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AN
ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE

ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT

OF THE

BERKSHIRE MEDICAL INSTITUTION,

PITTSFIELD, DECEMBER 23, 1824.



BY RUFUS WILLIAM BAILEY, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN PITTSFIELD.



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Pittsfield, December 23d, 1824.

REV. RUFUS W. BAILEY.

DEAR SIR,

I am requested, for and in behalf of the Trustees of the BERKSHIRE MEDICAL INSTITUTION, to tender you their thanks for the very excellent Address, you this day delivered, before the Corporation, Faculty and Members, and to request of you a copy for the press.

I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient humble servant,

JONATHAN ALLEN.

320757



Pittsfield, January 10, 1825.

HON. JONATHAN ALLEN.

SIR,

The Address delivered by me before the Corporation, Faculty and Members of the BERKSHIRE MEDICAL INSTITUTION, at their last Commencement, was written under my usual pressure of other cares, and I had not anticipated for it the notice expressed by you in behalf of the Trustees. If, however, its publication may subserve any important interest, or afford any gratification to the gentlemen, at whose request it was prepared, I shall not withhold it.

Yours, respectfully,

R. W. BAILEY.



Address.



THE interest which every community has in her professional men, is commensurate with the extensive influence they exert, and the immense responsibilities under which they act. Individual interests of property, life and principle, are very much committed to the advice and supervision of the Lawyer, the Physician and Divine. Every wise government will, therefore, exercise a watchful eye over the interests of learning, and every intelligent community will regard with jealousy the manner in which professional men are prepared and presented for their confidence and patronage. The most ignorant man goes to his lawyer, with questions involving all his interests of property, and commits their disposal to the hands of one, whom he supposes capable of counselling in wisdom. Here, too, the widow and the orphan bring their cause, and look for defence and protection. But, if it be important that the Lawyer be a man of wisdom and of principle, how much more the Physician and Divine, to whom are entrusted more eventful interests, affecting life and salvation.

The importance of a systematic education, suited to each profession has long been felt, and the good sense of the community has began to give a decided preference to regularly educated men. Our Colleges of Law, of Theology, and of Medicine, begin to compare in their extent and privileges, with those of Science and Literature ; and a formality and system are observed in introducing gentlemen into these professions as critical and exact, at least, as that by which men are prepared for the less responsible occupations of life. No friend to human happiness can regard these subjects but with the deepest interest.

To ensure success in business, it is not now enough that a man announce himself in the profession, and offer his services. It is not enough that he come out with his diploma, and ordinary academic honors. The public has begun to discriminate, on the

ground of substantial merit, of real knowledge, of practical aptness, and candidates for professional patronage, have learnt to prepare for a reception in society, adapted to their substantial claims.

Professional eminence has, of course, become the motto of every young man, who aspires to respectability or success. But professional eminence may be ephemeral. An enlightened public will demand that that eminence be built on a solid basis, on substantial character, on something above and beyond mere professional and technical knowledge.

I cannot, then, better meet the demands of this occasion, than in an attempt to trace and define the characteristics of true greatness in man ; together with the points of character important and essential to professional eminence.

While we shall not undertake to deny, that nature has made a difference in the original power and constitution of mind, it is obvious that the intellectual, as well as moral character, is formed and influenced vastly by education. To attain the highest standard, then, of our moral and intellectual dignity, is an object calculated to awaken the most strenuous effort ; and since there is no worthy and ennobling quality but may find footing, and be cultivated in every mind, the exhibition of those principles, on which the foundation of every thing valuable in character is laid, and the means of promoting them, become an object worthy the attention of all. The human mind is capable of putting forth efforts of a prodigious power, and with the aid of means subject to its control, of producing astonishing results. Some men, by seizing, combining, and exerting the happier powers of mind, have seemed to rise beyond ordinary distinctions, and we have looked upon them as elevated above us, by some rich and rare endowment of nature ;—when, if we analyze their characters, we may find their preeminence has often proceeded, not so much from any original distinction of mind, as from the careful cultivation and prominent exhibition of certain properties, which are common to all.

Characters, who have commanded the most lasting admiration, have usually regarded with comparative indifference the means of external promotion, and have risen on our esteem rather by the

sublime exertion of some commanding intellectual powers, than the mere influence of adventitious causes.

Among those traits which confer greatness and command distinction may be ranked as a leading feature, independence of mind. Not that independence which acknowledges no law, and exercises no discretion, but I mean that fearless hardihood, that disregard to consequences, which leads the mind to form its opinions and regulate its conduct by some great and unyielding principles, deliberately taken, well established, and uninfluenced by the apprehension of opposition or applause. By this I mean, a mind acting on its own responsibility, and possessing within itself a rule of action not liable to the influence of caprice or circumstance ; a mind which makes its own investigations, passes its own judgments, and regulates its own decisions, acting by its own energies on subjects presented to its examination, and borrowing no final sanction from the opinions or influence of others. It cringes to no footstool, and surrenders its judgments to no human decisions, and seeks no promotion but in the assertion of its own principles.

