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Brodie (Wm)

[Compliments of the Author.]

MICHIGAN
STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY.

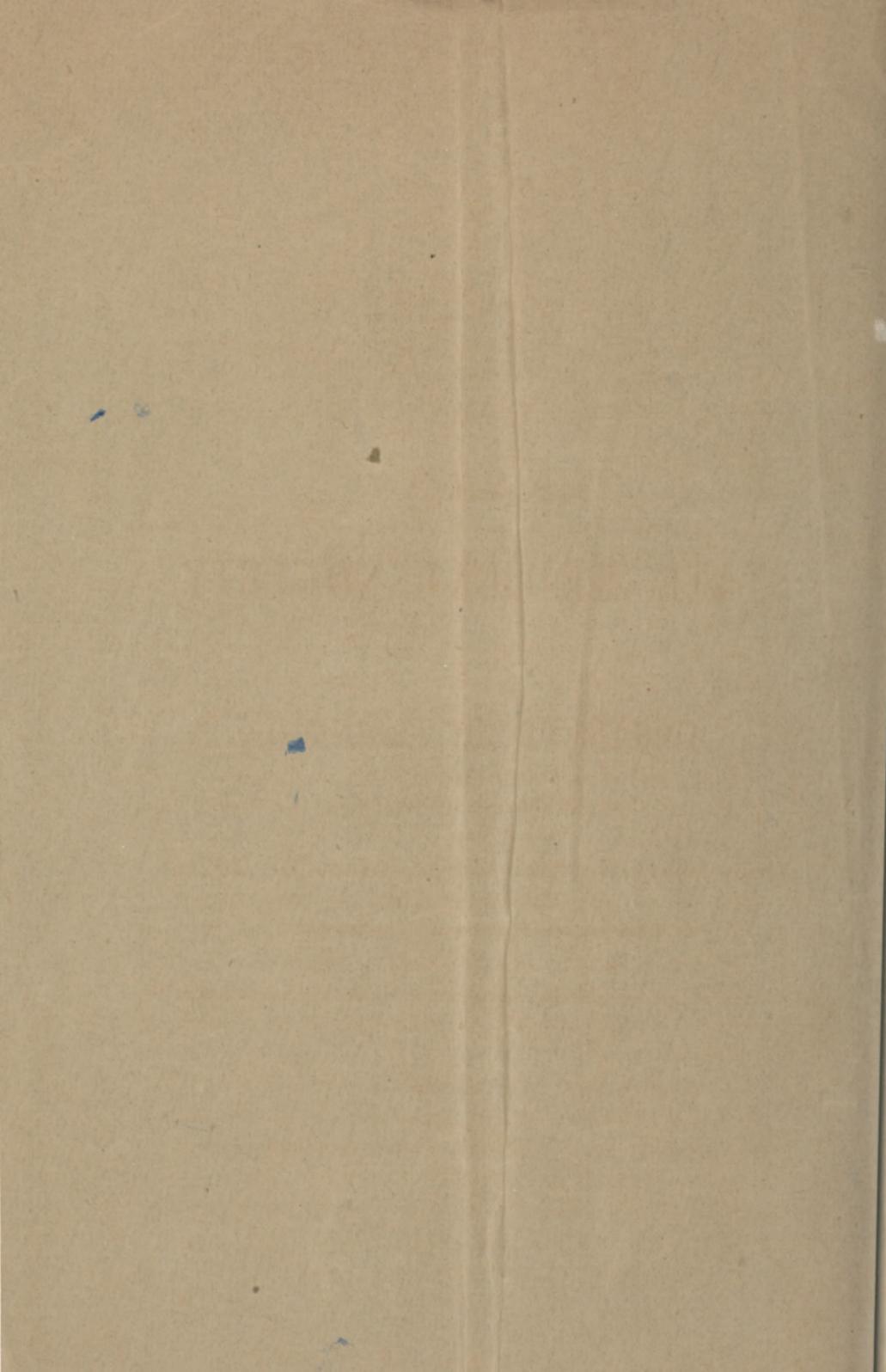
ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT,

DR. WM. BRODIE OF DETROIT,

Delivered at Ann Arbor, May 10, 1876.

