

COLLEGE

OF

PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS,

IOWA UNIVERSITY.

SESSION 1853-'54.

INTRODUCTOR

BY

PROF. M'GUGIN.

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COLLEGE HALL, October 21st, 1853.

Prof. D. L. McGUGIN,

DEAR SIR :—We, a committee on behalf of the Class of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, desire for publication a copy of your elaborate and eloquent address delivered last evening.

We earnestly hope that our request may be granted.

Yours, Respectfully,

ROBERT MOORE,
D. B. STURGEON,
JAS. W. LA FORCE.

KEOKUK, October 22nd, 1853.

GENTLEMEN :

Your kind note was received asking a copy of the introductory address delivered by me at the opening of the present College Session.

Prepared under circumstances most unfortunate to a satisfactory discharge of the duty imposed, it is therefore undeserving of the flattering terms in which you are pleased to speak of it, or the encomiums you bestow upon it.

As, however, you desire its publication, it is at your service.

I am, Gentlemen,

Very truly, yours, &c.

D. L. McGUGIN,

To Messrs. MOORE, STURGEON, and LA FORCE, Committee.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

GENTLEMEN :—

Humble obscurity, it would appear from the history of men and things, constituted the germ or the primary element of ultimate greatness, and that incidents and circumstances, trifling and insignificant of themselves, often lead to great and mighty results, astonishing to the world and ending in the establishment of systems and institutions fraught with all that is good and noble,—diffusing their benign influences upon society and contributing to the improvement, the elevation, and the enjoyment of our race.

Not only is this true with regard to the moral and intellectual capacities of men, but it is also true when applied to the physical world. By an aggregation of insignificant particles the inorganic material of the universe is formed, while a single dormant cell, waiting to be impressed by vitalizing influences, constitutes the primary and rudimentary forms of an ultimate, more perfect, and a more complicated organization. The air we breathe, indispensable to respiration and combustion, is composed of distinct atoms. Life could not subsist without it, so important is it to the preservation of our species, and yet when these particles are thrown into commotion so as to constitute winds, and hurricane blasts, driving in fury over the earth's surface, a destructive sweep, levelling forests, towers, towns, and cities, demonstrating the irresistible and uncontrollable power and majesty brought into being by an assemblage of these minute and insignificant atoms.

The ocean's shores, which with silent and defiant tone, bid back the furious waves of the tempestuous sea, are made up of isolated, distinct, and almost indivisible particles of glittering sand. Similar particles, under the power of cohesion, form large masses, which by successive strata rise up to the very summit of the cloud-capped mountain, a specimen of stupendous masonry, hanging in sullen grandeur and threatening aspect over the deep abyss below. Globules of light, in vast assemblage, make up the radiant glories of the king of day, the mellow but reflected light of the moon, and the bright scintillations of the starry host. In accordance with the divine mandate "let there be light," these minute globules assembled, and constituted the phosphorescent halo which relieved the earth of the darkness in

which it was veiled, until the celestial lights had assumed their appointed places.

Of distinct particles are composed the waters of the gushing fountain, away in the silent glen, enveloped in the deep but silent shade, flowing on and meeting in its onward and winding course some other rill, thus united, moving on and still meeting others, constituting brooks, and further on creeks, then rivers, and finally by multiplication and aggregation making up the great ocean, on whose bosom wafts the commerce of the world, and whose surface, when tempest-tossed, rolls in mighty and imposing grandeur, its waves of mountain height, and threatening to engulf the stately ships and fleets, whose sails whiten its surface and which have trusted themselves upon its wide and almost illimitless expanse. Yet this vast accumulation, so potent for good and at the same time the grave of millions of human beings, the depository of so much treasure forever lost to the world, is composed of infinitely small particles, less than the particle of glittering dew-drop upon the spire of grass, but each at the same time, vital with numerous animalculi.

To infusoria, so insignificant and indistinct as to require often the magnifying powers of the microscope for detection, are we indebted for our reefs, islands, and mountains of coral in the sea. The Island of the Polynesian Archipelago, the coral reefs of the Indian Ocean, the extended and unbroken chain upon the coast of New Holland, stretching for seven hundred miles to New Guinea, are the magnificent productions of the armies of these little polypi, and constitute the wonders of the world. Small as they are, and trifling in their organization, they nevertheless have erected dangerous impediments to navigation and commerce, have produced islands habitable by animal and man, and have formed masses of rock which, when elevated subsequent to their formation by volcanic force, have formed high mountains, rising up and towering aloft, high above the surface of the sea. And it is now believed, because proved by experiment, that many, if not all of the rocks which compose the several systems are the result of the formative agency of some form of polypi or infusoria. These are but a few instances in the material world of stupendous results from minute specimens, for when we look into the vast structures and then down the line of inorganic matter, through its complex combinations and aggregations, analysing each as we progress

with our enquiries, until we reach the primary element or particle; we are lost in admiration when we contemplate the majestic proportion of bodies and forms produced from such minute and insignificant specimens of matter. Not less astonishing are the developments in the moral world. Not less singular is man himself, whether considered physically, mentally, or morally. His infantile years are those of feebleness and dependance. So great is that dependance and so feeble his powers that to sustain, provide, and nurture him, he requires the highest order of intelligence and reason. And this condition of physical imbecility continues longer than any other member of animal organization. So also of his intellectual character and his mental constitution. In his cradle he possesses the power only to acquire knowledge. At this period how imperfect his opportunities and how limited his sphere of observation and acquirement. Each new idea begotten in the mind, gives additional strength to the intellect, increases his mental vigor, and enlarges the sphere of his enquiries. He progresses onward and rises upward in the scale of acquisition until, by regular progression, he attains to the high position assigned him by the author of his being, which in intellect and mind is next in the order of intelligences to the angels.

