CHAPTER XX.

THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF THE JEFFERSON MEDICAL COLLEGE OF PHILADELPHIA.*

It was not until the Jefferson Medical College had been in operation fifty-five years that an attempt was made to establish an Alumni Association, and even then many of the gentlemen who comprised the governing body of the institution were emphatically opposed to bringing into existence an organization of the kind. The fact is within the memory of many of the living Alumni that the majority of the Board of Trustees of the College not only took little interest in calling into being an Association of the character mentioned, but were opposed to its creation. The Dean at that time—Rand—refused to permit any extended notice of the existence of the Association to be promulgated with the Annual College Announcement, and it was not until it had been in existence five years that the executive committee was able to report that “in future, a circular, setting forth the objects of the Association, will be printed and distributed with the Annual College Announcement.” But the Dean did so far yield to the persuasions of the Association as to publish in the announcement of the fifty-sixth session the bare fact that “An Alumni Association having been formed, the Dean will be happy to receive the names of graduates, that they may obtain a circular on the subject.”

In 1870, the elder Gross, realizing how much power and influence might accrue to the school by the organization of an Association composed of the graduates of the institution, in number already amounting to several thousand, invited several of the active and progressive men connected with

* In the preparation of this chapter, free use has been made of a narrative history of the Alumni Association, written by Dr. Orville Horwitz, and published in connection with Dr. Holland’s history of the College.
the school, together with some of the prominent graduates, to meet at his house for the purpose of discussing the subject. As a result, a circular was issued and distributed among the graduates of the school, requesting them to attend a meeting in the lower lecture room of the College building on the evening of March 12, 1870, for the purpose of organizing an Alumni Association.

The meeting was largely attended, and with much enthusiasm Dr. Nathan L. Hatfield, one of the graduates of the first class that left the halls of Jefferson in 1826, was elected chairman. Dr. J. Ewing Mears was appointed secretary. After much discussion, Professor Gross, '28, offered a resolution "That a committee of five members be appointed to submit, at an adjourned meeting, a plan for organization, together with a constitution." This was carried unanimously. Professors Gross, Rand, and Wallace, and Drs. Hewson and Mears, were appointed, with instructions to report on March 9, in the same hall, at 12 o'clock, noon. At the adjourned meeting the plan of organization, constitution, and by-laws was submitted, discussed and adopted. Gross was elected President of the Association, a position he occupied for many years, and which he resigned only after the success of the Association was assured. He finally vacated the office because, in his own words, "he deemed it only right that some other Alumnus should have an opportunity to act in that capacity." Two years later, he was re-elected, and accepted the office in respect to the expressed wishes of the Alumni; and in that capacity he continued to serve until the time of his death.

Gross's interest in the welfare of the Association was so wholesome and unselfish as to be worthy the highest appreciation. The organization itself owes its existence to his persevering effort. It would have come later, under other leadership and influence, but it was Gross's mind that originated the plan, and his own knowledge of its importance as a factor for good in the history of the College that impelled his best endeavor in its behalf, in the face of the opposition set up against it. This opposition, however, did not any time take a determined form, and consisted largely in lack of interest in
its proposed objects, and a feeling that the Association might become a charge upon the Trustees and the Faculty, who were the sole sustaining power of the school. But Gross reasoned away any feelings of bitterness, although he could not for some years prevail upon the Trustees and Faculty to publish any mention of the Association on the back pages of the "Announcements." A little later every College officer, in whatever capacity, was glad to welcome the Association as a new factor in Jefferson history, and from that time it has exercised great influence in the affairs of the College. Indeed, it is doubtful if the large Hospital could have been built without the assistance of the Alumni Association. But the old first Hospital was only the beginning of the beneficent work of the Association; its influence and substantial aid have been potent factors in originating and carrying into effect every important measure proposed for the welfare of the school and the advancement of its interests.

