# TWO LECTURES

ON THE

# Conduct of the Medical Life

BY

S. WEIR MITCHELL, M.D., LL.D., Harv.
Member National Academy of Sciences

ADDRESSED

TO

The Students of the University of Pennsylvania

AND

The Jefferson Medical College

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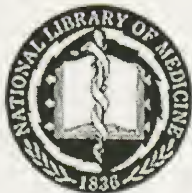

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# Lectures

ON THE

# Conduct of the Medical Life.

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A GREAT soldier was asked in my presence what was in warfare the most interesting thing. He said, "Recruits going into their first battle." What he thought as to the young soldier I feel whenever it is my lot to see a mass of men about to turn from the training of the schools and to face the grim realities of the physician's life.

Here before me are some hundreds of men in the morning of existence. Where will the noonday find you? And the evening hour, when labor is over, and, looking back, the conscience, undisturbed by new ambitions, shall make up the ledger of a life—will it leave you weighted with the debts of wasted chances, or rich with the honest interest of accumulated character? That the veteran like myself should look with a certain sad curiosity at a group of young soldiers is not strange. Here are men of varied individuality, of unequal fortunes, of every condition of life—some for whom all their ways have been thus far made easy, some for whom life has been always hard.

Here, at least, within these walls you have all had equality of opportunity. Let me hopefully presuppose you one and all to have used with diligence the precious years of training. You have thought, of course, of what you want to win. You vaguely call it success—success in life. That may mean many things. You will get some things you did not want or expect. You will fail where you least look for failure. You will win what you never dreamed of getting.

Glancing back over a career which has been, perhaps, one of exceptional success, I see that many things which I began by meaning to be or do I quite utterly failed to be or do. If any one had told me at the start, or a little later, that I should never reach in all my life the goal I early set before me—a professor's chair—I should have been troubled, perhaps discouraged. That I should secure other prizes as valuable I did not—could not—see. That I should stand here to-day where once I hoped to stand as a professor, and should feel that the fate which deprived me of the chance to teach with the tongue was my best friend—ah, that indeed seems strange to me as I look back and recall the bitterness of defeat.

And this is a lesson which in some shape all of you may learn in time. The moral of it seems clear to me: The great thing, after all, is, and ever will be, not what you win, but how you win it, or, in fact, how you lose it. The cup of the winner in a race means only that he was a little the better runner than a dozen; but the race trained all who lost as well as him who won. Is it not much that each got the honest

best out of his preparation? The last in a race may be the truest winner, though a thoughtless crowd smiles at his lagging pace.

In the great race you are about to run, the prizes which now seem to you the true ones are, I fancy, a great practice, the competence it should fairly secure, the esteem of your fellow-men, and perhaps the blue ribbon of the professor's chair. But some of these are for the few, and sometimes for the unworthy. If conscience silently salutes you belated at the goal, and you know, with whatever added bitterness relative failure may bring, that you have done the best for yourself, with yourself, you will have won that which does not always go with the larger and more obvious successes of this mortal world. If, in a word, there be in regard to life largely looked at one thing which shines out clear and plain among its many riddles, it is that the making of character is the true and sure object of a rational existence. Failures are of use if you use them rightly, think of them rightly. If they make you lie down and give up, if they leave with you abiding bitterness and unmanly hatred of rivals, then are you so far ignorant of the nobler uses of defeat. And this is true of success. If he who wins a professor's chair or a great practice simply declines into unthoughtful and languid use of opportunities, shall we think of him as having truly won the prize? I have known men to whom failure was more valuable than success. I have known many to whom success was fatal, so far as growth of character or intellectual progress was concerned.

Be sure, however, that I do not mean by what I have said to advise you not to have definite aims in life. It is a good, and not in any way an evil, thing to set before your young selves certain results which you mean to reach by honest use of all the means which time and training may put in your power. What I do eagerly desire to place irrevocably in your minds is the belief that the means must be such as your best moments will approve. For then, whatever comes, you will at least be secure that your defeats or your victories are but a part of the loftiest education and a preparation for the higher evolutions of that other world where, as I trust, the life of effort may still go on with yet nobler aims and more secure results.

All this may seem to you, who, young and hopeful, look out on life with confidence which, alas! the years to come may rudely disturb —it may seem to you much like a sermon. I can promise to be less dull and more minutely practical before we are done. But these are to be lessons in the conduct of the medical life. Back of all right conduct must be a directing code or creed; and I could not ask you to go along with me into the consideration of the varied aspects of our work without making you feel with me how seriously I look at the life upon which you are about to start. Consider for a moment what it is. It is a profession, and not merely a business. He who looks upon it commercially, and only thus, is apt to fail of even the mere financial form of success, because it is the peculiarity of our mode of earning a livelihood that it is not and cannot be regarded as a mere

business. We know too well the merely mercantile doctor; but the more you study the lives of exceptionally successful physicians in all ages, the more clearly will you come to see that the brilliant triumphs have fallen most often to those who had the highest ideals as to what they were dutifully bound to give rather than what they were in return to get. I am fond of saying that in our work we sell what neither we who sell nor those who buy can weigh or measure. We have no public to which we bend with abject submission as does the lower newspaper man, most timid of the reptilia; no judge or jury listens to us; no press or public look on to applaud or condemn. What we do neither the patient nor his friends can fully understand. One silent auditor makes up our moral accounts. That we live and are to live very largely a life of isolated self-judgment, that neither scale nor measure approves the amount and integrity of what we sell—this, I think, should make us doubly careful. I have no fear but that, as life goes on, the thoughtful among you will come to have a justified pride in your profession, and high standards as to what it should exact as to moral qualities and intellectual attainments; but too often the young start in life with vague ideas. I want you to go hence with unattainable ideals of what you mean to make your working lives; the higher the better. At all events, have and hold distinct conceptions as to the qualities which make men great in the higher manhood of medicine, and acquire them now. The world may make strange havoc with your views when, as years go on, you are to be guided by them in the every-day work of

life. But he is to be pitied who when young having no ideals of duty, waits for opportunity to generate a code of conduct.

There are risks to character already active in your lives. When I see men become easily indifferent to the exposures and the pains and suffering of the clinic and the ward, thoughtless of the falling shadows of the poor man's death, brutal or full of levity when learning the secrets of man's structure in the dissecting-room, then I know that evil has begun which insensibly hardens so many. For, while excess of sensibility destroys efficiency of action, and makes impossible that neutrality of mind which should go before decision, the other extreme is worse, because in our work you will more or less fail if you do not take into account the sentiments, passions, temptations and pains of men. He who becomes a mere hard mental machine can never justly estimate the enormous importance of the moral nature in its influence on the subjects of disease. Inattentive to such considerations, he makes no useful estimate of that individuality which makes the too definite text-book statements of symptoms but mere mockery; for, believe me, character tells in disease. The symptom varies with the human soil. Temperament is, as it were, a modifying climate. Where one man worries, another laughs. I could lecture long on this need to know men through earnest, kindly estimate of their moral as well as their physical peculiarities—the human climate and the human soil. I have been run away with by my subject; but if this should result now and hereafter in making and keeping you tender, and therefore gentle,

I shall not have spent the cheap money of words in vain. Out of such thoughtful, constantly recurring estimates of the effect of pain and trouble on others comes that divine gift of sympathy which in some men rises into the capabilities of genius. A thing, this sympathy, to be honestly cultivated in youth and sacredly treasured in age. As I have urged, it has its intellectual values in practice, and helps also to keep the conscience active. But be careful not to affect sympathy where you have it not. There are commercial representations of all the virtues. Take care! Make-believe sympathy is a false coin—most easy of detection. I recall with amused pleasure a fine old Quaker lady who told a doctor she did not like her feelings poulticed.

