

**AN ADDRESS,**

**BEFORE**

**LOUISIANA STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY,**

**BY**

**E. H. BARTON, A. M. M. D.**

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY,—PERMANENT MEMBER OF  
THE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES—  
FORMER PROFESSOR OF THE THEORY AND PRACTICE  
OF MEDICINE AND CLINICAL PRACTICE  
IN THE MEDICAL COLLEGE OF LOUISIANA—  
DOCTOR OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY OF  
THE ROYAL UNIVERSITY OF  
HAVANA, &c., &c.

**(On retiring from the Chair.)**

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# ADDRESS

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## ADDRESS.

### GENTLEMEN :

Since your last meeting, the Board of Administrators has been occupied in performing the duties assigned it under the Constitution. It has endeavored to extend a knowledge of the great objects of the Society, and of course its usefulness, to the remotest parts of the State.

The chairmen of the Permanent Committees were appointed by me soon after your adjournment, and I am gratified to be enabled to state to you, that every expectation has been created of compliance with the objects of their appointment; should such fortunately be realized, the Society will do itself credit and the State honor; it will aid, in developing the professional talent which has only required a proper opportunity to excite it, and I trust now our pride is fully aroused to do justice to ourselves.

The Board has taken great interest in forwarding the wishes of the Society, in addressing a memorial to the Legislature on the important subject of a Registration Law for the State, embracing a Record of the Births, Deaths and Marriages. Dr. Simonds was appointed by the Board, he has drawn it up with his usual ability, and it has been forwarded to the Legislature with the full concurrence of the Physicò Medical Society: Copies will be laid before you.

In the present condition of the State no subject could engage Legislative attention that is more vitally important to its well being; for it must be perfectly evident to you, and as palpable to every one who will reflect for a moment upon it, that a knowledge of our actual condition must clearly precede any intelligent attempt at change or amelioration; this is more especially important when it is known that two opposite opinions exist as to what that condition consists in. The developements of the late U. S. Census (so far as published) give us serious warning of its immense bearing upon the interests of our State, and she will be deaf to the frightful future that is before us, if it is longer overlooked. Louisiana has been retarded in her advance to prosperity, by neglecting to develop her inexhaustible resources; this is mainly to be accomplished by those improvements which tend, either directly or indirectly, to ameliorate her sanitary condition. The alleged insalubrity of the State has been for years used as a valid argument abroad, against the safety of immigration: had her actual condition been such as it might and ought to have been, her population and wealth would doubtless have been doubled. It is hoped that this stigma will soon exist no longer to her detriment, and that her present intelligent Legislature will accomplish this, to crown with unfading honor, the meeting of 1852. Long and deeply has this subject been cherished by me, and for more than fifteen years have I in one way or other recommended it to public attention.

A brief retrospect of the condition of our profession in the State, may not be unacceptable to the Society. Such a review should not be without its instruction, if it only warns us of the errors of the past; for while it shows us that as our own peculiar physical condition has had need for the exercise of great Medical intelligence to correct it, the profession has nobly stepped forward with charac-

teristic philanthropy and supplied the amplest instruction ; and if the community has not been as much benefited by this advice as it should have been, a deep penalty, which has followed on all alike, has been experienced for this culpable negligence on the part of the public authorities. That our profession, at least has performed its duty to Society, that it has acted a self sacrificing part, which has hardly been appreciated, and that if it has sometimes listened to the syren voice of pleasure, deeply has it paid for it in abbreviating the period of professional life.

