot even watch your plan of defence, he cannot perceive the wisdom or the weakness of the course you are pursuing.

When the advocate for a client, indicted for a capital crime, stands up to speak in his defence, he must be less than human if he does not tremble under the weight of his undertaking. But serious as is his responsibility, it is shared by others. A mistake might not be mischievous, the court might correct his law, and the hearts of the jury add force to his pleadings. But in *his* fearful office, the physician stands alone. Hastily summoned—perhaps at the dead of night—without a moment's preparation, with no intelligible information as to the nature and extent of the demand to be made upon his faculties, he is hurried to the chamber where death has begun his work. However terrible, however complicated, however unusual the disease, the physician must meet the exigency, and meet it promptly. In vain he may long for counsel, in vain he may

wish for one hour for preparation, not a moment can be granted him. Perhaps while he is endeavoring to ascertain the nature and extent of the impending danger, the warm blood of the fainting patient is gushing through his fingers, warning him in the most fearful tones that ever rung upon a trembling heart that what he does he must do quickly. *Resolve* he must—*act* he must—feeling, while he acts, that upon his determination hangs a human life.

I am not drawing upon fancy for this picture; it is but a faint delineation of an ordinary scene in professional life: it is a sketch which you will often see realized and filled up with details of the most soul-harrowing kind.

Moreover, you must meet such emergencies and suffer such fearful conflicts uncheered by the hope that your endurance or success will be rewarded by fame or fortune. Possibly it may be so, but there is no necessary relation between the conduct and the reward. After you shall have saved a life from the greatest peril, after you shall have restored a citizen to the state, a father to his children, a husband to his wife, you will have done precisely what you were expected to do—what you were sent for to do, and no more will be thought of the matter.

In a little while it is quite likely that you will find yourself superseded by another physician, every way your inferior. But he may have flattered the family by some insincere attentions, or astonished them by a parade of learning—he may have been heard to call the back-bone the spine, or the brain the cerebrum, or a bruise an ecchymosis,—or he may have won their confidence by the narration of some wonderful cures,—or he may be a new man who has lately joined the same church and claims the practice of the brotherhood upon ecclesiastical principles—being determined not to serve God for naught,—or you may be discarded to make room for a mere mountebank who may have made himself a doctor by the force of his will, and business by the force of his impudence—an utter ignoramus with no more knowledge of disease than of the means of curing it, and no more of either than has the more respectable animal that drags him through his daily rounds of mortal visitation.

Or you may be succeeded by a mere *name*—by *homœopathy*, a word which is not a sign—a mere *minus*, serving to indicate subtraction of every thing, but having no positive value. The ponderous polysyllable *abracadabra* used to be pronounced over luxated joints, and it was believed that a dislocated member would start at the sound and jump to its socket. Homœopathy is the modern polysyllable; the fashionable abracadabra—equally unintelligible and equally omnipotent.

In the words of the simple cobler of Agawam, "I look upon it as the very gizzard of a trifle, the product of a quarter of a cipher: the epitome of nothing, fitter to be kicked, if it were of kickable substance, than either honored or humored." Indeed there is something too absurd for comedy and too serious for farce in this conception, which we cannot call ideal, because it contains no thought, nor monstrous, because it has no form.

Homœopathy avowedly contends with diseases beyond materiality. It wrestles not with flesh and blood—and truly its weapons are not carnal, for the qualities of its medicines elude analysis and their bulk defies the microscope. I wish to be charitable, but to peddle about these little pillicules does seem to be a small business for "men that have bones in them."

The oddest thing about this animalculoid practice is the solemn simplicity with which the very few medical men who trade in it present their claims to public confidence. They invariably declare that they have been fearfully unsuccessful in their attempts at regular practice; that medicines in their hands have proved deadly doses, and that they have been fairly lashed out of the profession by the whip of conscience.

Now all this is doubtless true enough, but it constitutes a very dubious recommendation to the confidence of the sick. The doctor of course infers that the fault is in the science—but there is another way of accounting for the unfortunate results, and the patient may not think the doctor's explanation the most plausible.

Suppose you were to find in to-morrow's newspaper an advertisement like the following: "*Navigation exploded*, the present method of crossing the seas found to be altogether

erroneous, and inconceivably dangerous, being the confessions of a regular mariner and master of a ship, who, having repeatedly lost his vessel and drowned his passengers, has become convinced that navigation is not a science but a mere conjectural art—and who now offers to the public a new and safe conveyance over the seas, without the aid of sails or rudder, plank or iron."

