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1829

Jones, A.
AN ORATION,

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DELIVERED BEFORE THE

CENTRAL MEDICAL SOCIETY

By 1157 **OF GEORGIA,**

AT ITS ANNUAL MEETING IN MILLEDGEVILLE,

ON 2d. DEC. 1828.



BY ALEXANDER JONES, M. D.

AUGUSTA:

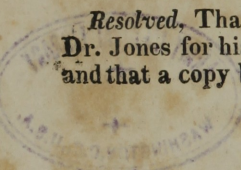
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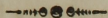
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AT an adjourned meeting of the Central Medical Society of Georgia, held on Dec. 5th. 1828—
The following Resolution, on motion of Dr. Weems was unanimously adopted :

Resolved, That the thanks of this Society, be tendered to Dr. Jones for his Oration delivered before it, on the 2d. inst. and that a copy be requested for publication.



ORATION.



Ladies and Gentlemen of this Polite Audience and Fellow Members.

CALLED by your wishes to deliver the anniversary Oration, I have been at a great loss for a subject upon which to address you, and have an impressive sense of my inability to edify you upon this occasion. After much reflection I have been led to adopt a topic, which I am conscious has been frequently discussed before, by persons more adequate to the task. Though I may not promise to offer much which is new; yet from the important and interesting nature of the subject I hope we shall not be losers, by hearing a repetition of the truths embraced in it.

The history of medicine in the Southern states, with a notice of the causes, which have retarded its progress—and the means calculated to promote, it, are the subjects upon which I propose to offer a few remarks.

This is an extensive field, strewed with materials, which it is difficult to collect and organize, and we only present them as the elements of a more elaborate history to be compiled, by some future historian.

Beginning with Virginia the "old dominion," the first Southern State. Although emphatically "old" in almost every other sense, she is young in medical lore. Settled at a period long anterior to our revolutionary struggle she has only recently adopted measures for the improvement and cultivation of Medical Science, with a population amounting to nearly a million and a half—she has long suffered her sons, to seek instruction "at the feet of European professors,"—Or to fill the classic halls of her neighbors of the North.—Bearing

off much treasure gleaned from her fertile soil, to swell the revenue of a distant school and a foreign shore. We are now amazed in contemplating why this was so long the case. It remained for Jefferson with his wonted philosophy to see and partially remedy the evil. Under his influence the Central College rose from the shades of Monticello. In this institution a medical department has been organized on a limited scale. However defective this attempt may be to improve our science, we indulge the hope that it may prove a bright star, in the Galaxy of American Medical Schools, and result in lasting benefits to the profession. A medical school was opened in Winchester, Va. in 1826 with four professorships.* Many physicians both living and dead have justly honoured this state with their professional fame and usefulness. Doctor Baynham, was a distinguished surgeon and practitioner.—Some attempts have been made to establish a medical tribunal in this state: but failed for the want of constitutional authority. Some useful and distinguished medical societies have been organized in Virginia.

Travelling south, we next come to North Carolina.—Although she can boast of many respectable and well educated physicians, yet her medical schools are unknown to us, if any exist. A medical society was formed in Charlotte in this state, some years ago called the Esculapian Society, having for its object the diffusion of information among its members,—and the advancement of the character and interest of the profession.†

Coming to South-Carolina we find more to cheer the feelings of the medical historian and to compensate him, for his toils after information. Charleston has long been, the theatre and nursery of distinguished physicians. A few *master spirits* in this city, eminent for their skill and learning, gave an impulse and cast to the profession; which will long

* Drs. Smith, McGuire, Magill and Cook, are its professors.

† Its officers are Dr. S. Henderson, President, Drs. McKenzie and Fox, Vice Presidents, Dr. Randolph Corr, Secretary, Dr. Biains, Rec. Sect'y. Dr. Ross, Treasurer, and Dr. Anderson, Libra'n. Managers, Drs. Sheffield, Darnall, School, S. Harris and John M. Harris.

be felt and appreciated; and it may be here remarked, that wherever the laws have afforded aid and protection, to our profession there has always been a commensurate improvement in medical character and usefulness.