The early training of the doctor tends measurably to make us look upon man as a mere machine, on which we work with knife and saw and into which we cast with more or less thought our drugs. It is the fear lest you drift into this materialistic conception which makes me eager that you shall not quite lose touch of the feeling that the soul of a man dwells in this house of clay, and that forever you are dealing with an immensely complicated and ethereal thing, which thinks as well as feels.

I have heard it urged that our humanely managed demonstrations on living things tend to harden the student and to take away from him that just respect with which he should regard the wonderful vital works of God. I can only say that when as a young man I first saw exposed so much of the machine of moving life as one may

see—the bounding heart, the swift rush of blood through the capillaries, the silent brain rising and falling with each breath—the effect upon me was then, and has been ever since, a growing sense of the awfulness of life. I trust that among you are many who have carried away with you a like sensation of the wonder and the marvel of it all. Out of that should come a keener perception of the vast complication, the almost hopeless riddles, of this strange machine, a man, and out of this again a vivid belief in the limitations of our knowledge and our powers, with, at last, such intellectual humility as ought to be his who, having learned all he can, knows, alas! how little are the counted gains of the long generations of our guild who have faced fairly this problem of life.

I am uneasily conscious of the gravity of all this talk. Its seriousness is but a measure of how earnest is my wish that you carry hence into your young careers a distinct capital of thoughtful, good intentions, and that these shall be founded on as clear conceptions of the finer qualities which in making the man make also the nobler doctor. We talk lightly of resolve, and say that the streets of a certain place are paved with good resolutions. Be sure that the highways of honour and true goodness were never paved without them. A great poet, who felt the need of man to form in youth an ideal for the conduct of life, has set it in verse which will live while men speak the English tongue:

> It is the generous spirit, who, when brought
> Among the tasks of real life, has wrought
> Upon the plan that pleased his childish thought;
> Whose high endeavors are an inward light,
> That makes the path before him always bright;
> Who with a natural instinct to discern
> What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn,
> Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
> But makes his moral being his prime care;
> Who, doomed to go in company with pain
> And fear and bloodshed, miserable train!
> Turns his necessity to glorious gain.

Might he not have been speaking of our own lives? He is telling us what should be the soldier at his best; but great truths have many applications, and this high-minded poem is throughout a lofty statement of the moral laws which should mould and guide in the conduct of any life. Before I leave it, consider with me a moment its helpfnl maxim, that high endeavor is to us as an inward light thrown forward on the paths of duty, and making all action easier. The endeavor may fail, but it is light unto the feet. Surely no man who in time of doubt has made up his mind to abide by the loftiest moral purpose can have failed to feel the relief, the illumination, which such decision casts forward on the way of purpose.

In an altogether admirable lecture on the man as doctor, the son of the greater Emerson has considered the influence of the doctor's

life on character. Let us also think of this a little. You all start with a certain capital of moral and mental qualifications. Growth of character is the best interest. The coarser gains will take care of themselves. You may make some bad moral debts as you go along; we all do this. Try to know them as debts. It is best to be your own sharp creditor.

Just as the first few years of childhood determine in their training the product of deeply-grooved habits of truth, industry, punctuality, good temper, and other minor virtues, as important to you are the coming years of the childhood of the medical life. Now is the time when readily-won habits, and the carefully-cultured use of mind and heart, help to make the life to come simple, and its decisions easy. Be careful what you do with these years. Let us look at some of the aspects they present.

The world is quietly confident that we will care for the sick who cannot pay us. Was ever finer tribute to the creed of conduct of a vast group of men? And it is among these poor your earliest work will be. But even this unpaid service, of which I shall speak again, which you ought to desire for experience sake, and, too, because it is wise and well to do so—even this will not competently fill your many hours of leisure. Now, what shall you do with these unfilled hours? A time of peril—a time of moral risks. Believe me, the hours of obligation in life are scarcely so sharp a test of the man as those which we

call of leisure. What he does with these latter, especially in youth, is the best means of knowing what the man is and what he will be.

The difficulty is greater with the doctor than with others. To-day he is busy, to-morrow he is not. The time when he would read, or what not, is broken by sudden calls. I really think that to know how resolutely to use the minutes is one of life's most valuable attainments. Take care of the minutes and the years will take care of themselves.

In great cities the young and but slightly occupied doctor has many resources; clinics, hospitals, dispensaries, lectures, may help to fill his hours; but even he has too much time. No one can or ought to study constantly; and probably his most valuable reading is in connection with his cases.

But, whether in town or country, what shall you do with the hours still left at your disposal when the reasonable claims of exercise, study and social life have been provided for? On your decision depends whether you mean to be merely a more or less well-running medical machine, or whether, with larger views of life, you desire to rise above the common levels of professional existence. All your life long you will have times, such as come to the busiest, when there will be leisure for other than professional work. Can you learn in youth to do things which will agreeably fill these hours? and can you continue amid growth of labor to do the like? This seems to me a question of continuity of energy. Plenty of men are good for a spurt, or even for

long work; but that sustained power of industry which enables a man to use himself steadily in a variety of ways is in some measure a gift, and in some degree, I feel glad to think, an acquisition which he may successfully will to get. I have known several men, and one I know full well, who, being by temperament lazy, have become restlessly active, and learned the great truth that mere idleness is a less perfect rest, strange as it may sound, than variety of occupation. The outcome of my advice is to get some hobby and ride it early and hard. Those hobbies which lure a man out of doors are best; and in botany, mineralogy, or geology, according to your tastes and surroundings, you may find valuable resources. I know a railway president who is an admirable botanist, a half-dozen country doctors who are as good, two who are excellent mineralogists. Only, do something of the kind; for be assured that no matter what branch of natural study you follow it will have its advantages in making you a more competent student of the ills which should ever be and remain the ruling study of your life.

