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AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED ON THE 5TH APRIL, 1855,

BEFORE THE SENATUS AND STUDENTS

OF

QUEEN'S COLLEGE,

ON CONFERRING THE

DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MEDICINE.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR GEORGE,

VICE-PRINCIPAL OF THE UNIVERSITY.

KINGSTON:

PRINTED AT THE DAILY NEWS OFFICE.

1855.

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KINGSTON, 7th April, 1855.

REVEREND SIR :

We, the Members of the Medical Faculty of the University of Queen's College, who listened with the greatest satisfaction to your address of the 5th instant, are desirous that the sentiments therein conveyed should be deeply impressed on the minds of those sent from this University, as Medical practitioners. We therefore beg that you will favor us with a copy of that address, for publication; so that we may be enabled to present it, in a durable form, to those who have lately been under our charge, for their deep consideration, and constant guidance.

We are actuated by another motive in asking you for the address in question. We consider it to be one which merits a circulation amongst our professional brethren generally.

We have the honor to be,

Reverend Sir,

Your most obed't servants,

JAS. SAMPSON,
JOHN STEWART,
JOHN R. DICKSON,
HORATIO YATES,
FIFE FOWLER,
WILLIAM HAYWARD.

To The Reverend Professor George,
Vice-Principal of Queen's College.

QUEEN'S COLLEGE, *April 8th*, 1855.

GENTLEMEN :

As you think the address I delivered the other day, to the eight young men on whom we conferred Degrees, may be of service to them in print, I agree to its publication. My knowledge of Medicine is very limited. But were it far greater than it is, I would have deemed it not only superfluous, but impertinent, to have spoken in your presence in a professional tone, on any one of the departments on which you have been giving instructions in your several classes. I felt that my duty was simply to offer a few general hints and moral counsels, which might be of some service to the young practitioner in entering on public

life ; and, from a desire to be extremely brief, I fear I have but imperfectly accomplished what I had at heart.

I am quite aware, that no compliment of mine, even if it had great value, is either needed or desired by you. Yet, justice compels me to say, what I can do on good authority, that the Trustees of the College have reason to be highly satisfied with the way in which the Medical Classes have been taught during the present Session. Not pretensions, but fruits, can establish the claims of our Institution to public confidence. But if you go on as you have commenced, I cannot but think the hope well grounded, that your Students will be found as fully entitled to public confidence as the Students of any Medical School in the Country.

I have the honor to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

JAMES GEORGE.

To Doctors JAMES SAMPSON,
JOHN STEWART,
JOHN R. DICKSON,
HORATIO YATES,
FIFE FOWLER,
WILLIAM HAYWARD,

The Members of the Medical Faculty of the University of Queen's College.

A D D R E S S .

GENTLEMEN :—

In most civilized countries, it has been deemed wise to require, by statute, that the medical practitioner shall bear credentials from some responsible body of his fitness for his profession. Than this nothing can be more reasonable. As health is nearly comprehensive of all temporal blessings, the government that would overlook the grand agency for preserving or restoring this would be fatally wanting in one of its most sacred trusts; while the necessity for acquiring this evidence of fitness becomes very apparent when one reflects, that by far the greater part who need the medical man's services are incapable of judging of his qualifications, and yet are impelled by the strongest motives to avail themselves of such help as he offers. His patients have to exercise entire faith in his statements. Men may or may not believe the statements of others, but there is no help for them, at least for a time, but to believe the statements of their medical attendant. It cannot be otherwise. In most cases he cannot explain to his patients, and in many cases ought not to try to explain, the treatment he pursues. He must, therefore, be a man *that can be largely trusted*. Nor will any one, who thinks of the evils which the incompetent practitioner, from ignorance, presumption, or mere avarice, brings on his fellow-creatures, deem the legal safeguards which government has established as unnecessary. God only knows—for man cannot—the full extent to which credulous sufferers, panting for life, and ready to snatch at straws, have had the remains of their health wasted, and their pockets shamelessly picked by unconscionable quacks. As the law can but inadequately punish this species of villainy, it is bound to do what it can to prevent it.

