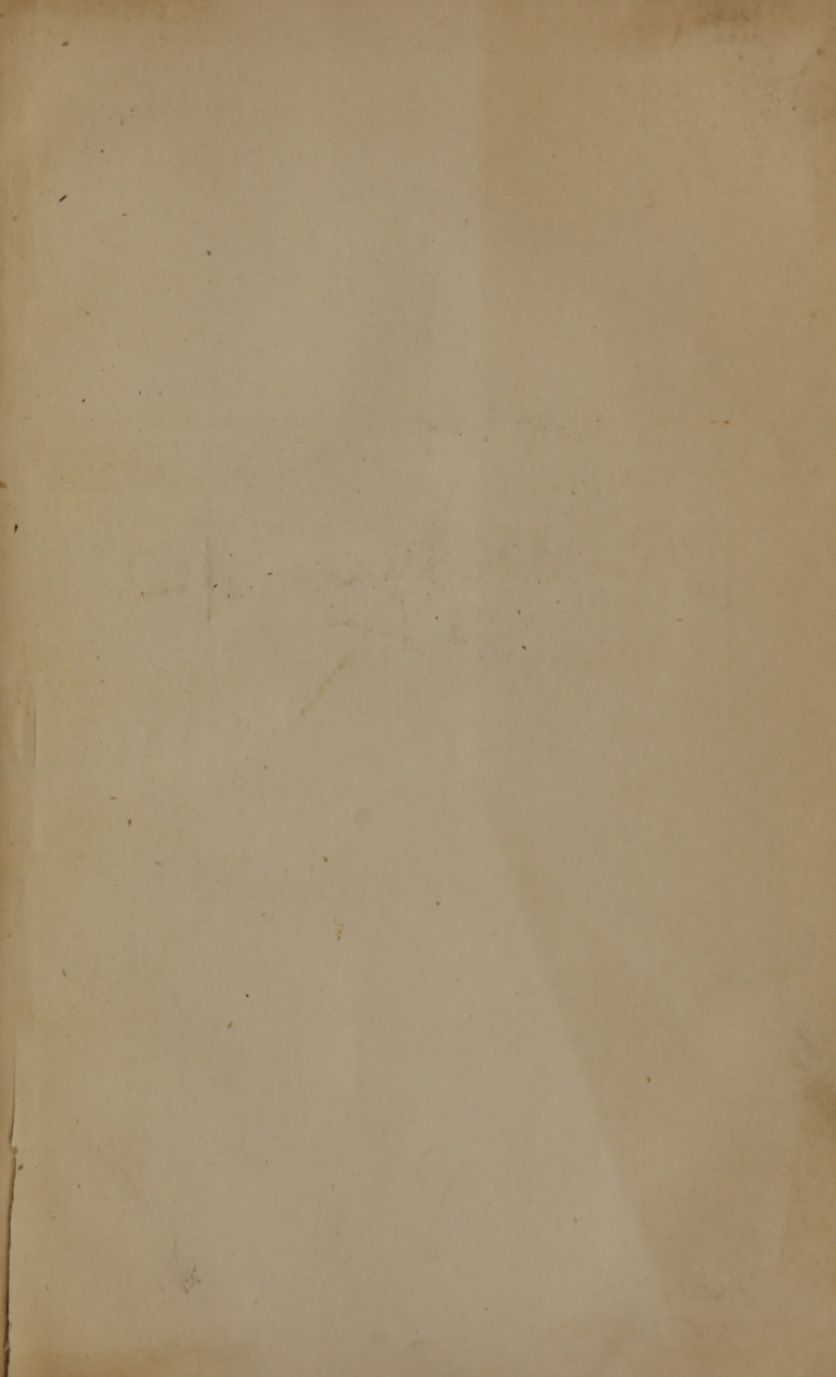


Surgeon General's Office

LIBRARY

Section, Education, Medical

No. 23344



366

M. Hastings, Esq.
Address

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE,

DELIVERED AT

THE

WILLOUGHBY MEDICAL COLLEGE

OF THE

WILLOUGHBY UNIVERSITY

OF

L A K E E R I E

1837-8

Surgeon General's Office
LIBRARY
3344
Washington, D.C.