(A REPRINT FROM THE SOCIETY'S TRANSACTIONS.)





*Presented by
the Author*

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ADDRESS

OF THE PRESIDENT, Wm. BRODIE, M. D., OF DETROIT.



Doctors, Members of the State Medical Society :

The Tenth Annual Meeting of this Society is now in session, and it gives me great pleasure to congratulate you upon its return,—its growth and success, and the evidence of increasing interest.

For the first time in its history it has met in the city of Ann Arbor, the seat of the University of Michigan,—an Institution in which we have great State pride,—and from whose halls many of you now present have received your diplomas to practice the art of medicine and surgery.

When the Legislature of Michigan, in the session of 1852, repealed all laws relative to the practice of medicine and the organization of State and county medical societies, it removed all restrictions and obligations save a suit at law for malpractice. It opened the field, in the broadest sense, to any and every person, whether educated or ignorant, qualified or unqualified, to practice the healing art, so that the State was at once overrun with all varieties and all grades of medical impostors.

There was no legal nucleus around which the educated physicians could gather ; but the necessities of social intercourse, and the desire to sustain the then infant Department of Medicine and Surgery in the University, brought many of the physicians of the State together in this city, when the first

voluntary State Medical Society was formed, and held its first meeting in the hall of the Medical Department at the annual commencement of 1853.

For five years the Society met here when the medical commencements were held, and many were the valuable papers presented and discussed at the meetings. At the session held in 1857, it was decided to make the Society peripatetic, and the next session was held in Detroit, the second in Lansing, from which place it adjourned to meet in the then village of Coldwater, January 18, 1860. But three members out of Coldwater were present. An adjournment was had to Ann Arbor on commencement day, but so few were present that it was the last meeting held.

On the 5th of January, 1866, a convention of physicians was held in the city of Detroit, when the present Society was organized. Constituted as we are, upon a different basis from any other State Medical Society within my knowledge, we come together from all parts of our great and growing State to this annual gathering to renew our local relations, to invigorate our mental faculties, and take council together upon any and all matters that necessarily arise in the practice of such a profession as ours.

Man, with rare exceptions, is a social being, and enjoys the coming together of those who are in special sympathy with him. Indeed it is a necessity, and to medical men exemplifies itself in the formation of local, State and national associations whereby opportunity is given to discuss individual opinions, the merits of which may be of the greatest value, and the whole world benefited thereby.

The social renewal of old acquaintance, the laying aside for the time of the daily toil of both body and mind that inures to the doctorate are only a few of the fruits of our annual gathering.

But the greater object of thus associating is addressed to the

mind, and the meeting is successful or unsuccessful according to the amount of intellectual pabulum furnished.

The essay, the reports of committees, voluntary communications, expressing more particularly individual views on either a specific disease in its general or local character, or some special investigation into some one of the many specialties into which the practice of medicine and surgery is now divided, are simply the dishing up of the repast, the enjoyment resting in the discussion and amplification of the matter presented and the opinions expressed.

Among the many objects that have attracted the attention of this Society, the chief has been that of medical education, and scarcely a session has passed without some action on that subject.

It was not, however, until the meeting held in Saginaw City, that definite proceedings were taken, when a representative committee of the Society was appointed "to confer with the Board of Regents and the Medical Faculty in respect to the relation of the Medical Department of the University to the medical profession of the State, and in respect to the future conduct of the said Department under any contingencies necessitating a change in its organization."

On the 24th of June following the committee met in this city and held a conference with the Regents and Medical Faculty, and presented their views in writing. The paper was referred by the Board to the Medical Committee, and was published as an appendix in the transactions of the Society for 1873.

