The Journal of the American Medical Association

VOL. XXI.

CHICAGO, NOVEMBER 18, 1893.

No. 21.

ADDRESS.

THE SOUTHERN SURGICAL AND GYNECOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION.—ITS ORIGIN, OBJECTS AND AIMS.

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

Delivered at the Annual Meeting, held at New Orleans, La., Nov. 14, 15 and 16, 1893.

BY BEDFORD BROWN, M.D.

ALEXANDRIA, VA.

Six years ago a small band of earnest, brave and determined Southern surgeons assembled in the city of Birmingham, Ala., with Dr. Haggard as President, amidst doubts, anxieties and misgivings for the future, to found and organize a Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association, and in this effort to build up an organization that would meet the advanced requirements of the times, and that should rank in point of talent, efficiency and high-toned character with the other great institutions of the kind, in this and other countries.

Under the circumstances we fully appreciated the difficulties ahead of us, and measured accurately the herculean task that had to be accomplished. Many of the most eminent and experienced surgeons of our section regarded the enterprise of doubtful propriety, while others equally distinguished believed that the object would never succeed.

But notwithstanding the stupendous difficulties we had to encounter, the vast labor expended and the many obstacles in our path, the Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association stands to-day a monument of energy, enterprise and indomitable will power.

In launching forth this enterprise upon the world of science, we were anxious but hopeful for the future; and in laying the foundation of our Association with a view solely and alone to future success, regardless of prejudice, of individual opinion or interest we determined to begin in the right direction and continue so to the end.

The first and most important question to settle was a leadership, and to be certain that no mistake could be made in the selection of a leader fully capable of steering the ship on its voyage, whether in calm or in storm, we wisely selected one of the most distinguished and eminent men in our profession in this nation; a man who by character, talent and reputation was in eminent degree qualified for the purpose. We started out on our career in the right way, and I trust that, by the exercise of wisdom and discretion, we shall continue to prosper in the future as in the past.

The next consideration of importance was the selection of proper material to compose this body. In framing our laws to meet this important question, I think the Association has manifested wisdom, judgment and foresight. They were so arranged as to

admit to membership three distinct classes of professional men: the specialist, whether surgeon or gynecologist, of distinction, skill and experience. The second was the general practitioner of eminence and experience, who in addition practiced surgery and gynecology to a limited extent. The third was the rising young surgeon or gynecologist of character, talent, education and promise, but whose practical experience was limited. In this connection this term, *promise*, means a great deal. Throughout our Southern country there are hundreds of accomplished young surgeons and gynecologists of *promise*, but not yet of eminence, who are struggling for success and who are certain to attain distinction, that this arrangement was made to reach. These are the men who are coming forward to take the place of those of the past generation, and these are the future hope of our country.

There never was in any land or any age so many young enterprising men of character, talent, energy and education as in our country at the present time. It is to this class of young men of known talent and energy that this Association has extended the right hand of fellowship, and a free untrammelled invitation to unite in our work and responsibilities, and the act has been a wise, judicious and profitable one. The individual or organization that has extended the helping hand of encouragement to the deserving, meritorious, energetic, struggling young man in fighting his way to success and eminence, has done a noble and generous act of humanity. The time seemed propitious, then, for the organization of a Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association. Circumstances demanded it and subsequent events have warranted it. Since that period this Association, I am proud to say, has scientifically, intellectually and professionally become an integral part of Southern progress. It is an evidence of Southern spirit, energy, enterprise, recuperative power and courageous determination to rise above its desolated condition and conquer success and prosperity; and it is typical of that noble and brave ambition which pervades our people, to restore this once impoverished land to a state of prosperity far beyond that of the golden past. Twenty-five years ago the condition of the Southern people was desolate and impoverished, to a degree that no civilized nation of modern times has been reduced. For those who had to begin the herculean task of restoring lost fortunes, and rebuilding a ruined country, the outlook was appalling and dreary beyond measure. Since that time, well calculated to appal the stoutest hearts, our noble profession by its labors of humanity, charity, its cheering influences and brave example has exerted in Southern recuperation a powerful effect for good.

