



TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

Medical and Chirurgical
Faculty

OF THE

STATE OF MARYLAND.

NINETY-NINTH ANNUAL SESSION

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THE FUNCTIONS OF A STATE FACULTY.

By WM. OSLER, M. D.

It would be interesting to know the reasons which induced the incorporators in 1798 to call this organization a Faculty, an unusual yet at the same time a most appropriate designation. So far as I know, there is in English speaking lands only one other society which bears this name, the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow. Time out of mind the term has been applied to the body of practitioners at large. At present its use is confined almost exclusively to indicate a body of men concerned in teaching. The Glasgow society to which I refer is a licensing body, while its use in our own body illustrates the older and more general meaning of the term.

Originally the Medical and Chirurgical Faculty had a dual function, in the language of the act of incorporation, "for the promoting and disseminating medical and surgical knowledge throughout the State," and "to prevent citizens from risking their lives in the hands of ignorant practitioners or pretenders to the healing art." In transferring the licensing function to a separate board, this Faculty has followed the good example of other States, but while we now exercise no direct authority in this matter, it is essential that our relations with the Board should be of a most intimate character. The change has been in every way a gain, since in an independent body of medical examiners chosen from the profession at large, our interests

and the welfare of the public are infinitely safer than in the hands of tender medical school professors, or of mere registering boards of the respective shores of this State, the duty of which consisted in a hasty inspection of more hastily conferred diplomas. The report which will be made from the State Board will speak of certain matters requiring early settlement, more particularly our protection and the protection of the public against unlicensed practitioners. It is most important that we render the Board willing and loyal support in its efforts, and in every way assist it in promoting any legislation which may make it more representative, and which will promote increased stringency in the examination.

The promotion and dissemination of medical knowledge throughout the State remains our important function. Physicians as a rule have less appreciation of the value of organization than the members of other professions. In large cities weakness results from the breaking into cliques and coteries, the interests of which take precedence over others of wider and more public character. Jealousies and misunderstandings are not unknown, and there is a baneful individualism—every man for himself—a centrifugalizing influence against which this Faculty is and has been the only enduring protest.

No class of men needs friction so much as physicians; no class gets less. The daily round of a busy practitioner tends to develop an egoism of a most intense kind, to which there is no antidote. The few set-backs are forgotten, the mistakes are often buried, and ten years of successful work tend to make a man touchy, dogmatic, intolerant of correction, and abominably self-centred. To this mental attitude the medical society is the best corrective, and a man misses a good part of his education who does not get knocked about a bit by his colleagues in discussions and criticisms. The programme in your hands is evidence that the Faculty is fulfilling its function in promoting and disseminating medical and surgical knowledge throughout the State.

I would call your attention to the thoroughly representative character of the subjects for discussion in their different

bearings: Peritonitis, upon which we all need information; Rabies, which has been brought in such a painful manner to the attention of the public; and the Care of the Dependent Insane in this State, on which last subject the Faculty should speak in no uncertain tones. It is pleasant to be able to announce the great success of our last semi-annual meeting. Not only was the attendance large, but the papers were most practical, and the educational aspects of certain subjects were carefully presented. In enthusiasm and hospitality the members of the Washington County Medical Society have set the pace for other sections of the State.

These are days of unification and consolidation, and the question has been raised by several members whether the usefulness of the Faculty would not be enormously increased by uniting as sections of the Faculty the various medical societies at present in existence in the city, organizing them as Medical, Surgical, Obstetrical and Gynaecological, Neurological, and possibly Ophthalmological and Otological sections. It would add strength to the Faculty and dignity to the various sections. It would make the State organization comparable with the Academy of Medicine in New York and the College of Physicians in Philadelphia. The county members could often participate in the monthly or fortnightly meetings of the different sections, and in that way maintain a more close relationship with the Faculty than is at present possible. The financial aspect could be, I think, readily arranged, but into details it is not necessary here to enter, and I mention the subject only that it may ferment in your minds.

Not only does this Faculty weld into one homogeneous mass the diverse, even discordant, elements which necessarily make up the profession, but through it we possess an organic connection with "the great and good who are gone." Through it, and through it alone, are knit together the generations of physicians who have here labored and striven, and then passed to their rest. Of the altruistic instincts veneration is not the most highly developed at the present day; but I hold strongly with the statement

that it is the sign of a dry age when the great men of the past are held in light esteem. I would like to read you a short paragraph describing the men who made this Faculty in its early days. It is from the memorial address of Dr. Wilmott Hall at the meeting in 1811.

