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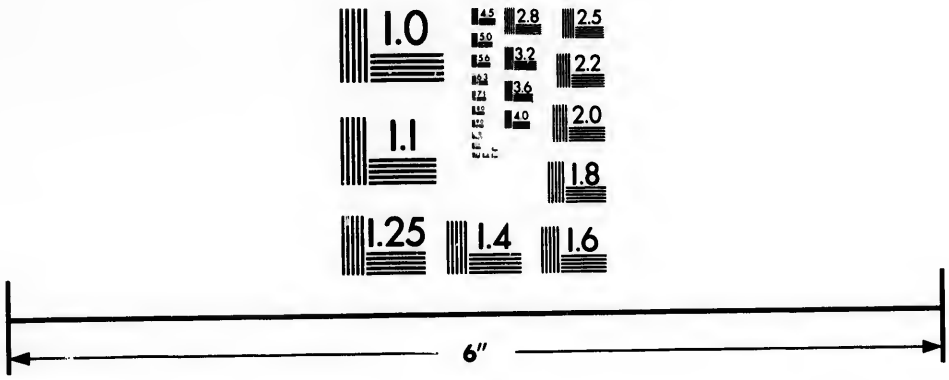

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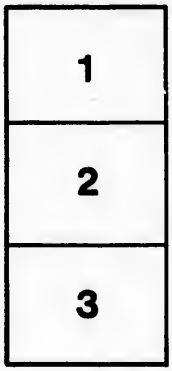

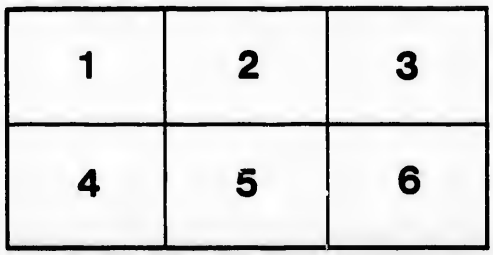

The following address, by Professor Campbell, was delivered before the Convocation of McGill College, held 5th May, 1859, to the Graduates who received the degree of Doctor of Medicine and Surgery. It has been considered advisable to append it to the general circular of the Medical Faculty, because the excellent remarks it contains are not only particularly appropriate, as being essentially within the scope of an annual announcement, but convey valuable advice upon the important subjects of preliminary education and of professional deportment.

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS.

Gentlemen Graduates,—Before addressing to you the few words of parting advice customary upon occasions like the present, I may be permitted, I hope, without being thought guilty of self-laudation, to take a brief retrospect of the progress of the Medical Faculty of McGill College, which I have now, for nearly a quarter of a century, been connected with as a Teacher. Upwards of 34 years ago, much to their honour, four medical gentlemen in this city, the late Drs. Robertson, Caldwell and Stephenson, along with the present respected Dean of our Faculty, Dr Holmes, feeling the want and necessity of a means whereby appropriate instruction might be furnished to Students of Medicine in Canada, associated together and founded, for this purpose, the Montreal Medical Institution. The school thus organized was most successful, and, five years after its establishment, was embodied in this University, of which its Teachers constituted the Medical Faculty. These gentlemen at once took the proper ground of demanding a high standard of professional education from their graduates, and, as far as circumstances permitted, assimilated their curriculum, and the duration of their lectures, to what was then in force in the University of Edinburgh, of which they themselves were Alumni. From time to time, the Faculty thus organized, although contending against want of pecuniary means and numerous other adverse circumstances, added to the number of its Teachers

and the efficiency of its instructions, until the year 1845, when it completed, in the advantageous sub-division of labour, its present very extensive teaching staff, consisting of nine Professors and one Demonstrator. The senior members of the Faculty can now welcome, with pride and pleasure, their former pupils as their valued and able colleagues and fellow-laborers.

The Universities of Great Britain, and the Colleges of Surgeons of England, Scotland and Ireland, early recognised the McGill College class certificates and degrees, as equivalent to their own, in entitling their holders to become candidates for University Honors and Surgical Diplomas. Our Graduates spread over the length and breadth of the Canadas, have, we believe, as a body, done no discredit to our instructions. We have representatives in England, one in the great metropolis, a frequent and able contributor to the Medical Periodical Literature of his native city, and now regularly employed in the editorial staff of the London Lancet. One of our Graduates, after competing successfully at public concours for an Hospital appointment in Victoria, Australia, has already realized an ample fortune, and still remains there, a highly popular and favored Medical Practitioner; and another has just returned on a brief visit to this his native country, from Oregon, Vancouver's Island, and the new Fraser River Gold Regions, after five year's absence, where he has had an equally fortunate career. Three gentlemen, natives of Canada, and Graduates of this University, are now serving Her Majesty in regimental and staff appointments in India; and upon six previous instances, as upon the present occasion, we have had the great pleasure of conferring our degree upon gentlemen serving as medical officers with the Troops in Canada. You will thus perceive, Gentlemen, that we have some cause for thankfulness at the measure of success which has hitherto attended our labours, and the number of Graduates of the present session, is an evidence that public confidence in the character of our teaching is assuredly not diminishing.

