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→: VALEDICTORY : ADDRESS ←

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TO THE

GRADUATING CLASS

OF THE

WOMAN'S MEDICAL COLLEGE

OF PENNSYLVANIA,

BY

CLARA MARSHALL, M. D.

Professor of Materia Medica and General Therapeutics.

DELIVERED IN THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC,

MARCH 11, 1886.

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Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania.

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Organized, March, 1875.

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LADIES, GRADUATES IN MEDICINE :

It seems to have been the custom almost since the world began, to surround every important event either in the lives of institutions or of individuals with a certain degree of ceremonial. Hence it is fitting that upon this, our thirty-fourth annual commencement, there should be assembled this vast and friendly audience, gathered together to do you honor and to celebrate your entrance upon the duties, responsibilities and rewards of a noble and sacred profession. On behalf of the Faculty upon whom has so recently devolved the pleasing, anxious task of your instruction, I now extend to you the right hand of fellowship, and salute you as Doctors of Medicine !

It is with a feeling of proud satisfaction that we have seen you put in possession of the diploma of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, not only because it is the certificate of an institution for whose advancement its Board of Corporators have labored wisely and with untiring zeal, not only because it is a certificate of valuable opportunities afforded for the study of medicine, but also because it represents on your part a period of earnest, persistent and faithful endeavor.

But " Things done are won ; joy's soul lies in the doing." Those college days are past, and we would urgently remind you that in addition to the " corporate seal of the college," it remains to you alone to affix to your diploma that other seal, the great seal of individual achievement. Therefore not only do we extend to each of you our heartfelt congratulations upon the possession of the diploma just conferred, but with a hopeful and prophetic glimpse into futurity, we hail with solemn joy the not far distant day when a career crowned with a true success shall give a yet higher value to that diploma, and shall thus reflect an added lustre upon your Alma Mater.

It is not necessary to remind you that your interests and those of the institution you have just quitted are henceforth one ; nor is it nec-

essary, judging by your attitude while among us, to exhort you at all times, in every legitimate way, to endeavor to advance the interests of this college and to assist in maintaining its high rank among like institutions of learning. Just here it may be well to suggest the importance of making known the fact, in the several communities in which you will begin your labors, that your diploma represents not simply a certain amount of training preparatory to the practice of a limited specialty but that your ability to practice that specialty rests upon the broad foundation of thorough instruction in all departments of medicine—instruction of such a character as would prove of value as a basis upon which to build up a practice in any specialty; that you have had, for instance, not only lectures amply illustrated in anatomy, but that you have done actual and thorough work in the dissecting room, and that work so done has been a preparation for a course in operative surgery; that the lectures upon the practice of medicine have been supplemented by clinical instruction in the diagnosis and treatment of disease; that in our annual session of eight months are included courses of instruction under the supervision of some of the most distinguished specialists of Philadelphia, the aim being not only to furnish individual teaching to our students in such specialties as diseases of the eye, ear, throat and skin, but also to awaken upon the part of our graduates such an interest as shall induce them to widen their sphere of practice, to include therein the above-mentioned appropriate specialties; that, in short, your medical education has been in accordance with the injunction, “physician first, and specialist afterward.”

Of your interest and pride in our Alma Mater we shall no doubt receive substantial evidence in a yearly increase in our list of matriculates. May you send to us those who by character and habit of mind, as well as by previous education, are fitted to become practitioners of medicine. In giving counsel to students as to the best preparation for entrance upon medical study, it is to be hoped that you will point out to them the necessity of a thorough education including some knowledge of the natural sciences, as a groundwork for the study of medicine; and moreover that you will teach them by precept and example that those virtues which have their abode in the mind and heart of the self-respecting man or woman are the same virtues which enter into the character of the self-respecting physician. Perhaps there is no class of people whose motives are oftener called in question than are those of the profession which you are about to enter. There are many conscientious and intelligent people who have their medical adviser and confidant, to whom, in times of illness, they look most eagerly, and upon whom they depend most implicitly; and yet these same good people are ever ready to deal what they style “a good natured thrust” at the profession at large. It is not enough, therefore, that physicians should possess in their own proper persons those virtues and that knowledge which shall command respect, but they must be ready to defend their calling and their professional brothers and sisters. They must aid in the cultivation of that *esprit de corps* which is the pride of the medical profession. In order that this end may be at-

