

**A MEMORIAL OF JOHN C.
DALTON, M.D.; AN ADDRESS
DELIVERED BEFORE THE MIDDLESEX
NORTH DISTRICT MEDICAL
SOCIETY, APRIL 27, 1864**

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A memorial of John C. Dalton, M.D.; an address delivered before the Middlesex north district medical society, April 27, 1864 by John O. Green

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JOHN O. GREEN

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MEMORIAL

OF

JOHN C. DALTON, M. D.

AN ADDRESS

Delivered before the Middlesex North District
Medical Society,

April 27, 1864,

BY

Green
JOHN O. GREEN, M. D.
LOWELL



Cambridge
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CORRESPONDENCE.

LOWELL, April 27, 1864.

JOHN O. GREEN, M. D.

DEAR SIR, —

The undersigned, a committee appointed for that purpose, would, in behalf of the members of the Middlesex North District Medical Society, express to you their sincere thanks for your able and appropriate address on the life and character of their late associate, Dr. John C. Dalton, delivered before them this day; and would respectfully ask you for a copy of the same for publication.

Very respectfully yours,

CHARLES A. SAVORY,
J. P. JEWETT,
GEO. H. WHITMORE.

LOWELL, April 30, 1864.

GENTLEMEN, —

I comply with your request, waiving all personal feelings of reluctance, from the same consideration which prompted me to deliver it, namely, that a tribute was due to the character and services of the departed, however humble and imperfect my qualifications, and partial the judgment of the friends who conferred the appointment upon me.

Respectfully yours,

JOHN O. GREEN.

To CHARLES A. SAVORY, M. D.,
J. P. JEWETT, M. D.,
GEO. H. WHITMORE, M. D., } *Committee.*

IN accordance with arrangements previously made under the direction of the Middlesex North District Medical Society, for an address with appropriate services in respect to the memory of their late venerable associate, Dr. John C. Dalton, the fellows of the Society, together with a large number of the citizens of Lowell, — friends and acquaintances of the deceased, — assembled in Mechanics' Hall, on the 27th of April, 1864, at 2 o'clock, P. M.

The Order of Exercises was as follows : —

I. The Dirge, "Rest, Spirit, rest," by the Choir.

II. Prayer by Rev. F. Hinckley.

III. Introduction of the Orator, Dr. J. O. Green, to the audience, by the President, Dr. J. C. Bartlett, in the following terms : —

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, —

"It is an important and fundamental law of human progress, that 'the good which a man does shall live after him,' and it is in consequence of the innate love of goodness which exists in the human heart, that the Middlesex North District Medical Society has invited you to unite with us in commemorating the good traits in the character of our late brother and your esteemed friend, the late Dr. John C. Dalton.

"I have the pleasure to introduce to you, as the exponent of the feelings of the Medical Society, your respected fellow-citizen, Dr. John O. Green."

IV. Address by Dr. J. O. Green.

V. Funeral Hymn by Choir.

VI. Benediction.

ADDRESS.

MEDICAL men are divided into two chief classes: those who are eminently *practical* in their professional associations, tastes, and pursuits, and those who are mainly devoted to theoretical labors and studies, and regulate their practice by the simple operations of the intellect and imagination. The various grades intervening between these two general classes it is unnecessary to enumerate or define; but there are few who may not be fairly embraced under one of them, from a visible preponderance of his professional peculiarities or predilections.

The ancient sentiment of Truth between the two extremes is no less emphatic and imperative now than formerly. An admirable model of professional excellence will combine theory and experience. So ingenious and plausible, however, are the teachings of the one, that our medical journals and libraries are teeming with them. But the disclosures of experience and diligent observation are much less punctually recorded and promulgated; yet, contrasting the extremes of multiplied theories and simple experience, it cannot fail to happen that a wise preference must be given to the latter.

There is no danger of too much experience. Medical science is pre-eminently *practical*. The crises and

dilemmas in which the practitioner is required to muster his resources are not such as to allow delay or foster speculation. The diseases and agonies of the body are real ills, and by the sufferer himself painfully recognized as such. The fruits of experience only are prolific of relief in their application to present issues. There is nothing more salutary in its influence on the mind of the patient than the active impressions which a lofty practical discernment on the part of the physician is certain to produce. It immeasurably enhances both the success and the reputation of the practitioner. It furnishes him an indescribable gratification in cases of weighty responsibility and singular complication.

That such signal superiority in the career of medical practice can be attained by supineness or accident need not for a moment be imagined. It can only be the reward of sterling probity, unwearied assiduity, and lifelong patience. It must be achieved by careful observation of insignificant details, by diligent comparison of examples, by the indefatigable love of research, and by a constant attention to the doctrines of experience which older and discreeter minds have accumulated.

The brief and unadorned instructions of toil-hardened men also, — of such as have, through a long and busy life, battled with prejudice and discouragement, — these are worthy to be reserved in the minds of their successors, and reproduced in the excitement of unforeseen exigency, and amid the doubts of conflicting counsel and serious apprehension. The *practical* thinker sees no emergency so desperate as not to permit the exercise of some competent philosophy, or the employment of some fit expedient, which, if

inadequate to secure convalescence, may be at least regarded in the retrospect as the dictate of cautious prudence or enlightened deliberation.

At the close of the long, most busy, and most useful professional life of our deceased associate, Gentlemen, you cannot hesitate as to which of the two classes which I have described he belonged, and eminently adorned. He was a man of earnestly *practical* habits and aspirations. Such were his aims, his training, and his rewards. Like many other honored members of our profession, too, he has left scarcely a single record of his ample experience. One of his intimate friends writes me, that his efforts to gather some information respecting his life and history have resulted in the knowledge of no facts other than those known to all who came in contact with him in the daily routine of professional and social life. His course differed, probably, little from that of every true, honest, upright, honorable, faithful medical man: presenting in its unambitious pursuits few incidents other than a long-life series of kind actions and deeds of mercy to be known and appreciated only by those upon whom they were generously conferred.

On the 17th of April, 1857, at the solicitation of his class secretary, Dr. Dalton furnished to him an autobiographical letter, containing the controlling events of his life, from which I desire freely to quote.

"I was born in the town, now city, of Boston, May 31, 1795. From a private school in a sunny upper-room in Spring Lane I was in due time transferred to the public schools, which, in our district, were then, and for many years after, kept by Masters Snelling and Haskell.

“In the spring of 1807, being then twelve years of age, I was supposed, by the aid of this and other means, to have been sufficiently indoctrinated in the elements to justify promotion to a higher sphere; and it having been decided about this time that I should ‘go to college,’ I was put under the care of Dr. Luther Stearns, Principal of Medford Academy, then at the height of its celebrity, with whom I remained until, with the sixty-two afterward constituting our class, I entered Harvard in 1810. Among the distinguished men of this class were James Walker, William H. Prescott, F. W. P. Greenwood, and Pliny Merrick.

“Here forming,” he says, “many friendships which time has served only to confirm and strengthen, and which have bestrewed the path of my after-life with roses.”

The four years of college life were filled with conscientious and industrious effort. Among other distinctions, in his Senior year he wrote for the Bowdoin Prize. The subject was some question of politics; “for I remember,” says his college chum, “he took out of the Library ‘Sidney on Government,’ in reference to it. I also thought of writing at the same time, but had not perseverance enough, and did not do it. When he won the prize, he laid out a part of it in a book which he gave me, — ‘Johnson’s Lives of the Poets.’ I have it still. I believe he did it to soften my mortification.”

“Graduating in 1814, and not having yet decided upon a profession, I accepted from my former instructor an ushership in his Academy, having had some little experience in the honorable calling of ped-