At the succeeding meeting of the Society the committee made a report of their labors, which was unanimously adopted.

At the meeting held in Detroit last year the following resolution was adopted: "That the Regents of the University are hereby requested by the State Medical Society to make, as soon as practicable, a full three years' graded course of study and

lectures obligatory upon all students graduating in the Medical Department, and that the requirements for admission be made equal to those for admission into the Scientific Department.

The past action of the Society in reference to the Medical Department of the University is proof conclusive of its deep and abiding interest in its welfare and success, and also of its deep solicitude that its pupils should be highly educated and its graduates without their superiors in the land.

It gives me great pleasure to inform you that your labors and desires have not been without results. The first part of the resolution has been the subject of consideration by the medical committee of the Board of Regents, and also by the medical faculty, and so soon as the necessary pecuniary and other arrangements can be completed, practical effect will be given to your request.

The second part of the resolution has also received prompt attention, and at the opening of the past course of lectures examinations were held and fourteen applicants were denied admission for lack of satisfactory preliminary education. This is only a beginning of the good work, and to make it permanent and more thorough, the faculty should and ought to have your full and free support.

It is not within my knowledge that any other medical school (save Harvard or the Chicago Medical College), whether free or private, can show a better record and an example every medical school should follow.

Public opinion should be so educated as to compel all medical schools to sift their applicants closely, and allow none to enter their portals save such as are mentally, morally, and physically qualified.

It has been the cry of the schools: Give us a higher grade of students and we will return you a higher grade of graduates, thus throwing all the responsibility on the profession. That

day, however, has passed away, and the responsibility cannot be shirked by the schools any longer. They, and they alone must bear the onus of the character of the education their graduates possess. The general practitioner has no time to enter into the minutiae of educating the neophyte, and his name to a certificate can only be of value as a note of reference for his moral character and position in the community from which he hails.

The medical colleges have the entire power of educating in their own hands; they can receive and they can refuse; and when the intelligence of the graduate is made the standard of excellence, instead of numbers and large cash assets, then will that institution merit the rewards and benefits of both the public and the profession.

The time was, in the medical history of our country, that physicians were needed faster than they could be collegiately educated. The written learning of the profession was comprised in a few books, and a short time only was needed to read them; the preceptor showed the student how to prepare his medicines and how to apply them, and the head that held the best brains proved the most successful.

Now the status is entirely changed. The learning of the profession has become so extensive, even in its elementary character, that the short term of three years is not sufficient for its consideration. Many of the specialties alone require from one to two years of time to be thoroughly mastered, and the general practitioner should be as well educated in the specialty as the specialist; for often when the latter fails in the cure, it is to the former the patient returns for the recovery of his health.

The day is not far distant, and every effort should be made by the profession to bring it early about, when medical education will be conducted on the same principle for a degree as the literary. A four years' course, with a preliminary standard,—

regular daily recitations and a final course of clinical instruction, the authority to practice to be determined by a distinct and independent board.

The efforts of this Society with the late Legislature "to establish a State board to secure the registration of physicians, and require of them certain general qualifications," nearly proved successful, and I would respectfully recommend that the Committee on Medical Legislation be continued, and action on the subject be again urged upon the next Legislature and indorsed by the Society.

The subject of insanity lies in the province of the physician, and is one in which we as a profession are deeply interested. Modern researches and observation are daily informing us that the term *insane* is very broad and significant, especially so in criminal jurisprudence, and it behooves us, who ought to be the arbiters between the people and the criminal, to be thoroughly informed on the subject. Not only that the plea of insanity may be justly proven, and the person charged at the bar be intelligently protected if insane, but also that the people, his accusers, may be protected against any false plea made by the criminal. For if the crime committed be done by reason of absence of the normal condition of the mind, the physician should be the proper person to prove it to the satisfaction of the court and jury so that justice may have its true course.