tained those under your care should be instructed in the very beginning as to what manner of men and women have been from time to time engaged in the pursuit for which they are about to prepare. In order that they may obtain a broader view of the undertaking before them, let them open the pages of medical history, rich with the records of laborious research and noble achievement; let them be carried in imagination to a time more than three hundred years before the Christian Era, when there lived a man who, while unable to rise entirely above the superstitions of his time (that would indeed have been a miracle), was yet able to put them aside in favor of the important essential of careful and painstaking study of the phenomena of disease as actually seen at the bed-side; one who might well have had for his motto, "Observe! Observe! Observe!" Justly was Hippocrates called the Father of Medicine. Tell them of Aristotle, the physician and philosopher, the teacher of Alexander the Great, the pupil and friend of Plato—of Galen, who by the force of his brilliant genius succeeded in making a more profound impression upon his own and succeeding generations than perhaps any other man known to medical history. Do not neglect to hold up as a warning that Prince of Quacks, Paracelsus, who, in accordance with the spirit of the pretenders of his time, claimed direct descent from the gods (though failing miserably in supporting his boast of immortality), and who was not unlike the charlatans of the present day in the avowed possession of a panacea for all diseases, and who had no right even to the name by which he preferred to be known; for instead of simple Philip Hohenher, the name which came to him in the natural order of events, he chose to be called Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus Paracelsus! Tell them of Servetus and Vesalius, martyrs to science. Let them study not only the works but the character of Ambrose Pare' the good, of whom it has been said that "notwithstanding the correctness and firmness of his character, of which he gave a thousand proofs, his favor at the court never diminished." Tell them of Harvey—not only of his laborious and painstaking researches in comparative anatomy, in the prosecution of which he literally carried out his own injunction to study and search out the secrets of nature by way of experiment," but of his patience under vituperation; of his magnanimity toward his rivals; of his generosity in expending his wealth for the benefit of medical science; the man of whom his professional countrymen to this day speak in terms of reverential possession as "our Harvey."

When your students read of these and many more illustrious ones, they will at the same time learn that each progressive step in medicine has been marked by the laying aside of some cherished superstition; that our art has kept pace with and been a part of all great revolutions, social, intellectual and religious; and that the physician at different times has appeared in the several characters of doctor, philosopher, the medical adviser and confidant of princes, the martyr to religious persecution, and above all as the *courageous conservator of human life*. Realizing how very slowly medicine is working its way towards a place among the exact sciences, notwithstanding the efforts of so many honored investigators, the student will enter the field of

medical study with all humility and with the inspiring thought that such work is worthy of a life-time of the highest endeavor.

Teach your students also to regard with respect and gratitude those women of the profession who acted the role of pioneers, who suffered social obloquy and professional ostracism that we might prosper. I would fain believe that their efforts were seldom disfigured by that noisy and imprudent enthusiasm which so frequently follows in the wake of all reforms, and which, while it cannot interfere with the final result, is yet a serious annoyance to the more quiet worker.

I believe that one of the distinctive characteristics of those early devotees was discretion in the counsels which they gave to those under their instruction, advising them against peculiarities in dress or manner. They were exhorted to "bear themselves wisely and well," and were reminded that "the sagacious Greeks numbered prudence as among the cardinal virtues;" they were cautioned against "any violation of the proprieties of life." Said Doctor Ann Preston in an address delivered to the medical class in 1855, "We shrink instinctively from what is coarse, and she who would fain raise the moral tone of the profession and teach reverence and purity to the grossness of the world must ever wear about her the spotless robe of delicacy as her own protectingvestment! Need I say," she continued, "what you feel, that gentleness of manner and the adornment of a quiet spirit are as necessary to the physician as to the woman, and that these are naturally related to that firmness and majestic patience which are the highest endowments of the human being?" Fortunate the institution, righteous the cause which can secure the advocacy of such a woman!