By **RALPH GRANGER, Esq.**

President.

PAINESVILLE,

PRINTED BY HOWE & JAQUES.

1837.

WILLOUGHBY UNIVERSITY OF LAKE ERIE, }
Willoughby, Oct. 2, 1837. }

To the Hon. RALPH GRANGER.

Dear Sir:—At a meeting of the Faculty of the Willoughby University of Lake Erie, it was unanimously resolved, that a copy of the eloquent and learned Address delivered by you this day, be requested for publication.

In accordance with the above resolution, we respectfully solicit a copy of the same.

We have the honor to be,

Very respectfully

Your obed't serv'ts,

DANIEL L. M. PEIXOTTO,

M. D. & P.

J. M. HENDERSON,

SAMUEL WILSON.

} Committee.

To D. L. M. Peixotto, *M. D. & P.* }

J. M. Henderson, *M. D. &* }

Samuel Wilson, Esq. }

Willoughby, Oct. 2, 1837.

GENTLEMEN:—

In compliance with the request of the Faculty of the Willoughby University of Lake Erie, with which I have been just honored, I enclose the Introductory Lecture this day delivered, not from any merit it may possess recommending it for publication, but because I conceive it to be the property of the University.

I have the honor to be

Very respectfully yours,

RALPH GRANGER.

ADDRESS.

AN unwillingness to shrink from the first duty ever requested, by those who have conferred upon me the honor of presiding over this University, forms the only motive which could have possibly induced this address. The consciousness of incapacity is overborne by a sense of duty, and is coupled with a cheering confidence, that the partiality which filled this chair will prompt excuses for any unwitting defect in the discharge of its duties.

Time was when the awful mysteries of Religion, Medicine and Law, were all shrouded in the bosom of the same officer, and the sacred oracles of all kinds of learning were pronounced by the same lips. The period to which credible history extends is, it is true, very limited, yet sufficiently great to demonstrate such to have been the fact, as well among the learned Indians and Egyptians, as among the most ignorant nations of Europe.—Such was the state of society in both Americas at the several times of their discovery, and such it has been found to be in most islands and among all savages with which acquaintance has been more recently formed by modern enterprise. If in ancient history an exception be found, it is in the history of the favored people. At an early period of the existence of the Hebrew nation, legislative and judicial power were separated from the sacerdotal and medical authority; yet even then, when the lawgiver judged the people, the High Priest sought to discover the tokens of leprosy, and even law was in some degree mingled with the sacred duties; since the water of jealousy was used in

judicial proceedings, as the consecrated rice was and still is resorted to in India and Africa, and as the corsned, and the ordeals of fire and water were employed in Europe. If Medical learning was the last which escaped sacerdotal monopoly, it was because, from its power to alleviate human suffering, it has ever been and ever will be considered of a more divine nature than any other; since, in the minds of all nations, Preserving Science must stand next to Creative Power.

Time was too, when the origin of disease was sought for in other causes than those called natural. It is not permitted to doubt that, in past ages, nations have been miraculously smitten with disease and death, for disobedience and for sacrilege. This belief may be traced from what is generally admitted the most ancient history, through all countries, even subsequent to the time when the heathen aborigines of Connecticut were miraculously smitten with the small-pox, to the manifest security of their Christian visitors and neighbors. But a knowledge of these facts is connected only with the history of disease, and not with the history of Medicine: since, for afflictions of supernatural origin, supernatural remedies only could be supposed to be efficacious.

