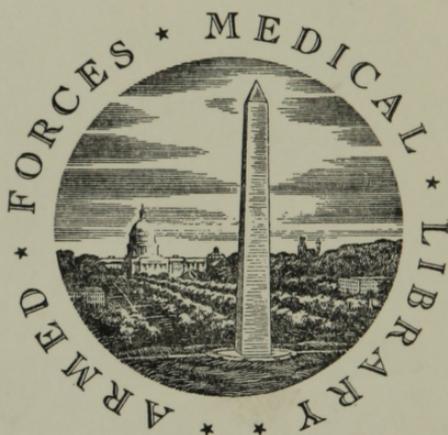


UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



FOUNDED 1836

WASHINGTON, D.C.

5
Benjamin Shuttleff M.D.
from Schenck's

DR. WARING'S DISCOURSE.



A

DISCOURSE,

READ BEFORE

THE RHODE-ISLAND MEDICAL SOCIETY,

ON

THEIR ANNIVERSARY,

SEPTEMBER, A. D. 1812.

BY EDMUND T. WARING.



PROVIDENCE :

PRINTED AT THE AMERICAN OFFICE, BY DAVID HAWKINS, JUN.

.....
1812

At the Anniversary of the RHODE-ISLAND MEDICAL SOCIETY, holden in Providence on the first of September, 1812.

VOTED, That JOHN MACKIE and WILLIAM C. BOWEN be a Committee to present the thanks of the Society to DR. EDMUND T. WARING, for his elegant and appropriate Discourse, this day read before them, and request a copy for the press.

A true copy from the records:

Attest, JOHN MACKIE, *Recording Secretary.*

DRS. MACKIE AND BOWEN,

Gentlemen,

THAT the Discourse, read before the Rhode-Island Medical Society, on their first Anniversary, has met with their approbation, will ever be a source of pleasing recollection to me; and although I never anticipated that it should meet the publick eye, yet as it is their wish, I cannot otherwise than cheerfully comply.

EDMUND THOMAS WARING.

DISCOURSE, &c.

IN all ages and countries, the arts and sciences have maintained a distinguished consideration. Enlightening the mind and refining the heart of man, they furnish a scale of the progress of civilization. Signal have been the honours and privileges conferred upon their votaries. Tyranny itself has been abashed and bowed with reverence before them. By special mandate, the Philosopher of Syracuse was exempted from the sword of destruction, and a modern conquerour commanded his legions to pause when they approached the walls of Mantua, and himself paid homage at the tomb of Virgil. The reasons are obvious. They are formed in that law, whose authority all human nature acknowledges. The arts and sciences affect the dearest interests of man; they relieve his necessities, contribute to his comforts and safety, and gratify his ruling passions—avarice and ambition. The sciences in a special manner, elevate and ennoble him; they divest him of all that is sordid and mean in his nature; they incorporate all mankind into one family, cherishing the benignant and sublime principles of benevolence and love. For him the Botanist directs

his steps to every clime; he leaves the cultivated plain and penetrates the deepest forests, where no human trace is found, to discover some new article with which he may enrich the natural history of plants. For him, the Chemist, with a scrutinizing and obtrusive spirit, not content with the mere externals of Nature's works, extorts from Nature's self, the secret of her operations, and by his inventive genius, forms a creation of his own. For him, the Astronomer, whose pursuits sublimate the mind, liberates himself from this spot of his abode, and ranges throughout the solar system. Directed by the laws of gravitation and repulsion, he determines the revolution of every planet, and unfolds the causes of our seasons; he guides the adventurous mariner through trackless oceans, and creates a social intercourse between the inhabitants of every clime. Winged by imagination, he o'erleaps the boundaries of discovered space, fancies other systems, and bows, at last, with religious awe, before the Great First Cause of the stupendous whole.

With sentiments of the most profound respect and veneration do we contemplate the distinguished character of the Physician. His subject is man himself—the last, the noblest work of God. For him, with feelings of the most refined philanthropy, he dedicates his life and labours—endures the inclemencies of every season—relinquishes the pleasures of social intercourse, and withholds from tired Nature the cordial of repose. Deplorable would be

the state of man, unimproved by the Physician. Society would not exist—disgust and self-preservation would annihilate the sublime principle of sympathy—man would flee from man—populous cities would be unknown, and mankind would be reduced to a level with the Arabs—wanderers of the deserts. That the science of medicine, which he professes, should render him respected and distinguished in society, is therefore natural. It is founded in the necessities and miseries of man.