Suppose upon personal application to this Solomon, he were to tell you that ships really were absurd things, that in fact they do not float and are not propelled by the wind, that experience is a fallacious guide, and that physical science is not applicable in the matter—that if a man would traverse the seas he must not trust to any thing material—that the thing to be kept above water is not the visible body but the invisible immateriality—that therefore the mode of conveyance should not be visible nor tangible, but be sought in the principle of similia similibus—that to preserve one against drowning it is only necessary to swallow a drop of water, and, thus fortified, the passenger will have nothing to do but to plunge into the sea and swim for his life.

Certainly you would think that you had encountered a very amusing madman. Yet if there be any thing conclusive in logic, this illustration is not a caricature or even an exaggerated exposition of *homœopathy*. But the name is absurd, let us christen it again, and, in view of its impalpable nature and deadly consequences, call it the *shadow of death*—and lest the broad farce be wholly lost in the tragic designation, we will take the liberty to correct its shibboleth—and for similia similibus curantur, substitute simia simiis cœduntur.

Gentlemen, if you are not prepared to endure these inconveniences, and more, let me entreat you not to venture further in your professional career. I tell you plainly that "sufferance is the badge of all our tribe." Once fairly embarked in practice, we bid farewell to ease. Idle we may be, but our idleness is not leisure. We never can know that in a moment we may not be called to endure fatigue and watching and anxiety. Our meals become mere feeds, the necessary

mechanism of ingestion rather than the quiet comfortable enjoyment of refection. Our sleep is the sleep of a picket guard on its arms, the fitful slumber of the bivouac rather than the regular indulgence of the luxury of repose. Freemen by the courtesy of the law, we are by profession every body's servants. Our locomotion is restrained within narrow limits; and if we venture out of bounds, we go to our stolen enjoyment with the misgivings of a truant, whose fears of detection transform his promised delight into anxious forebodings. But time would fail me to rehearse all the troubles, vexations and evils of a doctor's life—nor do I feel disposed to attempt it. "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." You will all have ample opportunity to become acquainted with the unamiable features of your profession. Perhaps my experience may have been harsher than yours shall be, perhaps my temperament may dispose me to invest my experience with a gloomier garb than it need wear before this company, and I have no ambition to be like

> Chief Justice Parker,
> Who made a matter darker,
> That was dark enough before!

And now you may ask why men love this troublesome and ill treated profession? Why men who have trudged its rugged paths for many years, yet love to trudge them? Why men in the prime and power of life, men of educated and sensitive minds, men of refined and elegant tastes, whose souls must often writhe under the tortures consequent upon medical pursuits, why these do not abandon medicine to the rude bullock nerved men who are ready enough to thrust their coarse indurated natures into it? Why do they not leave this field of thistles, and let asses munch them? The answer is easy. It is because there are men who know the force of the sententious saying of Christ,—"the life is more than meat, and the body more than raiment." It is because there are enjoyments compared with which mere sensual gratifications sink into insignificance; pleasurable sensations of the intellectual man which are cheaply bought with self-denial of the animal, nay with

toil and pain to the animal. Go to yonder chamber, when midnight has drawn the curtains around the bed of nature, and the stars are watching over the slumbers of a weary world, and there see the pale student intensely bending over the page of science. All the day he has toiled for subsistence, and now he toils for knowledge. Voluntarily, eagerly, joyfully, he exchanges the natural comfort of repose for intellectual activity, and why? because he has a capacity to discover truth and to appreciate it, and he has learned that this capacity is a source of enjoyment incomparably greater than all that the mere animal could enjoy. He has learned that "wisdom is more precious than rubies, and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it."

This feeling is more common than may be supposed. If it were possible for you to empty yourselves of even that elementary knowledge which you have acquired, and to surrender the power of acquiring it again, at what price would you agree to do so? Ask yourselves this question, and I am assured that, however tempting the bribe might be, no one of you could name a price for his knowledge, or for the liberty to know. You feel at once that this is not merchandise; it is not extraneous to you, it has become a part of yourself, and to surrender it would be like the surrender of your personality—you are conscious, without any argument upon the matter, that there are things that cannot be reduced to the standard of money value. Reflecting upon this phenomenon of intellectual life, you will comprehend why men love the medical profession—how they find in its mental pleasures abundant compensation for all the inconveniences incident to it.

What is the nature of those pleasures you have only begun to realize? They involve the pursuit of truth most interesting because most available, and most available for beneficent purposes. The pleasure of the pursuit is prolonged and multiplied by the pleasure of the application. When Le Verrier brought his amazing calculations to a close, and determined in theory the existence and position of another planet, his pleasure must have been intense, but how much greater would have been the grati-

fication had he been permitted to sweep the ponderous telescope over the distant heavens until the detected orb flashed upon his vision!

