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For Dr. Post, with the respectfull Compliments, of The Author

AN

ORATION,

ON THE

CAUSES OF THE MORTALITY AMONG STRANGERS,

DURING THE LATE

SUMMER AND *FALL*,

PRONOUNCED BEFORE THE

GEORGIA MEDICAL SOCIETY,

AND CITIZENS OF SAVANNAH,

ON

JANUARY 1*st*, 1820.

BEING THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOCIETY.

BY

JACOB DE LA MOTTA, *M. D.*

Fellow of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, of the University of the State of New-York.....Member of the County Medical Society of New-York.....Corresponding Member of the Lyceum of Natural History, N. Y.....Honorary Member of the Medico-Chirurgical Society of N. Y.....Honorary Member of the Philadelphia Medical Society.....Member of the Linnæan Society of Philadelphia.....Member of the Medical Society of South-Carolina.
&c. &c. &c.

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Oration.

YOU have assembled this day, Gentlemen, to unite in commemorating the Anniversary of the Georgia Medical Society; and I appear, designated the organ of that association, to manifest an accordance with the usage of public institutions—that of expressing sentiments connected with the objects of their establishment.

On the present occasion, you readily anticipate the purport of our formation—the principal of our *desiderata*. It is to perpetuate the magnitude, enhance the advantages, and maintain the dignity of the profession of Medicine; considered both as a science and an art; and, in which, classic learning—the beauties of literature—and the philosophy of nature, are intimately blended. Here, in doing justice to the theme of a discourse, the glow of embarrassment betrays my deficiency;—here conscious inadequacy urges me to shrink from the undertaking; here, you will readily perceive the paucity of those acquirements, requisite to elicit attention, or interest your feelings.—Prepared by this candid declaration, your indulgence you cannot withhold.

The vocation of Medicine, is paramount to all others.—Great veneration was paid its illustrious cultivators in days of Yore; and by reverting to the pages of antiquity, we shall find they were considered as descendants of the Gods. Tracing the respect observed to those who maintained elevated stations in the medical world, down to the present period, many instances are presented for our contemplation. We are told, Athens conferred divine honors on Hippocrates. Lyden was illuminated, and all the bells of the churches chimed on the recovery of Dr. Boerhaave, from a violent attack of disease. Verona erected a statute to Heinsius, in honor of the remedy he discovered, found beneficial in removing a pestilential fever, in that city. Europe, paid her tribute to the medical worthies, who graced her annals. The means of purifying contaminated air, was rewarded by a donation to Carmicheal Smith. And what shall we say of Guiton de Morveau? his merits deserved a monument, raised in the gratitude of millions, to be removed only with time Whilst we revere the virtues and talents of those, who have appeared for ages past conspicuous in other climes and in foreign countries, let us not forget those of our own times. Let us not omit to say of Rush, that Pennsylvania mourned his loss—nay, the United States, attested his worth, by public demonstrations of deep regret. *Georgia*, was once prepared with her offering, for the shrine of Medical Science. GRIMES, in the zenith of his usefulness, shone with resplendant brilliancy!

Medicine, considered both as a science and an art, is bounded only by the multitudinous operations of nature. How important its pursuits? How pre-eminent its attributes? In utility, it rises superior to the blandishments of fortune; for it embraces, Charity, Benevolence and Humanity. Boundless are the limits prescribed to its powers. It knows no control; it is circumvented only, by ignorance and barbarism. In its attainment, rugged are the paths we have to traverse; almost insurmountable are the eminences, that present and must be reached, ere we can obtain superiority; with unremitting assiduity must our labors be guided, to possess the necessary qualifications for judicious practitioners. To what an extent are we led! even in the *arcana* of nature, and there to scrutinize her secret operations.

Such then, are the diversified and multifarious objects embraced in this profession, that I feel as it were launched on the troubled ocean of

indecision, hesitating at what course to steer—undecided, what port to make. Again I perceive the ample field presented for my observation. The wide range occupied by the science of medicine. Numerous are the subjects inseparably connected with it, and others to which it is nearly allied. Like the ardent Botanist, surrounded by the beauties of the vegetable kingdom, he admires the varied hues nature invests this part of creation, pants to investigate every new object, but is restrained by apprehension, that a rude touch may tarnish and disfigure, or render uninteresting, what was intended should be skillfully handled. While contemplating so important a pursuit, it may be compared to the sturdy oak, its stem is majestic—its branches and fructification, umbrageous and nutricious—its foiliage beautifying and ornamental, worthy the poet's fancy, the painter's pencil. In utility, co-existent with its germination—co-extensive with its growth. Or viewed as having an influence in the moral world, its benefits are of heavenly tendency. The variety afforded in the prosecution of this science, and its correlative branches, presents to the imagination traits of magnitude and admiration; and in considering a subject from the many that offers, I am at a loss what to select.—While eager to adopt one, its abstruceness forbids investigation—while disposed to take another, insufficiency to do it justice, deters further consideration. The several points appertaining and approximating to the doctrine and character of disease, have been descanted on with a maturity of intellect, that leaves nothing to discover, or novelty to expect. Matters of a local nature, have already been presented to your observation. The subject of Fever has been elaborately discussed. The causes of our Endemial, and termed by some Epidemic, have been threadbare. The treatment still remains without the specific; but may we hope, this deprivation will not be lasting; for with the industry and research already manifested by some of our medical brethren, on this interesting and important topic; new light has been shed, to guide the persevering speculist in the attainment of truth. The accumulating rays will be soon concentrated, that shall at once disclose the means of subduing the formidable hydra—of prostrating the Pithon of our marshes.