There were many strong men allied to the Association in the beginning of its career. As Horwitz says, it is interesting to note that the officers who were elected at the first meeting were men of prominence and distinction, among them being several who had earned an international reputation, and were regarded as "master minds in the realms of medicine and surgery." They were men whom the sons of Jefferson will ever regard with love and veneration, being among the many remarkably great medical men who have attained distinction after receiving their diplomas from the Jefferson Medical College. Among those who served as officers of the Association during the first year of its history were Gross, Da Costa, Wallace, Pancoast, Gross the younger, Goodel, Ellwood Wilson, J. Aitkin Meigs, Levis, Rand, W. H. Pancoast, S. Weir Mitchell, Brinton, Hatfield, Maury, and Gervin.

In the preamble of the constitution adopted at the first meeting, the purposes of the Association are declared thus: "The objects of the Association are laid down, in addition to promoting the prosperity of the Jefferson Medical College, to be that of awarding prizes; the publishing of meritorious theses; the endowment of scholarships for the free medical education
of the sons of the Alumni whose means are limited; the collection of anatomical and pathological specimens for the College Museum; the cultivation of good feeling among the Alumni; and, above all, the advancement of the interests of medical education and the diffusion of sound medical knowledge."

A study of the early records of the Association impresses the reader with the interest and activity displayed by the Alumni in regard to every important fact pertaining to the welfare and prosperity of the College and its Hospital. Gross promised excellent results from the workings of the Association when endeavoring to awaken an interest in its behalf before the organization was perfected, and he emphasized his views in an anniversary address delivered before its members at the first annual meeting. On that occasion he said:

"The obligations of an institution and of its Alumni are mutual. They cannot be infringed by the one without the infliction of corresponding injury upon the other. The tree is judged by its fruit. If the one is decayed or rotten, the other cannot be good or fit for use. A school and its graduates stand precisely in a similar relation to each other. The foster-mother must stand out in all the purity and majesty of holiness; arrayed in robes of white, with lamps well filled and trimmed, zealous in good works, ambitious to excel, and determined to occupy the front rank among sister institutions. In a word, she must not weary in well-doing, nor falter in her endeavor to extend the sphere of her usefulness. Such a mother is worthy of the affection, esteem, and confidence of her children, worthy of the community in which she dwells, worthy of the age and country which she serves to adorn and ennoble. The good which an institution may do, guided and governed by correct principles, is incalculable. The seed she scatters is like the mustard-seed spoken of in Holy Writ; small and insignificant at first, but destined eventually to afford shelter and mental sustenance to thousands of human beings.

"Thus working together for good, mother and son are alike interested in each other's welfare, well knowing that what affects the one, must, to a greater or less extent, affect the other. Their characters are in each other's keeping; and although they may be separated by time and distance, they never fail, when occasion arises, to exchange kindly offices and to breathe benedictions upon each other's heads. It is for the promotion of these mutual offices of kindness and courtesy that Alumni Associations are established; and it is well that they should meet from time to time to interchange social feeling, to recall early reminiscences, and to confer upon the conditions and prospects of their alma mater. * * * There is special need at the present
time of such Associations, when the country is literally studded with cheap ad captandum medical schools, and overrun with all kinds of physicians, regular and irregular, mongrel and hybrid, scattering the seeds of discord among the profession, lowering its dignity, and impairing its usefulness.

In his address, Gross also made allusion to the early history of the College; and his remarks, while not strictly pertinent to the subject under treatment, are nevertheless worthy to be reproduced in connection with the early history of the Association. He said:

"Although the Jefferson Medical College is a very young institution, without a solitary wrinkle, as fresh and vigorous as the day she was founded, she has long been familiarly known as "Old Jeff," a sobriquet she may well be proud of, as it is beautifully expressive of the affection and regard of her alumni. Deriving her name from the illustrious author of the Declaration of Independence, she has been emphatically the school of the people and of the profession at large, dependent upon no clique, combination of interests, or hereditary prestige for support and continuance. She has been, in every sense of the term, a self-made institution. She did not, Minerva-like, spring full grown from the brain of Jupiter. Born in sorrow and adversity, she rose from humble beginnings by rapid strides to gigantic proportions, outstripping in the number of her pupils every school of the kind in the country.