I am certain, I can say with truth, that we, as a body, have earnestly laboured for the moral, intellectual, and political exaltation of our profession; that we have endeavoured to keep pace in our instructions with the modern progress of science; that we have not neglected the important practical bearing upon the rational and philosophical treatment of disease of the discoveries which the recent advances of Chemistry, Microscopic Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology have brought to light; that we have inculcated conservatism in Medicine and Surgery; that in the latter science there is much greater

glory in saving than in operating, however skilfully or dexterously the operation may be performed; above all, we believe we have endeavoured to teach a hopeful trust in the tender mercies and restorative power of our kind nursing mother, the *vis medicatrix naturæ*, when aided, but not thwarted by art, in remedying accidents and arresting disease.

And here, gentlemen, I may be permitted to state, that though of late years we have been pleased to observe a higher standard of previous education in those commencing their medical studies, still we believe there is much room for improvement in this respect; aud now there is not the same excuse as in former times for such neglect, as the higher schools and colleges abound in both sections of the Province. I would urge upon parents and guardians, who intend to educate their sons for any of the learned professions, not to be in any hurry fixing their choice before the mental powers have had time to develope themselves, and the tastes have in some degree been decidedly displayed. The employment to which the whole subsequent life is to be dedicated, which is to be its business, and ought as much as possible be its pleasure, should not be decided upon when the judgement is immature, and the higher mental capabilities are only beginning to manifest themselves. I believe that a course of education which will qualify a youth to commence, with advantage, the special study of any of the professions, should be followed up, at least, to the age of eighteen; the mind will then have had time to unfold itself, and its powers will be readily directed, with full intensity, to the special profession,—the heart as well as the head being engaged in its pursuit. A good knowledge of classics is universally acknowledged to be an essential part of the general training necessary before entering upon the study of medicine, without such knowledge, the very meaning of the terms, constantly employed in medical literature, would be incomprehensible to the student; but the chief importance of a classical education consists in this, that experience has proved the labor bestowed in its acquisition to be by far the best discipline for preparing the intellect for being advantageously employed upon any other subject.

An acquaintance with the physical sciences is now considered an essential part of a preliminary medical education, and, to the understanding the more exact among them, as Mechanics and Astronomy, a certain amount of Mathematics is necessary. Some knowledge of Zoology, Botany, Geology and Mineralogy, is now regarded as essential to any well-informed and liberally educated medical man, and Chemistry might, with great advantage, be studied as an elementary branch.

It may be thought that the range of study, now suggested, is too extensive for the generality of medical students; but, for my part, if circumstances permitted, I would feel disposed to add to it the study of Logic and Metaphysics; the exercises in composition, usually combined with the instructions on these sciences, are most valuable in the formation of habits of thought, as well as in the acquirement of power and facility of expression. I am convinced that a youth thus prepared, with the advantage of a large amount of available knowledge, will commence the study of medicine with the probability of much greater ultimate success than he who has not had such a thorough preliminary training.

Gentlemen Graduates, you are now about to leave us, having creditably passed through your final examinations and obtained the honors of this University. Your minds are now stored with that frame-work of knowledge upon which experience can alone afterwards be securely based; and as most of you will at once commence practice, you will shortly be called upon to bring your acquirements to bear upon matters of practical utility, to apply to the principles of your profession, which have been taught you in the lecture-room, the practical test of bedside experience. You are now about to study the book of nature—see that you become her faithful interpreters; her lessons are worthy of implicit belief, and the statements of lecturers and writers frequently require to be corrected by them. The zeal and intelligence which many of you have displayed during the time you have been with us, afford, unquestionably, the best promise that can be given of future eminence and success; but, in order that this hope may be realized, let me caution you not to give up study. Honorable distinction in the practice of medicine is only to be attained by keeping pace with its progress. At the present day, when science in every department is making such rapid advances, when education is becoming diffused so generally, the medical man cannot stand still, but must exert himself to maintain the exalted character of his profession; and, I say it with pleasure, that medicine has not been stationary,—she has not been behind others in the march of improvement, but has kept pace in advancement with her sister sciences; and her literature is daily adding new and important facts to our present store. Do not think, then, gentlemen, that such of you as relax in your efforts will meet with future encouragement: it is only by industry and perseverance that you can expect to obtain, in after life, respect and reputation as scientific practitioners.

But, gentlemen, superior attainments, without upright principles, will never secure success. In order to have a fair prospect of being esteemed

in your profession, you must never let your medical skill and knowledge be disjoined from those sacred principles of honour and virtue which you have this day sworn to respect; and this not only towards your patients, but also towards your professional brethren, who on all occasions have a right to expect from you that integrity of conduct and fair dealing which are the characteristics of the true gentleman and honourable medical man. In conclusion, gentlemen, permit me for my fellow-labourers in the Medical Faculty, as well as for myself, to return you our sincere thanks for the attention and respect with which you have invariably listened to our instructions. I can assure you that there is nothing more gratifying to the teacher than gentlemanly behaviour and exemplary conduct on the part of the student: encouraged by such evidences of diligence and zeal, his labors are lightened, his industry stimulated, and his endeavours to impart instruction materially assisted; good feeling is kept up, and mutual respect becomes the connecting-link between him and his class. And now, gentlemen, farewell. You carry with you our sincere good wishes for success in life; and we part with you, perfectly convinced that, whatever stations you may fill in the profession, you will acquit yourselves in a manner calculated to reflect credit on the University which has this day conferred upon you its degree.