The earliest and most distinguished physician of this state, was Dr. Chalmers, a graduate of Edinburgh. He was an able and copious writer; his work on the weather and diseases of South Carolina, published in London in 1776, though deformed in some degree by the errors of the mechanical philosophy, and Humoral Parthology, of Boerhaave and Sylvius, nevertheless abounds in much useful information which entitles it to the attentive perusal of every Southern physician.

Dr. Garden was also early distinguished, as a scholar and physician. In further illustration of his character, I do not know that I can do better, than quote the words of an intelligent friend. "He" (Dr. Garden) "was a native of Europe, he was early initiated in the principles of the sciences, and especially medicine and its kindred branches, in which he afterwards became highly distinguished. As a physician he had the fullest confidence of the community, as a man he was beloved and respected, and as a philanthropist, he inspired with admiration and gratitude all who knew him. But it was not alone by these means, that he distinguished himself, possessed of a noble and lofty mind, he delighted in exploring the boundless walks of nature; and in the study of Botany, he became so conspicuous as to attract the attention of the celebrated *Lineaus*, who as a mark of his admiration of his character, attached his name to one of the most beautiful flowers in nature. (*The Gardenixæ or Cape Jessamine.*") †

Dr. Lining studied medicine at Leyden under the celebrated Boerhaave, with whom he formed a firm friendship. As a physician and a man, he was universally respected. He wrote little, but the effusions from his pen always bore the marks of genius. Among those which attracted most attention was his very able account of the Yellow Fever of Charleston? and

† Dr. Garden was the first who introduced this delightful plant into Charleston, from the Cape of Good Hope, and gave a botanical description of it.

communicated to the celebrated Dr. Whytt of Edinburgh and published in the Edinburgh medical essays.

With the character and writings of that *eminent physician and historian Dr. Ramsy*—I presume you are *all* acquainted. He was a native of Pennsylvania, and a graduate of the Philadelphia School—By persevering industry and indefatigable application, he acquired *fame* as an *historian*, and *eminence* as a *physician*, truly great and really enviable. As long as the United States, exist, as a great republic, or letters are cultivated, so long will the name of *Ramsy* stand high on the roll of fame and pre-eminent in the annals of American genius. To his labours in the *senate*, in his *profession*, and as a citizen; South Carolina owes much of her present advancement in Medical Science. Would time permit, I might here relate to you the labours of a *Barron*, a *Wilson*, a *Harris* and an *Irvine*, who have added a lustre to the profession, and left names long to be remember'd by the citizens of Charleston. The Latter, was distinguished for his patriotism and services as a Surgeon, during the memorial struggle for our Independence. He was attached to Lees Legion as surgeon. At the action of *Quinby Bridge*, perceiving the first Troop of the Legion deprived of its officer, he gallantly assumed the command, and leading it on with the impetuosity which marked his character, he compelled a company of British, under the command of Capt. Campbell, to throw down their arms and surrender. He is believed to have been the first to suggest the plan, or celebrated manoeuvre of wheeling about from the pursuit of Cornwallis and leaving him to be caught in the snares which *Washington* and *Rochambeau*, had spread for him in Virginia. While the southern army should fall back on the British Garrisons and capture them in succession, it has become an historical fact, that the successful execution of it, together with the capture of Cornwallis, largely contributed to the recognition by the British Government of the freedom of these States.||

|| See a sketch, of the life and character of the late Dr. Mat. Irvine—by R. Furman, M. D.

Memorable

In 1789 the Medical Society of South Carolina, was formed in Charleston. In 1790, it appointed its first Officers, consisting of Peter Fayssoux, President, Alexr. Barron, Vice President, Tucker Harris Sec'ry and David Ramsy, Tresurer. It was incorporated by the Legislature in 1794, it has been eminently, respectable and useful, and has given birth by the aid of the Legislature to the Medical College, which promises much usefulness. § This School was incorporated by the Legislature in 1823, and is fast rising into respectability. In the year 1817, a Medical Board was established in this State; but it was divided between—a board at Charleston and Columbia; which division has operated against its usefulness. Its defects in other respects are similar to our own, particularly the granting of Temporary Licenses, and the less than trifling remuneration the members of the Board are allowed for their services, which effectually cripples their operations. In 1824, the Charleston Medical Society of Emulation was formed, which was incorporated by the Legislature in 1825. Dr. E. Geddings, was its first President, and Dr. H. Dickson, is its present chief officer. It has a Library of about 200 volumes, a cabinet of minerals and a few Anatomical preparations.

