INVITATION TO ADVENTURE; AN ADDRESS TO THOSE ABOUT TO GRADUATE IN MEDICINE, 1941.

By Colonel F. A. E. CREW, M.D., F.R.S.
Late Royal Army Medical Corps.

You will, very shortly now, be graduating in Medicine and many of you will be joining the medical services of the armed forces of the Crown for the duration of hostilities. It is for me, a graduate in medicine of this University, a member of its medical faculty and now serving in the R.A.M.C. as a Territorial Officer, to present myself to you as an example and to offer, for your consideration, certain reflections which I have distilled from the experience that I have endured.

I do not enjoy the offering of advice to men so much younger than myself and the notion that I might be regarded as an example on which such might model themselves appals me. The reason for this is, perhaps, that I have listened to so many promoters at the graduation ceremony. In a week or two you will be presented to the Vice-Chancellor for capping. This being done, the promoter will address you and, unless he differs from all his predecessors, he will first congratulate you on your so recent emergence from academic immaturity and comment upon your remarkable and painful metamorphosis into adult professional life. Thereafter, he will proceed to anoint you lavishly with the fragrant unguents of his own personal and peculiar philosophy and as you listen, you will, if I mistake not, find yourselves puzzled, wondering which would, in fact, prove to be the more profitable—to follow his advice or to imitate his example, for seldom do the two seem to be in harmony. At least it can be said of me on this occasion that my example and my advice must of necessity be in agreement.

Soon you will find, to your everlasting astonishment, that quite suddenly you, who were, for almost as long as you can remember, carefree and irresponsible pupils, permitted and encouraged to devote yourselves to the fascinating discovery of such talents as lay hidden within you, to pursue your own personal education, to stand somewhat aloof from the mass of society that toiled and sweated in dull and unexciting trades, have become transformed, as though by some magical process, into highly privileged people heavily loaded with social responsibilities. You will then know that the effect of thyroid upon the axolotl and the differences between the axolotl and amblystoma are but slight when compared with the effects of graduation upon the medical student.

You will find that in you, individually and collectively, the general public will place great confidence and that what you do and say will be imitated and echoed; you will play a most important role in the shaping of public opinion and to you men will turn, hopefully, for the solution of all kinds
of personal and public problems. Whether you wish it or not, whether you are worthy of it or not, the mantle of leadership will be flung around your shoulders. Soon you will know that to practise medicine is not only a grand adventure in experimental human and social biology but also a great privilege. Through it you may gain virtue and achieve intellectual and spiritual grandeur, for there is no field of human activity in which a man may give greater service to the community, no labour from which greater tranquillity of mind can be derived, no work that can bring greater reward in the currency of self-respect. You are about to join the goodly fellowship of the architects and the builders of the future and you will find that the true patients of the physician are the generations as yet unborn.

Privilege has but one interpretation—responsibility. May I be permitted to remind you that behind the fact that you are about to graduate there is one reason—the community of which you are part needs doctors. In its own interests and to serve its own ends, this society has organized medical schools and has permitted and encouraged you to enter medicine and to complete your curriculum. Since the war began, your own personal development has not been violently interrupted for the simple reason that it was recognized that, as graduates in medicine, you could give greater service to the community. It was not because you in your own persons are so precious that it was agreed that, though all else perished, all would be well should you remain. You, as individuals, were not regarded by the rest as exquisite flowers blooming on the dunghill that is society. You are the servants of the people and you have received special consideration because it was recognized that, in return, you could render special service to the community in its present dire need. In my view, none of you should have accepted privilege unless you meant to repay. In peace, as well as in war, this argument holds. Whilst some, as potentially capable as you, are dragged from school to earn money for others at the expense of their own possibilities for further self-development, you are permitted by the society that needs your special and devoted service to continue in tutelage and spend your adolescence in eager intellectual adventure. In war, whilst others must leave the quiet of the University cloister to be thrust into strange and noisome environments and to engage in occupations that have no relation whatsoever to their civil vocations, you are permitted by the society that needs your special and devoted service to continue in tutelage and spend your adolescence in eager intellectual adventure. In war, whilst others must leave the quiet of the University cloister to be thrust into strange and noisome environments and to engage in occupations that have no relation whatsoever to their civil vocations, you are permitted to continue, to graduate and to serve in your own professional capacity. Your careers are not disrupted by war; they may be temporarily deflected but they are actually expanded thereby.