"Opposition of the fiercest and most rancorous character, sharpened by the keenest shafts of ridicule, assailed her early career, and for a time threatened her very existence. Internal discord and dissension, too, exerted their baneful influence. The fate of a 'house divided against itself' is proverbial. No enterprise was ever surrounded with greater hostility or more discouraging circumstances. No generous rivalry stepped forth to greet the new school, as it was called, to extend a helping hand, or to proffer a word of sympathy. Failure, speedy and disgraceful, was predicted; the sanctity of the social circle was invaded; old friendships were broken up; the Faculty and students alike were tabooed as rebels and interlopers.

"The life of our alma mater, short as it has been, has had two important epochs, both sufficiently eventful; the one extending from its foundation in 1825 to its reorganization in 1841; the other from 1841 to 1856, when the first break was made in the Faculty by the resignation of Dr. Mütter. The first period was one of constant change, of poverty, internal dissension, and public opposition. * * * The reorganization of 1841, although it did not include the founder of the school, was a most fortunate event in its history. The new Faculty, with Dunglison at its head, stood together in a united phalanx, working like a band of brothers for the common interest and good of the school. From this time forth, peace and harmony prevailed, students flocked hither from all sections of the land, and
the Jefferson Medical College rapidly assumed the proud position which, thanks to the vigilance and good management of the honorable Board of Trustees, it has ever since maintained. Its history affords a forcible illustration of the withering influence of frequent changes in medical institutions, and adds another proof to the maxim how much better it is to bear the ills we have than fly to those we know not of.

"Notwithstanding its early trials and misfortunes, no medical school on this continent has produced as many graduates within such a short period. Inclusive of those who will next receive the honors of the doctorate, the number may be set down in round figures at six thousand, all within the short and narrow period of forty-six years. If it be true, as is so often asserted, that he who makes a blade of grass grow where none grew before is a benefactor of his race, what shall we say of the founders of a medical school whose alumni are settled in every part of the civilized world, in China, in Africa, and among the savages of our own country, who dispense the blessings of the healing art and illustrate by their numerous deeds of mercy and humanity the ways of God to fallen and diseased man? We forget the shortcomings of McClellan in his want of executive ability and in his warm-hearted, impulsive nature, in the remembrance of his greatness and his virtues as a surgeon, and inscribe his name in letters of gold upon the scroll of benefactors of his country. We recall with grateful emotion the names of his colleagues and of his successors, of Eberle, Green, Barton, Rheaes, Samuel McClellan, Pattison, Calhoun, Revere, Huston, Mitchell, Mütter, Meigs, Bache, and Dunglison."

In closing his address, Gross suggested several important improvements contemplated by the Association. Ultimately these were accomplished and in each of them the Alumni performed a considerable share of the work, and bore its full proportion of the cost. In speaking of the needs of the school and the willingness of the Association to assist in supplying them, the orator said:

"As Alumni of a great school, we must necessarily feel a warm interest in its prosperity and perpetuity; and, although it would be improper to intermeddle in the management of its affairs, there are a few points which strike me as being of such vital moment as to require some consideration on the occasion of our first anniversary meeting.

"1st. I begin with the College building. This, as is apparent to every one, is too contracted for our growing wants. Our lecture rooms are amply sufficient for our classes, but we need private apartments for the accommodation of the Professors, for the operations and manipulations of the students, and for the reception of our patients. 2d. There is urgent need of a General Dispensary. 3d. In 1832, chiefly through the influence of Dr.
Granville Sharpe Pattison, the Faculty instituted a series of medals and certificates of honor to be awarded to such pupils as should exhibit uncommon proficiency in their studies. * * * It is worthy of consideration whether this practice, so well calculated to excite a spirit of emulation among our pupils, should not be revived. 4th. Measures should be adopted to endow Scholarships and Professorships. 5th. An effort should be made to build up a great Museum, rich in specimens of comparative, healthy and morbid anatomy. 6th. One of the greatest needs of the College is a Library. 7th. Steps should be taken to learn the history of the Alumni of the College, in order to ascertain what agency, if any, they have exerted in promoting the interest of medical science and of humanity in the regions of country in which they were or are settled."

