

Hildreth (214)

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

MEDICAL SOCIETY

OF THE

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA,

*Presented
by the
author*

On 30th May, 1877.

AT ITS ANNUAL MEETING IN CLARKSBURG, W. VA.

BY E A HILDRETH, M. D.

[Reprinted from the Transactions for 1877.]



WHEELING:

DAILY INTELLIGENCER STEAM BOOK & JOB PRESS.

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On the 30th of May, 1877, at the Annual Meeting in Clarksburg, W. Va.

BY E. A. HILDRETH M. D.

Gentlemen of the Medical Society of the State of West Virginia :

It is with peculiar feelings of satisfaction and pride that I congratulate you on this, our tenth annual meeting. Although we are yet in the period of adolescence, I am sure we have now every sign and symptom of advancement to a vigorous, healthful, and useful manhood. Most of us are aware that our path has not been strewn with flowers ; on the contrary, our infancy has been attended with all the trials and difficulties incident to tender years ; which discipline, having been fairly gone through with, has so exercised and strengthened our organization, that we may confidently and hopefully progress onward and upward in the great work before us. Work, Gentlemen, is the watchword. Let every member feel deeply impressed with the high calling and nobility of his profession, be urged to that industry and diligence in the study of our science, which imparts freshness and interest to the most common cases of sickness, and spreads a softening charm over the trials and difficulties of professional life.

To us, is entrusted the noblest piece of mechanism which God has framed, "a harp of a thousand strings," whose melodies and discords, cadences and symphonies, are exhibited in the retirements of sickness, under circumstances of pain, suffering, and dissolution, with a loud appeal to snatch the victim from impending death. How shall we perform this sacred duty? Medicine is neither a finished, nor a perfect science; we need all the light shed by the

profoundest study, the skill of experience and judgment, the cool head, and steady hand, to accomplish this great work. The collected light of ages beams around our path; the assiduous and enlightened cultivators of medical science, are able to disentangle the complications and perplexities of disease, and lead the patient to recovery and health. None of us can reach the goal by intuition, or per saltum; it is the fruit of patient persevering effort and toil. The field of inquiry is so vast, that previous habits of study, and careful induction, are essential to surmount the numerous obstacles in the way of advancement and success. Medicine is an eminently progressive science; its rapid advances and wonderful discoveries, have during the last quarter of a century so revolutionized the old modes of thought, and doctrines of disease, as to have necessarily changed their treatment. Those among us who have neglected to keep up to the spirit of progress, or have disregarded the revelations of modern investigation must prove themselves unworthy of public confidence, and fall into disrepute; therefore, it is wise and expedient that we thirst for medical knowledge, "prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good. I believe the regular practitioners of this State, in their attainments and skill will compare favorably with an equal number in any other part of this land; neither they nor their patrons are disposed to sustain charlatanism; but with many, there remains an unliquidated debt they owe their profession; if this delinquency arises from sectionalism, political, social, or ecclesiastical, it is high time for reconciliation and unity. The medical platform contains but one broad plank of ethics and principles, to support and cement the body of the profession in one common bond of fellowship and brotherhood; upon which, every regular physician may fairly and securely stand. From the most reliable sources West Virginia is said to contain "612 physicians and surgeons;" in this enumeration, it is estimated there are 376 to 400 *regular* physicians, the remaining 236 are eclectics, botanic or Thompsonians, herb doctors, cancer doctors and homeopathists. Let us make an examination and analysis of the *legal status* of medical practitioners in the different States of the United States, in order to determine the extent and character of *our claims* in this State.

"Physicians and surgeons" is the term used in a majority of the medical laws of the different States. In all of the States, Physicians are required by law to furnish certificates of death of all persons attended by them, specifying name, age, sex, disease, etc. In 18 States they are required to make stated returns to some State or county officer, of the number and sex of *births*.

In 24 States physicians are by law summoned to attend *Coroner's inquests*, and give their opinion as to the cause of death. In 19 States the bodies of criminals and paupers not claimed by their family or friends, are allowed for *dissection* and advancement of anatomical knowledge. In 21 States a physician or surgeon cannot be compelled by the courts to divulge *secrets of patients* whom he may have attended. In all the States, any physician or surgeon, who shall procure an *abortion* or miscarriage, by any means, unless this treatment is necessary to preserve the woman's life, is liable to fine and imprisonment.

