AN ADDRESS

TO THE

CLASS OF THE MEDICAL COLLEGE OF GEORGIA,

AT THE OPENING OF THE SESSION OF 1846-7;

CONTAINING

A SKETCH OF THE IMPROVEMENTS IN MEDICINE

DURING THE PRESENT CENTURY.

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(PUBLISHED BY THE CLASS.)

AUGUSTA:
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1846.

AUGUSTA, Ga., Nov. 12th, 1846.

Prof. DUGAS:

Dear Sir,—At a recent meeting of the Students of the Medical College of Georgia, the undersigned were constituted a committee to request a copy of your very appropriate and excellent Introductory Lecture, delivered on the 9th inst., for publication.

Permit us to hope that the earnest desire which the Class feel, and which they authorize us to express—to see your manuscript in a more durable form—will not allow you to with-hold it.

We have the honor to be, with great respect, yours, &c.

T. C. DAVIS,
J. N. SIMMONS,
ROBT. CAMPBELL. } Committee.

AUGUSTA, 14th Nov., 1846.

GENTLEMEN,—Conscious that the Introductory Lecture of which, in behalf of the Class, you solicit the manuscript for publication, is by no means such as I would like it to be, yet desiring to meet the wishes of those for whom it was specially prepared, I yield to the request you are pleased to urge in such flattering terms.

Be pleased to accept and to tender to the Class the expression of my kindest regard.

Very truly, your friend and obed't serv't,

L. A. DUGAS.

Messrs. T. C. DAVIS,
J. N. SIMMONS,
ROBT. CAMPBELL. } Committee.

ADDRESS.

Gentlemen of the Class:—

My colleagues having assigned to me the agreeable office of greeting you on the present occasion, I would be doing injustice to the promptings of my own heart, as well as to the feelings of those I represent, were I not most cordially to welcome you into the halls of this Institution; not indeed as strangers, but as companions of study, as co-laborers in the great field of Science, as brothers in a common cause—a cause replete with interest to the novice as well as to the teacher—one eminently calculated to endear us to each other, and in which all distinctions disappear, save those founded on scientific attainments and gentlemanly deportment. Yes, gentlemen, it is with unfeigned pleasure that we extend to you the right hand of fellowship, in token of that harmonious accord we confidently anticipate from our future intercourse.

The studies you are about to commence, although laborious, and indeed interminable, present attractions such as are offered by no other department of human knowledge, for they comprehend all that is most interesting in Nature's works, and relate specially in all their bearings to the welfare of him who was created in the likeness of his Maker. The study of Medicine, therefore, not only enlarges the mind, but also cultivates those kindly sympathies so well calculated to develop benevolence, the most unfailing source of human happiness. Unlike those subjects of mental pursuit, whose end is mere recreation, and which leave no reminiscences on which we may dwell with pleasure, this is one in which the agreeable and the useful are so intimately blended, that the farther we advance in it, the more fascinating it becomes, and the greater is the store from which we may draw as utilitarians, or admire in silent contemplation amidst the turmoils of life.

The field is vast indeed; nay, I repeat, it is interminable! To cultivate it effectually, requires untiring industry. It has been aptly said that to make an orator requires action, action, action! but I tell you, that to make a good physician, requires study, study, study! The founder of Medicine begins his immortal aphorisms with the exclamation that Art is long and life is short! He has couched in those few words an idea that should ever be present to the mind of the student, to whom so little time is allotted for the attainment of the great fund of information he will need at the very outset of his professional career.

The profession of Medicine possesses the peculiar advantage of

being perfectly accessible to all who will unite to natural endowments a sufficient degree of industry. In Europe, where the Church, the Bar, the Army and the Navy, are the high-roads to political as well as to social preferment, we find the members of those professions almost exclusively derived from the wealthy and aristocratic classes of society. In our country, those who are ambitious of political station usually select the Bar. The Medical profession is, on the contrary, made up of those whom neither wealth, nobility, nor political ambition, prompt to seek any other than scientific distinction—that which can neither be bought with gold nor acquired by hereditary transmission, but which must flow from personal merit alone. It cannot be concealed that many enter this profession as a means of earning a livelihood; but it is an innate love of knowledge, a desire to look into the mysteries of Nature, which prompts them, unconsciously perhaps, to select this in preference to other pursuits in which less scientific research is necessary.