But from his impotency as an infant, what has he attained to?—What has he done and what can he perform? Once the feeble infant in his mother's arms and nestling in his mother's bosom for protection, he is now launched forth upon the stage of action with powers, moral and intellectual, capable of grasping and comprehending the characters and attributes of things material, and immaterial. If indeed he can never know precisely what matter is, and if mind still remain a mystery, he can acquire a knowledge of their attributes and qualities. He knows the laws controlling the universe of matter, he pries into the silent and secret laws forming and controlling animal, vegetable and mineral productions, he can steal the lightning from the heavens and "submit it to the dominion of his philosophy," can make it subservient to his purposes in carrying thought, can control the rays of light and wherewith produce accurate and permanent impressions and resemblances, and he can dip the water from the fountain, convert it into a propelling agent or element in rapid flight. He can refract and reflect the rays of light and so control and govern them as to bring distant objects under his immediate inspection, yea

even the distant planets and spheres, estimate their size, calculate their movements and their distances. He wills, and towering monuments rise to the skies, he orders, and cities are built, he dreams of power and conquest, and emperors are dethroned, crowns are made to crumble, and nations are annihilated or subdued. And yet but yesterday he was a puny, helpless,—I was about to say, an insignificant—infant, certainly an humble specimen of animal organization, with nothing superadded but a few intuitive propensities, intended for his maintainance and growth.

But there are circumstances surrounding him from infancy to maturity, which are to be regarded as modifying and moulding his destiny, and here again we shall find that those who have risen to fame and have occupied the most exalted positions in the world for usefulness and efficiency, have risen from lowly obscurity, and have struggled under poverty, penury, and want. Whether the one is the legitimate sequence of the other, or whether there is any relation at all, will appear from an examination of the fact itself. Certain it is, that although it has not been usual, yet there are instances of great minds and high attainments, who were born in luxury and cradled in affluence; but yet it would appear that in these cases, the individuals resisted the deteriorating influences and consequences of enfeebling indulgences.

To be born in poverty is to be born amidst restraints. If wealth is power, poverty is the very reverse. We only know that there is power in wealth, because we daily witness its influences. But it is unfelt, and deprived of the exercise of its power when opposed to itself. By whom then is its power felt, and upon whom is it displayed? Upon those less fortunate of course, either for good or for evil. This power, exercised in the unequal distribution of property, benefits and comforts, presupposes obligations, and those under obligation are under restraint. To return therefore to our proposition, poverty is a condition of restraint, of embarrassment, and dependence. Such then is our moral and mental natures, that we cannot brook unjust and unnatural restraints, when there are limits prescribed upon our acts, and unequal duties imposed. Then is awakened in the mind a determination to throw off such restraint and escape from the thralldom imposed. And in proportion to the power or force of that restraint, in that degree will there be an effort to effect a riddance. The deeper

then the obscurity, the more powerful the exertion, but if ineffectual, the mind sinks into dismay and melancholy. If ligatures be placed upon our limbs to take away the freedom of locomotion, a superhuman effort will be exerted, if required, to relieve ourselves, but if chains be fastened upon our limbs, denying the possibility of escape, we sink into dismay, and reluctantly yield without hope of an extrication, the mind is then obscured in gloom and is enveloped in a darkness of the most painful intensity. Thus it is in despotisms, and wherever man is enslaved, the history of such nation in their mental and moral characteristics, show that man has been enslaved.

But let hope whisper a better and higher destiny in the future, and loose but a few of the bonds by which he is bound, and man will bound forward and exercise, energetically, the high attributes of his mental and moral natures. He greedily embraces all occasions for the exercise of his powers. He enjoys with zest all his opportunities, benefits and privileges. Appreciating their value himself, he is active in their extension to, and diffusion among others. He is efficient, zealous, energetic and ardent. The results of his activity and efficiency are soon felt and acknowledged, and society looks upon him as a benefactor. But had no restraints been imposed, had there been no difficulties to encounter, no discouragements to face, no limits set up to his action or efforts, he never would have appreciated his privileges or powers, because he was never called upon to use or exercise them. They never would have resorted to superhuman efforts who had never suffered the loss of their liberties—who had no bonds to break—no ligatures to sunder. Hence we find that humility of condition and humble circumstances in life favor the development of genius and talent, because as necessity calls forth into exercise all our efforts, the same principle will develop intellect and mind. For the same reason the homes of the rich, and those families raised in luxurious ease, seldom are found to send forth to the world men of distinguished talent or great benefactors of their species. It is by opposing difficulties in man's progress that the mental and physical resources of his nature are developed, and the results—the manifestations, are in proportionate magnitude to the formidable character of the undertaking and the nature of the opposing difficulties. Who would have thought of tunneling our vast mountains, had they not thrown themselves into the pathway of man's triumphant progress, or

who would have been induced to span our large rivers with massive arches and bridges had they not been often found to be impassable obstructions? To ascertain the truth or the plausibility at least of one postulate, we will refer to a few prominent instances, and will here call your attention before proceeding to the fact, that not one of those who distinguished themselves for the greatest discoveries and inventions in the arts, was himself distinguished in the world either as a scholar or for any other considerations, except that secured by the discovery or invention itself.