In 10 States "every physician who, while intoxicated, prescribes any poison, drug, or medicine, by which the death of another is produced, even without design on the part of the physician to cause death, is guilty of manslaughter in the 3d degree.

In all the States, either by law or custom, physicians are exempt from *jury service*, and in many from *militia duty*.

In 3 States (Virginia, Oregon and Tennessee) a fee or license being paid into the State treasury, is sufficient authority to practice. A diploma from a respectable medical college is a license to practice in all other States. In Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, New Jersey, Minnesota, New York, Ohio and Wisconsin, the medical profession are *organized by acts of incorporation*, by and under which county and State societies are formed, whose duty it is to examine all applicants for practice, and their diplomas or licenses, and pass upon their qualifications; in New York the President of a county society is empowered to "notify in writing every physician and surgeon in his county who is not a member of the society, to apply for, and receive, within 60 days after notice, a certificate of membership, on pain of forfeiture of license and fine." In the States above named the *regular* physicians are those intended by the medical laws. In Wisconsin, New York and Delaware, the number of delegates each county may send to form the State society is designated, and the latter is made a court of appeal from the local societies. The best organized medical profession in the United States is in Alabama, they declare specifically that *regular* physicians are only received. In all those States where the regular profession is organized under State laws, quacks and irregulars, cannot collect fees by legal procedure; whilst the fees of regulars are not only so collectable, but in some cases made a lien on the decedents estate.*

What is the legal recognition of the medical profession in West Virginia? A physician shall be superintendent of the Hospital for the Insane, examine lunatics, give advice at coroner's inquests, be one of

*See Medical Register by S. W. Butler, M. D.

a committee to inspect jails and keep a record of deaths. A surgeon is allowed on the Colonel's staff, and to attend the Penitentiary.* Our State laws make no allusion to their skill or qualifications.

Gentlemen, I look with confidence to this society as having at all events initiated the necessary reform of the medical profession of this State, as being organized on a firm basis, and long since recognized by the highest medical associations of the United States and Europe. Let us carry her constitution and ethics to every county in the State, persuade, and entreat them to enlist under her banner, to maintain the rights and privileges of regular medicine; to force back the inroads of quackery which threatens to "filch from us our good name" and rob of us of our just desserts. On returning home let every member (where it has not already been done) gather together his worthy brothers, and form a *local society*; there is no good reason why the 400 regular physicians of the State should not become a unit.

With county societies organized after the plan of those of Wisconsin or New York, embracing the whole State, it is fair to presume there would be no valid objection on the part of our Legislature, to grant such societies the chartered privileges enjoyed by many of our sister States. Let us "put our shoulder to the wheel," and by an earnest, continued and united effort, accomplish this desired end. Why should this be done? Because, organization and association are essential to the accomplishment of all ends, or purposes, which cannot be done by a single individual; they lie at the foundation of all governments, dynasties and powers, whether barbarous, civilized, or enlightened. All churches and sects, creeds and professions, be they educational, philosophical, or mechanical, co-operate, combine, and associate. Should not every true physician by voluntary association endeavor to improve in medical knowledge?

Enlightened discussion upon the different modes of practice, tests the value of our opinions and views; an exchange of facts and observations strengthens the reasoning powers, and improves the judgment; a laudable ambition is excited in the mind of every member, not to appear ignorant or unadvised, on matters discussed. We are neither too old, nor too wise to learn. A fraternal feeling is generated by the mutual advantages gained; our glorious profession is advanced, and in helping others we are made happier.

QUACKS AND QUACKERY.

Now, what shall I say of quacks and quackery in this State? I am sure that like Balak of old, if we had any Balaam to call upon to "curse this people from hence," we would long since have brought

*See Code of West Virginia 1868.

him ; but the course of this world is so ordered, that the "tares" will get among the "wheat" and we cannot violently root them out, lest we destroy the wheat also.

