VALEDICTORY ADDRESS

OF

PROF. M. J. SCARLETT,

BEFORE THE GRADUATING CLASS

OF THE

Female Medical College,

OF

Philadelphia,

March 16, 1867.

SP ANGLER & DAVIS,
STEAM-POWER BOOK AND JOB PRINTERS,
529 Commerce Street,
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President,
T. MORRIS PEROT.

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Ann Preston, M. D., Professor of Physiology and Hygiene.
Emeline H. Cleveland, M. D., Professor of Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children.
Reynell Cortes, M. D., Professor of the Principals and Practice of Surgery.
* ————, Professor of Materia Medica and general Therapeutics.
Mary J. Scarlett, M. D., Professor of Anatomy and Histology.
Rachel L. Bodley, M. S. A., Professor of Chemistry and Toxicology.
Isaac Comly, M. D., Professor of the Principals and Practice of Medicine.

Names of the graduates of the Session of 1866-1867.

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<td>E. M. Roys, Rhode Island,</td>
<td>Chronic Diseases.</td>
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<td>Mary L. Watsworth, New Hampshire,</td>
<td>Inflammation.</td>
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<td>Nervous System.</td>
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<td>Lettie A. Smith,</td>
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<td>Mary E. Blackman, Michigan,</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth A. French, Pennsylvania,</td>
<td>Uterine Hemorrhage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliza Peiffer Stone, California,</td>
<td>Woman.</td>
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* This Chair, now vacated, will be filled before the opening of the next Session.

Prof. M
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address.
Since

Dr's. W.

Dear

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PHILADELPHIA, March 16th, 1867.

Prof. M. J. Scarlett:

Esteemed Friend:—The students of the Female Medical College of Pennsylvania, duly appreciating your excellent and appropriate address, most respectfully solicit a copy of the same for publication.

Sincerely yours,

Mary L. Wadsworth,
R. J. Cole,
Ruth A. French,
Millie M. Webster,
Mary E. Greene,
Committee on behalf of Students.

March 18th, 1867.

Drs. Wadsworth, Cole, French, and others:

Dear Friends:—So kind a request admits of but one answer. The address is at your disposal.

Yours truly,

M. J. Scarlett,
1603 Girard avenue.

LADIES, GRADUATES OF THE CLASS:

There are moments in our lives into which the responsibilities of years appear to be compressed—solemn moments, when some expected event is consummated, and the full weight of impending duties is felt. This hour, to you, to us, is an hour of solemn joy. You have just had conferred upon you the degree of Doctor of Medicine, a degree for which you have labored assiduously for years. It has been given you in token of our appreciation of your application and acquirements. It is a pleasure to us thus publicly to recognize you who have been our students as physicians, as our peers. Yet we would not disguise from you or ourselves the fact that your new position is one of toil and trial, as well as of satis-
faction and reward. A physician's life is not one of ease. No weather is too inclement, no night too dark for the calls of the sick to reach the medical adviser. Often delay in responding to these calls might be fatal, and the warm fireside must be forsaken, the night's wonted repose changed to toil, that the sufferer may receive timely aid, or the bereaved friends feel that all the human skill which they could command had been exercised. This is not all. The time spent in visiting the sick is only a portion, greater or less, of that required to be laboriously occupied. Thought, reflection, research, deep and long, continued into the causes of disease, and the requisite treatment, belong to the work of the physician. However pleasant this work may be, it requires mental and physical endurance. It requires investigation of the opinions of others. It is not enough simply to read what is published, as a novel would be read. The reading and investigation must be so methodical, so thorough, as to make what is appropriated blend with the thoughts, and become, as it were, a part of the mentality, that it may be available when needed. It is due to the patient that the best efforts of the practitioner should be concentrated on the means of cure. Constant accessions are being made to medical knowledge, and it is not sufficient that the science of medicine should have been carefully studied in college from lectures and text books. There is a continual work to be done. The new to be carefully examined, the true adopted, and the false rejected. Neither is it well to be too fastidious as to the source from which information may be derived. The little child in its simplicity often teaches important practical truths to the wisest. Suggestions of the unlearned may lead from darkness to light. A scientific fact is not divested of value by being examined by the uneducated, and he who has greatest facility for collecting and arranging facts, and bringing them to bear upon every-day occurrences, will have the most resources at command when called to the bedside of the sick. The combination of well-trained habits of thought with good powers of observation are important qualifications for the physician.

Ladies, you have cause to rejoice that you live in the nineteenth century; that your lives are approaching their maximum of usefulness in this past meridian of the century. The change in public opinion in regard to the capability of woman to practice medicine has been so great within the last few years that you will have far less prejudice and opposition to encounter than those had who have gone before you. Still these yet exist in some degree, and they can only be effectually overcome through the possession, by women who become members of the profession, of ability to meet exigencies, and to discharge devolving duties in a calm, dignified and skillful manner.

