**Valedictory to the graduating class of the Philadelphia College of Medicine at the semi-annual commencement, February 28th, 1856 / by Henry Hartshorne.**

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# VALEDICTORY

TO THE

# GRADUATING CLASS

OF THE

# Philadelphia College of Medicine,

AT THE

SEMI-ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT,
FEBRUARY 28th, 1856.

BY

HENRY HARTSHORNE, M.D.,
PROFESSOR OF THE INSTITUTES OF MEDICINE.

PUBLISHED BY THE GRADUATING CLASS.

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PHILADELPHIA:
INQUIRER PRINTING OFFICE.
1856.

PHILADELPHIA COLLEGE OF MEDICINE, Jan. 26th, 1856.

At a meeting of the Graduating Class of the Philadelphia College of Medicine, held Jan. 26th, 1856, at the College Edifice, at which Wm. H. Hazzard, of Philadelphia, was called to the Chair, and George H. Cooke, of Philadelphia, appointed Secretary, it was, on motion, *Resolved*, that a Committee be appointed by the Chairman, to request PROF. HARTSHORNE to transmit to us for publication, a copy of his Valedictory Address, to be delivered at the approaching Commencement.

GEO. H. COOKE, *Sec'y.*

DR. H. HARTSHORNE,

*Dear Sir:*

The undersigned were, in accordance with the foregoing, appointed that Committee; and, in requesting you to transmit to us a copy of your Address, permit us to express the high respect and esteem entertained for you by the Committee and Class.

Truly Yours,

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| T. M. BOSTICK, | *Georgia.* | J. W. HIGNUTT, | *Maryland.* |
| W. BRADLEY, | *Penna.* | H. HULSHIZER, | *N. Jersey.* |
| J. O. BURNETT, | *Penna.* | S. P. KIRKBRIDE, | *N. Jersey.* |
| G. H. COOKE, | *Penna.* | H. H. G. LUNGREN, | *Penna.* |
| A. T. CHEATHAM, | *Georgia.* | L. MARTIN Y DE CASTRO, | *Cuba.* |
| L. F. ENGELHARD, | *France.* | W. F. MCCURDY, | *Penna.* |
| JOSE GUERRERO, | *Nicaragua.* | P. P. NICHOLS, | *Penna.* |
| C. HARDEE, | *Florida.* | L. C. RICE, | *Penna.* |
| W. H. HAZZARD, | *Penna.* | J. W. STAM, | *Penna.* |

D. R. THOMAS, *Penna.*

GENTLEMEN:

The confidence evinced in me, by yourselves and the Class you represent, in the request conveyed in your note, is too gratifying, not to meet with a speedy acquiescence. The Address, however unworthy, shall be at your disposal.

Believe me to be

Very truly Yours,

H. HARTSHORNE.

Messrs. J. O. Burnett, W. H. Hazzard, W. Bradley, P. P. Nichols, G. H. Cooke, and others.

# ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN, GRADUATES:

It is fitting that we should view the occasion of our meeting with you on this platform to-day, through your eyes, and appreciate it with your hearts.

To us, however deep the interest it must ever have for us, it comes not for the first time. Though momentous, it has grown to be, in some degree, an accustomed occasion. But we revert in sympathetic remembrance to the hour, not yet much dimmed in the distance, when we were in your places.

We remember the ardent longings that had nerved all our exertions to meet the anxious trial which preceded this crowning occasion. We cannot forget the glow of high anticipation, so sweetened by long and careful toil, with which we looked forth upon the promised land of professional life. We can see now, too, on each brow, a light reflected from a dearer and a nearer land; the haven of *home*, where hearts beat more warmly, even than your own, to await

your coming; where your success will be the triumph of a household; and where this day will wear the brightness of more than a common dawn.

In toil and parting, then, you have won this goal; toil, that wears more than the pilgrim's journey, or the labor of stalwart arms; and separation, many of you, from all that gives to life its chief delight.

Has it been worth the effort? Will it repay you for so much sacrifice?

These are questions which, if not now, will soon be pressing upon you.