The science of Medicine, in the early history of our State, was hardly cultivated in a manner adequate to its high calling, except by a few ; but a very limited number have devoted themselves to this noble department of science for its own sake, and hence its representation before the great scientific republic, has not been corresponding to its claims. This comparative apathy, until a recent period, has long existed, notwithstanding the influence which the Medical Societies, the Medical College, and the Medical Journal have exercised ; which, nevertheless, has been very considerable. To account for this lamentable condition of things is very difficult. At an early period of our professional history (that is between 20 and 40 years ago,) a large proportion of the medical men that immigrated to the State, had not received the highest education of the science : giving themselves up to the calling as a means of livelihood, they did not adequately appreciate, as none such ever can, the loftier and more ennobling claims which the profession had upon them for the repayment of the debt which they owed it ; hence it was not cultivated to any great extent, and we do not find in the Medical Annals of our country, many records of this early industry and honorable zeal. The profession then was too lucrative, the temptation of gain was too strong for the calls of science, upon the great mass of those who represented it, a rich and sickly country, (for at the period I speak of, it was remarkable for both) fair and fertile fields, teeming with with golden harvests ; a climate the largest part of the year luxuriant beyond the experience or conception of our northern sisters ; redolent with pleasure it was alluring in the extreme, to all the enjoyments of life ; and it is hardly to be wondered at, that the multiplicity of so many temptations, where a kind of arcadian life was enjoyed by the inhabitants, and in the almost gorgeous magnificence of the scenes around them, that the early years of most of them, should have been led astray from the severer studies of the profession.

But that time has long since passed—there has been a natural cure to all this ; competition, invited by the reputation of the country for wealth and insalubrity, has very materially lessened remuneration—the country has become more healthy, the usual consequence of clearing and draining, adapting it to the wants of life, and time and opportunity have been long since allowed, for the cultivation of all the branches of the science : excuse then exists no longer, of the want of time, or on account of the alluring temptations of wealth ; and it will not be admitted that the climate is un-adapted to the cultivation of the mind. Situated on the limits of the temperate zone,—exposed to neither extreme,—protected from the inclemencies of northern blasts, by large bodies of water ; and fanned on the south by perpetual breezes from the sea, we enjoy that happy medium which forbids us supplying ourselves with apologies either for indolence on the one hand, or hardships on the other. You see then, we have no reasons for lagging

behind; the influences I have mentioned, have long since been working out their proper effect; these, we trust, will be immeasurably increased by a body that should and must extend its bearings throughout the state, and the feeling will no longer exist, that we have not done our duty to science.

From this cursory glance at the rather personal history of the faculty in the state,—of what *was* the main character of the mass, with some honorable exceptions; of the comparatively easy acquirement of property by them; of their early abandonment of their calling, and cultivation of the science; of the change produced by crowded competition, and a more healthy country,—let me invite you to a still briefer view, of the peculiar opinion advocated by them at that time. Let it be understood, in this review, I confine myself to the Am. Med. Profession.

In the early periods I speak of (15 to 35 years ago), the theory of Dr. Rush was the great leading doctrine in the schools. The teachings of the English (and particularly of Dr. J. Johnson of the Med. Chirug. Review,) and of Dr. Cook and others of the Transylvania school, filled the minds of most young men settling in this country;—these, with the plausible connexion of a warm climate and deranged liver, and of the influence of the mercurial preparations on this supposed monopolising organ, led to a degree of empirical administration of that drug, that would now hardly be credited; I have myself known pounds of it used on a single plantation, of sixty or seventy negroes, in a single season, and I have seen many die from mercurial mortification, in a single family, in a few weeks. Indeed, when a practitioner was puzzled about the administration of any medicine, in a disease, it was deemed perfectly proper for him to prescribe a dose of calomel; which he did conscientiously, with well satisfied assurance, that if he did not give the exact medicine adapted to the case, he could not be far wrong! The extensive use of this drug was fully sustained by public opinion, out of the profession, and it was as hazardous to the physician's interest to abandon it (as I well know to my cost, as I was among the first) as it was to the patient to administer it.

From this medical folly and period, when drugging was everything, and the constitution nothing; and which has done so much injury to the profession and the public, succeeded the opposite system of Broussais, more than 20 years ago,—and as extremes often meet, bleeding and gum water now superseded calomel and purging. I do not intend to detain you, in dwelling long upon the consequences of the change; certainly anything was preferable to the directly injurious system of the former, and although this was, as with all new conversions, carried to a great extreme, the beneficial influence was sufficiently obvious. Experience, however, ere long, convinced observers, that if the substitution of the specific action of mercury, for morbid action, was not only unsound and false in theory, but often fatal in its results,—yet there was a special action, or secretory power, which the direct depletion of the Broussaist almost entirely overlooked, and that hence both physiology and pathology, as well as sound therapeutics, taught that both were ultraists. The investigation resulting from the controversies of their respective advocates, led to most important improvements in practical physic, and to the firm establishment of eclectic medicines, where there is no predominance of any dogma. In the midst of these contentions, nay in a great measure springing out