Now, the law in this Province requires, that before a man shall be recognized as a medical practitioner, he shall hold a Diploma from some responsible body known to the govern-

ment, and presumed capable of judging of his qualifications. Queen's College, by the Royal Charter, has the power of conferring Degrees in the different Faculties. This, however, is the first time that any Degree has been conferred in the Faculty of Medicine. And it affords the Senatus much pleasure that the Degrees conferred to-day are bestowed on students connected with the College.

For some years past, it has been thought desirable, on many accounts, that Medicine should be taught as a branch of education in this University. Somewhat more than a year ago, not a few men, distinguished for their wisdom and learning, and ardent friends of the country, came to the conclusion, that the time had arrived when this should be attempted. You are aware that this scheme has been, so far, carried into effect. It requires time, and many appliances fairly at work, ere one can speak with certainty of the success of such an undertaking. Yet, when I think of the geographical situation of Kingston, of the advantages the medical student may derive from the classes in the College, and, above all, of the high talents and great diligence of the gentlemen of the Medical Faculty, I cannot but cherish strong hopes of the ultimate success of this undertaking. Let us hope, that as the College has already contributed not a few to the other learned professions, it will henceforth contribute largely to that of the Healing Art. But as much will depend upon the character, professional and otherwise, of those who are sent out during the first few years in this Department, I think it not irrelevant, either to your future usefulness, or to the honor of the institution that has this day conferred degrees on you, to address you briefly on the present occasion.

From the belief that you are now qualified to *practice*, the Senatus has given you the stamp of their confidence. Yet this belief would have little foundation in truth, did you entertain the notion that no farther acquisitions were necessary to your success as able and honorable practitioners. In no profession more than in yours, has experience to teach much which never can be learned within the walls of a University. Much assuredly must be learned there: yet, he who fancies that his stock of knowledge is complete, and his education perfected, when he leaves College, has reason to suspect that he has hardly begun to learn to any good purpose. What is learned during the curriculum of study, is properly the art of making higher attainments afterwards. This will not be overlooked by

those of you who are animated by a legitimate ambition to reach the front rank in your profession. The highest excellence in any walk of life can only be attained by a few; but ordinary talents, with persevering industry, may enable all to be respectable in their calling. With less than this you ought not to be satisfied; while the highest excellence ought ever to be your aim. But at this you will not aim, and will indeed fail of being even respectable, unless you estimate your profession highly. He that thinks meanly of his profession, is one of whom that profession has just cause *to be ashamed*. Every calling that is needful for the well-being of man is honorable; but as yours is specially directed to lessen human suffering, and in many ways to increase the sum of human happiness, and in both respects is very much needed in the world, it is a highly honorable vocation. Indeed, you are to stand among those whose proper function it is to aid in drying up the fountains of human woe. In a world in rebellion against God, we should rather wonder at the amount of good we taste, than the ills we endure, and should rather be astonished that our world is not utterly blasted by His curse than that it should be blighted by His frown. But although sin hath brought many ills on man, yet a merciful God hath not left us without remedies. Not to speak at present of the *grand remedy* for the spiritual maladies of the soul, why should we overlook the rich provision which, as the God of Providence, He has made for lessening the temporal sufferings of man?

Many of the miracles which the Saviour wrought, were not more decisive proofs of his Messiahship than beautiful illustrations of the Divine benevolence. Nor can we think of the numberless means among material agencies which your *art* can employ, for removing or mitigating disease, without being struck with evidence of the same gracious benevolence.

Now, when the medical profession is entered on and its duties performed from right motives, its members may be said to be co-workers with God in his beneficence to a suffering world. If this high view—which is really the true view—were taken by all medical men, it would not only furnish for them a set of pure and lofty motives from which to act, but would enable them to prosecute their scientific inquiries, and to go through their laborious duties, with wonderful diligence, fidelity, and success.