There is a quite happy temperament which finds joy in mere simple observation of nature, and one which is pleasantly reflective in its dealings with the gifts of observation. I have ridden very many times long miles with country doctors, and been amused or instructed to see what use they made of their endless drives. Once, some years ago, I was asked by one of these gentlemen if I would like to go in the saddle from the station where he met me. The ride was long. I had sent him Dr. Emerson's little lecture, and he quoted from it what

Mahomet said of the horse : " Blessings, success and rich gain shall be hung to the forelock of the horse till the day of resurrection." My friend was disposed to take me across country, but this I declined. He talked of horses much, and rarely drove. "A horse," he said, "is your friend when you are on his back, your servant when he is pulling you." This man was a mere lover of nature, and had a mind full of the oddest thoughts and reflections on the horses he loved and the changeful nature which had become for him a pleasant chatty comrade. He collected in his garden all the wild flowers, transporting their natural soil, knew the names of none, and talked to me ten minutes about the eccentric growth of a tulip-poplar he had known from youth, and how trees varied according to their soil and surroundings. A plain, odd, direct man, this, and an able doctor. I asked him if he knew that wonderful text-book of the methods of mere observation of nature, Ruskin's "Modern Painters." He said, "No," and I sent it to him. He wrote me that it was "a great book, but a bit hysterical in places;" and if this judgment makes you read it, you may agree or not, but you will find in it, as I have done, more of the art of simple study of natural objects than in any other volume known to me.

With our reflective people this type of mind is not rare.

I was once driving with a plain country doctor, also a quite old man, when he pulled up his horse, and, jumping out, returned with a flower. "Ah," he said, "that I never saw before; and I know every

weed within an area of twenty miles, and I don't know the name of one of them.'' Presently he called my attention to a curious hypertrophic growth on a fir-tree, a thick mass of tangled twigs;[1] and so I saw that my companion was, without added science, a good observer—a man who sees. I found, too, as I expected, that I could tell him no new thing as to the case in which he had asked my counsel.

This habit of active every-day observation is all the better for the methodical addition of science, but may well enough exist without it. It is, in fact, a quality which, strange as it may seem, few doctors possess or sedulously cultivate. One man goes to and away from a bedside, or talks to a chronic case, and sees and hears no more than the bare symptoms; another is curiously wide awake as to all his senses; by mere habit nothing escapes him; the patient's expression, his room, his dress, his surroundings, all interest him, and some day he gets out of all this results when other men fail. A friend of mine on his way to a train in Milan was accosted as he crossed the court of his hotel by an American, who said: ''You are Dr. Blank. May I consult you? I am very sick.'' My friend said, with a glance at his face, ''You are nervous and can't sleep.'' ''That is true.'' ''Well, you smoke in excess, and chew. Quit it altogether. I have no time to say more. Good-by.'' The bewildered patient obeyed the order, and, coming home, spoke widely—and he was a well-known man—of this acute diagnosis. When my friend was asked to explain it, he said: ''The

[1] In middle Pennsylvania called a hurrah's nest. But this phrase has also other applications.

man looked haggard; his hands shook; at the corner of his mouth was a slight stain of tobacco; in his waistcoat-pocket were four big black cigars. It was plain enough." Yet how many men would have seen all this? I could tell you other such stories, but one may suffice, as my business is not alone to amuse you.

One man notices what he is called on to notice; another observes well enough with eye, ear, or nose, but fails to remember so as to make use of the magazine of stored-up sensations. People with senses always alert like sentinels are rare. I was once, at dusk of evening, long years ago, when a student of medicine, in an omnibus with my father. Suddenly he said to me, quietly: "It is curious; I have had a sensation of something disagreeable which for a moment puzzled me. Now I know what it is. It is the odor of smallpox. There is some one near us who has it." At the next corner a young man got out. As he passed us my father saw that his face was dotted with the quite well-formed eruption. We followed him out of the omnibus, and on the side-walk my father explained in a kindly way to the young man that he was ill, and with what manner of disease. He said, in explanation, that he felt sick, but that although fevered for some days he had not known what was the matter, and so had continued to work rather than lose his job. This little story illustrates the way in which the mind and observing senses work automatically in the long and thoroughly trained.

These remarks on the power to observe, on the education of the senses until they seem to work with ready certainty, have led me off

the main highway of my thesis. Let us find the road again. I was trying to make clear to you that some out-of-door pursuit of nature's ways was of delightful use, because the play of the mind trains for its serious work, and because these resources never fail to add to the happiness of life, and, so far as may be, to bring into an existence full of worries and anxieties that remarkable contentment which I have observed to be the best moral property of the naturalist. "Care sits behind the rider," was said of old—but not, I think, behind him who rides a hobby. I remember once, at my own table, my friend Leidy listening with curious attention to a man who said that life was tiresome at times, and that the thing which has no English name—*ennui*—was not rare with him. Leidy looked up with a smile of gentle sweetness which swiftly interpreted the man. "How," he said, "can life be tiresome so long as there is still a new rhizopod undescribed?" I once kept him waiting for me nearly two hours on a beach near Newport, my horse having gone lame and delayed me. I came up to him full of apologies. "My dear Mitchell," he said, "just look at this worm. I am quite satisfied that it must be new. I turned over two stones in this brook, and have found a whole menagerie; and now, I suppose, I really must leave them. I am so sorry." Have I helped you to see what I mean? No, we cannot all be Leidys, but this easily-won delight in nature may be had for the wooing of it by minds less great than his. And, too, if your nature-studies make the habitual use of the microscope easy, there, too, is a clear gain in

training, for more and more does the doctor's work involve skill in its use. Indeed, it seems to me that all our progress makes more easy the possibility of research in remote localities, with small means, away from cities. Shall we let ourselves forget that Jenner and Koch were country doctors? To this point of medical education I may return; but now I want only to urge that for him who does not care for botany or minerals every pond about him offers to his assisted eyes a world of tiny vital dramas in the minute life of plant and animal.

Once I was going to see a patient with a middle-aged physician near a Southern city. I asked him how he amused himself. "Oh, very well," he said. "When I was young I used to read novels if I felt tired and had an idle hour; but I found out some years ago that the fresh-water sponges were much more entertaining and never by any chance stupid. But I do read novels still; only not so many."

I have said that it were well to have a hobby, but that it were also well that the side-pursuit you choose should have acceptable relations to your own mental structure. I know of many admirable physicians to whom all forms of accurate natural history pursuits are distasteful or difficult, owing to some defect of intellectual construction. We need not pause to analyze: I for one must admit the fact, because I personally illustrate it. My friend Leidy used to smile when I urged that I could never be a botanist, because I could by no possibility recall the names of species, or even of genera. We once tested his own memory after a meeting of the Academy of Natural Sciences, and

found that he was easily master of at least ten thousand botanical names, or specific and generic labels. He used to insist that it was all a matter of training. I am sure this is not so, and mention it only to illustrate my sub-thesis that one's side-studies—the choice of what we make the play of the mind—may have limitations due to individual differences.

There remain, for the use and joy of leisure hours, books. Not medical books; these are for hours of study; and I would like in my digressive way to pause a moment on this matter. Once for all I beg you to hold me excused for this pleasant freedom, and free to consider this the wandering talk of an older man with younger friends. What I lose in form and method we may gain in easy pleasantness of statement. Therefore a word as to medical books. Do not read too quickly. Do not let the book devour and digest you. It is so easy to float along on the accepted statements of a writer. Print imposes itself on the languid reader. There are no bullies like books. Remember that what men—even the best—say in books ought to be digested. Turn on them the critical tap of your mental gastric juice, to tease and solve out their cores of meaning. A little of the bitter cynical bile is not out of place.