From the assignment of special providences and supernatural causes, to account for natural events, a step was taken downward to Astrology, a science which was once connected with medicine, though for reasons not very obvious. In the minds of its believers, the influence of the planets appears to have had a middle rank between natural and supernatural causes of events. It was so far natural, that the character of its operation whether malign or beneficent, with the period of its execution could be ascertained and predicted, by regular and scientific rules. Yet it was so far supernatural, that no mode of escaping this influence could be foreseen. The belief in this mysterious influence upon a persons health, as upon his destiny, was entertained by other nations than those which cultivated Sabianism. It was for a time universal over the old world. Shakspeare, in describing the death of Falstaff makes one of his characters say—"A made a finer end and went away an it had been any Christom child; 'a parted even just between twelve and one, e'en at turning 'o th' tide." Shall we imagine that the author borrowed this notion from Aristotle, who says that "no living creature dieth but in the reflux or ebb of the sea?" Certainly not. He merely recorded a belief originating in Astrology, and not merely popular in his day, but equally so in the days of Aristotle. If

any one fancies this notion to be extinct, let him peruse the comparatively modern "essay on Sol-Lunar influence in the fevers of India," with the observations made to establish the fact of such influence; or let him consult any German Almanac of the present year for the planetary signs under which to exhibit emetics, under which cathartics and at what time to let blood.— There is no intention of conveying the idea, that the intelligent gentleman who made the observations to ascertain whether the sun or moon affected either the existence of fever or varied its paroxysms, held any faith in Astrology; but they were undoubtedly led to make and record their observations, to ascertain the rational grounds of a belief originating in Astrology. So far as Meteorology is connected with the influence of the heavenly bodies, the subject may not be unworthy of notice; and a set of correct tables, constructed in a series of years, comparing extraordinary meteoric variations with epidemics, would certainly be curious, and so far useful, as either to end all doubt on the subject, or to stimulate further connected and extended observation.

Neither was the above subject introduced to urge attention to it, either as matter of doubt or of faith. In an age when renewed experiments upon animal magnetism are conducted to support theories almost spiritual, on the one hand; while, on the other hand, the advocates of craniology are as busily employed, in reducing rational and accountable beings to the grade of mere machines, it can only be the duty of any member of this institution, if a teacher to continue, and if a pupil to adopt an eclectic course; in gleaning from every pure source whatever information is calculated either to alleviate the miseries, or prolong the lives of his fellows.

Though Medicine, as now taught and practised, has discarded the aid of superstition, it has not been to establish a proud and profitless independence. It calls to its assistance every branch of natural philosophy, which may, in any measure, be brought to contribute either to the detection of error, the dissipation of doubts, or the originating of new powers.

Chemistry has multiplied her apparatus and kindled her fires to aid in the common cause. If, proceeding on the safe ground of considering every substance simple, which has not been decomposed, she has swelled the catalogue of simple substances, it is not that they are so considered, or that farther experiment upon them has been abandoned. She aims at certainty; and when the discoveries of a few years are attentively considered, what immense results may not be reasonably expected. Think of the dis-

covery of latent heat, including the origin of animal heat—the creation or extraction of caloric, by composition and decomposition, the doctrine of elective affinities—the theory of the definite proportions, in which substances combine chemically—the mechanical demonstration, by dissection, that chrystalizable substances of the same chemical character have always the same invariable primitive form of chrystal, and that all variations are formed by fixed laws of increment or decrement, and are mechanically reducible to the primitive form. Think of the immense powers of decomposition she has acquired through Galvanism, and then fancy, if possible, the assistance she may yield to medicine, ere the current century shall have numbered its years; and at the same time realize the difference between the aid it rendered to the physician forty years ago, and the power which it now tenders to his grasp.)

When the stomach is considered as a living laboratory, in which chemical changes are perpetually wrought; when it is viewed, not as a mere experimental vase unconscious of what passes within itself, but as the subject upon which these chemical changes may operate, be they for nourishment, for injury or for cure; when it is known that the union of two chemical substances in the stomach may produce a third having medical properties totally different from either of those exhibited, and that too within the very organ on which it must necessarily act; nothing further is necessary to demonstrate, that a knowledge of chemical affinities is absolutely essential to a safe exhibition of all mineral medicines and equally important in the detection of poisons and in the indication of their antidotes.