When fanaticism, or cant, is a well-grounded charge, it is one

of the heaviest that can be brought against an educated man; but, when false, every man of moral courage should be able to treat it with indifference or contempt. Do not be afraid of being thought sincere Christians if you have a *just claim to the character*. Boerhaave, Zimmerman, Good and Abercrombie were not ashamed to be known as God-fearing men. And who is so foolish as to suppose that their enlightened and ardent piety at all unfitted them for shining among the brightest ornaments of their profession? It is, indeed, a fact worthy of notice, that not a few of the most distinguished medical men have been men of eminent piety. Why should it be otherwise? If one of our great poets has said, "An undevout philosopher is mad," I would take leave to say that an undevout physician is far from being wise.*

When Scotch and French atheism was damaging, throughout Europe, all sound philosophy, as well as true religion, it became fashionable, with men in more than one profession, to fancy that a dash of reckless scepticism gave to their character an air of originality. This folly is now considerably abated, although it yet occasionally comes forth in its bald impudence, to shock common sense and all solid learning. Let me express the hope, that you do not believe it at all necessary for a man to be great *that he be able to sneer* at the being of a God, and the evidence for the Christian religion, more especially as he may have given no attention to the subject. The world is now, upon the whole, pretty well aware of the worthlessness of the claims

* No man can reflect on the wonderful structure of the human body, and understand even partially the astonishing adaptation of means to ends which is found in it, and not be struck with wonder and awe at the wisdom and goodness of the Creator. The anatomist who can unfold the different parts of this marvellous work of God, with mere artistic skill, without any feeling of adoration for the Great Being that framed it, is destitute of the best and noblest emotions of the human heart. And while each department of the profession should furnish valuable instruction for the heart and conscience, it is difficult to see how the study of anatomy can fail to do this, for any one but an atheist; while it is still more difficult to see how any accomplished anatomist can possibly be an atheist. He that loses sight of the Great First Cause in his examination of secondary causes, may have an accurate knowledge of an isolated class of facts, but has no claim to the character of a true philosopher. Adoring admiration of the Divine wisdom and goodness, should ever fill the bosom of the anatomist. This, so far from clouding, will, in many ways, tend to illumine his scientific enquiries, and aid his intellectual vision. The lessons thence drawn are not all that he needs to learn of sin and accountability; yet, they could not fail to be, in many respects, beneficial to him. Anatomy, upon the whole, is a noble study. But let the irreligious anatomist at least know this, that his is the melancholy reflection of having read one of God's great books carelessly, I had almost said profanely, as to its moral lessons.

of such men, either to true learning or originality. You are, I hope, as little capable of being imposed on, by this impious sophistry, as you are of practising its pernicious lessons. The religion that is spurious is hurtful and every way hateful. But, gentlemen, let it sink into your minds that the piety that is heavenly is not only the true means of all health to the heart and conscience, but is wonderfully instrumental in strengthening all the intellectual faculties. Were this better understood, the learned professions would have abler men; while each man would be far happier and more useful in the discharge of his duties. But, as the object of this address is neither to unfold the principles of religion, nor fully set forth its advantages, I must satisfy myself by reminding you, that as your vocation brings you in contact with human suffering, under many of its most trying forms, you ought to be animated not only by professional ambition to relieve the sufferer, but also by that pious benevolence which, while it sharpens the reason, is ever honorable to the heart and soothing to the conscience. The tenderest pity, if healthy, will not in the least impair the firmness which the performance of trying duty may require; nor will the loathing at guilt, which is felt by a pious mind, cause the practitioner to turn away with indifference from sufferings which vicious conduct may have brought upon erring mortals. Such a man knows how to hate, and yet how to relieve; how to pity, and yet be firm. A medical man of this disposition of mind, while he is doing everything to lessen bodily suffering, will minister indirectly, yet powerfully, to the heart and conscience of his patient. Indeed, it is hardly possible to conceive of any position more fraught with weighty moral consequences than that in which you may find yourselves placed, when you may have to fasten the eye as much on the derangements of conscience as on the derangements of physical functions which you are called in to correct. A want of high moral sentiments, firmness and candor, or even the possession of false delicacy, may prevent you doing, for the moral constitution of your patient, what possibly no other human creature has the power of doing, because no other sees, as you do, the complex nature of his ailments. Without your stern reproof, pointed at vice, wise admonition, and soothing counsel, your best directed efforts may but very partially meet the case of your patient. Let me, however, not be mistaken: I am far from thinking that it would be wise in you to assume the character, or