Not only is this plea very frequently made, in matters criminal, but in the disposal of property by will dissatisfied heirs, in order to benefit themselves against the true intention of the testator, often seek the intervention of courts at law, their main reliance being the opinions of their medical friend.

There is no one subject upon which the profession is called publicly to express their opinions that requires more knowledge and skill (and really has less) than this question of insanity. How much, and to what extent, the brain in mature life is governed and influenced by the many conditions from conception

to maturity! The product of an inebriated father or mother, or both; syphilis in either parent or both; convulsions antepartem; convulsions in childhood; inflammation or concussion of the brain, either in infancy, youth, or adult age; each and every one of these conditions must certainly affect the mental faculties more or less.

At the present time, in our schools of medical learning, a few lectures are given by the professor of medical jurisprudence on this subject, when it is dismissed as no particular part of the curriculum of study for the degree of doctor of medicine. Indeed, some schools have not even a professor, and medical jurisprudence is not taught at all. How, under such circumstances, can the young physician be expected to advise either a court or jury, or give an intelligent opinion whether a person is insane or not? "In Ireland," according to the N. Y. Medical Record, "the increase of insanity is so rapid that the Commissioners of Lunacy, in view of the facts, strongly recommended the systematic study of insanity in the regular schools of medicine."

It is an appalling fact that insanity is on the increase, growing with the wealth and intelligence of the people, and therefore demanding not only the skill of the physician, but the wisdom of the law-giver to meet its necessities.

Our own State has entered upon the erection of another asylum, and statistics inform us that when completed and filled the poor-houses will still be surfeited by a class not receivable in the asylums, as being non-curable or chronic.

It is a hard thing to confess the fallibility of science in the cure of a diseased mind. Yet, the fact nevertheless remains, and it belongs to the State to provide that these persons should be well and properly cared for. How? is the problem; and the necessity is imperative, whether by farm labor and cottage receptacles, or the more elaborate asylum or hospital. You, gentlemen, can have a large voice in forming the public opinion.

Dr. Jno. B. Chapin of Brigham Hall, Canandaigua, New York, in a report on provision for the chronic insane to the American Medical Association, says: "Every plan for the relief and care of the insane should be comprehensive and include all conditions of insanity, more especially the chronic insane poor, usually sent directly or indirectly to the poor-houses." "An organization supplementing the asylum or hospital should comprise arrangements for the custodial care of the quiet, harmless, and manageable insane, mostly of the chronic class. Two-thirds of all the insane are of this class. This organization should be in the form of a colony made up of detached buildings for both sexes, having a relation of contiguity to the hospital.

It would supplement the hospital by affording more extensive facilities for classification. While the hospital building would furnish the extreme of restraint, the colony organization would reduce it to the simplest form of surveillance. The colony should be composed of several buildings, which might be located with reference to the various employments incident to a large establishment, as the cultivation of fruit, and the garden, the farm, the care of stock, and certain mechanical operations. Among the chronic insane are to be found a large number who possess, notwithstanding the mental impairment, physical strength unimpaired.

They are capable, under the direction of judicious influences, of performing the usual manual labors of a farm. The physical strength remains, but the force of will to direct is impaired. A certain proportion are feeble, mentally and physically, but susceptible to the impressions of surrounding circumstances.

Of the different forms of occupation, not any contributes so much in its variety as farm labor.

Under the influence of regular employment the monotony and idleness which render the life of the insane so intolerable, and so often find expression in fitful outbursts of violence, will disappear. As a remedial measure out-of-door occupation

is invaluable, and in this way we can explain the reported recoveries of patients in the poor-houses, after they have been discharged as incurable from an asylum. As the connection of a large farm with well organized departments of labor would afford employment for males, so the various domestic indoor avocations which females could follow would be encouraged." These are the views of a gentleman experienced in the management and treatment of the insane; and the crowded condition of our poor-houses with chronic insane is a sufficient excuse to bespeak for them our sympathy and earnest endeavor for their amelioration.

