3-6-1852

1852 Charge to the Graduates of Jefferson Medical College

Charles D. Meigs, MD

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CHARGE

TO THE

GRADUATES

OF

JEFFERSON MEDICAL COLLEGE.

BY

CHARLES D. MEIGS, M.D.

Delivered March 6, 1852.

PHILADELPHIA:
T. K. AND P. G. COLLINS, PRINTERS.
1852.
PHILADELPHIA, March 1, 1852.

Prof. Ch. D. Meigs.

Sir: At a meeting of the Graduating Class of the Jefferson Medical College this evening, in the lower lecture-room, the undersigned were appointed a Committee, to wait on you and solicit a copy of your Valedictory for publication.

Permit us to express our own wish, in connection with that of our constituents, that you will furnish us with a copy at your earliest convenience.

Respectfully,

Jno. E. McEachin, Ala., President.
Levi H. Smith, S. C., Secretary.
Isaac R. Shammo, Pa.
S. D. Grant, Maine.
Jno. A. Blanchard, N. H.
James Beaham, N. Y.
J. B. Richmond, N. J.
J. T. Taylor, Del.
J. R. Larzelere, Ohio.
E. C. Carrington, Wisconsin.
J. M. Havens, Indiana.
Robert L. Cooper, Kentucky.
Albert G. Preist, Mo.

W. H. Walters, Illinois.
H. S. Dean, Mass.
John B. Eastham, Va.
J. T. Hammond, Md.
B. H. Henry, Georgia.
R. K. Hinton, Miss.
James F. Foulkes, N. C.
James G. Wylly, Louisiana.
A. G. Shaw, Texas.
George S. Walker, California.
T. J. Parker, Canada.
J. Da Costa, West Indies.

PHILADELPHIA, March 2, 1852.

Gentlemen: I feel that I am highly honored by your communication dated March 1.

It will give me pleasure to comply with your wishes; and I shall accordingly hasten to place my Address in the hands of your Committee.

Accept, gentlemen, the assurance of my respect and affection.

CH. D. MEIGS.

To Jno. E. McEachin, President,
Levi H. Smith, Secretary,
Isaac R. Shammo,
S. D. Grant,
Jno. A. Blanchard, and others, a Committee of the Graduating Class of the Jefferson Medical College.
CHARGE.

Gentlemen: It is by appointment by my Colleagues that I now present the sincere congratulations of the Medical Faculty of the College upon this complete publication of your admission into the class of physicians; and also express our united and hearty wishes for your future success, and for your usefulness in the communities where you may be called to serve. The ceremonies by which this solemn collegiate act has been consummated—the numerous and brilliant assembly whose presence adds both grace and dignity to the occasion—the consideration, that all has been done in order, and by authority delegated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania—and also your own reflections upon the nature of medical learning, pursuits, and responsibilities, might well serve to impress the scenes of to-day deep in the tablets of your memory; and, at the same time, confirm every good resolution of yours to act well the part that henceforth lies before you.

You have here brought to a close the student-life, which succeeded your early pupilage; and you have now commenced what may properly be considered the career of the Scholar. You have thus been advanced to the highest grade that, at least in my opinion, a man can attain in this country; and henceforward, it remains for you, alone, to determine to what elevation in that great class of scholars you shall severally rise. You are no more henceforth to be guided by teachers, nor subjected to any discipline, or rules of action, save such as are imposed by law and custom, and by your own perceptions of the obligations of a pure morality and religion, of duty and conscience.

In thus assuming your station in society, you have a right to claim the privileges and the station of persons regularly trained, and duly instructed, and thereby qualified to assume that responsibility,
and perform those offices, that appertain to the medical profession. It is through your diplomas that you have received authority "to teach, to write, and to act in the practice of your art according to the rules of that art," and those diplomas will be your warrant for those ends.

I am sure, gentlemen, that I but express the concurrent sentiments of all my colleagues, when I assert that we have willingly and cheerfully recommended you to the Trustees, as men worthy to be received by the public in the capacity of physicians and surgeons; not doubting, in the least, your ability and willingness, faithfully and with a proper understanding of them, to discharge the obligations laid upon medical men. And further, while we felicitate you upon this favorable result of your labors in Schools and Colleges of Learning, we rejoice that our profession has, at the same time, received an accession of strength, both in your numbers and your proficiency in knowledge; and we should be happy to think that our country might, everywhere, be supplied with physicians equal to you in intelligence, and as we have reason to believe, in enlightened views of our art, and in zeal for the progress of our science.

