AN INAUGURAL DISSERTATION

ON

The Physician

SUBMITTED TO THE
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Doctor of Medicine.

BY

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OF

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To Drs. P. F. Eve and A. H. Buchanan,
as
a slight token of esteem and respect, for their high medical
attainments, and likewise for their noble qualities of both mind and
heart, this thesis is most respectfully
fully dedicated by,
U. L. Mitchell Walker.
"The Physician."

In attempting to write a thesis upon this subject, which will admit of much being said in relation to it, I can only hope to epitomize it and note some of the most prominent features.

The physician properly educated, and trained in the duties of his profession, and with a proper feeling, in relation to the sufferings of fallen and cursed human nature, can do much towards ameliorating the pains and tortures, for which he is called to treat.

Owing to the sin of man, human flesh, fell heir, to many maladies, for which, man
himself, directed through the agency of his Creator, set about to relieve the sufferings of the race. Led through sympathy he made arduous trials to learn by experiment remedies for particular diseases. With joy to himself and the suffering patient, no doubt he received that elevation and esteem which was worthy of the noble step he had undertaken.

To go back to the primordial age of "medicine," and trace down all of the "early lights," who spent their lives in acquiring information in the treatment of disease, would enlarge this subject to too great a length. Therefore I shall not enter into a historical review
of the subject.

The position of the physician to society is an important one. After going through the required routine of study and lectures, and he is admitted as a "practitioner," he then takes upon himself a most responsible office, and the faithful fulfillment of which, should be his highest aim. If the reflecting man will pause and consider and "weigh well" the relation he bears to the "sick one," confided to his care; and who expects to be guided by his directions, one more to be restored to health, he cannot but be deeply impressed by the responsible office he has
to fill. The fell destroyer, in the act of destroying the unhappy victim, the contest between life and death is hard, the glow of life seems to flicker, and to waver under the burning fever, relapses, and friends become alarmed, and anxious, for the welfare of the patient, in this hour of trouble, to whom do they look for aid and succor? To the physician, he is called, notice the appearance of the sufferer, counts the rapid pulse, sees his anxious countenance, and knows that the *vis vitae* is fast succumbing to the *vis morbi*, and now is the time, for him to exercise the means, he has acquired for the relief of disease, he must
bring to bear, all the "treasures" of knowledge he possesses, to combat the "Monster." If his steps are directed aright, and the disease succumbs to the remedies, his patient improves, great is the pleasure he enjoys to think, he has been the humble means in the hands of "God," of restoring one to health; and, much is the gratitude due him from the patient. But alas! if in the critical moment, he has neglected to prepare himself, and he empirically, instead of rationally, applies his remedies, and a fatal step is taken, ah! fatal may be the attack, and burden of remorse should hang upon him.
The true physician is undoubtedly of inestimable value to the community in which he resides, even one looks upon as a friend in need, and truly he is such. In the hour of physical or mental suffering, is the time for his mission to be performed, at a time when anything but sweet and delightful thoughts occupy the house, when disease provokes pleasures absent, this is the time that he is summoned, as a consoler, and counsellor, and now it is that the true physician is appreciated, and appreciates his relation to the one in need.

With these relations when called in time, he should render...
over, when not engaged, and make every effort to prepare himself to fulfill, so far as is within human power, the offices expected of him. Diligently searching into the depths of all departments connected with the noble science he has undertaken, to prepare himself for all obstacles that arise in his path, and also to be able to stand with the scientific men of the profession. By thus improving each leisure moment, he accumulates valuable information, which causes him to be respected by his patrons, and welcomed by his professional brethren. Resolute, fortitude, decision, and resolution, should all be diligently.
cultivated by him, for in no calling is their greater need for the exercising of these, than in the practice of medicine, and its collateral branches. Renellence needs its exercise when he is treating a patient with many whimsical opinions and notions, and when the patient seems unwilling to follow the dictates of his attendant, also patients hence has its share. The physician should not become irritable and unkind, but endeavor to try by kind means and gentle persuasion to overcome the whimsical opinions of the sick one, and thus in cultivating these attributes, he assimilates himself to the great physician of us all, and refines the finer qualities
of his nature. Fortitude, decision and resolution need to be exercised when in the severe time of trial when his fans are to be used to the utmost to decide upon a proper course, to arrive at a correct conclusion.

Thus firmly to pursue the plan he deems correct, and resolutely to put all accusations thrown upon him. The scenes, and trials which he has gone through, all tend when properly considered, to draw forth the tender feelings of the man, and make him more refined than as some contend, to make him callous, and morose. Amid suffering in all of its protean forms it is compelled to move, and endeavor to ameliorate its pangs.
The strong man, is stricken with an incurable malady, which resist all of his remedial means, directed through his best judgment, and life rapidly departs, and death claims as his own, the smiling beauty, with pleasure radiating from her eye, the adorns of all gayer, with every hope of life bright before, and the cherished flower, perhaps of a doting father, or fond mother, and the pleasure of an ambitious brother, is likewise stricken with the "intractable monster," all are distraught and look to the doctor for aid, but it is without his power, even after the best and most potent means have been used, and she likewise rapidly succumbs to the hand of death.
such trials and scenes as these are his to go through all calculated to draw forth his finer qualities, instead of inducing them.

By schooling himself also to these scenes, and to the sufferings of man, he should be better enabled to see our utter dependence upon our "Creator," and see the inutility of human efforts when the decree has gone forth that "man shall die." Thus teach him too, that his sojourn upon the earth is but a short one, and that soon too, he must undergo the change; it has been his privilege to see others pass. The lessons here taught him, if properly improved, and considered should teach
him to prepare for the great hereafter, and endeavor to reap the rewards of a well spent Christian and useful life.

The field which the physician has to explore and traverse is an extensive one, in no profession is there such material to collect from, and store well the facts with which man is gifted, once which under him, truly the Lord of creation. All the sister sciences to a greater or less degree lend their aid in filling up the vacancies in our profession. From chemistry we derive many valuable diagnostic means, indeed from this science both the practitioner and physiologist have derived many
and important truths. The practitioner by means of many chemical reagents is enabled to demonstrate a pathological state of the system, which before was only conjectural with him. In the beautiful and interesting study of physiology, nothing has so much enriched this department of medicine as the rapid progress of chemistry. By means of the acids derived from it, the physiologist is enabled to demonstrate many truths, which were a matter of conjecture and dispute with the earlier physiologist. The science of microscopy too, by its able teachers is fast revealing many hitherto unknown facts to the medical world.
And seems as it ever to make man more wonderful, than the most imaginative mind could conjecture. He is too by reviewing only some of the most interesting topics connected with the study of the physician, that there is no calling or profession better calculated to lead to a thorough training of the intellectual man either. To thoroughly understand the varied branches which constitute it as one harmonious whole, he will derive as much benefit in the way of discipling his mind, as could be derived from a rigid course of Rhetoric or Logic. In the study of medicine, we find much to allow...
soon, and make us curious to inquire into its rationale. Much to
evoke our admiration and draw forth thought to reflect from
whence this or that phenomenon arises. After patient labor
and diligent research the scientific laborer is compelled to acknowledge its existence, and can only attribute it to the power of the
Creator, and acknowledge a great first cause; every step that
we take forward in analyzing the structure, composition and
arrangement of our system only strengthens this, that an all-powerful and omniscient being is the
author of our existence.

In conclusion I cannot but
tor close than quoting the ex-
pression uttered by an able
scotch divine. That such to
the ministry, the profession of
medicine should rank

For what noble cause save
the "ministry," can one devote
his time, and talent, than en-
deavoring to mitigate the suffer-
ings of his race.