

ADVICE TO MEDICAL STUDENTS

Medical history teaches us where we came from, where we stand in medicine at the present time, and in what direction we are marching. (Henry Sigerist, 1951)

Traditionally, at the start or finish of an academic term or on special occasions, a senior faculty member delivers an inspirational message to medical students. The following examples of this genre, not only reflected the state of American medicine during early times but may have some relevance to our own day.

SAMUEL BARD

Historians disagree about which was America's first medical school. The College of Philadelphia (later the University of Pennsylvania) usually gets the credit because in 1765 it was the first to establish a Medical Department which granted an M.B., but King's College (later Columbia College) was the first to confer a medical degree. Of six founding faculty members, Samuel Bard was made Professor of Medicine and at a splendid graduation ceremony on May 16, 1767 he offered "Advice to those GENTLEMEN who then received the First MEDICAL DEGREES conferred by that UNIVERSITY." The formal title of Bard's commencement address was "A Discourse Upon The Duties of a Physician with Some Sentiments on the Usefulness and Necessity of a Public Hospital." It makes fascinating reading, especially in the context of current health related issues, and the following selected passages give an idea why:

This Country has ever since its Discovery and Settlement, labored under the greatest Disadvantages from the imperfect Manner, in which Students have been instructed in the Principles of Medicine and from the Consequent prevailing Ignorance of but too many of its Professors is a Truth which cannot be contested; and of which many unhappy Families have severely felt the fatal effects.

In your behavior to the Sick, remember always that your Patient is the Object of the tenderest Affection, to some one, or perhaps to many about him, it is therefore your Duty, not only to endeavor to preserve his Life, but to avoid wounding the Sensibility of a tender Parent, a distressed Wife or an Affectionate Child.

Never buoy up a dying Man with groundless Expectations of Recovery, this is at best a good natured and humane Deception, but too often it arises from the baser Motives of Lucre and Avarice: besides, it is really cruel...

The laboring Poor are allowed to be the support of the Community; their Industry enables the Rich to live in Ease and Affluence, and it from the Hands of the Manufacturer we derive, not only the Necessities, but the Superfluities of Life; while the poor Pittance he earns will barely supply the Necessities of Nature...how heavy a Calamity must Sckness be to such a Man, which putting it out of his Power to work, immediately deprives him and perhaps a helpless family of Bread?

Do not pretend to Secrets, Panaceas and Nostrums, they are illiberal, dishonest, and inconsistent with your Characters, as Gentlemen and Physicians, and with your duty as Men...

Read the writings of the wisest among the ancients, they are filled with modesty and diffidence, why then should we ascribe to them infallibility and omniscience. They doubted the assertions and controverted the opinions of the times which preceded them; why should we not doubt and controvert theirs; and leave to posterity the liberty of converting ours.

Samuel Bard's speech was America's first treatise on medical ethics. In it he advised his students that since they would be holding people's lives in their hands, it was their duty to always keep learning - to do less than their best would be like being an accessory to murder. But although his words were timeless, the scientific basis of Bard's teaching was rudimentary and based mainly on ancient humoral theories.

Who was Samuel Bard? His father Dr. John Bard (1716-1789) had moved from Philadelphia in 1746 on the advice of Benjamin Franklin when a yellow fever epidemic took the lives of several prominent New York physicians. He soon developed a large practice and was a co-founder of Bellevue Hospital. Son Samuel (1742-1821) entered King's College at age 14 while at the same time apprenticing to his father, but John Bard wanted his son to have the advantage of formal training so after two years at King's Sam sailed to Edinburgh. On the way his ship was captured by the French and Sam spent several months in prison until released through the efforts of Benjamin Franklin. After a period in London when he met prominent medical leaders, Sam matriculated at the University of Edinburgh. He was especially influenced by William Cullen's systematic approach to medical diseases and John Gregory's lectures on medical ethics. He was convinced of the superiority of the European mode of medical education and disdained the medical "free-for-all" he'd witnessed at home where quacks and "eclectics" thrived. After four years of study abroad Sam received an M.D. in 1765 and returned home inspired to build a new Edinburgh in New York.

