Address to Medical Class
Howard University.

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

of Medicine

read the definition - "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-

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 <u>human</u> 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 <u>science</u> who practices the <u>art</u> 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 <u>us</u>, mere outsiders as we are, if we are ~~so~~ like the lad who was so lost in admiration of

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,

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

fore by their fruits ye shall know them." The substantial estimate of a physician will not be ~~formed~~ based 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. ~~There is~~ Behold a little blind girl with her hesitating ways

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

place. Each case 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

"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 everlasting 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 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 ~~given~~ gave counsel to my enemies and where I expected sympathy and aid, I received envious

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

Now if you can enter upon your work observing this principle, nothing ~~could~~ can hinder your steady forward steps - no bribes, with their Kaleidoscopic varieties of presentation, will tempt you a moment - no disappointment will sour you at the forgetful neglects of supposed friends, - fewer controversies and dissensions will embarrass and em-

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