That our Southern country might be enabled to reap fully the benefits of its talents, learning and

labors, the organization of a home association for the development of surgery and gynecology was imperatively demanded, and this organization came in response to that demand. In the progress of Southern affairs, in the onward march of improvement, in the advance of thought, in that vast wave of prosperity, which is now in progress throughout the land, this organization had become a necessity to the progress of surgery and gynecology among our Southern people. And as time marches on, and future events reveal the requirements of our country, they will only serve to prove that the foundation of this Association came at the right time to subserve a great and pressing purpose. The origin of the Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association was based on a necessity of the times. Its object was the promotion of the progress of scientific surgery in the South, and its aim was the development of surgical talent and learning in our Southern profession. In this direction I am impressed with the conviction that this Association, in connection with others, is doing a great and good work for our country. All professions, in all times, and in all countries, need an active living stimulus to urge them on to energy and enterprise.

Forming an opinion by my own individual experience, and by that of others, I am persuaded that no member who has followed the progress of this Association closely, and who has taken assiduous part in its proceedings, whose knowledge of the science of surgery has not expanded; whose ideas have not been enlarged by the able papers and discussions that have characterized our transactions. The character, reputation and vast experience of many of the surgeons who compose this body, and the splendid work they have performed are in every particular worthy of the great Southern people, and would be an honor to any people or nation on earth.

Throughout our sparsely populated Southern country there is a large class of general practitioners, many of whom are good surgeons and gynecologists, men of reputation, of education, experience and standing in their communities and States, whom it was designed to bring into active sympathy and cooperation with the work of this institution. This is a meritorious class of men in every respect. Their services as surgeons are of infinite value to our Southern people, and their influence as men of refinement and moral character are equally valuable as a high-toned honorable example.

But, unfortunately, this class of men were absolutely debarred from sharing the privileges and advantages of the exclusive special associations of the country. All professional associations, however exclusive, open their doors widely to men of national or world-wide reputation. Men of great talent or reputation are, as a rule, always welcome to such associations. But it is very different with the two classes alluded to in the foregoing pages. The doors of the great national associations of specialists are closed and barred against those two classes of professional men, however meritorious may have been their lives, provided they have not reached the climax of professional reputation. I am happy to say that the organization of this Association is based upon broader, more liberal and more democratic principles.

Our laws and our principles require that all whose names are inscribed on the rolls of this Association

shall be men of honor, of character and standing, of education, of talent, or experience and distinction.

In this way we have brought together and united in one compact, harmonious working body the skilled and illustrious specialist, the educated, experienced general practitioner, who includes in his work surgery and gynecology, and the educated young surgeon and gynecologist of talent and promise. We believe that this arrangement subserves the purposes and requirements of our Southern people better than any other. We believe also that the influence of such an arrangement will tend more certainly to build up the interests of surgery and gynecology in our section, and at the same time to advance the interests of the medical profession in our Southern States, than if we had organized an exclusive association of specialists. In this great work we must ever bear in mind the fact that our labors, means and time are being expended, not only for the benefit of science generally, but also to aid in the cause of Southern restoration and recuperation, educationally, intellectually and scientifically.

Scientific bodies, whether medical, surgical or otherwise, are in all intents and purposes educational and instructive, and their management, principles and work should be so arranged as to conduce to these objects in the highest degree. The professional association and journal are both exerting a powerful effect in promoting the cause of medical science. They are the progressive allies of the medical college in the art of teaching medicine. They are both great and necessary mediums for the interchange of thought and opinion, and for the publication of that which is above all things the most useful and indispensable, whether to the experienced or inexperienced—the results of practical personal observation and investigation. Pure science without experience is simply impractical theory. Simple experience without the light of science is but little better than profitless rubbish.

It is this admirable combination of scientific learning and culture, and ample and well-regulated personal experience that gives to the work of this Association such force and effect in our profession. It is the friction of mind with mind, the interchange of thought with thought, idea with idea, that stimulate intellectual effort and development, and add to the accumulation of knowledge.

The conservative character and mission of the Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association affords a field for the liberal interchange of thought and opinion that none other does. It is a school for imparting and receiving practical knowledge that is unrestricted and untrammelled.