We know that quackery is founded on ignorance, secrecy, presumption, and almost every other thing that is bad, and disreputable ; although ignorance is universally conceded to be pernicious to the welfare of society, yet I am sorry to tell you, that it controls not an inconsiderable number of our patrons, and throws many perplexities in our way ; I admit, not as ignorance, but cloaked under some fancied rights or liberties. It cannot be denied, a majority of mankind have a fondness for mystery, and a craving for delusion, which morbid appetite quackery feeds to satiety, and grows and fattens thereby. Take many persons in your every day practice, whose education and refinement are beyond question, yet have so little knowledge of the structure of their bodies as to be unable to locate their heart, or liver, and of the action or purposes of the simplest medicines blissfully ignorant ; is it at all surprising that such persons would readily resort to the boasted efficacy of Hahneman's pellets, or sugar powders, when administered with the blandishments and patronizing airs of a Homeopathist ? An anxious mother, fond of her darling, although alarmed at its sickness, is afraid of a repugnant dose, and hearing of the sweet and harmless little granules, complacently resorts to their use, under the Homeopathic persuasion, that "if they do no good, they will do no harm." Gentlemen, to meet these contingencies you must go down to the "inwardness" of society to root out such prejudices, and restore people to *common sense* ; for these incidents seldom happen among common people, they belong to that class of society known as "fashionable."

I believed long ago, that the introduction into our *public schools*, as a part of their course of study, of a well written work adapted to the student, on anatomy, physiology, and hygiene, would in due time so instruct the rising generation on these elementary branches of medicine, as to effectually prevent their being humbugged, or cajoled by the boastings of quackery. The public expect a great deal from us, and scrutinize us closely. The man who deliberately and knowingly violates the rules of professional ethics, must, under the moral laws of our nature, feel self-degraded and humiliated ; after which, if he does not sincerely repent and turn from the error of his ways, he loses his self-respect, and surely, but certainly, sinks to the level of his lot.

If the medical profession be filled with ignorant, conceited and immoral men, those who resort to craft and subterfuge, want of

harmony, or due regard for the common honor, or indulge in jealousies and professional enmities, it must soon become "degraded in the eyes of society."

Medicine is a liberal profession, and promotive of every generous sentiment in human nature; its different departments open a wide range of cultivation for the highest intellects. Its ranks have been filled with the brightest and most illustrious names. Science, art, and civilization are under lasting obligations to the science of medicine for valuable contributions. Let us try to maintain its high standard of excellence, and if we should fall below the mark it will give us that sense of humility which is the basis of all sound learning and advancement. We must march in solid column and "face the music."

To medicine belong the natural sciences, and they are its auxiliaries; in their study, West Virginia presents a wide and almost unexplored field, whose cultivation promises a rich reward. I would heartily commend to our members the observation of the

METEOROLOGY OF WEST VIRGINIA.

The daily registry of the *temperature, prevailing winds, state of the sky, measurement of amount of rain and snow, barometrical changes, and the relative humidity of the atmosphere.* The instruments necessary would be a (tested) thermometer, (standard of Smithsonian Institute), a rain-gauge (ombrometer), barometer and psychrometer, all of which can be procured in any of the Eastern cities. The *time* of daily thermometrical observation is 7 o'clock A. M., 2 o'clock P. M. and 9 o'clock P. M., in order to make them uniform with the Smithsonian observers. The *isothermals* of different temperatures, could be determined for every county by the observations of one or more resident members. The fluctuations of the seasons and irregularities of distribution of heat afford practical data for sanitary rules, besides influencing the form and character of prevailing diseases. We have found 53° to be the mean annual temperature of the State, in crossing which it shows a Southern curve of about one and a half (1½°) degrees, (after reducing the observation to sea level). The summer line of 73° and the winter line of 34°, in their Southern incurvation, show the remarkable influence of our mountain range.

The amount and variations of *hygrometric moisture*, as a factor in the production and modification of disease, may be studied with practical advantage. *The prevailing diseases should always be noted in the meteorological register*, then you can observe the climatic conditions under which they occur. Having instituted regular observations as above indicated, it will be source of pleasure and profit to you,