Since those early college days many changes have been wrought, and could the lives of the graduates of this and sister institutions be recorded, the story told would be one of varied experiences—of trials and triumphs, always, however, with an undercurrent of slow but steady progress.

Perhaps there is no phase of the history of women in medicine which carries with it more of interest and romance than that which treats of the life and labors of the medical missionary. Not only does this life afford opportunity of entrance into the homes of the women of other countries, with the object of doing strictly missionary work, but it also opens an extended field for such as are ambitious to secure professional honors. An illustration of what the medical missionary can do for her own honor and that of her *alma mater* is furnished by the following example, and the interest of the story must be my excuse for repeating what is already familiar to some of my audience. From Dr. Elizabeth Rejfsnyder, of the class of 1881, has come a report of the first successful ovariectomy, not only in Shanghai, where her hospital is to be located, but in all North China. The patient was brought to Shanghai by her husband, from their home, 500 miles distant, the latter part of the journey having been accomplished in a wheelbarrow. The "Margaret Williamson Hospital" not having been completed, the operation, by cordial invitation of the physicians in charge thereof, was performed in St. Luke's Hospital, October 25, 1884.

The young surgeon does not omit to pay a generous tribute to the

trained nurse who assisted her, for she says "Miss McKechnie and I have taken all the care of the patient, both night and day, and without her I never should have undertaken the operation." She further adds, in speaking of her own sense of responsibility, "There was much at stake besides the woman's life, for I am a *woman* and an *American*." The assisting physicians were so much impressed by the skill of this young surgeon, our alumna, that through their reports of the case reached Europe and were copied into the journals of this country. An evidence of the profound impression that was made upon the popular mind in China is shown by an illustrated article which appeared in one of the native journals, the illustrations from which and a part of the text (translated by another alumna) have been reproduced in the supplement of the Christmas number of *Science*. Says the writer, in speaking of the above mentioned illustrations, "It is evidently an ideal sketch by a native artist of great capacity, and vies in its amusing misrepresentations with some of the manufactured conversations of the modern interviewer. In this most grotesque and amusing picture the operator is represented as dressed in fashionable attire, including a trained dress, French heels, etc., while in the same room, and in full view of the patient, are various anatomical and pathological specimens which, had they been present in reality as well as in the imagination of the native artist, would have been anything but reassuring to the patient. To complete the picture, the room is entirely open upon the side next the street, and standing upon a balcony just outside are two deeply interested spectators.

The following is a translation from the text of the Chinese article: "A knowledge of the Rhyming Medical Adviser is considered a sufficient qualification to be a practicing physician.

"Such ignoramuses (as those thus qualified) recklessly prescribe for disease and ignorantly trifle with men's lives.

"If a patient dies it is charged to his fate, and the doctor is not held responsible by the law.

"If he survives, he praises the skill of the doctor. Such is human nature, and the doctor, nothing doubting, takes all the honor to himself, considering that it was only by his skill that the patient's life was saved.

"If we ask him as to the cause of the disease and the nature of the treatment, his explanations are so shallow and nonsensical that before he has finished his gibberish we hasten to stop our ears."

After a short but graphic account of the operation, the writer concludes as follows:

"If this disease had not met with this doctor, it could hardly have been relieved. If this doctor had not met with this disease, who could have known anything of such divine skill?"

"When Chinese doctors hear of this their tongues will become immovable, and their heads will hang down."

Since in 1870 a graduate of this college, Dr. Clara Swain, was sent to India as the first woman medical missionary, her labors and those of others who have succeeded her, have born good fruit. Much might be said of the work of these women, of their entrance into the secluded

homes of the jealously guarded native women, of their personal sacrifices, and of their comparatively isolated professional lives.

