

**Medical commencement of the University of Pennsylvania, held on  
Saturday, April 5, 1851, with a valedictory by W. E. Horner.**

**Contributors**

Horner, William E. 1793-1853.

Hays, Isaac, 1796-1879

University of Pennsylvania. Department of Medicine.

National Library of Medicine (U.S.)

**Publication/Creation**

Philadelphia : L. R. Bailey, 1851.

**Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/xytqpvnt>

**License and attribution**

This material has been provided by This material has been provided by the National Library of Medicine (U.S.), through the Medical Heritage Library. The original may be consulted at the National Library of Medicine (U.S.) where the originals may be consulted.

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

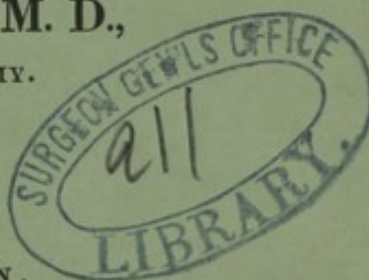
HORNER (W. E. J. Hays  
from Dr Horner

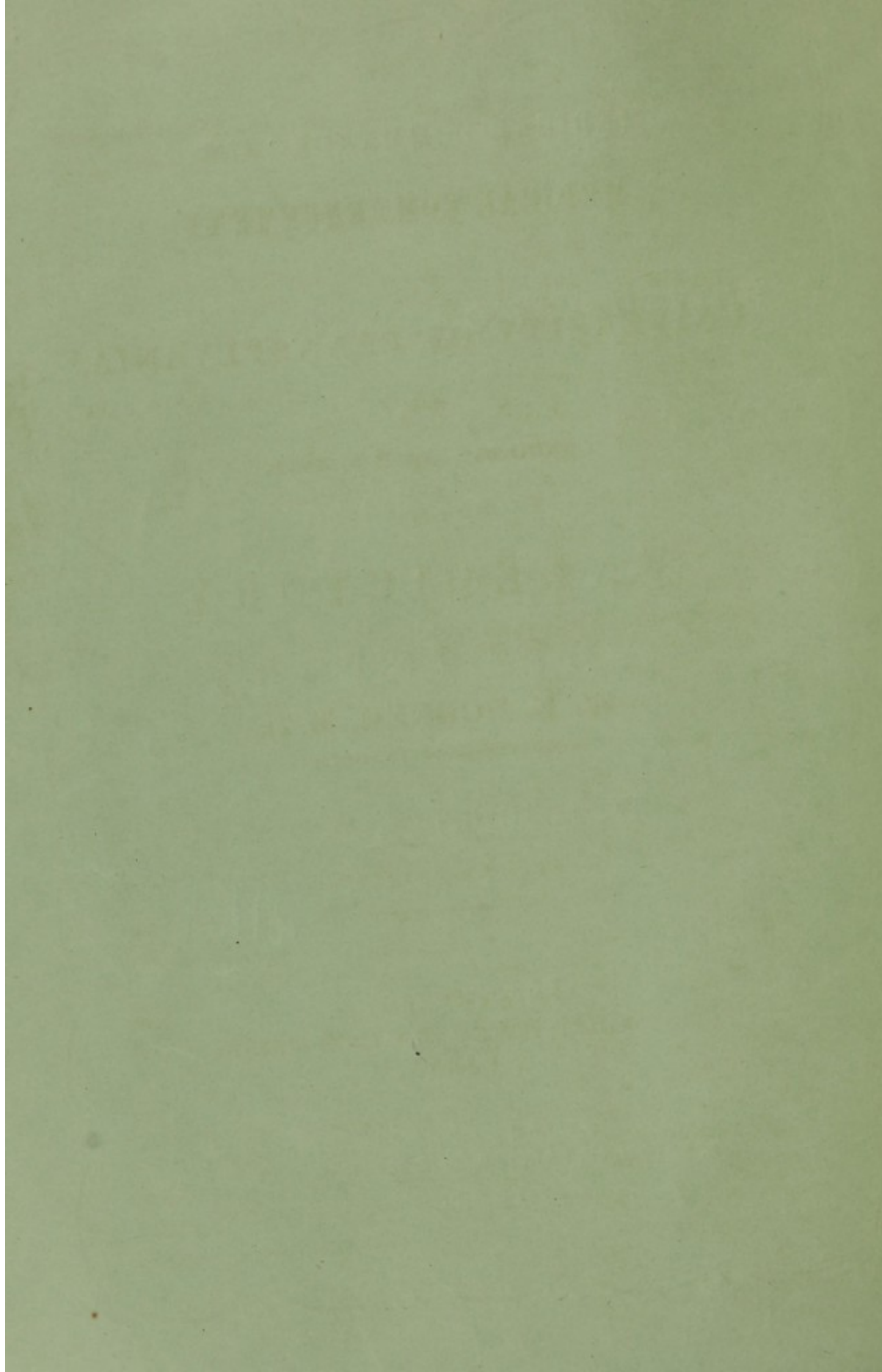
MEDICAL COMMENCEMENT  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA,  
HELD ON  
Saturday, April 5, 1851:  
WITH A  
VALEDICTORY

BY  
W. E. HORNER, M. D.,  
PROFESSOR OF ANATOMY.

SECOND EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA:  
L. R. BAILEY, PRINTER, 26 N. FIFTH STREET.  
1851.