It may be expected from me this day, that I should advert in this address, to the peculiar character and grade of our fevers, that prevailed with unrelenting wrath, and dreadful havoc, during the late fall months; and that mowed down with one common scythe, the indigenous as well as the exotic—that consigned to the dreary receptacles of earth, the native, resident and stranger. Here let me pause! the mortality was decidedly more prevalent among strangers. Yes, the hapless emigrant—the mendicant alien, groaning under penury and want—severing the shackles of a ruthless despot—abhoring oppression and the fangs of degradation—fled to our shores—this asylum from tyranny and odious persecution.—Indeed it has been a fatal asylum! The cold earth, soon received their lifeless frames!!!

I should readily comply, with what on similar occasions has received the sanction of custom; but I have nothing novel to advance, or improvement to suggest. You are all familiarised to the type of our Fever; a recapitulation of a subject so trite, would not repay you for the small portion of attention you may this day honor me with. Conceiving there are incidents of vital consequence, inseparable with the successful treatment of disease, the preservation of health, and the prolongation of life; that are blended with the propagation, duration and termination of our endemic fevers; I trust what I have selected to form the subject matter of this address, will not be considered irrelavant to our prosperity—uninteresting for consideration—undeserving your candor—or unworthy observation. Impressed with the strength of facts, hastily collected; I shall now proceed to speak of the agents that influenced the fatality of our late fevers, and the causes of the great mortality among strangers. The limits

prescribed by your indulgence in the occupancy of time, will not permit me to amplify on each point; I shall briefly touch on what I consider the most forcible.

All nature proclaims aloud, by the æconomy of perpetuation; and more especially the animal and vegetable creation; that atmospheric air, or that invisible, subtle, elastic fluid, which pervades the perceptible and imperceptible cavities of all bodies, that occupies interminable space, and forms a component and constituent principle of many phenomina—so variously modified and combined, as to be omnipresent—is indispensably necessary to the support of vitality. That its invigorating and sanative properties, are peculiarly dependent on its purity. That if rendered contaminated, it loses its salutary influence, and consequently is incapable and inefficient to distribute those beneficial effects intended should be afforded, in its uncontaminated state. This essential attribute of nature, this law in physics, has received the sanction of chemical philosophy. Let us then enquire, how far a vitiated state of this etherial compound, formerly considered an element, is capable of affecting the animal economy.

The situation of our city; its remoteness from uncombined sea air; its peculiar soil, partly alluvial; circumjacent country, low, marshy, and extremely porous; its vegetable productions, of luxuriant growth, and active properties; the innumerable animalcules and infusory animals; the countless numbers of the insect tribe, that generate, die, and are then reduced by spontaneous and regular decomposition; and that constantly climinate deliterious gases—all these separately and conjointly acting in a greater or lesser degree, tend perpetually to vitiate the air, and diffuse through it those noxious properties, destructive to animal life; and which being constantly reproduced by like causes, consequently and irrefragibly render our atmosphere less pure, than the circumambient air of other places, differently encumbered and surrounded. These impurities being inhaled, convey most incidiously those destructive agents, that pervading the system, produce derangement of the natural functions, subvert the operations of nature, and throw the whole frame into disorder and disorganization. The doctrines of chemical philosophy, have clearly defined the proportion of principles, composing our chief support, without which animation would be suspended, and all nature would droop and decay. But this subtle, invisible material that we necessarily respire, and that acts as fuel to support the flame of life, is capable of being rendered unfit for the complete and perfect operations of the system, and by uniting with, or being combined with deleterious gases and foreign bodies, may be inspired; and acting by slow progression, contaminate the fluids and solids, and ultimately destroy that equilibrium between the various and complicated offices, as to derange the intention, and destroy the order of organic functions, thereby producing extinction of the vital spark. It is on this principle alone we can reason on the changes induced, when the system is exposed to causes capable of engendering disease; and it is from this disorganization from violent causes, we are to account for the occurrence of fevers.

The Coan sage, gave to the world an axiom in phylosophy, that neither time, or the piercing sagacity of research, have attempted to confute. He recorded it as an aphorism, "that the good or bad disposition of air does not depend solely on the difference of climate, but on the situation of every place in particular," and common observation so far corroborates this opinion, that the atmosphere is variously modified with regard to purity, according to the sources and quantum of impure gases, that constantly tend to vitiate it; and such is the peculiar constitution of atmosphere, as being capable of receiving various combinations, that there will appear a difference in constituent principles, within short distances. Naturalists have repeatedly attested this fact, and the senses of all animals

