

Address to Medical Class
Howard University.



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On Tuesday evening of this week, your brethren of the Law Department demonstrated by a clear process of reasoning that the Profession of the Law was not simply the practice of an art, or the haphazard collocation of observances and decisions, but that it involved the arrangement and dignity of a science.

Having been taken to task by a really good lawyer for not entertaining a sufficiently high conception of the true lawyer, I thought I would try to avoid a like mistake in medicine. I turn to Webster's unabridged and

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read the definition ^{of Medicine} - "The art of preventing, curing or alleviating the diseases of the human body."

Hence we say the study of medicine, or a student of medicine.

But remembering that Dictionaries cannot keep pace with progress, I turn also to the word science, to see if from my observation of the facts and practices of medicine, I can trace that arrangement or discern that dignity that belongs to this favorite word, science. We find it "A collection of the general princi-

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ples or leading truths relating to any subject, arranged in systematic order." Art relates to practice. Now as the knowledge of the Law does not necessarily involve the practice, so it is with medicine. Therefore let us write it down "Medicine is a science". But while we admire this noble tree, the growth of ages, symmetrical in shape with branches clearly defined stretching outward and upward towards Heaven; while we appreciate its size, its beauty and its completeness

the human in us cannot forget the leaves and the fruits which are intended for the healing of the people. Humanity will always have a warm side towards the Doctor of the science who practices the art of plucking the leaves and fruits, expressing the juices and using them, in bitterness or in sweetness, for the prevention, cure or alleviation of human pain. Forgive us, mere outsiders as we are, if we are ~~at~~ like the lad who was so lost in admiration of

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the royal equipage and attendants passing by as not to see the King himself.

During the war sometimes a really excellent regimental surgeon was promoted to be a tolerable Brigade or Division surgeon; and then afterwards by promotion or seniority succeeded in making a failure as medical director of a Corps; and conversely, excellent medical directors knew better than to ply the knife and pick up the nerves of mutilated limbs. Science belonged rather to the higher place, which is called the post of honor—the healing art to the lower.

Pardon the wounded soldiers however for actually exalting in their esteem, in their memory, in their affection, the skillful man who gave them relief or saved their lives, above the man who organized the ambulance and supply train, gave general instructions, and made regular and interesting statistical reports. It is natural and it is right.

The science of music has a fictitious nobility - the art charms you. People will put on their eye-glasses or look through opera tubes in exalted admiration of a really scientific piece of

composition, but their hearts beat and swell and their eyes fill with tears over the simplest strains in practical execution. The lesson I would deduce from this contrast is a homely one but I think useful and important. It is this - in order to have a proper estimate of your profession, let not its scientific grandeur engross and overwhelm you, but remember that if you get hold of a little part of it and completely master that part in theory and in practice, your success is sure.

Affection, esteem and honor,

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a choice fabric of triple web will enwrap you unless you break their threads by unprofessional delinquency.

And is not this according to the Scriptures. "Ye shall know them by their fruits."

Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. "

Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit: but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree can not bring forth evil fruit neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Where

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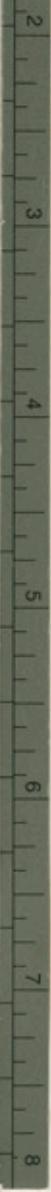


fore by their fruits ye shall know them." The substantial estimate of a physician will not be ^{based} formed upon the outward belongings, the fine culture, the general knowledge though organized with all the precision and regularity of the planetary system, but will be based upon the fruits of his tree of knowledge.