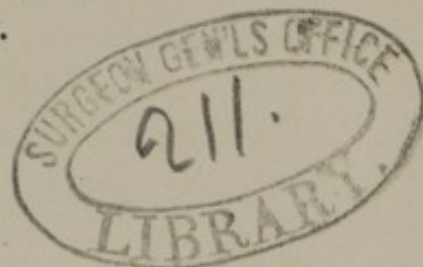
MEDICAL COMMENCEMENT  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA,

HELD ON  
Saturday, April 5, 1851:

WITH A  
VALEDICTORY

BY  
W. E. HORNER, M. D.,  
PROFESSOR OF ANATOMY.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SECOND EDITION.  
\_\_\_\_\_



PHILADELPHIA:  
L. R. BAILEY, PRINTER, 26 N. FIFTH STREET.  
1851.



MEDICAL COMMENT

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

1881

Prof. Werner's Valedictory Address.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

---

*University of Pennsylvania, }  
March 25th, 1851. }*

DEAR SIR:

The Students of the Medical Class of the University of Pennsylvania, desirous of having your parting counsel in a form suitable for future reference, earnestly solicit a copy of the address for publication. May we not hope, that your untiring devotion to their interests, will induce from you this additional favor.

With the kindest personal feelings, we have the pleasure, dear sir, of awaiting your immediate reply.

STEPHEN B. KIEFFER, of Pa.,  
A. OWEN STILLÉ, of Phila.,  
THOMAS J. GOFF, of Tenn.,  
AUGUSTUS WILSON, of Cuba,  
CHARLES H. WANNER, of Pa.,  
FREDERICK HORNER JR., of Va.,  
EDWARD A. SMITH, of Mass.,  
*Committee.*

---

*University of Pennsylvania, }  
March 26th, 1851. }*

*To Messrs. Kieffer, Stillé, Goff, Wilson, Wanner, Horner and Smith.*

GENTLEMEN:

In acquiescing in the request of the Medical Class, concerning my contemplated address to the Candidates of the Season, so politely conveyed in your communication of the 25th inst.; I beg you to believe that my only reluctance to its publication is a sense of the production having so few claims to this distinction. Wishing you individually, as well as your constituents, all the success and happiness in life which your well merited honors deserve,

I have the pleasure to subscribe myself

Your sincere friend,

W. E. HORNER,

*Professor of Anatomy.*



## VALEDICTORY.

---

COMMISSIONED to present this day the parting advice of the University of Pennsylvania to her children who are on the eve of issuing, many of them forever, from her walls, and in the hearing of this dignified audience, the witness of the ceremony just passed; it may be justly presumed by you, my fellow citizens, one and all, that I feel deeply the responsibility of the task. Conscious certainly of my own unfitness for its proper execution, I have on my right and on my left, colleagues and friends who could have brought much higher powers to its accomplishment, and secured a much larger amount of gratification for your time thus applied. It is, nevertheless, in just succession, a duty to use my best efforts in this cause, and to make amends, so far as practicable, for a deficient performance by the zeal and sincerity with which it is undertaken.

Under the circumstances of my position, I find myself addressing parties representing very different interests. 1. To the Audience I am introducing, as fit for their favorable notice, young gentlemen who have distinguished themselves in their studies, and obtained corresponding honors. 2. To the Graduates of the occasion I have to give those precepts, on which the good and the wise are all of common consent. 3. To the Constituted Authorities and Guardians of this ancient Institution, I am to report how far the trust committed to its Medical Faculty has been executed in the spirit of its appointment. 4. And to the Collective Assemblage, I have to exhibit the tendencies and policy of a School of Medicine which has occupied uninterruptedly, a large share of public confidence and attention, in this division of the globe, for nearly a century—a period certainly distant in its inception, when compared with what we see



around us, of men and of things, in this most progressive and favored of countries.

1st. To my polished and condescending auditors, among whom I see so many of the fair daughters of America, and of its noble matrons; who in their places will serve or have served in developing the high destinies of our glorious Union; let me say, you have just passed in review young gentlemen who, by unremitted ardor and attention in the prosecution of their studies, have well deserved the confidence reposed in them, and fully merited those ribbons, the badges of their success, with which their persons are decorated. I also add my attestation of the irreproachable and urbane conduct which has attended the progress of their studies.

The University of Pennsylvania has just cause of pride in the reflection, that the ancient renown of her graduates is in no wise tarnished by the class which, on this occasion, represents her. On the contrary, she confidently looks forward to the period when these, the youngest of her children, will be amongst the brightest of her ornaments, and serve also to perpetuate her reputation.

A careful examination and inquiry by the Medical Faculty into their qualifications, has satisfied the Faculty that their time has been diligently employed; that their proficiency in medicine is such, that the interests and dignity of the science are safe with them—and that the lives of the people may be confided to their care. They have now in custody a passport to rank and consideration wherever medical education is of any value; but that this passport may be so managed as to secure, augment, and perpetuate their respectability, there are some points of advice to them which their new position in society naturally suggests.

2d. Your recent studies, young gentlemen, have presented to you, as you know, an exposition of the structure and functions of the human frame—of the diseases and perversions of action to which it is liable, and of the resources furnished by botany, chemistry, pharmacy, and the principles of medical practice, to arrest its disorders, and to re-instate it in its healthy action. You have been laboring in a field of extensive and varied phi-



losophical research, each of the divisions of which when properly investigated, requires the almost entire time and powers of one individual. In the courses of instruction which you have just terminated, many of the ideas which have been imparted to you in one hour of lecturing, are the results of weeks of toil and of reflection on the part of your teachers. The remembrance that these and other acquisitions of knowledge are to you of recent date, and that they have been made with at least some degree of precipitation, will suggest to you that to be profitable they must be made familiar to the understanding, and deeply impressed upon the mind. There are many things in medicine which it would be want of loyalty to forget, and the moment that the physician suspects his memory of a treacherous part, he ought to repair its lapses. He ought indeed to be constantly on the alert for the possibility of such accidents, and to avert them by a frequent re-perusal of the elementary works which were the companions of his early studies.