incontestibly show it; for we are very sensible to the impression of impure air, and by removing out of its sphere of action, or at a short space where it is less impregnated, we are at once convinced of the difference. Analysis of atmospheric air within inconsiderate distances, or in different apartments, has repeatedly evidenced this assertion, and it is as cognizable to our senses as various temperatures. This admitted, will show, that under particular causes, our city is differently supplied with those extraneous materials, that contaminate the air, and consequently render a difference of location, either more or less injurious to those subjected to its influence. These ideas premised in relation to what has been termed accustomed and unaccustomed impressions, will account for the great susceptibility of the human system to be effected, by whatever deranges the vital, and that simultaneously impaires the natural functions, or in other words, certain animals in particular will be more sensible to the change from a rarified to a dense atmosphere, from pure to impure air; and that a derangement of the operations of nature, will evidently ensue to such an alienation of residence, as may subject mankind to those agents, that invariably either directly or indirectly, induce irregular action and consequent disease. It is only on this ground, and by assuming these positions, fairly arising from legitimate deductions, and receiving the countenance, authority and attestation of the *Litterati* on this subject, in all ages and in all countries: that we can rationally infer, the great dissimilarity in different constitutions, independant of idiosincraces or temperaments, that render strangers so liable to contract the diseases peculiar to our climate, and that occasion this hostile disposition to health, attributable only to the peculiar state or constitution of the atmosphere. This subject, early called the attention of individuals, who have devoted much time and attention to investigations appertaining to the causes of the great disposition in certain cases to disease and death. The fruits of their labours, have been collected and embodied, and the corroboration of sentiment in respect to the changes produced, has received universal sanction. To enter more fully on the grounds of explanation, would be a useless amplification. The evidences rest with the most indifferent observer. The truth has never been questioned or denied; and all will agree, that one of the agents that favor the mortality among strangers, is their liableness to be effected by a change of situation, and the manner this is induced, may be rationally explained on the principle of a peculiar septon, or specific gaseous poison, being received in the system, either through the lungs or otherwise, pervading every vessel and fibre, vitiating the fluids, occasioning a correspondent vitiation of the solids; and like a violent and destructive poison, penetrates every avenue that leads to the seat of life, deranging the powers of respiration, and thereby produce those obstructions to the regular operations, as to destroy the machinery of animated nature, and prostrating the whole fabric, it soon crumbles into dust.

That Savannah should be more or less subject to the production of fevers, than any other place in the United States, are opinions that can never be supported by correct reasoning or sound principles; and let me here state, that low marshy situations, or a residence in the vicinage of such places, are not exclusively exposed to the visitation of bilious and pestilential diseases; we have the evidence of Cleghorn, who asserts that Minorca is far from being a marshy country, nay, on the contrary, it is very dry. Doctor Lind, advances a similar opinion: "that noxious vapours arising from the earth, are for the most part to be blamed, even in countries seemingly dry, and where violent rains are not frequent." He thinks the air may load itself with putrid exhalations from the ground and that except in the burning desarts of Arabia or Africa, people are no where exempt from fevers. We must infer from what has been said on this subject, independant of locality, and the evidences of the causes

which produce disease, that the atmosphere is capable of being altered, at particular seasons, and that woody or marshy lands in warm countries, are pernicious to the health of Europeans, and especially those who have been accustomed to a cold region. This unfriendly effect, is dependent on the peculiarity of constitution of our atmosphere; and as long as this exists, so long will it constitute a material agent, in the causes of mortality among strangers.

The condition of our atmosphere at particular seasons, is very much subject to certain alterations, resulting from a greater or lesser supply of those materials, that make it innoxious or injurious. If the exhalations from the earth, and decomposed animal and vegetable matters, are less abundant at one period than another, we are to look for an atmosphere more or less surcharged with those offensive ingredients that enter the system; pass through every vascular ramification, and occasion that derangement which constitute disease. Our enquiries must lead to the origin and production of these pestiferous particles; and here we must revert to what is familiar to every one; I mean heat and moisture, those essential agents in producing putrefaction, and a consequent elimination of those vapours, so prejudicial when respired. A succession of showers or an abundant fall of rain, occasioning more moisture than is required for vegetation, alters the texture of plants, or creates that change in their physiology, as to render them more readily influenced by heat, which destroying their vitality, reduces them to their constituent principles; which operation evolves a variety of gases, whose specific gravity being less than atmospheric air, they constantly rise, and being aided by caloric, are suspended to a certain height, are wafted by the current air in all directions, and exercise their baneful influence over every thing submitted to their sphere of action. When the quantum of vapour is less, it of course disposes the atmosphere to a less deterioration, and renders it comparatively less injurious. It is then from the previous fall of rain, and subsequent heat, we may invariably expect, that alteration in our atmosphere, which is the result of exuberant humidity and accumulated exhalations from low marshy soils, covered with various plants, and which we may from fair deductions enumerate as fruitful causes or agents in governing the generation and fatality of the fever cases. The occurrence of fever, may be regulated, as respects its violence, by the means that shall be judiciously employed to suppress or lessen the sources of its production. The medical topography of our city, defines these receptacles or labaratories of Miasmata, that have become formidable obstacles to the health and prosperity of this habitable portion of our state. An annoyance so grievous has called forth such measures, as were intended, should stifle this enemy, or at least unarm it of much of its havoc and desolation. Labour and attention have not been wanting to this end—means have been partially adopted. The pursuit is worthy the effort It is laudable —humane. But whether it will have a beneficial result, time must develope. Its usefulness is worthy the trial. None can be inimical to *Dry Culture.* And while we see the most sanguine expectations expressed by one party, in charity to those whom it is said ungenerously, constitute an opposite; if their expectations have been less ardent, at least let us say, dry culture has had their good wishes, and their pecuniary aid has not been wanting to further the object.

While we direct the excursive eye remotely for the sources of pestilence, let us not overlook near points. It has been conceded by the most sceptical on this subject, that to the constitution of the atmosphere, is to be attributed the infrequency of fevers. Instead of looking abroad for the spring of this annoyance; let us look at home.