In every section of our country, accomplished surgeons are springing up who are prepared to practice surgery scientifically and successfully. It is in obedience to this rapid increase of surgeons and gynecologists that this Association was founded. There was a period when a single surgeon could control the practice of a great section or State. It is no longer thus. The unlimited avenues for the acquisition of medical knowledge have wrought a wonderful change in this respect. I will not say that education is leveling all things, but I will say that education is elevating all things moral, intellectual and material.

I regard this Association in the light of an organized institution for the acquisition of a practical knowledge of surgery and gynecology. To so con-

struct it as to make it an organization where practical experience alone is taught, was one of the principal aims of those who founded it. We need in our Southern country, practical men, practical ideas, practical methods and knowledge. This is eminently a practical age, and in this respect we have endeavored to adapt the working of this organization to the practical wants of the times. Ever bearing in mind the great principles of honor, right, justice and truth, let every man, whatever profession or vocation he may be destined to fill, labor to make our Southern people a practical people, a useful people and an honorable people. Practical employment is the great and pressing need of the hour and times. In restoring the prosperity of our country, in rebuilding our great and valuable interests, nothing but practical methods and means will succeed. We believe that in furthering these great and vital questions that we, as a profession, with our present practical methods of research, observation and investigation are by example and practice contributing our influence towards Southern recuperation and restoration. But we are not only engaged in a great and important practical work. We, at the same time, have not forgotten the refined amenities of personal association.

The interchange of thought and opinion between the members of our Association, different from that of some others, has never been trammelled or embarrassed by acrimonious controversy or harsh criticism. On the contrary, our discussions have ever been conducted in a spirit of manliness, high-toned gentlemanly bearing, and a courtesy that has ever characterized our proceedings. In this way, thought has ever had a free range, and it has been the means of developing a freedom of opinion that has exerted a most happy and beneficial influence over all. Courtesy in our intercourse, kindness to all, a due respect for the rights of every individual member, in their results are not limited to the personal gratification they afford at the moment, but looking far into the distant future we see the working of these charming influences in engendering delightful memories that we have acted our parts as men of honor and humanity.

The memory that we have treated our brother kindly, magnanimously and generously will do to carry with us down the rugged path of life. Recurring again to the beneficial influence exerted by medical associations on medical progress, I do not hesitate to hazard the statement here that the Medical Association of my own State, Virginia, has accomplished more to raise the profession of medicine in that State, up from its condition of lethargy, depression and helplessness resulting from the wreck and ruin of war and restore it to energy, life and prosperity, than any other single agency. No one can fully realize or appreciate the grandeur and importance of this work, and its valuable results, but those who are familiar with the black hopeless chasm of despair into the gulf of which our people had sunk after the late disastrous war. Then how much cause have those who expended their time and means and have toiled and persevered in past years, often against opposition, discouragement and difficulties, to congratulate themselves on the splendid results of their labors, and to feel proud that they have borne an honorable part in this great and noble work. The diffusion of useful and practical knowledge, the education of the human mind, and the elevation of human thought

are among the grandest of human missions, and rank in their glorious results almost equal to, and but little less in importance, than the propagation of the gospel of Christ.

Then let us not under-estimate the importance of the aims and objects of this Association. They are not limited to the pleasures of reunion; neither are they confined to the mere advancement of individual interest or the gratification of personal ambition. They rank far beyond the limits of these considerations. We are building up surgical and gynecological science. We are adding our mite to the accumulated experience of ages. We are engaged in the stupendous work of making surgical history. Whatever is said or done within the confines of this Association, will be impressed on the pages of the medical history of the world and must go down to posterity and bear the test of enlightened criticism. Will the character of our work bear the sharp and rigid criticism of the cultivated, enlightened and searching opinion of the scientific world? I believe that it will. I believe that the character of the work of this Association will rank in point of scientific value and professional merit with that of any other organization of the kind. Medical and surgical associations have multiplied with extraordinary rapidity in the past few years. Have the results of this vast increase in medical associations proved favorable or unfavorable for the cause of medical science? I believe that it has been for the good of medical education and progress. It indicates the development of a spirit of inquiry, of research, a desire to impart and receive information, and a laudable ambition for advancement that augurs good for our country. The Southern States, six years ago, were absolutely destitute of a surgical or gynecological association. This, when considered in connection with the large number of talented, experienced, and promising surgeons and gynecologists in that section is a remarkable fact.

