

A clergyman's idea of a model physician : an address delivered at the commencement of the Albany Medical College, June 8, 1858 / by Duncan Kennedy.

Contributors

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Kennedy (D.)
A Clergyman's Idea of a Model Physician:

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A D D R E S S

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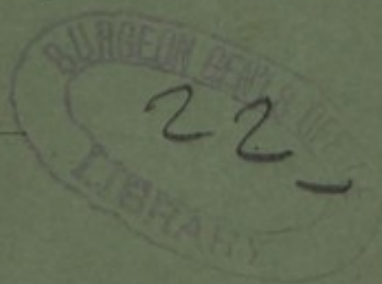
A T T H E C O M M E N C E M E N T

O F T H E

ALBANY MEDICAL COLLEGE,

J U N E ' 8 , 1 8 5 8 .

BY DUNCAN KENNEDY, D. D.



ALBANY:

MUNSELL & ROWLAND, 78 STATE STREET.

1858.



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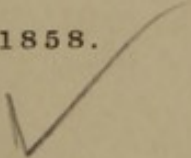
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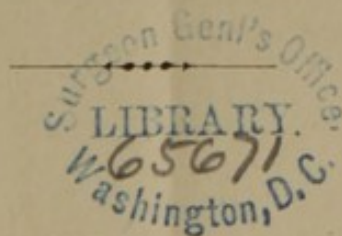
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ALBANY MEDICAL COLLEGE,

JUNE 8, 1858.



BY DUNCAN KENNEDY, D. D.



ALBANY :

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1858.

MEMORANDUM

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide a summary of the information received from the various sources regarding the activities of the group during the past year. The information is being presented in a concise and clear manner for the information of the Board of Directors.

- 1. The group has been active in the field of research and development.
- 2. The group has been active in the field of education.
- 3. The group has been active in the field of social work.
- 4. The group has been active in the field of public health.
- 5. The group has been active in the field of community development.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

ALBANY, July, 1858.

Rev. DUNCAN KENNEDY, D. D. :

Dear Sir—Having listened with great pleasure and profit to your interesting and instructive Address delivered before the last Graduating Class of the Albany Medical College, we solicit of you the favor of a copy of the same for publication. Having gratified us by its preparation and delivery, we trust you will add one favor more by complying with this our request.

Your obedient servants,

ALDEN MARCH,
JAS. McNAUGHTON,
JAMES H. ARMSBY,
J. V. P. QUACKENBUSH,
THOMAS HUN,
CHAS. H. PORTER,
AMOS DEAN.