There is, therefore, *PER SE* greatness in humility evolving glory, honor and power, from the very depth of obscurity itself.

There are those of humble origin and under great difficulties, who have risen to conspicuous places in the history of the world, and have shown themselves benefactors of mankind, by their discoveries in the arts and sciences. Suffice it now for our purpose that we briefly refer to Dolland, the great optician who refuted one of the errors even of Newton on the relation between the dispersive and refractive powers of different substances, was himself an humble silk weaver. He rose to an elevated rank in science, and received the celebrated "Coply Medal" as the reward for his "perseverance and success."

Guttenburg, the true discoverer of printing and the partner of Faust or Fust, invented the art of printing when laboring under the most necessitous circumstances in exile. To Faust has been given the credit but does not deserve the honor of a discovery so fraught with consequences to the world.

He who acquired an unparalleled brilliancy of fame as a painter, and whose productions stand unrivalled in the world, was Sir Thomas Lawrence, the son of the proprietor of an obscure hotel. He was knighted as a compliment to his unsurpassed genius and artistical skill. Conover, the eminent sculptor of world renown, was the son of a stone cutter. His productions stand as models of imitation and admiration in that divine art.

Among those who made their names illustrious in science, was Sir Humphrey Davy, who was the son of a carver of wood. On his errands of scientific exploration, he derived enthusiasm for the cultivation of his favorite science, and imbibed an incentive to the prosecution of his favorite studies from the craggy and bold prom-

ontory among which he rambled. The interest thus awakened, and the enthusiasm here derived, stamped his character, gave direction to his genius, decided his future fate, and raised him finally to the proud and exalted position to which he attained. The little vegetable balloons, skimming the surface of the sea, and driven to the shore by the winds or tides, were objects of the deepest interest to him, and the trifling circumstances and materials of his future fame and glory. By a sacriligious perversion he converted a pair of surgical instruments, a present to him, into instruments for carrying on his philosophical experiments and enquiries. To this expedient he was driven by necessity, and to this circumstance may be attributed his future tact in manipulation, in which he attained to a perfection.

Isaac Newton, renowned in science, was a poor posthumous offspring, born in the county of Lincoln, England. He was still more orphanised by the second marriage of his mother, contracted and entered into because of her slender income. The child, feeble from birth, was sent away, but after the lapse of a few years his mother's second husband died also, and left her a small farm without however the means to cultivate it. Isaac was brought home to aid in its cultivation and became the market boy, but he proved no adept in this department, for a revolving wheel in a mill or other machinery happening to arrest his attention, would confine him to the spot for hours, and until the market hours had passed. This habit of observation proving unprofitable, and he was sent to school. It is necessary only to add what the world already knows, that he became one of the most profound mathematicians and astronomers the world ever saw. The faithless market boy became the admiration of men of science, and kings and courts were proud to do homage to him.

There is another name sacred to science, wisdom, and republican liberty—he who snatched down the lightning from the threatening thunder cloud, was the son of a tallow chandler,—the obscure wandering printer boy. Human nature boasted of such a son, the world of an exalted specimen of human nature, science of an honored disciple, and patriotism and liberty of such a friend and votary, as Benjamin Franklin.

The history of steam is a familiar history, with a people in whose language the term is so diffusively incorporated. But he who did more toward the perfection in the application of that agent to the

uses and purposes of man than any other, was Jas. Watt. He was a ship Chandler, and early manifested a desire for knowledge and intellectual culture; and to this end he made his geometrical calculations upon the humble hearth-stone of his humble home. About this time, when but six years of age, he commenced his enquiries into the powers of steam with the tea urn at the tea-table. A tea-spoon was used as a condenser, and various other articles were employed in succession for a like purpose. This circumstance shaddowed forth into the future the important inventions and the distinguished inventor, the first as an unparalled discovery, and the second one of the greatest benefactors of his species. The subsequent application of this power in propelling water crafts, is even more interesting. The first effort it has been maintained, was made by an obscure blacksmith of Philadelphia. With his own hands he constructed a rude engine and placed it upon a water craft equally rude and rough. During the progress of construction, an obscure dentist was often seen closely scanning each step of its progress, with singular interest, and when the trial trip was made, this same gentleman was invited on board.— Upon the return of the boat from its experimental trip, which was a triumphant demonstration of its capacity to perform, a part of the roughly constructed engine gave way, and with it the hopes and prospects of the humble inventor. He had spent his last farthing, and was unable to repair the injury done to the machinery. Regarded by his family as a lunatic, his wife abandoned him, and he forsook the spot where he indulged in so many fond hopes and day dreams of success, and wandered heart-broken to the then far West, where he died, and his grave is now upon the summit of a high bluff overlooking the Ohio river, on whose bosom is every day demonstrated, the triumph of his invention and its value and importance in the commerce of the world. The invited guest—the humble Dentist, was no other than Robert Fulton, who perfected what the other had begun and reaped all the honor and glory of being the original discoverer.