A true independence of mind is founded in principle, and consequently appears in all its investigations as well as actions. It is exerted at home in examining and choosing as well as bodied forth in its public efforts. It elevates the mind above a selfish or interested policy, and directs it to a course of efficient action in the rejection, not only of the authority of others, but of its own prepossessions, desires, and pride of opinion. Such an independence affects no singularity, and as readily coincides with others in what is right, as differs from them in what is wrong. There is a popular independence, much to be deprecated, which shows itself only in a contempt of the opinions of others, and treats with rudeness every thing not its own. It originates in the meanest pride, is actuated by the most selfish views, is dependent on the most capricious and local circumstances, and certainly shows itself in the most grovelling character. Nothing is approved by it which brings merit to another ; nothing can proceed, which does not in some way subserve its own selfish interests. From such a mind, no elevated views can originate, no liberal plans proceed, no disinterested efforts show themselves. Such an inde-

pendence contemplates no common interest, and of course consecrates no talent, with which it may be connected, to the public service. It is not the independence which in the language of Horace, inspires the patriot with delight, as well as crowns him with honor, when he falls for his country, and prompts to a fearless discharge of duty, whether it lead to glory or death.

The exercise and display of a dignified independence, requires a mind elevated above a mere sordid or selfish interest. It must look with a degree of unconcern on the consequences which will result to itself as well as to others, that the independence of its decisions may, when necessary, be elevated beyond the dependence of its circumstances. The man who cannot take this stand, can never decide by the rule of principle, but will always be influenced by the contingent circumstances of a personal interest. In reference to this species of independence, Shakespeare has said,

“ Blessed are those,
 “ Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled,
 “ That they are not a pipe for fortune’s finger
 “ To sound what stop she please.”

And in another connection, he has well expressed the operations of this lofty spirit, although in a language less adapted to common life, than we should choose to select, when he said,

“ His nature is too noble for the world.
 “ He would not flatter Neptune for his trident,
 “ Nor Jove for his power to thunder.”

Nearly connected with this independence of mind, and perhaps always attending it, is decision of character. Although so intimately allied as never perhaps to appear alone, they are entitled to a distinction, since the former relates properly to the operations of the mind in forming its opinions, the latter to the prompt action of the mind in passing and executing its judgment. The grand point of superiority in such a mind is, that it is always in action, and thereby awakens, disciplines, and shows forth its most efficient powers. Such a man rises on himself, and looking down all the misgivings and relentings of natural sloth, brings all his energies to bear upon his object, overcomes difficulties which seemed insuperable, and accomplishes all that lies within the com-

pass of human power. This was a striking feature in the character of Napoleon, and raised him to an eminence above ordinary great men. No one can contemplate this man in his splendid career, without a degree of astonishment. Yet we shall find much of that which constituted the greatness, and contributed to the exaltation of the character he sustained, was his decision.—With him it was only to look and decide—to decide and to act. Indeed, action is necessarily implied in decision. Without it, decision is an empty sound. The energies of his mind spent all their force in the active prosecution of his object, and therefore accomplished what was possible. There is something in this cast of mind which commands our admiration, because it is efficient. It is admired even in Napoleon,* although exerted so fatally to human happiness.

* The character of this distinguished man has been variously appreciated.—It is unnecessary now to trace all the influences which might operate to produce and diversify these opinions. It is enough to say, the time has come when the character of Bonaparte ought to be dispassionately weighed, and rightly estimated. Such an example cannot exist, without exerting an important influence. There is much in it to dazzle, and perhaps deceive the aspiring mind of youth, and on this account, some would object to the manner, in which it is here introduced. We think, however, this is the true reason why it should be presented and examined. As a scientific and successful soldier, Bonaparte is unrivalled by all who have gone before him : as an able and efficient politician, he will be celebrated by the pen of the historian ; and as possessing the leading traits of intellectual greatness, he must be confessed to have few equals. There is a sublimity and splendor in his career, which distinguishes the public course of no other man, who has lived and died. Still, the earth can endure but few such men. Why ? Because his ambition was unrestrained by that principle, which could make his power subservient to the happiness of man. His talents were unsanctified. Here we apprehend, is the true ground of distinction. It is a marked distinction, and the philanthropist cannot but weep, when he thinks what Napoleon might have been, had the great powers of his mind been confined to the study, and the means of making his country independent, virtuous, and happy. Bonaparte was *great*, when we contemplate all that gives preeminence to mind, or energy to character ;—but he was not *good*. His character is commanding—it is not lovely. If it should be said, the sphere in which he was called to act, was suited only to the developement of the severer features, we answer ;—we cannot as christians, admit of any circumstances, in which the sympathies of human kindness, and the affections of piety must be excluded.—The christian character has certainly often found an eminent display in the monarch, the soldier, and statesman, softening and controlling the sterner passions, and directing the most eminent talents, to the service of humanity and religion.

It was his decision which formed much of Cæsar's greatness. It was certainly this which, while it lengthened the period, heightened the brilliancy of his career. It was this which enabled him to accomplish so much. It concentrated his energies in action, and thereby rendered him efficient. Had Cæsar neglected to pursue this promptness of decision, and indulged the natural sensibilities he had, in the fond attractions of Cornelia or Cleopatra, instead of the preeminence he holds among the Cæsars, he might have been known only as a name in the Julian family—"fortisque Gyas, fortisque Cloanthus."