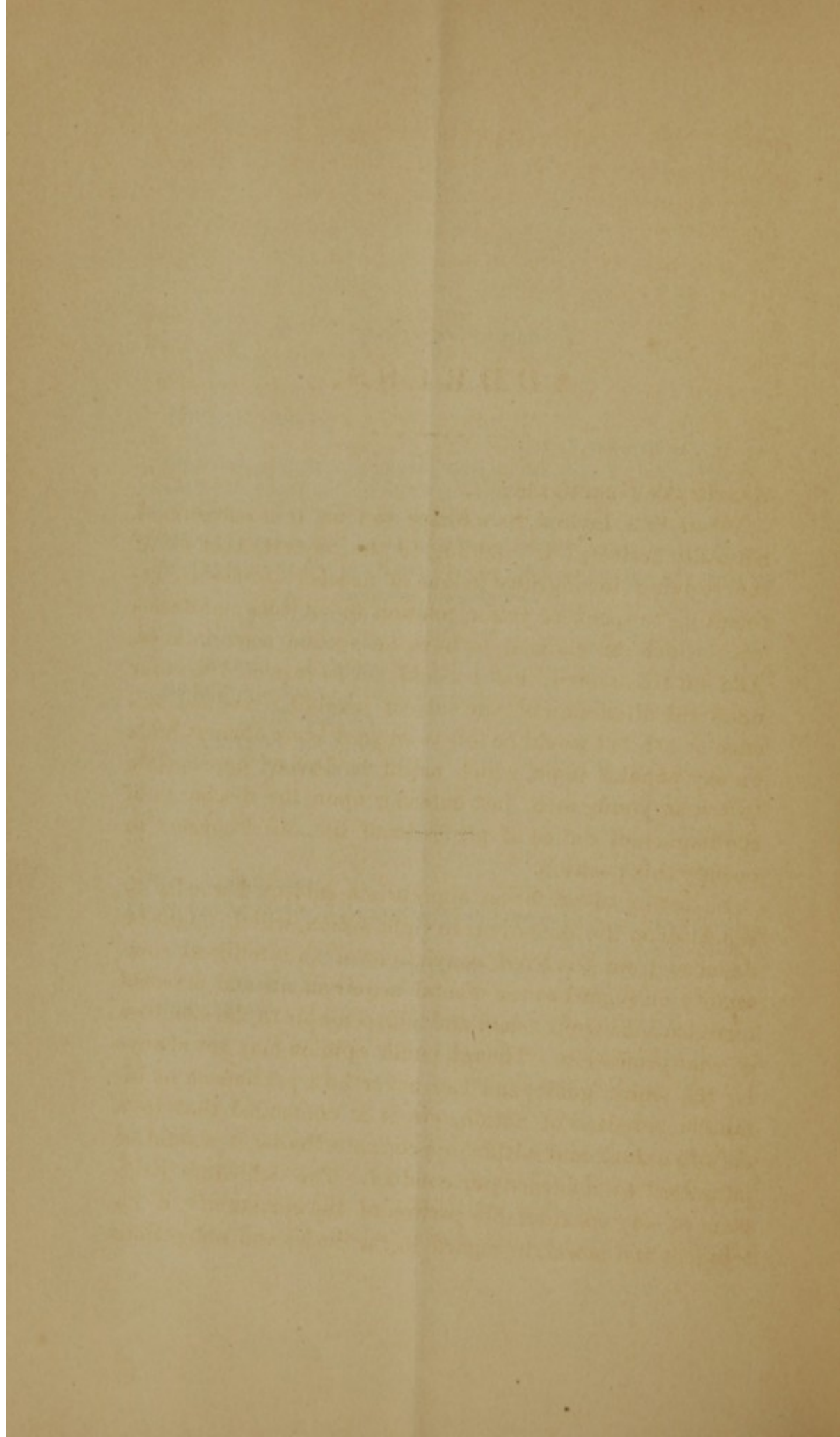
TROY, July 26, 1858.

Gentlemen—In compliance with your request, I submit a copy of my Address to your disposal.

With assurances of personal regard, I am, gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

D. KENNEDY.



ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN GRADUATES :

When first invited to address you on this occasion, I naturally hesitated in yielding to the request, because of the seeming incongruity in one of another profession attempting to speak to you in relation to subjects and duties with which he claimed to have no special acquaintance. And not till assured, that I would not be expected to enter upon the discussion of any subject involving medical science or art, but would be left to suggest some obvious hints on any popular topic, which might be deemed appropriate to you as young men, just entering upon the discharge of the important duties of professional life, did I consent to occupy this position.

In casting about for an appropriate subject, I was led to reflect upon the incentives to right action, which might be deduced from the fixed convictions of an intelligent community, in regard to the mental acquirements and personal qualifications appropriate and indispensable to the members of your profession. Though public opinion may not always be the safest guide, and can never be a permanent or infallible standard of action, yet it is contended that to a certain extent and within appropriate limits, it should be permitted to influence our conduct. The deliberate judgment of any considerable portion of the community, if intelligent and moral, in regard to the duties and obligations

of any class of men, professional or otherwise, is not likely to vary much from the line of rectitude by which every honest mind should seek to be guided. The moral sense of sober, right thinking persons, has prescribed certain qualifications and a certain routine of duty for clergymen, and the standard is, for the most part, acknowledged to be correct, as it coincides with the general requirements and sanctions of the divine word. So also in regard to the legal profession. And the same authority has pronounced upon the qualifications and actions becoming the physician; and we have no reason to conclude that its demands are either unjust or tyrannical. It should not then be a matter of indifference to any young man to be distinctly informed what is expected of him when he becomes an actor in the chosen sphere of his future life. He is not wise who declares himself uninfluenced by the opinions of his equals; he is self-conceited and rash who ventures to scout the convictions of those who are his superiors in years and practical wisdom, and to whose countenance and sympathy he is to be so much indebted for future success. "I care not what people may think of me," is the language, not of a noble, independent nature, anxious to appropriate all lawful appliances for doing good, but of a reckless, ignoble spirit, which can neither appreciate the delicacy, nor comprehend the force of refined and elevated sentiments.

As an humble representative, on this occasion, of a profession in some respects allied to your own, and with the members of which you will frequently come in contact in the exercise of common sympathies and duties, I trust I shall not be found trenching on professional courtesy in the announcement and treatment of my subject, to wit: A CLERGYMAN'S IDEA OF A MODEL PHYSICIAN.