Throughout the entire history of the use of steam from the Ball of Æolus as used by the ancients, down to the present time, the instruments, in the several discoveries and important improvements, were of the most humble and lowly origin, whose conceptions have led to results and consequences astounding to mankind, for it has annihilated space, it has brought distant countries in close proximity and intimate relation; it has ascended mountains, has fled, and is now flying, with

the speed of flight over plains and valleys; it has extended civilization, developed the commercial and agricultural resources of every civilized nation, and is now binding every portion of our beloved country in a widely extended system of network, establishing an equality and reciprocity of interests. Onward let the "fire horse" speed away, the herald of civilization, literature and science.

The world is indebted for the superiority, the abundance and cheapness of all kinds of fabrics, particularly those of cotton, to the patient and self-sacrificing Albright, who was not only born in poverty, but during his inventive career, endured more, suffered more, physically and mentally, than any other individual who has distinguished himself as an inventor or discoverer. He suffered from penury and want, was clothed in rags, treated often with cruelty and neglect, and often persecuted. Notwithstanding these multiplied discouragements and painful embarrassment, he persevered, contemplating no other contingency but success, and yielding to no influence but a stern and inflexible moral courage, he finally triumphed. Doubtless there are nations now existing on the face of the globe, lagging behind the progress of civilization and improvement, who could in gratitude to his memory exclaim, "naked and ye clothed me." The extreme wants and necessities of the inventor himself would seem to have sanctified his endeavors and their results to benevolent ends.

We might refer in this connexion to Herschel, the great astronomer, to Berwick, the distinguished engraver, Edwards, the self-taught Welsh architect, and others who rose from humble stations to the proudest and most elevated positions of fame and honor among men. We will now refer to another, and a different but an equally distinguished, and once an equally humble class of men.

The ancient and renowned, the great and the good Agathocles, King of Sicily, was the son of a potter. He was not more humble in his origin than in his desires and habits. His example of simplicity, plainness, and humility exerted an omnipotent influence over the habits of his subjects, so that luxury and extravagance were avoided.

Ptolemy was reproached, spurned, and abused for his lowly origin, but who was greater at that day than Ptolemy.

William Penn, although a man of birth, in his wisdom saw that court trappings were antagonistical to the condition of true greatness, and therefore humbled by an abiding sense of his duties and responsibilities, denied himself position and power, took upon himself the

outward garb of humility and practiced by its precepts. What? but the simplicity of his manner, his humble demeanor, and the manifest simplicity of his nature ever wooed to favor and reconciliation the inexorable and irreconcilable savages of the forests. The very obscurity in which he had buried himself, and the humility and self-denial which he practiced, were the secrets of the unlimited power and the ascendancy he had acquired over the mind of the red man.

Homer who tuned his lyre upon the rocky Islands of the Archipelago, was both poor and blind.

Shakespeare was the son of a butcher. In early life the poet followed the trade of his father, and when he slew a calf it was the subject of a fiery declamatory speech. His works constitute an imperishable monument to his memory and need no comment from us.

The Scottish bard was only another name for nature's poet. The most touching, and sweetest poet that ever wrote, or sung, was the author of the "Cotter's Saturday Night." Burns, in the sound of whose very name there is music and poetry, was the son of an humble and obscure farmer, whose cottage stood upon the banks of the Ayr. His poetically inspired productions have been read throughout civilization, and as universal is the fame of the humble Highland farmer. Language fails to express the admiration felt for one whose memory is so green in the bosom of every one whose heart is susceptible of those loftiest emotions which are an honor to our nature.

And who has not read the "Gentle Shepherd;" if there be one, let him procure the works of Burn's countryman, Allen Ramsey. He was the son of a worker in the leadmines, and became one of the most natural pastoral poets of his time. Bloomfield, too, the son of a tailor was early orphanised, was compelled to maintain himself by the same avocation, and during his labors composed one of his poems, which reflected so much credit upon his talents. "The Farmer's Boy;" the title of this production is remembered with much regard by literary men every where. Other works soon followed, until the name of Bloomfield stands conspicuously enrolled among the great poets who have delighted the world. Goldsmith was one of nine children of a poorly endowed clergyman, (a position about as flattering as that of a poorly paid physician). He however, was well educated, but afterward traveled over all Europe with no other means than his flute, with which he was enabled to roam. His first poem was the "Traveler," which was followed by other works of still greater celebrity.

The most distinguished sacred poet, theologian, and logician, was Dr. Isaac Watt. The name of Dr. Watt is known wheresoever his valuable works have been distributed, and these are co-extensive with Christianity. He was the deformed and decrepid son of a boarding-school teacher.

Roger Sherman rose from the depth of obscurity to a position of prominence and usefulness to which few can ever attain. He burst the shackles which indigence and obscurity imposed, and, from his seat on the cobbler's bench, he was lifted up to a seat on the highest judicial tribunal of the country. He dignified and still more exalted that position by the depth of his research, by his profound legal abilities, and by the bright example presented in the unsullied purity of his motives and acts in life.

The distinguished champion of colonial rights, the eloquent and fearless advocate of American liberty, Patrick Henry, escaped from an obscurity in which at one period of his life he seemed doomed to continue. The abashed stammerer became one of the most fervent, eloquent, and animated orators of the times. His stirring appeals, his vivid descriptions, his forcible denunciations,—all expressed with so much ardor and emotion as to be beyond the power of resistance.—Yet this ardent patriot and unequalled orator, had not the capacity to make agriculture profitable, or manage the business of a small retail shop, in both of which he engaged and successively abandoned.