Among the many situations, from which arise the *materies morbi* that infest our atmosphere; the condition of our streets and lanes present objects that cannot receive the countenance of cold indifference. We

must view them particularly as sources of those injurious materials, that *assist* in altering the constitution of our atmosphere. Need we authorities to substantiate our position, none others can be desired, deserving of greater respect, than those of the immortal Linnaus. It was his stupendous mind that first suggested the fact. that sandy soils of themselves, independent of their aptitude to cover and secrete putrid animal and vegetable substances ; would be sufficient to explain the reason, why they dispose the atmosphere to become deteriorated. The health of Philadelphia for many years, was attributed to the paved streets, and the excellent police regulations, that made it obligatory, continually to keep them clean, as well as the gutters, by which means the collection of impure articles, was prevented. Our situation is different, our streets dissimilarly arranged. We have abundant sources of pestiferous vapours, they have but few. However disposed our location may be to keep alive the embers of disease, instead of fanning them into a flame, our exertions should be directed to their extinguishment. This can only be done by the proper enforcement of such restrictions, as shall obviate all these inconveniences. Traverse our lanes during the hot seasons, and you will soon be made sensible of the offensive effluvia arising from the offals of the kitchen, consisting of putrid fish, and decomposed animal and vegetable substances, that are constantly thrown out after the hours prescribed for removing such filth. Scarce a public street is exempt from this detestable practice; thus loading the air with offending matters,that tend to pollute,what would become less so,from other causes. And let me not be considered as overstraining the point, when I advance, that the diffusion of such ingredients, has no inconsiderable effect in altering the state of the atmosphere ; which aggravating our fevers, may be ranked among the causes of mortality. An additional subject intimately blended,is the emanations from stables, the dirt of which has been repeatedly suffered to accumulate and remain in reservors, to be removed at convenient times ; which receptacles, may be compared to laboratories for preparing pestilential gases, when the doors are unhinged, the suffocating fumes and injurious effects, cannot be suppressed. These may be considered by many of minor importance. They are in my estimation of much magnitude in determining atmospheric impurity ; and notwithstanding the judicious arrangement of removing the trash by scavengers, and the inspection of lots, still during the intervals of time this duty is performed, certain description of our inhabitants are regardless of cleanliness, and seldom think of making a proper distribution, till they expect an examination, which being communicated by previous publication, they in order to elude a fine, are but for a short time attentive to the ordinance. The visits of the inspector being once in a month, apprises them of what should never be lost sight of ; were his calls unexpected, the lots would be kept in constant preparation ; under existing regulations, it is tantamount to a superfluous office. It must be admitted, that the practice of constantly throwing offensive materials within the enclosure of dwellings, and also in our streets and lanes, which generally prevails at all hours of day and night, must, by diffusing in the atmosphere mephetic particles, add contamination, to what has been made partly vitiated from other sources, and undoubtedly induce the tendency to disease and mortality.

Pursuing this subject still further in relation to the causes of mortality. observation points to the condition and uncleanliness of many boarding houses and public taverns. among the ordinary classes of this community ; where a regard to comfort and health, is lost in temporary gratifications. The nocturnal revelry collects together a horde of depraved beings, whom after excessive indulgencies in innebriation and riot, throw themselves promiscuously in a room, where the proprietor huddles many beds, and you would suppose his mansion was the hold of a ship,

where men are stowed together, as merchandise, in unventilated small apartments, around which is constantly created an artificial atmosphere, the corruption of which, is kept up, by expirable air of human creatures, and the emanations of foul materials, that like the *Grotto-del-canno*, whoever inhales the noxious vapour, is sure to be prostrated, but, to suffer the agonies of a malignant fever.

Situated as this city is, subjected to an increasing population of strangers, and where boarding houses are in great demand by the lower orders in society; it would be attended with beneficial results, for public authority to invest an individual with powers to visit such places, and enforce a proper regard to cleanliness, that comports with health, and the suppression of disease. If there be any within the reach of my voice, who will not unite their assent, that the increasing mortality among strangers, may be attributable to the condition of certain dwellings, let them no longer doubt; many have been the facts to substantiate the assertion. It is perfectly consistent with this part of our subject, and while speaking of atmospheric ascendency, in favoring the mortality of our fevers, to draw a comparative view between the relative proportion of health and disease amongst natives and strangers. This is done to show, that if strangers are more sensitive to the impression of our atmosphere than natives; the latter are not excluded from its baneful influence, and that they are exposed to the same causes, and have suffered from similar effects.

The idea of graduating the quantum of health and disease during our sickly season, according to the mortality among residents and natives, is as ridiculous as irrational, as subversive of medical principles, as pregnant with evil consequences. If temperament—peculiarity of circumambient air—habit from particular vocations—but more especially the repetition of certain impressions on the nervous system; are no exemption from the effects produced in the constitution of those unaccustomed and estranged to certain vicissitudes; what situation in our southern hemisphere, would be free from the ravages of disease? What individual could escape the assaults of those maladies incidental to warm climates? No place would become habitable under a torrid region—no tropical clime would be inviting to emigration; terror and dismay would seize the minds of those, who from their inability to remove, and pecuniary circumstances, would be compelled to remain in this or that section of our country, during a season, unfriendly to the health of every one, and where disease and in many instances death, may be the inevitable result.

Notwithstanding this enumeration of what may be termed climatized prerequisites, such is the power and control of heat and its concomitants in generating bilious fevers, that natives and residents are not excluded from that peculiar character of disease, that under more aggravated and malignant features, attack strangers. I have more than once lamented, that an opinion has been advanced, and suffered to roam abroad in favor of the healthfulness of this city, on the belief that the mortality was almost exclusively confined to strangers, and that our inhabitants have seldom been victims of, or labored under the endemial fever. This sentiment, promulged under whatever circumstances, is egregiously erroneous. Where the type of disease has been more mild in some cases, it has been very violent in others. But I would ask the advocates of a contrary belief, whether endemial or epidemic fevers, occurring in any of the southern states, have not been more prevalent among those unaccustomed to the climate and atmosphere, and whether the mortality has not been more confined to them; and how is this to be accounted for?—On the principles just recited, and not to the total or partial exemption of fever, in natives and residents. This liableness in both to be affected by fever, will more glaringly appear, by considering the absence of fever, and the violence of its accession during that season, when the usual causes of its generation either do not exist, or exist in

a moderate degree. Surely if strangers are exposed to the invasion of fever, arising from a change of climate alone, they would be as susceptible of its attacks, when the causes are absent; as when the semina of disease are floating in our atmosphere.