Inasmuch then as Physicians are not men who have been forced into the profession by the accidents of birth or fortune, but who enter into it voluntarily, as a matter of choice and from the love of science, we should expect to find in their ranks most of the eminently scientific men of all countries. Indeed, it has been remarked since the establishment of scientific conventions in the principal nations of Europe, that those bodies are constituted almost entirely of physicians, either in the active practice of their profession, or who have, after acquiring it, devoted themselves to some special department of natural science.

The Class in attendance at present, is, doubtless, composed, like all classes of Medical students in Europe as well as in this country, of the rich and the poor, the favored and the less fortunate, the collegiate graduate and the self-made man, the accomplished scholar and the less informed. But, as all are actuated by the same love of science, these distinctions will vanish before their professional progress. It is true that those who have received a good education and have acquired the habit of study, will have fewer obstacles to overcome than those differently situated. It is also true that those who are better endowed by nature will have the advantage. Yet, it should be borne in mind, that neither previous advantages nor superior endowments will compensate for deficient industry—for no fact is better established than that the great majority of eminent men have commenced their career with very slender advantages, and even with natural endowments by no means in accordance with the position to which they have attained. Their advance has always been the consequence of that thirst for knowledge, that intense application, that unremitting devotion to study, which overcome all obstacles. Let your motto also be "*Labor omnia Vincit,*" and success must attend you.

It is proverbial in most communities in which Medical institutions are located, that their classes consist of remarkably heterogeneous and unpromising materials in comparison with those attending other professional studies. The reason of this has already been hinted. Moreover, the lover of Truth and the admirer of Nature, cares but little for the vain ornaments of a depraved and fictitious taste, whilst the thoughtless, accustomed to judge men by their external appearance and attire, remain unmindful of the important fact that many a gem lurks beneath the crusty envelop which crude nature has thrown around it, and that it needs but the industry of the lapidary to be exhibited in resplendent beauty! See the homely pebble exhumed from the mountain-cliff, and thrown aside as valueless by the ignorant and unobserving. It has been rescued by one better acquainted with Nature's laws, submitted to cleavage and polish, and lo! it shines forth with the brilliancy of a diamond of the first waters! Behold that rude block of marble, just drawn from the bowels of the earth, without form or symetry, a shapeless mass of inexpressive matter! yet, in the hands of a Phidias or Praxiteles, what charms does it not assume as the chisel gradually removes the cumbrous covering beneath which lies concealed a Laocoon, a Venus or an Apollo, inanimate, yet full of life—cold, yet radiant with feeling—mute, yet speaking a language of unsurpassed eloquence!

As nothing can be more unwise than to attempt to determine the character of inanimate objects by mere superficial observation, the principle must apply with tenfold force to man, whose noble and immortal spirit can never be but imperfectly represented by his physical appearance. The genius of Lavater has failed to render physiognomy an index of the inner man, and the acumen of Gall to impart any real value to the form of the cranium; and shall we still found our estimate of individual minds on the garments worn by the body? I am happy to say that such is not the case in our city, whose population, being comparatively small, and consequently brought into more immediate contact with the students, merit is more properly appreciated and has uniformly met with the kindest regard and hospitality.

The course of instruction we have to offer you, is divided into the Elementary and the Practical branches; the former comprehending Anatomy, (normal and pathological,) Physiology, Chemistry, and Materia Medica; the latter the Practice of Medicine, of Surgery, and of Obstetrics. The Practical branches, being based upon principles deduced from the Elementary, it becomes of paramount importance that these be thoroughly understood by the Student, before he can expect to derive much advantage from lessons in the former. Hence it should be the business of the less advanced or junior members of the

class to give especial attention to the Elementary studies, whilst the senior members will naturally look with most interest on those termed practical.