It might be supposed, gentlemen, that, having now ceased from the labors and the irksome restraints of the student-life, and having acquired a coequal rank with the medical practitioners of America, all connection between you and ourselves, as students and professors, should also be suspended, and the relations which have united us, here terminate forever. But, there is a sentiment which we cannot exorcise, of a nature akin to love, that assures us you will not soon forget those who have faithfully assisted you in important undertakings; and that you will bear to your various distant homes a kindly recollection of your connection with us.

We have the authority of the Father of Medicine, given to us in his celebrated Oath, to say that the student ought not to forget his upright instructor; and we cannot consent that these ceremonials shall break forever the bonds that have united us. You shall at least carry with you our warm wishes for your happiness and honor; and we beg to assure you that every triumph of yours shall excite a sympathetic throb of pleasure here. We earnestly desire, therefore, that you may make haste to show forth to the world the ripe fruits of learning in your profession; and that to skill and science may be added those worthy qualities of the heart that spring from earnest and right-minded moral inculcation and purposes.
In entering, as you are now to do, upon the paths of the practitioner of Medicine and Surgery, however competent you may have become, from scientific acquirements, properly to fulfil your task, you shall find that much remains for you to learn as to the state, and prospects, and duties of the physician.

In the first place, if you should treat that subject as one essentially connected with your personal happiness and good fortune, you will so demean yourselves in the world as to draw from it the support which is necessary and convenient for persons in such a station. And it is evident that this business, while it is one indispensable for the comfort and security of the social state of man, is very fruitful of occupation, and profitable to that degree indeed as to enable many men, with their families, to live in a style becoming their pretensions as men of education and even of superior rank.

There is no country whatever in which the people can dispense with the aids of physicians of some grade of qualifications. So that, in the remotest and most lonely prairie of the West; on every wild inhospitable shore; in every retired hamlet or flourishing city and splendid metropolis, the wounds and diseases of men demand the frequent assistance of art; nor has the world ever been able to dispense with our Class. In proportion, however, as Society becomes more advanced, and education sheds its plenary light over the natal darkness of the understanding, just in that ratio does the demand for superior skill and knowledge rise.

Seeing how wide-spread are the advantages of education in our free and happy country, it is easy to conceive that those who would rise to eminent stations in our calling can only justly hope to do so by means calculated to elevate themselves higher and higher in intelligence generally, and imbue their very spirit with the peculiar characteristics of the medical man. Society requires physicians, not empirics and charlatans; and should you, by a virtuous life, becoming to, and conformable with the nature and calling of the Scholar; by charity; by moderation in all desires, and speech, and action; by the exhibition of superior skill, dexterity, and judgment, make known to the public that you really belong to the class of persons whom they can trust and will confide in, doubt not that, should you thus make good your part of the conditions of success, success will wait on your endeavors.

Even should there be ground to assert (which there is not) that the ranks of Medicine are already filled and overflowing, fear not
any want of success, since you shall take the places of the laggards in improvement, and fill the positions that are now usurped by hundreds and thousands of false pretenders, that deceive the people under a garb of science and knowledge, of which they possess no jot nor one tittle. It is probable that fully one-half of the medical service of the population of the United States is rendered by quacks and nostrum-mongers, and such service is deplorably inefficacious. If you should aid to expel some of these pernicious men, and supply their places, with intelligent judgment, and with pure and upright intentions, you will give material aid in the great work now in hand, of purifying our calling, and of making it what it was designed to be, a blessing and a conservatism to the people.

As a wounded or sick man requires a physician, and not a merchant or salesman, it should become a settled principle with you, to regard your patient as an object committed to you for his cure, and not for your own benefit. You can never justly appreciate the importance of this great principle, unless you shall learn and agree to look upon all men as equal in claims and rights, when they happen to fall under circumstances that require the intervention of your heaven-descended art. The condemned felon, in his lonely cell, must not be considered as cast off from your pity and sympathy, though society may have rejected him and delivered him bound into the hands of the officer. Disease and wounds are no respecters of persons; and you should be criminal to turn a deaf ear to the cry and the wail of the poor—for you are physicians for men, not classes of men. You are here upon a mission—I had almost said a holy mission, whose object it is to do good unto others rather than unto yourselves. If this be true, then who made you to be a fitting judge, and who appointed you to decide upon the morality of the patient? Let the laws decide; let society reject, or let God condemn—be it yours ever to serve—and with charitable intent to carry out the purposes of Him who, when he gave us this fleeting breath, these rising pulses, these human susceptibilities, that bring often pain and disease as their inevitable attendants, also planted the roots and seeds whose sanative juices might serve as antidotes to many inevitable sufferings of his children. Who made you the fitting judge betwixt God and man? We charge you, therefore, be ever impartial, and so exercise your mission as to enable you in the end to say, I have faithfully comprehended, in the scope of my ministrations, all manner of sick and wounded people, without partiality or injustice to any.
I said you are not called to this work as salesmen, or dealers in human woe—nay, you are entered into a liberal profession.