It must appear obvious to the most unlettered mind, and I advance it on the authority of almost every medical writer on tropical diseases, that the standard production of fever, must be established according to the existence of the causes generally acknowledged to generate it, and not to the greater or lesser fatality among strangers than natives. We find, that when the agents that favor the appearance of our fever are more abundant during one season than another; we see more disease among foreigners, but residents and natives are not exempt. By referring to the bills of mortality in former years, we shall note, that the natives formed no small proportion of the number of cases that terminated in death. Much could be urged against the fallacy of that reasoning, and in opposition to the trite common place observation, that our city has been, during our last summer and fall, decidedly healthful; because few cases of death have occurred among the natives. From the nature and constitution of our atmosphere, it has been conceded, that the people from the north, are more disposed to be affected by it, at that season of the year when bilious complaints are wont to be present among us, than that portion of the inhabitants of the south, who are more habituated to this affection, and accustomed to inhale a vitiated air. This I readily admit, and it may account for the yellow fever being more predominant among the residents of the north, than those of the south; because, independent of their being sooner affected by impure air, we know that crowded apartments, or confined residence in parts of a town thickly inhabited, where there is little or no free circulation of air; are observed to be the most frequent places where malignant fevers first generate. This is particularly applicable to situations in our northern cities, adjacent to docks and other receptacles for filth, where the yellow or malignant fever of cold climates, first prevails. Comparing then the state of our atmosphere, with that of other places, rendered impure; I cannot subscribe to the opinion, that our natives are excluded from high grades of bilious fever, or that the paucity of such cases among them, is a true criterion of the health of our city.

From what I have briefly stated it must appear in the most glaring light, that a peculiar state of our atmosphere at certain seasons, is inimical to health, and acting with more force on strangers, from their aptitude to disease, occasion fevers of the most aggravated type, that frequently baffles the skill and vigilance of medical aid, to avert from the iron grasp of death. Let it not be understood we overlook the predominance of fever among natives, because the mortality has been less with them. I assert unequivocally, that in estimating the amount of disease that attacked natives, residents, and strangers; we shall find on due consideration, a relative proportion; and that, had the same circumstances prevailed with strangers, their chance of recovery would have been as great.

Here suffer me to observe, I am aware of the diversity of sentiment on this subject; I am aware of the opposition I shall meet with, from some of my medical brethren: but in stating it has been sickly among natives and residents, I am supported by the number of cases that occurred among natives and residents, and which I shall enumerate. In this I trust, I am sanctioned by medical opinions, matured by the best experience and nicest observation. From the time of the promulgation of our reports, to their suppression, a period of five months; we have had, according to the reports of the committee appointed by the Medical Society, (in a population amounting to upwards of four thousand white inhabitants) seven hundred and thirty two cases of Billious, Remittent, and Intermittent fevers. Of this number from 225 to 250 have terminated in death. In June and July, 70 cases were registered; 16 occurred in the centre—of the whole number 13 terminated in death. No

notice was taken of the number of cases, among natives, residents or strangers. In August we had 117 cases of fever fifteen deaths—twenty three of the 117 occurred in the centre of the city. No distinguishing line between natives, residents or strangers, who sickened or died. In September, two hundred and fifty one are reported—forty-six deaths—twenty-one are cases recorded as originating in the centre of the city. In this month, we have a record of seventy-four residents and natives—one hundred and seventy-two strangers, who were attacked with fever. Showing the relative number, it appears then, in support of the assertion, when comparing the number of sick among residents, natives and strangers, that above one third and nearly half of the former, constituted the statement of this month. In October, we had two hundred and ninety-four cases—sixty central, or in the city—of the whole number, one hundred and fifty-one deaths—one hundred among strangers. From this account we must infer, that fifty one were natives and residents, making one third who suffered from the mortality. Will any man in his proper senses, now declare, it was healthy among residents and natives? But the report for this month, enumerates the cases thus: one hundred and forty-two *strangers*—nine *residents*—forty natives of the north—sixty-six Irish—thirty-four foreigners. It would appear from this latter statement, which so far corresponds with the number of deaths among foreigners, (and indeed no other conclusion can be drawn,) that it was comparatively unhealthy among residents at least, and that fifty-one deaths must have been among natives and residents, or *residents* who have been climatized by a residence amongst us, of at least three years.

From this statement, it is obvious, that our inhabitants suffered in proportion to their numbers, and more especially from the causes of disease. Our reports recognized the great disparity between the deaths in natives, residents and strangers, and not the number of recoveries, by which we can only arrive at any degree of precision; and if *these* are not to be considered, what shall we say of the various cures? Are we to yield nothing to the talents of those, who with lynx's eyes, watched the progress and pursued with alacrity the meanderings and intricacies of an incidious epidemic?

After this plain narration of facts submitted to the notice of the discriminating, let us not boast of the health of our city during the late season. It is due to candor, to propriety, and to that liberality which should pervade every state in the union; to declare, unshackled by doubt, unencumbered by partiality; that comparing the bills of mortality published in Charleston, with those of our city, and considering the relative proportion of the population of each place, we have not enjoyed more health, nor have our non-residents suffered less during the last fall. Let this be submitted to the test of truth, and should the attestation of the reverse be found to prevail, may lacerating obloquy rest on those, who should utter this opinion.