We come now, to speak of the medical history of our own State. Our advancement in medical science can be told in few words. The oldest medical society in the State, is the Georgia Medical Society of Savannah—of which Dr. Kollock was a distinguished President. This society has been very useful in the advancement of professional character in Savannah, which city can boast of a large number of respectable *physicians, living and dead*. In 1823, the medical society of Augusta was incorporated, of which the late distinguished and benevolent *Dr. A. Watkins* was President, whose character will long be held in grateful remembrance, by the profession and his fellow citizens of Augusta. In 1825, the board of Physicians, was organized by the Legislature of this State.

§ It has a Library of between one and 2,000 volumes of Books, chiefly Medical.

President of the Medical Society of South Carolina

Its officers and proceedings are too well known to require comment. It labours under some defects which if not remedied will destroy its usefulness, if not the Institution itself. In the first place, it is not to be believed, that the almost gratuitous services, of a sufficient number of eminent physicians, can be always obtained, to discharge the duties of the Board in a way to make the Institution respectable. Its *formation* and *operations*, to the present time, have required sacrifices for the public good, on the part of those who have upheld it; which are rarely witnessed in any country. Its duties in many instances, have been painful and perplexing and a rigid regard to justice and responsibility, in the discharge of their functions, have no doubt caused them to receive unmerited censure. But the members of the board have the consolation of knowing, that they have acted from conscientious motives, & that an enlightened public will judge of their services. The law by a slight alteration, might be made more efficient and its frequent violation prevented. Many professing to have been in practice previous to the passage of the act—are suffered to proceed without an investigation. And others when failing or, neglecting, to obtain License, emigrate to the new counties and commence the practice among strangers and being unknown evade the law.—This might be prevented by compelling *every physician* licensed, or, unlicensed to have his name enrolled by the Clerk of the Superior Court of the county in which he lives, together with the date of his license, or the year in which he commenced the practice, such records would render it easy to detect illegal practitioners.

Many names of distinction, might be mentioned, as adorning the early professional character of our state.—Their writings however are few. Dr. Bibb, early distinguished himself as a physician. His thesis on indigestion, has been published, and much admired for its argumentation, and elegance of style; Being early called to fill political trust of importance, his promising aid to the cause of science was in a great degree cut off. Dr. Grimes, possessed a mind of great strength and clearness, he entered the profession, under flattering circum-

passage investigation

stances, and gave early indications of future professional fame. But unfortunately, we were doomed to mourn the premature loss, of talents and worth, upon which hope might reasonably have rested in expectation of gathering, unfading honours to adorn his brow. Others might be enumerated who early distinguished themselves in our profession in this state. Dr. Abbott, whose name it would be improper to omit, on this occasion, was for 16 years an eminent practitioner in Wilkes county; as a *philosopher, philanthropist* and *physician*, Dr. A. has had few, if any equals in Georgia. To impart instruction to a numerous class of respectable students, to practice medicine according, to the deductions of correct reasoning—to relieve the sufferings and distresses of the poor, without regard to compensation, were noble and distinguishing traits in the character of Dr. Abbott. It may be said he was a student all his life. The various departments of Natural Philosophy and Natural History afforded him pleasing subjects of investigation and enquiry. His magnetic investigations, or the proposal of applying the principles of magnetism, to the discovery of longitude, were so ingeniously and philosophically explained and supported, that they gained for Dr. Abbott, a high character and standing in the literary and scientific world, and secured him the acquaintance, and esteem of some men, of the first literary renown in America. He died in 1826, full of honours and full years.

The establishment of the Board of Physicians and the organization of this society the past year, will we are induced to hope form an interesting era, in the medical history of our state. Did not delicacy forbid, we could name many living practitioners, who justly honour their profession and give pledges of great usefulness to society.