You are beyond the age when Hope speaks with the voice of a syren, deluding with false prophecy; or when the pencil of untaught Fancy paints everything with rainbows.

*You are men.* The business of life opens before you in real aspects. Yet, perhaps, your anticipations of the Science you have pursued, and of the profession you have chosen, may not have met, as yet, with precise realization.

Did any suppose it to be more easily mastered, its results more readily won, its knowledge limited and attainable, instead of reaching out into the vast unknown, with an extent which no eye can pierce, no plummet sound?

You have, then, in this, no cause of disappointment. Instead of conquering a narrow island, you have entered upon a vast unbounded continent; a very world; whose seas and shores no duration will enable you to explore, since the words

*Ars longa, vita brevis est,*

ring out in varied echoes, everywhere, as you tread on. It is not in the unlimited character of Science that the noble mind finds discouragement. You can have had no misgivings from this source.

But, perhaps, the acquaintance you have thus far formed with Medicine, upon the threshold of her temple, may have given rise to disheartening thoughts of quite another kind. You have seen, if not felt, the "*experientia fallax.*" Medicine is an incompleted science; its application, an imperfect art. We must confess this.

The uncertainty of some departments of medical knowledge has always proved a fertile theme of satire to its deriders, as well as of humility to the profession itself.

Thus says Tom Hood, (the wittiest though kindest of humorists,) "the physician is expected to find out the color of a *cat* in a *bag;* or, to pronounce as to the contents of a *suspected trunk*, without even the policeman's privilege of search."

But, you well know, this is not always so. If it were, now, will it *always be?* Has not the human mind achieved results as marvellous as these? Has it not read the epitaphs of the pyramids? Weighed the planets, with their moons? Measured the distance of the sun, and traced even his orb to a vassalage to another sphere? Has it not decyphered, upon the walls of the old Earth herself, tokens of her many-cycled age? And shall it then, having thus made the far off spheres and distant ages to give up their secrets, be always baffled with what is nearest to us, within and about us, our very selves?

It is not, surely, that the occurrences of man's life, the phenomena of organic beings, in health and disease, are less subject to order, less governed by laws than any others in the universe. It is, only, that we have not yet known the former, as we have learned to discern a portion of the latter. When we can command, in our mental vision, the ultimate and proximate molecules of matter, as the astronomer seizes the star upon the field of his telescope, then will we see that among the pheno-

mena even of disease, which are the most complex, rules an order as absolute, though in discord, still telling of its lost harmony, as that of the spheres, which

> Each in its orbit like an angel sings,
> Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubim.

And, then, will we or our successors, be able to point with pride to medicine, as a positive, an exact, a most magnificent science, second only, in dignity and usefulness, to the study of divine truth itself.

You share, then, gentlemen, in the honors of Medicine, not only as it is, but as it will be. Its future, with unlimited aspirations, lies before you.

You shall aid to exalt it. We have confidence in you, that this banner, now confided to your hands, will not be abandoned without trophies to adorn it.

Medicine expects much from the profession in America, during the coming century. Our progenitors and cotemporaries have done somewhat—may have done much—in their time, but the emulation of the world demands still larger tribute from our hands. In strict scientific inquiry, and cumulative research, what, it is said, has America effected, when we compare the immense results of the English, French, and German minds?

Perhaps this comparison may have been somewhat erroneously stated. A qualitative analysis might show, on the part of the Cis-Atlantic profession, a better account.

But I will not enter into the controversy. Let me only quote, as one testimony in regard to it, the words, spoken thirty-six years ago, by the distinguished, and now venerable Professor of Institutes in the University of Pennsylvania.

"Under the influence," says he, "of a fickle sky and ever-varying temperature, the diseases of our country present pecu-

liar characteristics. The earlier practitioners of America found no authorities on which they could depend, and were forced for their treatment into a reliance on their own powers. Hence was awakened in them a habit of close observation, of patient research, a prudent distrust of general deductions, and mere authority, which has continued to designate the medical profession of our country. With pride," he continues, "with feelings of exultation it may be pronounced, that for sound physiological doctrines, for correct pathological views, for enlightened and successful practice, for a just system of therapeutics and materia medica, for accurate knowledge of anatomy, and expert and improved surgery, the Medical Science of our country stands conspicuous."

