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THE DOCTORATE ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

SEMI-CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE:

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.

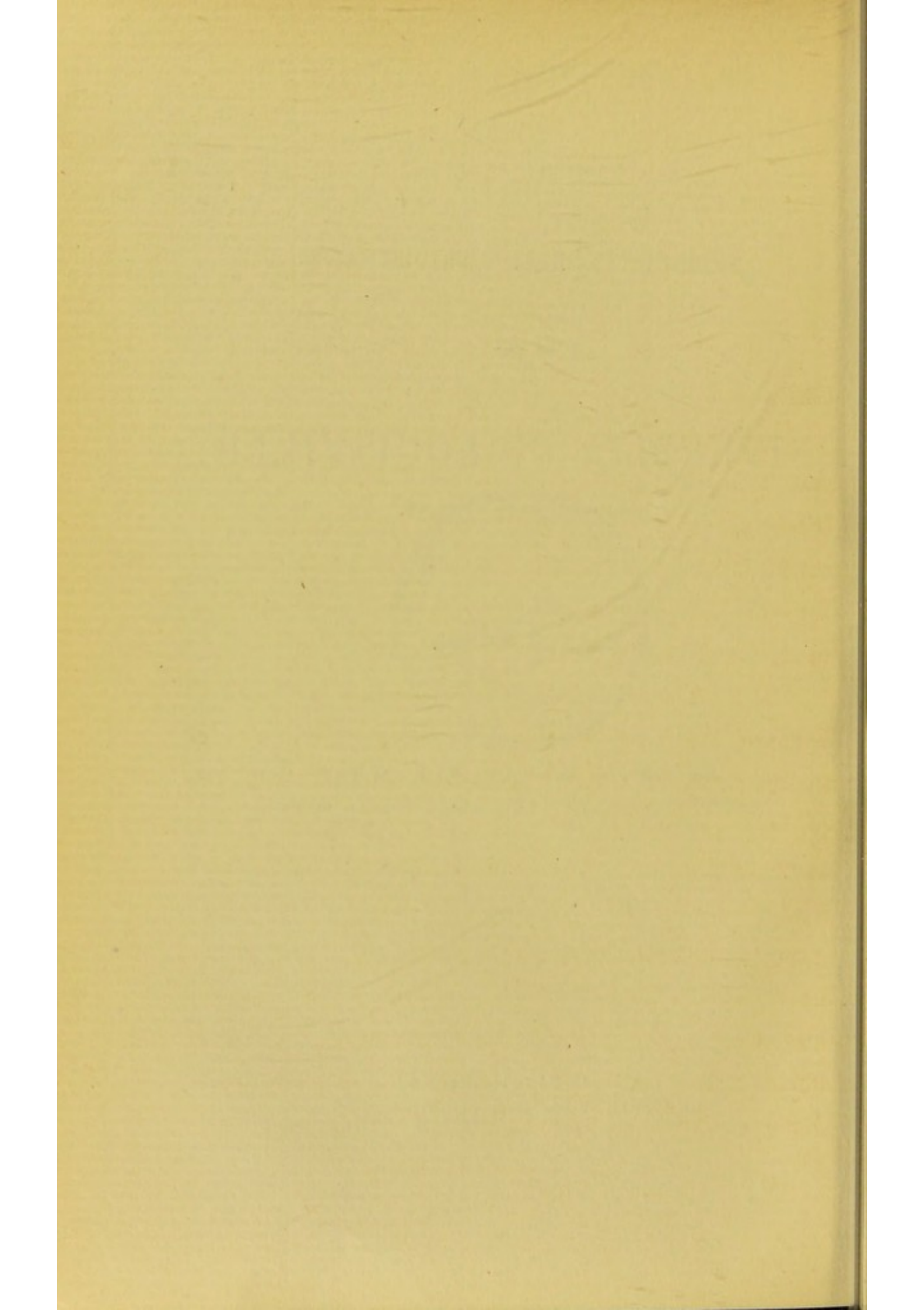


By DAVID W. YANDELL, M. D.,

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LOUISVILLE:
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1887



UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE.