It may not be apparent to you now, but the time will come when you will join in the general sentiment of the advanced members of the profession, that the best conducted medical education leaves much to be acquired at the subsequent periods of life. Lectures and demonstrations must unavoidably be more or less compendious; the limited appropriations of time under which they are given compel them to be so. The faculty of attention has also its own limits; with the most ardent inclinations for a branch, we cannot, so long as it is new to us, attach ourselves to its minute details. Our familiarity with it must advance—its ideas must be more or less incorporated with our common-place stock of knowledge, before we can feel adequate interest. It is only the accomplished scholar who can have such inspiration of his subjects, that when he turns his mind to them, they seem not matters of memory only, but points of personal identity or incorporation with his very nature. I have no doubt that there are among you those who strongly approve of what is now said, who are conscious that there are numerous subjects from which their attention has been wholly withheld or very partially given, and which it is their firm resolution to master at the first moment of leisure. Let me, then,



recommend every one of you who may be under this conviction of deficiencies, to carry his resolution into effect, and not to allow such time to pass as will extinguish almost the recollection that he ever had the intention.

There is unquestionably no profession which requires a more intimate acquaintance with its rules of practice and with its materials, than medicine. Cases of sudden emergency are constantly arising in which the self-possession of the practitioner is the only barrier between the patient and death—the slightest confusion of mind or agitation of hand becomes the turning point of safety. Every one should prepare himself for scenes of the kind, for there are none of us who have been engaged to any extent in the practice of medicine, who have not been called upon to take a part in them. Let me ask, from what source are we then to look for clear ideas, self-possession, and steady, decisive action, except in the information gained and digested in the hours of study? Lucky chance, or undeserved inspiration, cannot be expected at those periods of trial; and if we fail, we must appear afterwards as inadequate to the occasion, and as having proved ourselves incapable of fulfilling just expectations.

Besides a revision and a supplementary course of study, it is also incumbent on you to be a diligent observer of what is passing around, and to increase your stock of knowledge by a liberal intercourse with the most intelligent members of your profession, and by a perusal of the most esteemed medical periodicals and works of the day.

Indolence in the early years of professional life is by all means to be avoided; a pre-occupation of the public attention by seniors and by men of acknowledged skill, will necessarily leave the young practitioner in obscurity and without much reward. Many men are irrevocably discouraged by their deep sense of these disadvantages, and as they cannot get an immediate reward, have not the force of character to labor for the emoluments which come in, only after the expiration of ten or of fifteen years. The difference between individuals is strongly marked in this respect, because there are some who, notwithstanding this tedious postponement, yet consent to labor on, and to do so even diligently, under a strong hope that their reward



must at length come. In surveying the state of our profession here, elsewhere in the cities of the United States, and in the largest of cities in Europe, as London and Paris; it will be found that the most distinguished and able members of the time are those choice spirits who in early life devoted days and nights to study; and to threading obscure alleys, the abodes of sickness and of wretched poverty; but having now passed through that probation, they are enjoying all the advantages and dignity of their high calling.

With the time appropriated to his practice, to his studies, and to his notes, no physician can devote much to the ordinary pleasures and pursuits of life. He has indeed to exercise the most severe vigilance upon the distribution of his hours, to prevent the misapplication of them. If his talents are admired by the public, and called into action, he will find, that wherever he pays a professional visit, there is a strong disposition on the part of the patient, or his friends, to extend its duration by conversation of a familiar and interesting kind. In the more improved circles of society this is particularly the case; and the conversation from such quarters is so frequently sustained by high intelligence, grace and vivacity, that it requires the strongest effort to withdraw from it. To this invasion of time may be added the more seductive one of invitations for convivial purposes. These, apparently harmless indulgences, have to be watched so as to keep them within proper limits; but there can be no doubt of the sentiments and conduct proper to a physician, when he finds himself near a gambling table, a race course, or a political junto. They are all three so destructive to his good habits, and the feelings and passions they elicit are so entirely incompatible with his duties and improvement, that he cannot engage in them without serious detriment. Some writers are so strict on the head, of an exact and unflinching attention of a physician to his profession; that, they declare, he cannot while in practice take consistently upon himself the duties of another occupation or profession, however honorable or unexceptionable it may be. Thus he ought to decline serving as a legislator or acting as a magistrate.

A more common union of office, and perhaps a more natu-



ral one, is also prohibited, to wit, the ecclesiastical with the medical. In the early stages of human society, the ministers of religion, in being the depositories of the Divine will, also occupied themselves with the science and learning of the period. To this they were peculiarly fitted by their studious and contemplative lives. Under the then existing state of things, with a rude and incoercible barbarism on every side, the combination of medicine with the priestly office, *grew out of circumstances*, and was both justifiable and appropriate. In this country, where the population is in certain places thin, and the elements of society not yet arranged so as to assign to each individual his personal and exclusive duty, the clerical and the medical character are still found occasionally in the same man. No exception can be taken to this either; it is probably in most instances rather the result of social necessity than of choice. But in our larger cities, and more populous places where people of good education can be found in adequate numbers, this union of the two professions may be justly reprobated as inexpedient and weakening to both. Either assiduously served must occupy all the powers of reflection, the opportunities of study, and the practical attention of any one person. Where there is an entire transition from one profession to the other, it is of course unexceptionable as a point of conduct. It is generally beneficial to the profession of the last choice, for the step is mostly one of great deliberation, and the result of a strong conviction of the value and importance of the change, and of ardent attachment to its objects and duties. Some of the most interesting men of our country have made this transition from medicine to the pulpit, and are distinguished both by the ardor of their attachment to their new duties, and by the powerful illustrations and the exact method of reasoning derived from their first studies.