A motley group are gathered in a Brooklyn office waiting. ^{Behold} ^{little} ~~There is~~ a blind girl with her hesitating ways

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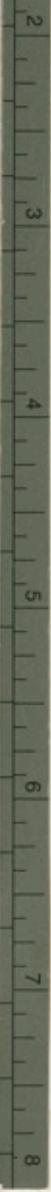
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and her sad, pensive look!
Her eager mother holds her
by the hand, looking from
the window to the door at
every sound. There by the
window stands a soldier
whose eyes have been dimmed
into perpetual darkness by
a wound in the head. ~~There~~
are two little boys almost
blind ^{by} disease and yonder
sits in a chair an Irish
working woman with one
eye sightless and the other
weakened; and there ^{is} just
entering at the open door

a man of seventy, who, by every motion of his body, his limbs and his cane, shows that he descries material objects very faintly - One eye is covered by the cataract-veil and the sight of the other is being involved. Soon the room is filled with such as these, waiting as at the Waters of Bethesda. Just as the city clock strikes 12 in steps a brisk young man - prompt to the moment - decision is in his face and in his step, not one false motion - the table, the chair, the case of instruments, the remedies, at once assume order; and

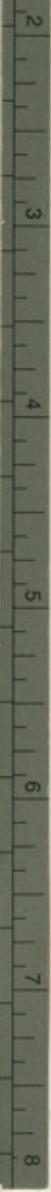
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place. Each case ¹² ^{of suffering} is heard, examined, relieved or provided for. The man of seventy is cheered by an appointment at his ^{own} house. "To-morrow at 2 P.M." At the hour the young physician appears. The operation is performed at once - bandages put on; ten days of utter darkness and confinement and precise nursing prescribed. These are days of pain and great anxiety to this aged man. With regularity the young man comes and goes. After 6 days he gives him a glimpse of light which helps patience and strengthens fortitude.

at last the day of relief arrives and the old man is restored to sight and to life. His friends are made happy and his whole countenance has been transformed. This is but a single testimony to the blessed fruit of the skill of Dr. Agnew of New York.

The skill of our blessed Lord attested his identity when John the Baptist sent to ask him "Art thou he that should come or do we look for another." "Go



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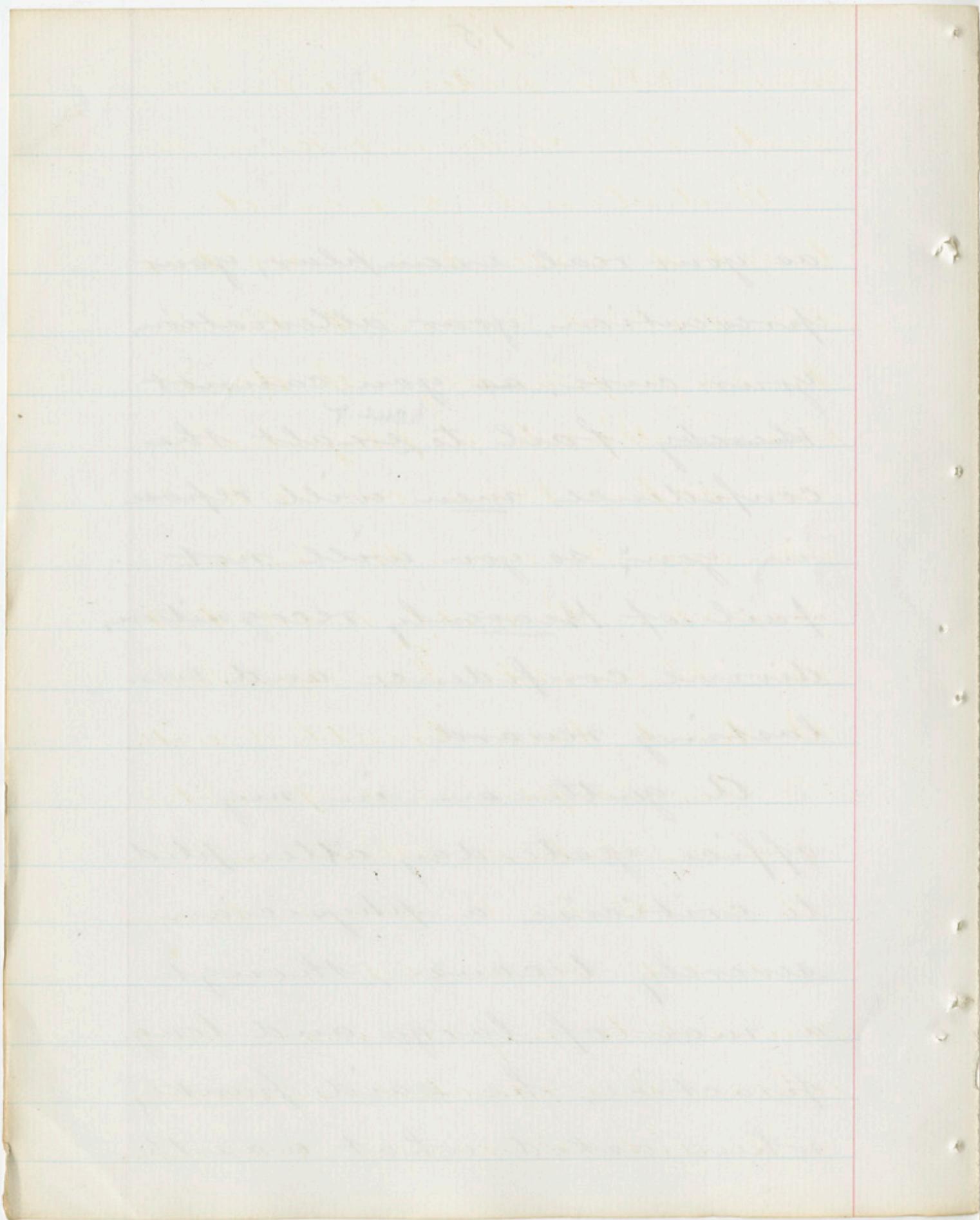
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"and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see." "The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them".