It may be that some of you may wish to present the view that medicine is an instrument of peace and that to transform it into a sword is an offence against its high purposes. I choose to think that the social purpose of modern medicine is that of banishing from the earth all those agencies, living and non-living, which cause defect and derangement in the individual and in the group; of producing, through the application of science to human affairs, an "optimum" environment in which mankind shall flourish; and of creat-
ing, through deliberate and conscious selection, types of humanity which, in virtue of their constitutions, shall be able to enjoy to the full the advantages of this environment. Medicine is concerned with the waging of ceaseless war, war upon all disease-provoking agencies, bacteria, personal and public habits, ignorance, superstition, false doctrine; against anything and everything that hinders the further and the higher development of mankind as a species and as a social organism.

Our profession must, of course, condemn war between human societies since such war is demonstrably dysgenic; but surely if the profession is satisfied that our way of life, not so much because of what it is as because of what it promises in terms of human and social betterment, is an experiment in social biology which must not be brought to an end by forceful interference from without, then it must play its part in the war that is now being waged. You are required, as I was required, to orient yourselves in relation to it.

Throughout history, as I read it, each and every human society, in the course of its own evolution, has developed a political creed which in its turn has fashioned the social structure. In order to protect this from outside interference or in order to impose this political creed or social pattern upon neighbouring communities, societies have armed themselves, have created more or less organized military forces. These have been, in their origin and purposes, instruments devised by human societies to give effect to the public will, to protect or else to propagate political or social ambitions, these being defensive or offensive. In the more primitive societies, the political and sociological views which dominate the whole community are those which are held and expressed by powerful minorities, by individuals such as tyrants, despot, dictators, or by small groups such as feudal families or terrorist parties. When this is so, all social institutions are, of course, controlled and used by the predominant minority to serve its own ends. So it is that an army has frequently been the instrument used by a political minority to impose its will upon a people or peoples. In a world in which prejudices, preferences and points of view have so often been thrust upon the indifferent and the unwilling by a display or by the exercise of armed force, the army has always been a double-edged social tool. It has provided protection under cover of which a society has quietly pursued its own chosen form of development; it has also been used by tyrannical persons and parties to subordinate the people and to retard, if not to prevent, social evolution.

We, as a society with a long and very eventful history, have long realized that an army is a source of potential danger and we have taken steps to ensure that the control of our armed forces should rest in the hands of the people, that they should be governed by the elected representatives of the people in Parliament. This being so and since I am of the opinion that in this world, as it now is, the maintenance of organized armed forces is unfortunately necessary, I am willing to serve in them.
I am willing to serve for another reason also. The army of to-day is not the army of yesterday, not so much because weapons have taken on new shapes as because our political and social aspirations have altered and become more dignified with growth. There came a time in our history when we found ourselves the uncomfortable, even unwilling, possessors of a far-flung empire, bequeathed to us by former acquisitive generations which cultivated political notions that seemed to us to be sadly outmoded and mistaken. We watched this empire crumble, as it was bound to do, since much of it was founded, not on colonization but on exploitation, and we were content, for the desire to impose our will on others by force had departed from us. As we watched, we saw, as by the operation of natural forces, the replacement of an empire by a commonwealth and we knew that what we saw was good and sound and desirable, a model for a new and a better world. With this change, the armed forces, which formerly had been used for the expansion of privilege and power, now assumed the guardianship of the evolution of a group of human societies, an evolution which would see the self-development of each and all of the components of this federation of free peoples. The soldier became a policeman being used to prevent violence rather than to repress it.