Alabama though comparatively a new state, has done something to aid the cause of medical science; In 1823, the Legislature of this state passed a law establishing five medical boards in different parts of it; each consisting of three members, who annually convene on the first Monday in December. Its other provisions are similar to our own, and though very

defective, are unquestionably better than none.—All persons who were practising medicine, at the time of the passage of the law, were authorised to continue it, on condition, that they reported themselves to one of the boards, in nine months after their establishment, but if they afterwards removed more than thirty miles, they were subject to an *examination*, or were to relinquish the practice. This state is inhabited by many eminent practitioners, chiefly emigrants from other states.—The periodical Medical Journals, show, that there are in Alabama many meritorious and skillful physicians. Though in its first settlement perhaps *few states were so over run with impostors.*

Few states in the Union, have so well sustained the science of medicine as Mississippi, which in this respect is decidedly before any other Southern State—In 1819, a law was passed creating a Board of Censors, who were to meet semi-annually in Natchez. Dr. Jno. F. Carmicheal, is Pres't, and Dr. Standard, Sec'ry.—In 1823, another Board of Censors, consisting of five members reputed for their skill and moral character was created in Monticello, on Pearl River, for the benefit of the Eastern Counties—In 1827, a Board was appointed to hold its meetings at Columbus, in Monroe County. The penalties for violating the laws creating these Boards, are a fine of *five hundred dollars*,—*imprisonment for six-months*, and a *forfeiture of all professional fees.* More effectually to suppress, empiricism, a law was passed in 1827, requiring every Licensed Physician, to have such license recorded in the Clerks office of his county, and at the sitting of each term of the circuit court; the Clerk, is required to give into the hands of the Grand Jury, a list of the licentiates of his county. And it is made obligatory upon the Judge to charge them to bring in a bill of indictment against any person who (either within their knowledge, or from the formal charges of others,) continues to violate the law. The Boards interchange a list of all they pass and reject, after each session.

It is needless to add that such salutary regulations, have

produced the most happy results. Mississippi has a larger number of well educated physicians and fewer pretenders, than any other State in the Union, of her age. Among her number may be named, Dr. Cartwright, who has written several Prize Essays, and Drs. Merrill, Perlee, Perrine, Moore and Haynes—each of whom have contributed to the Medical Journals of Philadelphia, and have given evidence of much medical talent. A medical society was formed in Natchez in 1824. The Epidemic of 1825, interrupted its proceedings and we do not know whether they have been resumed.

Our limited opportunities of information, do not enable us to say much respecting the medical *history* of Louisiana. There is a Medical Board in New-Orleans, but its jurisdiction, and provisions are unknown to us. We are induced to think, there are one, or two medical societies in that place. The State contains many respectable *practitioners*, chiefly emigrants from other States. Dr. Flood of New-Orleans, was a practitioner of eminence. He was the preceptor and step-father, of the late distinguished Dr. J. O. B. Lawrence of Philadelphia. The climate of N. Orleans, and of the State generally has been unfavourable to the developement of medical talent; physicians prematurely falling victims to its desolating epidemics.

From a slight review of this imperfect sketch, we must perceive that the southern section of our country, possesses ample resources, and only needs Legislative aid, to make it, as distinguished in medical character and usefulness, as any part of the world.

The *causes* which have retarded the *progress* of *medicine* in the *Southern States*, may be divided into two :

1st. *Those which respect the physicians*, and 2d. *which respect the people*. However slow the progress of our science has been—however far in the rear of other sciences and pursuits—however far from occupying, that place for respectability and usefulness in society, which it deserves; much of its lamented condition is attributable to the conduct of the numerous practitioners, scattered over our extensive