The Bards were instrumental in establishing a public hospital in the city but even before it was completed an accidental fire destroyed it and it took another six years until the New York Hospital opened in 1781. Sam eventually became its President and always insisted that a public hospital would provide the opportunity to study the effect of locality, climate, race and occupation upon disease.

During the Revolution Samuel Bard was a Tory and evacuated his family for safety to their estate in Hyde Park while he remained in the city. After the war when the newly elected President Washington settled in New York he developed a so-called “malignant carbuncle” on his hip, Sam drained the abscess and after three months of recuperation sent the country’s first president a hefty bill. King’s College had closed during the Revolution but reopened in 1785 and was renamed Columbia with Samuel Bard, the only holdover from the previous faculty, made a Trustee, and later the Dean. In 1795, tiring of the rigors of medical practice, at age 53, he took in a junior partner David Hosack (1769-1835) and retired to Hyde Park where he spent his last 23 years occupying himself with medical education, writing a book about midwifery and leading the life of a country farmer.

NICHOLAS ROMAYNE

When the Revolution broke out, another of Samuel Bard’s students Nicholas Romaine (1756-1817) sailed to Edinburgh where he obtained his medical degree in 1780. Born in New York City, he’d received his early education in Hackensack, NJ before enrolling at King’s College. After two years of further studies in London, Paris and Leyden his return to America “excited considerable conversation [for] he was reported to have improved his opportunities with singular diligence.” When appointed to Columbia College’s medical faculty, he was described as “a man of very strong intellectuality and vigorous personality” and had no difficulty attracting private students. But when his request to have 35 of them sanctioned by Columbia was rebuffed, he resigned and turned to Queens College in New Brunswick to provide academic degrees. New Jersey didn’t have its own medical school yet, but issued diplomas to Romaine’s students in 1792, 1793 and 1805 “by special arrangement” and for a modest fee.

Dr. Romaine could be brusque and, according to historian James Thacher (*American Medical Biographies*, 1828), his “superior attainments on literature and medicine elevated him with high notions and filled him with contempt of some who had been less fortunate in education.” Another contemporary John Francis recalled, “[Romaine] was unwearied in toil and of mighty energy, dexterous in legislative bodies and at one period in his career was vested with almost all the honors the medical profession can bestow.”

But his excessively “adventurous” nature frequently got him into trouble. During the 1790s Nicholas Romaine became involved in a land speculation scheme known as “The Blount Affair” in which he and a corrupt United States Senator (William Blount) instigated Cherokee and Creek Indians to aid the British in seizing Spanish territory in Louisiana in order to inflate land prices. In 1797 the doctor was seized, imprisoned briefly and then fled to Scotland, allegedly to find out what was new in medical science and, while there, he became the first American to be admitted to the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh.

In 1806 New York’s state legislature passed a bill that incorporated medical societies and two years later, “by a sudden and singular change of sentiment,” Nicholas Romaine was called out of retirement to serve as president of the Medical Society of the City and County of New York and the next year as the first president of the College of Physicians and Surgeons. At the commencement of lectures in 1808 he delivered an address:

The Regents of the University of this state, in their paternal solicitude, for the advancement of science, have deemed it expedient to establish the College of Physicians and Surgeons. The immediate care of the institution is entrusted to professional gentlemen, many of whom have been distinguished for a love of knowledge, and an ardent zeal for its promotion...The objects of instruction in this College will be extensive, and the patrons of this institution will be unremitting in their endeavors to make it equal, in usefulness to the most distinguished universities of Europe.

James Thacher who attended Romaine’s address to P&S students, described it as “elegant and elaborate,” especially his comparison of the physical and mental attributes of various nationalities and races, including “the ethnology of the Red Man in America.” Romaine declared that “the most extraordinary and wonderful variety of man is our own or the white race....active, enterprising, ingenious, and at this period of time, without presumption, the most intelligent of human kind.”