Continuous care as to reading gives in the end that swiftness of apprehension of things in print which at last results in power to seem to skim books and journals and yet to make available conquest of their contents. This comes with time, and presupposes large familiar

knowledge and immense previous fractional attention. This is really a form of training in the observation of what is set before you in print. Become an observer of books, not a mere lazy reader.

First, then, comes care—attention to what you read. Next comes the habit of thinking, as you go, about what you read for medical use. The mood of indolent acceptance of what is seen in print saves much present trouble. But the neglected opportunities of youth are ruthless usurers. Therefore learn to ask yourself if what you read is proven; if the observed facts are as stated. A vast amount of safe, accumulated knowledge exists in medicine to-day, a vast amount is doubtful. The fact which seems certain to-day is to-morrow insecure. The sanguine statements as to new drugs and novel methods set forth by discoverers or inventors invite and too often justify the caution of discreet scepticism. There never was a day when the quiet judgments of the general practitioners were more needed. And, after all, it is the public opinion of this great jury which decides and keeps a drug in use or lets a vaunted method drop into the limbo of rejection.

Ask yourself as you read if this or that may not be improved upon. Longfellow once wrote that it was not well for the man in common life to turn somersaults in order to appear original. Appearance of novelty is not what is to be desired. But when a fresh idea occurs to you, put it down in a note-book. Look at it again. It may seem valueless to-morrow. There is deceptive self flattery about what one's own brain originates. And yet the habit of

trying to take new views of things, to regard nothing stated as beyond some one's bettering—perhaps yours—is, I assure you, a good plan. I have many pages of such notes. Too often these hints for research come to nothing; but sometimes they come to a great deal. Above all, do not merely stuff yourself with reading. Read thoroughly about some one subject at a time, and do not try to keep up always with the vast mass of accumulating statements. As to the swiftly changing beliefs on bacteria, vital chemistries, and the like, read now and then some one of the summarizations of these matters: that will be enough.

And books—other books—what shall I say of these to the young man who turns to them as the noble playmates of his leisure? A vast mass of good or bad or neutral literature is nowadays cast before the world. If you learn early to content yourself with the mere pleasant fiction of the day, when more wisely minded you will find it hard work to change your diet. It is a law of the mental life that a man grows to like what he does long enough; and so, be sure that, if in the youth of your career you choose for comrades the master-books of the world, you will in time find their company wholesome and attractive. Like the best of earthly friends, these great books are hard to capture. They repay the effort. Like our friends of the flesh, they have their limitations; and, as with the friends who are alive, you must not expect too much. But the great books are fine mental tonics, and do not die. As years go on you turn to them with increasing certainty

of satisfaction, but they must for this have been yours in younger hours.

I think it a sign of narrowness of nature when I find a young man indisposed to read the great books. He may succeed in life—it has little to do with that—but he will have lost a vast resource and will have ignorantly let go by until too late the noblest of friends—the fine company of those who, being dead, yet speak.

I am not so foolish as to tell you not to read fiction. But it is not a good exclusive diet, even for the leisure of the young. There are times when it is valuable—good as a change. But choose it wisely. It is better, I think, for the old or middle-aged. I myself find that after a tiring day the best preparation for sleep is a pleasant hour over some absorbing novel. But as to this men's tastes vary. Nor less as to that noblest branch of literature—verse—with which our profession has some interesting relation. In fact, it has produced many poets, and men as grave as the great Haller have written good verse. For many active men in our profession I have known poetry to be in their busy lives what music is to some people. But as with music, so with poetry, the taste must be natural, or at least cultivated in youth.

Reflect, then, what it is I urge upon you. Poetry means the most elevated thoughts in the most condensed form of the best language, told to the music of rhyme and rhythm.

The best literature of prose and verse is what I ask you to make a part of your mental outfit for that profession in which no accomplish-

ment can possibly be wasted. You deal not with the bodies of men alone; woe to them and to you if this be your definition of medicine. Men's souls, men's lives, their thoughts, passions, and temptations, their secrets and crimes, come all within the range of your experience. In the serene atmosphere where soar and sing the great masters of human passion you may learn to live with an ever-broadening and ever-kindlier view of life, and acquire that charity toward the weaknesses of your fellows which for the better nature is the sure outgrowth of large knowledge of men, however learned.

This is not a lecture on literature; and were it that, it should be needless to point out what are the great books in prose or verse with which a thoughtful man ought to desire to be intimate. They are the books which have generated libraries of comment and criticism. They are the books which contain the flower, the fruit, and, too, the seed, of thought. Like those vast forms of stone, or god or king that sit among the desert sands of Egypt, they fill us with wonder, and tax alike the imagination and the intellect.

Learn, then, to know well some of these records of human genius at its summit of productive power. This is the best society a man can keep. Here are the best talk and here the noblest manners. Do not think of me as exceeding in my enthusiasm the limits of reasonable advice. In sickness, in trouble, in hours of vexation and days of disappointment, the greatest of our kind have found compensation and consolation in the company I recommend you to cultivate. I remem-

ber that one evening the late James Russell Lowell walked to and fro in my library. Now and then, pausing, he picked a volume from the shelves, glanced at its contents, and said pleasant, wise, or merry things of it or its author. It was as though he were answering some skillful talkers. It was like gay chat of which I heard but half. At last he said: "I wonder if young men comprehend what they miss in not learning to love the best books. Many times in my life," he added, "I have turned to them for help and distraction when everything else on earth seemed to be as dust and ashes. While a man has books he need never think of a monastic life as a refuge from moral disaster."

Lord Macaulay has left us an interesting poem in which he, too, records at a time of bitter disappointment what literature was to him, and what it has ever been to those who seriously apprehend its values and its possibilities of moral helpfulness. In imagination the fairies who endow the cradled child with gifts of fame and power and wealth pass him by, but one stays to give of her best. She who represents the love of letters leaves with him this gift, and says:

"Yes, darling, let them go: so ran the strain:
  Yes, let them go—gain, fashion, pleasure, power,
And all the busy elves to whose domain
  Belongs the nether sphere, the fleeting hour.

"Without an envious sigh, one anxious scheme,
The nether sphere, the fleeting hour, resign.
Mine is the world of thought, the world of dream,
Mine all the past, and all the future mine.

"Fortune, that lays in sport the mighty low,
Age, that to penance turns the joy of youth,
Shall leave untouched the gifts which I bestow,
The sense of beauty and the thirst of truth.

"In the dark hour of shame I deigned to stand
Before the frowning peers at Bacon's side;
On a far shore I smoothed with tender hand,
Through months of pain, the sleepless bed of Hyde:

"I brought the brave and wise of ancient days
To cheer the cell where Raleigh pined alone;
I lighted Milton's darkness with the blaze
Of the bright ranks that guard the eternal throne.