William Wirt rose from humble circumstances, and, in after life, by his habits had well nigh irrecoverably wrecked his reputation by his own moral faults. One remaining spark of self-respect, united to the keen demands of necessity, awakened in him a determination to recover himself and rise from his degraded position, from which he triumphantly escaped, and rose to one of the proudest and loftiest known to intellectual fame.

Another name, the recollection of which is cherished by his countrymen, who prefer to speak of him by the sacred title of the "Father of his Country;" a name which more nearly expresses the filial regard of his descendants, who are the beneficiaries of a great inheritance, and is more ample than the high sounding and pompous expressions of empty fame and glory. George Washington! was the son of a clergyman, in no flattering position, with regard to wealth or prominence. Once but a "young buckskin," who had the temerity "to teach a British General how to fight," afterward made a conquest

of the proud army of Great Britain, with a provincial army in rags, and almost without food; and who, once the humble surveyor, rose to the loftiest position ever occupied by mortal man on earth.

In more modern times there have been illustrious examples of men of humble stations in life rising to the highest and loftiest positions in the world. We apply this term in its extensive sense to positions and places in our own country, for here are found the loftiest stations ever occupied by man. Yes in this plain and simple government are enjoyed the highest fame and the most distinguished honors. They who fill these stations with ability and faithfulness are entitled to the highest mead of praise, and therefore those who have discharged these high trusts, have added the brightest lustre to their names. Instances may be found, where, after a life of brilliant usefulness, now repose in their tombs, in the shades of Mount Vernon, of the Hermitage, of Ashland, Monticello and Marshfield.

We forbear entering upon sacred ground, more strongly to fortify our position. The instances of austere humility, rigorous abasement, and self denial, are familiar to all, as well as the divine precept that the "humble shall be magnified." But subsequently after truth and light had been buried and extinguished in the impenetrable gloom of the dark ages, during which there was moral and intellectual night; the humble and unpretending Martin Luther come forth, brushed away the mist which obscured the horizon and permitted the sun of truth and light to shine forth. The results of this single and humble individual, who can estimate? The further consideration, of the consequences to mankind and the world, we leave to those whose sacred and solemn duty it is to investigate and enforce them.

We have now shown that the grand and stupendous works in nature acknowledge their origin in infinitely small particles and humble atoms,—that the great discoveries and inventions in the arts and sciences were made, by men occupying humble positions in life,—that the most distinguished and illustrious men of all ages have risen from humble origin, and that the great moral, social, and civil systems originated with humble projectors and advocates.

But you will enquire what has this to do with the objects for which you are assembled here? What connexion with medical science? In answer to such enquiries, we remark emphatically that medical science is one of these great systems of the world—grand in its inception and glorious in its consequences,—that it has been sanctified by

the humble circumstances of its origin and subsequent progress,—by the good it has already accomplished and is still accomplishing, and therefore because of these considerations, like every other system of humanity and benevolence, it is the result of the designs and appointments of Providence, and we think it would be no difficult task to show that the inspired men of old, understood in part, or in whole, the laws governing the physical body, for he, to whom was delivered the unexceptionable decade for the moral and civil government of man, remarked when speaking of the blood. “FOR THE LIFE OF THE FLESH IS IN THE BLOOD,” again, “FOR IT IS THE LIFE OF ALL FLESH, THE BLOOD OF IT IS THE LIFE THEREOF” and further “FOR THE LIFE OF ALL FLESH IS THE BLOOD THEREOF” and again “BUT FLESH WITH THE LIFE THEREOF WHICH IS THE BLOOD THEREOF.” Now without calling down the anger of the Solidists, or adopting wholly the Humoral doctrines, no physiologist will deny that the blood is the great nutrient current and the channel through which nutrition is conveyed to every tissue of the body; and every pathologist is aware, that when the blood is poisoned, the whole system is diseased. These are the doctrines entertained and inculcated by medical men of this day. Those who follow the parti-colored *ioesus fatui* in medicine, may feel inclined to doubt this position, but when they are informed that these very principles, almost in letter, are those taught by the teachers and medical philosophers of this day, they are left seriously to reflect upon the delicate and responsible position they occupy, in opposing principles, the truth of which is so well sustained. There are false theories in medicine, as well as in religion, and there are skeptics propagating false doctrines, in the one, as well as in the other. They both arise from the same cause, a doubting, disbelieving, mental and moral nature, which prefer mystification to the development of the simple laws of nature, and wonders to plain and simple truths. To be skeptical in one thing, where facts are every day presented fully sustaining it, is to be skeptical in all, and he who denies that there is truth in the system of medicine, now taught by our philosophers, and which has been improved during the mutations and changes of the world, for the same reason would disclaim against astronomy, mathematics, geology and botany, for they have struggled, side by side, with medicine—regularly and progressively. He who would deny the truths of these sciences, would find reason to deny the inspired writings themselves.