The white people of these United States have always manifested a love for learning, equal to their brethren in other parts of the world. Some European writers have supposed that we have degenerated from the vigor of mind possessed by our forefathers. But the Chief who presides over these states with so much wisdom, moderation and justice [James Madison], has, in his philosophical tracts, vindicated

the character of his countrymen with all that zeal for which he is accustomed to support their rights and interests...

Five years later, in a marriage of convenience, Columbia's medical faculty merged with the College of Physicians and as a result Nicholas Romaine and several others were forced out. Romaine was replaced by his former mentor, the by-now elderly and semi-retired Samuel Bard. This ended Columbia's involvement with medical education for more than eight decades until in 1891 P&S became an integral part of Columbia University.) But the new arrangement failed to calm the chaotic medical scene in Olde New York and the man most responsible, and according to historian David Rogers the successor to Nicholas Romaine for the title "the stormy petrel of American medical education" was Dr. David Hosack.

DAVID HOSACK

David Hosack was born in New York City in 1769, the very same year that Bard addressed the first graduating class at King's. While studying at Columbia College he decided to become a doctor and apprenticed with a prominent surgeon Richard Bayley. While studying anatomy at New York Hospital in 1788 he became involved in the infamous "Doctors Riot" when a mob, enraged by grave robbing and alleged abuse of cadavers, ran amuck for three days. Professors and students fled for their lives - David was struck on the head by a rock and had to be carried away. Otherwise unscathed, he transferred to the less rowdy College of New Jersey in Princeton.. After obtaining his bachelor's degree he went on to study medicine at the University of Pennsylvania boarding in the house of Benjamin Rush.

Hosack practiced briefly in Virginia but found that his patients were slow to pay so he returned to New York but soon learned that the wealthier citizens whom he coveted favored doctors who'd studied in Europe. So leaving wife and child behind, he followed the by now familiar route to Edinburgh and London, stayed for two years and had a grand time hobnobbing with influential people. A contemporary described David Hosack as "probably the best known, the most popular, the most useful physician in New York." Conversely, historian David Cowen described Hosack "as a substantial scholar, teacher, physician and a patron of arts and letters" but a difficult personality: "egotistical, aggressive, extravagant, given to intrigue, frequently embroiled in acrimonious controversy and perhaps more generally disliked than liked."

Both Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr were his patients and in their famous dual, he served as Hamilton's physician and later loaned money to Burr to escape from the law. While studying abroad Hosack became an enthusiast of botanical medicine and by 1804 he could afford to buy 20 wooded acres of "common land" about three miles north of the city limits, between today's 47th and 51st Streets. He called the place Elgin, after his father's Scottish hometown, and he cultivated some 2,000 varieties of exotic trees, vegetation and medicinal plants from seeds sent to him from all over the world. It was the first botanical garden in the United States. David Hosack married three times, each wife wealthier than the last; the third was a widow much older than he and when they moved into her "country house" in Kips Bay they held a weekly salon and the doctor became a "mover and shaker" in New York's cultural scene.

In 1825, in David Hosack's introductory lecture to P&S students at the start of the winter session, he predicted that New York City would soon surpass Philadelphia as the country's leading medical center. He noted that New York had an important educational advantage because of the great diversity of its 170,000 inhabitants.

Our infirmaries, our Almshouses and Penitentiaries, furnish the most ample means of practical information in every department of healing art, and are conducted in such manner that the student can obtain a ready access to their wards, and receive all the benefits to be derived from institutions of a similar nature in any foreign country. In the New York Hospital alone, which encloses within its walls nearly four hundred patients, he has more ample opportunities of observing the diseases which most frequently occur in this climate and country, and which he will have occasion most frequently to meet with in practice...It may be reasonably be anticipated, that not only the Legislature of this State, but of every other in the union, will soon perceive the wisdom of concentrating their efforts upon the school of the metropolis, instead of multiplying medical academies in towns and villages that of necessity can only furnish the rudiments of education, instead of the practical results that are derived from extensive clinical observation and experience.