It is always profitable—if not always agreeable—to know what others who do not look through the same professional medium with ourselves, *think of us, and expect of us*. And I assure you, that should some future occasion serve, I

should like to hear one of your number discourse on a physician's idea of a model clergyman. I doubt not the theme would be well and ably treated.

The first attribute which in our estimation marks a model physician, is a just estimate of the dignity and importance of his profession. The science of medicine is founded on the study of man's physical and moral constitution, in health and in disease. It has its origin in the noblest impulses of our nature, as its high mission is to relieve human suffering. The period from which it dates its existence is coincident with the advent of physical sorrows into our world ; and it takes high rank among those benevolent appointments, by which a beneficent Providence has sought to meliorate the condition of the race. Long before Chiron, Æsculapius, Hippocrates, Celsus, or Galen, became known as the world's benefactors, noble minds were, doubtless, exerting their powers in discovering remedies for human ills, and benevolent hearts panted to alleviate human sufferings. And because of the accordance of the functions of the profession with the sacred laws of religion, it was early called the " Divine Art," and among different nations of antiquity its practice was confined to the priesthood. Of its intrinsic dignity it can not be divested either by the humble condition of its votary, or the repulsiveness of many of its remedial agencies, or the obscurity and poverty of any to whom it extends its benefits. It has to do primarily with human life. And much that is sacred in that heaven-bestowed gift, much that is weighty in the responsibilities of its protraction or abbreviation, much that is solemn in the destiny dependent *hereafter*, upon the healthful exercise of its functions in the *present state*, attaches directly and inevitably to the vocation you have chosen. Your profession has to do with the mind as well as the body ; nay, it takes even a higher range, for conscience itself lies not beyond the reach of physical influences. Your grand mission then is to relieve human suffering in all the diversified forms in which

it may come before you. It is yours to avert disease, or to seek its removal where it has already seized upon its victim, to soften the pillow of the languishing, to mitigate the agonies of pain, and to inspire the desponding spirit with the cheering impulses of hope. When the destroying angel is breathing contagion upon the community, when the pestilence is walking in darkness, and the destruction is wasting at noon-day, it is yours to take your stand in its course, to interpose the potency of your profession, like the incense of Aaron, between the living and the dead, that the plague may be stayed.

Human happiness, in its deepest relationships in this world, so far as dependent upon material circumstances, is, perhaps, more directly affected by your profession than by any other. Of what value are the richest gifts of Providence to him who is incapacitated by disease to enjoy them? What though the landscape be diversified with scenes swelling into mountain grandeur and sweeping into extended valleys and plains, and canopied with a firmament studded with suns and stars, when the organ of vision has become so impaired that it can not behold them! What though field and forest be melodious with murmuring brooks and the singing of birds, when the ear is deaf to the harmony of sounds! What though the richest treasures of science and literature be opened to the mind, inviting its investigations and offering its most brilliant rewards, when that mind is the tenant of a deranged physical organism, able to bear no exertion, every nerve in which has become the medium of pain and depression, leaving the soul to desire supremely a deliverance from the body of this death! Here it is the province of the physician to exert his power and bestow the blessings of his art; to remove the film from the blinded eye, to unstop the deaf ear, and to restore the disturbed harmonies of the physical constitution, that the mind may exercise untrammelled its noblest energies.

We may loose ourselves in admiration of the astronomer,

the historian, the poet, the warrior, and bend in reverence while we contemplate their lofty intellects and grand achievements; but we may nevertheless ask, what special relief has the discovery of a new planet, the composition of a new poem, or a signal military triumph brought to the physical sufferings of diseased humanity. I deem it not too much to say, so far as the physical sorrows of the race are concerned, that he who discovered the circulation of the blood, or established the theory of vaccination, or first couched the blinding cataract has done more to increase the sum of human happiness than the boldest astronomer, the sublimest poet, or the most successful warrior the world has ever seen. Such, gentlemen, is something of the dignity and importance of your profession. See that you place a just estimate upon it by acting in accordance with the responsibilities it involves, and the high honors that belong to it.

Another element that enters into a clergyman's idea of a model physician is, the possession of a thorough professional education.