Among the Greeks, but little attention was paid to medicine, until the Esclepiades sprung up, and after this a time, Hippocrates was hailed as a great benefactor, because he applied himself to the investigation of its principles, and for the first time in the history of medicine, he gave his attention to the investigation of anatomy. Following him, came Galen, whose opinions and doctrines lived for several centuries, when his works were collected together, and burnt by Paracelsus. Meantime, the Romans paid but little attention to medicine and paid it just as LITTLE respect. Not only did they treat it with indifference, but they heaped obloquy upon it. Not only did they regard it as a mean and humble calling, but they disgraced it even more by making it the duty of their menials. Slaves from Greece were bought and kept in families for the discharge of this disgraceful office. They could not believe that diseases could be cured by any other power than that emanating from the Gods. It was therefore the duty of sorcerers and mountebanks, who were a disgraced and a despised class. No prominent man in Rome would practice magical chants, and therefore for a long period, a darker stain could not be affixed to the reputation of an individual, than to assign to him the duty of curing diseases. The office was therefore left to sybils and juglars as appropriate to their position in society. Subsequently however, Rome did more to cultivate and perpetuate medicine, than any other nation, although they had previously assigned it a low position and permitted it to struggle up to consequence and character under humble and degrading circumstances. Cato gave it his considerate attention and wrote several learned works upon the subject and yet, he persecuted and sent out of the country all the Greek physicians among whom was the learned Archagathus.

Celsus followed Cato in a work of high merit; and, following, in the order of prominence and conspicuousness, was Andromachus, from Crete. We might follow its history, mark the stages of advancement, and present the characters who have contributed to it, up to the present time, but we forbear. We have only referred to so much of its early history in order to show the humble circumstances under which it was introduced, as one of the great systems and schemes of beneficence, charity and humanity, which now adorns the world, and which for efficiency and utility is second only to that institution proclaiming "peace on earth and good will to man."

As a beneficent scheme, it seeks to alleviate the suffering and as-

suage the griefs and woes of our fellow men. To be the instrument, in the hands of Providence, in saving life, is to hold a position the most exalted among men. To be able to relieve suffering, when a cure is even impossible, is to fulfill a distinguished office and perform an important function in life. To smooth the bed of death and relieve the sufferer of its severer inflictions, to enable our dying fellow mortal to glide down softly to the tomb, with the usual agonies unfelt and unendured, are attributes and duties, in the discharge of which, humanity will shed its grateful tears over, and for which angels will smile with joy.

It is every where on its errand of mercy. You will find it dispensing its blessings and benefits in the "mad house," where "the mind is lost in the stormy deserts of the brain." Here by his instrumentality the wandering intellect is brought back, and reason and rationality restored. The imaginary horrors, experienced during the night of the mind, are by the skill and treatment of the physician, moral, mental, and physical, driven away and dispelled. But medical science has not only relieved the mind from the bondage of darkness, but it has loosed the chains, which ignorance and inhumanity had put upon their limbs, thereby riveting the disease, and confirming the deplorable malady upon them. While Pinel was opening the prison doors of filthy cells, in which these unhappy objects were incarcerated for half a century, he not only loosed the chains that bound them, but by this very act restored the mind also to mental light and liberty. The different asylums of the world, erected by the philanthropy and liberality of a christian people, as monuments of their christian sympathy, are managed, conducted and controlled by medical men, with the happiest results to suffering humanity.

The wards of our hospitals, and other similar benevolent enterprises for the relief of our afflicted fellow beings, are attended by medical men, who make their abode amid cries and groans of agony, and the keen suffering of their afflicted fellow men.

There he is to console the suffering, to raise the drooping and cast down spirits with the soothing whispers of hope, and to give consolation and promise, to the sinking and dying. Day by day, he is in communion with sorrow and woe, and hourly dispensing blessings and benefits.

A frightful epidemic with its grim and ghastly features, enters the

gates of the populous city—or penetrates into dense settlements, and crowded communities. It rages with fearful malignancy, and parents are made childless, children made orphans, and homes made desolate. Deep despair marks the features of every living being, and sorrow and woe fill the minds of the survivors. Where now in these times of trial and general distress, is the physician? The history of all epidemic visitations will furnish the answer. He is abroad, on his mission of mercy, and while others seek safety in flight, he is at his post of duty, faithfully and manfully contending with the deadly foe. Very often too, he dies in the struggle himself, and follows to the silent tomb those who were beyond his power to save.

As a great almoner of good medical science has not been contented with the discharge of those duties, the fortunate tendencies of which experience has made familiar to community and its members. It has been on the road of enquiry for still greater capacities and powers.—The attribute of humanity has given direction and an incentive to enquiry, and investigation following, has resulted in the discovery of large additions to the means and appliances of relief. The improvements in surgical skill by which the infliction of unnecessary pain and suffering has been prevented; in very many instances, are triumphs of themselves worthy the great objects to be accomplished. Formerly hot searing irons were used to arrest hemorrhage in capital operations and caldrons of boiling oil were prepared into which the stump of an amputated limb was immersed, in order to arrest the bleeding.—Parre invented the ligatures of silk, which cost no suffering, and were painless in their use, and yet, he was, at that early period of the history of the world, prosecuted for the innovation upon an old and barbarous custom.

Actuated by humanity, Jenner prosecuted his enquiries into vaccination, the result of which, has saved millions of the lives of the human family.

Opium has been extolled by the poets as almost a "divinity" because of the repose it affords from suffering and anguish.

Chloroform is another potent article, in hushing to sleep the senses and rendering them unconscious to physical distress. It has high claims upon our gratitude, for not only is pain unfelt, but also are the mental terrors, often more severe than physical torture, itself, unheeded under surgical operations.