country. A great deal, depends upon the activity, talents and industry of physicians, in making themselves serviceable to all classes of society, and dignifying an honourable profession in the estimation of the community. Every person who assumes a profession, is bound by the general laws of that profession to use his efforts to improve and elevate it, and to avoid doing any thing that might tend to its injury. Without such conduct, our science would be restricted in its benefits to mankind. *The knowledge of medicine has been greatly retarded by physicians admitting young men, to read in their offices, who are not qualified, either by education or talents:* for it seems that some members of the profession, are willing to receive them, whether, learned, or ignorant. Thus young persons have been persuaded to enter into the profession, who might have made respectable mechanics, or been successful in other employments; but who have neither genius nor acquirements to fit them for the practice of medicine, and become objects more to be pitied than scorned. Another obstacle to the improvement of our profession is *jealously*, which ought never to be seen in minds worthy of appreciating all that is connected with so *exalted* a pursuit as *ours*; such feelings must effectually prevent, that free interchange of medical opinions and experience, which contributes to our extended usefulness more than, almost any other of our advantages.

To preserve the science of his profession and keep pace with the discoveries of the age, the physician must remain a student all his life—or he is in danger of falling into a practice entirely independent on his learning and purely mechanical. The practice of undervaluing each others fees, is no less unworthy than detrimental to the profession; to remedy which, the physicians of each county should meet once in 3 or 4 years, and agree to a written bill of charges, and publish it to the people. In forming such fee bills, *pecuniary* depressions should influence the *amount*. Fees that are actually disproportioned to the services rendered, are apt to encourage the employment of pretenders, and when under the value of the

services, they do an injury; to those whose *qualifications, experience, and equipments*, for the discharge of their *duties*, will not allow them to bring down their fees, to those of a *penny post, or a scavenger*.

We should be cautious in expressing our scepticism on the healing art, as doubts held by physicians, beget doubt on the minds of those who hear them, and may cause some to neglect medical aid, whose diseases would yield readily to the application of the proper remedies. We know that it cannot be expected for the most skillful to heal in all cases, and we have often to deplore that our prescriptions are unavailing, yet we can console ourselves with the reflection, that we have employed the best means, which God has placed in our hands, or brought within compass of human knowledge, and that the failure did not proceed from an ignorant mis-application of remedies.

It is almost needless to add, that physicians should be *polite, virtuous, charitable hospitable, kind, benevolent*, and well educated gentlemen. Always remembering, that *vice, impiety, intemperance, indolence, rashness, rudeness, vulgarity, and ignorance* (next to a clergyman) are most low and disgraceful in a physician. It is an awful mistake to suppose that the *use of ardent spirits, either preserves the health, or aids the understanding*. Nothing is more vulgar, or ridiculous than to be told that *a man*, is a much *better physician* when *drunk* than *sober*. It is a strong testimony in favour of the increasing intelligence of the community that such delusions are rapidly vanishing. Holding to experience, and rejecting all theory, is also detrimental to the profession. We are sometimes told by the people, that they see no need, why a Dr. should be a well educated man, or what is termed "*a regular bred physician*." They knew a very great one in the neighborhood, who took it up with his own head, and performed many cures, without ever seeing Philadelphia or any other medical school, or without even the aid of books. This all appears like fair reasoning: if it is true, that they really were great physicians by inspiration, or intuition, there can be little use for all the

science of the schools; and to suppose that there are no good physicians but such as are self made, *Sydenham, Rush, and many hundreds of others*, had as well not have existed.

The accumulated knowledge and experience of ages upon which all true theory is built had as well to such reasoners be burnt. Self taught physicians have a long and dangerous road to travel before they can arrive at any experience, that is worth having. Such physicians may treat many diseases improperly, if not fatally through their whole lives, because depending on their own knowledge derived from experience, they omit to make themselves acquainted with the results of the *combined experience* of hundreds of patient, investigating men, treasured up in the standard books of the profession.

The charge of ignorance against physicians who have visited schools of medicine, is not without foundation in many cases. It is often the case, from the want of talent, from the neglect of previous preparation under suitable preceptors before they attend Lectures, or from dissipation and idleness, after they arrive there, that too many young men return no wiser, than they were before they left their homes. Their parents and friends in such *instances* are always more willing to blame the school, than to find fault with the mind, or habits of the student.