We are not to conclude that such minds are rare, because they are so seldom developed. We may doubtless find among us, minds like Julius Cæsar's, capable of the most extended influence and effect, for want of decision in council, and energy in action, like splendid palaces, standing desolate, and without an inhabitant. And we can hardly be more deeply impressed with the extent and influence of human depravity, nor feel a more melancholly regret, in viewing the desolations and miseries which attended the paths of Cæsar and Napoleon, than we must feel in contemplating the ruins of some great and original mind, hampered by indecision, and prostrated by idleness, luxury or delay. If as christians, we must condemn the misguided mind, spending its energies in action, we cannot less pass our censures and regrets

We would rejoice to see our youth cultivating most of those points of character and acquirement, which gave mental distinction to Napoleon, but restrained and influenced by no sounder and more divine morality, we should deprecate the reign of his influence.

If human depravity ever awakens the virtuous mind to a regret preeminently keen, it is when seen dragging down and debasing exalted intellect. In this view, "the Poet" of the present age sustains but a vile preeminence. Who does not admire the *mind* of Byron exhibited, as it is, in "thoughts that breathe, and words that burn?" Yet, who does not deprecate the moral influence of the man? If the fire and energy of that genius, could have been expressed under the influence of that divine principle, which warmed the heart of the "Royal Psalmist;" instead of scattering firebrands into the citadel of civil, and social, and domestic life, he would have kindled the altar of our sacrifice, and with a wing, I had almost said such as ministering angels use, would have fanned the flame of our devotions. Yet, if we omit the last action of his life, where is the expression of his *heart*, we can admire? Let, then, the mixed character be canvassed, that we may separate the precious from the vile, and hold up the one for imitation, the other for abhorrance.

on the heaven born intellect, which, although chastened and commended by the humblest professions of piety, spends all its energies in endless deliberations, and punctilious scruples, while the vigor of its powers is exhausting in the effort, and the time for successful action passes by forever. And while the former may often command our admiration, the latter will always beget our contempt.

Patience of suffering, the efficient virtue of a persevering mind, is necessary to secure the proper results from that independence and decision, which first lead the mind to attempt, and expect great things. As we proceed, the mind must be prepared, not only for prolonged exertion, but for the changes incident to every condition, and the varieties which must attend all continued effort. As in prosperity, the mind is apt to be elated with pride, so in adversity it sinks in discouragement. But we have seen minds rising above their conditions, struggling against misfortune with fortitude, and preserving their own command in the midst of embarrassment. The same spirit which will sustain a man under misfortune, will enable him to provide with decision, for the exigency of cases in an unexpected derangement of his plans. If, however, his imagination overpower his reason, if the dread of disgrace, of self denial, of suffering, and of losses, dwell with appalling apprehension on his mind, he soon sinks under the effect, and gives himself over to despair. But the mind which looks with unconcern on misfortune, will rise above distraction, exert every power in the time of danger or of disappointment, and retain in all events its dignity, although reduced to a low condition. For the developement of this trait of mental greatness, the philosophy of the stoics was admirably suited. Contempt of danger, and patience of suffering, formed a prominent part of their virtue. Roman greatness was built much on this feature of mind. It was associated with all their religious hopes, and was indispensibly requisite to the attainment of political honors. It was cherished by all their forms of education, and entered into all the discipline of their youth. Eminent examples of this trait of character, are found among barbarous and savage nations, where it is the only virtue, and the only religion they know.— Hold out to man the purchase of heaven by patience in suffering,

and self denial without faith, and repentance, and submission to the will of God, and there would be more stoics, than there are now christians. For such a crown, great exertions will develop great powers of mind, so long as the moral man is left in his own pollutions ; and therefore it is, probably, that the same motives which lead to the endurance of hardships in other prospects of gain, command often of the rudest and most vicious men, great patience in suffering, when that suffering is contemplated as a religious sacrifice, and the foundation for favor.

This same patience is necessary to every valuable attainment. The regular student, indeed, finds satisfactions sufficient in the labor of acquisition, yet it must be allowed that this labor is not congenial to his natural sloth, and is originally a subject of self-denial, and formed to a habit by perseverance. Whatever pride and satisfaction there may be, therefore, in the labor of acquisition ; a patience in suffering is necessary to the production of any great and valuable effect. And this may account for the fact, that with so many great, original, and delicate minds, we are favored with so few labored and finished productions in literature, science, or the arts.

Much is said of genius as a substitute for the drudgery of investigation. But it is idle. Those, who expect thus to support themselves, will soon find that light substances alone, can move in the elevation they affect ; and those who look for their pleasure and instruction from such a source, will be disappointed.—The student who gains a lasting professional reputation, must have exercised that patience, which has ripened and extended to a habit of perseverance. A flash of wit may burst from a mere trifler, to show he has a mind. But a steady blaze will require a constant supply of fuel, gathered from Academic groves, and Parnassian summits. We may listen for once to the empty declaimer, because we admire nature's work. But we are disappointed and disgusted when we look again ; for though nature still may claim our praise, no signs of human industry command our admiration ; and where we expected to meet an intellectual display, there is only "*vox, et preterea nihil.*" It is a patient and persevering industry, which has furnished our libraries, and smoothed our way in the paths of various learning, our predecessors so