These were among the more important measures of improvement urged by the Alumni Association and advocated by its President for the welfare of the College and its properties. The efforts so early put forth did not yield immediate fruit, but in the course of a few years the influence of the Association began to be felt in College circles. The period of delay would have been much shorter had the Trustees appreciated the true purposes of the associated Alumni, and had they more promptly given it the recognition it asked and deserved; but with the guardian body of the College there seems to have existed a fear that in some manner the Association might become a charge upon its finances. The Trustees were slow to appreciate the importance of a union of the graduates, and evidently did not understand how such an organization could really advance College interests. But their prejudices were removed within the next few years, and when it was proposed to erect a Hospital building, the earnest efforts so freely put forth in promoting that undertaking soon convinced the doubtful mind that the Alumni Association was indeed a factor for good in the life of the school. From that time the organization has held an important place in the councils of the Board in all measures pertaining to College interests, whether relating to the educational or other departments. Gross, in his first anniversary address, promised much, and, although that great teacher did not live to witness and participate in the fulfillment of each pledge, those who survived him have
more than carried out every promise made by the President of the Association in the year 1871.

Early in the history of the Association, a prize was established, to be awarded for superiority in scholarship attained during the two years' course of instruction. The Museum received its first gift, consisting of a valuable collection of silver ore, from Dr. J. M. Betz, 1870, of Idaho. About this time, too, the Faculty officially announced that the Board of Trustees were "looking for a new site upon which to erect a College and Hospital building." The statement was received by the Alumni with much rejoicing, and a resolution was passed requesting the Trustees not to remove the College from the site it then occupied, and asked that the proposed Hospital be built on Sansom street, in close proximity to the College building. This action evidently had weight in determining the course of the Board, for the Hospital was erected on the site suggested by the association. This was the first considerable undertaking in which the influence of the Association was brought to bear in behalf of college interests, and from that time its status was fixed. When the Trustees announced a determination to erect the new building, the Association straightway resolved to aid in raising the necessary funds.

This action was taken at the first annual meeting, about the end of the session of 1870-1871, the occasion being one of considerable moment. The school had attained the greatest attendance in its history down to that time, and the Association extended congratulations to the Trustees and Faculty on its remarkable success. In the evening of the same day the first anniversary address was delivered by Professor Gross, the audience being very large and wholly in accord with the sentiments of the distinguished orator. At its conclusion, a reception was given to the members of the Association at the Gross residence, which, as the records somewhat naively state, "was a great success, many distinguished men being present." Indeed, there were drawn together on this occasion several notable characters of the medical profession, the Jefferson Faculty and Alumni, with a less number who were
graduates of other schools, especially guests of the entertainers, and all representatives of high standing in the medical world.

At the reception it was decided to hold an annual banquet at the close of each school year. Thus was inaugurated what ultimately became an established and popular function in the history of the Association, which has come to be regarded as one of the events of the College year, and has been conducive of good fellowship among the Alumni, as well as the means of largely increasing the Association membership. The organization is thoroughly democratic in character, and extends its privileges to all graduates upon payment of a moderate membership fee. It has been largely instrumental in keeping the older members in touch with one another and with the school, and likewise brings the younger members into acquaintance and association with the older graduates.

Acting on the expressed desire to aid the Trustees in carrying out the proposed improvements, a special meeting of the Association was held March 17, 1872. Judge Campbell, a member of the Board of Trustees, was present, and by invitation presided over the meeting. This is the first record of any member of the governing board of the College taking an interest in the work of the Association, a condition quite unlike that which exists at the present time, the Trustees now doing all that lies in their power to forward the work of the Association in its endeavors in behalf of the school. At the meeting referred to, Dr. A. C. Bouronville offered to donate a considerable sum of money contingent upon the raising by subscription from private sources by the 10th of June, 1874, of the entire sum of $250,000. His example was followed by other contributors, who so promptly answered the call that in the brief space of ten minutes the sum of $10,000 was pledged in aid of the proposed building. Two months later the chairman of the committee on collections announced that $350,000 had been subscribed to the general building fund. A legislative committee, with Dr. F. F. Maury as chairman, was appointed, and through its endeavors, aided by other influences, an appropriation of $100,000 was voted by the state legislature.
In 1877 the Hospital building was finished, and the members of the Association viewed the completed structure with the satisfaction of having been participants in a noble undertaking. During the year just closed, it had contributed another $8,000 in support of the enterprise, and in all that was done its members had taken an active, earnest part. But in this newly organized body of graduates all was not peace and prosperity. True, the Association had acquired a large membership and every measure proposed for the welfare of the College found in it a devoted friend; but still the ranks of the members were not exempt from the hand of the destroyer. In
the year last mentioned, Dr. Nathan R. Smith was stricken and died, and within the next three years Biddle and Meigs and Maury were likewise removed. These losses were severely felt, but still there remained those who were capable to carry forward the work in which the Association was engaged.