One of the most striking features of the human mind is the love of mysticism, of the marvellous, the incomprehensible, the creations of fancy. We see this daily and hourly in our intercourse with mankind; we find it in strong relief in every periodical thrown into our hands; it is the leading attraction of the great mass of publications even of a more permanent form. How immense the number of works of fiction, when compared with those of observation, of fact! and how few there are who read the latter, whilst the former are sought with avidity by all classes of readers! The history of Medicine presents one of the strongest illustrations of this mental peculiarity. The very founder of Medicine, although acquiring immortality by his vast collection of facts, which, as such, must ever remain invaluable, could not refrain from mixing them up with the most extraordinary vagaries imaginable. Galen, who advanced our knowledge of the Elementary branches more than any single individual prior or subsequently to his time, has so completely wrapped up his discoveries in numerous and ponderous volumes of theoretical trash, that it were an Herculean task to winnow its wheat from the chaff.

For fourteen centuries after the death of Galen, we find in Medical literature little else than commentaries on the theories of this great master, or substitutes offered for them by writers of less genius, the profession at large still regarding his views as oracular. Although to the three centuries preceding the present we are indebted for many important discoveries, we find theoretical sectarianism then still in the ascendant, and whilst the ancients were Dogmatists, Empirics, Methodics, &c., more modern medicine presents us the sects of Chemists, Anatomists, Mathematicians, Vitalists, Humoralists, Solidists, &c.

To the nineteenth century emphatically belongs the merit of a systematic effort on the part of Physicians to dethrone Imagination, to elevate Observation in her stead, and thus to establish Medicine on the sure basis of facts, and facts alone. Let us review some of the results obtained by this effort in the brief space of fifty years.

Anatomy had long been in advance of the other branches of Medicine. Being purely demonstrative, its progress was never impeded by theoretic speculations, and could only be retarded by the superstitious prejudices of former ages. Anatomists, however, having described with considerable accuracy the various organs of the body, seemed to have accomplished all in their power, when the genius of Bichat, penetrating beyond mere external forms, analyzed the organic structure itself, and led to the establishment of those simple tissues, which in

their turn yield to the chemist the elementary principles of animal matter. If we add to these improvements the discoveries of Serres, and Geoffroy St. Hilaire, in Transcendental Anatomy; of Ehrenberg, Donne, Mandl, and others, in Microscopic Anatomy; of Cruveilhier, Andral, Louis and Carswell, in Pathological Anatomy; of Velpeau and Breschet, in Embryology; and of Cuvier, Meckel and Carus, in Comparative Anatomy, we must acknowledge that in this department of our profession, the present century has far exceeded any other in the multiplicity and importance of its results—that it has indeed made of Anatomy a new science.

Physiology, the offspring of Anatomy, has advanced with it under the fostering care of Magendie, Bell, Burdach, Muller, and Carpenter, who, by direct experiments and vivisections, have elevated it to a degree of importance equal at least to that of any other of our professional acquirements.

Most of our principles of diagnosis, and consequently, of the treatment of diseases, are founded on the knowledge of the normal functions of the organs; hence, every step made by Physiology must be hailed as a victory. But, however much we may perfect our means of scrutiny, there is a limit beyond which we can never hope to penetrate. Of efficient causes, of the manner in which results are produced, we must ever remain ignorant. We know, for example, that there issue from the spinal cord numerous nervous filaments, certain of which convey to the parts to which they are distributed the faculty of motion, whereas the others preside over sensibility; but it were difficult indeed to assign the cause of this difference of function, and much more so that of the production of either. These limits to the human understanding are not peculiar to the study of animal functions; they are felt in all sciences. The natural philosopher is taught the lesson of humility by the very first laws of physicks. "The communication of motion from one body to another by impulse, appears a very simple phenomenon, but how little idea have we of the cause of it! we say the bodies touch each other, and so the motion is communicated. But in the first place, we cannot say why a body in motion, coming in contact with one at rest, should put the latter in motion; and farther, we know that they do not come in contact. We may consider it indeed as ascertained, that there is no such thing as the actual contact of bodies under these circumstances; and therefore, the fact which appears so simple, comes to be as unaccountable as any phenomenon in nature. What again, appears more intelligible than an unsupported body falling to the ground? Yet, what is more inexplicable than that one mass of matter should thus act upon another, at any distance, and even though a vacuum be interposed between them?" We know that food