After outlining the school's curriculum in great detail, Dr. Hosack had some practical advice for incoming students:

Allow me to recommend to you, during your attendance upon these Lectures, the practice of making written notes, or memoranda, of what you may see and hear. By notes, I do not mean stenographical writing. This practice...is to be reprobated for the writer in this case becomes a mere machine - he copies words, not thoughts; but

I mean an analysis of what you hear, with a record of the most essential facts, and the authorities upon which they are related, and which should afterwards be expanded at your leisure; it secures your attention to the subject before you; it gives the mind a habit of analyzing what we hear; it gives an order and connexion in the arrangement of our thoughts; and especially it gives a facility in committing those thoughts to paper, an exercise which physicians, in many instances, to the disgrace of our profession, are too apt to neglect.

The students were so enthusiastic about Hosack's lecture that they petitioned him to have it published and the charismatic professor, their "humble servant," graciously agreed, so long as they covered the cost. In closing, Hosack remarked that the experience provided at what he called this "Temple of Science" was the only "legitimate" source of medical degrees in New York State.

But within a year all that would change. In the rough and tumble world of New York's medical politics, Hosack was the most entrepreneurial of the gang of rivals. He demanded to additionally be made professor of surgery, in order to enroll more private-paying students which would be more lucrative than merely serving as professor of physik. When this was refused a rancorous dispute ensued; power, profits, perks and personal grievances all were involved and the affair culminated with Hosack resigning from P&S and, taking most of the faculty with him, opening his own school adjacent to New York Hospital. As he said, "I can spend my time more profitably, than by teaching unproductive branches to the College of Physicians...I must not be neglected."

Although the new school had a splendid faculty and a new building, it needed the backing of a diploma-granting institution. A willing partner was the newly reopened Rutgers (formerly Queens) although that school's previous arrangement with Nicholas Romaine had ended badly. Hosack persuaded Rutgers's Board that having a medical school (albeit in New York City) would enhance its prestige and they'd receive a \$3 matriculation fee and \$25 graduation fee from each student. David Hosack marketed his school so aggressively that when in 1826 he gave an introductory lecture, this time to his own students, he was pleased to note that there were 152 of them compared to 90 at what he dismissively called "the old school." They came from fifteen states and four countries (but of that large group, only 36 would receive degrees from Rutgers College the next spring.)

In his Inaugural Discourse at the opening of Rutgers Medical School in New York City on November 6, 1826, Dr. Hosack as president of the medical faculty addressed the

incoming students and vilified the same Regents and Trustees of P&S whom he had praised just a year earlier:

We are assembled on this occasion to dedicate a new Temple to Medical Science. Having dissolved our connexion with another institution we have undertaken to establish a new foundation, under circumstances we trust more favorable to a successful cultivation of medical studies, than we have heretofore enjoyed.

Now, no longer under the restraints of rivals in the profession, envious of our prosperity; no longer impeded in our progress by a board of control, but happily left to our own judgment and experience to direct us how far, and in what manner, we can best offer instruction in the branches of science, to which we have devoted devoted the labour of our lives, we are met to institute a School of Medicine where our youth may be instructed in the principles and practice of the healing art....

Dr. Hosack continued in the same vein for some seventy-five pages. after which those students still awake officially endorsed the project. But although David Hosack had powerful friends, there were many who found him to be overly ambitious, sometimes unscrupulous, and enmity between the warring schools was vicious. As Dr. J. A. Smith concluded a lengthy and vituperous attack on Hosack:

I acknowledge that by puff and parade, by sounding his own praise and by hiring others to 'swell the note,' a man may acquire a certain kind of notoriety. This is particularly true in medicine, from the acknowledged incompetency of the public to judge if medical men... But this mushroom-fame never lasts. In the end justice is sure to be done, and mankind, though imposed upon for a time, finally reduce the vain pretender to that obscurity from which he so improperly and frequently so surreptitiously emerged.