We must now direct our attention to the consideration of other conspicuous agents, that aided the mortality.

Many have sunk beneath the weight of disease, who, by timely assistance, may have been propt up amidst the accumulation of symptoms, that with hurried and unabated violence, terminated the closing scene of life. Such cases may be attributed to a variety of circumstances. The most prominent was the delay and neglect to apply in due time for Medical aid. Such has been the indifference to timely relief, and such the inflexible stubbornness and consummate ignorance among attendance; that the propitious opportunity has been lost, the efficient moment suffered to pass, because the unfortunate sufferer evinced appearances of recovery. Some sudden change unhappily construed into favorable symptoms, has eluded the watchful care of friends; and the speedy approaching moment of dissolution has lulled by the most specious precursors, all apprehension of unrecalled fatality. Alas, how deceptive! but not more so to the attendants, than to the inexperienced physician,

who confiding in the statements of his patients, and those about them, would, if not possessed of the keenest discrimination, directed to every function and to every feature ; nay, if all his senses were not immediately summoned into requisition, would suffer his misguided judgement to pay the forfeit of his ignorance. The aspect of many cases, were delusive indeed. Often have I seen morbid action, transcending sensation.—Often have I noticed the operations of the mind, seemingly to progress without obstruction. Often have I observed reason with all the majesty of pre-eminence, assuming her accustomed empire. Often have I beheld the animal functions performed with that stability, indicating perfect health. And you may have seen, to use the words of a conspicuous character in the medical world, patients, a few hours, or a few minutes previous to dissolution, conversing and walking, as if tumultuous disease had become suddenly quiescent, and nature again pursued her labors. But on feeling for the pulse at the usual place, it is absent, or if present scarcely perceptible. The clay cold surface—anxious look—increasing restlessness—hurried respiration—are the sure harbingers of the dreadful catastrophe. Then, and not till then, does insidious disease flash on the mind with all its terrors—then reflection and harrassing self rebukings occupy but to torment the mind—then are a thousand imaginary circumstances presented to those, who are left to appease their grief, in bitter lamentations. And here the well known postulate in medicine is sadly verified, "but for timely aid, thousands perish of medicable wounds." Were facts wanted in corroboration of the opinions advanced, on the delusion of disease, and neglect to resort to medical aid I should not be at a loss to cite many. I speak from credible authority, that instances of death, were noticed, just before and very recent after some patients were received in our public hospitals. It seemed as if fate ordained, they should be carried there, to breathe their last ; arresting from the attending physicians, the power of bestowing relief.

Pursuing this subject still further, in connection with the causes of mortality, the want of those requisites to render patients comfortable, and the deficiency of proper nourishment, and change of clothing, almost indispensable in the cure of disease ; have retarded the sannative powers of medicine, and thereby deprived the system of that support, so essential to its recovery. Many cases in certain situations have been aggravated for the want of proper adjustment and removal of bed clothing, and the necessary supply of such diet, as would comport with the nature of the complaint and the physicians judgment. Altho' innumerable have been the instances of public as well as private charity, extended to the alleviation of misery, and of affording comfort to the sick ; and notwithstanding the abundant provision made by public donation.—Yet from a variety of incidents, *that* attention could not be confined, that the hand of friendship, and the sympathies of relationship, could bestow. And here I must be suffered to digress, and award my humble tribute for benevolent deeds. The *Mayor* and Aldermen of our city justly merit. Such regulations were adopted, and such appropriations made, as ameliorated in a great measure the sufferings, and somewhat lessened the mortality in strangers. They evinced that philanthropic disposition, characteristic of their public usefulness and private worth ; and must have afforded soothing consolation to the suffering mendicant ; that their lot had placed them, (whilst laboring under accumulated ills) among those who had learnt "to feel for others woes." How melancholy the reflection that independent of all the care extended, such was the formidable invasion of fever, that few remain to boast of their escape, from the grasp of death.

A dereliction to established principles in the treatment of diseases, and non-complyance with the prescriptions and directions of Physicians ; may be ranked among the causes that favoured the mortality. A dread of too much effect and violence in the operation of medicine—its untimely administration—the giving of improper nourishment—resorting to mis-

applied applications—harsh remedies—uncooth and harrassing management, as regards removing the sick—an assumption of power, and responsibility, predicated on previous conduct, that happily terminated—the withholding of medicines—and the unwarrantable boastings in the presence of the patient, of cheating the doctor, at the expence of cheating the poor sufferer of his life—all these causes, assuredly have had their baneful influence, and when the orders of a Physician in one case may have been strictly attended, in two, they have been scorned. But it may be said, that this contrariety of conduct, was only observable among the ordinary classes of people; to this I would reply it is only among this particular denomination of beings, we are to look for the greater prevalence of the mortality in fever.

In recurring to the disregard manifested to the proper administration of medicines, a reluctance on the part of the patient, frequently converted a curable into an incurable fever. Some from a want of confidence in the use of medicines, and others from a natural antipathy to remedies, suffered until their pains could no longer be endured. Others fell victims, from an enervated state of mind, either impaired from peculiarity of tone, or intimidated from bodily infirmities. On the first invasion of fever, terror and dismay would involuntarily rest upon them, and conceiving their situations critical, and their recovery doubtful, would at once resign all hope of restoration, and submitting to their imaginary forlorn condition, refuse to submit to profferd assistance; till disease by rapid strides made such incursions on the system, as to render its removal impracticable. We need no proofs of the influence of fear and superstition on the mind; our medical records abound with instances, and the practical observer must be convinced of the force of presentiment, and the prophetic annunciation of death, in the first or forming stage of fever. This has not passed unnoticed by the most scientific of the profession. Many cases terminating fatally, and comparatively mild during an epidemic; have been produced from despondency; and is a forcible elucidation of the operation of the mind over the body; loudly calling for vigilance and prescription. The most distressing apprehensions have been quieted by the assuasive eloquence of a physician, and confidence has been acquired, when it would have been lost, by directing our attention to that purturbation of mind, inseparable with some bodily complaints.