We can indeed scarcely admit less than a close affinity between the two professions, from their both having for object the diminution of human suffering; and from the same scenes of human wretchedness being exposed to both. One of the most memorable instances of this affiliation occurred during the reign of terror in the first French Revolution. The temples being desecrated—the altars upturned, and the clergy forced into exile;



numbers of the young men destined for the holy office being driven from their pursuit, entered as students of medicine, from its congeniality with what they desired. The Institutes and habits of Christianity then, should always be treated with the most marked respect by physicians, notwithstanding we may deprecate the professional amalgamation just alluded to as injurious to both. This respect we owe to them not only on account of their origin, but from their value in the social order. I assert, confidently, that the most desirable patients to the educated and polished physician, are such as are governed by the Christian code; they are more tractable, more confiding, more sincere in their intercourse with him—are less despondent in sickness, and are less under the influence of the various perversions of imagination and of judgment, which are the lot of the children of Adam.

The terms of intimacy between a physician and the families under his charge, are apt to become so close and binding, that whatever may be the disposition of parties to keep upon a relation strictly professional, this guard is finally relaxed and feelings of private esteem and interest are almost unavoidably generated. In this relation of the physician to the domestic circle, it is important for him to be, as far as human nature will allow, an example of virtue and of purity of conduct, so that nothing may be exhibited in his deportment and language unfavorable to a high state of morals. The deference paid to his judgment by the young as the guardian of health and the preserver of life, inclines them, if he be also a man of letters, to confide in his judgment *on points* which are extra-professional; *on principles* which decide the tone of character and of morals. Under such circumstances should his own notions of moral rectitude be perverted or wavering, the poison infused by his conversation may vitiate or corrupt deeply the morals of his admirers. Not unfrequently the most secret concerns of families are exposed to him either by accident or through deliberative action.

No physician can safely make a habit of speaking, even on the indifferent concerns of the families he attends; otherwise, he becomes a sort of news-monger for society, and when their domestic occurrences of a more serious and exciting kind attract



the attention of people, he is looked to as the person who can assuage the curious itchings of every body who chooses to interrogate him. It is scarcely necessary for me to say that information acquired through professional channels and confidence, should have a seal as solemn as that of death put upon it; and that neither fine nor imprisonment, nor torture should have influence enough to make the physician break this seal.

As the evening of life advances and closes, abundant will be the consolations of a physician's life thus well spent. Unstung by the remorse of conscience, his reflections and his self-examination prepare him for the great crisis which he has so often witnessed in patients. He feels as if his mission had been properly accomplished, and that usefulness to others having been its great and redeeming object, he had lived not for himself alone but for the comfort and happiness of those around him.

To the preceding suggestions in regard to the undisputed obligations and duties of a physician, let me call your attention to one of a more debateful kind, and concerning which there are now many differences of opinion and of action. I mean Medical Education. Immediately on leaving this room you become participants in the discussion, and must by your influence and example, affect its result. We all know and feel that in a country like ours, whose progressive march, outstripping all the ordinary rules of experience, seems to demand an experience of its own—that simple experiment is always largely in advance, for it belongs to the genius of our people. In one or more States of the Union any man may, if he chooses, legally plead his own cause; and in most of them any man who thinks himself in a state of medical inspiration, or wishes others to believe so, may undertake the cure of disease. This unrestrained freedom of action, in being perfectly in harmony with the cast of our institutions, applies itself also to medical education, and out of the various accommodations of the latter, each school is left entirely at liberty to follow its own bent. Some, therefore, hold up a higher scale, both in regard to acquisition and to time; others are contented to let their alumni settle for themselves, the amount of information they stand in need of for their particular localities and calls.



We also live at a period when individual will prevails, to a large extent, over system; when mere personal convenience frequently defies, successfully, the suggestions of experience and of good order; in other words, the world is progressive, and this spirit of progression is exhibited not only in matters which are decidedly useful, but in such as are simply experimental and abortive. We can scarcely doubt that full education in an exact science and one of observation can only be the result of time and attention, and yet there are too many persons who escape successfully from this law, not to leave a perpetual influence acting against it. The most splendid acquisitions of medical wealth in this and other cities, I cannot say *dignity*, are the accumulations of nostrum-venders and of charlatans. The prominence of such exceptions is such as not unfrequently to cast a doubt over the value of the entire science of medicine—and hence mere exceptions to a rule, affect the rule itself so as to put it in no small danger.

I am not prophet enough to foresee the final result of this struggle of antagonisms, but I trust it may be propitious to the cause of science. I at least have the consolation of representing here to-day an Institution which, the first in the country in its period of organization, has also led the way in the efforts to advance medical education—and while other institutions decline going counter to a popular current, is herself endeavoring to stem it, and, if possible, to give it a better direction. Whether we are to succeed or to fail in this effort, time has yet to determine. We would cordially invoke a greater number of sister schools to lay aside their fears and to co-operate with us. There will, I have no doubt, be a temporary sacrifice to them, as with us, but most probably an increased benefit will subsequently result. A sense of discrimination by the public may finally prevail, so as to understand that while there are many institutions having the right of issuing diplomas; so there must be other guarantees of proper education besides the mere exhibition of a parchment.