"Ah, when on restless night dawns cheerless morrow,
When weary soul and wasting body pine,
Thine am I still, in danger, sickness, sorrow,
In conflict, obloquy, want, exile, thine."

This is a very real thing of which men like Lowell or Macaulay can so speak or sing. You do not need it to make dollar-winning more easy; many men great in our profession forever miss it; but, believe me, it is a thing to win with effort, and worth the winning.

There are men who do not—never will—care for it, and there are some who care neither for nature, nor art, nor gun, nor rod, nor saddle. I can but feel a sort of mild pity for such people. Believe me, the more things you can put into life without doing harm to its definite duties the happier will it be.

It must often happen that whether you study natural objects or find in literature occupative change, some of you may be tempted to put in print your observations or your thoughts. Also, it is possible that among you may be one or two who have the power to say better in verse than in prose what they feel and think. Observe my words, "to say better in verse." If the thing cannot be said better in verse than in prose, then, by all the Muses, hold your tongue so far as verse is concerned; and in any case be certain that what you want to say is worth saying at all. But, whether you write prose or verse, do not let the pleasure of recording thought fill you at once with ambition to see yourself in print. The use of the pen is for many minds needed to give definition to thought. For me this has always been the case, and whether it be a mere literary statement or a problem in toxicology or medicine, it only grows clear to me on the written page, and perhaps only then after repeated efforts to put it in words. But be careful how, as medical men, you print anything. If you write something not medical, and think you have done a good thing, look at it in a year or two. The partiality of the mother for her first-born is but mere neutrality of preference compared to the young writer's affection for

what he calls the offspring of his brain. Too often there may be grave doubt as to the legitimacy of these children. At all events, beware of the fatal audience of *one*; the *I's* always have it, and unanimity settles the question. Pray note that I think it a good thing to use the pen; but be wary of inflicting its product on others.

There is yet another and a graver reason why you should in your young lives consider literary product as but mental gymnastics. Rightly or not, the public, especially in small towns and the country, believes that a doctor should be that and nothing else. The feeling—the prejudice I prefer to call it—is fading away in great cities, where generally a man may do as he will if only he makes it sure and obvious to all men that the distribution of his energies does not affect his value as a physician. It were best to err on the side of caution, and to wait for larger personal freedom, until in early middle life you are certain of that professional success which, after all, is and ought to be the main object of your care. You will pardon me if I speak so often of myself, but the story, now well known, is worth the telling over. When I was yet young, being of opinion that I had written some good verse, I sent it to a Boston publisher, who agreed to print it. Then came a letter from Oliver Wendell Holmes in which he said that he had been asked by the publishers to read my little book. He wrote that, after some hesitation, he had resolved to give me a piece of unasked advice. He said that, having read my verse and being familiar with such medical papers as I had written, he thought he

ought to say to me that I could not hope to succeed both in medicine and literature. He counseled me to withdraw the poems, to put them in a drawer, and to look at them again when I was forty years old. Not without a pang I took his advice.

With this too personal illustration, which I would readily have replaced by another had it been in my power, I draw to a close. I wished to show you how to make use of the variety of mental qualifications which one and another of you may possess. I wanted to point out how in their use you may avoid the evils which their exercise may bring to your careers.

I might have added a few words as to the morals of young physicians—as to the temptations which beset the hours of idleness—the coarser temptations, I mean—but no sermon can be complete. I prefer to leave to the preacher we all carry within us such obvious lessons as to these matters of moral conduct. I shall be well enough repaid for the easy labor of advice if, in days to come, in hours of trial and vexation, you return at times in thought to what I have now said, and find in its remembrance any help toward the successful conduct of righteous and wise living. In my next lecture I can promise to be more practical, because I shall deal chiefly with every-day questions of a professional nature.

# Lecture II.

I HAVE long looked forward with pleasant anticipations to these talks with students. The reality has blocked my way with difficulties. There is so much to say. I soon saw that I must choose with care what to discuss, and risk the want of appearance of continuity. If all of you were to be town or country doctors my task were more easy; but some the navy will claim, or the army, and others will drop into special lines of work.

I shall try to remember only that you are all to be of the great army of medicine. First of all I own for you the wish that in this vast organized body you shall take honest pride. Through it you will earn your bread, and, I trust, much beside a mere living. That you may correctly estimate its splendid history, that you may fitly comprehend the opportunities it gives, let us look a little broadly for a time at some of its virtues and some of its values. I could wish that you were really taught something of the wonderful history of medicine.[1] I have, myself, ancestral pride in the splendor of its conquests, the courage and heroism of its myriad dead. I am fond of saying it is a guild, a fellowship, a brotherhood, older than civilization. It had a creed of moral life antique when Christ was born. No other organization is like it. Customs, code and creed separate the lawyer and

[1] This is now provided for in the four-year course of the University of Pennsylvania.

clergyman of different lands, but we in all lands hold the same views, abide by the same moral law, have like ideas of duty and conduct. From Japan to London you may claim medical aid for self or wife or child, and find none willing to take a fee. There is something fine and gracious in this idea.

I once asked the care of a physician I never saw or heard of before in a German town. As I was about to pay him a card dropped from my pocket-book. He glanced at it, said, "But you are a doctor; I can take nothing—nothing." I remonstrated in vain. "No," he said, "you will make it up to some other doctor." I believe that I have paid this debt and other like debts with interest. I hear now and then of men who break this beautiful rule which makes professional service given by one physician to another a friendly debt for which the whole brotherhood holds itself responsible. Doctors are said to differ, but these bonds of union and generous amity are mysteriously strong. Try to keep them so, and when you serve medical men go about it as if they were laymen. Put away all thought of wasted time, of the commercial values of what you give. The little biscuit you cast on the waters will come back a cheerful loaf. I consider it a glad privilege to help thus my brothers in medicine, and let me assure you few are more heavily taxed than I.

And there is another privilege your profession brings. From the time you graduate until you cease to work, whether in town or country, hospital or wretched homes, the poor will claim from you help in their

time of sickness. They will do it, too, with tranquil certainty of gracious service on your part.

The greatest of moralists has said, "The poor ye have always with you." I think he meant to speak of the poor as representing opportunities for self-sacrifice never absent. Of a certainty it applies to us. The poor we have always with us—the sick poor. The unthoughtful public believe that our easy readiness to give of our skill and time to the sick comes largely out of our consciousness that the experience won in this service is valuable. This is true, but not the whole truth. Experience is needed in the training for every form of work, but neither in law nor trade does a man expect to acquire capacity by calmly giving away time and skill after he has completed his primary education.

Imagine a law hospital where the highest talent is to be had without money by any man too poor to carry on a righteous law-suit.