These Southern surgeons and gynecologists scattered over vast and sparsely populated sections, men of talent, character and education, had no association of the kind on earth with which they could unite. Their reputations were not such as to entitle them to fellowship in the great associations of specialists in our country. This had become a serious question in the medical profession of the South. There seemed to be just at this period a consensus of circumstances, a fitness of things, a tide of professional sentiment and opinion which proclaimed to us in strong and unmistakable language that there was a demand and a necessity for an association, based upon principles of surgery and gynecology, coëxtensive with the interests of the medical profession of the South, but at the same time one based upon more liberal and broader principles, and more suitable to the requirements of the Southern people. Were these meritorious and deserving men to be forever excluded from all participation in associations of this character, and debarred from all their advantages, pleasures and profits? No. The time had arrived in the accumulating necessities of the age, when talent demanded a fair, unobstructed field for action.

Intellect in its height, depth and immensity is godlike, and it is a God-given function to be cultivated, developed and used for the good of the human race, and it is our imperative duty to give it a generous and liberal encouragement. When for a moment we pause and reflect on the wonderful develop-

ment of talent, the extraordinary acquisition of knowledge, and the marvelous progress of medical science in our land, it is not difficult to realize the fact that the rapidly growing and expanding medical talent of the South called for and demanded a new organization, to meet the rising emergencies of the times.

The origin, objects and aims of this organization must be regarded in a broader, wider and far more important light than the mere founding and building up of a professional association under ordinary circumstances. The state of the medical and surgical sciences is inseparably associated with the moral, intellectual and material progress of countries and nations. At the conclusion of the late civil war, the condition of the Southern States was, in many respects, similar to that of a people just beginning a new life, but bereft of everything, material and immaterial, for the reorganization of society. The medical profession ever brave, ever earnest and ever determined, was among the earliest, in this gloomy and discouraging prospect for our country, to indicate signs of recuperation. Since that sad period in our history, the onward progress of medical science in the South and the process of Southern recuperation have advanced, hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder, and are linked indissolubly in destiny. When medical science declines and falls, in this or any other nation, then civilization and national prosperity will go down with it. Medical science, enlightened, cultivated, pure, constitutes one of the strongest pillars of civilization and national refinement. And though our people were left, after a disastrous war, impoverished and desolated, they still clung to their civilization, their religion, their medical and legal learning.

No nation, no people can ever rise high in the scale of enlightenment and prosperity without an enlightened knowledge of medical science. It is one of the earliest indications of national progress, and one of the earliest to indicate national decline and decay. In founding the Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association, I believe that we have accomplished a noble and commendable work. It was an important duty that we owed to Southern recuperation and prosperity, and in laboring to strengthen medical science in our country we are bearing our part, however insignificant it may be, in the grand cause of civilization and enlightenment. We stand here in the relation to each other of both teachers and learners. We instruct and are in turn instructed. The very nature, the pith, the leading principle and object of this Association is *educational*. Its chief aim is to aid in the cause of developing enlightened surgery and gynecology in the sparsely populated sections of our Southern country. If, in our efforts we have been the means of conducting to this end, then our labors have not been in vain.

The medical and special associations of our country I regard as an important and indispensable part of the educational system of the nation, and none are doing more efficient or valuable work for the promotion of this cause than this. Men of eminence, distinction and vast professional opportunities, fresh from great and almost unlimited fields of practical experience meet here on common ground, rich and ripe in knowledge acquired from active practice, and each willing and ready to impart to

the other, valuable treasures obtained from practical observation.