perform the functions, peculiar to the clergyman, in the chamber of sickness or death. I have hinted that there are moral duties which you can better perform, than he, to your patients. But you must know where to stop. Indeed, I have seldom seen the clerical gown hang gracefully on the shoulders of the medical practitioner; while, on the other hand, I have known few clergymen, who went about piddling in Medicine, who did not bungle the business most wretchedly. Their advice is not often wise, while their gratuitous service is apt to neutralize the real service of the medical man when called in, and, not unfrequently, to interfere with what are the just rewards of his profession. Yet, if you are deeply imbued with that pure benevolence which should characterize your profession, you will not fail, as Christian men, to carry along with you an influence most salutary to your patients, and every way good to yourselves. A hint, or a pointed warning, comes from your lips with peculiar significance.

Although it is not my wish, nor indeed does it lie within the range of my acquirements, to address you in a purely professional style; yet, I deem it not improper, in addition to what I have said, to offer a few remarks which may have a more special reference to your professional success.

No profession can draw more largely than yours on certain discoveries which have been made of late. The achievements of chemistry have been truly astonishing during the last half century. The subtle and severe analysis which has been employed on the qualities of matter, has unfolded elements, single or in combination, of the greatest use to the healing art. As you do not presume to cure by miracle, and, as I trust, will not pretend to cure by charms, your grand dependence must be on the true application of inorganic matter to restore the deranged functions of vital and organic bodies. But your success in this will depend very much on an accurate knowledge of the agents you employ. If you would rise to distinction, in difficult and *varying cases*, you must have a fair share of chemical knowledge. See, then, that you avail yourselves of every discovery or improvement that has of late been made in this department of knowledge, as there is scarcely one of these which the well-educated physician may not turn to good account, either for the restoring of health, or, what is better, the preventing of disease. He that is ignorant of chemistry, as a science, and knows but little even of its practical results, must be content, if a cautious man, to

creep along in the narrow and beaten path of routine, doing some good, and as little harm as he can ; but, if a presumptuous man, this sort of ignorance is almost sure to make him a most dangerous Empiric. Now, if you would rise above the meanness of the former position, and avoid the criminality of the latter, you must understand well the nature of the different substances you employ, whether in their simple state or in combination.

You will find several books well fitted to aid you in this. You are, however, to keep in mind that many books published in our day are rather adapted to save thought than to teach men how to think. Yet even these have their worth, which you will endeavor to extract. But after all you may get from books, or lectures on Chemistry, never forget that your best lessons can only be obtained by touching nature with your own hand, and obtaining as many answers as possible from her own lips. Study Chemistry from nature, and you not only add to your book knowledge, but so verify this that each part becomes essentially your own.

But there is another branch of knowledge on which a few words may not be unsuitable, and on which it is more appropriate for me to speak. If you would be even respectable physicians, you must study, with great care, the *relations* between the mental and corporeal parts of the constitution of man. Mind is neither a result of organized matter, nor has it any qualities in common with the properties of matter. Either assumption is, if possible, even more false in philosophy than in religion. Hence the materialist is the most vicious of all sophists, and the most illogical of all reasoners. Indeed, the materialism of the eighteenth century is such a mass of gratuitous assumptions, supported by such childish and superficial arguments, as to make all men of sense and learning thoroughly ashamed of it. Folly may still prate and dogmatize ; but no man, worthy the name of philosopher, will now risk his reputation in supporting the doctrine of materialism. But all this fully admitted, and still it is true that the connection between mind and body is so intimate as to produce constant action and reaction. Now, as the condition of the mind or body may be either healthy or diseased, so will the action arising from the union of mind and body be beneficial or hurtful. Certain bodily organs, if neglected and deranged, may produce serious mental disease. On the other hand, the mind overwrought, or sorely fretted with bitter grief, or corroded by remorse, may produce such