There are none of us who do not do and have not done more in the unpaid care of the sick than was needful for our mental training. Whether we like it or not this service *is* essential to the young, and valuable at all ages. However harassing, however unjust in its excess, however absurd, try always to get out of it for yourselves and others all that you can. The virtues men affect become their own. An inexorable and noble part of our unwritten creed makes such charity so completely a portion of our lives that at last, even for the most selfish, it comes to have the unquestioned force of a mere bodily habit,

and this is as it should be. The virtues which grow to be thoughtlessly habitual are none the less virtues. We tell the truth, are honest, are just, or punctual, because the qualities in question have grown to be a part of us. At last they exact no effort, involve no indecision, and above all no self-praise. And so it is that with us the gift of our mental and moral best to the poor becomes an unquestioned necessity of our nature. These onerous claims lessen as life runs on.

None altogether escape this form of charitable expenditure. But each virtue has its attendant evil. An eastern proverb says, "every angel has a twin devil." This constant unrequited service of the sick poor has its danger to character. I have felt it myself. I want you to feel it.

On every Friday I conduct the clinical out-service at the Infirmary for Nervous Disease. I never go through these long and tiresome hours of intense attention without feeling that it is needful to put some stress on myself that I be not negligent or hasty, vexed, or impatient, or fail as to some of the yet finer qualities of social conduct. I want you also to feel that such self-watchfulness is needed. These early years among the poor, or the class of uncertain debtors, are apt to make some men rude and uncareful, and ill-tempered. Most honestly do I say that such work is what I may call an acute test of character.

In this service a mass of little undermining, mean temptations assail you. When I have watched a young resident a year in my

clinic, I know whether he will succeed or not. If he fail in the hospital, he will fail in life. It is a sharp test, I admit. Here are the sick poor, at times ill-mannered, surly, ungracious, ill-tempered, harassed by cares you know not of. There, too, are nurses; and there is the visiting M.D., with his exactions, and expecting you to know everything. In your early practice at home, away from wholesome criticism, you will go your way for good or ill, and become your own critic. Are you careful then or uncareful, conscientious or not, gentle, charitable, thoughtful or not, no one reproaches you with failure. Some sad day, in middle-life, you feel that your fellows have gone by you. You ask yourself, why? Alas! by that time you will have lost competence for self-criticism, and will conclude upon luck as your foe. An old friend of mine used to say some men always spell Luck with a P before it, and some without it. Observe, now, that I am but casting out hints, that I am pleading for the careful, early construction of habits now, here, at the immature age. That was a wise man who said:

> "Sow an act and you reap a habit,
> Sow a habit and you reap a character,
> Sow a character and you reap a destiny."

Before leaving this question of unpaid work, of which we do so much and learn to think so little, a word more as to one aspect of it.

I am doubtful whether any constantly unpaid work is always the best work. Note my phrase, *constantly* unpaid work. Experience

won *is* our pay, says a public well content to be eased of the burden. But this applies also to the unpaid nursing sisterhoods, of whose devotion we hear so much. A queer, moral trap is set for some natures in all this; one may easily over-esteem what is one's pure gift. It is deeply human to conceive of devotion to pecuniarily unrewarded work as in all respects an insurance of competency. But sisterhoods do not give us better nurses than we get outside among the paid and trained. A vow does not exclude defects, moral or mental, nor convent or hospital shut out motives of this world. Nor, on the other side, does the fact that work is paid for deprive us of spiritual motives or the finer incitements to perfectness of method and manner.

The nobler the nature the more surely does the fact of wages add to the obligations of dutiful action. That you get a dollar for doing this or that surely does not exclude even the highest religious motives, and it adds a wholesome, earthy motive which may be base enough if you choose to put it before all others.

And, now, after this seeming digression, let us clear our way a little for its applicative uses. A part of your life-work consists in giving of your best to those who cannot pay. A part consists in work for honest wages. I think you happy in that our work is not altogether paid labor, and not wholly work without pay. In both are chances which, rightly used, make the good better, the wise wiser; and there are many sides to it all.

In a country like ours you will find, and not rarely, that by-and-

by these poor who so cling to you are no longer poor, and that among them are some who rise with you in life. The other day a wealthy manufacturer who came to me with his grandson reminded me pleasantly that in our young lives I had given his family unpaid care for years, and then he added, "but I have tried to get even," and that was true enough.

I do not like to leave this subject without a living illustration. It is strange and interesting to see what our life does with different kinds of men.

I once went through a hospital ward in France watching the work of a great clinical teacher, long gray in the service of the sick. It was as pretty and gracious a thing as one could see. The examinations were swift, the questions few and ready. Clearly he liked his work. A kindly word fell now and then ; faces lit up as he came near. Now and then he answered a patient gravely and simply where there was real reason to do so, and twice I observed that when he did this he sat down as if in no haste—a nice trait of gentle manners. It was a ward of women and he was very modest—a too rare thing in French hospitals in my student days. When he went away his interne told me that he had been very sharp with him for a piece of neglect, "but," said the young doctor, "he never says a word of blame at the bedside." In fact, this great physician was a gentleman—much-abused word—but think what that may fully mean : a man in the highest sense of manhood—so gentle, good old English word, that every little or large act

of duty or social conduct is made gracious and beautiful because of the way of doing it.

I saw a week later a great French surgeon in his clinic for women. The man was as swift, as skillful as could be. He was also ill-tempered, profane, abrupt and brutally immodest—a strong, rough, coarse machine; and this was what the medical life had done with two men. With less intellect this rude nature must have altogether failed of success in life. He did not fail, being a man of overwhelming force and really admirable mental organization; and so when you read of Abernethy's roughness and the like, pray understand that such great men as he win despite bad manners, and not because of them. There is no place where good breeding and social tact—in a word, habitual good manners—are so much in place as at the bedside or in the ward. When Sir Henry Sidney wrote a letter of advice to his son—the greater Sidney, Sir Philip—he said, "Have good manners for men of all ranks; there is no coin which buyeth so much at small cost." The too common trouble as to this matter is that men who lack really good manners seem to be wanting in knowledge of their own defect. The finer nature has the more delicate social conscience, and is swift to feel its own wants or mistakes. You are now at the age when the school of social conduct closes. No one says "don't Bill," or "Tom;" no one now says you were right as to this or that, but the manner of the doing was ill and hurt your purposed efficiency. Be, therefore, in your young lives most watchful, yes, and most thoughtful, as to this matter.

A clever woman of the world once said to me: "I sent for Dr. A. yesterday, and by mistake the servant left the message with Dr. B. He came at once, and really he was so well-mannered and pleasant that I quite forgot what a fool he is."

I know men who have had large success in practice chiefly because of their gentleness and sweetness in all the relations of life. I know of far more able men who have found life hard and the winning of practice difficult simply because they lacked good manners or wanted tact. We began about the poor, and here we are discussing manners. I had not meant to say of it so much, but on the whole I am not sorry. Pray remember, finally, that neatness of dress and the extreme of personal cleanliness are, shall I say, a sort of physical good manners, and now-a-days the last words of science are enforcing these as essentials of surgical success.