The doctrines of hygiene are fully discussed and anxiously enforced

by members of the profession, who have written valuable treatises upon the subject. He is emphatically a benefactor of his species who, will point out the means by which diseases may be avoided. They have regarded this as much their duty, as to cure when sickness assails. * And certainly, if mankind would but listen to the admonitions and warnings of medical men, their services in the sick chamber would not be so often required. But with some persons whose own superior abilities, are so much above the acquirements of the best educated medical men, it is regarded by them, as a mark of rare and exquisite genius to treat their opinions with contempt, and follow the dictates of their own better judgments. And there are others who, selfish themselves, would deny that there were disinterested acts, performed by any one, and therefore are prone to doubt the sincerity of those who would give advice contrary to their own interest.

In our cities and municipal organizations health officers are appointed and these are usually taken from the ranks of the profession. In the discharge of their duties they are compelled to visit the dens of squalidity and filth, to seek out deleterious agents and elements destructive to public health, and provide for their abatement. Quarantine, and other sanatory regulations, required to protect communities from the invasion and spread of contagious diseases, are dependent upon the profession for their establishment and effectiveness.

From an examination of the bills of mortality and by the institution of comparison, it is apparent that in proportion to the number attacked with disease a less number die now than formerly. This fact has been well ascertained; which shows that medical science is, year after year, acquiring more and more control over disease.

But who of all the professions or departments of life, save those actually employed in it, have done more for the advancement of the cause of education, than medical men? The wide diffusion of knowledge, by the common school system, has ever received the zealous and efficient support of medical men.

Medical science has contributed its full proportion to the advancement of literature. None have a better appreciation of the ancient or Greek classics, than its members, and certainly no one of the liberal professions has derived more of their healthful influences upon the mind, none have more freely acknowledged their peculiar beauty and their unequalled richness.

He who early devoted himself to literature was Hippocrates, whose works, written in the Ionic dialect, so much admired for its perfection and peculiar beauty, stood side by side in point of purity with the dulcet songs of Homer or the historical productions of Heroditus.

The collateral sciences and the arts, have all drawn liberally from the services of the profession. Geology and mineralogy, continue to derive important aid from medical men. Drs. Owen, Shumard, Dean, Hildreth and others eminent in their profession, have enriched natural science by their labors in this department; and what a fund of sedate and interesting knowledge has been secured by their labors?

Agriculture has been a subject of much labor and interest, and an object of much care by the profession of medicine in all ages. Celsus, an eminent physician in the time of Tiberius, wrote several works on the subject, since which, the wisest and best of the profession, have yearly contributed to this important department of the industrial interests of the country.

The chemical analysis of the soils and subsoils, the mode and manner in which the different specimens of vegetable productions glean their nutrient particles and appropriate them to their growth and perfection in the several varieties, was most ably discussed by one of the faculty, but a short time since, in this place.

Although Watt conceived the mode by which the use of steam could be made effective, as a propelling power, still the manner of estimating its temperature and elasticity; so essential to fixed results, certainty and safety in its use, was reserved for the triumphant investigation of Drs. Ure, Young and Dalton, and others in the profession.

Another discovery of great importance to the world, which was invented when the gloom of the dark ages overspread the earth, was that of gunpowder. Roger Bacon, the first, was a physician of that period and expert in all the "customs and questions" of Alchemy. He approached as near the discovery of the philosopher's stone as any other alchemist of that day, or ever will in time to come. In the progress of his experiments in search of this article as in that of *ELIXIR VITÆ*, which was to perpetuate life indefinitely, he blundered upon this important agent in projectiles. And yet he never discovered gold in lead and his gunpowder proved anything else, than a panacea for the prolongation of life.

Medical science has furnished a number of Statesmen and Patriots. In the halls of legislation, they are requisite in the passage of sanatory laws and those involving medico-legal considerations. Dr. Edwards, whilst a member of Congress, obtained the passage of a bill providing for the confiscation of impure drugs, and imposing penalties for their introduction. The consequence is, that a traffic, highly injurious to health and life, has been arrested, and our country is now supplied with pure and certain medicines.

When we turn back to the history of the past, we indulge in proud reflection and grateful retrospection, to that epoch in the history of our beloved country, which marks the pages relating to our revolution. There we find the names of Rush, Bartlett and Warren, all physicians, who mingled in the councils of that trying period. The latter died valiantly fighting upon the battle field, and a monument erected to the memory of the patriot dead—by the gratitude of those who enjoy the blessings for which he shed his blood, now marks the spot where he fell.

Whatever of good is to be found in the vital statistics of the world, has been the result of the labors of medical men, and in a particular manner of Dr. Price. To the Jurist, the Statesman and the Physiologist, they are most important. In proportion to their importance, there is not yet a perfection in this department of knowledge in the world.—The subject however, is in the hands of the profession, who will give it an impetus which will lead to important results.