placed into the stomach is changed into chyme, that the liver secretes bile, that saliva flows from its appropriate glands, and that the brain is the organ of perception; but the cause of either of these results, or even of this diversity of action, is yet, and must ever remain shrouded in impenetrable obscurity.'

The study of remedial agents, and of their action on the system, engrossed much of the labours of the ancients, and constituted, in many instances, the principal source of their celebrity. Under the conviction that each disease had its antidote in Nature, the Materia Medica could not long retain its original simplicity, but became crowded with every variety of natural productions, and almost every form of composition in the power of man to invent. Simples were indiscriminately thrown together without regard to discordancy of action, and the efficacy of the prescription was deemed proportionate to the number and diversity of its ingredients. At present, the Materia Medica of the scientific Physician is limited, with but few exceptions, to those agents which have been demonstrated to act on determinate parts of the system, and in a fixed, invariable manner; thus enabling him to know with much precision the result of most of his prescriptions. These usually increase, diminish, or otherwise modify the functions of certain organs. The peculiar action of each being established, we may, at will, occasion emesis, catharsis, diuresis, narcosis, &c., with a degree of invariableness amounting almost to positive certainty.

The strides of Chemistry during the present century, are so well known to every one, that it is barely necessary to refer to them in this place. It has not only furnished us with a large number of our most valuable remedies, but opened to us an entirely new field of observation in relation to the acts of the animal economy. Animal Chemistry may now be regarded as constituting a new science, the beneficial effects of which are as yet incalculable. With such men at its head as Berzelius, Thompson, Prout, Guy-Lussac, Thenard, Liebig, and Simon, Chemistry may at present boast as bright a galaxy of intellect as any department of human knowledge.

Surgery, until a comparatively recent date, abandoned to barbers and itinerant quacks, was rather a dexterous art than a cultivated science. As its practitioners possessed no knowledge of physiology, and very little of anatomy, they were indebted for their success solely to their boldness and adroitness. Not unlike the jugglers of the present day, many of them roamed from land to land, practicing with the most mysterious injunction of secrecy, operations for the performance of which they had acquired more or less celebrity. In the hands of such individuals, destitute of principle as well as of education, this

important branch of the healing art made but little progress. Its connection with the study of medicine however, impressed upon it a new character, and upon surgeons a degree of respectability such as to secure amongst them talents of the first order.

For the last thirty or forty years the improvements of Surgery have been such, that were it possible to resuscitate the ablest Surgeon of the last century, he would with difficulty recognize the fraternity to which he had belonged. What, indeed, would be his surprise on seeing Lues considered by many as a local disease, and treated successfully by antiphlogistics alone? Strabismus, Club-foot, and even Curvatures of the Spine, which had baffled his best efforts, now effectually cured! Hydrocele, ranked amongst the most manageable affections; irreducible strangulated Hernia no longer necessarily fatal; the amputated limb dressed with mere adhesive strips, instead of cumbrous loads of unguents, lint, compresses, huge bandages, &c.; a simple seton ossifying ununited fractures; the delicate silk ligature substituted for the clumsy cord, and fearlessly carried around the carotid, the iliacs, the subclavian, and even the inominata; the amputating knife and saw penetrating the hip-joint, removing the lower jaw, the clavicle, the elbow and knee joints; and the calculus removed from its repository without bloodshed and without pain! And yet, after witnessing all this, he would have seen but a small portion of what the cause of humanity had gained during his short absence.