Let us turn aside from these questions. I presume you to be placed with hope of practice in town or country, and here again I am puzzled how to choose the points on which I want to advise you. Let us look at the health question first. There is no success for you without health. The energy of full vigor makes itself felt in our work as in no other pursuit. I have often felt that. Sometimes the energy has gone out of me. The English say to become a Lord Chancellor a man must have the three B's—Back, Belly and Brains. Vigor, good digestion, intellect. Into your lives will come loss of sleep, irregular hours, delayed meals and daily worries. As to these latter they are as

sand in the machinery of life. "Learn to laugh, and you are your own doctor," say the Turks. A natural sense of the humorous is an unusual help. I hope you have it. But if you cannot acquire that gift of the fairy nature you can at least learn cheerfulness, and by habit to cease to think of your bad cases more than their problems demand.

Our open-air life is a great safeguard. We suffer little from neurasthenic conditions, despite the seemingly unhealthful conditions which surround us.

But try to get, while young, some daily active, violent use of your muscles. For the country doctor the back of the horse is available, and as Lord Palmerston said, the outside of a horse is good for the inside of a man. Try soon to get every year a little divorce from all your physical and social surroundings. I have a prejudice in favor of the rod or gun. But whether in canoe or afoot be sure that a little wood life, away from all you know, is what the Indian calls "great medicine" for mind and body. There is a strange moral influence in the life. You come back better, wiser, innocently sweetened all over, and by lake or river you forget and forgive with natural ease. I think that doctors are apt to be a little reckless as to their own risks of disease. They have seemed to me to share the popular belief that in some mysterious way we are guarded from contagion. Nothing could be more foolish. Never be ashamed to take reasonable precautions.

I have myself twice taken diphtheria from patients, and once

small pox. I think my own maladies taught me some good lessons, and few of you will, I fear, quite escape such opportunities of knowing disease from the standpoint of the patient. The records of typhus and yellow fever epidemics tell a sad tale of such disaster in our ranks, and I may add that in the great civil war surgeons suffered death and wounds in equal proportion to line officers of the like ranks.

Be reasonable, therefore, in your care of yourselves. There comes a time now and then when we want the most sturdy health—for the battle with epidemics, or for the honest wrestle to save some single life. Then, as in war, all questions of convenience, safety, ease must disappear before the unquestioned call of duty.

Among country patients and doctors a certain amount of friendly relation and more or less familiarity is apt to grow up. In cities this is less certainly the case. "As a rule," said a wise physician to me, a young man, "you will do well to let your patients be friendly, but be yourself careful how you make friends of them." Whim, caprice, accident, absence, cause them to leave you for another practitioner. You will not like it, no man does, but, if you are personally attached to them the pang will be sharper. Any large practice in a great city is continually changing. Patients leave you, others come. Another man who complains to you of his patient leaving him for Dr. A. or B., will always seem to you a little childish. Take care. There is nothing in life more valuable than a true sense of the ridiculous applied to ourselves. When a patient leaves you, try to see why you failed to

hold the case or family. If it was not through negligence or want of earnest care, do not let it annoy you or disturb your relations to them, or the more lucky doctor. But be honest in your self-examination, and remember my old doctor's advice—don't try to make friends of patients, and do not get to think you own the sick man. I scarcely ever go for consultation to a village that I do not find some little bickering among the doctors. Most of it comes out of loose talk and critical comments, or from loss of cases who go here and there and leave you. Let me beg of you finally, now in advance of these incidents, and they come to all, to resolutely accept them as a part of the changeful fates of life. Try to look down on life as a whole. How its smaller calamities affect your character is of far more moment than how these for a passing hour influence your material fortunes. Guard too your own tongue. I saw over an inn in the Tyrol in the queer old Romansch dialect these words, "Critica ast facile." To find fault is easy. Yes, it is very easy, and it is something else.

There is a wise proverb of the East, "He who holds his tongue for a minute is wise with the wisdom of all time." I am fond of proverbs, and this is full of meaning, for really to refrain from instant speech when irritated is victory. An hour later you are sure to be silent enough. The temptation to speech is momentary. Above all, try not to talk of your patients—even with doctors. It is usually a bore to be told of cases, and we only stand it because we expect our own boring to be in turn endured. But my ideal doctor who reads,

thinks, and has a hobby will not need to gossip about patients. He will have, I trust, nobler subjects of conversation. When I hear a young man talk cases or read them in societies with heavy detail of unimportant symptoms I feel like saying of him, as was once said in my presence of one who amply justified the prediction, "That man has a remarkably fine foundation for dulness in after life."

The life and ways of a country physician make it rather hard for him, as his days fill up, to do all the reading he should do, but if in town or country you were to be let into the whole life of a man you would always find more unused hours than the lazy care to admit as existing. I have all my life wondered how doctors, even the busy, fill up all their time.

For the country doctor there is most excuse. He has to know so much. He has to rely so completely on himself. As a result, the best country physicians are better all-round practitioners than the up-and-down town men of cities, who can in an hour of doubt find counselors close at hand.

In any case, no matter what may come to excuse later deficiencies, begin and try to continue a system of notes of cases. Their value comes to be immense—their value to you I mean. Index them as to names and diseases. At the close of a case read it over and make comments. As regards the odd and curious, keep a special index. As time goes on the accumulated knowledge as to individuals and families gathers value. I saw a few years ago a case which had puzzled a

friend. I turned to my notes of twenty years ago and found in the dead father's case a story of syphilis, which brought clear light into a difficult consultation. If the whole medical story of successive generations could be kept, how strangely interesting it would be. I have myself several thousand records of my cases, and every now and then some one turns up whose history of years ago is in my books.

The methods of note-taking you are well taught, and, too, I hope, the best ways of examining your cases. As to this, circumstances must guide you. A patient is often a bad witness, and one man gets at the truth of his case, another does not.

As to acute cases, it is immensely valuable to learn through concentration of attention to be rapid without omissions. Dr. Edward Dalton is quoted as saying to his class, "After careful and repeated auscultation, percussion, palpation and even succussion of your patient for twenty minutes, *you* may not be very tired. *He* is."

As you go on in practice you will get to be fond of certain drugs. Be a little careful of this habit, which has its reasonable side. Even the best of us fall into this therapeutic trap. I once met in consultation the late Prof. Blank, a delightful and most able physician. As I came out of the house I fell upon his son, also a doctor. "Ah!" he said, "you have been meeting my father; I am sure he advised Plumer's pills"—an old mercurial preparation. It was true.

As I watch the better medical practice, I see a tendency to rely less upon mere drugs, and more and more sharply to question their value.

The true middle course is to be skeptical as to new drugs, and to test them over and over before being mentally satisfied. Nor is it well to run into the extreme which in our civil war caused an order forbidding the use of calomel because of the folly and indiscretion with which a few men had used it. After all, one of the most difficult things in ours, the most inexact of sciences, is to be sure of the value of a drug. When studying the poison of serpents I found the most positive printed evidence of the certain value of at least forty antidotes. Not one of them was worth the slightest consideration. Such a fact as this makes one careful of crediting the endless cures to be read in the journals.