besides accumulating an array of facts and figures, which if reported to this Society will afford the ground-work and necessary data for establishing the climatology of the State; for demonstrating the relative influence of atmospheric changes upon endemic and epidemic diseases, and the relations they sustain to each other; if possible, to discover the laws of their propagation and diffusion through the agency of the air. The comparative salubrity of the valleys and mountains, and many other problems of life and longevity, health and disease, which if studied by the inductive method, may lead to valuable results. *Meteorological Chemistry* can be simultaneously studied. The air has been proved by recent investigations to undergo various changes in the *proportion* of its elements; it has been shown that the amount of carbonic acid "varies from 257 to 1,992 parts in a million;" that phosphorus, ammonia, hydrochloric and sulphuric acid are essential to, and have peculiar influence on, the development of animal life. Ozone is regarded as an element of great sanitary value. That myriads of microscopic organisms, both animal and vegetable pervade the air of rooms where cases of contagious diseases are confined; the air of our iron mills and factories, under microscopical observation, is filled with an infinite number of impurities. Respired air of healthy individuals, but much more the breath of those having diseased lungs, have been accused of producing Phthisis P. The phenomena of meteorology occurring day and night under your observation, will not only delight and instruct you, but tax your most profound reasoning powers to solve.

THE MEDICAL BOTANY OF WEST VIRGINIA

very appropriately belongs to this Society. You are aware that several reports have already been printed and published in your Transactions. Those papers are partial reports from Ohio, Tyler and Kanawha counties; the remaining fifty-one counties include such as particularly abound in undescribed plants, etc., the description and uses of which would be highly interesting and instructive to every member, and a record of each ought to be printed in the Transactions. One of our members from the eastern part of the State told me he had prepared a paper on this subject, but was discouraged from presenting it at our last meeting, assuring me that, having paid attention to the subject, he had found over two hundred undescribed plants, etc., in his own county.

At our last meeting the Standing Committee on Medical Botany was without discussion suspended. I hope it will be the pleasure of the Society to reconsider their action, and restore said Committee.

It is an open subject of inquiry, and many of our practitioners who are remote from drug-stores have wisely availed themselves of this provision of nature, for ready relief to their patients, and having a successful experience, are ready and willing to offer it to this Society. I hope it will be cheerfully and thankfully granted.

THE GEOLOGY OF WEST VIRGINIA.

Soon after its formation, this Society took the lead in urging upon our Legislature the importance and necessity of making a *survey* of this character. The example of our sister States, the immense advantage to our manufacturing, mechanical, and agricultural interests, in the acquisition of untold wealth, by the development of her hitherto unexplored and unused mineral and other magnificent resources, had been urged as reasons for the appointment of a State Geologist. On visiting our State exhibition at the Centennial, near Philadelphia, I confess feeling, as a native, a considerable amount of West Virginia pride in our show, as compared with many other States; but it could be plainly seen that half remained untold and unknown, although our Commissioners had used all diligence and care in gathering together as good a collection as possible, under the manifold disadvantages under which they labored, without the revelations of a systematic survey of the economic geology of the State. We, as physicians, have a deep and abiding interest in the geological structure of the State. It is the formation and character of the earth's crust on which we live, which determines the form, habits, idiosyncracies and diseases of its inhabitants. This is the broad, general declaration of Geologists; and the truth of the proposition struck me with great force during my trip to San Francisco, California, in 1871. On the Platte River plains live the Sioux and several other Indian tribes. A Sioux warrior is a model of the genus *homo*; full six feet high, head erect, large, expanded chest, limbs that Achilles would not be ashamed of, with a short rifle slung behind his shoulders, cutlass, brace of revolvers and long knife at his side; mounted on his pony, without saddle, he is able to perform feats of prowess and strength which have but few competitors. The *plains* upon which he lives are covered with a very nutritious grass, upon which numerous herds of buffalo, elk and antelope feed and fatten. These animals are the food of the Sioux, the exercise and effort of the chase promoting their appetite, strength and development. Passing on further West, you reach the top of the Wasatch Mountains, a barren, rocky, sterile country, the only product of the soil being *sage or grease bush*, a plant of miserable odor, and inedible to