"To classical erudition the most liberal and profound, they united the stores of medical learning with which the ancients or moderns had enriched the science of physick, or of which the schools of America or Europe could boast. In the academies consecrated to literature or medicine, either at home or abroad, they had given convincing evidences of their research, industry and talents; while they bore honorable testimony that the intellectual claims of their native State were inferior to no portion of the old or the new world. As physicians they enjoyed that respect and confidence which is the pleasing and voluntary tribute of intelligence to virtue and worth, which the successful application of the principles of our science so generally receives from the discerning and grateful. As men, they were governed in their intercourse with society by all those refined and enlightened sentiments which generally arise from the study of the sciences and liberal arts; from expanded and comprehensive views of the sublime laws and order of nature, and from a just sense of those moral obligations which bind man to his fellow-man."

As these walls show, our predecessors have done something to keep active a function of this Faculty which is of the greatest moment, viz., the preservation in its archives, on its shelves, and on its walls the memorials of the days that are no more, and of the men who served faithfully the profession of their choice. We owe them much, and a heavy debt remains unpaid. Handsome portraits of Upton Scott, the first President, and of his successors should grace these walls; the list of incorporators, 'tis a long one, from Gustavus Brown, of St. Mary's County, to George Lynn, of Alleghany County, should live in brass in our hall. Then the men who made strong impress in their day should receive recognition at our hands, and it should be an act of filial piety year by year to add a portrait, a bust or a tablet. Wiesenthal and Buchanan, Potter and Davidge,

Godman and Jamieson, Chew and Power, are names which in honoring we should ourselves be honored. And there are notable men, transient teachers here, who have passed on to other fields; the learned Dunglison, the scholarly Gibson, the erratic Pattison and the philosophical Bartlett have strong claims upon us, and many others of whom time fails me to tell. Are their memorials not written in Quinan's Annals and in Cordell's History? Would that the Faculty had been as faithful in its trust of this heritage as have these two devoted students of the Medical History of this city!

Unlike other State organizations, this Faculty has in its library an important educational function. It was a singularly judicious action on the part of the men who controlled this institution (in the thirties), to begin a collection of books. They knew the true gauge of a profession's standing, not the number of its schools, not the length of the roll of students, not the material wealth of the physicians; these are as dross and slag, chaff and dust, in estimating the true worth of a profession. Books are tools, doctors are craftsmen, and so truly as one can measure the development of any particular handicraft by the variety and complexity of its tools, so we have no better means of judging the intelligence of a profession than by its general collection of books. A physician who does not use books and journals, who does not need a library, who does not read one or two of the best weeklies and monthlies, soon sinks to the level of the cross-counter prescriber, and not alone in practice, but in those mercenary feelings and habits which characterize a trade.

But to maintain a modern medical library is a very serious undertaking. So extensive has the literature become that even well endowed institutions find it impossible to meet the incessant demands in all departments. The Faculty has the nucleus of an excellent collection, and through the kindness of our friends we have been enabled this year to add a long list of most valuable journals and many complete sets. Within a few years this most valuable section of the library should be greatly enlarged. The true worker does not want text-books; he looks to

journal literature and monographs, and the extraordinary development of all special departments makes the work of a Library Committee very difficult unless it has a rich appropriation. In a year or two we should be able to give the committee at least double the present allowance.

There are several ways in which we can all help. Bring in new members; every additional annual subscription adds so much to the library. You can join the Book and Journal Club, which is, as you know, a voluntary organization among members of the Faculty. This year, as Dr. Harry Friedenwald's report will show, we have more than one hundred members, and the club has subscribed to more journals for the library than the Library Committee. This is an excellent way of helping ourselves. The club should next year have at least two hundred members, and present \$1,000 worth of new books and journals. And lastly, many of you can help by filling out our imperfect sets of native and foreign journals. Will not one or two of our gynæcological brethren take the trouble to look into the defects in the journals in their department? A little money spent quietly in this way will lighten their pockets and their hearts. There are gaping gaps which our surgeons might bridge over. A little personal interest on the part of the members will be much appreciated.

I envy Charles Frick the good fortune to go down to the future generations in this Faculty with his name linked to an important section of our library. Posthumously and by proxy, as it were, thus to carry on, though dead, the work he was interested in while living, is the nearest approach a man can make to cheating the great enemy, and in Charles Frick's case it is in a measure a compensation for the untimeliness of his taking off. It is proposed to make the Frick Library the strictly medical section, in contradistinction to general surgery, and obstetrics and gynæcology. How suitable it would be to connect also these departments with other names of men who have won sufficient recognition. Than this there is no more appropriate way to perpetuate an honored name in our ranks. The College of Physicians of Philadelphia has set a good example in the Samuel Lewis and the S. D. Gross Libraries,

which are so successfully kept up—the one in general medicine, the other in surgery.