This day, dedicated to the cause of medical science, demands that we should bestow on it our particular attention. We will cursorily consider its origin, its progress and improvements. Of all the sciences, that of medicine boasts of the highest antiquity. From the first introduction of disease, it existed, as is fabulously represented in the character of Hope, in the story of Pandora. The first evidences of its existence were furnished by the doubtful and hazardous experiments of distressed and sympathizing friends. Experience in course of events afforded some guide. This, which had afforded relief, was treasured up as a remedy; that which did not relieve, was discarded. But, it was not until the profession of physick was embraced that much progress in the healing art could be expected. Individuals devoting themselves exclusively to the observance of the symptoms, the progress and termination of diseases, and the effect of remedies, could alone advance it with any degree of

certainty and usefulness. Ages, however, passed away without its being identified in the dignified form of a science. It lay imprisoned within the grasp of interested conjurers and impostors. At length a luminary arose in the person of HIPPOCRATES. Possessing a mind patient, acute and discriminating, he applied himself to the investigation of the causes, symptoms and varieties of disease, and was the first to promulgate the precepts of medicine. His discoveries and example excited a spirit of inquiry and emulation, which may be said to lay the foundation of the science. Greece deified him, and after his death, divine honours consecrated his memory. Unhappily, the dark and Gothick age soon succeeded. The science of medicine, with all the arts and refinements of antiquity, disappeared. A thousand years of medical history are distinguished only by almost continued marks of deletion. The few geniuses which appeared within that period were as meteors, evanescent and deepening the shade of the prevailing darkness. At length the night passed away. The few relicks which formed the monument of ancient greatness were collected, and a literary enthusiasm was excited. But the pride and indolence of man, impatient under the restraints of close investigation and experiment, soon indulged in theories; in supporting which, discord arrested the progress of improvement. The foundation which HIPPOCRATES had laid, was passed by, unheeded. Centuries rolled away, medicine was no more than a conjectural art; mankind

continued the victims of pride of opinion. Again, the spirit of HIPPOCRATES revived in a BACON. To him mankind are indebted for the revival of all science, particularly that of medicine. He resumed the work which had been begun, and so long neglected. Not a Physician himself, he has given birth to thousands. Pursuing his instructions, a HERVEY discovered the circulation of the blood, which forms so important an era in the history of medicine. To him succeeded a SYDERHAM, than whom a greater genius never trod the path of medical science. He combated, successfully, the superstitious prejudices of society; introduced correct conceptions of diseases, and established a rational and successful treatment of them. From his time, we look forward to the present moment, with transports of joy and delight. A period less than two centuries, we observe, with enthusiastick admiration, a science rapidly advancing to a proud eminence. A galaxy of genius arose in Europe. A BOERHAAVE, a HALLER, a MUNRO, a CULLEN, a BROWN, a HUNTER, and a host of others, extended their lights to every quarter of the globe; diffusing health, happiness and life. Pursuing the course of rational investigation, Physicians adopted no theory, but what arose from facts and observations, established by experiment. They exacted tribute of all the arts and sciences. Anatomy and Physiology, Botany and Chemistry were united in promoting the interests of humanity. The human frame was critically examined; the functions of different organs, their re-

lations, their sympathies and dependencies on each other were ascertained; the seat of diseases discovered; articles of diet and remedies for diseases multiplied; and the means of preserving health proclaimed. The terrour and consternation which pervaded families on the approach of disease are now supplanted by a grateful confidence in that faculty, whom they have seen restore limbs to the lame, hearing to the deaf, sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, reason to the insane, and even life to the supposed dead.

Gentlemen of the Medical Society of Rhode-Island,

From the conviction that medical science has been advanced by the united energies of individuals, you have laudably associated yourselves for its diffusion and improvement. As Physicians, you have individually estimated the importance and dignity of the profession which you have embraced; you have realized the weighty responsibilities attached to it; you have been the guardians of the health and lives of your fellow-citizens. From the moment that man ushers into being, through the varying and perilous track of life, even to that solemn moment when Nature's mandate is to be obeyed, you have been his hope; the sympathizing colleague of the ministers of peace, to alleviate the agonies of death.

Great as your responsibilities have been, they are extended by your association. Heretofore you have

acted as individuals; you are now clothed with the privileges of an act of incorporation: privileges which secure to you the right of authorizing and recommending Practitioners of medicine. Need I caution you in the exercise of them, against the indulgence of partiality or prejudice? Dreadful is the havock which ignorant pretenders spread on every side! Helpless widows and children, bereaved and disconsolate husbands, desolated families, are the sad trophies of their skill.

On you, your fellow-citizens will direct the eye of confidence. Voluntarily embracing the medical profession, with its additional privileges, they repose in you the guardianship of their dearest interests. Yours is the felicity to have the discoveries and experience of ages, descend to you by reversion. They are a legacy which it is your duty to preserve, improve and transmit to posterity. Great as they are, much remains to be done. There are still diseases which are the opprobria medicinæ. New diseases still arise within the circle of every man's practice. A recent discovery which has proved that a loathsome and mortal disease may be struck from the list of human evils, encourages the hope, that others may also be erased, by further investigation. Let not your successours reproach you with indolence; be animated by a noble emulation; cherish those liberal and enlightened principles, for which your profession has so long been distinguished; devote the talents you possess to the diffusion of

medical science; and, when the evening of your days shall arrive, envied will be your retreat: gratitude will attend you with all her kind offices; reflection will preserve those sublime emotions which sprang from doing good, and self-approbation will brighten your future prospects with hope.

Med. Hist.

WZ

270

W276d

1812

c.1