An adequate knowledge of the elements of any pursuit which a person has resolved to prosecute in life, is essential alike to eminence and success. Little or nothing can be accomplished by proxy, in any department of human enterprise. The miner must know how to sink the shaft, the pioneer to swing the axe, and the farmer to direct the plow, before the ore will yield its treasures, the mighty forest be prostrated, or the soil produce the golden harvest. The inventor and the artisan must understand the laws which apply to their respective departments of genius and labor, or each will be baffled in the accomplishment of his designs, and be left to the disappointment of unrequited toil. Thus with the merchant, the navigator, the historian, and the professional man. The advocate who argues his cause upon false presumptions of law, is sure to be cast in his suit, to injure himself and his too confiding client.

The statesman who is ignorant of political economy and international rights is always liable to give a wrong direction to public affairs, and to drive the ship of state upon the rocks and quicksands of internal disorders and external conflicts. And what shall we say of the evils that must be caused by him, who assumes to be the guardian of health and life to his fellow-men, while ignorant of the means by which health is to be promoted and life to be preserved ! The science of medicine, in its material aspects, occupies a broader range than that of law or divinity. A larger number of objects is brought under its view, and a greater number of physical sciences is made tributary to its advancement and perfection ; it is, in fact, a combination of many sciences. The first chapter it opens to the investigation of the student is the human frame, "fearfully and wonderfully made," in its complex structure, in its subtle functions, in the laws by which it is influenced, and in the mysterious principle of life by which it is animated. It treats of man as an intellectual being, endowed with the capacity of thought and reason ; seeks to ascertain the nature of the ties that bind the material with the immaterial, and to define their mutual relations and reciprocal influences. The anatomist and physiologist have for ages directed their attention to this great subject, and numerous and valuable as have been their discoveries, they still acknowledge that much yet remains to be accomplished, and that many laurels may yet be won by the adventurous student in this magnificent field of investigation.

To meet the demands of this complex organism, in view of the obstructions and derangements to which it is constantly liable, the physician has to put the whole material world under tribute. He is to obtain his preventives and curatives from the recesses of the earth and the depths of the ocean, from mountain and valley, from air, heat, light and electricity, subjecting all to the various changes, modifications and combinations which chemical and mechanical

action is capable of producing, to render them adapted to the diversified wants and conditions of the human system.

And, now, is all this to be accomplished by minds uneducated in the laws which God has written in every department of the physical creation? Or when remedial agents are thus collected from the four quarters of the world, are they to be committed—containing, as many of them do, most powerful latent energies—to the random prescriptions of mere sciolists? It can not indeed be expected that every practitioner should, for himself, enter the laboratory and go through all the processes of forming his *materia medica*; yet he ought to be thoroughly acquainted with the distinctive properties of every medicine he employs, and with its adaptation to the condition of the system to which it is administered, else he labors in the dark and is as likely to kill as cure. While it is justly conceded that the medical profession as such, is distinguished for its scientific attainments, must it not at the same time be admitted, that a large number of the great body of practitioners devote too little time to actual study, though they are governed almost entirely by rules, formulas and prescriptions furnished by others, the correctness of which they neglect to examine, and the adaptedness of which, in given cases, they fail to consider; and that there would be less of suffering in the world, were the laws ordained for the government of our physical and mental organizations more thoroughly investigated and more faithfully regarded. If clear perceptions of truth; if strong powers of analysis; if ability to reason with unerring logic, and a capacity of concentrating thought to the highest degree of intensity, be demanded by any profession in the world, it is pre-eminently demanded by that of medicine. It is true, all can not become distinguished, but all should set their mark high, and strive not only to grasp what has been achieved by others, but to add, if possible, to the common stock of medical knowledge

and attainment. This is the only standard which the model physician can consent to adopt.

Be this standard yours, young gentlemen. You have finished your course here, it is true, and you go forth with the honors of your Alma Mater. But you have as yet acquired only the elements of your profession. Here, only the foundation has been laid; you have yet to erect the superstructure; and whether that shall be contracted and low and mean, or shall swell out into magnificent proportions, perfect in its model, massive in its workmanship, and enduring in its grandeur, will depend, under God, upon your own individual exertions. Let your purpose then be elevated, your resolution strong, and your motto excelsior!