of them, in the awakening of the public mind (in and out of the profession) to the important truths of medical science, and their value to the public health,—the first great result, was the origination and establishment of the Medical College of Louisiana, in 1834. I see before among me the earlier founders of that school, some of the prominent advocates of the improved doctrines of that day; others have paid the great debt of nature, but the school itself, deriving its existence almost from the necessities of science, and our condition at the time, has contributed much to the cultivation and enlightenment of the profession, and the public since; and every well wisher to the science, should hail its genuine prosperity as a real blessing to the country.

But not only have medical men and medical theories changed, so also have diseases. God has made nothing imperfect, hardly any country in a state of nature is sickly *per se* but during the transition incidental to the adaptation of it to the increased and higher wants of our species, morbid conditions are developed, which, yet have to be, and doubtless are susceptible of being controlled by the intelligence of man. Several of my hearers will bear witness to the verity of statements in relation to some special diseases, and my own recollection, and recorded data in my possession, satisfy me of the same in relation to others. I will but mention now yellow and intermittent fevers,—the first once so distinct in its type as to be called the plague in some of its ferocious cases, and of typhus gravior in others, with its glaring lurid expression; and the latter, the algid fever or cold plague, sometimes running its course in the first paroxysm of a few hours,—its fatal congestions, reminding one of the blue stage of cholera, but with the fullness of the capillary system, feeling like a cold marble statue, while the patient was burning up with an almost volcanic fire within. These aggravated types of these diseases are now rarely seen; and with the progress of improvements in cultivation and in hygiene, both will probably disappear altogether. That this change has resulted from the causes assigned, is rendered probable from the fact that the different classes of society suffer now in a less corresponding ratio than formerly, and that, in truth, it is now with its lessened ferocity, a more preventible disease. The same remarks are applicable to other forms of disease, that I need not delay you to dwell upon—the time may come in the progress of improvements, when Louisiana may merit and enjoy its early reputation for salubrity. These climatal changes and the severe influence upon the health of the inhabitants during the progress are well known in the history of medicine; they account, with the alterations in our personal habits and modes of living, for these mutations in the administration of medicines, which have been so often thrown up to the profession as the “varying fashions of physic,” but most unjustly. On the contrary, great credit is to be awarded to us for these changes, which are nothing more than the successive adaptation of therapeutic agents to conditions ever varying with these successive influences, it is to my mind the best evidence of awakened science and skill. With the love of freedom which characterizes the human mind in America, there are few things felt as a greater restraint upon us than the blind routinism in medicine; and hence it is that more experiments are made and more improvements result from them in America than anywhere else. The various modes of treating yellow fever, so different from the almost stereotyped manner I have



witnessed in the West Indies and Mexico, fully verifies the statement, and I believe the application of Quinine to its treatment would be a fair illustration of it. The former open and inflammatory types of yellow fever clearly call for the various forms of depletion,—the changes in our habits and modes of life have tended to a greater developement of the nervous system, and our diseases have partaken more of the characteristics of this system and called for a treatment to correspond. A very distinguished authority (Professor Caldwell) has said that what has been ascribed to the happy conceptions of genius, in the various improvements in the arts and sciences, is nothing more than the gradual development of the human mind in the progress of the successive advancements in knowledge, and in the philosophical history of man there is ample attestation to verify it. Now whether this is actually true or not, it is certainly indisputable that in the free spirit of thought and action, which characterizes our countrymen, there is constantly an enhancing progress in every thing. Our own profession, and particularly in the south, has fully partaken of this feeling, and I look forward, with great confidence to the period, when the empire seat of knowledge will be transferred far south of its present location, and we shall be repaid for the many millions expended at the North for the education of our youth.