GRADUATES:

The present is an occasion of exceeding interest to you, because it marks an epoch in each of your lives. It is of like interest to a much wider auditory, because it marks an epoch in the life of a great institution of learning—the University of Louisville—which uses this hour to celebrate its semi-centennial birthday.

The Trustees of the University, feeling that it would befit the time, have asked me to prepare a narrative of the institution of which you are now alumni, to tell you of its origin, career, and prospects. They thought a sketch of this kind would interest, not only you, but the friends of educational work every where. They also thought the task would be easy to one who had grown up with the institution, as I have done, and who, therefore, would naturally have at hand abundant material for illustrating the subject. In one sense this is quite true. But it so happens that the material has already been

woven into a full and authentic history by hands far abler than mine—by those of my venerated father—one of the founders of the institution, and with which his name in parent and sons has been connected in almost unbroken succession from its opening term to the present time. Instead, therefore of repeating what has been better said than I could hope to say it, I have chosen to attempt a sketch, a mere outline drawing of the men who made the history of the University rather than to reproduce the annals of the institution itself. For I hold that the history of an educational establishment, like that of mankind, is the history of its great men. “My friend,” said Faust to the student, “my friend, the times which are gone are a book with seven seals; and what you call the spirit of the past ages is but the spirit of this or that worthy gentleman in whose mind those ages are reflected.”

This being my purpose, my remarks may properly be styled

REMINISCENCES OF THE TEACHERS OF MEDICINE IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE.

In order, however, that you may the more readily catch the thread of what I have undertaken to say, I must first tell you some things connected with the origin

of the University. I shall be very brief and shall try not to weary you.

The first medical school west of the Blue Ridge was established at Lexington, Kentucky, in 1817, under the name of the Medical Department of Transylvania University. Its first faculty held together for but a single session. Two years later a new organization was effected, composed of learned and zealous men under whose direction the school reached a success at that time unparalleled in the history of such institutions. When Transylvania was founded, Lexington, besides sitting in a region of marvelous fertility, was the literary and commercial emporium of the Western States. It was the one city in the West which, at the time, possessed the needed facilities for giving a medical education. But Lexington had no hospital, and her small population afforded but little anatomical material.

The system of teaching medicine under which Transylvania had achieved her unexampled success was undergoing silent but rapid change. The profession and the public felt that the student should be taught less by ear and more by eye and by hand. Subjects for clinical instruction and subjects for dissection had become essentials in the curriculum. These Lexington could not

supply. The faculty, quick to discern the requirements of the times, determined to remove the institution to a larger city. Louisville was at once settled on as a place possessing every facility for a medical school. A charter for one, under the name of the Louisville Medical Institute, was already in existence. The citizens of Lexington and the Trustees of Transylvania refused to ratify the proposed transfer. A dissolution of the faculty followed. Four of its members clung to Transylvania. The remaining three—Dr. Caldwell, Dr. Cooke, and Dr. Yandell—came to Louisville. They were offered places in the Medical Institute, and accepted them. They immediately busied themselves in the effort to found a school with medical and law departments attached. The people headed by Mr. James Guthrie, the leading citizen of Louisville, took the matter in hand. A public meeting was called. The mayor and council were asked to endow at once the medical department. An entire square of ground was given, and fifty thousand dollars appropriated for the purchase of an outfit. A faculty was appointed. This was in 1837. Dr. Caldwell, Dr. Cooke, and Dr. Yandell were given the chairs they had respectively filled in Transylvania, namely, "Institutes of Medicine," "Theory and Practice," and "Chemistry." To Dr.

Miller, of Louisville, was assigned the chair of Obstetrics, to Dr. Cobb that of Anatomy, to Dr. Flint that of Surgery, while Dr. Yandell filled the chairs of *Materia Medica* and Chemistry.

The first course of lectures in the Medical Institute was delivered in a building which occupied the site of the present structure.