laboriously trod. The jurist, who is sought after and confided in, is the man, who has labored his cause through the ponderous and multiplied volumes of precedent, principle, and evidence.—The divine, who brightens and burns with increasing lustre, is one, who has filled his lamp, and taken oil also in his vessel with his lamp ; who has waked at midnight, while others have slept ; who has labored in the fields of science, and staid at Siloam's fount, "fast by the oracles of God." The physician, who deserves well of the community and will finally possess their confidence is he, who, while approaching the great lazaretto where lie his active labors, has studied his books, acquainted himself with the science of his profession, investigated the volume of nature, and learnt her laws ; and who, when arrived at the theatre of his active duties, makes it well known, by his attention to business, where he may be found, who wakes easily at midnight, at the trembling tap and faltering voice of the agitated friend, is soon arrived at the sick bed, and bends with untiring assiduity over the anxious and eventful scene, where are soon to be decided the hopes, and fears, and prospects of an agonizing family.

To give the proper effect and direction to the powers we have, it is necessary the mind be so disciplined as to exercise the command of itself. Whenever passion obtains the command of reason, the man becomes the sport of the winds, and is ruined. It is in those exigencies of life, where we are most exposed to the influence of passion, that the most important interests are often at hazard. It is often in decisions where great consequences are pending, where the mind has hardly time to weigh all the important relations of the subject, where action is forced into the present moment, that the perfect collection, and full exercise of the mental powers is required, and where they are most readily disconcerted. It is then the mind appears great in self-possession, when surrounded by danger, and every thing to wake up its apprehensions, when the forebodings of evil appear in every thing around us, and the prospects of defeat are associated with the future. This interesting trait of character, appears to eminent advantage under provocation. When tempted to sinful indulgence, a successful command of passion, raises the man to a dignity in his own estimation, which is necessary to its proper exhibition to

others. True greatness of character is often most clearly exhibited in little things. It is related, I think, of Sir Isaac Newton, that on returning to his study, after a short absence, he found his papers, containing the labored result of many years' painful investigation, scattered and burnt to ruins by his playful dog.—The calm philosopher, perceiving the calamity, instead of beating the innocent animal, only replied—you little know, cur, the injury you have done me. Self command often appears to special advantage, in seasons of personal danger. Cæsar put forth the efforts of a man rising above his fortunes, when he cried to the boatman just ready to cease from the oar, and yield himself to the rage of the element—"Ne time. Cæsarem vehis."

Combine an independence of spirit, with decision in action, patience of suffering with self command under trials and dangers, and these qualities of mind, will involve every feature essential to success ; deliberation without delay, promptitude without haste, activity without rashness, independence without contempt, condescension without meanness, perseverance without obstinacy. Nor are these always the rich and gratuitous endowments of nature. They may be cultivated ; and in every mind they owe their development, much to education. Socrates was eminent for his self command, yet he once assured a friend, that his natural temperament was extremely irritable.

Pass in review the character of any man, who has been the admiration of the world, and we shall find, I apprehend, that the features of character now enumerated, have been the prominent points, which have raised him to notice, and those which have principally commanded public admiration. They are the forming traits in the character of Homer's Ulysses, of Virgil's Aeneas, and of all the persons of history or of fiction, who have commanded our admiration or applause.

But shall we sit down and say we have finished the picture of a great man, and call on you to admire the portrait ? Shall we take any example of greatness, which has been alluded to, or all the ennobling qualities of mind which have been enumerated, and be satisfied with the attainment ? The skeleton of a dignified statue is formed, flesh is clothed upon the bones, and the lineaments of a human form are eminently marked, the breath of life

is moving the man. But, unrestrained by principle, a principle, which has not yet been recognized, it is a breath of pestilence : “ blows mildew from between his shrivelled lips, and taints the golden ear.” Such a breath, and such a spirit as animated the tall Archangel when, arrayed in arms against the majesty of heaven, he stood with mingled envy, disappointment, and contempt, and said

“ O sun, how I hate thy beams.”

Never were great qualities of mind, decision, independence, patience of suffering, and self possession, more eminently exhibited than in Milton's fiend. And from the influence, which such exhibitions have on the mind, we may not find it altogether unaccountable that a man, possessing the depraved sentiments of Robert Burns, should, in reading the Paradise lost, “ become enamored with the character of Satan.” We should be sorry, however, to hold up such a character to imitation; or pass our praise on *such* qualities so exalted. No. It is the seraph himself burning with devotion before the throne of God, exerting these powers in acts of praise, and of worship, bowing down before the Majesty of heaven, that we may admire and imitate. It is these great and independent sentiments owing our Supreme, and merging all their glories in the divine, that finishes the character of true greatness. This it is, which constitutes the true difference between Gabriel and Satan, and this must constitute the true value of every quality we admire in mind. Compare the desperate valor of the fallen angels, with the spirit of the martyrs, or those whose mental distinctions have been chastened and regulated by piety, and then pass your praise on the worthiest. The spirit of the reformation is the exhibition of the human intellect, in one of its most preeminent exertions. In that effort of the mind are exhibited its prominent powers in their most chastened influence ; the confidence of integrity, the independence of truth, the decision of conscious rectitude, the self command which is inspired by the divine presence.