Striving, with the assistance of enlightened principles, to obviate as much as possible all resort to the knife, modern surgery has gloriously succeeded in establishing the maxim that the palm should be awarded, not to the adroit performer of a mere manual operation, but to him who renders it unnecessary. Dexterity is confessedly advantageous to the surgeon, yet being possessed by few practitioners, it has been the especial care of the present age to reduce operations to such fixed rules as to materially compensate for the deficiency of that natural gift; so that operations, hitherto practiced almost exclusively by a few famed residents of large cities, now systematized and fixed in their various stages, are within the performance of every country practitioner who has devoted any time to the study of Anatomy.

We find the science of Obstetrics also keeping pace with the other branches of our profession, and in many respects approximating to positive precision. Most of the principles which guide the practitioner are purely mechanical, and consequently invariable. The addition of the rich store of facts and observations collected by Mad. Lachapelle, Mad. Boivin, Denman, and Dewees, to those already recorded by the distinguished Baudelocque, has placed obstetrics in a state of perfection almost as great as it can be expected to attain.

Nor has the Practice of Medicine, properly so called, been behind the other branches of our studies, in the march of improvement. Indeed, we hesitate not to say, that more has been accomplished in this department during this, than had been done for many centuries previous—I might perhaps, without exaggeration, say since the days of Galen. The dawn of this most brilliant epoch of positive medicine is marked by observations tending to facilitate the Diagnosis of Diseases, without a correct knowledge of which, practice can never be but the most fatal empiricism. The origin of correct diagnosis is to be found in the valuable work of Pinel, who first attempted a classification of diseases according to the peculiar structure or tissue affected. Bichat seized the idea thus advanced, and emblazoned it with the researches of his active and philosophic mind. Broussais, with his characteristic enthusiasm and energy, advocated the localization of diseases, and eagerly invoked the aid of post-mortem examinations as alone capable of indicating their true seat and nature. The impulse of localization was given, and Pathological Anatomy, hitherto but little known, was recognized as its most powerful and legitimate auxilliary. Diseases, so long regarded as incomprehensible entities, as subtle agencies spreading their noxious influence throughout the system, and attacking with equal virulence all its parts, were now to be divested of their mysterious character, reduced to known laws of organized matter, and circumscribed in their existence to fixed organs. The French metropolis, in which the principles of reform were diffused, combined all the advantages requisite to the performance of the task. Its numerous hospitals, with appended and well regulated amphitheatres, thrown open to the lovers of science by an enlightened and liberal government, became so many head-quarters, thronged with men of genius and untiring industry, from all nations. The symptoms and treatment of every case, as well as the post-mortem appearances of all who died, were carefully recorded for the purpose of furnishing the most valuable deductions. Diagnosis enlightened, special modes of treatment extensively and systematically tested, medical statistics carefully kept, and facts substituted for theories, have yielded results that are now being applied in every land. The labours of Broussais, Cruveilhier, Andral, Rostan, and Louis, in France; of Graves, Stokes, Hall, Elliotson, and others, in Great Britain, would furnish us with ample matter for expatiation; our limits, however, will permit us only to dwell a few moments, to pay our tribute to the memory of the immortal Laennec, unquestionably the individual who has done most for Medicine since the early ages of the profession; for if, as we have already repeatedly asserted, facts constitute the only true elements of Science, he who has accumulated the greatest mass should stand foremost

amongst its benefactors. And who since Hippocrates has contributed such a body of them as Laennec?