Such then gentlemen, is the history of medical science, and such its origin. Although cultivated, practiced and propagated by slaves,—spurned by men and treated with contumely, because too degrading for even a passing regard, by those of prominence and influence; yet it has risen to its present exalted position, and its history is that of every other great system, having its origin in humility and obscurity.—Such too the benefits it has conferred upon the other sciences and the arts, and like them has struggled into existence under opposing and discouraging circumstances. It has been sanctified by the highest attributes of humanity, characterized by its all-pervading and happy influences upon the well-being of man, and honored and ennobled because of the number, the devotion, the sacrifices, and the character of its disciples and votaries. It is with the noble purpose of entering upon its duties as the department of usefulness in life, which you

have selected for yourselves, that you are now here among us.. The preparation is scarcely less arduous, or less responsible. In your initiatory steps, you will often falter, will often find yourselves groping in darkness and your pathway obstructed. Patience must be exercised until the gloom be dispelled, and faithfulness and perseverance will remove out of the way, opposing barriers. High attainments must be reached for, by an upward and an onward movement, for be assured they will never, unsolicited, descend to you. To attain to the honorable and dignified position to which you aspire in the world, you must labor to deserve it. And yet we would not discourage you. The dark and threatening storm-cloud which overcasts all nature in frightful gloom, often shows a silvery bright light along its margin. It may blacken the heavens for a time with its dark outline, but soon the glories of the sun, which had been temporarily obscured, may pour forth beneath its dark shadows, and reflect upon its sombre face the bright hues of the rainbow of promise. It rests with yourselves, if you desire the honors and rewards of a life devoted to the best interests of humanity. There does not exist that difference which is generally supposed among minds, for subsequent circumstances often modify their destiny, in a good degree for usefulness and efficiency. Perseverance, energy and action, are more frequently the elements of true greatness than intuition, mental strength and power.

The history of all great men, as has already been shown, is the tale of toils, labors, disappointments and sacrifices. They have willed,—and it was done—they have persevered, and it was accomplished.

Then let no circumstance discourage, let no difficulty dispirit you, let no obstacle arrest your progress. Be true to yourselves and you will be just to the great object for which you came, as well as to those who follow you with their ardent hopes and wishes for your prosperity and success.

The institution, in which you have enrolled yourselves for a time as pupils, offers you high inducements. If you studiously apply yourselves you will not go away disappointed in the prospect entertained for improvement. A strict supervisory care will be exercised over your progress and every effort will be exerted for your advancement. It is under highly favorable auspices and its capacity for usefulness is still on the increase. There is a united harmonious de-

sign, as there will be a united effort on the part of your instructors, to lead you on from step to step in the progress of your acquirements, and your best interests will be the constant and earnest study of the faculty.

It is under the parental care of the State Government through its trustees and it has the confidence and the prayers of community for its success. Our wise Legislators look upon it with the deepest solicitude and interest because it is intimately incorporated and blended with the well being of the State. The profession with a zeal and ardor worthy themselves and their high calling hope for it, labor for it, and look with pride upon it, as the dispenser of good and the fountain of medical truth and light. And its ALUMNI placed around as sentinels, ever vigilant, and ever active in the exercise of their professional obligations, look back, and send back, their sincere heartfelt prayers for the continued success of their alma mater.

Under such auspices, with such encouragements, with the unanimity which prevails in its councils, with the devotion which every one connected with it displays for its present success and ultimate triumph; it is destined to a high and an elevated position as one of the institutions of the State. And if constant, unwearied effort and zeal, ever has or ever will effect aught in any great enterprise, much will be accomplished in this, because of the settled and fixed determination that it shall prove still more worthy of being sustained, and that the profession and the people will enrol it as one of the essential elements of scientific advancement in the State. All that is required is that the favoring smile of a generous public and an enlightened profession may be continued to it, and that their protecting ægis will be thrown over it. Then difficulties may surround it, enemies may assail it, and treasonable conspiracies may be formed to crush it, but all will fall harmless at its threshold or reflex back upon the authors of the foul and sacrilegious attempt at the destruction of one of the State's own institutions, and an object of solicitude on the part of the people. It would be vandalism to disturb one single fibril in its youthful structure, lest its healthfulness be interfered with and its capacity for good be impaired.

We would call the attention of the citizens of the city, to the large increase over last session. A class, we are free to say without the fear of the charge of adulation, of as much intellectual promise, as any

other class of the number. They are here from our own state, from other states around us; and some of them from the Eastern States; and nearly all are strangers. We ask for them, that which we are assured they will receive at your hands; that considerate attention which they well deserve. And we would also say to our citizens, as we would say to the people of the state, you have evinced the liveliest interest in the success of this institution, and you have repeatedly given substantial evidence of your regard for it. In this, you have acted intelligently, for the benefits substantively, mentally, morally and socially, will be felt by you, and with the growth of the institution, these benefits will multiply. We therefore ask a continuation of your friendship, and we do not as a faculty crave it because they are favors personally conferred upon us, for we derive no profit or emolument from it, but we ask it in the name of medical science, of the profession, and of society at large.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE
Bethesda, Maryland



ERRATA—

4th Page, 15th line from top, for "*strugged*" read struggled.

5th Page, 10th line from top, for "*man*" read mind.

6th Page, 21st line from top, for "*promontory*" read promontories.

8th Page, 2nd line from top, for the capital "*C*" substitute the small letter.

8th Page, 8th line from top, strike out one "*d*" in shaddowed.

9th Page, 9th line from top, for "*Albright*" read Arkright.

16th Page, 20th line from top, for "*triumph*" read triumphs.

21st Page, 8th line from top, for "*prossession*" read profession.

A press of engagements prevented a more careful revision.

ERRATA

The Page 10th line from top, "and" should be "and" and "and" should be "and".

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