Pour encourager les autres, I would like to refer to the splendid bequests which Nicholas Senn has made to the profession of Chicago. Many years ago he purchased the library of Prof. Baum, of Göttingen, containing some 16,000 volumes and pamphlets, and this he presented to the Newberry Library for the use of the physicians of Chicago, and now, this year he has bought the splendid scientific library of the late Prof. Du Bois Reymond.

Increased privileges and facilities bring necessarily increased responsibilities, of which the future holds for us a goodly store. Two years will bring around the centennial of the founding of the Faculty, an occasion which should be made memorable in a very special way. There is, as you know, a small indebtedness on account of this building, a mere bagatelle to the profession of a city of half a million. This must be met, and certainly the centennial celebration of this organization is an epoch important enough to demand a larger effort, for which the payment of the small debt will prove useful training. The Executive Committee has a plan, which it will bring before the members at an early date, asking them to subscribe varying sums for the years 1897, 1898 and 1899, to pay off our mortgage. A few may be relied upon to give \$200 a year for the three years; from a larger number we hope for \$100; others will give \$50; some \$25; and a larger number \$10. We hope not only to pay off the debt, but to leave a balance.

May I say a word on the art of giving? The essence is contained in the well-known sentence, "Let every man do according as he is disposed in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity." Subscriptions to a cause which is for the benefit of the entire profession should truly be given as a man is disposed in his heart, not in his pocket, and assuredly not of necessity, but as a duty, even as a privilege, and as a pleasure. Some of us, the younger men, cannot give. The days of travail and distress are not yet over, and to give would be wrong. It is sufficient for such to have the wish to give; the elder brothers will bear your

share; only be sure to foster those generous impulses, which are apt to be intense in direct proportion to the emptiness of the purse.

Upon a second group we must chiefly depend—the men of moderate incomes, who have a balance, however small, at the end of the year. To devote a fraction of this to the needs of the profession by which they have lived is, on the lowest motives, good policy, on the highest, a delightful privilege.

Beyond a modest competency the sensible doctor does not aspire, but in the profession of every State there is a third group, composed of a few men, who, dry-nursed by us, sometimes by the public, have become prosperous, perhaps wealthy. Freely they have received, freely they should give. It must be acknowledged, however, that the admonition of Sir Thomas Browne, “should your riches increase, let your mind keep pace with them,” is not always regarded by the men of this group. We have seen a good deal in the papers about the large fortunes left by doctors who have died in the past few years; but it has not been a pleasant feature to note, with scarcely an exception, either an entire neglect or a very beggarly remembrance of the profession in which these men had at any rate laid the foundation of their large fortunes.

The sum required is not large, and we may confidently hope that the committee who will have it in charge will within a few weeks obtain promises more than sufficient to meet it. If we make this little effort ourselves, we can try in the centennial year to obtain a proper endowment for the Faculty from our friends among the citizens. We shall need a larger hall, more in keeping with the rank and work of the profession of this city—quarters as complete as our brethren enjoy in Philadelphia and New York. And an endowment yielding a few thousand dollars annually is absolutely essential for the proper development of the library. I would offer as a suggestion that a Committee on Finance be appointed to take charge of this matter. It would be well subsequently to have a permanent Finance Committee.

And lastly, I would call the attention of the members to the fact that we are working under a somewhat antiquated and very much patched up set of by-laws. If you will turn to the last year's transactions you will find between five and six pages of resolutions, amendments, etc., affecting the Constitution, from 1885 to 1896 (inclusive). There are also anomalies in the Constitution which might be amended; thus the examining boards for the Eastern and Western Shores, respectively, have no longer any vital status in our organization since the licence is no longer granted by the Faculty. They might be replaced by a committee for the examination of the credentials of candidates for membership. I would suggest that a committee take charge of this whole matter, to report next year on the necessary changes, and give notice of motion for any alterations in the Constitution which are deemed advisable; then in 1899, our centennial year, the Constitution, By-laws, etc., could be all clearly and definitely presented for discussion and adoption.

In conclusion, may I paraphrase those noble words of Aristotle, in which he laid down the duty of the citizen to the state, as also peculiarly appropriate in defining the obligations of the doctor to his calling. . No physician has a right to consider himself as belonging to himself; but all ought to regard themselves as belonging to the profession, inasmuch as each is a part of the profession; and care for the part naturally looks to care for the whole.