I have characterized our climate as a delightful one, yet there are conditions, associated with our position, which render it more susceptible of man's agency than any in America. The level character of the country, adapts it either for Canals or Rail Roads—the extensive area overflowed and subject to overflow, and which can be easily reclaimed—the immense primeval forests inviting the axe and the industry of man,—all show how wide the field and how tempting the State is to the enterprize of its citizens. But the records of the profession warn us, that during this change, man is subject to great mortality,—of the verity of this record my own lengthy experience fully convinces me; our statistical records have been shamefully kept, and the precise official data are not to be had—it is probably true, that the mortality has not so much varied in amount as it has in the *character of the diseases*, because the condition has never been long stationary, but has ever in its successive improvements, been in a transition state. The two monarchs of diseases which I before mentioned, have been evidently declining in intensity and number during the last thirty years, and when all the ameliorations which have been recommended shall have been applied faithfully to the city, it will doubtless bear the usual proportion to the salubrity of the country around us. In the rural districts however, the proof is very demonstrative, and the record furnished by the recent U. S. Census, clearly shows that the mortality is least in the old and cultivated districts, and greatest in the new and recently opened portions of the country. Here then are two most important facts which should never be overlooked by the public, showing the great value of an intelligent, scientific faculty,—the first, a physical condition susceptible of the greatest changes and improvements; and the second, the immediate influence of these alterations on the sanitary condition. No state in the Union then can be so much benefitted by information derivable from Medical Science, as this. Now, Gentlemen I should be utterly unworthy of my position here, were I not to claim for our profession, the honor which cannot justly be denied it, of having done its duty—of proofs of this assertion I have in possession various valuable records—viz

1st. A Memoir on the Yellow Fever of this country, from 1804 to 1821, by Champmanuoir.

2nd. There is recorded in the volume containing the minutes of the Licentiate Board, a Memoir on the sanitary condition of the city made in 1816 by its then distinguished President, Dr. Trabuc, at the instance of the city council.

3d. We have a report from Societe Medicale of this city, upon the Yellow fever of New Orleans in 1817, by Messieurs Gross and Girardin, with special reference to the cause of its origin.

4th. We have a most interesting precise analytique—of the labours of the same Society from August 1817 to January 1818.—again pointing out the causes of the great mortality of the city, and advice given to the city council, as to the mode of correction.

5th. We next have a Report from the same Society, on the epidemic Yellow fever of 1819—replete also with the most valuable hygienic observations and reflexions, with recommendations to the public authorities for their adoption.

6th. An interesting Report by a Committee, consisting of Drs. Randolph, Davidson and Marshall, of the Pysico Medical Society, on the Yellow fever of 1820, with valuable suggestions as to its cause and prevention.

7th. We next have a lengthy Memoir of great value by Dr. P. G. Thomas, on the epidemic of 1822, preceded by an interesting treatise on the hygiene of the place, by Dr. Picornell.

These works are all the results of the mature reflexions and experience of the most distinguished Physicians of those days; and are well worthy of perusal and republication,—the correctness of the advice contained in them, addressed to the city councils and the public, was never disputed—was, and is, to this day, indisputable, and had their valuable suggestions been followed, it is hardly venturing too much to say, that New Orleans would probably have been at this period one of the largest and wealthiest, if not the healthiest city, in America!

Among the eminent Medical men of those days, who made themselves conspicuous by their public labours for the good of the city, we willingly record,—besides those whose names are signed to the papers whose title pages I have read you, Drs Dow, Martin, LeMonier, Deveze, Chabert, Lacroix, and Lambert, besides others too numerous to mention here. These names are entitled to your grateful recollection; honor and respect are due to them for most important public instruction. Yes, Gentlemen, in the midst of almost yearly devastating epidemics; at a period too—when they were justly entitled to their appellation of *malignancy*, they firmly remained at their posts, and as faithfully performed their duties to society: all honor to such noble specimens of the profession—may their example never be lost upon their successors!

Of the list of the members of the two Societies of those days,—I know of but three survivors, and but one who still exercises the labours of our common calling, and well may he say, in the language of an eminent statesman,—that he appears as it were, before posterity, to give an account of the deeds of your predecessors!

In 1828—31—32—33, we have the published Memoirs and works of Drs.