any living creature. Here live the Ute and Soshone Indians—a little, diminutive, runted, stunted, filthy and disgusting race. Their food is crickets and locusts, which they roast, pound up, and make into cakes—surely not bread. They look half-starved, and have good geological reasons for it; their minds coincide with their physical development, for they are cunning and fierce, like a feline animal. Our beautiful State forms a part of the great Apalachian chain of mountains, rising towards her centre, and near her Eastern border, to the height of about three thousand feet; thence, in the Southern range, sloping down to two thousand feet; falling again to the North-west and West, by successive terraces or tableaux, to six hundred feet, in the Ohio Valley. From mountain to valley is a grand watershed, over whose face numerous water-courses, running across the line of stratification, have cut deep into and exposed on their sides a fair map of the structure. The component rocks are of the Silurian, Devonian and Carboniferous formation. The parallel zones lie in a succession of convex and concave flexures, having no principal or central axis or conformation of minor ridges, the chain consisting of a synclinal and anti-clinal arrangement. Beginning with the oldest strata in the Eastern part of Jefferson county, we find the lower Silurian limestone, with its overlying shales and sand-stone, running high up in Pendleton county; in fact, by reason of its upheaval and resistance to the erosive power of water, maintaining the *elevation* of this region. The highly silicious and compact character of this sand-stone, wherever exposed along its line of stratification, gives a very rapid drainage with a thin and superficial soil, and hence is not liable to the evils of surface moisture, claimed as a factor of disease in other parts of the United States.

The great limestone and coal formations, underlying the largest area of the State, are an important feature in her structure, the former being an element of great richness in the formation of the soil, whilst the mining of the latter must enter largely into the diseases of the operatives engaged in this subterranean work. The *great synclinal trough or basin* lying between Eastern Ohio and Western Virginia, extending from the Northwestern part along the whole Western boundary, the bottom of which is traversed by the Ohio river, until reaching the lower rim, it encounters the heavy stratum of conglomerate rock, by which its course is deflected to the north-west. The situation and formation of this great basin are subjects of investigation which may profitably employ the best intellects of this or any other State.

Near its most depressed portion, and running obliquely across it,

is the great break or upheaval known as the "Oil-break." Some of our members have already reported upon some of the diseases of this region, and I hope they will be invited and encouraged to continue their investigations. The influence of the continued inhalation of the gases evolved from petroleum oil by those engaged in handling it, upon pulmonary, endemic and other diseases, should be one of the first problems for study and elucidation. The necessity of a State Geological survey is so apparent and important, that I would urge this Society, and every citizen, to use all available means to overcome the public indifference, and interest our Legislature in the appointment of a State Geologist. Rain, dew, snow, vapor, etc., in their aërial distribution are under the dominion of the laws of meteorology, and referable to that science. But as soon as they fall upon the surface of the earth, whether gathered in the form of rivers, lakes, seas, rivulets or springs, they belong to Geological science, and permeating the soil and rocks, dissolve and redissolve the various compounds along their courses, their value being estimated by the amount and character of the mineral substances they hold in solution.

Permit me, then, to direct your attention to the

MINERAL SPRINGS OF WEST VIRGINIA.

I hold it to be the imperative duty of every regular Physician in the State to be acquainted with the properties and qualities of the *mineral waters*, which pour out from the side of nearly every mountain and hill in the State. Without a knowledge of their therapeutic action, how can we direct the invalid to the right place, or prescribe intelligently for his disease? West Virginia has long been celebrated for her mineral springs. Many thousands bear grateful testimony to their curative powers, *Berkeley Springs*, in Morgan county, are the oldest in the State; besides these are *Shannondale* of Jefferson county, *Capon* of Hampshire county, *White Sulphur* of Greenbriar county, and the *Parkersburg Wells*, in Wood county. Monroe county also abounds in sweet, salt, red, and blue sulphur springs. We have also *Thermal Waters*, ranging from 74° to 107°. A systematic classification of mineral waters becomes necessary to the study of their application. The methods proposed are according to their *chemical constitution*, (this is the German and French system), their *geological origin*, *geographical location*, and *therapeutical action*. Valid objections may be urged against each of these groups. The chemical classification, although the most natural, conveys an imperfect idea of its medicinal action, whilst the therapeutical effects of many are such as to make it difficult to deter-