It may not, perhaps, be an unpardonable vanity to add, that our own city has had some share in the amount of renown which the world has been compelled to give to American science; when we can name, amongst other names, hardly less worthy, the European, as well as enduring reputation of a Rush, a Physick, and a Morton; the fellow-citizenship, at the present time, of a La Roche, a Kane, and a Leidy; and the influence which has so long belonged to the city as the medical metropolis of the Union.

May we not ardently hope that you, young gentlemen, may, by your labors and talents, add something not only to your own reputation and success, but to the honor of your country and of your profession.

We trust that your College has not failed to do its duty, in furthering your preparation for so noble a task.

We hope, we may even say we believe, that in choosing for your *alma mater* one of the youngest Institutions in the country, you chose not one that was idle or neglectful of her charge, or even incompetent to bear it.

The Faculty of the Philadelphia College of Medicine, when, in 1854, they received the transfer of its responsibilities, determined to place and maintain it upon a high, safe, and honorable platform. Regardless of prejudice, and independent of petty interests, they were still resolved to be governed only by their own candid sense of right, in its control. So, should it sink or swim, live or die.

Of its former organization, we have no occasion to speak. Of its older graduates, I may say one word. They are, I need hardly say it, our professional brethren. Their sympathy and friendship has been a grateful support to us in the task of our early establishment, which has not been without its toil and anxiety.

As to them all, as they are worthy of the profession, we receive them to our hearts. Should any prove to be less so, (which we hope may never be the case), upon that ground *alone* could any think of repudiation. The oldest institution could do no more, the youngest can do no less. And when, as upon a recent sad occasion, well known to you all, and to the public, they are seen in the ranks of those who march against pestilence, through death, and danger, and distress, shall we not be proud of them? Shall we not add their names to ours, with gratulation at the connection?

Alas, let us pause from all words of gratulation, while we speak the name of one, who shall never hear them more, except in the glad, eternal voices of another world.

Poor Courtland Cole!

There have been tears and breaking hearts for thee,
And mine were nothing hadI such to give;
But, when I stand beneath the fresh green tree,
Which, living, waves where thou didst cease to live,

And see around me the wide fields revive
With fruits and fertile promise, and the Spring
Come forth her work of gladness to contrive,
With all her reckless birds upon the wing,
I turn from those she brought, to those she could not bring.

Thus may we, perhaps, most appropriately allude to this young hero-martyr of science and benevolence, who died, in Portsmouth, Virginia, in September, 1855, while engaged in service during the Yellow Fever epidemic, which he had left his home to aid in combating.

The heroism of destruction is growing obsolete; the heroism of beneficence will ere long, supercede it, even in the world's esteem. For, that grand self-sacrifice, which is, after all, the radical element of the heroic character, finds a thousand times more congenial life in combating against pain and death, than where its own self-wronging hands are imbued in blood and carnage.

Yet, let us be allowed to rejoice, that all self-devotion is not martyrdom; and that of the representatives or alumni of this school (who were, as you know, a majority of the medical volunteers to that scene of death from this city), all, except him whom we have named, have returned in safety. There is one, even among your own number, native of a sunny island of the South,* who did not wait for the completion of his academic course to hasten to the scene of arduous labor, danger, and usefulness. May he never suffer a more painful reminiscence, than that of those generously devoted days, spent in manly toil by the bedsides of victims stricken down by that fearful pestilence. I dwell upon this topic, because it has for us a deep professional as well as personal interest.

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* Dr. L. Martin y de Castro, of Cuba.

"If," as says the Report of the Committee of Relief, "if doctors, druggists, and nurses are to be ranked as the commissioned officers to combat pestilence, a comparison will show that the mortality in their ranks in the Portsmouth and Norfolk campaign exceeds the mortality among the regular officers of the Russian and allied armies in the campaigns of the Crimea. If there was heroic courage shown in storming or defending the Malakoff, and in the attempt on the Redan, it required yet more to minister to the sick and dying in the plague stricken cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth."

