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THE COUNTRY DOCTOR.*

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Ladies and Gentlemen,—Possibly it was a kindly regard for my health that prompted the officers of your Society to extend to me an invitation to address you this evening. They may have been thinking with a certain Western poet that

“When a fellow has a story that he thinks he ought to tell,
If he does not get to tell it, why, of course, he don't feel well.”

I alone from the large faculty of this College can look back upon ten years of life as a country doctor. But it is not the story of that decade—not my own story—that I propose to tell you. Rather, it is that of my brothers and comrades, men whose lives I have been watching, lo! these many years.

My personal experience might teach you less than that of others, since I had the good fortune to succeed to an established practice, and so missed the heart-breaking wait and the long up-hill struggle that marks the earlier periods of many a doctor's life.

The theme you have given me is one that might well arouse to eloquence even a member of the silent profession. As when the sun in early morning tips with radiance the trodden snow, so could I wish for the white light of potent words with which to bring out the lights and shadows of that high vocation to which the country doctor is called; but, conscious of the greatness of my subject, and of my own limitations, I ask in advance your indulgent consideration, recalling the words of that old professor of rhetoric who, to a

* An address first given to the students of Trinity Medical College in 1890 and repeated by request before the Medical Society of the University of Toronto, Dec. 1907.