Another thing which enters into a clergyman's conception of a model physician is, that he should possess a generous and magnanimous spirit. The medical profession is eminently a benevolent one, and he who would adorn it, must seek to act in harmony with its nature. The physician is appointed to the walks of mercy, to relieve suffering wherever he meets it, whether in the abodes of poverty or in halls of affluence, whether among the depressed and the vicious or the elevated and the virtuous. Every consideration of professional consistency, of humanity and religion, calls upon him to act in character and be true to his vocation. It is not for a moment imagined that the physician is bound to take upon his soul the vow of perpetual poverty, that he is forbidden to regard the material wants of himself and family. It is an undisputed axiom that "the laborer is worthy of his hire;" and a practical disregard of this law which contemplates a just remuneration for services rendered, would destroy the reciprocal relations of society. The thought I wish to express is, that he who voluntarily makes choice of a profession based upon the noblest principles of benevolence, and which contemplates so distinctly

the well-being of others, should have a mind and a heart permeated by its noble and generous spirit. A disposition, in connection with your profession or mine, marked by selfishness and avarice, is a monstrous incongruity that should excite our horror and disgust. And he who is subject to an influence so debasing, is sure to destroy his own happiness, and inflict numerous evils upon others. Such a person is doing what he can to degrade his noble profession into a mere money-making business, and will not scruple at disgraceful tricks and artifices when they promise an increase of his wealth. To the physician multitudes are constantly looking as the guardian of their lives, and their only earthly confidence amid the dangers and agonies of disease. To his keeping is committed the sacred ark of human life, and he is the anointed priest to conduct its service. And what sight on earth more revolting than to see him thus standing beside the altar, bearing the authority of so high a commission, and entrusted with so sublime a charge, basely neglecting the vital flame first kindled by the breath of the Almighty; forgetting to recruit its wasting energies and suffering it to sink and expire, while his soul is absorbed in considerations of material gain. Language fails to furnish terms sufficiently strong to express the detestation in which such a character should be held.

But it would be gross injustice to imagine, for a moment, that the medical profession, as such, is liable to the charge of speculating in the miseries and calamities of men. This, like every other department of human activity, has its degraded and unworthy members. It is unquestionably true that it exhibits, in Christian and heathen lands, examples of true magnanimity, of generous self-sacrifice, and heroic devotedness to the welfare of humanity unsurpassed by any other profession or pursuit in the world.

How commonly is this evinced in seasons of fatal epidemics. "If one falls in the performance of his duty, another steps into his place. If labor fails through death's doings

in the professional corps, others from distant localities press into the vacated places of danger, and fall victims to a more than chivalrous humanity." And there are but few physicians—none worthy the name—that do not fully sympathize in the declaration of the distinguished Sydenham, that "he had rather discover a certain method of curing the slightest disease, than to accumulate the largest fortune." It is said that one-third, or more of the whole practice of medical men in the city of New York, is done without remuneration; and that all the numerous charitable institutions of that city are gratuitously attended. This is noble! And this I believe to be a fair representation of the exalted generosity, and the self-denying philanthropy that distinguishes your profession throughout the civilized world. See to it, young gentlemen, that you do nothing that shall tarnish its honors, or forfeit your share of the precious heritage of its good name.

Another element claimed by the clergyman as essential to a model physician is, that he should be a man of refined sensibilities and tastes. It is sometimes alleged that physicians, by reason of their constant presence in scenes of disease, and suffering, and death, undergo an induration of sensibilities, and acquire an obtuseness of feeling which disqualify them for the exercise of warm reciprocal sympathies; and that, in many instances, those delicate perceptions of the proprieties of social intercourse, so essential to the highest style of a professional and Christian gentleman, become greatly impaired, if not wholly destroyed. It can not be denied that instances do occur, which, by reason of unhappy treatment of patients, and by a rude disregard of the conventional rules of society, have furnished some ground for the charge thus made. And it may also be true, that the tendency of the physician's associations in the dissecting room and the sick chamber is to produce the effect in question, just as the soldier, accustomed to the scenes of the battle-field, becomes insensible to its horrors.

If so, then it should be the constant care and study of the physician to counteract this influence, and assiduously to foster and strengthen every sensibility and taste liable to be injured by it. The complaint of seeming cold-heartedness, however, is doubtless often occasioned by that severe discipline to which every physician is constrained to subject himself in order to the better performance of his responsible duties. There are circumstances when the indulgence of sensibility, the slightest appearance of emotion, would be wrong. While others are in paroxysms of grief and terror, he must be cool and self-possessed. He has a high duty to perform, which demands the deliberate judgment, the unfaltering decision, the clear eye and the steady hand. And yet, there is no duty to which he is called, that requires or justifies a rude manner, a coarse expression, or a vulgar attitude.