There is one other aspect in which I would view the same subject before we leave it. Let me quote a few words more from the same document. "Not we alone, but all cities and States of the Union responded to the cry of affliction. The wail of woe which went forth from the cities of Virginia thrilled throughout the land, and the whole Union beat with responsive sympathy, proving us to be *a people*, one in feeling, and one in patriotism."

How stands our profession in regard to this? Has it, less than any other class, this feeling of wide-spread, national, all-embracing sympathy?

Nay, even more. It is Cosmopolitan. Its vocation is Humanity.

But, I maintain, that the Medical Body has a usefulness, of both a social and political character, not restricted to its conflicts with disease and death.

It has an organization of its own. From New York and St. Louis, to New Orleans and Charleston, every year beholds the meeting of a congress of medical men, the representative body of the profession. By its efforts science is enlarged, and a true fraternity is realized. If you seek for sectionalism, look for it everywhere, you will not find it amongst medical men.

Besides the American Association, however, another means of similar potency toward the same end, exists in the influence of our system and Institutions of Medical Education.

On the seats of our Medical Schools, you meet, from North, South, East, and West. On neutral ground, without any of those occasions of difference in lesser interests to which distance only lends exaggeration, you find, coming from all quarters of our vast national domain, only the courtesy of gentlemen, the friendship of men. If you had imagined it otherwise before you came hither, I trust that you have realized, in this cradle-city of Independence, a most agreeable disappointment; that you have found that, here, as much as *anywhere*, is felt and appreciated the sentiment of one of our noblest citizens, the late John Sergeant, spoken in his Eulogy upon Charles Carroll of Carrollton, "*The Union is our Country.*"

It is, then, in no merely egotistical and selfish spirit that we may urge and promote the attendance of young men from the most distant quarters, in our Medical Halls.

We cannot regret the increase of Medical Schools in various parts of the country; we take pride in it, as an indication of thriving and progress, in the profession, as well as in the society of which it forms a part. But this need not cause any diminution in the resort to the central reservoirs; if it be even attended by an exchange. Grant to each School an equality, be it even in some instances a superiority of talent, yet there must be reasons why a visit to a great city will afford advantages. There, and no where else, can the fullest clinical opportunities be afforded. There are Hospitals, and Libraries, a variety of private instruction, an infinitude of books, multitudes of men; and from *all* of these much may be learned.

A visit to Paris was once thought almost indispensable to the

fully educated physician; a visit to Philadelphia, or, shall we stretch the courtesy, and say New York—will, we trust, long be thought so, still.

Gentlemen, we feel the responsibility of our past relation to you, as Teachers, very deeply.

We have some regrets, even, in connection with it.

We believe that you are, as a class, as amply prepared, through your own careful industry, to merit the degree and license we this day confer upon you, as any class in the Union.

But, we trust that the day will come, when "excelsior" will be written upon the banners of medical education. We should be glad if, by the extension of the time of study, more learning might be exacted of, as afforded to, the candidate for medical honors, than now is the share of one half of the profession.

Yet the Philadelphia College of Medicine shrinks from no reasonable test of its performance of duty in this matter. It has shown this, by its challenge, thrown out so often, that reiteration has grown to be a tautology, to unite with the other Schools of the country in subjecting its pupils to an impartial, extra-collegiate examination, before conferring the Degree.

But, in truth, as I have already said, Science is *illimitable;* Truth is infinite. All of us must *forever* be Students.

You will find leisure, in your early days of Practice, to fill up many a void in your present acquisition of knowledge. Do not attempt to read everything; but study well and thoroughly, master completely a judicious selection of Books and Medical Journals. Study nature, too; at the bed-side, in the immediate pursuit of your art; but not only there. In the fields and wood-paths; in the waters, and the very clouds around and

above you; in every thing that has life, the Physician, whose very name is derived from nature, should find interest and profit. If there be any one pursuit which, rather than another, may well fill those hours not engrossed in your profession (since the mind requires variety of thought, as the stomach needs variety of food), it is the cultivation of the Natural Sciences.

