

OPENING ADDRESS.

AT THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, 4TH OF OCTOBER, 1912

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I ESTEEM it a very high honor to have been invited to address you to-day at this opening of the session of your Medical School, but although my acceptance of that invitation was immediate and without hesitation, I confess that I felt and still feel some misgiving as to my ability to select and adequately to deal with any topics which may possess the interest of being more or less cognate to the educational pursuits in which you are engaged, or related to the profession which it is your ambition in future to serve.

Moreover, this duty of delivering an introductory address is one, the discharge of which is apt to be regarded by those of us who have grown old in academic life, and have frequently been officially present on similar occasions, as very trite and even tiresome in its repetition. But I desire to remember that it is to the students and not to the older members of the audience which honors us with its presence that my remarks are to be specially addressed. To some at least of the students such an occasion must necessarily be novel; while all of you, I trust, are sufficiently ingenuous to be able to suffer for a little words of exhortation from one who has travelled to the very end of the road upon which you are now only setting out.

And you are setting out, gentlemen, at a point of time in the history of the healing art of good auspices and big with the promise of progress, because its work is now more and more becoming based upon sure and stable foundations. If I contrast its present position and prospects with those it possessed when I became a student of medicine in the early sixties, language can hardly exaggerate the difference. At that time such boast of comparatively recent progress as existed centred around the use of the stethoscope and anaesthetics, but general blood-letting was not yet wholly abandoned, while the use of leeches and other means of abstracting blood locally was a daily routine. Pathology, as a science, was only beginning to be cultivated, and, except in the University of Edinburgh, I question whether in Great Britain there was any professorship or lectureship, and certainly there was no equipped laboratory, established for its teaching. No separate instruction on the subject was given at all in my own University—that of Glasgow—except such teaching as was connected with the making of post-mortem examinations and with the demonstration of the gross evidences of disease to be found in different parts of the dead body.