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**G**ENTLEMEN,—There are pinnacles to which we reach, only to be hurled down from the dizzy height into the valley below to be hidden from the rude storms of the world, and where peace and quiet and easy-going hum-drum pervades the spot, while the green grass grows under the feet. This is the well known valley of the “have beens.” Hills have only two sides, one going up and the other going down, and when one has reached such honor as you have conferred upon me he has climbed the up-side and must begin the descent. One is elated with the honor, but grieved with a retrospect of all that led up to it; one is pleased with the evidence of the good-will of his fellows—and a better lot of fellows never lived in any profession—but subdued with that soul-shading feeling that youth is fleeting and age approaching. Each man naturally looks forward to the day upon which he may occupy the presidential chair, but when the day comes he would give much to be able to postpone the honor for another ten years. And now it is time for the past presidents to move up and make room for me; but I do not intend to be placed upon the shelf, if health and strength remain. We all like to mingle with youth, but, unfortunately, youth and age were never meant to mix, as Charles Kingsley has aptly put it:—

“When all the world is old, lad,  
And all the trees are brown,  
And all the sport is stale, lad,  
And all the wheels run down,  
Creep home and take your place there  
The spent and maimed among,  
God grant you find a face there  
You loved, when all was young.”

It is a satisfaction, in dealing with the awful miseries of life, to know that others suffer, that suffering and death are the accompaniments of life, and from this springs much of the beautiful sympathy that is witnessed by our profession. We have a grand work to do.