Take as an example of a rich, original, unyielding, and heroic mind, John Knox, who looked down opposition, even from the throne, and came to a natural death in old age, because the Empire united, was afraid to bring him to the stake.

Contemplate as an instance of independence, the simple example of John the Baptist, who reprov'd Herod of sin, at the expense of his favor and of life.

Take an instance of patience in suffering in St. Paul, when he went bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, knowing that bonds and afflictions did abide him.

Take an instance of self command under provocation, in Michael the Archangel, when contending with the Devil. He "brought not railing accusation against him," but only said—"The Lord rebuke thee, Satan."

And I will adduce for your admiration and applause, an instance of decision in the christian, renouncing at once all his darling and cherished desires, waging war with himself, and carrying on a contest, requiring every exercise of mental and moral power, which it is in the nature of man to possess or exert.

Religion, holding her empire in the heart, must shed her benign influence on the severer and more violent powers of the mind, to make true greatness subservient to the happiness of man. She must give direction to the energy of the mind, and control its power, or its independence will be but profaneness, its decisions desperate, its self command supercilious, its sufferings mean.—The genius and greatness of the mind, must be bound by fixed laws to the heart as its centre, from which it receives its principal lustre, or it will be but the blaze of a comet, rapid, brilliant, and threatening. It comes not near to bless. We gaze upon its approach with admiration, but rejoice to see it retire. It is the influence of religion, which gives all its charm to character—all its loveliness to mind. This will exert an influence on all the small circumstances of life, which go to make up the character of any community. Especially will it be demanded in those professional departments, where great responsibilities rest, and important exigencies are constantly pressing on the mind.

A man, when considered merely as an inhabitant of this world, may appear great in the display of some of the worst and most destructive powers. He may even present in his life many dignified exertions and virtues. But do we justice to the human character in tracing it from the cradle to the grave? Can that man appear truly great, who, though exalted and honored here,

shall wither at the frown of the Almighty, into eternal woe?— And will there not be a permanent dignity attached to the mind, drawn from the number of forgotten and unhonored poor, and seated at the right hand of the matchless King of the Universe?

If these reflections be just, are we at liberty to separate the character of true greatness from the christian? It may indeed be questioned, whether we speak to the true merits of the subject, while we pass our praise merely on those endowments or acquisitions of the imperishable mind, which have no connection with a heart devoted to God. Such a character can, at most, command the admiration of the fallen star. We remember the place where it shone; we trace, in our recollection, the course of its splendid career, but it has passed away and fallen into the blackness of darkness forever.

Let it not be imagined that true greatness of character, can appear only on great occasions, or in persons of distinguished stations. The meanest may aspire to it, may possess it. In the private walks of life, we often see manifestations of a soul swelling with a spirit of decision, of independence, of self command, of patience in suffering, which would do honor to the greatest, and proudest stations. The widow's desolation, the orphan's care, open a theatre for the display of true greatness, where we have often seen it exhibited, as eminently as in any scene of life. The attainment of true greatness, is within the reach of all.— Great convulsions are not necessary to its existence, though they may serve to develop it. Each individual moves in a sphere, where is an opportunity to exhibit all the valuable traits of character, which have served to render more conspicuous, the highest stations. Every man has responsibilities. Every profession is important, and needs men eminent for all that is truly worthy; and the cultivation and due balance of the respective powers of the mind, is important to human happiness in every sphere.— Cincinnatus was raised to the highest distinctions from the plough, where, if permitted to remain, his virtues would have shone not less conspicuously, though in an humbler sphere. Washington was an American farmer, and such would have been his only history, had not the peculiar state of the country, developed those great qualities of mind, which had still existed, and been exerted,

though limited to the theatre of private life. Often do we see retired, and unostentatious displays of character, which designate minds, moulded to the finest, and most elevated cast, that seem only to need great occasions, to make them known to the world.

In an age like our own, we are to look for a development of character, differing greatly from that which appeared in the Grecian and Roman states. The preservation of peace is a leading object of our institutions and policy. The pruriency for war, which, in earlier times, led the ambition of the master spirits, has given place to a more dignified taste for the arts of peace, and pursuits of science. The divine philosophy is more generally recognized that “ he, who is slow to anger, is better than the mighty, and he, that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.”— And while the rude contest of the gladiator is reprobated, we hail with congratulation the growing sentiment, that he, who refuses a challenge to single combat, is more honored than he who gives it.

It is under these circumstances, that the learned professions, invite and receive the attention of those, whose active and aspiring minds seek a more public theatre, than the paths of private pursuit. The youth, who in the conflicts of that restless state, which characterized the Greek and Roman republics, would have been found in the tented field, will now be seen walking the paths of science, or laboring in the details of professional business. Under these circumstances, we may expect to see an excitement and progress in the department of letters, auspicious to the happiness of man. The multiplication of literary men, can bring no detriment to the best interests of the community. It must terminate in the advancement of useful science, and in the improvement of the learned professions. Because, as candidates multiply, the most worthy will be patronized, industry will become necessary to success, while idleness and ignorance will fall into merited neglect. Every parish will learn to seek, and will be able to command the services of an eminent Minister, an eminent Lawyer, and eminent Physician.