When you come to read over the works of the great masters, dead or living, and to see how Sydenham or Rush, Cardan or Bright, did their work, you will be struck, as I have been, with the great stress laid upon habits of living, what shall be eaten, diets, exercise, clothing, hours of work and rest. Curiously enough, these dicta are more often found in their records of cases than as positive theses; a proof that, in his practical work, a man may be better and wiser than in his generalizations. When, therefore, you come to deal with chronic conditions, be sure to learn all there is to learn as to the ways of men, their diet, clothing, sleep, work, play, wine and tobacco. I like to make a man describe to me, with minute care, his average day. Then I consider, usually, how much of what is clearly wrong may be set right by a life on schedule. After that comes the considerate use of drugs.

The desire for drugs is a remainder from barbarous times. It is

much in the way of what I call natural medicine. *Do* this and do *not* do that, might cover a large amount of useful treatment if men would but consider the doctor as a wise despot to be implicitly obeyed. But just here I wish to add that the very men who are most chary as to drugs are those who, at times, win splendid therapeutic victories by exclusive diets, or heroic use of powerful medicines.

Much nonsense is talked about the injurious influence of drugs until, in the very word drug, there is a malignant sound. Men used to be over-bled or salivated. This does not occur now-a-days. And if I asked your whole faculty how many people they have seen permanently injured by mere medication, I fancy they might be puzzled to bring to mind illustrations of such mischief. The belief is another survival of conclusion founded on premises which perished long ago.

I pause for another word of caution. Let me entreat you to be careful as to narcotics. Never leave to a patient the freedom to use them at will. They are too often the easy resort of the lazy doctor. Pain is a sad thing, but be sure that the frequent use of opiates mysteriously increases the future capacity to feel pain. Nearly always the attendant physician is in some way to blame for the opium habit. Above all, be careful in your own households. Few winters pass without bringing to me three or four morphia cases in doctors' wives. Certainly it is a sore thing to see the pain of those we love; the temptation to give instant relief is great; affection is a poor consultant. You yield, and at last a habit is made, and the more easily because the drug

is too readily at hand in the homes of country doctors. The moral is, do not attend the sick in your own household. There are many reasons why it is unwise. Save as to these matters doctors are the best husbands in the world.

Men in our profession fail more often owing to want of care in investigating cases than for lack of mental power. There are exact sciences and inexact sciences. If ours be a science at all, it lies among the inexact. Try, then, always to be as exact as possible. Let me show you what I mean. Let us take for illustration the urine, and suppose the case a difficult one. Is the patient gouty or lithæmic? One man looks at the urine carefully once and decides; another looks once at the night and morning water and concludes; a third asks that there be made no change in diet or habits for a week, and examines the urine over and over, both the night and morning secretion. Of course, this is the only right way. Troublesome? Yes, very! If you do not want to practice medicine as it ought to be practiced, better far to get some business which will permit of indolent intellectuation.

A friend of mine had a consultation in the country as to a case of great importance. The attendant fell ill and could not meet him. My friend went over the case with care. It was one of persistent headache. He took home urine of the night and morning, and wrote word that the patient had uræmic toxication. The attendant said "No; that neither casts nor albumen were in the urine which he had thrice

examined." At last, puzzled, my friend asked if he had studied the night urine. He said "no." And here was the mischief.

I saw to-day a woman of wealth and social importance, who for years suffered cruelly from headache. Now, as it always began after an hour of very acid vomiting, a dozen of the ablest men in Europe and America, who were led off by the vomiting, failed to take in the whole possibilities, and did not question the eyes. But a little country doctor did, and a tendon or two clipped put that woman back into a state of health. I was one of those who made the mistake, and yet I have written, was perhaps the first to write on the eye as a cause of headaches of varied type. But to be constantly complete and exact in all examinations is, I admit, hard; nevertheless, that way lies success.

And the like axiom applies to treatment. You are taught in acute disease to write your directions and to leave no possibility of change unprovided for. And the acutely ill are prisoners of our will. But how many men think it needful to write out a schedule of life, medicine, diet, exercise, rest for cases of chronic disorder, I do not say disease. I never tire of urging that in attention to minutiæ lies the most certain success. A large practice is self-destructive. I mean that no over-busy man can continue to give always, unfailingly, the kind of care patients ought to have. But that is as I said in my first lecture, a question of enduring energy, and of the firmly made habit of dissatisfaction with the incomplete. If medicine consisted only in mere intellectual endeavor; if to see, hear, feel, weigh, measure, in a

word, know all there is to know of a case, were really all; if then we only had to say do this or that, one's life might be sufficiently easy.

In time of peril, or under stress of pain, any one, and always the great consultant, can secure absolute obedience. In the daily current of practice, fancy and unbelief, indolence, prejudice and what not, stand in our way. Busy men, indulged children, hysterical women are your worst difficulties. Then come into play the moral qualities which, in union with educated intellect, make for the triumphs of the great healers of their kind. Are you gentle, and yet firm? Have you the power of statement, which is so priceless a gift, the capacity to make the weak, the silly, the obstinate feel as you speak that your earnestness rests on foundations of kindness, and of thoughtful investigation of their needs? Can you, in a word, make people do what you want? Have you the patience to wait, untroubled by the follies of the sick, to bide the hour when you can carry your point? Have you the art to convince the mother that the sick child is the last of all who should be left to the misery of self-indulgence? Can you sit by the bedside and gently satisfy some hysterical fool of her capacity to take up anew the reins of self-government? It demands earnestness. It means honest beliefs. It exacts such rule over your own temper, such good manners as few possess in their highest degrees of quality and quantity. Above all, it means that dislike of defeat which makes the great soldier.

A fine thing in our profession that mere hatred of defeat. As I came once out of a consultation with Prof. Gross, he said: "Don't you

hate it, sir?" "Hate it; what?" I said, "hate what?" "Oh, to spend a life like yours or mine, and be beaten—puzzled—licked, sir—by a miserable lump in a woman's breast." I always liked what General Sheridan said to me years ago. I asked how he accounted for his constant success in war. He hesitated and then replied: "It was because I did so hate to be licked." No matter whence comes this feeling, it is valuable. Cherish it; never lose it. Find reason for disaster, but learn to loathe the result. I never see a death or a grave failure to cure that I am not personally hurt by it. I say then, "a century hence this will be otherwise," for, as I am proud of the past of this great guild, so am I full of glad hope for its future, when it shall have learned the conquest of cancer and tubercle.

I have come again half unexpectedly, as I draw to a close, upon this grave question of the moral qualities needed for the noblest success in medicine. It would lead me, and easily, to talk of the code, of your relations to the secrets of households, to the criminal law as to witnesses, of insurance cases and the like, but all of this I must leave unsaid and reject the pages in which I had said something of the ethics of our profession.

You have chosen a life inexorably hard in what it asks of soul and mind and body, but be that as it may, you have taken upon you, I surely think, the most entirely satisfactory of earthly pursuits. I have seen much of men and their ways, but nothing I have seen entitles me to think there is any truer, better way of serving God and man, and in this service making yourselves what you ought to be.