Young men at a distance from home, take license for every species of dissipation and profligacy, they spend fortunes, ruin their parents, return with constitutions filled with all the contaminations of vice and finding that having been to Philadelphia, does not prevent a discriminating public from detecting and exposing their disgraceful ignorance; and being superseded by others who have better improved their opportunities, (from a sense of mortification, which they would fain deaden;) they often *make the bottle finish, what vice had began*. I have thought that a medical school so constituted as to restrain, and exercise a parental watchfulness over the students conduct, would have a good effect. It is true such a school would only have a limited number, but they would be respectable pupils. It, would not be filled with such herds, of vacant countenances,

and empty skulls, vulgar uneducated dissipated youths, contaminating others by base example, which no less true than strange, pour into the Philadelphia and other schools, from the shades of ignorance and obscurity every year. From such a spectacle it is obvious, that most of the schools deem it infinitely more important, to multiply numbers, than to give the school respectability and standing by the *future fame* and *eminence* of its *alumni*. It is with the same view, they grant with so liberal a hand, diplomas, to nearly all who attend two courses of Lectures, without regard to merit. It is proverbial that they never reject any from this state, nor those south west of us. This proves one of two things: either that the students who apply for a degree from this section of country, are better qualified than others, or the school fears that being too rigid; would lessen the patronage, which it receives from a distance, seeing a number graduate, who are not entitled to a degree; I am led to conclude that the latter inference is most correct. And as graduates are to be licensed without examination before our boards; this cause also operates against the dignity and usefulness of the profession. For many young men pour in upon us, annually from the Northern Schools with Diploma's, who apart from a smattering of medicine are as ignorant as *semi barbarians*. *These are sad truths and must lessen the professional pride of every meritorious physician.*

It remains for Georgia to free the profession from such lumber, by setting up a purer standard of medical character. This can be accomplished by the united exertions of the people and physicians of our state, and by that degree of Legislative patronage, extended to the science, which its importance demands. The half of what has been uselessly expended in chopping few logs, and dragging them together with some rocks, out of rivers, which will never be navigable, would rear an edifice for a medical school, in our state, that would extend its blessings to the latest posterity. A profession charged with the lives of many valuable citizens, surely deserves at the hands of the legislature every encouragement, which can tend to its improvement. The neglect of classical learning is a serious

cause of degradation to our profession in the present day. It is an axiom, that will forever stand firm; that no man ever did, nor ever will attain to lasting fame, in the profession of medicine who does not possess either a classical education, or an *extraordinary genius*, combined with *extraordinary application*. And we do not know how much more even *genius* would have been distinguished if assisted by a *classical education*. Our profession is so much interwoven with classical terms, and has such a wide range of connection with all the sciences: that an uneducated man without, great abilities, who should aspire to medical honours, would render himself absolutely ridiculous. It is said of Dr. Rush, that he graduated at Princeton, when 15 years of age, and at 17, translated the Aphorism's of Hippocrates, from the original Greek, into English.

We come now to speak of the causes which retard the progress of medicine, as respects the people; these arise from their employment and encouragement of empirics, in preference to physicians of established merit. The cheapness of his services, or his Indian herbs, and secret cures for all diseases, constitutes frequently the governing motive for obtaining them, not remembering that they often prove the dearest drugs ever swallowed. Their dangerous nature, is frequently concealed under the celebrated quack motto, "*if they do no good, they will do no harm.*" This is a false and deceptive proposition. There are no neutral medicines, every medicine must do good, or harm. It makes no difference, if you tell me bread pills, or drops of cold water, are exhibited, they do harm by consuming time in which remedies might be given to do good. It is worse than nonsense to drench a patient with some nauseous drug, which neither promises *good* nor *harm*, it were better to *abandon* him to *nature*, and *acknowledge* our *ignorance*.

Not so with the impostor, he will persist in doing something, and make a bad case out of a simple derangement of the functions. Where is the practitioner, who has not, had to attend to many cases made *worse* by the *officious meddling* of pretenders? How often, after a case has become desperate

in their hands, have Physicians had all the responsibility to fall upon them, by being called in, too late, and how frequently does the empirick, in such cases confidently affirm, that death ensues, because he was dismissed; or if by great exertions, and judicious treatment, the patient should recover, the same impostor will assert, that he had performed the cure, before the latter was called in.