Riviere, Halphen and myself, \* on the epidemic diseases of those years. In the autumn of 1835, dates the first establishment of the Medical College, and a new impetus was given to the Medical mind of this country—and thence onwards were successive emanations from the profession eliciting its talents, and showing its great value to the community. It was followed in 1844, by the publication of the Medical Journal, since when the press has, teemed with a mass of valuable matter which proves that the professional intellect of the country has been fully awakened, if not thoroughly developed.

Gentlemen, this retrospective review of the course of your predecessors, in which many of you have largely partaken is made not without feelings of pride, in which I trust you all participate. That their labors have not been more successful in hastening to completion the great destiny of this country has been no fault of theirs,—they have done all that men could do in their positions—a short-sighted policy, one replete with sacrifices of the present and the future, has ever prevailed; “damning with faint praise” all attempts to alter it, and aided with the plausible support of those—the worst friends of the country, who, confounding a remote period with the present, continue to boast of its salubrity in face of the most irrefragable proofs to the contrary.† The task is left then to the more enlight-

\* On the applications of Physiological Medicine to the Diseases of Louisiana 1828, by E. H. Barton. M. D. &c.

Topographic Medicale de bas Louisianne, par J. A. Riviere, 1831.

Memoire sur la Cholera Morbus, complique d'un epidemique de fièvre jaune en 1832, par M. M. Halphen.

A Memoir on the epidemic, Yellow Fever of New Orleans, in 1833, by E. H. Barton, M. D. &c.

Observations sur la Cholera Morbus de la N. Orleans, in 1833 et 1834, par M. M. Halphen.

†The facts (of our large mortality) the great lever of Archimedes, are admitted! facts are the great harbingers of truth—they are the only certain props on which to rely,—wanting these we wander into the speculative regions of fancy;—thus it is when the explanation of this great mortality is avowed, it is asserted, *without pretension of proof*, that it proceeds from poor immigrants and intemperance, dodging the fact that this mortality is at its maximum when the immigration is at its minimum, and that the cities where this immigration is at least eight times as great as it is here, do not notice it at all! Indeed the whole argument is simply ridiculous, and only imposes upon ourselves,—nay, it is more, it is even suicidal; it is a barrier to all amelioration, it tends to blind the public to the real causes; the almost absolute want of sanitary measures. Three-fourths of the city have been, probably, immigrants, they are the chief and indispensable materials to build up and maintain cities every where,—the poor are the first and chiefest victims of defective sanitary measures, all over the world,—in some instances, more than 40 per cent over those of the more comfortable classes. To select a class here as *particularly subject to die*, which is done no where else, is a slander upon the climate, which more effectually “writes down the city,” by preventing accessions of population, than anything else. On the contrary, I have maintained and stated, that neither the climate nor position is sickly per se, but arises from superadded conditions, which I have pointed out in detail, nearly all of which are, I believe, removeable, and referred, as illustrative proofs, to the salubrity of the adjacent country.

No one is I believe, more sensible of the great vice of intemperance than I am; I have ever been among the first movers in the exposition of its manifold evils; and delivered the first address upon the subject in this city, some seventeen years ago. But let me suggest, that we do that great cause injury when we load it down *usque ad nauseam*, with all the ills to which society is subject. Let us proceed with the caution of more exact truth, not put the cart before the horse, but, “mount to its sources—get at its antecedents,” and we shall be more apt to attain all our ends,—the permanent benefit and advance-

ened wisdom of the present generation, to correct the errors of the past,—and upon you the responsibility rests to continue the warning, which for many years has been in a course of constant fulfillment, of the fatal policy, to our most important and enduring interests, of the almost entire neglect of the sanitary condition of this great country.

