

Acceptance of the Buildings  
on Behalf of the Trustees  
Colonel John Fletcher Bruton  
President of the Board of Trustees.

Speaking for the Trustees, I accept the gift to Duke University of the structures erected by the Duke Endowment and just tendered in the name of the late James B. Duke for the use of the University School of Medicine and the Hospital. These buildings admittedly approach perfection in their construction and appointments. To the Trustees of the Duke Endowment unlimited praise is due and accorded for the painstaking service rendered by them. I beg to assure these gentlemen that their labors will not, cannot, be forgotten; for in their notably valuable, and yet self-effacing, service they have simply revealed the unerring judgment of our great benefactor in his selection of them as men who can do big things. This leads me to an inquiry:

Our benefactor--who was he? If we must judge by his commitments, it is safe to say that in some respects he was--just a man. In fact such is revealed in the reading between the lines of a certain paper writing, recording after years of investigation and study his conclusions and commitments. It is clear that during these years, more than once orphan children, some crying maybe, some hungry, some laughing and singing, played about his knee. That in these years aged men and women, broken in the service of their father's God, were revealed to him as worthy of his

remembrance. That on occasions he in his imagination visited hospitals and looked upon sick men, the beds whereon they lay, and upon those seeking admittance when there was no room. It is natural that these types should have appealed to him, because he was a man like you and me. The record shows that he made certain provision for them. It is interesting to note, however, that this provision was not absolute. Is it not true that little children, even orphans, grow into manhood and womanhood and sometimes forget; that old men and old women die and are forgotten; that sick men of the irresponsible class, if they get well, sometimes linger on as burdens to the State? There are those who do not thus reason, but I am tempted to believe that Mr. Duke did have some such thought. At any rate we find him unsatisfied. To conclude with undertakings fenced about by human limitations, to abandon a struggle to overcome obstacles incident to human weaknesses, even death, sounded of failure to him. What followed is interesting. He dreamed a dream so great that to the average man it falls without the realms of possibility. He caught a great vision, the realization of which depends upon his discovery of the secret doors to faith and immortality. In accepting the challenge to make possible the fruition of that dream, the realization of that vision, he stepped outside of the ranks of ordinary men.

Thus I read the document of record known as the Duke Indenture, having in mind that he spent ten of the ripest years of his life in the making. In it is to



found few limitations, and they are impersonal, fundamental--essential to the consummation of his life's undertaking. This document delivered without even the finger prints of a dead hand; vital, pulsating, expanding, appealing, it will unceasingly demand and receive from those serving under its terms devotion and self-sacrifice.

And thus Duke University was born. It is eminently fitting that the School of Medicine and the Hospital should have this first recognition, serving as the most practical human expression of Mr. Duke's interest in his fellow man.

Glorious in contemplation are the benefits, the expanding service, the refining influences, the uplift, the pains of new light and new life, to be confidently expected from the operations of this school and hospital!

As the best and highest tribute to our benefactor and friend may I conclude with the old-fashioned and, therefore, eminently fitting, worshipful prayer--To our God, the God of his father, be all the glory.