But however the alleged grievance may be accounted for, and however rarely it occurs, still it makes an appeal to the young physician on a point well worthy his attention. Make it your care to cultivate the most refined tastes which will dispose you instinctively to reverence those tender sensibilities which do honor to our nature, and which are found among all classes and conditions in life. Let them never be rudely disturbed by you. Add not to the pangs of the sensitive sufferer, by an unguarded word, or look, or action. No man in the community needs to possess more of cordial sympathy, quick sensibility and keen sense of propriety, than the physician. He is admitted to the most intimate and confidential relations. He mingles in our domestic sanctities. He enters the penetralia of our dwellings. He abides among the lares and penates of our households. His visits are ever welcomed with expressions of pleasure and confidence. And surely they who hold such relations to us, should possess a character incapable of wounding our sensibilities or betraying our confidence.

It is, furthermore, regarded as essential to a model physician, that he possess a high moral character. Without this he can not meet the demands of his profession, nor satisfy the just claims of those who commit health and life to his care. Sound moral principle ever refuses to be the slave of impulse, or passion, or expediency. It allows no personal advantage, no momentary gratification, no selfish indulgence to become the rule of conduct, or constitute the measure of right and wrong. Such a man acknowledges no laws that are in conflict with his convictions of honor and right. He is ever alive to the sacred authority of conscience, and seeks to bow implicitly to its dictates. He is therefore, incited to respect the rights of others, faithfully to render the service implied in the sphere of action he has chosen to occupy, and to adorn the various relations of life by the example of beneficent actions and moral virtues.

Upon principle, and without the stimulus of material reward, he will visit the poor and minister to their necessities as zealously and faithfully as he attends upon the rich. And when he once assumes the charge of a family, he will strive to be true to his trust. This he regards as a most solemn duty. And so it is. For, in the language of Dr. Rush, "to undertake the charge of sick people, and to neglect them afterwards, is a vice of a malignant dye in a physician. Many lives have been lost, by the want of regular and punctual attention to the varying symptoms of diseases; but still more have been sacrificed by the criminal preference, which has been given by physicians to ease, convivial company, or public pursuits, to the care of their patients. The most important contract that can be made, is that which takes place between the sick man and his doctor. The subject of it is human life. The breach of this contract by wilful negligence, when followed by death, is murder; and it is because our penal laws are imperfect, that the punishment of that crime is not inflicted upon phy-

sicians who are guilty of it.* Inflexible moral principle will secure the model physician against all temptation to empiricism. Indeed, I can not conceive how a man, who voluntarily stoops to the tricks and deceptions of quackery, can be an *honest man*. He may be well versed in all the learning of the profession, but when, for the sake of gain, he consents to sacrifice the high claims of his sacred mission, to trample under foot all that has for ages been achieved by medical investigation founded upon the certain laws of philosophical induction, and resorts to some elixir which performs its magic cures by the influence of some hidden potency or supernatural charm, he is, and he must be an ingrained knave! He may make great pretensions to honor and benevolence, but the assumption of what is not really possessed, is only the homage which hypocrisy pays to virtue. He may earnestly warn the public against counterfeits and impostures, but it is only the cry of "thief" in order to escape detection. But whatever be his pretensions or achievements, as to true honesty, he is a moral bankrupt!

I deem this a fitting time and place, to allude to a complaint not unfrequently made against my profession, of evincing a disposition to endorse, by certificates and otherwise, the claimed efficacy of quack medicines. I feel very sensitive on this point, I confess, and am disposed to do my best to vindicate my brethren. I do so, in the first place, with a weapon furnished by one of your own profession—the venerable Dr. Alexander H. Stevens, who when seeking to repel the imputation of the prevalence of scepticism among physicians, says: "We must go among the smaller men of our profession to find sceptics or infidels." I believe it. And in the same spirit I say, you must go down among the smaller men of our profession to find abettors and supporters of quackery. I do not think you will find them

* Rush's Lectures, p. 127.

anywhere else. I say again, you must not take it for granted that every man is really a clergyman, to whose name, in a quack advertisement you find "Reverend" or "D. D." attached. The titles of both our professions are constantly and surreptitiously assumed to give character and currency to some vile nostrum.