mine to which class they ought to belong. For practical purposes, it has been proposed by those who have made the subject a special study,* to combine the chemical and therapeutical, thus, 1st, Alkaline Waters; 2d, Saline Waters; 3d, Sulphur Waters; 4th, Chalybeate Waters; 5th, Purgative Waters; 6th, Calcic Waters; 7th, Thermal Waters. The sub-classes can be arranged under some one or more of the above. The remedial powers of mineral waters and baths were known and used from the earliest history. As our bodies are composed of two parts water and one part of organic and inorganic constituents, which are being continually renewed and discharged, no atom, whether solid or fluid, retaining its position in any given part but a short period of time, it would not appear unreasonable to premise that mineral waters holding in solution the salts of lime, potash, soda, magnesia, alumina, sulphur and iron, with hydrogen, oxygen, chlorine, nitrogen and carbonic acid gases, which ingredients are identical with those forming the fluids and solids of our bodies, that the *vis medicatrix nature*, or the elective power of each secreting organ, would have a splendid opportunity of selecting the ingredients most needed to perform its proper function. We know the use of water in considerable quantities increases the metamorphosis of the tissues, excites the secretory action of the glands, notably the kidneys, intestinal glands and skin. As no water is absolutely pure, that is, free from foreign matters of one kind or other, it is essential to inquire into the nature and quality of such elements to determine their effects on the animal economy.

We know that common salt (chloride of sodium) is necessary to the health and vigor of many animals; yet, taken in excess, it induces in man, a peculiar cachexia (scurvy); that where lime abounds in the drinking water, calculous and nephritic complaints are more prevalent. The large number of cases of lithotomy performed by the late Dr. Dudley, in Kentucky, may be accounted for in this way, because, in the granite regions of the North, such maladies are almost unknown. Goitre and cretinism are said to arise from this cause. There is no doubt of the curative powers of our well-known springs in many diseases of the liver, stomach, kidneys and skin, as proven by the observation and experience of many of our best physicians. The testimony of Dr. Moorman, of Greenbrier White Sulphur Springs, is especially valuable and instructive. It will certainly be acceptable to offer reports to the Society on the adaptation and remedial action of such mineral waters as are found within the circle of practice of our members.

*George E. Walton, M. D., Mineral Springs.

STATE BOARD OF HEALTH.

You are all doubtless aware that for many years past in the more enlightened countries and cities of Europe, great attention has been paid to the subject of sanitary science and hygiene. The results have proved most salutary in reducing largely the death rate by executing such sanitary laws as preclude the origin, or prevent the spread, of contagious or epidemic diseases. The people of our Republic are so miserably free, or independently ignorant of sanitary science, that the philanthropists of our country have found it expedient to form an association for the purpose of disseminating sanitary knowledge among the people, and thus to educate them in public hygiene. This organization is the *American Public Health Association*, a body for intelligence and philanthropy second to none in the land. Under the labor and supervision of their "Executive Committee," and their worthy Secretary, Dr. Elisha Harris, of New York, they have published two volumes of their transactions, containing the most elaborate and searching investigations of questions of public health, a copy of which should be in the hands of every regular physician in this country. One of the objects of this association is the creation, by law, of State Boards of Public Health in every State in the Union. Already 12 States have authorized such Boards. This work also meets the cordial co-operation and assistance of the American Medical Association. In response thereto on the part of West Virginia, we would say that in 1875 Dr. M. S. Hall, of Ritchie county, introduced a bill in our State Legislature to which very little attention was paid. During the late session (1877) a second bill, somewhat modified, was offered and very ably advocated by Dr. Hall and his friends. It was ordered to be printed and referred to the Committee on Humane and Criminal Institutions, by whom it was reported back to the House of Delegates with a recommendation to pass. Just at this time an endemic called "Capital on the brain" was raging in the House, and they failed to give the bill the consideration it deserved.

There are many cogent reasons for the legal organization of such State Boards, some of which will appear from the following outline of the powers and duties intended to be conferred; they are "to take cognizance of the interests of life and health among the people of the State, make sanitary investigations, and inquire respecting the causes of disease, especially of epidemics, the sources of mortality, effects of localities, conditions, employments, ingesta, habits and circumstances upon the public health, and collect information on these and kindred subjects; make special investigations, whenever

