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Original Communications.

THE SOCIAL DUTIES OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION ;

Being the Faculty Valedictory to the Class of 1880.

By CASEY A. WOOD, C.M., M.D.,

Professor of Chemistry, Medical Faculty Bishops University.

You may readily imagine, if you cannot actually realize, the sense of responsibility experienced by the Faculty Valedictorian as he rises to say the customary words of farewell to the members of the graduating class. The knowledge, gentlemen graduates, that I am to address to you the last sentences of advice and instruction that will fall, in an official way at least, from the lips of the medical staff of this University, makes me specially desirous that my words should meet the requirements of this almost solemn occasion.

Having given the matter my earnest consideration, I have thought it well to depart from the usual course and address you on a subject that, while it is of the greatest moment to you, may not be uninteresting to those who are gathered here to witness the conferring of your degrees.

In a scarcely more than casual manner I referred, in a previous farewell address, to what may be termed some of the outside work of the medical man. Perhaps when this former ad-

dress was written the expression "outside duties" may have been applicable in a much greater degree to the medical profession than it could be now, since it is an undoubted fact that along with continual yearly additions of knowledge concerning rare, and possibly new, forms of disease, there is growing up a tendency in medicine to claim as her own proper ground much that was formerly regarded as professional *terra incognita*. If this be true, you will at once perceive the importance of discussing these matters, not only because what is to-day debatable territory may, in the near future, be your legitimate fields of labour, but because your studies have, in most instances, fitted you for entrance upon these duties—some of which I propose to notice.

You cannot have failed, even from the beginning of your studies, to have been struck with the fact that a great deal of the suffering in this life, not only of a physical, but of a moral nature, has its origin in causes that are absolutely preventible. To this may be added the hope of many men, and the belief of a few others, that the discovery of the causes of other diseases will, in time, suggest means for their prevention, even if they are susceptible of cure. It is with this last division that I would fain class you while I endeavor to point out some wide-spread troubles whose increase you can assist in arresting. Moreover, the medical man, at the outset,