The physician who searches the inexhaustible treasure house of nature until he finds a new and potent truth, may apply it and reap the reward of the practical operation of his newly acquired power. True he may not expect the applause of a wonder-stricken world, but this is a reward important only to inferior natures. It has been withheld from the best and lavished upon the least deserving of mankind. Bestowed without reason, withdrawn without reason, it is little more than "digito monstrari et dicier hic est."

The astronomer who has discovered a star, is for the time a man of note—men talk of him and wonder about him and desire to look at him—but they speak more of and wonder more about and desire more to look at a girl to whom nature has given a fine voice and who is able to excite their sluggish emotions and entertain them for an hour.

An artist killed himself with vexation because crowds rushed to see a paltry show while few came to admire the products of his art. Poor man! he was a good artist but a poor philosopher. He lived for fame—that is, he had set his heart upon being esteemed by that very crowd whose conduct proved the utter worthlessness of their approbation. The world remember Bonaparte, but have forgotten Jenner—they venerate the man of blood whose stay on earth was as the long blast of a sirocco, whose every pulse marked the death-time of a man, whose every step opened a grave. But they have forgotten the angel of mercy, who wrestled with death for his sharpest sting, and disarmed him; who rolled a great stone to the mouth of the yawning sepulchre into which myriads had been thrown and towards which myriads more were driven—who chased out the most hideous terror from the heart of man and added years of life to a thousand generations! Yet who would not rather be Jenner than be Bonaparte? Who would not be satisfied to pass from life with the assurance that he had evoked a protecting angel that would for ever spread his

wings over the human family—who would not give his part in life if he might seize and carry with him to the grave a merciless mutilator and destroyer of his race!

Let the thoughtless and silly sneer as they may at the Medical Profession, it is evidently ordained of God, for he has made it both possible and necessary. Possible, because he has furnished means by which disease may be checked, abated and cured. His wonderful beneficence has given antidotes not only for the bodily evils necessarily incident to our mortal condition; but, reaching far into the future, it provided in the great medicine chest of nature for diseases altogether unnatural, the prospective consequences of the violation of his own laws, the physical penalties of outraged nature. Thus He made the Profession of Medicine necessary, causing it to be both a science and an art. He has not planted among us trees of life whose leaves, sought by the instinct of the sick, should heal all the diseases of the body. He has not medicated the waters that the disordered might drink and be restored. He might have done so, but he has willed that man shall be the comforter of man. He has hid his medicines in the rocks, and wrapped them in flowers, and concealed them in the organs of untamed beasts, and he has given to man the mental power to search them out—but he has told no man, not the most favored of men, where these healing agents are stored. To discover them, to test them, to combine them, to prepare them, he has left to the working of that sagacity with which he has gifted the beings for whose benefit they were intended. Thus God himself has made Medicine a *science*. By leaving it also to man to find out his own construction, to learn the changes to which his body is liable; the signs of those changes, and the manner of applying means to their relief, he has made Medicine an *art*. In short, our Creator has dealt with us in this respect as he has with regard to all other physical science. He has determined that we shall want, and he has provided in accessible things qualities fitted to supply our wants, but he has left us to ascertain the adaptedness of one to the other, and to learn how to make the adaptedness available.

God never has interrupted this law. Though he has often interfered by his sovereign power to cure diseases, he has never accomplished the extraordinary cures by revealing the hidden qualities of familiar substances. When Peter's wife's mother lay ill of a fever, incurable by the rude physicians of that day, Christ did not proceed to her restoration by pointing out the pathological condition and indicating the power of antimony or bark over the affection. Even when, as in the case of a blind man, and of Hezekiah and Naaman, physical means were used, they were means selected for their ordinary inefficiency—the clay, the fig, and the waters of Jordan. Every where the domain of science was protected from miraculous invasion. We constantly perceive a delicate respect towards medical science, an avoidance of every thing which might lessen the value of human acquisition, by superseding it or throwing it into the shade by divine communication, and thus discouraging man in the pursuit of truth.