directed by the Governor or Legislature, of all public schools, prisons, or public buildings in regard to the drainage, water supply, disposal of excreta, heating and ventilation. For the formation of local Boards of Health in every city, county and town, who shall collect information and make suggestions in matters involving the public health, and report the same to the State Board with whom they shall co-operate to prevent the spread of disease and for the protection of life. To have the supervision of the State system of registration of births, marriages and deaths, and make annual reports to the Governor upon the vital statistics and sanitary condition of the State, also their investigations, discoveries and suggestions." The practical work of such Boards is such as to touch the vital interests of every grade of society, to grapple with the monsters of pestilence and death, to fore-warn and fore-arm against the strange, unseen, insidious forms of disease in the air we breathe, in our food and drink, and from the earth we tread upon. To the farmers, who constitute the great majority of the inhabitants of our State, it is a matter of interest to investigate the causes and effects of disease in cattle, as "malignant anthrax producing malignant pustule in herdsmen," "Hereditary entailments in domestic animals and in the human family," the "effect of the use of poisons to destroy insects in wheat, potatoes," etc., "on potato rot as a cause of disease," "on hog cholera and trichinia with the diseases communicated to man by their use as food," "causes and effects of epizootic in horses," etc;* nor are farmers alone, but the whole population are vitally interested in all causes which endanger life. "No man liveth to himself, nor no man dieth to himself." As the object of *law* is to "protect the life, liberty and property, and promote the highest good of the greatest number," it is clear that a proper sanitary code should become a statute law of the State. Cases of small-pox, scarlet fever or measles may travel on our cars or along the public highways, scattering the seeds of disease and contagion and infecting whole districts without prevention or remedy by law. State boards propose to remove popular prejudices by force of reason and common sense; to prove to the people that it is cheaper to live than to die; that death often entails pauperism, destitution and crime upon the survivors of the family.

What has this State done? and for whom has she expended her money? Let us examine the Auditor's Report for 1876; it shows that for criminals, lunatics, convicts and deaf and dumb and blind her appropriations from the public treasury amounted to \$165,563.00, and these are the *wards of the State*; but the life and health of her

*See Public Health Reports.

500,000 inhabitants are daily threatened with a score of *preventable* diseases. What benevolent provision has she made to stay their incursions? Here it is, officially! "For salary of vaccine agents \$75 00."

Gentlemen, I believe I have as deep and extended a sympathy for my unhappy fellow creatures who have lost their sight, hearing or reason as any citizen of this State, as a practical evidence of which, I spent four years of my time and labor, at a cost to me of about \$1,000.00, as a Director in building and organizing the Hospital for the Insane at Weston, about five years more in building that solid and safe structure at Moundsville for that unfortunate class called convicts; but I must confess to a somewhat uncharitable feeling when I learned that the excellent House Bill No. 70, offered by Dr. M. S. Hall in our House of Delegates, was rejected or indefinitely postponed, chiefly on account of the appropriation of \$1,000 to carry out its provisions. Such is its fate and history; I leave it with you, hoping you will use your influence and logic with the members of the Legislature in your respective counties to change their vote at the next session. If preachers and ministers control religious matters, and lawyers and jurists questions of law, it is surely safe to commit the care of the public health to physicians.

VITAL STATISTICS OF WEST VIRGINIA.

This is a professedly dry and tedious subject, but when rigidly analyzed, forms the basis of many valuable deductions. Our State laws (see Acts, 1872-73) requires "the Clerk of the County Court to issue and register all *marriage* licenses. Every *assessor* makes an annual registration of *births and deaths*, to be ascertained from the head of each family, and recorded in a book furnished by the Auditor, in which he enters the name, place, sex, age, condition, occupation and disease, with the name of parents, which is sworn to, and returned to the Clerk of the County Court, who records the same, and makes return to the Auditor." The system is imperfect, uncertain, and needs correction; but it furnishes an approximation to such facts in the diseases and causes of death in West Virginia as we are expected to know, hence, I have carefully compiled the following statement,* viz:

Number of marriages in 1874.....	4,091
" " 1875	3,554

*See Auditor's Report, by Hon. E. A. Bennett.

Births in 1874, in 38 counties, pop. 322,214, (including 117 stillborn).....	8,820
Of these were, Males.....	4,586
Females.....	4,234

Births in 1875, in 37 counties, pop. 320,216, (109 stillborn)...	7,344
Males.....	3,784
Females.....	3,560

1874. <i>Deaths</i> (in 39 counties, pop. 327,214).....	2,650
Males.....	1,352
Females.....	1,308

Making the ratio 12.37 per 1,000.