To this distinction and patronage, I may believe the medical Faculty and Candidates, who now hear me, have their expectations already formed. And on the broad basis of character al-

ready portrayed, I may hope they will seek to found their professional superstructure. It may not be improper, then, for me to detain you with a few hints on some of the necessary qualifications for eminence and success, in the profession of medicine.

The responsibilities, which press on the official duties of a physician, and the nature of those duties, eminently demand that his reputation should be built on that basis of character already defined : a principle, which will lead him to feel a moral responsibility in every thing he approaches or undertakes ; an independence of mind, which will raise him above the influence of his own weakness, or that of others ; a decision, which can inspire at once promptness and energy of action ; a patience, which can bear all things ; a self possession, which may enable him to bring all the powers he has, to act in the most critical emergencies ; to unite cool deliberation with a decided action, readiness of expedient with carefulness, a nervous insensibility with the kindest humanity, and a regardlessness of distress with a tender sympathy. Indeed, it is necessary there should be the most intimate connection, between the sensibilities of the heart, and the hand of the operator, and yet no connection which will alter a steadiness of purpose, or shake a stern resolution. To this effect, it is absolutely necessary the powers of the mind be well balanced, and that the nervous and physical organization be formed and strengthened, by a temperate constitution of habits, and of feeling.

We are led also to perceive, that the character of a physician is very much involved in his preparatory course. Next to

“ Him who negotiates between God and man,
 “ As God’s ambassador, the grand concerns
 “ Of judgment and of mercy,”

the physician has the greatest trust committed to him by those, who seek his professional services. Indeed, when we speak of the business of preparation, it is doubtful whether even the minister needs more preparatory study, and accurate investigation.— There are points of discrimination to be marked, varieties of cases to be understood, and appropriate remedies to be prescribed, which can never be treated with safety, except by the well-read man. The collateral branches of science, which pertain to his

profession, are numerous and important. It is not enough that a physician be able to define diseases, and prescribe the accustomed remedies : he must mark the numberless shades of variation, which obtain in the diseases themselves, and be accurately acquainted with the nature of the medicines he administers. His studies therefore, must extend to a scientific, chymical, experimental acquaintance with *Materia Medica*. Botany and Mineralogy will have a prominent claim on his attention, as furnishing an important part of the medicine he uses ; and also embracing others which ought to be the objects of his search. Medical Jurisprudence will also occupy his serious attention, not only as a superficial and general subject, but as connected with questions of morality and of law, deeply involving the public interests. He must also be intimately acquainted with the structure and physiology of the human body, which can be known only by actual dissections, and minute investigations. When I have a limb to be amputated, or an anatomical operation to be performed, I seek to place the knife in the hands of one, who is intimately acquainted with all that lies in the neighborhood where he operates, who cuts my flesh, not for experiment, that he may know how to cut another better ; but who only does what he has done before, or at least what he has had opportunity to know.

To any great degree of proficiency and acuteness in Anatomy and Physiology, it is necessary also the student be able to bring to his aid a thorough knowledge of mechanical philosophy.—The principles of this science are absolutely necessary, to explain the motions of animals, with the nature and extent of their physical powers, the velocity of the blood, and the principles on which its circulations are effected and continued, and directed from the principal vessels at different angles to supply, without surfeit, the various parts of the body, and again sent back in regular and precise returns, to receive and convey from the fountain, a new tribute of life and health, to the remotest extremities.—Mathematical principles are necessary, to understand and explain the philosophy of vision, on the important organ of which, so many nice operations are required. And not less necessary are many important principles of natural philosophy in the anatomy of the ear, to show the uses of the various organs in relation to

the phenomena of sound. An accurate acquaintance with Chemistry, too, must bring an important aid to the physiologist. It has already served to explain and illustrate the important functions of respiration and digestion, and is to be concerned in future, and more minute observations which will doubtless perfect the knowledge of those, and other operations of the animal system. To come to his practice thus prepared, it is necessary the physician should have studied well, and under favorable advantages. When I see a young man preparing to announce his name to the public for their patronage as a physician ;—when I see him idle and superficial, listless and vagrant, I cannot but feel a commiseration for the people, who shall place their lives at the risque of his empiricism or ignorance.

But it is not enough that the physician should come to his profession well-read, and intelligent in what is already known.— Knowledge is progressive, and this is peculiarly an age of improvement. Great improvements are making in Medical science, and every man belonging to the profession ought to contribute something to its advancement. He must, therefore, continue to study and investigate his profession, or the next class of candidates will come and tear away the reputation he might have enjoyed, and leave him at leisure from professional duty, to dig or beg his bread. If the physician would arrive at eminence, he must not only know more than the people who employ him, but more than others around him in the same profession. His character will be adjudged by a comparison with those of similar pretensions and claims.

When the well qualified physician comes thus before the public, the continuance and advancement of his reputation, must depend much on the improvement he makes from actual practice and observation. Here he will be found to need some peculiar qualifications, to gain the confidence and patronage of the public, and ensure to him a successful business. One is connected with his intercourse with his patients.