On the 22d of February, 1838, the corner-stone of the University was laid by the Ancient Order of Masons in the presence of a great concourse of citizens. The ceremonies were enlivened by music and made impressive by orations setting forth the importance of the event. I stood, as a boy, an interested spectator by the side of those who came to establish a medical school here.

"When," as was so poetically said by the author of the history which I have so freely used, "when the dome which crowned the edifice was completed, it was the last reared in honor of medicine upon which the sun shone in his journey down the evening sky, the first to greet the traveler coming from the far West."

[I am speaking of a period when knee-breeches, queues, and gold-headed canes had gone out of fashion, but when tall black stocks and large white neckerchiefs, ruffled shirts with a great show of collar, and black

dress-coats were in general use, and constituted the regulation dress of the professor when he appeared before his class.]

The central figure of that group of noted teachers who founded the University was Charles Caldwell. He was a massive man in body and mind. He was both tall and broad. His carriage was erect. His head was simply grand, his mouth was large, his eyes were bluish gray. He had studied elocution. His gestures and his speech were studied also. His manners, usually cold, were always stately. He spoke in long, well-rounded periods, and in a great sonorous voice. He was learned in the languages, fond of study, and of abstemious habits. Besides all this he was a man of affairs, and delighted in controversy. He taught the physiology of his day, which was largely the physiology of the ancients, but he taught it in so impressive a manner that his classes received it as gospel and voted him its greatest expounder.

Beside him stood John Esten Cooke, a simple man in all his ways. He was of medium stature, with a face much like that represented in the portraits of Sydenham. He had brought himself prominently before the public by his "Pathology and Therapeutics," a work which advanced peculiar theories and advocated a heroic practice.

His pathology resembled in some of its main features that of Mr. Abernethy. He taught that the liver was the principal seat of all constitutional diseases. Mr. Abernethy taught that all local diseases had a constitutional origin. The British surgeon was no more tenacious of his theories than was the physician in the "backwoods" of the West. Nor did he have more followers. The doctrines of each were so readily comprehended, so easily applied, and saved such an amount of study and observation to their pupils that their pupils at once adopted them. Mr. Abernethy is said to have reserved in his lectures all his enthusiasm for his own peculiar doctrine, and so reasoned it, and so acted it, and so dramatized it, and so disported himself with ridicule of every system but his own, that his hearers accepted the dictum in all its fullness. Dr. Cooke had enthusiasm, but neither dramatic power nor any turn for ridicule. He was near-sighted, and wore glasses. His voice was feeble, his articulation hesitating and labored. He used but few gestures, and those were awkward. And yet he maintained his doctrine with such earnestness and by a compactness and force of logic so great that, in spite of its growing unpopularity, he carried conviction to the mind of every pupil. Mr. Abernethy's pathology and

practice were simple indeed. Dr. Cooke's pathology and practice were simpler still. "All local diseases are of constitutional origin, and the remedies proper for their cure lie in the small compass of a blue pill at night and black draught in the morning," thundered Mr. Abernethy from his desk in London. Dr. Cooke, reading from his desk in Louisville, saw in bile, yellow bile, and black bile, the hands on the dial-plate of disease which pointed unerringly to the one and only treatment. The three biles constituted his medical trinity, and appealing to this he compressed his means of cure into one drug, and that drug was calomel. This he gave in huge doses, by day and by night, in season and out of season, first, last, and all the time.

But a pathology so narrow could not long survive, and a practice which trusted the awful issues of life and death to a single agent failed to satisfy the growing intelligence of the people. Physicians at large assailed the pathology. The public rejected the practice. And, as extremes do so often meet, there grew up with this opposition, and, indeed, out of it, a sect which condemned as poisons all medicines derived from the mineral world, and found in the vegetable kingdom alone their remedial agents. This sect called itself Eclectic. It

was founded by a man named Thomson, a person of much mother-wit, great shrewdness, and but little knowledge. For a time it held large sway throughout the country. The sovereign metal of Dr. Cooke was driven from the field by steam, lobelia, and number six. But if it were permitted this ingenious, original man to look down on the practice of to-day, he would have the satisfaction of seeing the remedy on which he rested all his hopes come out from the eclipse which temporarily obscured it. His pathology, essentially bad, naturally perished. The remedy he advocated, essentially good, necessarily survived, and under wiser restrictions, a more correct pathology, and enlightened interpretation of its action, is at present in more general use than at any previous time in the history of the world. Eclecticism, too, has perished; another proof that "what is useful will last, what is useless will sink."