1875. <i>Deaths</i> (in 25 counties, pop. 231,498).....	2,287
Males.....	1,154
Females.....	1,133

Ratio, 10.12 per 1,000.

1874. <i>Ages at Death.</i> Udner 1 year.....	743
Over 1 year and under 5 years.....	440

Making about 44 per cent. of total deaths.

From 5 to 80 years	1,354
From 80 to 100 years.....	113

1875. Under 1 year.....	568
Over 1 year and under 5 years.....	392

Making about 42 per cent. of total deaths.

From 5 to 80 years... ..	1,234
From 80 to 100 years.....	93

		DISEASES.	1874.	1875.
Thoracic.	{	Of Brain	181	131
		Pneumonia	96	90
		Consumption	340	260
		Heart Disease	77	66
Intestinal.	{	Cholera Infantum.....	80	80
		Inflammation Bowels	47	33
		Diarrhoea.....	28	19
		Dysentery.....	32	14
Zymotic.	{	Erysipelas.....	24	15
		Fevers.....	258	187
		Diphtheria.....	115	126
		Whooping Cough.....	111	33
		Spinal Meningitis.	35	36

Consumption causing 12.82 per cent of total mortality in 1874, and 11.36 per cent in 1875. By the returns of the ninth census, (1870) it was 17.67 per cent. The percentage of deaths for the classified diseases to the annual mortality for 1870, are: Brain Diseases, 10 per cent.; Respiratory,* 13.1 per cent.; Intestinal, 12.94 per cent.; Zymotic, 16.86 per cent. Ratio gross deaths to population, 110 per 1,000.

THE INFLUENCE OF ELEVATION IN PULMONARY DISEASES

has lately attracted the attention of the medical world, particularly in Phthisis P. The altitude proved most desirable is that found in our mountain heights. The conditions sought for are, 1st, *a dry, cool air*. On consulting the rain-chart of West Virginia, you will find a diminution of the quantity of rain in our mountain districts, amounting in many places to one-half the precipitation of the Ohio Valley; fogs are of short duration, being rapidly dissipated by winds and sunshine. By observation made in August, 1874, at Cranberry Summit, the mean dew-point is 52° , and the relative humidity 430 of Mason's scale. The same month in Wheeling shows a dew-point of $58^{\circ} 30'$, and relative humidity .520. The decrease of temperature for altitude in West Virginia, is 1° for every 314 feet, making a difference in the same latitude of between 6° and 7° . The mean annual temperature of White Sulphur Springs is $37^{\circ} 54'$, altitude 2,000 feet; at Kanawha Salines, $55^{\circ} 84'$, altitude 700 feet; 2d, *continued sunshine*. We have no data to determine this except the diminished rain-fall; 3d, *atmospheric electricity*, which in a clear sky is always positive, the earth being negative; 4th, *atmospheric pressure* being diminished with the altitude, the lungs are more expanded by reason of the lessened amount of oxygen in a given volume of rarified air, yet with a more active endosmose and distention of the capillary tubes; besides the diathermal qualities of mountain air, and other points associated with this branch of study, to which I invite your attention and observation. My own experience is limited to Portland, Oakland and Deer Park. I have sent cases of Phthisis P., in different stages of developement, all of whom were decidedly benefitted; I mean, the cough abated or disappeared, the night-sweats or diarrhoea ceased, appetite improved, gained in flesh and strength, and many doubtless kept alive for years. Those afflicted with Hay-asthma, or autumnal catarrh, on visiting this region are exempt. If they should be suffering with the disease, the paroxysm will usually

*Consumption not included.

cease within twenty-four hours after their arrival. To those who, from the cares and anxieties of business, or wear and tear of professional life, are weak, nervous or dyspeptical, our pure mountain air and fresh sparkling waters will prove a panacea.

Finally, to our State Society is committed the high and responsible trust of watching over the interests of the profession, and maintaining its honor and purity. Like the Esculapian Temple of old, let "*Come and See*" be inscribed in blazing capitals over her portals, for the admission of all true inquirers after truth and knowledge; that within her hallowed enclosure "her walls may be hung with votive tablets, and her ministers may trim their golden lamps, and burn sacred incense on her altars."

Thanking you for your kind attention, I ask your aid and generous forbearance, in conducting your deliberations.