Gentlemen, by that mysterious agency which determines the manner of human probation, you have been called to be dispensers of the Almighty's goodness: almoners of divine beneficence: representatives of his merciful kindness. In his stead you are to stand beside the sick man in his hour of pain and terror—as his minister you will pour out the healing balm and mingle the cup of consolation—as commissioned by him, you will stand between the living and the dead, and stay the plague. The timid mother, trembling over the cradle of her restless infant, will remember you and take courage. The fainting husband, in the sickness of his heart, turning from the pallid face of his wife, shall find hope in you. To all classes, to all ages, your presence shall be the brightening of hope, the dawning of consolation. "When the ear shall hear you, then it will bless you, and when the eye shall see, it will give witness to you, because you delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish shall come upon you, and you shall cause the widow's heart to leap for joy. You shall be eyes to the blind and feet to the lame—and it shall be yours to

bind up the broken-hearted." The angel who was dispatched once a year to trouble the pool and to communicate to the agitated waters a virtue by which one cure might be effected, was sent on a glorious errand, and doubtless that bright and august being felt it an honorable distinction to be sent from the realms of bliss upon so merciful a mission. But yours is a mission vastly more glorious. You go to cure not one, but many—you go not to perform a mere mechanical act, but to wield the mighty power of intellect for the good of men.

Speaking as one of the humblest and least worthy of the profession, and pleading the privileges of the occasion in which admonitions, private as to their subjects, are nevertheless spoken in the presence of many, I say to you that this day will introduce you to the companionship of men who as a class are certainly equal to any other in all that exalts and ennobles our race. For varied information, for accurate knowledge, for refined taste, for practical good sense and for moral character, the Medical Profession is not excelled. Our literature is vast, prolific, strong and elegant. I know of no department of letters with which our own cannot successfully compete. Our science is growing up under our hands vigorously, daily sending out its branches and thickening its foliage and throwing its protecting shadow further over the children of men. Our profession is a busy one for the mind, it stirs it to its depths, it shakes it to the centre, it excites it to the utmost movement and tension of its faculties, it brings out whatever of thought or soul is hidden in the manhood. Among the happiest and proudest moments of my life have been those when I have stood in a crowded assembly of physicians, met from every part of this vast country to deliberate upon the means of improving our art. As I have surveyed the hundreds of thoughtful men around me, from whose care-worn faces intelligence and benevolence were radiating, I have been powerfully affected at the thought that, among all that crowded assemblage there was not a man who had not saved a life. There were they—upon whom the confidence of thousands was resting—there were they, the ministering angels, whose footstep had

been heard as music in the chamber of the rich and in the cottage of the poor—there were they who had lighted up the fading eye, who had calmed the bounding pulse, who had assuaged the almost mortal agony—there were they upon whose knees the listless infant had smiled again, upon whose arm the aged had leaned his tottering frame, upon whose breast the sister had wept the benediction her tongue refused to utter—there were they who had stood last beside the dying and spoken the last words of heavenly consolation. There were the men to whom God had given the part to wipe away tears. It was a sublime spectacle; rather would I be numbered among these men, than to sit at their banquet of blood with the mightiest conquerors of earth—rather than my Midas touch should convert all around me into gold—rather than to my pampered appetite a world should minister of its fullness.

Gentlemen, to such companionship you are now admitted. Our profession is now your profession, and between your present position and the highest place in the esteem and affection of your brethren, stretches before you the steep and rugged and narrow road which all who have made a name have traveled. How far you will travel, how high you will ascend, will depend entirely upon yourselves. Systematic, patient, persevering industry cannot be resisted—sooner or later it must overcome all obstacles. Do not fall into the error of looking to your diplomas as establishing your rank as medical men. These testimonials, honorable to you as they are, are only evidences that you have gone through your preparatory studies—they only recognize you as worthy to enter the arena and compete for the prize. Nominally in the profession are hundreds who are only diplomatized men, they have never advanced a step since they set foot upon the road to eminence. Their commencement was to them the beginning and the ending of their course. Such are not physicians, they have not the mind nor soul of physicians. Let it not be so with you. Determine to know all that can be known of medicine—determine that every day shall leave you wiser than the day before.

Few of you start in the world with the adventitious aid of

wealth. It is better that you should not. However valuable such assistance may seem, experience has fully established that we may as little expect a man of fortune to become eminent in science, as an eagle to soar into the clouds with a bag of gold in its claws. Human society is constantly renewed from below. It is not the water that falls from above that purifies the lake, but that which is ever welling up pure and fresh from beneath—wherever, as in our own blessed land, the civil institutions permit this natural renovation, every class of society, every department of human action is constantly supplied with new and vigorous elements, and the whole body spreads and strengthens and rises together. Be not discouraged then, because you can rely upon no external aid. You need none. Let your reliance be upon your own honest hearts and strong minds—upon industry, frugality—above all, upon your God.