I know of no study which, to the physician, will so serenely alleviate the painfulness of that sympathy, which custom does not annul, with the sufferings of those he treats, and of the evidence he sees, in disease, of disorder in the creation, as may the contemplation of nature in her grand and perfect forms and motions.

He may, even, by this contrast with man's marred and imperfect state, gain a finer sense of the divine harmony.

He will, at all events, never find his labor unrewarded by delight. For, in whatever direction the eye or the mind of man turns, armed with the weapons of Science, it everywhere, as you have seen, meets with beauty.

Whether, with Lord Rosse, it penetrates the farthest heavens, to resolve nebulæ into stars; or, with Maury and his friends, sends a plummet downwards, to bring up the delicate plants or unbroken shells from the bottom of the ancient sea; or, gazes, through the microscope, upon the lines of an insect's wing, the forms of a crystal, or the layers that make up the colors of the pearl; still, everywhere, it finds beauty; beauty in all things, if men had but eyes! We cannot escape from it; it is the proof of the omnipresence of God.

The study of the Natural Sciences is one, also, which has a direct bearing upon, and close congeniality with, Medicine.

The affinities of Law, are most with literature, history, and

politics; of Theology, with philosophy and history; of Commerce, with politics, history, and the arts; but Medicine rests her whole existence upon, and draws almost her whole nutriment from Science.

Much is expected, also, of the Medical man, in this day of diffused education; he cannot always do his duty, in private, or as, at times, the guardian of the public welfare, without being at least the equal of those around him in general knowledge.

While, therefore, you should not despise any cultivation of the mind, and may allow, with advantage, a place to poetry and literature in your scheme of recreations, Science may well claim a primary place; and a taste for it will be of the highest importance to you, in your profession.

But, gentlemen, *character* is, after all, in the profession or out of it, essentially *the Man;* and there is no vocation in which this is more practically and strikingly so, than in that of Medicine.

A man may be a commander, as great as Nelson, and yet a social criminal; a politician and philosopher, like Bacon, and yet the *meanest* as well as wisest of mankind; witty, as Dean Swift, but a brute to those who loved him and whom he professed to love; even a votary of Natural Science, and yet, like the famous Dr. Webster, may murder his friend and hide and burn his bones; but, a truly and honorably successful *physician* or *surgeon*, and not a *gentleman*—the thing is impossible.

And in this I mean a man who is gentle as well as manly; qualities which may exist with or without much intellectual superiority. It has been quaintly, but perhaps not untruly, remarked that *Don Quixote* was one of the truest gentlemen in all fiction.

But it has been more often said of the poetic mind, that the largest and finest genius always has in it somewhat of the feminine, in its sympathies.

The poetic temperament resembles, in this, the Medical; however different may be the popular impression in regard to both.

Add, to the same sympathetic traits, in place of a glowing imagination and creative genius, a strong understanding and practical sagacity, and you have the highest capacity for Medical success and distinction.

Well is it, then, for the physican to cultivate, in his own character, all the amenities and adornments, the refinements and courtesies, of life; well for himself, and well for his profession. Next to Religion, and his strict professional duties, these may be classed as his highest objects.

There are, sometimes, inducements or temptations to their neglect or violation, belonging to the very nature of the practice of Medicine.

If, therefore, the accusation of jealousy and constant opposition amongst physicians has become a proverb, it must be because the occasions are more frequent and trying, not because the disposition is at all characteristic; as, towards the rest of their species, Medical men have been, in all ages, most noted for their benevolence.

And, of latter times, at least, they have displayed a marked aptness for organization, such as is hardly to be found in any other profession. This has been evident in Europe, but still more so in this country, in the National Association of which I have spoken, with its ramifications into almost every State. The whole body of American Physicians will, we may trust, in time, be thus organized.

The admirable influence of such associations is manifest.

It can have no better illustration, than in the excellent Code of Ethics, adopted first by the College of Physicians of this city, and afterwards by the American Association, and which we present to you to-day, with the solemn sanction of such high tribunals added to our own.