Every family makes their physician a confident and friend.— And when he is selected, regard is had, not merely to his professional knowledge, but to the general character of the man. He must be a man, susceptible of the affections of friendship, that

he may not only *appear*, but *be*, a friend. He must be a *discreet* man, for many things are committed to his knowledge, which may not be disclosed. He must be a man of moral integrity, that he may be able to resist every temptation to cover iniquity ; for the profession often encounters circumstances, where a bribe to moral corruption is held out. He must be a merciful man, that he may not be insensible of the misery which others feel.— When my physician feels for me, it seems to divide the pain ; it inspires my confidence. But the “unkindest cut of all” is that, which grows out of carelessness, ignorance, or insensibility. I once suffered severely under the operation of a medicine, ’till my physician called and told me he had mistaken the dose. How could that be ? Why, he had poured from the wrong bottle.— But Doctor, how could you mistake the bottle ? And this is a question no physician can answer, with satisfaction to his patient. It might have been arsenic, as well as camphor. He must be an active and faithful man, easily called, and soon there. When a case is committed to his care, he ought to feel the interest of a family friend in the event. His attentions must be suited to the case, and assiduously rendered. A sick man should have a friend in his physician. He gives his life up into his hands. And if he be a merciful man, he will feel the magnitude of the charge, and identify his feelings with those of an anxious family. A physician, whom I loved, perhaps, more than any other, laid his strongest hold on my confidence and affection, when I saw him weep at the death of a patient.

Another peculiar qualification to render a physician acceptable and agreeable to the public, you will permit me to mention, is connected with his treatment of his professional brethren. I am aware I have here taken delicate ground, since I address an enlightened society of men, who may well feel competent to define their own duties.—But wise men will always profit by the reproaches of their enemies—may I not hope then, that the suggestions of a friend will not be useless ? The ill natured remark is often made, that physicians are born to a mutual hatred ; but we would rather say a professional ambition, honorable in itself, too often leads to low enmities. We admire to see an honorable strife for mastery, but the influence and feeling of every man is

involuntarily opposed to him, who seeks his victory by maiming his antagonist, rather than by exerting himself. The only pre-eminence worth the ambition of a professional man, is the victory of talent, of industry, of skill. If there be any circumstances when, more than at any other time, a man needs the safety that is in a "multitude of counsellors," and the united efforts of all the power, which can be enlisted, it is when his life is staked on the issue. When a man is sick, he sends for the "beloved physician;" but if he be dangerously ill, he wishes for additional counsel, and the tenderest feelings of the heart are violated, under the most sensitive circumstances, when the aid of talents, learning, principle, and professional skill are excluded from the sick chamber, on the ground of any personal or local jealousies. Physicians are in a sense the property of the public. When they offer themselves for patronage, they are not, like ordinary men in ordinary business, at liberty to decline the service to which they may be called, or perform it partially. They are depended on in matters, which cannot be deferred. Great consequences are pending, and their services are pledged. Having commenced, they are equally bound to sacrifice every private feeling, to the promotion of life and health. As soon as the responsibility of a doubtful case occurs, this responsibility should be divided.

Another duty, which physicians owe to one another, and also to families, is a caution in expressing their opinions when discordant. I was once called, in the discharge of my official duties, to a most afflictive scene of death. I found among the items, which mingled in the bitter cup of sorrow, drunk by a tender mother, was an opinion dropped by a physician, called late to give his advice, that *he*, if earlier called, should not have lost the patient. I found myself obliged to administer consolation by assuring the afflicted woman, that this opinion was manifestly partial, as well as cruel, since in every view we could take of the subject, the attending physician had equal claims to our confidence, and was certainly the best able to judge in the case.

Another point of character, in which a physician must be affected in an important degree before the tribunal of the public, is the *respect he pays to the dead*. On this subject I shall hazard a few remarks, without hesitation, because it is extensively agitated,

and a degree of public sensibility is expressed on the subject, which must be heard. We demand of the physician that knowledge, which renders dissections of the dead absolutely necessary. The safety of the living demands it. Still the sanctuary of our dead must not be invaded. The demand of nature is loud and urgent, that the bodies of those we loved in life must be suffered to rest in their graves. It has, therefore, been made a subject of legislation, and severe penalties are appointed to guard the repose of the tomb. Nor can we admit the Grecian maxim, that the crime consists only in detection. The man, who disregards public law and sentiment on this subject, is no other than a thief and a robber. He is guilty of a kind of sacrilege. And I have never known an instance of detection, which has not proved the ruin of the offender. It has forfeited to him the confidence of the public, driven him from practice, and usually from society.— Aside from its moral turpitude, therefore, it is attended with present consequences, sufficient to deter a reflecting man from the attempt. He must go as a thief under cover of the night; he must feel like a thief; he does the deed of a thief; and, if detected, he suffers like a thief. The duty of physicians, therefore, on this subject is plain. They must not rob our graves. Their moral and professional reputation is involved in it.