The remaining member of the trio from Transylvania was Dr. Lunsford P. Yandell, younger than either of his colleagues. He was tall, erect, slender. His skin was dark. His eyes, full of expression, were black, and set far under a broad forehead. His mouth, denoting great strength of character, was large; his lips were thin, and his chin broad and well rounded. His voice was pleas-

ing in a marked degree. His gestures, always fitted to the sense of his discourse, were exceedingly graceful. He was a rhetorician. He had a wonderful faculty for focusing facts. As a teacher he was clearness itself. His was an imaginative mind, richly stored with multifarious knowledge. He was extremely popular with his classes, each student looking upon him as a personal friend. He knew every member of the class by name, and almost on the instant of entering the lecture-room would detect the absence of a pupil from his accustomed seat. He was a ready and scholarly writer and of surpassing eloquence as a lecturer. His favorite collateral study was paleontology. The Falls of the Ohio furnished him a rich and unexplored field for its pursuit. He spent much of his time in tracing the footprints of the dwellers in the earlier waters on the earth, and enriched the knowledge of this beautiful branch of science by numerous and valuable original contributions. Ardent in admiration of whatever was noble, he was sympathetic with whatever was good and gentle. With all the drawbacks inseparable from a feeble constitution, he filled a large measure of usefulness during a long life, which he lived throughout as an humble, active Christian.

These men were pioneers in their work, "benefactors of their profession and their race, and as such their names will live in the memories of men." They bore still farther into the frontier the light of our beneficent science. They builded wisely, and their work which they so much loved endures.

The University found Dr. Henry Miller here, a rising practitioner and ambitious to teach. He had already occupied a chair in the Medical Institute. He was of medium height and inclined to be stout. He had light hair, a florid skin, blue eyes, a small mouth, and a very large nose. He was slow of speech, slower of gait. His voice was loud enough, but his utterance was thick and indistinct. Of gestures he had none. But he was a solid man, through and through. His slowness of speech made it possible to catch every word he uttered, while his selection of words could with difficulty have been bettered. At the beginning of the course his lectures seemed tedious; but as the session advanced the students became more and more interested, and before commencement day he had won the respect of his hearers by reason of his terseness of speech, and their admiration by reason of his brain power. Early in his teaching career he prepared a work on Human Parturition, which

was at once accorded a place second to none on that important subject.

Dr. Jedediah Cobb, of New England birth and training, who had already made reputation as a teacher of anatomy in the Ohio Medical College, was induced to cast his lot with the Louisville enterprise. He was a tall and shapely man and very graceful. His voice was clear as a bell, and his large, lustrous black eyes added much to its effect. He stripped the intricate points in anatomy of their obscurity and lodged them in the mind of even the dullest of his hearers. He was Dean of the Faculty during his entire connection with the school. He had great suavity of manner, and was a prime favorite with the students.

Dr. Joshua B. Flint, the occupant of the Chair of Surgery, had been a resident of Boston. He was a graduate of Harvard, and had early shown a turn for surgical work. He proved to be a practical surgeon of real ability. He was a learned and amiable man, and a quick and graceful operator. In body he was short and slight, weighing little over one hundred pounds. His voice was thin and of low pitch, while his utterance was indistinct to a degree that made it unintelligible beyond the first two rows of benches. He acquired a large practice, and

made many friends, but never gained popularity as a teacher.