While the Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association is supposed to be composed exclusively of specialists, as its name implies, this is not a strictly correct idea of its character. If it were so constituted it would fail to meet the requirements of the Southern people. It is in reality composed of two distinct but harmonious elements—the skilled and learned specialist and the minor surgeon and gynecologist. I believe, as previously expressed, that the latter is at this time a necessary element of the Southern society as at present constituted. The chief advantage of this arrangement is that the skilled specialist becomes the teacher of the minor gynecologist. He instructs him in that most important art, a correct knowledge of the true distinctions between the requirements of major and minor gynecology. To have attained to a clear and scientific understanding of the art of knowing when a given case demands surgical interference, or when conservative treatment only is required, is arriving at a state of perfection that the most learned might envy. Both the major and minor gynecologists should, by all the means in their power, strive to attain this facility or art of differentiation in this particular, as being the basic principle upon which all safe surgery depends.

The learned and skillful specialist occupies a position in this Association of infinite importance and usefulness, his relations here to the minor gynecologist are equally fortunate and favorable, and his influence for good is invaluable. There can not be skilled specialists in every town and village in our country, but there are thousands of diseased females who require attention but are not proper subjects for surgical operation, and who have not the means to enter a sanitarium for treatment. There are this day hundreds of educated physicians practicing minor gynecology among this class who are doing a good and meritorious work. Let us not under-value the merits of an intelligently and skillfully practiced minor gynecology. If there is any good in it, let whatever is good be sifted from that which is worthless and estimated at its true value. I believe that minor gynecology has its proper place in the science of general gynecology.

The appearance on the stage of medical progress, of the skilled specialist, has been one of the glories of the present generation. It is one of those brilliant and splendid advances in civilization that appears only at rare intervals in the progress of science. It marks a tremendous stride in the onward march of our profession. Medical and scientific knowledge and learning were pressing on the human brain so forcibly and powerfully as to demand more room, and a wider field for action, and specialism came for the accommodation of this marvelous increase of knowledge.

Forty years ago there appeared on the scene of American surgical science a man whose splendid genius blazed forth in all the brilliancy of the gorgeous and glorious sun of the summer morn. He came from poverty and obscurity. He came unheralded, unpredicted and unexpected. Rarely has it been the fortune of any man to make such impression on professional opinion and practice. He was a native of our Southern land, and it was in that warm, genial and sunny clime that his genius was

born. It was that grand and superb man whom we all loved and admired, the great Marion-Sims, *the ideal specialist*. His life was a beautiful picture to contemplate, of lovely character, of attractiveness of person, of innate modesty, elegance of manner, a charming, fascinating voice, united with the grandest order of genius and strength of intellect. He was, in all the relations of life as a man, a great surgeon, as a humanitarian and speaker, one of the most splendid of his race. His appearance on the scene of surgical science marked an epoch in the history of surgery, not only in his own country, but throughout the universe. Marion-Sims was truly a great man. He originated ideas, thoughts and practices that revolutionized the opinions and methods of an age, and that must impress themselves on the current of surgical progress for all future time. It was not the borrowed, purchased or surreptitiously acquired reputation, but the glorious genius of nature, bursting forth and unfolding itself as circumstances and opportunity called it into active life. The man who can turn the great strong tide of human thought from the depths of doubt, uncertainty and darkness, into the clear golden light of truth, reason and certainty is nothing less than a heaven-born genius.

We, of the South, have a just right to feel proud of the genius and greatness of Marion-Sims. We are proud that he was born on Southern soil. But at the same time we are proud to call him an American citizen, an honor to his country and age. Nothing but the demands of absolute necessity brought forth the specialist in modern gynecology. Sims was the forerunner, the pioneer who made it reputable, who made it great and launched it on its road to greatness and power. Medical science had grown too vast, too complicated for any single mind to grasp or practice. The time had arrived for a division of labor in our profession, and the rapid development of medical science imperatively demanded it.

In the economic arrangement of all things there seems to be a tendency to a division of labor. We observe this tendency in the arts, manufactures, sciences, in commerce; and in nature's great field of operations we see this principle at work busily and unceasingly, and as we near the goal of perfection in medicine, specialism or a division of labor, will be drawn finer and closer as we progress. If the division of labor has been a means of developing art, mechanism, manufactures, then there is no good reason why it should not become a means of developing medical science also.