A law passed in 1827 precluded using degrees from out-of-state schools for medical licenses in New York State. So the intrepid Dr. Hosack turned to Geneva College in the Finger Lakes district and for the next four years a hybrid Geneva-Rutgers degree was offered. Meantime bitter charges and counter-charges continued, there were suits for libel, the fight reached the state's Supreme Court and then the legislature and, in the end, the Rutgers-Geneva collaborative succumbed; several months later so did David Hosack, dead of a stroke at age 66.

Amidst all the political intrigue, Elgin Garden fell into disrepair. Hosack had intended it to be an educational resource but students found it too far out of town to visit - it was 3.5 miles north of the city limits. The abandoned land passed through several owners eventually to become Rockefeller Center and today a small plaque near the ice skating ring reads in part, "In memory of David Hosack...botanist, physician, man of science and Citizen of the World." In his last years, Hosack bought Samuel Bard's 540 acre estate in Hyde Park, close to what later became the Roosevelt estate, and like his former colleague, David Hosack became a gentleman farmer. Now the property is maintained by the National Park Service but little remains from the Bard-Hosack era, except for a large gingko tree planted, no doubt, for its medicinal properties.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

While earlier medical students, such as Samuel Bard, Nicholas Romaine and David Hosack, expanded their knowledge in Edinburgh and London, during the 1830s through 1850s more than 800 young Americans chose Paris as their destination of choice. Among them was Oliver Wendell Holmes (OWH) of Boston who found the experience of studying in what he called "the Paradise of Paris" to be both transformative and delightful. Although he could scarcely understand what the professors were saying, he hired a language tutor and soon wrote to his father: "I love to talk French, to eat French [and] drink French every now and then." To a friend he confided that he "refreshed" himself by making love to a pretty *grisette*; moreover, cadavers were plentiful and cheap and the neophytes could bring them back to their garrets to practice their surgical skills.

Most of the young Americans in Paris were acolytes of Prof. Pierre Louis who had developed his own systematic classification of disease and advocated close bedside observation of the patient. Young Holmes learned from this mentor that the physician's role was to do everything to aid and nothing to hinder natural healing. As he famously wrote many years later (1860): "I firmly believe that if the whole *materia medica*, as now used, could be sunk to the bottom of the sea, it would be all the better for mankind, - and all the worse for the fishes."

Shortly after returning home, OWH obtained his medical degree from Harvard (1836) and entered private practice. In 1838 he accompanied his friend Ralph Waldo Emerson who'd been invited to give an oration to Dartmouth College's literary societies; years later he would recall "the cautious old remnants of Hanover's aviary...[and] the endemic orthodoxy of that place." Nevertheless, OWH was "mightily pleased" to be invited to join Dartmouth's six member medical faculty as professor of anatomy and physiology since

at the time a professor's salary was \$400 for each fourteen week term, supplemented by ticket sales that students paid directly to their teachers.

Because Holmes already had a reputation as a poet, he was invited to give the annual Phi Beta Kappa speech at Dartmouth's next commencement which would occur the week before his first scheduled anatomy lecture. His oration was well received but some questioned whether the 29 year old, five foot four inch tall professor wasn't an entering freshman. Although this talk is long forgotten, retired Professor William C. Dowling of Rutgers has described it as "a noteworthy event in American medical history" because the fledgling professor was suggesting that the traditional medical model was outmoded and that received doctrines, dogma and theoretic "systems" were passé. Holmes explained that a new era of skeptical empiricism and therapeutic nihilism had dawned in Paris:

It was something to have unlearned the pernicious habit of constantly giving poisons to a patient, as if they were good in themselves, of drawing off the blood which he would want in his struggle with disease, of making him sore and wretched with needles, blisters, of turning his stomach with unnecessary nauseous draught and mixtures - only because he was sick and something must be done.