Classic, in tone, as the moralizing of a Seneca or Cicero, this Code yet breathes a spirit of finer benevolence, of more generous courtesy, of truer justice, than could emanate from any but a Christian age. It has met with the unanimous acceptance of the Profession in this country, and is even beginning, I have learned, to be adopted in Great Britain.

Cherish it, then, as a landmark; a beacon; a guide. Principles such as it enforces, will enable you to make your profession something more than a *métier*, a bread-bringing and money-making art.

Ought it not to be so? Having all necessary relations to business, and the support of the practitioner and his dependencies, in view, still, the attitude of the profession, from its connection with the issues of life, death and disease, has always been that of a mission of honor and duty; and only to be maintained upon the most elevated principles.

It ought to be so, still.

A vocation which has had its healing offices sanctified, even, by the action of the Redeemer of men; from the ranks of which one of the Apostles was called; and in which the highest genius has found full scope, the noblest character "ample room and verge enough" for all its worth; from such a profession far be a degeneracy such as has sometimes threatened it, into a selfish craft, fattening upon the misery of mankind. We trust it will ever be far from us.

But, Gentlemen, I have detained you long enough.

One more topic I must speak of; which I have left to the last, because it is the most painful. We shrink from approaching it. Yet it has waited, as a shadow, upon us all, from the moment we stood together upon this platform.

We look around, and there is *one missing*. And that one, the noblest of us all! He who would have taken the most pride and genial pleasure in this day; he who was as a parent to you, a brother and friend to us. Can we believe, who so lately saw that manly form, and heard his voice, and met the warm pressure of his hand, that our friend, our companion, our preceptor, is already gone?

Never again to mingle, here, in our pleasures, toils, anxieties, or sorrows.

> How shall we know thee, in the sphere which keeps
> The disembodied spirits of the dead,
> When all of thee, that time could wither, sleeps
> And perishes among the dust we tread?
>
> In meadows fanned by heaven's life-breathing wind,
> In the resplendence of that glorious sphere,
> And larger movements of the unfettered mind,
> Wilt thou forget the love that joined us here?
>
> Yet, though thou wear'st the glory of the sky,
> Wilt thou not keep the same remembered name,
> The same high thoughtful brow, and gentle eye?
> Lovelier in heaven's sweet climate, yet the same?

Gentlemen, in Professor Isaac A. Pennypacker, you and I, the Institution honored by his services, the Medical Profession, have met with no common loss.

More brilliant men there may, perhaps, have been, although

his abilities were of a very high order; more profuse in learning, although a ripe judgment, ample experience, and wide research, made him a Teacher truly eminent in his vocation; men of more varied accomplishments there may have been, or more popular address; but an honester, truer-hearted man, God never made upon this earth!

To this School, especially, he gave all his great mental energies; with the pride of a founder, which, in a certain sense, as it now stands, he was; it seems to us, now, like an edifice whose foremost column has fallen down; or a tree, whose topmost bough is broken off.

Too little time has, as yet, been afforded for the sap to cease to flow, for the wound to heal, over so great a grief, to enable us to speak calmly, or at length, of him we have thus lost.

Let us, then, faithfully trust him to our memories. In yours I am sure he will ever be treasured as he so well deserves. No man need wish to live longer than to leave so excellent a name behind him. No triumphs which this world could give, are worthy to be compared with the rest and the joy, which we may trust are his, now.

For him the glory; ours the gloom;
The narrow coffin, and the tomb,
Are ours alone.

And now, our last words must be said.

In this world, of short meetings and long farewells, of baffled hopes, and aspirations unfulfilled, of morning brightness, with clouds gathering as the day rolls on, and, only, by the light of a better world, stayed from setting in a night of storm and wreck, in such a world, we part. You, as well as we, must, no doubt, meet with some misfortunes, some suffering, some disappointments.

In separating from you, then, to-day, it is with the most fraternal, or paternal, interest, that we ask for the blessing of Heaven upon your career; so that, if knots, and thorns, and tangled vines should sometimes grow about your tree of life, they at least may be deciduous, while the bark, the sap, and the fruit, may be perpetual, eternal.

Farewell.