The College corporation is indebted to the Alumni Association for many interior furnishings of its buildings. Attention was given to this work soon after the organization was perfected, and it has since been carried on with a degree of earnestness which is characteristic of the progressive spirit of the Alumni, both individually and as a body. Through the efforts of Dr. Brinton, a bust of George McClellan, the founder, was secured and presented to the Trustees, to be placed in the now famous Clinical Amphitheatre of the Hospital, where it has since remained. In 1880 Dr. Levis, on behalf of the Surgical Staff of the Hospital, presented the Trustees with the handsome bust of J. Marion Sims, one of Jefferson's most distinguished Alumni, a man of world-wide reputation, and unquestionably the greatest gynecologist of his day. The portrait in oil of Gross the elder was presented to the Trustees by the Association. These are only a few of the many gifts which have come both directly and indirectly through the offices of the Alumni Association. Hundreds of portraits and other interior adornments have been thus acquired, and every succeeding year witnesses additions to their number. Not only the Hospital, but the Laboratory and Medical Hall as well, have been made attractive through the agency of the Association; the halls, office, reception rooms, library, class rooms, and even remote corners of the buildings, are hung with gifts which have come through this source. This work has extended through all the years of the life of the Association, and still is being carried on.

But the good work of the Alumni Association has not been limited to building up and improving the physical condition of the College; that has been an important though comparatively small part of the work really accomplished during the thirty years of its existence. The principal object of the organization has been to raise the standard of medical education in
Jefferson, to increase the usefulness of the institution, to add to its strength, to maintain the reputation the school acquired under the administration of the famous Faculty of 1841. To accomplish this ultimate purpose the Association from the beginning of its history has been active in improving the physical condition of the College, but its object has been two-fold. Not a building has been erected, not a room has been equipped, that does not show evidences of the generosity of the Alumni. It is not necessary to enumerate all its actions in detail, and it is sufficient to state that within five years from the time of organization the Alumni Association became a recognized factor and power in the history of Jefferson, and is so regarded at the present time.

In every reorganization of course of study, in each added chair in the Faculty, in extending the course of study, first to three and then to four years, the influence of the Association has been felt, and always in favor of the advanced ideas; and that regardless of the action of other medical schools. There has been something unusual in this manifest spirit of progress. The average man is prone to argue that whatever was sufficient for him in his time, is sufficient for his son; that the education he received in his youth ought to suffice for his children and those who follow after him. But with the old Alumni of Jefferson the aim has been to provide the means of better and more thorough medical education than they themselves received. Gross and Hatfield were among the early graduates of the school, both students under McClellan, the founder, and his associates of the first Faculty, but in 1870, when this Association took form and declared its purposes, both of these honored veterans urged a much higher standard of medical education than was required when they were in the school, and a part of its student life.

As with Gross and Hatfield, so with a host of later-day graduates, who acquired a medical education under the advanced methods inaugurated by the Faculty of 1841. This rare combination of teaching strength, Dunglison, Mitchell, Pancoast, Huston, Mütter, Meigs, and Bache, gave to students such medical instruction as no other school in America could give, and yet
in 1870 the graduates who left Jefferson with diplomas between 1841 and 1856, united with others of earlier and later years, asked that there be set up a still higher standard of medical education for those who followed. When time at length wrought changes in the Faculty, and when still more modern methods of teaching were adopted, the graduates who went out into the ranks of the profession soon saw the need of again raising the standard of medical education, of providing new and better facilities for clinical and didactic instruction, as well as the erection of suitable modern buildings; and to this end and for this purpose they organized themselves into an Association. The fulfillment of their special mission was begun at that time, but it is not yet ended. First was their aid of the Hospital, then of the Laboratory and Annex buildings, next of the new Medical Hall, and finally of the new Hospital building now in course of erection. In each of these undertakings the influence and means of the Alumni has been at the service of the Board of Trustees, and in all that has been accomplished the Association has shown itself the devoted friend of the school, every member according to his means contributing that which seemed best for the permanent welfare of the institution.