As in this part of our State public attention has been fully awakened by the profession, as was our sacred duty to society, of the direful consequences resulting from the almost entire want of sanitary police, I trust our brethern in other parts of it, will be equally vigilant. It is now generally acknowledged that a mortuary condition exceeding 2 per ct., is demonstrative of a deficiency of police regulations on the part of the public, that should render any administrative authority amenable to the tribunals of justice, and that no part of our State ought to be subject to a greater mortality. Our late distinguished countryman Dr. Rush, with a prescience which often accompanies true genius, says. "To all natural evils the author of Nature has kindly prepared an antidote. Pestilential fevers furnish no exception to this remark. The means of preventing them are as much under the power of human reason and industry, as the means of preventing the evils of lightning and common fire. I am so satisfied of the truth of this opinion, that I look forward to the time when our courts of law shall punish cities and villages, for permitting any of the sources of malignant fevers to exist within their jurisdiction." The General Board of Health in England, with the Earl of Carlisle (better known in this country as Lord Morpeth,) at its head, says, "The British parliament has legislated on the conclusion, submitted with an accumulation of demonstrable evidence, that the causes of epidemic, endemic and contagious diseases are removeable, and that the neglect on the part of the constituted authorities, to remove such causes, as far as they are obviously within their control, is a *punishable offence*. The foundation which the Legislature has thus laid for the physical and consequently for the moral improvement of the people is recognized. Half a century ago, it was said by a great Physician and Philanthropist," \* "that the time would come when the legislature would punish communities for neglecting, the known means of preserving the public health, and that prediction the British parliament has been the first to realize." Now look at the record of the

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ment of society. "It is too much the custom, perhaps, to look upon moral degradation as the cause of the physical; to consider the disease, want, filth and indecency of the abject outcasts of society, as the result of their own uncontrolled passions and vices, and to view them with the stern eye of condemnation, rather than with the mild look of pity. The vice of intemperance is charged with the production of a large share of the want, diseases and suffering of the lower classes; it may well be questioned, however, whether the absence of all domestic comfort in the miserable hovels of the poor; the exhaustion from the severe toil requisite to provide the scanty necessaries of life; the depressing and poisonous influences of *vitiating air*, do not engender a state of system that irresistibly seeks relief in the sedative stimulation of alcohol. The real and true relation between moral and physical degradation is, however, now beginning to be more correctly appreciated, under the improved sanitary states of all classes of society, the important truth is being demonstrated, that the moral as well as the physical condition may be greatly ameliorated; ministers of the law as well as ministers of religion are "discovering that the scavenger and the the architect are among their best allies," and by their arguments and eloquence, are urging the claims and speeding the progress of sanitary reform." ROGERS.

\* That authority I have just quoted.

late U. S. Census, and you will find that although in the Eastern District, there has been a great degree of salubrity enjoyed, (except in New Orleans,) not much exceeding 1 per ct., excluding cholera in several parishes. and only 1. 68 including it, in the white population: the mortality in the Western District, has been more than double what it should have been, under wise, sanitary and hygienic rules; and I here call upon our brethren in that part of the state, to point out wherein have been these deficiencies and negligencies,—it is a duty they owe society and the profession,—if the public authorities neglect to correct them, our noble calling which acts the part of a sentinel on the great watch tower—to overlook and guard the health of the community, will at least be exonerated, *fiat justitia ruat cælum.*

In a highly enlightened state of society, the duties and claims of the citizen upon the body politic are reciprocal; I have given you a very brief sketch of what the profession has endeavoured to accomplish for the good of the public,—at every sacrifice of interest and even of life itself, (as I will show you presently,) but that is not all. From  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the entire sick of this city, (which according to statistical computations probably reach the enormous amount of between 45 and 60,000 per annum!) are attended gratuitously by the the Medical men of the place. While there has not been a benevolent, scientific or eleemosynary institution of any kind existing here, but what their peculiar practical talent and literary acquirements are brought to bear, for the benefit of the community. With these claims then upon society, based too, upon an extensive and expensive education, requiring years of exclusive devotion, to render them competent to the discharge of its high duties, what has society done for the profession? *specially* and really nothing,—nominally; the legitimate profession is a body corporate, the admission to the right to practice, being through a licentiate board, and the admission fee \$20. This board was formed for the *protection of society* against empirical pretenders,—and I venture to say that no man was ever refused admission by that board who had the claims of practical scientific skill, or whom it would not have been dangerous to let loose upon society. I see the legislature, in its wisdom is about destroying all the barriers making a distinction between the charlatan, and the man of science and education, and the future will decide who has been the gainer by it. There will arise no loss in the \$20 fee, as that has long since been devoted to a charitable institution. At an earlier period of our history, the regular profession did not require even the nominal protection of a license law,—the severity of the diseases was such, that few of them could withstand the test of a single season; this feature showing the utter failure of empirics in our malignant diseases, has been very remarkable, and tended, on the occurrence of epidemics, to purify the profession of impostors. Since these great touchstones have become more rare, and diseases have gained in multiplicity what they have lost in intensity, the result may somewhat vary, or at least not be so easily discovered.