During the summer of 1838 the organization of the Institute was completed by the introduction of Dr. Chas. W. Short, who was made professor of *Materia Medica*, the chair he had held in Transylvania. Dr. Short was a most valuable officer. "His high scientific attainments, the soundness of his judgment, his dignity and urbanity of manners, his amiable temper, and blameless life, added character and weight to the institution." Botany was his favorite pursuit. He found the flora of this region virgin and unknown, and so collected, arranged, and classified it that his successors in this field have been able to change nothing and to add but little to his work. He was an instructive but not an interesting lecturer. He never looked at his audience, but, fixing his fine blue eyes on some far and elevated point in the room, and rising and falling on his toes and heels, delivered his carefully prepared prelections.

In the spring of 1839 the Cincinnati Medical College, a young but powerful rival of the Medical Institute, closed its doors. Dr. Drake was its founder and one of its chief ornaments. The faculty of the Institute, following the line of policy which led them to abandon

Lexington, asked the Board of Trustees to create an eighth chair, entitled Clinical Medicine and Pathological Anatomy, and tender it to Dr. Drake. The matter was accomplished, and Dr. Drake came to Louisville.

As a lecturer Dr. Drake had few equals. He was never dull. His was an alert and masculine mind. His words were full of vitality. His manner was earnest and impressive. His eloquence was fervid. While connected with the University he composed his work upon the Principal Diseases of the Interior Valley of North America, a work which, comprehensive in scope, philosophic in spirit, and abounding in graphic pictures of disease, will remain a storehouse of knowledge and a monument to the originality of its gifted and versatile author. He said to the speaker when he was about to enter on the practice of his profession: "I have never seen a great and permanent practice the foundations of which were not laid in the hearts of the poor. Therefore, cultivate the poor. If you need another though a sordid reason, the poor of to-day are the rich of to-morrow in this country. The poor will be the most grateful of all your patients. Lend a willing ear to all their calls."

At the close of the session marked by Dr. Drake's

introduction into the University, Dr. Flint retired from the school. The faculty, true to its guiding purpose, secured the appointment of Dr. Samuel D. Gross to the chair of Surgery.

Dr. Gross had achieved success as a teacher in the Cincinnati Medical College. He had won his spurs as an author by the preparation of a volume on Pathological Anatomy, the first original work on that subject composed by an American. He came to Louisville young, vigorous, brimful of enthusiasm, bent upon the noble end of lessening human suffering and lengthening human life. Here he prepared an original monograph on Wounds of the Intestines, which contained the seminal thought of the most advanced practice in this branch of surgery to-day. Here he brought out a volume on Diseases of the Bladder, which was every where recognized as the ablest treatise on that interesting class of affections. And here he gathered much of the material for his System of Surgery, completed at a later day, which was at once assigned a place among the classics, and is read in different tongues wherever medicine is practiced. Cecil said of Sir Walter Raleigh, "I know that he can toil terribly." Dr. Gross "toiled terribly." He was never idle.

During the first three sessions of the school, clinical medicine was taught by Professor Caldwell, and clinical surgery by Professor Flint. The students at that time "walked the hospital" with their teachers, who instructed them at the bedside. But the class had grown too large for this, and in order to augment the efficiency of this important branch of medical teaching, the faculty, with the consent of the City Council, had erected, at their own expense, a clinical theater adjoining the City Hospital.

Drs. Drake and Gross succeeded Drs. Caldwell and Flint as clinical teachers. Dr. Drake was greater as a didactic than as a clinical lecturer. He was a grand expounder of the principles of his art, seeing things with great eyes and in large relations, but when he came to apply these in practice he did not appear to such advantage. Dr. Gross, on the other hand, while making every case illustrate some principle in surgery, descended to the minutest details of bedside practice.

The popularity of the school grew apace. It was now confessedly ahead of all the neighboring schools, and probably behind none, except the two principal schools in Philadelphia. "In 1847, ten years from the commencement of the enterprise, I suppose I am safe in

saying," continues the historian, "that no medical school ever attracted so many students in so short a time."