There are many "distinguished benefactors of the race," bearing your insignia, whose names appear in print—but nowhere else—"Old Doctors," "Good Samaritans," "Retired Physicians," "whose sands are nearly run out," who, from a long residence in "India," or Africa, or some where else, have made discoveries that are to banish from the earth all the "ills that flesh is heir to." There are also many self-styled "Reverends," who, having for a season been called—mysteriously, and to the profound regret of the church universal—to lay aside the active duties of their profession, have been constrained, from a deep sense of duty, to make the attempt, and have finally succeeded, to discover some patent specific, which by the "wondrous blessing of Divine Providence," has become entitled to the distinction of a sovereign panacea—so palatable that "the children cry for it," and so successful, that the whole medical world is trembling with a jealous rage concerning it! These are all venerable men, animated by a pure, disinterested benevolence—until you happen to meet them—when you behold them suddenly transformed into sturdy impostors, arrant swindlers and liars! And shall we charge upon each other the sins of such traffickers in fraud and villainy—who, were they to receive the consideration to which their conduct entitles them, would be furnished, at the public expense, with quiet retreats, in such *retired* places as Sing Sing, or Auburn, or Clinton, and for a period long enough to allow their sands to run entirely out. I would indeed be sorry to believe, that there is one in a thousand, of the respectable members of my profession, who has voluntarily given his endorsement to a quack medicine.

For myself, I believe I would suffer long and painfully under the care of an intelligent, well educated physician, before I would consent to receive a certain cure at the hands of an empiric; for admitting that by accident he cured me, yet by giving him my influence, he might have the opportunity of killing others, and I would be partaker of his sins!

But the last and crowning attribute which completes the clergyman's idea of a model physician is, sincere piety. Not indeed that high distinction in every thing that is elevated and noble in professional attainment may not be reached without this; but may it not be added, that it is a most happy consummation, when with professional skill, refined tastes, unsullied honor and unimpeachable integrity, is united the spirit of the humble, devout Christian. Whether the facts of the case, at any past time, justified the charge of prevailing scepticism against your profession, I can not tell. But sure I am, that time has passed away. The disgraceful proverbs have no longer any foundation in truth, "*Ubi tres medici, tres athei.*" "*Optimus inter medicos ad gehennam.*" A splendid galaxy of names might here be rehearsed, who have furnished to the world the noblest examples of living piety. I will mention only a few as referred to by Dr. Rush, among whom, his own holds a distinguished place.

Hippocrates and Galen were religious, according to the light which they had, for they vigorously opposed the atheism of Greece and Rome, with arguments drawn from the curious structure of the human body. Botallus advises the physician, before visiting a patient, to offer prayer for the success of his prescriptions. Cheselden always implored the blessing of heaven whenever he performed a surgical operation. Sydenham was eminently a religious man. Boerhaave spent an hour every morning in private religious devotion. Hoffman and Stahl were not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; and Haller wrote a series of letters

in defense of Christianity. Dr. Lobb had the motto "Deo adjuvante," inscribed upon the panels of his chariot. Dr. Fothergill's long life resembled an altar, from which incense of adoration and praise ascended daily to the Supreme Being. Dr. Hartley, whose works will probably perish, only with time itself, was a devout Christian. To this slightly condensed record the author adds the just remark, that "the weight of their names alone, in favor of revelation, is sufficient to turn the scale against all the infidelity that has ever dishonored the science of medicine."* This catalogue of medical worthies might be indefinitely enlarged, by the addition of names of more recent date, but the occasion will not allow.

Gentlemen, in no secular pursuit in life, is there so decided a demand for the possession of Christian principle, and the exercise of the Christian virtues, as in yours. From the fact of the conceded dignity and importance of your profession, and the universal confidence reposed in you, not only as physicians, but also as thinking and learned men, your known opinions have a great and deserved weight in the community. And how important is it, in this day of reckless speculation, of unrestrained radicalism, of wild fanaticism, and of open infidelity, that your influence be found distinctly and decidedly on the side of sound, conservative, eternal truth.

Besides, your calling leads you into scenes where the most favorable opportunities occur for benefiting, not only the body, but the mind and the heart. Knowing how conducive physical sufferings are to salutary reform, you may be instrumental in bringing back to virtue, as well as to health, those who by their vices have caused their own miseries, and upon whose minds a few kind words from your lips will make a deeper impression, than the most solemn

* Rush's Lectures, pp. 128, 129. Some of the sentences changed for the purpose of abbreviation.

appeals from any other source. You will be frequently present where you will witness the last agonies of dissolution, and where the deep wail of bereavement will break upon the ear; there your tender sympathy and consolatory counsel may point the eye of the dying to the cross, and the faith of the living to sources of imperishable consolation. In thus acting you need not fear any intrusion into the sphere of the sacred ministry. You will excite no jealousy in our hearts. Doubly blessed is he who can do the work of the physician and the minister in the chamber of sickness and death.