The public may and probably does think, that the abrogation of all special laws in relation to the profession of Medicine, is throwing open to free competition the curative calling,—that is not so; intelligent and educated men fear no competition founded upon science and skill; they object to being reduced to the level of charlatantry where neither exists, where secrecy supplies the place of science, and imposture skill,—and where the credulity of the public in baseless promises

is substituted for legitimate faith. Society is more deeply interested in upholding the profession of Medicine as a separate class of specially educated men, than it seems to be aware of. The actual curing the sick is really but a small part of the great science of Medicine, (as valuable and humane as that is,) the PREVENTION of disease, the great and all embracing subject of general and special hygiene, by which not only individuals, but whole communities are saved from disease, and taught how to preserve the invaluable blessings of health, is alone thoroughly understood through this great study;—it is through this that the exalted value of a Medical education becomes appreciated, and its eminent worth elevated among intellectual pursuits. Now can any man furnish an instance in the whole history of sanitary science, where what is well known as the irregular, uneducated practitioner or empiric, has added one iota to the improvement of his neighborhood one permanent addition to the blessings of his race—one to redeem the whole class from oblivion or from infamy! none—no—not one, nothing but the most intense selfishness, that *begins with self and ends with self*; actuates the whole; oozed to their secret nostrums by the cement of public credulity, the solution of which by publicity, at once dissolves the charm, which has been amply proved by the history of secret remedies, from the time of Mrs. Stevens, who obtained £20000, from the British Government, for her remedy for worms, which was used long before her time, to the present day! The profession of Medicine would be a great blessing to society, and especially in sickly countries, did it not possess the means of curing a single disease, as the amount of preventible sickness or diseases, is in such countries more than twenty times as great as the ordinary deaths.

From the foregoing observations, I cannot come to the conclusion, that the profession of Medicine in this state, is fully appreciated by society, or that in a pecuniary point of view, it is in a state of prosperity—or that it receives the remuneration adequate to its claims, exposures and sacrifices,—or that there is any class of society which is not succeeding as well, if not better. All these influences bear upon the value of professional life, and the brevity of this give ample attestation of the truth of what I have advanced. From the record kept by the Licentiate Board, of the age of applicants for licenses, to exercise the profession from 1816 to 1840, (and it has been imperfectly kept since,) it seems that these were usually granted at the average age of 30 years and 4 months, and hence this must be taken as the average age of the commencement of professional life in La., while from all the data I have, with much trouble, been able to procure, the average age at death, of practicing physicians in this state, has been but a fraction over 43 years and 8 months! Thus it seems, that on the best general average that could be obtained, the profession is exercised in Louisiana only about 13 years and 4 months! This is a melancholy record—probably one third less than the average age at death of Professional men, in countries where it has been a subject of investigation. Gentlemen, this subject is one pregnant with important and serious reflection,—it should solemnly warn you of the shortness of life, and invite you to that preparation for it, which is so often most neglected, where death is most common,—as if real wisdom alone come with the maturity of age.

As a fitting commentary on these solemn reflections, duty as well as inclination induces me to remind you, that it has pleased the Almighty Disposer of events in his inscrutable wisdom, to take from his sphere of usefulness, our estimable confrere Dr. Wm. P. Hort. It is but bare justice to his memory, to say—that, through this serious dispensation the profession has been deprived of a great ornament—one of its most indefatigable and talented members, and the city itself has cause to mourn his untimely loss. Of fine talents, which he had improved by extensive cultivation, of bold conception and indomitable perseverance, he had arrived at that useful period of life, when his matured mind replenished with the vast stores of accumulated reading—observation and experience, could have been most beneficially employed, and long had been in the course of employment, for the public good, that he is suddenly cut down from among us, and society is made most sensible of his great value by his untimely death. Let us mingle our tears with those of his bereaved and beloved offspring, and console ourselves with the hope that our loss is his gain.