Two years later, that is, in February, 1849, Dr. Drake returned to Cincinnati, and Dr. Caldwell and Dr. Short vacated the chairs they held. "These eminent teachers were succeeded by Dr. Elisha Bartlett, Dr. Lewis Rogers, and Dr. Benjamin Silliman, jr. The latter took the chair of Chemistry, Dr. Yandell being assigned to the department of Physiology and Pathological Anatomy. The influence of so extensive a revolution was feared by some, but the sequel proved that the institution had become sufficiently established in the confidence of the public to bear the change without loss."

Late in the summer of 1850 Dr. Gross and Dr. Bartlett resigned their places, and accepted chairs in the University of New York. Dr. Gross was succeeded by Dr. Paul F. Eve, of the Georgia Medical College. Dr. Drake again left Cincinnati, and was reappointed to his former position.

Dr. Bartlett was of small stature and of feeble health. He had a pale and thoughtful face, a gentle voice, and charming manners. He was of exquisite perception. As a clinical teacher he had no superior. I had the honor to be selected by him as his assistant in clinical

work. In his opening lecture at the hospital he said, "Gentlemen, sickness is in one sense a very solemn thing. A hospital is a place where only dependent and homeless people come to seek succor at the hands of the physician. If you are to make physicians worthy of the name, suffering will always command your sympathy. You will be shown here disease in all its phases and the manifold suffering which it entails. It is expected that you will study each individual case; study its symptoms, study the practice advised, study the pathological changes wrought by disease in the various organs of the body. But in all your studies here, I beg you, study to be quiet."

Dr. Rogers was a man of frail and slender body, tall and thin. He, too, had a pale and thoughtful face. He taught with much earnestness and force, and his large experience as a practitioner lent exceeding weight to all his words.

Dr. Silliman came from Yale with a fine reputation both as author and teacher. He was a stout man, with blue eyes, fair skin, and handsome face. He spent almost his entire time in the laboratory, and made his every lecture a carefully prepared discourse.

Dr. Eve was a large and very tall man, who lectured

with great fire. He was a brilliant operator, and a master in the field of practical surgery.

Dr. Gross yearned, he said, from the day that he reached New York, for his Kentucky home, and returned to it after giving a single course of lectures. Dr. Eve generously relinquished a place to which he felt his friend had stronger claims, and accepted a chair in the medical school at Nashville.

Dr. Drake now abandoned the University for the third time, and persuaded his colleague, Dr. Cobb, to accompany him to Cincinnati, where they took positions in the Ohio Medical College.

Dr. Austin Flint and Dr. Benjamin R. Palmer were appointed to succeed these two gentlemen. Dr. Flint is known by name to medical men every where. While here he composed his Report on Continued Fevers, a work which reflected honor upon the professional literature of our country, and formed the basis of his unequalled volume on the Practice of Medicine, which at this moment is in the library of every reading physician in America. Dr. Flint was strong in didactic teaching, but it was in the wards of the hospital that he appeared at his best. Kind, patient, and gentle with the sick, he read their diseases with consummate skill, and expounded

them to his class with masterly ability. He was a sage ; and the Chinese Mencius said, "A sage is the instructor of a hundred ages."

Dr. Palmer was a man of medium size, large mouth, and noble head. He had a ringing voice. His descriptive powers were not surpassed by those of any man I have ever known. He made the dry structures of the human frame to live again, and so portrayed the living structures that under his picturesque treatment they assumed unwonted interest. He created a love for anatomy in the minds of all who listened to his lectures. He knew well how to subordinate the lesser to the greater facts of his subject. He and Denonvilliers were the best lecturers on anatomy it was ever my fortune to hear. With a great knowledge of surgery, he blended his surgical thought with his anatomical facts in a manner that the student could not forget.

In 1854 Professor Silliman resigned, and Dr. J. Lawrence Smith, of South Carolina, was elected to the chair of Chemistry. Dr. Smith was a scientist from the sheer love of science, full of learning, and a prestidigitator with apparatus. He was distinguished for his originality of thought and work. Few men have done more for science, pure and simple, in America than he, and perhaps

none have received for it more general recognition, both at home and abroad.