While it is true to say that the services you shall render are worthy of reward, you ought never to sell your power. The compensations of the physician never can be, with them that are true-hearted, prime objects in their relations with sick men. It is true, I repeat it, that your services are worthy of compensation, and they will be compensated according to the condition of the recipient of your favors. Such compensation is, however, never a price—but always a fee. It is always a gift. It is the measure of the patient's feelings as to you, who have helped him in his extremity. There is not and there cannot be any tariff, or ad valorem estimate in the case. A man's sight is worth to him more than the Koh-i-noor diamond; and to rescue him from an aneurism that is to burst, or to ward off a consumption, or phlegmasia, that would otherwise lay him in the grave, is a service wholly impayable: he may give unto you; he may reward you; he never can pay you. I charge you, therefore, not to believe that men shall pay you, and to remember at the same time, there was a Dives and a Lazarus. The poor man is often worthier in the sight of God than those that are clothed in fine linen and purple, and that fare sumptuously every day. Boerhaave regarded the poor as his best patients. I could not offer you a better example than his.

Still, you must live in the world, and that in a respectable condition. It is needful, therefore, that you should appear like those of your Class, and be clothed with both its inward and outward attributes. Among you, though there be many already of good estates, there are many to whom the res angusta domi have cut off many pleasing and useful sources of power. Make haste, then, so to conduct your affairs as to range you among, not the affluent, not the splendid, nor the opulent, but among those who are not needy, not in want, not exposed to temptation of venality. Take care early to lay the foundation of the estate; one hundred dollars invested at the close of the year are worth more in your estate than ten thousand a year, squandered in vain parade, or riotous living. If every man of you would, at the end of the first year of his labor, lay aside in safe investment, were it but ten dollars of the surplus of his fees, I can see that, when he shall have become old—when gray hairs take the place of ambrosial curls—when the vision grows dim, and to labor has become a toil, and no longer is it a pleasure and a delight to work, I can see him retired.
from the contests and conflicts of the world, calm as a summer evening, crowned with the people's approbation, and even their affection; and happy amidst the inexhaustible stores of pleasures that exist in literature and the ever-expanding sciences.

Disregard this part of our charge, spend all that you receive, and heedlessly plunge into debt beyond—and the closing scenes of your life, as well as the whole course of it, it seems to me, must be sad and mournful.

You should strive to become earnest men. Men who are in earnest are always to be believed, and are understood by both friend and foe. You have chosen a serious, if not a melancholy lot; and, say what they may, in their hours of ease and gayety, as to the charming frivolities of the light-minded and fascinating Doctor; when seized with the pangs of disease—when death comes to extend his grisly hand to clutch their life—they are then in earnest, and they want earnest men about them.

You ought to conceive, therefore, of the tenor of a medical life as one subdued, and brought into conformity with the outward circumstances of the man. I am far from recommending an ascetic manner, or habits of moping and dulness, but would have you shun all trifling and all frivolities, as incommensurate with the dignity of your station, and the gravity of your concerns. You must go, in and out, before the people, daily; the boisterous laugh, the stormy carouse, and the discreditable spree are but evil antecedents of that visit which you may at the next moment pay in the chamber of the dying, when the soul is about to take its flight to unknown realms, amidst the sighs, and groans, and tears, and the broken hearts of those whom it leaves in widowhood or orphanage; and sometimes, even, when a nation mourns.

There is a just medium, and he is safest who touches neither extreme in anything.

You will have abundant cause to be cheerful, were it but in the cheering voice of a conscience not accusing you. You will be cheerful if you should grow in professional strength; for you cannot avoid discovering within, those conservative powers, as to the friends who employ you, the consciousness of which must fill you with the conviction that you are capable men. There is nothing can make a man so happy as doing good to others: the conviction, should you have it, that you can do much good, will support you in many rude trials, and even impart a cheerful tone to your character and manners.
You have brought to a close this day your student-life. We charge you to let it be the day to commence your studies in earnest. Already are you possessed of extended and accurate views in Anatomy and Physiology, in Chemistry and Therapeutics, and in the Science and Practice of Medicine and Surgery. I aver with the greatest sincerity that I look upon you as men who have made great attainments of knowledge as to forms and substances, or material knowledge; but there is still so much to learn! the subject is so vast! all things earthly have such great influence on man's physical as well as his intellectual and moral complacency! Gentlemen, the whole wide circle of the sciences lies open before you; nothing is contained therein that it is useless for a physician to know—nothing whose acquisition should be fruitless as to his ministry, and his state. Hasten, then, to gather into the treasury of the mind every solid ore, every precious gem with which to confirm your power to do good unto others, or to adorn your professional character—without both strength and graces, you will be less welcome, and less trustworthy counsellors for all those to whom you are by this ministry sent, and near those who are in pain, and such as are in fear, and them that are in imminent danger of destruction.