It is by similar fruits, less in degree, but the same in kind, that you, my young friends, will gain true and permanent earthly recognition and surely with the great physician

as your real exemplar, your
prevention, your alleviation,
your cure, as you cannot
thereby fail to ^{have} exalt the
confidence men will repose
in you; so you will not
fail of Heavenly recognition,
divine confidence and ever-
lasting reward.

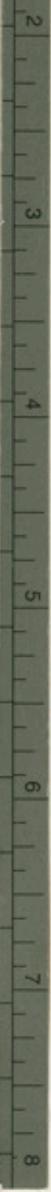
A gentleman in my
office yesterday attempted
to criticise a physician
severely because, though
a man of large and long
practice, he said frankly
when asked what was the



matter with a patient who was quite ill, "I do not know, sir."

I declared I was delighted with him. It took me several years to learn to say frankly "I don't ^{not} know." Such a physician is safer than one who always knows. ~~He is no quack.~~ I will add but one thought. For years I had been troubled with the principle and practice of ingratitude. Some men whom I had aided, turned and like Ahithophel ^{gave} ~~gave~~ counsel to my enemies and where I expected sympathy and aid, I received envious

matter with a faint idea of
 quality, of the out-
 of character of the
 light and with a
 the world of the
 to the front of the
 known first a
 in order than
 change from
 practice of will
 one thing for
 I had but
 the first
 of the
 of the
 and the
 connected
 and
 and



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unfriendly
reproach and ^{unfriendly} opposition. But
at last the truth was ground
into my soul - "perform no
duty simply for earthly re-
ward" - steadily, look above
and beyond the reward"

Now if you can enter upon
your work observing this prin-
ciple, nothing ^{can} could hinder
your steady forward steps - no
bribes, with their Kaleido-
scopic varieties of presen-
tation, will tempt you a
moment - no disappoint-
ment will sour you at the
forgetful neglects of sup-
posed friends, - fewer con-
troversies and dissensions
will embarrass and em-

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bitter the days and nights
of your labor; and God
will enable you to under-
stand how His secret is
with them that fear Him
and how under poverty,
trial, falsehood or perse-
cution, great shall be your
reward in Heaven - how
"the man most man, with
tenderest human hands
works best for men, - as
God in Nazareth."

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letter the day and night
of your letter and that
will make you to know
that it has been the best
with them that has been
and has under family
love, patience or peace
which is great shall be your
friend in Heaven - for
the year next year, with
the best of human health
with the best for you, as
the in the year.