We can scarcely doubt that, viewing a diploma as a commodity, it will continue to be furnished from some place or other at the smallest expense of trouble and time that parties desiring



it may demand—that if it cannot be obtained in an accommodating way at one place, other places will be found more yielding; but it is also true that there are some objections to its mercantile character—that there are ulterior considerations of importance which must arise in the course of its use. First of all it is impossible, whatever may be the finish or size of a diploma, that it will cover the ground of information actually required in the practice of medicine. An immatured study leaves its proselyte without aid or resource, when he most requires both; he must unavoidably expose himself in the first crisis of professional skill. Secondly, a belief exists largely on the public mind that experience is the only safe guide in medical matters. A young man, returning to a neighborhood in which he was raised, is nearly always closely scanned in regard to his claims to public confidence in business; he is in fact more apt to be placed below than above the just point. But should his course of study be actually much shorter than what public conviction demands as necessary, he enters upon a career of not only severe competition, but of opposition from the beginning. That opposition will not be of the loud, clamorous kind which affords right and left an indication of its existence. But it is the opposition of the private conferences of individuals, the expression of distrust from one mind to another, without the parties to it having the slightest desire to injure or to disparage the individual concerned, but merely the disposition to find a true verdict. Instances of ignorance and want of skill may perhaps be quoted; the senior physicians are interrogated whether it is likely that such a young man had qualified himself as a practitioner of medicine in half the time only that every body said was necessary. The answer, without any inclination to injustice, will unavoidably be No: it will be said time must be taken, observations must be made on diseases, to justify any one in assuming the duties of practitioner of medicine. There is no doubt that these private channels of opinion will be fatal in many instances not only to the really undeserving, but also to such as by singular talent and fidelity to their studies do not merit such a catastrophe. To such of you, therefore, as aspire to the more elevated conditions of public confidence, let me commend not



only what you have just done, but also advise a continuance in close study and in ardent devotion to your profession.

Under the circumstances, you will find now on the return to your homes respectively that the currents of sympathy between yourselves and the older physicians of the neighborhood where you settle, are active—that they will consider you to have passed fairly through the probation of study recognized by experience and by public conviction of its utility and necessity.

The cure of disease is really a practical affair, and requires practical men to accomplish it; the mere abstractions of medical education afford but a feeble glimmering of light to the line of duty. Which of us in passing through an unknown country, would take a simple geographer for a guide, one whose observations had never extended beyond the limits of his library? would we not on the contrary, employ an experienced conductor—one who knew the fordings of the streams, the best passes of the mountains, the places of rest and of accommodation?

We have heard of a medical education for California. Suited however as California may be for rapid growth of every kind, we doubt much whether what may suit California, will also be acceptable everywhere else. Ample as that market may be for doctors of all kinds, it is probable that it will soon be overstocked, and as all who wish an education for it, cannot be accommodated there, the overstock may be in some difficulty to find a congenial soil elsewhere. But, watchful observers exist even there, in the persons of experienced and educated physicians who to a large extent influence the public mind, and determine more or less upon questions of personal merit.

Let us suppose that a man under some extraordinary faculty of acquiring knowledge, and devotion to his improvement, had surmounted the difficulties of a short course of studies. He finds himself, however, surrounded by others whose term of study has also been short, and who are graduates of the same school with himself. In case of his desiring countenance and assistance in a patient, are his fellow alumni the individuals that he calls to his succor? they are not; he knows too well their attainments: and he, therefore, instead of honoring those whom he would probably most desire, turns in a different



direction, and thus marks his own pretensions as undeserving. In this country we are as yet not prepared, as they are in Europe, for a finished course of study; we cannot take the five or the seven years required there as a probation for practice; but we may do much towards a nearer approach to that condition, and it is to be hoped that every man will in his place contribute thereto by his example and his influence.

3. To you, gentlemen Trustees, the dignified and the estimable guardians of this ancient corporation, I may say that the changes recently introduced into it, resulting as a consequence of the ill health and the retirement of one of its most illustrious Professors after a service of nearly forty years; have, as you know, put a new aspect on two branches—that of the *Materia Medica* and that of the Practice of Medicine. The first it is acknowledged generally, has been most ably sustained by its present incumbent, Dr. Carson, who, in bringing to its support a well tried experience of many years in lecturing, from the College of Pharmacy, and also the science of an accomplished botanist, has proved all that the most ardent friend hoped for or expected. The second branch, that of the Practice of Medicine, by Dr. Wood, has obtained a system and an illustration which probably gives it a position unrivalled in any part of the world. Preceded by a publication on this branch unequalled in popularity by any which went before it either here or in Europe; the simply didactic lessons of it have now their illustration in every lecture by models and by drawings of a most finished and expensive character—by contributions from the pathological collection of the Anatomical Museum, and by the living exposition of disease within the walls of the Pennsylvania Hospital. A liberal and magnanimous spirit in appropriating freely its purse and its high mental energies, to the elevation of an important branch of medicine, to the bringing it up to the actual state of the times—I may justly say to the going ahead of the latter and making itself a leader of the times themselves—has for the last course done even more than was expected from it. We may all feel justly proud that our distinguished colleague, in such a voluntary extension of his duties, called for certainly by no private necessities, has done what will add no



small amount to the laurels of a school, as illustrated by the names of a Shippen, a Rush, a Wistar, a Physick, a Chapman, and others.