Gentlemen I cannot close these imperfect observations, without again urging upon you, the important and sacred obligations of your profession, and for your great responsibility to society for their due performance,—let us do our several duties, whether it is appreciated by the public now or not,—the time *must come* when they will be; these duties together with your fine educations and social position, present claims, which cannot be overlooked *always* in an enlightened state of public opinion: we have then no excuse for indolence,—indeed, there exists every incentive to the most strenuous exertion; with fine preparatory instruction, and minds richly stored with the elements, the foundation is laid for a superstructure embracing all science and all art, and an excursion over the fair fields of nature: no profession is so rich in its gifts—none requiring such extensive preparation—none that rewards the possessor with accomplishments so extensive, varied and sublime, (excepting in this last sense—the theological.) If the “undevout astronomer is mad,” how much more irrational it would be with him, who witnesses the play of all the functions of animated nature; nay, who traces them up by their very action to their fountain head—the very sources of his being; in the language of an eminent English judge—“if ever the great law which governs human life was to be discovered, it could only be through the accumulated observations of those who devoted themselves to the Medical profession. He knew no profession, without disparagement to his own or any other—more valuable or interesting than that of Medicine. The whole study of nature lay before them, while the profession to which he belonged, after leaving science and literature at Cambridge and Oxford, were confined to the dull study of precedents and acts of parliament, many of them contradictory, and hardly to be rendered consistent with each other. The advantages of industry could hardly be too highly appreciated, Demosthenes being asked what were the requirements of an orator, replied—firstly, action; secondly, action; and thirdly, action. Now if he were asked what would insure success in life, he would say, firstly, industry; secondly, industry; and thirdly, industry. He believed it was the Count de Buffon who said that genius was nothing. He would not go to that extent but, though the public admired

and revered genius, it did not reward it, the real rewards in this life were only obtained by labor—continuous labor. The greatest reward in this life, was to be found, not in wealth, not in power, but in the consciousness that a man possessed of having faithfully performed his duty,—and he knew of no sphere in life in which that consciousness was so fully enjoyed as in the Medical profession." This is indeed a high compliment to our calling, flowing spontaneously from a source elevated by lofty attainments in science and knowledge of human nature, which is fully merited, as well as the important advice of the value of industry. Estimate it then properly while you can—cultivate all its collateral branches so replete with delightful instruction, and in the language of my distinguished preceptor,\* never desert your profession." Let us guard then with the strictest vigilance, admission into the holy temple dedicated to Medicine—its shrine has ever been the chosen residence of science, of high honor and patriotic impulses,—protect its vestibule from the unhallowed entrance of selfish empiricism and arrogant ignorance, and an enlightened state of society will appreciate you according to your true merits.

Nor can I better close this discourse than by quoting the highly applicable remarks of Marks and Willis—"True knowledge and true good go hand in hand. In the old Grecian Mythology, light was held to be joy—to be bliss also; Phœbus Apollo, who illumined the world, was likewise the healer; to him was the pœan, the song at once of joy and thanksgiving, upraised. What antiquity, in mystic foreboding announced, in the lapse of milleniums is made manifest. The more humanity attains to the knowledge and the evolution of all its capabilities, the more sure will the full harmony of corporeal existence also be unfolded. It may, with every reason, be said, therefore, that intelligence is not only synonymous with moral power, but also with bodily health. Access to the treasures of mind is denied to none; the Art of Printing, and our educational institutions, place participation in this highest good within the reach of all. Medicine has not lagged behind the other evangiles of enlightened humanity: on the contrary, she has ever been foremost in the race, when the object was to enlighten and to raise; and as her purpose has still been to root out disease, and to lessen its power, to help the sick and the suffering, to confirm the healthy and the strong; so has she also striven to make her truths common property, irrefragable evidences of civilization.

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\* Professor Chapman.