It would seem as though in the history of each politico-social group there inevitably comes a time when its people burst its political boundaries and swarm over the territories of its neighbours. It is as though there is a migratory phase in the developmental history of a human society during which the imperialistic spirit flourishes and the urge to dominate and subjugate others is uncontrollable. It is perhaps reasonable to regard this phase as one which is characteristic of political and sociological immaturity. In Europe the different human societies have not all achieved the same degree of maturity. Some are relatively old, some are young. We, as a people, have grown up and have passed through the jingoistic stage of our development into a nation. The present conflict is, in the ultimate analysis, a struggle between mature and immature political and social philosophies, between an ancestral imperialism and a modern democracy.

I personally regard war as an outmoded silliness, as an absurdity of political juvenility. But I am willing to drape myself in barathea and bedeck myself with stars for the reason that I am of the opinion that our particular social structure is threatened, that it is worth protecting, and that there seems to be no other way of preserving the ideals that have always claimed my devotion than by fighting.

You may wish to argue that medical men in uniform do not fight and that I indulge in cheap heroics. I retort by saying that in war, as it is now fought, every doctor in the country is personally and directly concerned professionally with the task of conserving man-power in order that the battle may be nourished. Everyone is necessarily militant in the exercise of his professional skill though it may be said by the cynic that the doctor does his killing by proxy. No matter what you do or where you do it everyone...
of you will be serving one end, the production and maintenance of the maximum lethal force for use in war. You may be a civilian exhibiting your healing art in the nursery; on the staff of a civil hospital which attempts to overtake its waiting list; on the staff of an E.M.S. hospital ever prepared to repair the human wreckage of air-raids; or officers in the medical services of the armed forces; everyone of you will be contributing to the war effort; will be harnessed to the chariot of war.

In total war, fighting, the attempt to defeat and overthrow the enemy, is not restricted to such as bear arms and wear uniforms. All the available energy of the community is used to drive the engines of war and there is no essential difference between the services of those who sail the ships, who fight the fires, who fire the guns, who till the land; every man, woman and child of this country is at war with every man, woman and child of Germany. Differences in the colour and cut of clothes do not determine differences in the kind or the quality of the services rendered by individuals to society. For conventional reasons, mainly, members of the armed forces wear uniforms. A uniform allows its wearer to be recognized for what he is. A modern military uniform is a working dress, being in harmony with the tasks which the wearer is called upon to perform; it is a battle-dress. All individuals officially associated with the armed forces wear uniform in order that they may more easily orient themselves in a military milieu and claim the authority, rights and privileges of recognized militants.

It is recognized that it is easier for individuals to share a common aspiration if they are dressed alike. So it is that clergymen and postmen, soldiers and boy-scouts, Rotarians and Wrens are uniformed, their clothes and their uniformity help their wearers to behave according to the particular code that is characteristic of the group. Most people derive pleasure from being in a uniform of some kind and in all of us there exists, to a greater or lesser degree, an urge to merge ourselves in a group, a dislike of isolation and loneliness. Almost everybody finds it necessary to join some kind of organized group, a church, a club, a society, a party. To symbolize this allegiance to the group, everyone eagerly dons one or other variety of the old school tie, the coloured shirt, the pigmented rosette, and takes a satisfying part in one or other kind of exciting or narcotic ritual. To join a group, to follow a flag, to sing a chorus, is to find that much personal responsibility has been lifted from one's shoulders, for no longer is one required to make decisions and to choose between alternatives which do not appear to be distinguishable. At the same time one becomes endowed with the might and the authority of the group, so much larger and more powerful than oneself.

