

## The President's Column

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### *Excerpts from Address of Acceptance*

Twenty-one years from this very date, I attended my first (N. M. A.) meeting at Hampton Institute just prior to my beginning the practice of medicine in Norfolk, Va. During this period I have missed only three sessions and I have never missed paying my annual dues.

I knew too much about the office of president of the National Medical Association to seek it. I was conscious of its obligations, its trials, and the great demand it has made upon those whom I have known to hold the office for the past twenty years. And because of this intimate knowledge of the situation I made no effort to be elected, but I am devoted to this cause and I must be doing something to further it. Hence, my acceptance.

As the bridge between age and youth in the association I grasp youth with a stiff hand pulling it over the great divide. I am reaching after age which is the inevitable. My sympathy therefore lies with youth, and my efforts during the remaining days that I must live and labor in this organization will be to show the way, God helping me, to those I style "Youth."

We too often forget that the only path to

success is narrow, and must be traversed with care and precision. The medical man who forgets that he is a student to begin with and a student always, fails to travel this path.

Over two decades ago, it was predicted that the change was inevitable for the advancement in medical science in this country; that the substitution of a large number of schools by a select, well-appointed number would be the solution of a vexing problem that had imposed itself upon us.

After this pruning process some worthwhile schools of our group had to discontinue on account of inadequate facilities and ways and means to secure the same. The two that survive, Howard University and Meharry Medical College, have stood the test and it is only up to us to see that they hold their ground.

But this is not a full mark. There will be another pruning, if not by an appointed commission, one by public opinion. Physicians who do not acquaint themselves with the growing tendency toward modern scientific development will find themselves, I predict, in a precarious position when selection is being made

for men equipped to carry on the task that seems at the present time upon us in some form of specialized medicine.

I trust it does not come as a whole in this country, but the independence of the American people will demand some form of medical care for the sick, and if they cannot out of their meager funds provide this care, pressure will be brought to bear upon agencies of the several states to take care of these indigent poor. This is where, I claim, the man who is fitted for the post will get the assignment.

I propose that, as a means of stimulating local interest, a plan be worked out during the year to foster the Reading Clubs and Journal Clubs as adjuncts to all societies, thereby bringing the men in closer contact, scientifically and fraternally. The scheme to encourage post-graduate courses whenever practicable in the southern states at the state's institutions, such as now carried on in Virginia, is one that in-

terests me, and should command study in order to be placed into actual use as conditions permit.

In the second place, I shall endeavor to propagate the gospel of public health throughout this country, preventing disease and postponing death. This can be done, and must be done, because of the growing tendency toward the restriction in our family group.

Finally, may I have this parting word to you, as you go to your several fields and localities; remember that yours is a responsibility that cannot be placed upon the dentist or any ally of this profession. It must be borne by medical men until it hurts.

I appeal to you to help me put over the program; then further to build this National Medical Association to the stature of its merit. And, God helping me, I shall safeguard the profession, not as a noble experiment, but as a realization and an accomplishment to be handed down to our posterity.

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