The State has already taken the acute insane as her own wards, and yet another class of our fellow citizens, male and female, need her fostering care. I refer to those persons who have become so habituated to the use of intoxicating drinks as to be beyond the government of their own wills, the influence of personal friends, or the rebuke of the public in its cessation.

For the reception and cure of such persons inebriate asylums have been erected by some of the States, but from some fault in their organization or management thus far they have been of little benefit. It does seem as though such an institution with the legal guards of our insane asylums thrown around it would be of incalculable benefit.

The inebriate in a certain sense is an insane person. He cannot control his passions any more than his appetite while under the influence of strong drinks. His body and mind both become enfeebled, and he commits acts for which he cannot be really accountable.

From the medical profession of the State the ball should be set in motion for such an institution, and the report of a committee from this society at its next annual meeting, with full statistics setting the matter in a clear light before the people, would soon result in the proper legislative action.

The subject of medical advertising, so-called, is exciting considerable interest in the profession, and is worthy of your attention. Code of Ethics, American Medical Association, Section 3 of Article I., of the duties of physicians to each other and the profession at large, is the only published law on the subject, and many are the diversified constructions put upon it.

The faculties of medical colleges and associations under the name of Medical Dispensaries publicly offer advice under the guise of a clinic to the poor gratis (and were the poor the only recipients the object would not be so objectionable), and claim in so doing they do not evade either the letter or spirit of the section, while the individual practitioner must be held rigidly not only to the spirit but the letter. The former can indulge in the use of the public prints directly or through the aid of the reporter, while the latter doing the same acts must be styled an empiric and dealt with accordingly. The editor of the "Medical Record" has taken the subject in hand, and in a series of editorials is throwing much light on the subject, and we also learn "that the subject of medical advertising is attracting the attention of our British cousins. On the whole they take very strenuous grounds. Not only do they object to the advertising of medical colleges in the daily papers, but to the announcement of medical works and their review in the secular prints." Surely some remedy should be adopted so as to place all on the same plane.

The subject of Hygiene is one of important interest, not only to the physician, but to the citizen. The laws of health cannot well be disregarded without entailing their consequences. Heretofore this subject has occupied the attention of the different medical societies, State and local, but since the advent of the State Board of Health this interest has in a measure abated, owing to the fact that the Board of Health has taken it under its own special protection. It is evident

from an examination of the reports of the Board that the profession outside thereof take but little interest in its labors and furnish but a small modicum of their proceedings.

This can be accounted for on two grounds at least, which are fundamental to its success: 1st. The board is composite, having professional and non-professional elements in its formation, when it should be entirely medical. 2d. Although the law of its organization says nothing about its political complexion, yet all the members have been of the same political creed as the Governor,—by implication men of medical and scientific attainments, with equal, if not of more experience, but holding contrary political opinions, have not been thought worthy of appointment. Science should know no political belief, but when it so prominently thrusts forward, as in the organization of the State Medical Board, it presents sufficient reasons for the lack of interest on the part of many of the profession. Yet another reason may be added. By the law, instead of each township, village, or city having a well-informed physician properly compensated, and as such properly recognized by law, to examine into the hygienic conditions of the locality under his jurisdiction and report to the Board, the whole subject is left to be examined and reported upon by the clerk of such township, village, or city board of health, whose education might be so limited on the subject as not to know whether excessive moisture or excessive dryness is most productive of malaria. Notwithstanding all this and the consequent inaccuracies of statistics collated under such circumstances, the Board have presented a large amount of practical information, and which has been distributed to the public through their annual reports prepared by their efficient Secretary, a member of this society, —Henry B. Baker, M. D., Lansing. In view of the advantages to be derived in a sanitary point of view, I would suggest that a committee of one from each organized county in

the State, be appointed to report upon its hygienic condition at the next annual meeting.