The progress in medical and surgical science in the past twenty years has astounded the civilized world. We, who are engaged in its daily study and practice, behold its wonderful advance with astonishment. These wonderful changes have been wrought largely through the advantages of a division of labor. For ages the advantages of a division of labor were unknown and unrecognized. Hence the progress of medicine and all other sciences and arts was slow, uncertain and often retrogressive. So long as a single mind attempted the impossible task of grasping all things there could be no progress.

But while untold benefits have resulted from a division of labor in our profession, in developing the various great specialties and in the attainment of their wonderful power and perfection, this vast influence may prove a source of danger, and special-

ism may in its exalted position become domineering, intolerant, nay radical, and run into the extreme of exclusiveness and narrow-mindedness. I am happy to say that in the construction of our organization there is a conservative element, a balance wheel that will protect us against these untoward dangers.

All organized bodies, in their struggle for the attainment of success and the maintenance of that supremacy that comes from success, may in certain particulars be compared to individual enterprise. When by a long course of toil, perseverance and good judgment the much coveted goal of success has been at last attained, and the very pinnacle of hope has finally been reached, and we stand apparently on a firm and solid foundation, and then can take a retrospective view of the difficulties of the past, and look the future in the face with confidence and composure, and satisfy our minds that all has been accomplished that ambition, hope, and expectation could desire, then we already stand on dangerous ground. It is as difficult in the affairs of this world to maintain success, as it is to attain it.

You and I have toiled for years to build up this admirable and noble institution, the pride of our profession. Let us, with equal ardor and earnestness labor to maintain it in its integrity and power, and to perpetuate it for all future time. We stand here as an organized band, united in purpose to promote the great and glorious cause of surgical science, with this single aim in view, congenial in sentiment, united in friendship, strong in the confidence of each other, determined to give our time, talent and energy to the great work before us.

Forty-five years ago the medical history of female diseases was in a state of primeval simplicity, and it was the simplicity of profound ignorance. It was then confined usually in the concluding pages in some work on obstetrics to a description of prolapsus uteri, leucorrhea, amenorrhea, dysmenorrhea, menorrhagia, cancer uteri and metritis. Now the literature of gynecology is sufficient to fill a respectable library, and the work is of sufficient magnitude as to occupy the most splendid minds of our day for a lifetime. Such is the importance of her who is the loveliest of all God's creation, and such is the vastness of her peculiar diseases.

The change that these forty-five years have wrought is marvelous and astounding, even to us who make the science an object of daily thought and observation. Surgery has taught gynecology much, but gynecology has repaid surgery with full measure. The gynecologist taught the surgeon the invaluable lesson that the abdominal cavity could be opened with impunity, and its organs exposed, handled and treated successfully. The grand lesson was taught in the wilds of Kentucky more than seventy years ago. Every year of our progress, gynecology is becoming more and more a part of surgery, until it would seem that the two would become ultimately blended into one vast science. Nevertheless, I am impressed with the conviction that there are two natural divisions of gynecology, based upon actual and real phases and conditions of disease, the major and minor forms of the science, and that the lines between these two divisions can never be obliterated. History indicates that the science of medicine is replete with remarkable changes, sometimes advancing and at others receding. Sometimes following new ideas and theories with

intense zeal to extreme results, and again abandoning what appeared to be fixed principles and practices and then retracing its steps returns to old opinions long discarded.

Our profession is steadily advancing, but it does not progress in a direct line forward. However apparently well grounded and firmly fixed may appear our ideas and principles of to-day, they may be overturned by others equally plausible, and set aside tomorrow. We may not be surprised if principles which appear to us to be settled for all time should in a few brief years be rejected as untenable. But without a scientific knowledge of the principles of sepsis, as a cause of disease, and antisepsis comprising the means of correcting diseases, this Association and others of its kind would not now be in existence. Sepsis is no longer an idea or a theory. It is an established fact, and has come to remain with us for all time. It has made surgeons and gynecologists of us all. Men who were formerly timid and hesitating about using the knife on any occasion now dare use it at every opportunity. We are naturally inclined to ask this question, When will this thing end, or has it any end?