fatal derangement in one or other of the bodily organs, that the vital functions will become greatly impaired, or even destroyed. The truth of this was often forcibly impressed on my mind, while the pastor of a large congregation. Sometimes, when called to see my parishioners, I astonished them, by telling them that they needed the physician first and specially: and, permit me to add, occasionally astonished physicians, by telling them that unless the moral and spiritual treatment were successful theirs would fail. Now, while the most ordinary practitioner can easily see that there is such connection between mind and body as to produce reciprocally the most powerful action and reaction, it is only the man who has thoroughly studied the mental as well as the physical parts of our nature, who can form any just notion of the mysterious, yet powerful, phenomena to which I have referred. Unless he knows much of the laws that regulate these influences, he will be utterly at fault in some of the most delicate and trying cases that come under his care. I take leave respectfully to say, that if you be not tolerably good metaphysicians, if you have not somewhat closely studied mind, not only in its intellectual but moral aspects, there are patients for whom it were not safe for you to prescribe. Depend on it, you must understand the maladies of the mind, before you can in many cases minister successfully to the diseases of the body. It is true, that with all this knowledge, you may be compelled to answer as the doctor does in the play:—

Macb. How does your patient, Doctor?

Doct. Not so sick, my Lord,
As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies,
That keep her from her rest.

Macb. Cure her of that;
Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased;
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;
Raze out the written troubles of the brain;
And, with some sweet oblivious antidote,
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?

Doct. Therein the patient
Must minister to himself.

Macb. Throw physic to the dogs, I'll none of it."

No, not so fast. Physic has its uses here, and may be of vast importance. For, assuredly, some of the worst cases of insanity might have been cured in their incipient stages, if the physician had seen clearly what was the true source of the malady; whether its cause was entirely physical, or purely

mental ; or if it sprung from a combination of both, as causes. If I may be allowed such an expression, I would say, you must beware of depending too much on your *physics*, to the neglect of metaphysics. Indeed, in many cases, if destitute of this sort of knowledge, in its high and proper sense, I should consider you very unsafe advisers. With a small share of it, you may be moderately respectable in ordinary practice ; but if you aim at solid distinction, an extensive usefulness, you must be well acquainted with mental philosophy. 'Tis not enough, in all cases, merely to put your finger on the wrist : the case of a patient may be such that you cannot understand it unless you have the art of feeling the pulse that tells the state of the mental emotions. Unquestionably, the best kind of this knowledge can only be acquired by experience ; yet he who has gone through a severe course of training in mental philosophy, is well prepared for gathering up, and properly applying, the lessons which experience teaches. At all events, do not think your professional education complete without this branch of knowledge. It is worthy of notice, that all the most distinguished medical men have been, without exception, able metaphysicians, and not a few of them deeply versed in ethical as well as in pure mental philosophy. The young man who is too lazy to seek after this kind of learning, or ignorantly sneers at it, is already as high in his profession as he ever will be, and possibly *a little higher* than he ought to be.

Nor should it be overlooked, that the present age is characterized by a wide diffusion of knowledge. The Press is daily disseminating, not only general information, but also the elements of science and philosophy, in a popular shape, to a far greater extent than in former times. Hence, if you are found deficient—I do not say in your own department of knowledge, but in the kindred branches—this cannot but lower your standing, and lessen your usefulness. You could not but feel it a serious reproach if found less familiar with a knowledge of the laws of mind, or some question in chemistry, or natural philosophy, than a mechanic, farmer, or merchant. This hint will not be lost on the thoughtful. But, then, youth is the season to turn such hints to the best account. No man is to be reproached for not possessing all kinds of knowledge ; yet, let it be borne in mind, that some kinds of ignorance are peculiarly disgraceful to men who have had your advantages. That you may escape this disgrace, and its moral conse-

quences, study with assiduity those branches of learning akin to your profession, from which you may draw valuable aid for duty, as well as for personal respectability.