Graduates, no one knows just so well as I do that these are indeed crude portraitures, but they are none the less those of gracious men, "and gracious men are public treasures and storehouses wherein every man hath a share." We, their successors, have caught none of their grace nor inherited aught of their glory, but standing upon their shoulders, it may be permitted us to believe that we do see farther than they saw, just as those who shall succeed us will see farther than we now see.

There were other distinguished men than those I have mentioned who taught in the University, but I have time to repeat their names only:

Dr. R. J. Breckinridge, brilliant and persuasive, taught *materia medica*. Dr. J. W. Benson, accurate and forcible, taught anatomy. Dr. Llewellyn Powell, dignified, systematic, instructive, taught obstetrics. Dr. John E. Crowe, quiet, reserved, weighty, taught obstetrics also. Dr. G. W. Bayless, sturdy and earnest, taught surgery. Dr. R. O. Cowling, genial, broad, and of fine quality all round, succeeded Dr. Bayless. Dr. H. M. Bullitt, clear and comprehensive, taught physiology. Dr. S. M. Bemiss, solid and strong, taught pathological anatomy and

clinical medicine. Dr. L. P. Yandell, jr., sound of head and sweet of heart, taught clinical medicine. Dr. T. S. Bell, who realized Lord Brougham's saying, "Know something about every thing, and every thing about something," taught the theory and practice of medicine.

Not one of these men is living to-day. Some were gathered like shocks of corn fully ripe; some were taken when in their prime; others were called away "while the dew of youth was still fresh upon them. Each did in his appointed time, and in his way, the work allotted him.

When the University of Louisville was established it was the fourth medical school founded west of the Alleghanies. There are as many schools now in Louisville alone as were then in all the territory which extended from the Ohio River to the Pacific Ocean. There are almost as many schools now in this region as the University counts years in her age, and yet, with such active competition immediately at her doors, and throughout the territory from which she draws her classes, she maintains her position and continues unobtrusively to strive to do her duty.

The thought which led to the founding of the University, that of enlarged instruction in clinical medicine and practical anatomy, has governed it throughout its

entire career. It has cultivated and developed, widened and increased her means for teaching these subjects. Those who have guided the fortunes of the institution have steadily labored to align it with whatever is best and most advanced in teaching. It lays claim to being a school where practical medicine is taught in all its branches, in a thorough, practical way. It is believed to have wrought well, to have done honest work in an honest way, and to deserve well of the profession and of the public. It points to its record with becoming pride, and finds there its guerdon and its hope for the future.

If the wealth of a nation resides in its sons, surely the renown of a university resides in its pupils. Tried by this standard, the University of Louisville is deservedly renowned. It has had many pupils, and they have won much distinction. Its teachers, and those they have taught, have filled chairs in many of the leading schools both North and South, East and West. New York and Philadelphia have made large drafts from this material. New Orleans, Nashville, and other places have profited themselves in a like way. Thousands upon thousands of her sons, who have not reached the particular distinction referred to, have none the less gained renown by their every-day work, and earned the gratitude of mill-

ions of their fellow-men by their skill, their kindness, and their courage.

Universities of learning have larger uses than the mere scholastic instruction that they give. They are humanizing agents. Their influence, though silent, is none the less marked for good. They elevate thought. They disseminate knowledge. They develop the good, and repress and supplant the bad in those who resort to them. They set in motion the concentric circles of taste and culture, which widen with the sun. They enrich the cities which foster them. They bless those who look on them.

Graduates, my concluding words will be very few. I feel that I can not point you to better examples of true physicians than are to be found among those whose names have been identified with the University of Louisville. Contemplating them, your minds can not fail to be tuned to a higher and nobler key. These men rest now in the Silences, but their work abides. Of all those who knew them, I do not believe there is one who does not feel a deep and abiding thankfulness that they lived and wrought where they did and as they did. Animated by their deeds, it is expected that each of you will, in his way, do the work that falls to his hands, and do it well. Gentlemen, good-bye.