The indulgence of appetite—The too frequent and injudicious use of food and drink, by the ill and convalescent, have had no inconsiderable influence in the fatal termination of many cases. Such is the fondness of nurses to supply their patients with what they wish; that they frequently yield to their solicitations, under the impression their recovery is sure, from the desire for food; ignorant of an axiom in medicine, that false appetites is the effect of morbid action; and that abstinence increases the keenest cravings, when the powers of the stomach are too weak for the performance of its due functions; and what is received with avidity, is a cause of offence, and consequent derangement. I have witnessed the fatal termination of many cases, that would have been numbered among the cures, but for the uncontrolled demands of hunger and thirst.

Untimely application to business in convalescents, has been a cause of relapse; and a sudden prostration of the system from too much exertion, reducing the powers of the body below the point of reaction. Many of the faculty can bear testimony to this fact, as existing among those whose peculiar situations, and desire for returning to their daily occupations; hurried them into excesses that ultimated in a return of fever; when unable to withstand the shock of a second attack, were soon consigned to their lonely habitations.

It is a trite observation but of melancholy truth, that intemperance among strangers has been a fruitful cause of fever. This indeed has had its too frequent tendency to exposure and other excesses, that lay the

foundation for the superstructure of misery and wretchedness, with all its concomitants. This was observable in many instances. The practice of slinging down, as it is termed, the anti-fogmatics and mint Julaps! from the dawn of day to midnight, has been pursed to too great an excess, under a false idea of cooling the system, and counteracting the effects consequent to a change of climate. This odious indulgence saps the foundation of mental as well as bodily stamina, and so enfeebles and alters the energies of the system, that the slightest attack in many instances, is sufficient to demolish the fabric of man. A predilection for ardent spirits has induced nurses and attendants to give the patients free potations, when it was absolutely improper, and when its use was strongly enjoined by the physician, they converted to their own use, what was intended to sustain and restore lost tone; and by depriving the sick of this article, favour the death of a fellow-creature—deceive the doctor who confided in their care; but at the same time, deceived by their own depravity, ensure for themselves no distant end to their cares.

Improper conduct in nurses and attendants from negligence, ignorance and dark design, have been repeatedly observed. Negligence to cleanliness—to the use of remedies—to close attention to the wants of patients—to the proper preparation of their diet—to the ready performance of all those offices appertaining to the sick;—baffle the exertions, skill and care of a physician, at the expence of his reputation, and the life of the sufferer. Ignorance, another evil, excusable in certain cases, is abominable to the feelings and detrimental to recovery. Insufficiency to perform the duties of a nurse, and timidity in approaching the sick bed, should be arranged under the sources of pestilence, and enumerated among those agents, destructive to health, the removal of disease, and the prolongation of life.

But what shall we say of that fiend-like deportment under the specious garb of friendship, that demon design, which accompanies every word and action. Bear with me for a moment my patient auditors, whilst I delineate scenes, that in rendering the rugged path from life to death, so diversified during our late sickly season, greatly enlarged the bills of mortality.

It now becomes my painful duty, as inseperably connected with this subject, and in further illucidation of the agents that influenced the mortality among those assailed by the iron-grasp of infuriate fever, to state the deficiency of attendants to the sick on some occasions; the neglect of attendants in others; and the wanton, intentional indifference to those whose unfortunate situations assigned them to the care of monsters in human shape; whose obdurate hearts, never pulsated in the cause of humanity—whose minds never entertained the ennobled principles of commisseration—whose eyes were obscured to the agonizing throes of suffering humanity—whose ears were deaf to the importunities of exhausted nature—whose souls, steeled against the great attributes of God, would wage open hostility against charity and benevolence. Death, with all its terrors, arrayed in all its various garbs; and assuming the most horrific aspect; could not assuage nor soften their savage breasts. Disregarding the sufferings of their fellow beings; they would be busily engaged in devising means of stripping the almost lifeless body of its last raiment. Villainy, in certain situations, stalked uninterrupted; and in seeking one object of less perverseness, one would be lost in a throng of such congenial spirits. Treachery, rapine and detestable avarice, were frequently seen, hovering round some devoted dwelling, seeking an opportunity of executing base designs. At one moment, you would perceive the profligate, with a borrowed tongue of assuasive eloquence, administering apparent comfort, while their hands would be busily employed, pilfering a few worthless trinkets from the prostrate friend. Turning your eyes in another direction, you behold a kind matron, serving the cup replete with the nauseous draught, qualifying it with an earnest of solicitation, as if the nectarious potion was to infuse

life and vigor. But mark the reverse! It is to hasten the close of the dreadful scene, that shall exonerate from debt, or place in possession some inconsiderate legacy. Directing your attention otherwise, you discover the watchful nurse, who under the inebriating effects of strong potations; omitted, during the night, giving medicine or nourishment; but assuming the specious show of attention in the morning, at the instant of the arrival of the physician; would impose on his credulity, and make him doubt his own senses; insist on the medicines having been properly administered, and would arrogantly assert, the patient was on the recovery. Next you see the kind friend, who actuated by self interest, had cast the physic out of the window, and declare most solemnly, the patient had swallowed it. Next you are annoyed by many loquacious gossips, who are paid to pronounce the doom of your patient, and made to swear all things have been attended. But how mortifying the reverse, to the scrutinizing eye of the physician. Alas, death soon closes the scene! but not the iniquitous scene that ensues. Scarce has the spirit winged its flight, when the depredation commences. Here let me pause. I shall be led to a foreign theme. This digression would be inadmissible. Your feelings would be too abruptly arrested on a subject, that would harrow the keenest sensibility.