I trust it will not be deemed irrelevant, to make a brief reference at this point, to a matter which has occasioned some irritation between your profession and ours. You have sometimes found fault with us for seeming interference at the couch of sickness; and we have sometimes found fault with you, for a seeming disregard of our prerogatives at the same place.

In regard to this, as indeed to most other grievances in this world, my conviction is, that there have been indiscretions and faults on both sides. There doubtless are clergymen, who seem to know nothing about the proprieties of time, place and circumstance connected with any thing with which they have to do; who are constitutionally dictatorial, rash and severe; who suppose themselves to be practicing the virtue of faithfulness in their calling, when it is only rudeness and insolence. On the other hand, there are physicians, who, from a disregard to the salutary influence of religious sympathy, a conceit of professional superiority, or a spirit of rude indifference to the amenities of social intercourse, treat the pastor with less respect than they accord to the most ignorant menial in attendance. Now, is it surprising that such spirits should always be in trouble themselves, and should often occasion trouble to others? These are emphatically the "smaller" men of our respect-

ive professions ; and I am happy in the conviction that they are "*few and far between.*"

Still it is well that we should comprehend our mutual rights in the premises. These, I contend, are in every respect equal. The duties of your profession lead you to visit your patient ; the duties of mine lead me to visit my parishioner. And when the patient and the parishioner are found to be one and the same person, I ask, have we not equal rights there ? You are there by the obligations of a contract ; so am I, and by the obligations of a contract as binding and solemn as yours can be. The mission of the one is to do good ; the mission of the other is precisely the same. You then have no right to interfere with my prerogatives, nor I with yours. How then is the matter to be cordially and amicably adjusted ? Simply by the ruling of common sense, common courtesy, and a common conscience. It is not for us to quarrel over a dying bed, and there is no reason why we should. No clergyman, worthy the name, would seek to approach a patient, when a judicious physician had told him it would be hazardous to health or life. And no physician, worthy the name, would unnecessarily interfere to prevent the sympathizing pastor, from seeking to awaken in the weary spirit—perhaps on the confines of the eternal state—the supporting energies of an unwavering faith, and the joyous anticipations of an undying hope. Let us remember that our respective professions have a bond of union in the life of the great Physician, who while on earth, made the body of man the subject of his miracles, and the soul of man the recipient of his heavenly doctrines. In Him we become bound in the ties of a common brotherhood. "Let there then be no strife between us, for we are brethren."

I have thus attempted to sketch an outline of a clergyman's idea of a model physician. The picture is, doubtless, quite imperfect ; not however because of any exaggeration

of feature or excess of coloring, but simply because the inexperienced artist has failed to give those nicer touches of light and shade so necessary to fill up the drawing and impart finish and animation to the whole. He is not unwilling, however, that its fidelity to nature should be put to the test. There are many physicians within the circle of our acquaintance, and especially among those whose instructions you have recently enjoyed, any one of whom might well be supposed to have sat as the original. But as it might seem indelicate to allude further to them, allow me to speak of one outside the circle of the faculty, an old resident in this city, in whom all the excellences I have enumerated, are beautifully blended and harmoniously developed. He is now far advanced in life. For more than half a century, he has been a ministering angel in the abodes of suffering. Sordid ambition, grasping avarice, cold selfishness, never placed their unhallowed impress upon his soul, nor ever cast a momentary shadow on the path which he trod. A true estimate of the dignity of his calling, distinguished mental qualifications, inflexible integrity, tender sensibilities, and unaffected piety, realize to us the completeness of the man; that man, "*clarum et venerabile nomen*," is Dr. William Bay.

I fear, young gentlemen, I have detained you too long. And now, permit me only to congratulate you on the success of your efforts thus far, as evinced by the honors just conferred upon you, and to express the earnest prayer that prosperity may attend you through life; and that when your work is done, and in a good old age you are gathered unto your fathers, the memory of your virtues may be cherished on earth, and your names be found written in heaven.

Gentlemen of the Faculty and Board of Trustees, allow me to congratulate you on the prosperity of the institution to whose interests you are devoted. With most of you I have enjoyed an acquaintance extending through several

years. And I feel warranted in saying, that if personal worth, learning and public spirit can be the guarantee of stability and success, the community has a sure pledge of the permanency and prosperity of the ALBANY MEDICAL COLLEGE.



Mr. Bontecore

Wray