There is a touching story of how Queen Victoria was first aroused to an interest in giving medical aid to the women of India—how the sufferings of one woman became the means of securing help to many other sufferers of her sex. Thus runs the story: "It appears that a certain Dr. Beilby, a physician then at Lucknow, was sent for by the Maharajah of Punna, a native sovereign of Central India, at whose court no Europeans reside. The object of the summons was to see if the English woman Doctor could save the life of his Queen, the Maharanee. The patient recovered, and the following account is given of the farewell interview between the patient and her physician:" The Maharanee, having dismissed all of her attendants, desired the Missionary to make her a solemn promise. She desired Dr. Beilby, of whose approaching visit to England she was aware, personally to see 'Empress Victoria,'" as the Maharanee called her, and personally to tell her of the sufferings of the women in the Zanas of India when ill. Exacting a solemn promise that she would commit it to no other person than the Queen, the eager, grateful woman placed the written message in a gold locket, and put it around her benefactor's neck with the charge to wear it until she could deliver it in her own person to Empress Victoria. "If you forget your promise," said she in parting, "your God will judge you!" Closely following and doubtless proceeding from the interview of which I have given this newspaper account, we learn of the Lady Dufferin movement, which in its well-laid plans comprehends the most of India. Thus, under the inspiration and command of Royalty, there has been established in India the "National Association for Supplying Medical Aid to the Women of India." One of the objects of this Association, as set forth in its prospectus, is the "Teaching and Training in *India* of women as Doctors, Nurses and Midwives;" but as yet, with the exception of one of our graduates of to-day, no native women have been trained for this work, and the supply must for the present come from Europe and America, notably America.

This movement, though originated by the English-speaking people of India, is not confined to them. Only recently an appeal has come from one of the native rulers, the Durbar of Kolhapur, asking that the Dean of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania shall recommend a well-educated woman to take charge of the Albert Edward Hospital of that city. Although this movement among 250,000,000 of people is occurring in a country far away, how can we help believing that to the women of America, also, it is full of hope and encouragement? Who can tell how soon this Eastern wave of progress shall reach the Mother Country—England? And through that sympathy of thought and feeling which must ever exist among English-speaking people, who can tell how soon the younger scion, the American profession, shall be induced to abandon its patch-work of mingled liberality and conservatism—a veritable crazy-quilt, in which is represented in one section the spectacle of some well-informed woman expounding her views amid the respectful attention of an audience composed of

medical men and women, and in an adjoining section the entirely distinct picture of a woman equally intelligent, honest and earnest, who finds it impossible to obtain any hearing from medical men, these two sections being separated by a wavering zigzag of public opinion of which the medical profession is the equally wavering index. I would not be understood as cherishing a sentiment of antagonism towards any portion of the medical fraternity, for in a profession so honorable and so ennobling, it must be that the conservatism among its members is actuated either by a jealous regard for the honor of the profession, or by a conscientious desire to shield women from its many hardships. Honest differences of opinion demand the respectful attention of the fair-minded, and these objections are to be met, not by wordy argument, but by thorough training and by honest work. These are the dignified and peaceful weapons with which the battle shall be won. When shall the victory be achieved? In the fullness of time. Already we may point to a hopeful sign of the times in the different races and nationalities represented by our students, our list of matriculates representing such widely separated countries as Russia, Australia, India, Syria and Japan. Moreover a young Chinese girl is now pursuing her collegiate education in this country preparatory to the study of medicine; and recently there comes the word from Southern Africa of an intending medical student. Also we may appropriately note the interesting fact that there is present with us this morning a learned and illustrious lady of Punna, India, who comes among us to witness the graduation of her kinswoman.

Ladies, the loftiness of your aim will be the measure of the dignity with which you will pursue your chosen profession. May you respect that profession and be honest in it. May you grow in that charity which I believe physicians as a class possess to an unusual degree, for to them it is given to enter the life of the human being at moments the most unguarded, and thus to learn how truly universal in its application is the saying that "to err is human."

May the presence of friendly rivals awaken your ambition to fresh endeavor, and in this connection may you remember the injunction, "Ever in thy right hand carry gentle peace." Wherever your fellow-practitioners are in council assembled, whether it be in some far off enterprising western State or in some conservative eastern city, may you be found among them, giving as well as receiving encouragement, and may it never be said that your numbers outrun your strength. May your future, whether it be one of brilliant achievement or a life of quiet endeavor, be in harmony with the right, and finally, Children of alma mater, dear aspirants for fame, may God give to each and all of you your heart's best desire.

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North College Avenue and Twenty-first Street.

The Thirty-seventh Annual Session Will Commence on Thursday, October 7, 1886.