As members of a highly honorable profession, permit me to say, that we hope your whole character will be marked by a gentlemanly deportment. If simple dignity, genuine kindness of heart, self-forgetfulness, and a sincere desire to make all happy around us, be the prominent characteristics of the true gentleman, I cannot but fear that this is by no means so common a character as we are apt to suppose. When one looks through the filigree and tinsel of conventionalities, he is often pained to find something far different from this noble and lovely character, in men who are supposed to possess it to no ordinary extent. It cannot be concealed, that with a certain class in society, who have lost all sense of the natural and the real, a man with the simpering, foppish, finical airs of the fine gentleman, is often a favorite as a medical attendant. Yet, when we think seriously of the whole business, well may we ask with astonishment, Is that the man one would wish to see amidst scenes of deep human anguish? When all has at last become terribly real with the poor sufferer, it is reality that he wants in all who come near him. I will not say that such a man as I have indicated never does good to his patient; but this I will say, that there is only *one other place* in which it is more loathsome and hateful to see a foppish character. While a poor mortal is in close grapple with the King of Terrors, to see his medical attendant full of grimace, antics, and simpering levity, is to me unspeakably horrible. But in eschewing all this folly, it is not necessary to go to the other extreme, and manifest manners characterized by vulgarity, meanness, or coarseness. Never forget, that the high-minded and accomplished man combines in his character exquisite gentleness with true dignity and unbending firmness. Such a man has not in him one particle of rudeness. Let me specially beseech you to aim at that firmness which will never yield to caprice, nor sacrifice truth to whim; and that gentleness which will lead you instinctively to shrink from causelessly wounding the feelings of even the poorest of your patients. I say the poorest, for the rich in this matter are likely to take care of themselves.

My young friends, I entreat you to guard against the baseness of slighting the claims, or wounding the feelings of the poor man. The poor man has feelings, hopes and fears, as

acute as the rich, and ties as strong, that bind him to life; while the medical attendant is often the last and only earthly friend whose appearance can soothe his feelings, or shed on him a ray of earthly hope. Treat him not with a cold or haughty perfunctoriness. Be it in wretched hovel, or in the cheerless and naked wards of an hospital, oh! speak to him kindly, and do your very utmost for him. Remember, that under that wasted breast there yet throbs a human heart, with all its deep and wondrous emotions; and in connection with that emaciated frame, there is an immortal soul, that has an eternity before it. A man's position in the social scale may be very low, yet with all his mysterious feelings, solemn accountability, and awful destiny, he is still an object of deepest interest, and of unspeakable importance. And, then, he is your brother. Be tender to him; do your best for him; and thus you will manifest the noblest traits of the character of the true gentleman. Never forget—for the allusion is appropriate—who it was that washed the disciples' feet, and laid the hands of tender mercy on the diseased and outcast leper, and performed nearly all his miraculous cures on the poorest of the people. O! were it not well that you should in this, as in other things, imitate that great physician.

Not seldom has your profession furnished most beautiful specimens of moral heroism of character. Let it be said, to their high honor, that medical men have often been found in the midst of the most loathsome scenes, and exposed to the greatest dangers, calmly and firmly performing their duty, when nearly *all others had fled*. Nor should it be overlooked, that they have often thus acted, when there could be no expectation of either fame or reward. This is grand. Let us hope that if the occasion should ever call for this manifestation of moral heroism, it shall never be wanting in those who hold their Degrees from Queen's College. If so, then rest assured, you shall have a character which will not fail to secure the love and esteem of the very best of your fellow-men. Nor is there any one, who, more than the physician, needs, for the successful performance of duty, the respect and love of others. For, without their respect and esteem, his patients will hide from him much which it may be necessary for him to know, and will follow but partially the wisest directions he may give.

But, gentlemen, I have done. We send you forth into a world of much confusion, sin, and misery. Do not, I beseech you, increase the confusion by immoral conduct or professional

imbecility. Try to lessen the sin that is in the world, by good counsel and example, and strive to mitigate the suffering that is in it, by an able exercise of the noble Art to which you have devoted yourselves :— And, so doing, you may look to God for His blessing.