As the vegetable world furnishes the most ample stores of what are erroneously called simples, some acquaintance with Botany is convenient to the practitioner of medicine. Not that there is any want of numbers in the well known articles of vegetable materia medica; yet, where all kinds cannot be procured, it is useful to know an equivalent for one which may be needed; and, consequently, to be acquainted with the most certain tokens of such equivalent. It must be confessed that no perfect system of rules has yet been framed on this subject; nor can a system, absolutely perfect, be devised; since it is imperfect man who makes systems, classes and orders, while nature creates only individuals. Much that is valuable has however been achieved; and, if to the brave,

“Where e'er a path is dangerous known,
The danger's self is lure alone,”

so, it is hoped that there are present many to whose aspiring minds, the very difficulty of perfecting a system of medical botany, will act, rather as an incentive to, than a discouragement from attempting one.

Were botany and vegetable physiology of no other importance than to discipline the mind to combine the most minute observation with most expanded views, it would not be useless; nor can it ever be idle in him who makes the highest of organized beings his study and care, to institute comparisons between them and the lowest in the natural scale. What though plants rooted in earth are deprived of the powers of locomotion; they are composed of the same elements with ourselves, with the doubtful exception of azote. Like us they are furnished with a capacity to select each its own peculiar pabulum, with vessels and organs by which it may be elaborated and distributed. Like animals, they slough their useless parts; and, though they may lack a common sensorium, they at least possess excitability. (Those who push comparative anatomy and physiology farthest, are compelled to admit that the line between the animal and vegetable kingdoms is so finely drawn as to be scarcely perceptible. If no other motive could induce a physician's attention to botany, it would at least receive some notice from that pride which impels every truly professional man to make every other branch of learning contribute to the support, illustration and advancement of his own cherished science.)

The wonderful results of organic action are beautifully and readily exhibited by the examination of a single tree. The mathematical rules of combination seem to be set at nought, by the endless variety in which the few elementary principles of vegetables are made to appear. Who shall enumerate their various dyes, odours and flavours as countless as dissimilar. Study even a Peach. Leave out of view the structure of its stem and leaves, with the functions they perform; and look not at the beauty of its blossom—Take the immature fruit, unsavory to the taste, and clad in the common green livery of vegetation—it is fed by the same sap, which might have been converted merely to leaves or wood, yet, by the action of its own system of vessels, with no unusual supply of sunshine or of air, it paints its own cheeks with the richest and daily varying tints—it converts its gum to sugar—The crude juices it received are partly converted into a pulp, and to fluids of a far different character, wholesome, fragrant, and delicious to the taste. Within this, a bony nut harder than wood itself in its turn encloses a kernel, in which

the blandest of fixed oils is mingled with the most deadly poison known; and all these phenomena are the results of organic action. Yes, and it will be demonstrated that some substances now called simple, even metals, are but the product of this same action on materials as simple. What a study then must the principles of organic action ever remain?

To the advantages possessed by the student of the present day; from the improvement of all other branches of Natural History, may be added those arising from the safe and rapid intercourse between the most distant and dissimilar countries of the globe—and the improved character of those who visit foreign nations. Descriptions of natural objects, as well as of diseases and their treatment, are now given with scientific accuracy. We read no more of those celebrated races, the description of which, on the authority of travelers, renders ancient works on Natural History so amusingly absurd. The Blemneci without heads, with mouth and eyes in the breast—the Himantapodes who crept from incapacity to walk—the Pigmies—the Nisicastes with three or four eyes—the Nigrivæ with a single eye in the forehead; and the Cynamolge with dogs' heads, are none of them now to be found, *adult*, in Ethiopia; though gravely described by ancient authors. Yet to know what the ancients believed is not to be despised by a physician. Mingled in a mass of absurdities, are some notions uncontradicted, and worthy of consideration. Take, as an example, the following sentence from Pliny,—*“A pestilence beginning in the south parts, goeth always to the west.”* That the small pox originated in southern China or Hindostan, and pursued the path suggested by Pliny, has long been matter of history.

