CUS417/18.2

Sent by Sir William Osler to be read at the Introductory Exercises of Jefferson Medical College - 1914.

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MEMORANDUM FOR DR. McCRAE.

[Oxford. Summer of 1914]

To the Jefferson Medical Students from W.O.

Dear Students:-

I am, of course, sadly disappointed not to be able to address the students at Jefferson this year. I owe much to the men of this school - let me tell you in what way. The winter of 1869 - 70 I had a bed-room above the office of my preceptor Dr. James Bovell, of whose library I had "the run". In the long winter evenings, instead of reading my text-books, 'Gray'and 'Fownes' and 'Kirkes', I spent hours browsing among folios and quartos, and the promiscuous literature with which his library was stocked. I date my mental downfall from that winter, upon which, however, I look back with unmixed delight. I became acquainted then with three old 'Jeff' men -Eberle, Dunglison and Samuel D. Gross. The name of the first I had already heard in my physiology lectures in connection with the discovery of cyanide of potassium in the sali~~in~~va; but in his Treatise of the Materia Medica, and in his Treatise on the Practice of Medicine, (in the yellow brown calf skin that characterized Philadelphia medical books of the period) I found all sorts of useless information in therapeutics so dear to the heart of a second year medical student. Eberle was soon forgotten as the years passed by, but it was far otherwise with Robley Dunglison, a warm friend to generations of American medical students. Thomas Jefferson did a good work when he imported him from London, as Dunglison had all the wisdom of his day and generation combined with a colossal industry. He brought great and well deserved reputation to Jefferson College. After all,there is no such literature as a Dictionary, and the twenty-three editions through which Dunglison passed is a splendid testimony to its usefulness. It was one of my stand-bys, and I still have an affection for the old editions of it, which did such good service. (And by the way, if any one of you among your grandfather's old books find the 1st edition published in 1833 send it to me,please). But the book of Dunglison full of real joy to the student was the Physiology, not so much knowledge,

that was all concentrated in '<u>Kirkes</u>', but there were so many nice trimmings in the shape of good stories.

One day, we had returned from an interesting post mortem, and I asked my preceptor where to look for a good account of softening of the stomach, and he took from the shelf S. D. Gross's <u>Pathological Anatomy</u>, 2nd edition. I suppose there is not a man in this room who has opened the book - even great text-books die like their authors - and yet if any one wishes to read a first rate account of gastro-malacia, he cannot do better than turn to the book just mentioned. And look, too, at the account of Typhoid Fever, written remember in 1845, five years before the differences between typhus and typhoid were recognized in England. Many and many a time I have had occasion to refer to this work, and always with advantage. Later I came to reverence the author as the Nestor of American surgeons. Not many years afterwards I got into mental touch with two more Jefferson men - Samuel Henry Dickson, one of the most brilliant teachers in medicine the school has ever had. His essays on "Life, sleep, pain,etc." are full of good matter, and especially let me commend to you his <u>Study on Pneumonia.</u> The other was John K. Mitchell, the great father of a still greater son, whom I learned to know in connection with his early studies on the germ theory of disease.

I really came to Philadelphia through the good offices of Jefferson men. Early in the eighties I used to earn an honest penny by writing articles for the <u>Medical News</u>, of which Minis Hays was the editor, with Samuel W. Gross and Parvin the active collaborators. In 1884 when Professor Stillé resigned and Dr. William Pepper took the Chair of Medicine, there was a strong local field in for the Chair of Clinical Medicine. One day Samuel Gross said to Pepper "There's a young chap in the north who seems to dot his "i's" and cross his "t's". You had better look him up". Well, the upshot was that the plan of the <u>Medical News</u> editorial committee succeeded - I got the Chair. No small measure of the happiness of the five happy years I spent in Philadelphia came from my

association with Jefferson men. Among the surgeons, Keen and Samuel W. Gross became intimate friends. They, with Brinton, Mears and Hearn, maintained the splendid surgical traditions of the school. With the seniors in medicine, Bartholow and DaCosta, I never got on quite so intimate terms, but they were always encouraging and friendly. The younger Jefferson set became my fast friends, particularly Wilson and Hare.

With best wishes for the progressive growth of a school, with which are associated many of the foremost names in the history of American medicine.

Sincerely yours,

Wm. Osler.