To join the Army is to escape the responsibility of making decisions which affect the individual. Decisions are made by others "higher up" and so the Army can be, for those who dislike balancing on the edge of doubt, what a church or a political party so often is, a system in which omniscience
and omnipotence are concentrated in the higher ranks and which demands from the lower only obedience and efficiency. There is nothing particularly meritorious in being in uniform. Those who wear such can claim no greater social worthiness than those who are not so garbed. I should have no difficulty whatsoever in proving to myself that my present contribution to the community cannot be compared in terms of quality, with those now being made by such of my colleagues who have remained in mufti to carry on their own work in this University. For obvious reasons—the great expansion of the fighting forces, the evacuation schemes, the creation of the E.M.S., the dispersal of industry—there came into being an urgent need for a planned redistribution of the medical manpower of the whole country. It was reasonably decided that certain categories should be preferentially employed for certain purposes. Thus, medical men with territorial army commitments were encouraged to serve with the armed forces; young men recently graduated, because of their relatively high degree of physical fitness and because of the lightness of their loads of social responsibility, were nominated for the medical services of the Navy, Army and Air-force; other categories were earmarked for service with the E.M.S., or persuaded to remain in general practice. In this way there developed a sartorial sectioning of the medical profession into the coloured and the plain and, as always happens when differences of this kind are created, values were given to these differences and disharmony arose. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that there has been no real division of the profession but only a redistribution, which may or may not have been faulty. This redistribution was devised and controlled by the profession itself so that if any of you should find yourselves in uniform, you will not have been the bemused victims of some press-gang; you will have been selected for this particular form of national service by your peers.

Those of you who do join the R.A.M.C. will be fortunate, in my opinion, for, being young, it is highly probable that you will serve in the capacity of regimental medical officer and thus encounter the unique opportunity of rapidly discovering what kind of man you really are. In battle you will live dangerously and you will feel the grip of stark fear; you will be unarmed amid violent indiscriminate lethality; you will be attacked and comfort; through your devoted service the profession of medicine will gain added dignity. The work that you do, under conditions which will range from the merely inconvenient to the utterly impossible, will be of the very greatest importance for it is upon the quality of this initial treatment that all the rest depends.

But battles are rare events in war. Most of the time is spent in preparation for combat or in the licking of wounds and the work that you will do in quiet times is of far greater importance than that which you will attempt under fire. The regimental medical officer quickly finds that a knowledge of medicine is not enough. The battalion to which he is attached is a community composed of a number of highly specialized parts, each of which
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has its own special function to perform. None of these parts is complete in itself; they are mutually interdependent and together they form one integrated whole, the unit. Training has for its object the achievement of this unity. No one can do more to help in its achievement than the regimental medical officer. His combatant colleagues do not need to know the principles or the techniques of doctoring but the medical officer must know sufficient of the principles and techniques of fighting to be able to relate his own professional activities to those of the unit as a whole. His colleagues are not required to become doctors but the doctor must become a soldier.

The army that you will join is not an army composed of illiterate serfs commanded by landless squires. It is a very representative sample of the young adult population of this country and will offer to you a unique opportunity of learning the elements of human and social biology, subjects of the very greatest value to you in your professional career yet subjects which you will not have encountered in your undergraduate curriculum. Your professional duties will require you to help healthy men to be healthier and you will come to know more about the small compact human community and about the individuals comprising it than any farmer knows about his herd of livestock, for you will be dealing not only with the bodies of men but also with their minds. If you wish to take advantage of the opportunities, you can gain more of permanent value to yourselves from a short and concentrated experience as a regimental medical officer than you could from years spent in the wards of a hospital or in general practice. The medicine that you will practise is the ideal medicine, disease prevention. You will be living in an atmosphere in which it is accepted by all that to be healthy and to keep healthy is the duty and the responsibility of every individual; that to become ill or unfit through ignorance or through disregard of the ordinary simple rules of personal and public sanitation is an offence against oneself and against the community. You will be in medical charge of those to whom the future belongs and not be hopelessly engaged in placating the senescent and the spent. Your teaching and your personal influence can be productive of results of profound importance to society, for you will be shaping the views and habits of those who, after the war, will be called upon to build the world anew.

I confess quite frankly that I envy you who stand so eagerly at the threshold of adventure. My decrepitude condemns me to a position of sessile seniority; were I granted one magical wish, I would be young again so that I might once more be a regimental medical officer and serve alongside that very wonderful person, the ordinary man, whom to know is a privilege and an inspiration.