The encouragement afforded secret remedies, is also, detrimental to our profession. Ours being a liberal profession, keeps no secrets from suffering humanity, if any important, or useful remedy is discovered, it is soon communicated to the world, that all may enjoy its benefits. How many millions of lives have been prolonged, by the *promulgated discovery* of the *efficacy of vaccination?*

The tardiness with which the people liquidate their Physicians bills, is another cause of injury to our profession. It has driven some men of talents from our ranks, to seek more prompt and profitable employment in other pursuits. Without the mutual respect and punctuality of the people and physicians, neither can discharge their duties. The neglect of them in one, is apt to beget a dereliction of them in the others, and thereby lessen the usefulness of the profession.

The jealousy which many entertain towards the profession is likewise detrimental to its progress. It proceeds from a false idea, that physicians make their money very easy and are extravagant in their charges. When we take into consideration the vast expense of a *liberal medical education*, the consumption of *time and labour in obtaining it*, the responsibility resting on his mind, his exposure to all kinds of weather, his sleepless nights and fasting days, his gratuitous services rendered to a large class of persons, from whom he can expect nothing, and by whom he may lose every thing; there is not a *galley slave*, much less a *ploughman* to be found, who suffers, more in mind and body, or undergoes greater privations than a country physician. When these things are considered, surely no reasonable man would, withhold their hard and just earnings, or look upon our profession as inimical to them, or their country.

It is only necessary to name a *Rush*, a *Warren*, an *Irvine* and others, to shew, that in our profession, have always been found a large number of *patriots* and *republicans*, ready to defend their country against tyranny and oppression.— Among those who signed the declaration of Independence in 1776, were 13 *Physicians*, who pledged their *lives*, *fortunes*, and *sacred honours*, to defend it.

I am sorry to add that for many years heretofore, our Legislature have treated a profession, upon the skill and advancement of which their relief from painful disease so often depends, with the most unfounded suspicions and the coldest neglect, closing their eyes against every proposition to better its condition, or improve the means of healing their maladies. There is cause for mutual congratulations, that we have lived to see a more enlightened period, although much was done by the magnanimity of the Legislature of 1825 to improve the Science of Medicine, much more remains to be accomplished.

We come now to speak of the means to be used for the promotion of the profession. In this undertaking, the people and physicians are mutually concerned. We shall first state some of the means to be used by the faculty. Which consist principally in avoiding the causes that have been mentioned as retarding it, as far as on them depends. They should never take young men to read with them, except they are recommended by a liberal education, or promising genius and great talents. Any gross departure from, temperate, or gentlemanly habits should immediately cause a dismissal. We should never cease studying, nor from an industrious, and attentive observation of the causes of disease around us: We should notice the appearances of the weather, the progress, symptoms and treatment of all epidemics, and record all remarkable cases which may occur in our practice. It is only in this way, we may expect to arrive at a knowledge of the climate and diseases of our country. It would perhaps be well for this Society to appoint a committee, or committees, to consult on the best methods of promoting the profession, and

particularly to investigate, the nature and causes of the most prevalent and fatal diseases among us, with their treatment and means of prevention.

Medical Societies should be formed, and encouraged in every county, as they lead to useful researches, and an interesting exchange of professional opinion. More time and attention should be bestowed by practitioners in preparing their students for the Lectures, or examinations before our medical tribunals. It is too often the case, that young men, go to some of our Medical Schools destitute of preparatory instructions, consequently the first course of lectures, attended with 5 or 600 dollars expense are comparatively lost upon them, and should they not attend the second, they commence the practice unqualified. We should bestow as much pains, and care in the instruction of our students as possible, and consequently take none without an equivalent remuneration. If we take gratuitous students, it is attended with injury to those physicians, who have qualified themselves to impart instruction, with anatomical preparations, Chemical apparatus, and Medical Libraries, &c. It is a very easy matter for a physician, who has paid nothing for knowledge, who knows nothing and has no aids for a student, merely for the name of it, to take one gratuitously. In this manner one impostor will form many others, with as much facility as a juggler would *shift the scenes* in a *vulgar play*.