From travelers we are beginning to trace the destructive progress of a disease, with as much geographical precision, as the devastating march of an army is delineated. Since this present century commenced, the Typhus Gravior, and the Asiatic Cholera, each once, and a fatal influenza twice, have been epidemic; and it is a wonderful fact, that they have all commenced in the southern parts of Asia, and traveled westward, as disease must often have done before Pliny would have obtained the notion.

On this subject other reflections naturally occur. Different climates have different diseases; or, more properly speaking, particular maladies are more common and more malignant in some climates than in others; and long experience has demonstrated, that different diet is necessary to be observed; as, with certain regimen, the peculiar diseases of a country may be mea-

surably avoided. Such however has not been the case with the Cholera or the Influenza. Commencing in a level country, and under a sun nearly tropical, they have climbed the mountains, and braved the rigors of northern regions. Attacking and conquering first, a people of the most rigid abstinence from fermented and spirituous liquors, and generally from animal food; a people of cleanly habits; whose very religion requires them to perform those wholesome ablutions so shamefully neglected by us; those diseases have next fallen, with equal fatality on those, whose habits and diet have ever been precisely the reverse; on the all drinking and all devouring nations of Europe and America. It would appear that the cause of these diseases, whether atmospheric or not, and wherever originating, is a cause not justly attributable to climate, season or diet; and one which, though it occasionally becomes general, operates but for a very limited period. A series of observations, such as are now made by travelers, and recorded and compared in universities, will, ere long, expose the fallacy or establish the truth of the theory—that, from the immutable laws of nature, diseases, differing in character, must follow each other in something like regular succession.

It is not for mere curiosity, or to lay by a stock of idle learning, that it is recommended to study the general history of diseases, in connection with the physical structure of the country, and the peculiarities of the climate, and of the habits of the people, where each most prevails; for, in all new forms of disease, the most experienced practitioner, however well he may be satisfied by the indications of the symptoms of the course probably the best to be pursued, still knows that the first prescriptions can be little else than experiments, unless led to them by analogies drawn from known facts, and not from simple dogmas. / As in law, one presumption may be founded on a fact, but one presumption is not allowed to rest on another; so in medicine, one theory may be constructed upon facts, but never upon another theory. An extensive knowledge of facts is therefore of great importance in the treatment of those cases where no direct precedent for practice is given, and where the method of cure must be devised by induction.)

These last remarks are of course addressed only to such students as may be present, to induce them to lay the foundations of their education as broad as possible, without which they can never become perfect physicians. Such a foundation having been laid, each can build and finish on such part as he chooses, and in a manner so systematic that every addition

shall form a congruous and useful part of the complete structure. / It must be admitted that all that is, or ever can be, known of medicine, has been derived from experiment. To recorded and continued experiments it can only look for improvement.— As the astonishing perfection to which the mechanic arts are now carried, may be in a great measure attributed to the subdivision of labor, and the distinction maintained between the different ramifications of the same business; so the certain improvement of medicine may be traced to a similar source. All alike study the human structure—the characteristics of the various maladies with which man is afflicted—the proper treatment of such maladies; as well as the remedies for the accidental injuries to which he is subject—with those collateral branches of science most necessary to enable them to prosecute their studies effectually; and for a time all travel in the same common track. But alas, human life is too limited, if the powers of the human mind are not, to permit any man to hope to become as perfect in the whole circle of knowledge, as he might be in a particular branch. This reflection, combined with circumstances or with peculiar predilections, operates on these travelers differently. Some are induced to follow the track opened by Surgery, as leading to certain results, either favorable or unfavorable; and consequently devote more time in acquiring an intimate and exact knowledge of the mechanical structure of man, and of local diseases. These are again subdivided into those who limit their practice, almost exclusively, to the treatment of one particular part.— Take for example an Oculist. It will scarcely be denied, that a well educated oculist, with faculties of close observation and of correct reasoning, by a few years practice in a populous district, would acquire more knowledge of the affections of the eye, and the modes of relief and cure, than could be possessed by an army of ordinary practitioners. What is more—in accumulating this knowledge, he would also acquire the power of communicating every portion of it, except his manual skill, and that indescribable and incommunicable tact of judgment, which is the result only of personal experience. It would by no means follow, that because he confined his practice to affections of the eye, his views would therefore be limited. Would he not of necessity learn the distinction between the ophthalmia of the dusty plains of India and Egypt, and the deserts of Arabia and Africa, and the ophthalmia of the Roman marshes? Would he not discriminate between cases arising from long continued local irritation, and those induced by a bad habit of body? Or to be more