Under the leadership of Gross, the Association itself became firmly implanted in the life of the College, but there were other friends as devoted and others as faithful as he; and when that great master of surgery died the Alumni Association joined with the American Surgical Association in erecting to his memory a suitable statue in the city of Washington, on the grounds of the Smithsonian Institution. In the office of President of the Association, Gross was succeeded in 1874 by Nathan L. Hatfield, 1826, who served two years, when the former was re-elected, serving until 1884, the year of his death. Addinell Hewson, 1856, followed next in order, serving until 1887, when Samuel W. Gross, 1857, was chosen to succeed him. The fourth President was Da Costa, 1852. But Da Costa served only one year (1890) in the Presidency, and then yielded to Oscar Huntington Allis, 1866. Keen followed in 1892, and was re-elected in 1893. He was
of the class of 1862. He now holds the active and honorary Professorship of Principles of Surgery and Clinical Surgery in his alma mater.

Next in the succession appears the name of Elmer E. Montgomery, 1885, the gynecologist, faithful worker in the ranks of the Association, and a valued member of the Jefferson Faculty. He served as President during the years 1894 and 1895. His successors were A. K. Minich, 1870, who served one year (1896) and was followed by Horace G. McCormick, 1874, an active practitioner and a resident of Williamsport, Pennsylvania. Next came William H. Warder, 1871, who served during the year 1898, and was succeeded in 1899 by A. H. Hulshizer. In 1900 and 1901 Joseph K. Weaver, 1867, of Norristown, Pennsylvania, served as President. In 1902 W. W. Hartzell was elected, and was followed in 1903 by Thomas D. Davis, 1870, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the present President of the Association.

The officers of the Association for the year 1903-1904 are as follows:

President, Thomas D. Davis.


Corresponding Secretary, Charles S. Barnes, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
On many occasions, says Horwitz's narrative, the Association has been called upon to mourn the loss of members who, having completed their life's work, have passed from our midst, leaving a name indelibly inscribed on the rolls of our College; men who have shed honor, reputation, and fame on their alma mater, spreading her reputation throughout Christendom by advancing medical education, and by their teachings and writings diffusing sound medical knowledge. Among these names we find those of Nathan R. Smith, Gross the elder, Sims, Gross the younger, Joseph Pancoast, Goodell, Bache, J. Aitkin Meigs, Biddle, W. H. Pancoast, Wallace, Ellwood Wilson, Maury and Parvin.

In summing up the principal achievements of the Association, Horwitz says:

"Enough has been said to show that the inauguration of the graduates of the College into an active, disciplined association, working to maintain the prosperity of their alma mater, carrying out the designs of the founders as in their preamble promulgated to the constitution, have been more than realized. It has aided materially in increasing the 'prosperity of Jefferson'; it has offered annually an Alumni Prize; it has materially assisted in improving the Anatomical and Pathological Museums, by the constant addition of valuable specimens. It has been very successful in its efforts to raise the necessary amount of money to build Hospitals, enlarge and re-erect the College building, equip the present Pathological Laboratory, and in raising funds for the improvement of other buildings. Through the influence of individual members, many free hospital beds have been endowed, which have been the means of giving comfort and restoring health to thousands of suffering human beings.

"The Alumni Association has always been a source of strength to its alma mater; its members point with pride to the work it has accomplished, and none can fail to feel that it has borne with credit the responsible duties that rested upon the shoulders of its members it cheerfully and freely assumed at the time of organization, nearly thirty-five years ago."

This proud record of the Association should impel every student to aspire, on leaving the halls of "Old Jeff," to have his name enrolled on the
list of loyal sons of the College, thus manifesting his desire to uphold and maintain the continued success and prosperity of his alma mater. The adage "United we stand, divided we fall," applies with the same force to the Alumni Association as to all other organizations. "In union there is strength."