Many of our graduates have gained the confidence of the people, and are reaping rich pecuniary rewards; better than this, they are developing their own faculties, and thus securing increased enjoyment, as well as the means of usefulness. We fully realize that whatever tends to bring into activity and to cultivate the faculties God has given for use, makes woman more truly womanly, and man more truly manly.
The change in public opinion has not been sudden. Progression is the law of the universe. Suddenly the world is startled by some unexpected innovation. Silently the elements of revolution have been at work; silently, but not sectionally. The causes of progressive development permeate society. A reformation in religion takes place. It is not confined to one section; the people, elsewhere, are ripe for its adoption. A discovery is made in science, and just as the discoverer is about to be lauded for his original researches, lo! intelligence comes from another continent that the same discovery has been made by another individual. It is difficult to decide to whom renown is due. It is, in reality, due to no one. The discovery is the necessary result of the waves of thought in society, just as the washing away of lands and forming of islands is the result of the action of the surging waves of the sea.

When, in the year 1859, the State Society of Pennsylvania made it an offence worthy of excommunication for its members to consult with Professors in a Female Medical College, or with Women Physicians, no doubt many of the members honestly thought the innovation women were making on established customs one that would tend to demoralize society. At least the movement excited enough interest to attract the attention of the Society to it. That selfish motives prompted a scientific and benevolent association to pass a resolution detrimental, as we believe, to the interests of the community, charity forbids us to suspect. Now, after a lapse of a few years, we find that same Society discussing the propriety of rescinding the resolution. Its most able and influential members are strong us; advocates for its abrogation. Their eloquence and logic reassure for our trust had been almost shaken in the insight and integrity of the profession in Pennsylvania. We hail the discussion in the last annual meeting as an evidence that the time is not far distant when the general hospitals of this city will be opened to us as they now are in New York, and fuller facilities afforded to women to become thoroughly conversant with the healing art. There is even now no difficulty in obtaining the advice and co-operation of many of our best physicians. Consultations are freely held when desired, and our patients need not fear that they cannot have the benefit of the best talent of the country. It might appear invincible to mention the names of living physicians, but the virtues of the dead belong to posterity, and we have had such names as that of the lamented Valentine Mott among our supporters. True, he was not a resident of our own city, but the world justly claims those whose influence for good is world-wide.

We live in an age when the right to labor in our own way is not denied us; when new avenues of usefulness are continually being opened to us; when our God-given physical, mental and moral powers may be expanded under the benign influence of active and ennobling work. Work is the great reformer; idleness the tempter to vice and immorality. That want of employment sends the young, the beautiful, the fair, to the lowest depths of degradation, to seek shelter in the justly most despised of earthy abodes, to sell themselves for support, has become patent to all. Illness is one of the great vices that is instrumental in filling our county houses and prisons with the outcast of society.
The day for discussing the propriety of women attending to other than household duties has passed. None toil more unremittingly, more exhaustingly, than those who apparently deem it obligatory to spend the thousands acquired annually by their fathers, brothers, or husbands, in supporting a fashionable style of living. Time is consumed in dressing, attending parties, and entertaining those who belong to the same "set," regardless of congeniality of feeling or true friendship. Days of weariness succeed nights of respectable dissipation. Listlessness follows nervous exhaustion. The body is fatigued, and the mind left without healthy aliment. The unsatisfied soul cannot shed around it the genial influences that make the abiding place truly a home. If it is right and proper, as some by their acts appear to deem it, that the mistress of a house should spend her time in toilsome follies, and depend entirely on hired help to procure the creature comforts for her household, there can be no rational objection to her employing her time actively, usefully and profitably, and having the same dependence. But she need not necessarily have the same dependence. Habits of industry engender executive ability, and even while attending to professional duties, a care can be extended to domestic comforts. Time economized is virtually equivalent to time increased, and it is astonishing how much can be accomplished by making proper use of the moments. We would not advocate a position for woman that would in the slightest degree remove her from the home throne. The family circle, "the holy of holies," is the sanctuary in which her inner life is most refreshed and refreshing. In consequence of her appreciation of the sacredness with which personal individuality is invested, is woman specially adapted to minister to minds diseased. Her intuitions give her power to understand the cause of physical suffering by penetrating through sympathy, not inquisitiveness, the veil that covers from careless observation the heart-throes that tend to destroy the body. Sympathy, kindness, tenderness, judiciously administered, are not less specifically adapted to the treatment of certain classes of diseases than quinia and mercury are to others.

From articles published in the Victoria Magazine the inference is legitimate that, in England at least, the idea is prevalent that woman's work, as a physician, should be chiefly confined to the degraded classes,—that it should be missionary. The argument used is, that her patience and powers of endurance are such as peculiarly adapt her to enter the habitations of the lowly, and, through sympathy, to gain the confidence of the inmates, and thus acquire influence over them that can be used to change habits that tend to destroy health. We know full well that could proper hygienic influences be brought to bear upon the denizens of filthy localities; could they be induced to cleanse their houses, alleys, streets, and their own bodies and apparel; to open their windows and admit freely the pure air, cook their food properly, and obey well-known laws of health, a much better condition of both mind and body would be secured. Home comforts being increased, the temptation to wander abroad would be diminished, and consequently crime would decrease. A happy home is always a safeguard against temptation.

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