particular—if he noticed a case of inflamed eyes, in a country afflicted with intermittent fevers, like this country, and ascertained that his patient was subjected to periodical paroxysms of pain, as was generally the case in Ohio, would not his treatment be different from what it would be, in a season or a country, where the general type of the prevailing diseases was inflammatory, and the pain of the organ unremitting? Most assuredly, yes. And, if the local diseases varied in their character, in a manner uniformly corresponding with the changes in the types of the prevailing diseases of the country, would he not refer their origin to the same common cause? If so, he certainly must possess the information necessary to enable him to compare the diseases of one season and one country, with those of another season or another country. When he has acquired this varied knowledge, he gives a minute and accurate treatise to the world, the substance of which, in process of time, becomes embodied and perpetuated in some elementary work; and thus he reflects back upon general science, with concentrated intensity, the various lights he had received from it, in pursuit of his investigations.

To enable a person to examine even a trifling subject in all its bearings, general knowledge is necessary; to obtain exact knowledge, strict and confined observation is equally to be exercised. Such combined views, if not always matters of habit, are at least much assisted by the custom of examining things in both manners; and, to create such a habit, the task of writing Theses or Monographs upon any subject, selected by the writer, is frequently and profitably imposed in Universities.

The customs of a country have more influence upon the general state of health, and the practice of medicine, than is usually supposed. (It is comparatively easy to acquire a thorough knowledge, of the general manner in which health is preserved in other regions, without being able to make that knowledge useful in any eminent degree, where customs differ.) With us the skin receives no attention, until it actually becomes diseased.—But dry hot baths, or steam baths, with shampooing, friction, or flagellation, are used as a preventive of disease, over more than half the globe. In the Islands of the Pacific and the South Sea, the nations use cold bathing before meals, and after their meals are shampooed in the manner sometimes practised on dyspeptics. In Sweden, Finland, Russia and Tartary, they bathe habitually in vapor generated by throwing water upon heated stones, in apartments constructed for the purpose; and

are lashed with twigs during the operation. The North American savages, not habitually, but for sickness only, bathe in steam raised in the same manner; but instead of flagellation, pursue the more primitive mode of employing the incantations of a priest during the ceremony. The more luxurious orientals use suits of rooms, heated without vapor; where, after friction, various unguents are applied to the whole surface. Such was once the practice of the Romans; but it is a singular fact, that, for some unexplained reason, practices so ancient, and once universal, are now generally discontinued in all civilized portions of christendom, though of undoubted benefit to health. The impossibility of a physician's generally employing such means in riding his circuit, is obvious, from the mere inconvenience; unless the customs of a country provide the means in each dwelling, or in crowded vicinities; and to create a custom, the usages of more than one generation are necessary.

(In all scientific pursuits founded upon the observation and comparison of isolated facts, there is an unavoidable tendency to generalize every thing; as well for the convenience of memory, as in obedience to old, or for the establishment of new theories.) In medicine, especially in thinly peopled districts, this disposition leads gradually to the disuse of all but a very few favorite remedies; each practitioner selecting his own, being guided in his choice, either by a favorite doctrine, or by the good effects he may have noticed to have followed its exhibition, in some peculiar and difficult cases.) This discrepancy of prescription, within a limited district of precisely similar country, and for identical diseases, exists to a much greater degree than is usually imagined. It is not perhaps more a matter of astonishment, that every physician should entertain too exalted an opinion of a prescription, whose virtues have often fallen under his observation, and have, perhaps, given him reputation in his practice, than that two scholars, of equally sound judgement, should differ merely because they had been educated in different schools; yet it is believed that those educated in Boston and New Orleans, notwithstanding the difference of climate, would not differ more than the faculty of New York and Philadelphia once differed. This, so far from being a reproach to the profession, evinces an independence of action and thinking necessary to advancement. (Medicine has never claimed to be a perfect science, but one susceptible of daily improvement; and this difference in practice, from whatever source it may spring, furnishes a greater collection of experiments, than would have ever been designedly made for the purposes of mere investigation.)