Endowed with a mind of the first order, and with industry that knew no bounds, a liberal education had prepared him for the laurels he was to reap in the prosecution of a profession, to which he was enthusiastically devoted. He early saw the invaluable advantages of the system of study then prosecuted by his compeers, and devoted himself most zealously to the investigations of Pathological Anatomy, which he enriched with many striking observations. He had already won for himself considerable distinction, when, on visiting a lady who had an affection of the heart, it occurred to him that perhaps the sounds usually heard by applying the ear over the region of this organ, might be modified by disease, and if so, it would be interesting to note such modifications. Delicacy, however, forbade the immediate application of the ear in this case, and his fertile imagination supplied the means by which the exploration might be effected without the least impropriety. Knowing how readily solid media transmit sound, yet having nothing better at hand, he rolled up firmly a few sheets of letter paper, and, placing one end of the scroll against the patient's chest, applied his ear to the other. His countenance brightened as every beat of the heart revealed the importance of his discovery. He carried his rude instrument over the chest, and, to his delight, found that even the gentle murmur of the air penetrating the intricacies of the lungs was perfectly audible. Elated with these results—for he immediately perceived their importance—he sought the best material for the conduction of sound, and invented the instrument to which he applied the name of Stethoscope, from the Greek, *stethos*, the chest, and *scopeo*, I explore. He then, at the Neckar Hospital, devoted himself assiduously to the study of the peculiarities produced in the pulmonary and cardiac sounds by disease, determined their relation to particular symptoms and conditions, by daily post-mortem examinations, and finally published to the world that imperishable monument of genius, industry, and sagacious induction, the Treatise on Auscultation.

The application of auscultation and percussion by Laennec, completely unmasked one of the most extensive and hitherto obscure classes of diseases to which mankind is subject, and one in which may be found perhaps the cause of more mortality than exists in any other. The diagnosis of Pulmonary affections was so little understood prior to the researches of this acute and indefatigable physician, that it was almost impossible to distinguish their various forms from each other. Pleurisy and Pneumonia, Tubercular Ulceration and Catarrh, were continually confounded. Empyema, Emphysema, Chronic Pleurisy, Chronic Pneumonia, &c., were mere subjects of conjecture. At pre-

sent, all obstacles are removed, every variety readily detected, its locality determined, and its extent marked with mathematical precision. On approaching the bed-side of a Pulmonic sufferer, the physician has at once the satisfaction of being as fully acquainted with the affection he has to treat, as though it were exposed to occular observation; and although this satisfaction may be occasionally marred by the discovery of the insignia of his patient's irrevocable doom, his conscience, at rest, will not torture him with the horrid suggestion, that an *error of diagnosis* was perhaps the cause of the fatal issue!

But the advantages of these physical signs are not limited to the class of diseases we have just been considering. They have been applied with much success to Cardiac and Vascular affections. Pericarditis, Endocarditis, Hypertrophy, Dilatation, and the various abnormal modifications of the valvular structure of the heart, aneurismal enlargements, &c., formerly so difficult to detect, are now recognized with the utmost facility.

The extension of auscultation and percussion to the study of obscure fractures, and to the detection with great certainty of the condition of the abdominal and pelvic contents, the volume, position and density of every organ, however deeply seated, as well as the slightest dropsical effusion, tympanitis, and morbid tumors, should also be added as legitimate results of Laennec's great discovery.

At the same time that Diagnosis was advancing so rapidly with regard to diseases of the lungs, heart and other viscera, the physiology and pathology of the brain were also submitted to the strictest scrutiny by Gall, Rostan, Esquirol, and others. Their success, though not equal to that of those who studied organs susceptible of yielding *physical* signs, was sufficient to throw much light on the subject, and in many instances, to render the diagnosis comparatively easy and certain.

Modern medicine has been peculiarly successful in facilitating the treatment of Infantile diseases. At a time when the patient's testimony was the only source of information, a correct knowledge of the diseases of those deprived of language or of intelligence, as children and idiots, was unattainable; whereas with the aid of physical signs and the *method* of *exclusion*, by which all organs ascertained to be in a healthy state are excluded from farther consideration, there are few, very few cases in which any difficulty will be experienced in the formation of a correct diagnosis.