Tremble, then, lest you fall into the snare of idleness, or the pernicious deceptions of self-conceit. Think that twenty-four centuries have elapsed since our records began, and that, in all that long lapse of ages, the thoughts, the experiences, the researches of so many able men, and of all society, indeed, as to medicines and their uses, have been accumulating until now, and are preserved for us. So that, in fact, many ancient Nations, and many modern Empires, and the People in general, have constructed this Temple into which you have entered to-day. Be not satisfied, then, to gaze upon its columns, set in order; on its sculptured friezes; its ornamented pediments, and graceful porticoes—nor believe that you know the whole because you have come on the hither side of the propylon. Nay, examine the structure, and know it as it is from foundation to coping stone. Know the whole identity of Medicine—Medicine as it was, and as it is. If you will trace it from Cos and Cnidos; at Athens and Rome—at Alexandria and Hilléh—at Seville and Salernum—in Bologna—at Gottingen, and so, down to the latest date—then you will know your art; for you will know its very beginning, and all its phases, in progress, until now. All this ought to be yours; and it ought to be a possession for every medical man. See what an amount of labor is before you. See how
needful it is to let no day elapse without giving some portion of it to your library. Something should daily be wrested from science, from literature, or from art, to add to your stores—for society does not want you as an empiric. You will but cheat and deceive her, if you be any other than a learned and philosophical man and physician.

Gentlemen, every educated man is held to owe something to his Class, and mankind are divided by a line that separates the educated from the ignorant class. If left in our original state, we should be all alike, ignorant and barbarous. 'Tis education makes us to differ; and scholarship is the highest earthly nobility. The Scholar alone is man's proper teacher. He unseals the blind natural eye of man, and fills it with the light of knowledge—"bright effluence of bright essence"—he teaches virtue, decency, order, reverence for law and custom; he points to the things that man requires, and shows the way to obtain and use them aright. I would that I could have such ability to present this magnificent theme as he* had whose thought and language I have here appropriated; I would urge and persuade you to strengthen the hands, and promote the cause of the Scholar-class in every act of your lives. Therefore, we charge you: be good men, and learned men; join yourselves to every good work and purpose; oppose all evil; let your examples shine before all worthy men to encourage them, and to check and reprove whatsoever tends to the subversion of religion, of morals, of the public welfare in short.

And lastly, gentlemen, we venture to reiterate our heartfelt wishes that you may kindly remember us, as believing that we have striven with sincerity to speak to you, in truthfulness and with zeal, of the various doctrines it has been our province severally to propound. Do not believe that we could make physicians of you by our own teachings merely. Far from you and from us be the thought! We have but shown you the way—it is for you to walk therein; and what we desire, is, that the future may show we have not proved blind guides. Your alma mater will be honored if you are honorable. She must be disgraced else! And now, as for the last time on earth you hear your professor's voice addressing you in a public discourse, I would that its latest sounds might be able to invoke from heaven every choicest blessing upon our departing class; while in the names of my colleagues, and my own, I bid you most heartily and most affectionately, farewell.

* Dr. Fichte.
GRADUATES
OF
JEFFERSON MEDICAL COLLEGE OF PHILADELPHIA,
MARCH, 1852.

At a Public Commencement, held on the 6th of March, 1852, the degree of
Doctor of Medicine was conferred on the following gentlemen by the
Hon. Edward King, LL.D., President of the Institution; after which a
Charge to the Graduates was delivered by Professor C. D. Meigs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>STATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anderson, Joseph W.</td>
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<td>Kentucky</td>
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Intermittent Fever.
Physical Exploration of the Chest.
Hygiene.
Causes of Bilious Remittent Fever.
in Georgia.
Bone.
Sick Stomach.
Inguinal Hernia.
Typhoid Fever.
Diagnosis.
Dysentery.
Pneumonia.
Acute Pleurisy.
Gun-shot Wounds.
Intermittent Fever.
Record of the Microscopical Examination of one hundred Tumours.
Pneumonia.
Acute Peritonitis.
The Pulse.
Diagnosis of Enteric Fever.
Hysteria.
Femoral Hernia.
Scarlatina.
Cholera Infantis.
Respiration.
Entero-mesenteric Fever.
Abortion.
Scarlatina.
Proximate Cause of Intermittent Fever.
Scarlatina.
Compression of the Brain.
Pneumonia.
Nervous Influence.
Pulsation, and its Relations to Cyanosis Neonatorum.
Delirium Tremens.
NAME.

