THE BIOLOGICALLY MINDED PHYSICIAN

By Dr. Wm. deB. MacNider

I have often wondered why there were commencement addresses and why an individual should even for the moment assume such a degree of egotism as to gain the belief that he had something worth while to say on such an occasion. The only possible excuse on the part of presidents and deans in commanding such addresses is that it is of their nature to command and in addition such statements which are supposed to be buoyant with thought, tinged with advice, have become a custom, and customs are not bad things; they are at least of some value, in terms of historical continuity. More than likely on some rare and ancient occasion some individual happened to say something worth while to a group of people who were graduating, and then it was that certain high officials in academic life said this must be done each year for ever and ever, and it is done. We have found, I feel, a part of the answer to the question which I have raised, but the important part of this question for you and for me is not answered. Why do I assume for the space of half an hour, when you have been talked at and talked to for four years, that I should catch you and detain you for another period for the same purpose? I can not answer this question except that as a teacher for thirty-seven years I like to be with young people when they commence a great adventure, set their sail and make a start, and because I wanted to be here and feel the great honesty and truthfulness of Dean Hyman and to gather a certain inspiration by subjecting myself to the stimulating intellects of Professors Nash and Gibbs and to find other minds of a like order in your faculty. With such an explanation for my presence here to-night I want to detain you for a bit, not with advice which is ever so free and repugnant, but

1 An address to the graduating class of the Medical School of the University of Tennessee, Memphis, March 22, 1937.
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