The improvement in the treatment of Insanity constitutes one of the most brilliant achievements of our age. Formerly the unhappy victim of dementia, cast off from society, secluded in a loathsome cell, loaded with chains, fed with offals like the lowest of the brute creation, and treated with fiendish cruelty by a mercenary hireling, was left to lin-

ger out his miserable existence in his own filth and degradation, friendless, comfortless, and an object of horror even to his dearest relatives, who, entertaining no hope of his recovery, hailed the intelligence of his death as a providential and merciful release! How different now! Provided with every comfort that benevolence can devise, subjected to the kindest treatment, without painful restraint, the continued object of affection and sympathy, his disease is often easily removed, and, in a comparatively short time, he is restored to the bosom of his family and to the enjoyment of the inestimable blessings of rationality! We may safely allege that whilst this fearful disease was once almost uniformly incurable, it is now under the complete control of our remedial means, in at least three-fourths of the cases subjected to proper management.

The discovery of the spinal origin of most nervous affections is likewise of modern date, and has furnished us with the key to the treatment of an extensive and harassing class of diseases. To it we are indebted also for the only rational pathology of Rheumatism and Gout, and of those widely prevalent Intermittent and Remittent fevers which, although described with great perspicuity, so early as Hippocrates, had never been before well understood, nor, consequently, treated with much success.

There is no disease in which the usefulness of our profession is more signally illustrated than that commonly called bilious fever, for whilst if left to the unaided efforts of nature it will almost invariably terminate fatally, it now rarely if ever does so under early and skilful medication. If to Laennec should be awarded the praise of having done most to improve our means of diagnosis, to Pelletier and Caventou should be equally conceded that of furnishing us with one of the most valuable remedial agents we possess, for with quinine at command, we have the antidote to the most prolific scourge of the temperate and torrid zones. Their discovery was truly opportune, as without it, it would have been difficult to demonstrate the correctness of the pathology of paroxysmal fevers at present advocated by the most enlightened Southern physicians. With the possession of this powerful and controlling agent, our various forms of autumnal fevers must cease to give us any alarm, if timely aid be invoked. Intermittents, remittents, malignant and congestive fevers, which have heretofore slain thousands and millions of our fellow beings, must now be regarded as comparatively harmless! These diseases being heretofore regarded as affections more or less inflammatory and dependent on biliary derangements, he who was so unfortunate as to be attacked with remittent fever was subjected to the lancet ad deliquium, to emetics and cathartics without stint, then to mercurials until his mouth was on the

verge of dissolution, and his very breath became putrefaction! If he still survived, he was now flayed with enormous and multiplied blisters, and finally, perhaps, resuscitated with Bark and Wine, to linger through a protracted convalescence of weeks, and even months! Contrast this picture with the practice of the present day, when, however violent the attack, it is for the most part subdued in a few days, without depletion, with but little loss of stamina, and consequently with scarcely any period of convalescence! Is not this a triumph worthy of the nineteenth century? However exaggerated this statement may appear to you, who have not yet, perhaps, learnt to forget the evils of fever, I trust that before you leave this Institution, its truth will be established to your entire satisfaction. The Medical College of Georgia may justly claim the merit of having been the first to promulgate this great reformation in the treatment of paroxysmal fevers; yet new views, however manifest their correctness and value may be, are always slowly and reluctantly adopted by mankind at large. The ashes of the great Laennec have now slumbered almost a quarter of a century, yet how small the number of practitioners who avail themselves of his lessons! Quinine was discovered in 1820, and it is but a few years that its great value has been fully recognized! How long will it not still be before this recognition becomes general with the profession!

Such, gentlemen, are the principal improvements in Medicine effected in the nineteenth century. They amply testify to the progressive state of knowledge, and show that whilst the spinning-jenny has been dispensing comfortable raiment to the poor of every land, and the steam engine civilization to the most benighted, the Art of Healing has not remained stationary, but has also contributed largely to the well-being of society and aided considerably in lengthening the period of man's existence. To impart to you the knowledge of these improvements, untrammeled by sectarian prejudices, yet venerating the valuable acquirements of past ages, is the duty assigned us. Lend us your patient attention, second us in our efforts, and should we be so successful as to render our labors useful to you, and to earn your approbation, we shall have accomplished that which is our highest ambition. Permit us to carry with us the consciousness of having been, through you, the instruments of relief to suffering humanity, and it will be to us the happiest solace of subsequent life.