The devotion of your honorable body, as individuals, to other pursuits than medicine, of a high and intellectual order; may possibly have prevented you from learning to its full extent that a question of great importance agitates the medical mind of the United States, to wit, medical education preparatory to practice. The points of this question are the amount of study due from the student, the duration of study, and the responsibility and obligations of schools in regard to it. Some assert that the medical schools are all under obligations to listen to the voice of the profession in this matter, while others consider that the medical schools are under no further obligation than to take care of their own interests. The medical schools for the most part have taken the latter view, and under it present almost every diversity and degree of requisition which one might suppose. In some cases, but little further responsibility in the matter is assumed than that of performing according to promise the curriculum of lectures; the students graduate almost as a matter of course when the turn comes round, and thus the public is left only with its own sagacity, as in other matters, to learn who is well qualified as a physician. I propose, then, on this occasion to express a few sentiments on various points of this subject of medical education.

The position of this school is at present strikingly singular. We have announced to us from every quarter, that the sessions of cotemporary schools have been brought to a close, and that their commencements have already occurred, several weeks ago. We on the contrary, have only within a few days been released from the obligation of lectures; and are at this comparatively late period, bestowing the reward of studies in the form of a diploma. Every one, whose attention is turned to the subject, may properly ask, why is this so? and many actually present this question. To you it may be necessary to say, that in our present attitude, we are in correspondence with the views deliberately expressed of the American Medical Association, which has now for five years in succession held its



sessions, and strenuously urged its convictions, on the important point of an improved medical education. It had been perceived that an advance ought to take place upon preceding usages,—that young men should go into the practice of medicine with higher attainments than formerly: the older practitioners were beginning to feel themselves incommoded by the numerous settlements of the younger ones around them, said to be badly educated.

Every cross-road it was alleged, was not supplied but infested by its young doctor, and public disparagement of the profession had gone so far, that the annual egress of young men from the schools, was spoken of with as much levity as the flight of a flock of wild pigeons, and with almost as little regard for it. We have, moreover, lately seen announced that an old physician had made application to the legislature of New York, for bleeding in the case of disease to be made a criminal offense. Not knowing the gentleman, we may conclude that if his views are not those of the deepest wisdom, they at least express an experience derived from some disastrous proceedings in the case of badly instructed practitioners, possibly very young and inexperienced ones.

In the uneasy state of the public mind just alluded to, it was hoped that a great national embodying of opinion, would introduce improvements and correct abuses; and that by the discountenancing of such schools as refused to acquiesce in its decisions, and throwing patronage upon such as united in the movement, everything would be accommodated properly: Or that, at any rate, two grades of practitioners would be formed, one of advanced education and whose course of study and amount of information could bear successfully all the scrutiny likely to be directed to it; while the other grade would not fail to experience the disadvantage of their more limited claim for public consideration, and that the final result would thus be improvement everywhere, and abatement of the evils in existence.

The oldest school in the country was designated particularly, as the one to lead off in this matter, and it has been done in good faith, both from respect to the source from which the idea emanated, and from a sincere conviction of the dignity and utility



of such a policy. In this, there were many considerations which governed the Medical Faculty of this University, and that we have acted sincerely in our professions, I adduce the following proofs.

The Session for 1850-51 opened on Monday, October 7th. The first week having been given up to introductorys, the lectures began regularly on the 14th of the same month, and with the exception of a holiday for a week at Christmas, were continued uninterruptedly till the last week of March, 1851. Our lectures, in occupying twenty-two weeks exclusive of the opening week and of Christmas, presented a curriculum, including hospital instruction, of about seven hundred and four lectures of one hour each, a duration we believe much in advance of the curriculum of any other in the country. The University of Virginia by her session of thirty-six weeks, and the very commendable diligence of her professors, so arranges her studies, that they may be considered as amounting to about six hundred and forty-eight lectures, should we include in the latter the time devoted to the very useful practice of recitation, the presence of the students at which we understand is obligatory. The latter with us is generally done at extra hours, on the part of such professors as choose to engage in it, but is chiefly in the hands of the junior members of the profession.

Our course of Demonstrative Medicine was rich and instructive, in the variety of cases which it brought forward ; and our course of Demonstrative Surgery, presented every week from its opening, to the close of the same on the 1st day of March, cases of absorbing interest, involving many varieties of capital operations as they are called. We might devote a few lines to an allusion to them, were this a proper place.

While these steps were in progress at the University, the Pennsylvania Hospital was co-operating by the lectures of Dr. Wood, as the Professor of Clinical Medicine also, and by the lectures of Dr. Norris, Professor of Clinical Surgery.

Of the whole matriculating list, amounting to four hundred and sixty-eight all told, we may say in round sum that four hundred and ten, at least, were regular students. On the matricu-



lating list, there were sixty graduates, about forty-three being from the University of Pennsylvania, and seventeen from other institutions, some of whom contemplated finishing their studies by graduation in this Institution. Two hundred and thirty-five were first course students, and one hundred and seventy-five were consequently second course or more. Of the present graduating list, amounting to one hundred and sixty-one, there were forty-three *ad eundem* candidates. The relation of graduates to students is therefore about forty in one hundred—a proportion not exceeding an average of twelve years, as presented in our annual report for the year 1845.