That the disposition to generalize diseases, and simplify their treatment, without reference to individual or local peculiarities, should in an equal degree lessen the number of remedies employed, is not only a necessary consequence, but, if not carried too far, is a grand desideratum. A catalogue of ancient medicines is by no means the least amusing and curious branch of the study of medicine. One who reads the recipes given, even by Lord Verulam, would scarcely imagine him to have been the father of the only correct method of reasoning for discovery—the inductive method. If the value of prescription depended on its costliness or rarity, a solution of pearls or aurum potable would have been choice medicines; but the days of Mithridate and Bezoar, of Mummy and Ambergris, of gold and pearls have departed. Though, after the example of Medea the transfusion of blood and the injection of medicated solutions into the blood vessels may have been resorted to in modern times; it can be said with pride, that the contents of Medea's cauldron find no rivals in regular practice, though the "*mille aliis postquam sine nomine rebus*" may long find admirers among the vulgar.

When it was remarked that medicine had never claimed to be a perfect science, no disrespect was intended—far from it—certain sciences, from their very certainty of character, have their limits of improvement. It is the boast of medicine that as it has steadily improved, so it may go on *ad infinitum*. Every aspirant for fame may be assured, that the field of discovery is as broad as ever—as many avenues are open to honorable distinction. By the expansion of a single original idea, he may become famous like a Harvey or a Darwin—by demonstrating the success, and introducing the practice of some vulgar or provincial treatment, he may become a public benefactor like Jenner—and in pursuing the study of natural history generally, he would constantly bear in mind that we probably have plants and even animals, in this vicinity, as yet undescribed, with whose name his own might go down to posterity. In pursuing investigations on these, or other subjects, no proposition should be believed or doubted, merely for its antiquity or its novelty; nor should a theory be pronounced to be absurd, unless it can be demonstrated so to be; nor should a practice be called injurious, until its effects have been witnessed. For these reasons, all medical professors, while they endeavor to impart their own knowledge, and its incident conclusions, should always impress upon their pupils the necessity of an independence of opinion, as necessary, equally,

to the advancement, and the dignity of the profession; and this too, notwithstanding the honest caution they constantly exercise, during the process of instruction in advancing no proposition which cannot be supported, by deductions from facts, or by their own lucid demonstrations.

Not the least of the advantages of this age, and of this country, is the perfect freedom with which a man may form and express opinions on general subjects. There are many nations in which the progress of medicine is subjected to obstructions, from the peculiar religious notions prevailing. Where a person is accounted unclean for touching a portion of a dead body—where to handle a skeleton, for the purpose of learning the structure of the frame, or the simplest rudiments of surgery, would render the surgeon too impure to touch the person who requires his services—where custom denies the power of devising the remedies of a disease, by a *post mortem* examination, to discover its local ravages, and the probable cause of death—when such impediments are thrown in the paths of research, little progress can be expected, but what is borrowed from nations where different opinions exist. This is the state of society, in what may be called the cradle of science—and even in Egypt, where the doctrine of the resurrection of the body first prevailed, the embalmers who first prepared the body for embalming, that it might be preserved for future reanimation, were ever held unclean and subject to the insults of the populace, for performing a duty enjoined only by piety.