Within the last twenty-five years a great change has taken place in the practice of medicine and surgery. With the exception of special attention to the eye and ear, such a practitioner as a specialist a quarter of a century ago was unknown. To-day the case is different, as is exhaustively exemplified in the experience of Dr. Robert Barns, who says in the *London Lancet*: "I have recently been honored by a visit from a lady of typical modern intelligence, who consulted me about a fibroid tumor of the uterus; and lest I should stray beyond my business, she was careful to tell me that Dr. Brown Sequard had charge of her nervous system, that Dr. Williams attended to her lungs, that her abdominal organs were entrusted to Sir William Gull, that M. Spencer Wells looked after her rectum, and that Dr. Walsh had her heart. If some adventurous doctor should determine to start a new specialty and open an institution for diseases of the umbilicus,—the only region which, as my colleague Mr. Simon says, is unappropriated,—I think I can promise him more than one patient."

Dr. George Jackson Fisher, the late President of the New York State Medical Society, in his Annual Address delivered in Albany, New York, February 3d, 1875, says, and I quote his language as expressing my own views: "We see numerous societies and journals devoted exclusively to a single tissue, organ, class of diseases or special mode of treatment. High and mighty sounding titles, indeed, are the journals of "Neurology and Electrology," of "Otology and Ophthalmology," of "Dermatology and Syphilography," "Gynecology," &c., and exceedingly convenient and taking are the skin and bone, brain and nerve, throat and lung, heart and kidney, rupture and tumor dispensaries which abound in every city.

I am aware of the fact that most of the distinguished specialists of our great cities were general practitioners and thoroughly posted in every department of medicine and surgery before they devoted themselves to a specialty; and that it was not original choice but peculiar circumstances that guided them in the particular line wherein they subsequently became more or less eminent and celebrated. This is true of the great ovariologists, lithotomists, and many oculists, and a few other specialists. What I am anxious to check is the present tendency to increase the number of this already too numerous class of practitioners, and protest against the encouragement of young men to study with reference to practice in a field limited to one organ or a single class of diseases.

I do not wish to be understood that *special studies and researches* should be discouraged. On the contrary let every man select a subject and make a hobby of it as far as it is possible for him to do so, for by this means the greatest contributions have been made to medical science; but never forget that the human body is a harmonious unit, that exclusive *practice* prejudices the mind and narrows the judgment of the physician, that the tendency is to belittle the general practitioner in the public mind, and that the extravagant fees demanded by specialists for treatment or counsel, though a minor, is yet an important consideration to all except the opulent."

At the last session of the Legislature and previous to the late meeting of this society an act was passed and approved April 27th, 1875, authorizing the Board of Regents to establish a Homeopathic Medical College as a branch or department of the University to be located at Ann Arbor, and the Treasurer of the State was directed to pay over to the Board of Regents the sum of \$6,000 annually, to be used exclusively for the benefit of said department.

In conformity to this law the Board of Regents have organized a Homeopathic Medical Department of the University in

this city and one course of instruction has been given. The calendar informs us that only twenty-four students were matriculated in that department, while in the school of regular medicine 313 were in attendance. Unless the future develops a larger annual matriculation a repeal of the law will be imperatively demanded as being a too costly luxury for even its own friends.

Brethren, we are convened in the great centennial year of our national independence, but neither time nor space will permit me even to touch upon the extended march our profession has made during the hundred years now passed. Other minds and other pens will write it, and the proceedings of the Centennial Medical Congress, to be held in the city of Philadelphia on the 4th day of September, may be looked to with interest for that purpose.

Let us as a society take on a fresh impetus, let us keep up with the people in the grand march of improvement. As I have endeavored to show, there is much yet to be done in order to keep our profession in the vanguard of society and science. We should be a unit, each member striving to add his mite to the general fund. Above all be not diverted by outside issues from the straight way that leads to unity, harmony, and strength in all and every matter pertaining to the great and noble profession of legitimate medicine.