Oliver Wendell Holmes always was a popular teacher and although his speaking style may sound ponderous to some modern ears, for me its sheer eloquence is refreshing - indeed, it's a lost art. Consider the start of his Introductory Lecture to Harvard students in November, 1861:

The entrance upon a new course of Lectures is always a period of interest to instructors and pupils. As the birth of a child to a parent, so is the advent of a new class to a teacher. As the light of the untried world to the infant, so is the dawning of the light resting over the unexplained realms of science to the student. In the name of the Faculty I welcome you, Gentlemen of the Medical Class, new-born babes of science, or lustier nurslings, to this morning of your medical life, and to the arms and the bosom of this ancient University. Fourteen years ago I stood in this place for the first time to address those who occupied these benches. As I recall these past seasons of our joint labors, I feel that they have been on the whole prosperous, and not undeserving of their prosperity...

This day belongs not to myself and my recollections, but to all of us who teach and to all of you who listen, whether experts in our specialties or aliens to their mysteries,

or timid neophytes just entering the portals of the hall of science. Look in with me, then, while I attempt to throw some rays into its interior, which shall illuminate a few of its pillars and cornices, and show at the same time how many niches and alcoves remain in darkness.

Following this came more than forty pages of florid prose before OWH ended his lecture with a few words about the impending war: "We [all] belong not to ourselves, but to our imperiled country, whose danger is our calamity, whose ruin would be our enslavement, whose rescue shall be our earthly salvation!"

Nearing the end of his long career, in his farewell address to Harvard medical students (1882) Oliver Wendell Holmes remarked, "Old theories and old men who cling to them, must take themselves out of the way as the new generation with its fresh thoughts and altered habits of mind come forward to take the place of that which is dying out." Some two decades later when William Osler expressed similar sentiments, it caused unanticipated controversy.

WILLIAM OSLER

In 1889 Osler left the University of Pennsylvania for Johns Hopkins and in a famous valedictory address titled *Aequanimitas* he counseled students about those virtues that are essential for a good physician:

To many the frost of custom has made even these imposing annual ceremonies cold and lifeless. To you, at least of those present, they should have the solemnity of an ordinance—called as you are this day to a high dignity and to so weighty an office and charge. You have chosen your Genius, have passed beneath the Throne of Necessity, and with the voices of the fatal sisters still in your ears, will soon enter the plain of Forgetfulness and drink of the waters of its river.

Ere you are driven all manner of ways...it is my duty to say a few words of encouragement and to bid you, in the name of the Faculty, God-speed on your journey. I could have the heart to spare you, poor, careworn survivors of a hard struggle, so "lean and pale and leaden-eyed with study;" and my tender mercy constrains me to consider but two of the score of elements which may make or mar your lives—which may contribute to your success, or help you in the days of failure. In the first place, in the physician or surgeon no quality takes rank with imperturbability...

Dr. Osler proceeded to explain why imperturbability, by which he meant “coolness and presence of mind under all circumstances, was essential in order for a physician to succeed in his mission which is “To prevent disease, to relieve suffering and to heal the sick - this is our work.” Osler ended his long speech with a final admonition: “Gentlemen - Farewell and take with you into the struggle the watchword of the good old Roman - Aequanimitas.”

All well and good, but sixteen years later (1905) when the 55 year old Osler bade farewell to Baltimore before setting sail for a new academic position at Oxford, his last words to Johns Hopkins students at commencement were too clever for his own good. The title of this speech was *The Fixed Period* which he borrowed from the English writer Anthony Trollope who some 25 years earlier had written a Utopian novel of the same name. Trollope's book, now long forgotten, related the history of the fictitious island of Britannia whose subjects fled New Zealand thirty years earlier and then severed all political connections with England. All of the original settlers were relatively young and when they got around to establishing a legal system, insisted upon compulsory euthanasia to abolish the “miseries and imbecility” of old age, no less the expense of caring for the nonproductive elderly. This was seen as an obligatory act of altruism made for the sake of others.

After much debate the young Britannulists agreed that upon reaching the age of 67 all citizens would be “deposited” in a college campus where they would spend a half year of contemplation and dignified retirement. But when they reached the age of 67 and a half, “a euthanasia” would be prepared for them and they would “depart.” Specifically, a vein would be opened, while the victim was immersed in a warm bath and given morphine. This was intended to assure “a decent and comfortable departure” and justified not only on the basis of economics but because it would spare the elders from “a useless and painful life.” Indeed, Trollope's novel was fascinating on many levels and was popular in its day. Ironically, two years after it was published the author died of a stroke at age 67, approaching his own “fixed period” were he living on his Utopian island.