Still their anatomical rooms must be furnished. The public safety requires it. Public sentiment requires it. The law recognizes the necessity, and to the restrictions of the law, or at least of public opinion, the dissecting knife must be confined. We are aware that further provisions, however, are necessary to remove the temptation to crime, and perfect a profession so important to the common safety. This begins to be felt. And I am persuaded the arm of legislative power ought, and will be employed, to place in the hands of medical men, this most necessary means of knowledge, to an extent adequate to the nature of the subject, and at the same time in a manner to meet, and guard all our most sensitive feelings on the subject. Let the crimes, which, by common consent, exclude their perpetrators from the pale of society, be attended with the additional penalty of dissection after death, and the object will be partially answered, the feelings of friends properly guarded, the dignity of the law supported, while an ad-

ditional terror will be held up to evil doers. And it is well worthy the enquiry of an enlightened government, as the guardians of the public weal, whether there are not other provisions practicable, which may effectually meet the demands of the case in the protection of all that is sacred in individual feeling, and in the lawful employment of all necessary means for the common safety. Having thus expressed myself, I am happy to add my perfect confidence, that the principles adopted, and the measures pursued by this Institution are, and always have been, such as to secure to our dead, a quiet and undisturbed rest.*

Finally, we may say, the physician must be a man who can feel a lively interest in all that concerns the welfare of men. He meets them to do them service between both worlds. How im-

* The most important discoveries and improvements in medicine, have proceeded from the knowledge obtained by actual dissections. Had this never been permitted, the science would, at this day, have been in its infancy. The blood would have flowed untraced. The various organs would have performed their functions by a kind of mysterious action, and when deranged, would have been left to sink unaided. Instead of this, the skilful physician, when he finds us in distress, is often able to perceive at once the nature and seat of the disease, and to apply appropriate remedies for our immediate and grateful relief. No man can do this, however, without a tolerable acquaintance with the mechanical structure of the human frame, and an accurate knowledge of the nicer organs. This accuracy must be derived, not merely from reading, but from observation, from actual dissection. If so—then is there no principle of philanthropy which will prompt a man to a personal sacrifice, for the promotion of so important a good? Can a man be persuaded to die for his country—and is there no patriotism nor humanity, which can induce him to give his clay, for the benefit of his country—of the world? We make this appeal merely to prepare the way for another remark:—There are principles operating in the human heart, and exhibiting themselves in human conduct, which may triumph over a narrow prejudice, and which will act on liberal principles of humanity.

We cannot regret that dissections have been permitted, when we contemplate the immense benefits, which they have brought to mankind. Let us not then demand of the physician that knowledge, the means of which we deny him.—But it is not only what has been known, which he ought to labor after, but what may be known. Many important discoveries may still be reserved to elevate the names and characters of future anatomists to an equality with Hippocrates, Harvey and Pecquet. Discoveries in the economy of the animal frame have been gradual; and who can say there are not still others to be made as important as any heretofore effected? Every view we can take of the object, is calculated to deepen our impression of its importance. Let the laws then, at once guard our sensibilities, and seek our safety. These sensibilities demand that the arm of the law hold and confine the wretch, who profanely robs our graves. This safety demands that the honorable and humane physician be furnished with the necessary means of knowledge in anatomical dissections.

In England, where the laws to prevent sepulchral depredations are very severe, and where the gallows furnishes an unusual quota of subjects, the sentence of the law, which takes the life of the criminal, consigns his body to the surgeons for dissection. In France, the laws afford more liberal means to the anatomist, and as a consequence, the medical profession is repaying the community in the

portant, then, he should feel for the *soul* as well as the *body*.— How important he should be able to drop on the anxious ear of the dying man, that word, which he most needs to hear. Cicero has said that none but a good man, can be an orator. I would use the term in a stricter sense than Cicero could comprehend it, when I say, every physician ought to be a good man. He performs some of the tenderest, most eventful, most religious duties.

Let my physician then be a man, who has, as a foundation, the characteristics of true greatness, who has cherished and cultivated all that can exalt and dignify human nature, that he may be a man, whom I can confide in and love when I am sick ; who can administer to my soul when he can no longer help the body, who can take me up in prayer, in that trembling and awful moment, when my tongue shall cease to speak what I feel, and my flesh and heart shall fail ; and who, when he can do no more, can commend me to the great Physician, and carry me by faith to the portals of the skies, where I hope to revive again, and experience no more sickness, nor sorrow, nor death. Then, having cultivated and employed my powers while on earth, having sought and used the best means of prolonging life, I can feel, when I can no longer speak, that I have done my duty, and finished my course, and can lay down in the grave peacefully, 'till the resurrection.

eminent advancement of the science. In some of our States, the bodies of all who die under sentence of the law, are given to the use of the surgeons. In this State, the selectmen of each town have a discretionary power to remove, or permit to be removed, any body from the grave. Although some have supposed this law had a reference to occasional removals for dissection, we believe it was rather intended for the safe keeping of the dead, and for the accommodation of friends who might desire such a removal, or for the public convenience and safety. At any rate, the town authorities would, in few instances, exercise their power beyond this.

It is believed that a judicious law, framed with a reference to this subject, might find other instances, in which the public interest and safety might place in the hands of physicians, all the necessary means of knowledge. In England, and in France, it is often the case, that the living give to the surgeon, a fee of their bodies, to be claimed at the moment of death ; and in many instances this must be said to be the best use they ever made of them. We do not say the law should recognize such contracts, nor forbid them—still we believe, there are practicable points, on which the law might reach this important subject, in all its extent, and in a manner by which the *feelings* we cherish, might be still more sacredly guarded.