There is at the present time a larger degree of talent, absolutely and relatively, of education, of learning engaged in the study, observation and practice of medicine in its various branches, throughout the civilized world, than in any other single subject. This is in wonderful contrast with the state of medicine two or three centuries ago. We can now, without emotions of shame or reproach, look the world squarely in the face and with pride and justice proclaim that modern medicine is a science. Twenty years of the present time can bring forth more for the enlightenment and civilization of the human race than five centuries did a thousand years ago.

In conclusion, I desire to make some passing allusion to the alleged sectional character of our title and purpose, "The Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association." Those who founded this Association never entertained the remotest idea or intention of organizing it or using it for sectional purposes. They believed that the necessities of the medical profession of the South demanded and required such an institution based upon broad, liberal and democratic principles open to merit, talent, and character for the encouragement of medical progress in that section.

No! We are of all people the least sectional. We are a band of workers linked together, working with one mind, with the single purpose, the noble object of promoting the sciences of surgery and gynecology. We know no politics, no political distinctions. We do not even know the political opinions entertained by each other. We are composed of ardent spirits in search of scientific knowledge from the far North, the distant West, the East and the South, that mingle together on perfect terms of equality, in social pleasure, and in a spirit of kindness and mutual confidence. There are those here mingling together in friendly intercourse who took part in the great struggle, and who stood arrayed against each other in bloody array, now united in friendship and engaged in the humane office of devising means for alleviating human suffering and prolonging human life. The scene, as it presents itself to my mind, of men with one single and grand and glorious object working together harmoniously, congenially, trustingly, forgetting all differences of opinion, political and social, each ready

to make sacrifices for the other and for the good of the cause, presents a sight truly noble and worthy of the greatest admiration.

To those illustrious and distinguished men who have at our invitation come from the great cities of the North—Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Buffalo, Chicago, Cincinnati and St. Louis, and united their destinies with ours and are sharing with us our toils and responsibilities, I have only words of admiration, commendation and kindness. I, for one, thank them for the noble, distinguished and unselfish part they have borne in laboring with us to build up the cause of medical science in our once impoverished Southern land, and I can in all truth and sincerity assure them that their association with this institution has not only redounded to its welfare and profit, but has brought about a friendly and kindly relation and engendered charming and delightful memories that I trust may go with us through all the vicissitudes of life and end only when life itself is no more.

And, finally, in the concluding sentences of this address we can, in all truth, congratulate ourselves that we have arrived at a stage of the progress of this organization where we can look back and take a retrospective view of our work for the past six years, and see the good results of our labors, and observe the growth of this Association from a small beginning to a great and influential body, representative of the Southern profession, and respected not only by the people of the South, but by the entire profession of this great Union. How has this eminent position in the estimation of the profession of our country been attained? This great and desirable end has been accomplished solely and alone by a strict and unswerving adherence to the inflexible principle, that no man can gain admittance to a membership of this Association who has not an unblemished character, who is not a gentleman of honor and probity, and who does not possess professional attainments. That Council of Five, which is so strong and valuable a feature of this Association, has ever been the watchful, the faithful and incorruptible guardian of the interests, the rights and the welfare of this institution, and they have unswervingly protected it against the entrance of men unfit to become the associates of gentlemen of honor and attainment.

Gentlemen, this is the basis, the foundation of all great and prosperous institutions. However brilliant and splendid may be the intellectual features of an institution, if it is corrupt, is low in its standard of character, if it hath not honor, purity and refinement it can not stand the test of time. Then let us hold to that invaluable principle which has given us strength, influence and prosperity, which has made us what we are to-day, a great and respected body, whose portals no man is permitted to enter without an unblemished reputation. Let us but determine to maintain this high standard of qualification which has been the established rule of our action in the past, and the future success and prosperity of this Association is assured, and it will take rank morally and intellectually with the greatest association of the kind on earth. But if the day should ever come when this high standard for membership should be lowered, then our reputation and standing in the estimation of the world will be trailed in the dust, and the Southern Surgical and Gynecological Association will no longer command or deserve the respect of an honorable profession.