It will thus be seen that this Institution has acted sincerely under its professions to aid the medical body at large, in the advance of education, and in putting its honors under such restrictions as may be most conducive to this end;—that we have, on the present occasion, actually graduated only in a ratio heretofore observed, and perhaps in smaller number. Under the circumstances, undiminished confidence may be placed in the administration of this Institution by parents and preceptors, the public at large may possibly unite in this sentiment, and will, I hope be gratified. But what is more, the alumni of this school will I trust have the particular benefit of this confidence, by a large share of its immediate enjoyment, and the increased skill with which they will be endowed, so as to justify it. When I inform you, gentlemen, that out of the small number in the aggregate of medical students belonging to this populous Emporium, sixty-four were entered for the course of lectures in this Institution, with the view to obtain their degree in it, you will then know whether the present policy of the University in regard to course of study, is the most consonant to public feeling in Philadelphia.

From the solicitude exhibited by letter and by personal applications on this subject, I am induced to conclude that the class of this Institution could have been augmented from fifty to one hundred at least, possibly more; by its throwing off the restraints which have been placed upon the conferring of its honors, and upon the admissions to its lectures. It has, however, preferred the honorable course of falling into the views of the



American Medical Association, and in that way exhibiting its loyalty to the important cause in which we are engaged. But even with this curtailing policy actually in exercise, and with an antagonistic action in the general tendency of things in this country, we have had a class larger than could be accommodated with convenience in one of the most important lecture rooms; and it will therefore be the duty of the Faculty so to extend the accommodations, that this inconvenience may not be repeated, unless a class should convene much beyond any size heretofore in our walls.

Gentlemen, with this address I close a circle of forty courses of lectures in the University of Pennsylvania. The forty years which they represent, have been in every way the eventful ones of my life: they include education, business, wife, children and friends. My connection with this distinguished school was first as a student; your partialities, too little merited, elevated me at an early period of life, to the honorable distinction of a place in its medical faculty. I became finally the successor in full of a Shippen, a Wistar, and a Physick, names too illustrious to need at the present moment further notice. I now find myself, though not very old, yet at a period of life when most men may look for retirement at a day not distant; either from the necessities of health or in view of making place for the deserving who are close upon their steps. As this is moreover the last time in which I am likely, in the regular order of rotation, to perform an office similar to the present, I will take this only opportunity of speaking strongly, but with all respect to you.

Let me then say, I trust that at no period, either while I am with you or subsequently, the high principles which have hitherto governed this school may be abated; or that an honor suited only to minds of the higher cast of intelligence, shall be permitted to become a simple commodity, whose price of time and of labor is to be regulated by the freedom, with which the supply may come from other quarters. As we have heretofore survived the influence of the latter policy from various directions, ever since my first connection with you, so may you survive it long after I am gone.

4. It is to many a subject of regret that the circumstances of



our country do not admit of those positive legal enactments on medical qualification, that are found in the kingdoms of Europe. As this is an affair under the action of state legislatures, I do not myself entertain any expectation that uniformity of an advanced kind will ever exist; it could only emanate from a national body. The American Medical Association have now been repeatedly brought together, with the principal object of action, to prevail on the schools to extend their course of lectures, and to elevate the standard of medical education by requiring more on examination; but as yet their efforts have not succeeded.\* Our own School and one in New York, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, have followed this expression of opinion. Some of the schools have extended their term a little, but many have stood aloof from it, with positive disregard of the recommendation; and so far from falling into the measure, are pursuing almost the contrary course. The profession itself does not appear to me to have acted as energetically in this matter, as may have been expected from all that was said. It will certainly be deplorable if, after all, the ebbing of opinion should leave things in a worse state than previously. That there will be a uniform code for the whole United States is, however, very improbable: it is not at all likely that rural districts where the annual receipt of the physician does not exceed more than four or five times that of a day laborer; will be furnished with physicians whose education has cost a very great sum of money, and a long devotion of time. The physician will necessarily be assimilated to the condition of those around him.†

The practical duration of medical studies, as observed by usage of the Medical Schools of the United States, varies from twelve months to eighteen months or three years, according to the school. I believe that none of the schools admit of much less

\* Possibly some good would arise from an arrangement under the patronage of the American Medical Association, having in view a beneficial object as an annuity fund for decayed physicians or their families after their death, the admission to which, besides the ordinary premium, should be qualified by medical education of a certain standard.

† In Europe, provision is made for such a state of society by the issue of licenses of an inferior order, and by the Apothecaries practising.



time than twelve months, or demand by positive requisition more than three years;\* though some of the graduates are found to have accomplished four years or more.

The course of education on the continent of Europe is widely different from our own; from five to seven years of study, and under the most favorable circumstances, are demanded. If one of their eminent savans, their Mullers, their Civiales, their Velpeaus, their Rokitanskys, their Von Rosas, and their Louis, were told that in the United States of America, a Doctor of Medicine could be made and was really made in eighteen months, his eyes would open to their utmost limit. He may have heard of California, and of its unequalled progress and development. He may have read the enchanting imaginings of Ovid† on the reproduction of the human race, after the great flood: by Deucalion and Pyrrha casting the stones of the earth behind them. He may say with the poet himself,

“Saxa (quis hoc credat, nisi sit pro teste vetustas)?

Ponere duritiem cœpere, suumque rigorem,

Molliriue mora, mollitaque ducere formam.”