There are those, even in our own day, who object to comparative anatomy and physiology, because, though they shew the difference between human bodies and those of brutes, they also show the resemblance. But what has physiology or comparative anatomy to do with psychology? It is true the imagination is often called in to the aid of medicine; that confidence in a physician is a comfort to the patient, if not an assistant to the practitioner. It is true that the phenomena of dreams, of memory, the power of conceiving and combining abstract ideas, as well as those derived from perception, are all, in some degree, dependant on the healthy discharge of the corporeal functions; and while we are compelled to admit the truth of Lucretius, when he says

*“quoniam mentem sanari, corpus ut ægrum
Cernimus, et flecti medicina posse videmus.”*

it is not equally necessary to admit the startling deduction of the fascinating poet,

“Id quoque presagit, mortale vivere mentem.”

In the present state of man, it is perhaps necessary, it is certainly wise, in some degree to take advantage of the mental disposition of a patient, to effect his cure. There can be no more harm, even in cases absolutely hopeless, in a physician comforting a patient or his friends, or in alleviating painful though incurable symptoms, than there could be in strewing flowers upon his grave; common humanity requires it, when it can be done without an abandonment of opinion, or a lowering of professional dignity.

This age looks favorably upon all attempts at improvement in science generally. That there never has been—that there never will be any want of favor to the medical profession is sufficiently evinced by the confidence still reposed in unscientific pretenders. The truly learned feels no chagrin at this want of discrimination in others. He knows that those who run after nostrums would, in other countries, with the same blind faith and ignorance, make pilgrimages to kiss consecrated relics. He knows also, that though occasionally an old prejudice against one mode of practice or another, against one class of remedies or another, is revived, and obtains an ephemeral popularity; that still the march of public confidence in learning is steadily onward, and exactly in proportion as the mass of community itself becomes enlightened. Sustained by this knowledge, and the delightful consciousness of doing good, and, (for the whole world is not ungrateful,) occasionally cheered by the tearful gratitude of those whose pains he has alleviated, whose sorrows he has soothed, and perhaps whose lives he has been instrumental in saving, he learns to tread with indifference the vexations and inconveniences with which his path is strewed.

Others have made it a just subject of felicitation, that this university has been founded in so charming a country; one at all times so feasible of access, and abounding with so many subjects of natural history, on which of all men, medical gentlemen have ever bestowed the most distinguished attention. As the institution has every reason to be satisfied with the high reputation it has already acquired, it seems now proper rather to congratulate community than the faculty. Though all such establishments have in their commencement to overcome prejudices, nay even sometimes to refute calumnies; if sufficient funds are provided to sustain their existence a very few years, their triumph is insured, and their triumph becomes the boast of their vicinity. Ready at all times to furnish information on all subjects even remotely connected with the purposes of their

foundation, they gradually become wholesome regulators of practice, and the tribunals to which matters of difference in opinion are generally referred.

Ere long to this institution will be reported all new, all anomalous symptoms of disease, occurring in an immense region, as to the place where, in return, the most proper treatment, if any be known, can be learned, and where, if none be known, one can, by analogy, be devised. Here all specimens for collections of subjects of Natural History will find their way. If ninety-nine out of every hundred specimens brought are of subjects well known to the learned, still the hundredth may be a rarity, and all are acceptable. If each donor carries away with him the scientific name of his present, with the proper description of its characteristics, its properties, and uses, the public receive information in the ratio of of a hundred to one; while the University preserves the specimen and records its locality, as well to perpetuate this knowledge as to retain the means of communicating it. By furnishing opportunities of acquiring new, and comparing and correcting old ideas, it will sustain and strengthen the relish for scientific pursuits in bosoms in which it before existed but is fading away; and it will create such a relish where now it is unfelt. It will eradicate old and idle notions and prejudices, and substitute correct ones, and that too in a manner so gentle, gradual and inoffensive, that community will feel itself enlightened, yet can scarcely detect the manner, or appreciate the extent; till even those who have almost feared that unsafe opinions were a necessary result of philosophic investigation become satisfied that the wisdom and benevolence of Deity are no where more readily learned than from the book of nature, when opened by the finger of science, and expounded by that reason which constitutes the greatest gift of infinite benevolence to man.

WZ
270
G 7586
1837