At age 56 William Osler was considered the most respected physician of his generation but on this day he brought a hornet's nest down upon him. What Osler had in mind was not a fixed period of biologic life, but of scholarly life. He proceeded to cite two of his long-held “fixed ideas,” the first being the creative uselessness of men above age 40. He noted that the most “vitalizing work in most fields is done between the ages of 25 and 40 years: “the anabolic or constructive period, in which there is always a balance in

the mental bank and the credit is good.” His second “fixed idea” was the intellectual uselessness of most men above 60 years of age and the incalculable benefit it would be in commercial, political and professional life, if as a matter of course, men stopped working at this age. He should have stopped there. Next:

The teacher’s life should have three periods - study until 25, investigation until 40, profession until 60, at which age I would have him retired on a double allowance. Whether Trollope’s suggestion of a college and chloroform should be carried out or not, I have become a little dubious, as my own time is getting so short.

Dubious or not, Osler’s words were distorted by yellow journalists. The next day it was headlined across the country, “Osler recommends Chloroform at Sixty.” The doctor protested that he’d been misunderstood and held his ground saying, “I meant what I said, but it’s disgraceful, this fuss that the newspapers are making about it. I know that there are exceptions but they only serve to illustrate the rule...as to chloroforming men at 60, that was only a pleasantry.” Dr. Osler’s speech provoked an enormous response both from supporters and critics; some people began to speak of “oslerizing” the elderly. A dispatch in *The Lancet* reported that the great stir among American journalists in response to Osler’s address reflected the fact that “the Americans are somewhat deficient in a sense of humor when they themselves are directly concerned.”

Eleven years after his controversial speech Osler ruefully recalled the incident:

I had been reading Anthony Trollope’s “Fixed Period” and had been thinking of some professors who had remained at their posts after their period of usefulness was over. It was for them that with humorous intent advocated chloroform as a peaceful means of retirement. The newspapers made much of it and misquoted it. Boys do not read Trollope. He is dangerous.

FRANCIS PEABODY

In 1926 Francis W. Peabody, at age 45 already a full Professor of Medicine at Harvard had exploratory surgery which disclosed an inoperable sarcoma of the stomach. While convalescing Peabody began a speech which he delivered several months later to Harvard medical students. It may have been the most memorable speech of its kind in medical history and its final sentences burned into the minds of generations of students:

Time, sympathy and understanding must be lavishly dispensed, but the reward is to be found in that personal bond which forms the greatest satisfaction of the practice

of medicine. One of the essential qualities of the clinician is interest in humanity for the secret of the care of the patient is caring for the patient.

Not Osler's imperturbability, but empathy. Many years later, a colleague who attended the Harvard lecture recalled that although Dr. Peabody's words seemed to have made an impression, there were no signs of unusual approval, no applause and the hall emptied quickly afterward. Nevertheless, Peabody remarked to his wife, who also was present, that he was certain his speech would be remembered long after he was gone and in this he was correct; indeed, his sublime description is often cited when attempting to describe the ideal doctor-patient relationship.

Earlier in that same speech Peabody had more to say on this subject:

The practice of medicine in its broadest sense includes the whole relationship of the physician with his patient. It is an art, based to an increasing extent on the medical sciences, but comprising much that will remain outside the realm of any science. The art of medicine and the science of medicine are not antagonists but supplementary to each other...The treatment of a disease may be entirely impersonal [but] the care of a patient must be completely personal.

Francis Peabody, age 46, died several months after his famous talk at Harvard. Five years earlier, in a speech at the *New York Academy of Medicine*, Peabody declared that "the art of medicine is that which carries us beyond the patient to the man." To the modern ear those words may sound quaint but they speak eloquently about the very essence of medicine, our great legacy from the past.