He may admit the possibility of a crop of armed men growing up from the field, in which the warrior Cadmus had sown the dragon's teeth. In all this a European savant might conceive that a new empire could arise in two or three years, by hordes of a numerous and enterprizing people migrating into it—that a creative power from stones or bones or any inorganic or organic element whatever, by an effort of its energy, could reproduce a nation or even re-people the world,—but it would remain to him an incomprehensible enigma, except on the principle of divine inspiration, that in a period of time too short in Europe for learning even the meaning and use of medical terms—the same time applied in the United States of America, was so managed as to qualify in Chemistry,

\* It is remarkable that while these mitigations prevail on a higher branch of medicine, a collateral one and in theory at least, under the direction of the first, is more exacting. The Apothecaries of Philadelphia, members of the College of Pharmacy, have to study four years for a degree, while Medical Colleges of the United States are finishing their studies in from one to three years.

† Metamorph. lib. i. 400.



in *Materia Medica*, in *Anatomy*, in *Obstetrics*, in *Surgery*, in the *Institutes of Medicine*, and in the *Practice of Medicine*—that in a science of confessed obscurity to experience itself, the Neophyte in *Medicine* should in eighteen months here, not only learn to distinguish between equivocal and unfrequent diseases, but moreover, acquire the skill to cure them; and that if any one doubted such ability, there was the diploma to give it legal affirmation.

It would be a matter of just curiosity to see which one of two physicians of this rapid growth, would by choice trust his life to the skill of the other, in a dangerous complaint. And what would be still more curious to learn, is which member of a medical faculty, recommending so directly to public patronage an individual thus superficially educated, would take medicine at his hands, and especially in a doubtful disease.

It has been often observed, that progress in knowledge tends to diminish one's confidence, and to increase his humility. Let us listen to the reflections of a powerful mind in the following words:

“What have those geniuses, who have descended to the foundations of science, and risen by the boldest flights to the loftiest speculations, told us? After having reached the utmost limits of the space which it is permitted to the human mind to range over—after having trodden the most secret paths of science, and sailed on the vast ocean of moral and physical nature—the greatest minds of all ages have returned dissatisfied with the results. They have seen a beautiful illusion appear before their eyes,—the brilliant image which enchanted them, has vanished; when they thought they were about to enter a region of light, they have found themselves surrounded with darkness, and they have viewed with affright the extent of their ignorance. It is for this reason that the greatest minds have so little confidence in the strength of the human intellect, although they cannot but be fully aware, that they are superior to other men. The sciences, in the profound observation of Pascal, have two extremes which meet each other; the first is, the pure, natural state of ignorance in which men are at their birth; the other extreme is, that at which great minds arrive when, hav-



ing reached the utmost extent of human knowledge, they find that they know nothing, and that they are still in the same state of ignorance as at first.”\*

In medicine, this feeling of affright at our insufficiency advances as we ourselves advance in observation. The neophyte then who launches his barge upon an ocean of this extent, without misgivings and without remorse, must have no thin cloud of darkness enveloping his mind, which prevents him from seeing the hazardous character of the enterprise. To what extent he is morally culpable, is under the decision of a tribunal higher than one on earth.

I acknowledge again, freely, that in our widely extended country, with its diversified interests and condition of things, an identical system of education for all is impossible, it is the quadrature of a circle which cannot be accomplished. On the contrary, I admit that every school has a right to determine for itself, a plan of education which may be the most congenial to its honest convictions, and to its interests; and that it may possibly, and does carry out its principles, such as they are, with as much or more sincerity and good faith, than we ourselves can claim. There are, however, many schools unquestionably in the United States, so well placed by their locality and just estimation, that they can stand shoulder to shoulder with us in this enterprise of securing higher attainments. Let them henceforth come forward; their success, if accomplished, will be the more glorious; they will have the additional satisfaction of being able to submit it to any kind of analysis, and to prove that what otherwise may possibly be attributed to a mitigation of study and of acquisition; is on the contrary a well founded and legitimate result of dignified exertion.

With the above views, my young friends, I now take an affectionate adieu. May you henceforth enjoy all the advantages of time so well devoted to your studies.

\* Balmes, p. 45. Balt. edit., 1851.





the teacher the most varied of human knowledge, they find that they know nothing and that they are still in the same state of ignorance as at first.

In medicine, the teacher of all that is our humanity and youth are we equally as a teacher in observation. The teacher then who teaches the laws upon an organ of the system, without imagination and without reason, must have no idea of the human mind, which is the subject of his study. To what extent the teacher character of the teacher. To what extent he is mostly capable, in order to the teacher of a subject higher than the one at hand.

Let us return again, then, to our widely extended country with its diversified interests and conditions of things, an ideal system of education for all is impossible, it is the duty of a state which cannot be accomplished. On the contrary, I think that every school has a right to determine for itself, a plan of education which may be the most congenial to its local conditions, and to its interests; and that it may possibly, and does carry out its principles, such as they are, with as much of more dignity and good feeling than we ourselves can claim. There are, however, many schools unquestionably in the United States, so well placed by their location and the assistance that they can stand shoulder to shoulder with us in this struggle of securing higher education. Let their progress come forward; their success, if accomplished, will be the more potent; they will have the additional satisfaction of being able to submit it to any kind of analysis, and to prove that what others may possibly be entitled to a recognition of study and of reputation; is on the contrary a well founded and legitimate result of dignified exertion.

With the above views, my young friends, I now take an affectionate adieu. May you incessantly enjoy all the advantages of time so well devoted to your studies.

Yours, P. M. Hall, M.D.