I cannot omit enumerating one or two agents, that I conceive, have had their full force in bringing to an untimely close, many of our fever cases.

The constant visits, and officious interference of those, whose garrulous, and querimonious tongues, would distract the solemnity of saints; are sure obstacles to that tranquility and composure, which should always surround patients. The vicious tendency of this kind of indulgence, is not limited in its exercises. Importunities from these scourges to society, to induce patients to settle their worldly affairs, and imposing on their minds the necessity of making their wills, are too evident and lamentable, to be unnoticed. We cannot be ignorant of the effect such propositions make, on the duration of an acute disease. The poor sufferer is made too soon sensible of his situation, to the detriment of his future recovery, and the gratification of mercenary dispositions; who are generally trained and expert in what they term "proper preparation." If their forward conduct stopped here, the injury would be limited; but ever disposed to give full scope to their detestable views, they, to use the words of our much lamented countryman, doctor Rush, who early called the attention of physicians to this subject; "they sap the confidence of the sick, by observations on their physicians, detrimental to their reputation, and recommendatory of others in consultation, and the invalid is excessively annoyed with complaints and animadversions; and when they are unheeded, their effrontery leading them into greater excesses of impropriety, they are sure to attack with pertinaceous confidence, the conduct and treatment recommended by the attending practitioner, even within the sound of their voices. What then must be the effect of such indecencies on the mind of the patient, and the consequences that generally result from this aggavation of symptoms. Confidence in a physician, in many instances favors the cure; and we are told, many intelligent men have lamented the demise of a celebrated quack, in whom the most implicit reliance was placed, in the progress of a serious malady.

Are these the only circumstances that have exercised their influence in determining and accounting for the great mortality prevalent during our sickly season? I trust not; the store of facts is not quite exhausted; but I have sufficiently trespassed on your time and patience, by a recital of the most conspicuous and important. The force and magnitude of each particular, I am sensible, will be admitted by those, who honor me with their attention. To some of you, these subjects are more familiar, and I but renew them in your recollection. To others, they are novel, and would almost stagger credibility. If doubt exist, accompany the physician in his visits, enter with him the mansions of

misery and want. Let the excursive eye be indulged, and the closest observation brought into action, and he must be insensible to those sublimated feelings, which adorn, exalt and dignify our species, if he does not readily admit the opinions and sentiments, this day expressed. But in order to possess himself of all the bearings and accompanyments embraced in the positions I have assumed; he must first traverse the fields of philosophy, study the operations of nature; and above all, he must analyse the circumambient air; that subtle ether, which is the prime agent of the stranger's calamity, and that wafts the semina of disease over this part of the continent. Let him learn one truth, paramount to all others; that all animated nature demands for its sustenance and perpetuation, a portion of that invisible fluid termed air. That in its common state, the most perfect operations are performed. That in its impure state, imperfect operations are produced. Then, and not till then, will he be convicted of what has been handed down to us, from the early dawn of science to the present period; that to a deterioration of atmospheric air, may we account for those non-naturals, subversive of healthy action, and the prolongation of life.

Gentlemen of the Society—It becomes me on this occasion to address you with that sincerity of expression and warmth of feeling, commensurate with the important trust you are engaged in.—The undeviating zeal that accompanied you in your labours, and the unremitted devotion, manifested in assuaging the torments, that both corporeally and mentably deranged your fellow beings. It is due to you individually and collectively to say, that no research has been wanting, no skill deficient, in combating the incidious and formidable invasion of that peculiar type of bilious fever, that regularly appear at certain seasons. If the specific still lays buried among the *arcana* of nature, you have evinced, as much industry in searching for, and detecting its presence, as marked the conduct of your Medical brethren in any section of this habitable globe. Your experience and acquaintance with the various diseases incidental to our climate; has long convinced you, that each climate has its peculiar diseases—each disease its peculiar grade—and each grade its peculiar characteristic symptoms. No regular system can be laid down in the treatment of our fevers; they are as various as nature; as subject to revolution as the planetary system. He who acknowledges the unity of disease, but tenders his offering at the shrine of truth; but acknowledges the memory of him, whose medical worth can never be erased—who has raised an imperishable monument in the medical world; that the foul blast of envy can never effect; the rude cavillings of impertinent detraction, can never remove.

You have not been unmindful of the calls on your benevolence, in attending those destitute of the means of employing medical aid; and the last contributions of your pecuniary and personal support in furthering the establishment of a Dispensary, evinces your disposition in favor of its anterior foundation, if your efforts were there unavailing.

Pursuing that line of conduct which must perpetuate your usefulness, and ultimate to the honor of the profession, you will thereby maintain the dignity of your title, and support the respectability of the society.

Remember the science of Medicine stands unrivalled—remember the divinity of its origin—its matchless excellence—its extensive dispensations. I need not remind you of its coextensive researches with the chemist, the botanist, the mineralogist, the electrician, the astronomer, the naturalist. In a word, it stalks with majestic dignity through all the avenues of philosophical inquiry; prompting man to exercises of heavenly pursuits—that presents to his mind the profound adoration of the works of creation. It leads him by resplendent intellect,

> "*Through heaven, or earth, or air, or flood,*
> "*Through nature's works, to nature's God.*"

FINIS.