Crawford, John W.
Culbertson, James
Cunningham, William R.
Da Costa, Jacob
Dean, Henry S.
Dedrick, Allen
De Witt, Benjamin
Dinwiddie, Crispin (M. D.)
Dillard, William D.
Doane, George Hobart
Dorsey, Henry A.
Dunmore, Edward Osborne
Dunton, Thomas J.
Durham, Alexander F.
Eastham, John B.
Emanuel, Andrew
Estace, James H.
Evans, Isaac Newton (M. D.)
Farley, William S.
Farrar, William F.
Fleck, William C. A.
Fletcher, Corbin D.
Forbes, William S.
Foulkes, James F.
Fox, Thomas G.
Franklin, Benjamin
Gardner, Robert B.
Gee, Charles J.
Geikie, Walter B.
Gibson, Frederick H.
Goode, Allen G.
Goodwin, Edmund P.
Gordon, John N.
Graham, Robert H.
Grant, Samuel Dexter
Gray, William B.
Green, Charles H.
Guiliver, Daniel F.
Hammond, John T.
Hampton, Edmund B.
Hanly, Richard Ruse
Hardy, Thomas J.
Harrison, James F.
Hart, Alfred Gaillord
Hart, Ira F.
Hawkes, Joseph M. (M. D.)
Hay, Randal D.
Hayhurst, George R.
Henry, Beverly A.
Herndon, James C.
Hicks, Virginius H.
Higgin, Tompkins (M. D.)

STATE.

Maryland.
Missouri.
Alabama.
West Indies.
Massachusetts.
South Carolina.
Pennsylvania.
Virginia.
Kentucky.
New Jersey.
Pennsylvania.
New Jersey.
Maryland.
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Ala. 
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Maryland.
North Carolina.
New York.
Virginia.
Pennsylvania.
New York.
Indiana.
North Carolina.
Pennsylvania.
Georgia.
Virginia.
Virginia.
Indiana.

SUBJECT OF THESIS.

Femoral Hernia.
Dysentery.
Congestive Fever.
Epithelial Tumours and Cancer of the Skin.
Pericarditis.
Capillary Action.
Epidemic Colo-rectitis.
Gonorrhoea.
Phthisis Pulmonalis.
Pathological Chemistry.
Pneumonia.
The Placenta.
Structure of the Tissues.
Functions of the Womb.
Erysipelas.
Oil of Turpentine.
Dyspepsia.
Erysipelas.
The Passions, and the Influence they exert upon Health.
Inflammation.
The Female Pelvis.
Scurvy.
Therapeutical Employment of Sea Water.
Dyspepsia.
Phenomena of Death.
Ergota.
Effects of Alcohol on the Human System.
Physical Diagnosis of Thoracic Diseases.
Symptoms and Treatment of Acute Dysentery.
Acute Pneumonia.
Medical Student.
Intermittent Fever.
Gun-shot Wounds.
Inguinal Hernia.
Congestive Fever.
Ploutus.
Typhoid Fever.
Typhoid Fever.
Principles versus Pathies.
Prognosis and Treatment of Gun-shot Wounds.
Art of Prescribing.
Vital Stimuli.
Pseudo-membranous Croup.
Pneumonia.
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Nervous Systems of Bell and Hall.
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Hematography.
Dysentery.
Typhoid Fever.
Comparative Anatomy and Physiology of the Circulation.
Intermittent Fever.
Epidemic Erysipelas.
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SUBJECT OFTHESIS.       
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Inguinal Hernia.        
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Epidemic Erysipelas, as it occurred in California in the Spring and Summer of 1851. 
Pertussis.              
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Of the above there are—from Virginia, 65; Pennsylvania, 43; Georgia, 13; N. Carolina, 13; Alabama, 11; Missouri, 10; S. Carolina, 7; Kentucky, 7; New York, 6; New Jersey, 6; Ohio, 6; Maryland, 5; Tennessee, 5; Maine, 4; Indiana, 4; Canada, 4; Texas, 3; Illinois, 3; New Hampshire, 2; Michigan, 2; Louisiana, 2; Delaware, 2; Massachusetts, 1; Mississippi, 1; Wisconsin, 1; California, 1; West Indies, 1.—Total 228.

R. M. HUSTON, M. D., Dean.