We should recommend our students, to choose those schools, where great advantages are *accompanied by a rigid scrutiny* into the qualifications of candidates *for Degrees*; for without such rigour and careful scrutiny, no medical tribunal *can or ought to become respectable either with the public, or profession*, and whenever they depart from a *rigid course*, they should cease to be *deemed so*, for they then, become the *shadow* without the *substance*.

Suffering humanity might be much relieved, and the profession aided, if better provisions were made for the diseased poor in each county. Under present circumstances, their remote situations from most physicians, and their scanty

equivalent

W. B. B. B.

supplies, powerfully operates against the success of practitioners, who cannot afford that close attention, good nursing and pecuniary aid, *all* of which may be necessary for their relief. These evils might be obviated, by authorizing the Inferior Courts in the several counties, (where the county funds would admit of it) to establish infirmaries, or small Hospitals, in the county Villages, where the diseased indigent could be accommodated and receive the close gratuitous attentions of any physician they might select. Apartments could also be fitted up for those who might lodge in them, to be convenient to Medical aid; and who being able to pay for the same might assist in the support of such charities. They would also afford *asylums* for the *wandering and destitute insane of our country*.

The first efforts to encourage the profession by Legislative aid, in the southern states, were made in South-Carolina.—This patronage has been followed by results, the most gratifying, by improvements in our profession commensurate with the anticipations of the friends of science, and the liberal support of the people. That state has been purged of pretenders and has established higher claims to Medical character than any state south of the Potomac.—Georgia has followed her example, with a spirit and magnanimity, highly creditable to her enlightened Legislators. There however remains much to be done towards improving this useful science in our state.

While none deny the utility of Literary Schools and Colleges—it is apparent that Colleges for the instruction of young men in the science of Medicine are equally important to the comfort and well being of Society. Where is the family, whose happiness founded on the most sacred ties of consanguinity has not, or will not, at some time be made to depend in some degree on the skill, or knowledge of a physician—and it is often the case, that the life of an individual, arraigned before the bar of his country, is made to depend upon the evidence of a physician. Next to *religion itself*, this science deserves universal aid and support. Much depends upon the *people* in

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putting down the evils of empiricism without their support—it would cease to exist. No physicians but such as have embraced the best opportunities and qualified themselves fully for the practice of physic; should receive patronage. They should be *industrious, moral, frugal, temperate, and uniform in their habits—charitable, benevolent, and agreeable in disposition*; in such men they may safely confide. One who possesses qualities the reverse of these, should above all other *characters, be the most feared—the most abhorred.*

High pretensions to healing—the employment of secret remedies—~~claims~~ to self wisdom and inspiration—self praise and superstitious juggling to tell the complaint without seeing the patient. are all ridiculous and debasing to human nature. They should be held in just abhorance by the people, as the unerring evidences of the *lowest quackery* and should be shunned with as much caution as the *poisonous Upas*; or the *foul are of Avernus*. Let us remember that we stand connected with a profession, which claims kindred with the kindest attributes of Heaven; When we learn the vast truths of Philosophy and view her immense treasures unfolded—When we explore the bright revolving worlds which float in Heavens blue ether—Or travel oe'r earths rotundity learning her various riches, in mineral, animal, and vegatable productions—Her climates—Her people and her *causes of scourging diseases*—Let us recollect, that *all* these subjects contribute, to afford the Physician useful instruction.

If I were asked what science medicine had no connection with? I could give no exemption. It comes in for a share of all human attainments. Even that science (Chemistry) which has given birth to some of the proudest inventions of man, is closely allied to our profession—We have seen its principles developed in the explosions of Gun-powder; the Rocketts dazzling blaze and steams expansive force. Or the Sun eclipsed brilliancy of burning metals before Galvanic batteries.

In all the wide scan of science, which is terminated only by, the *extension of matter—the distance of vision—or the reach of thought*; the Physician may gather materials of his profession.

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It is by the bed of the afflicted we stand as the guardians of life, and when our skill and assiduity under the blessing of Heaven, have been the means of saving valuable lives, the delightful consciousness of such enviable distinction is abundant compensation for the discouragements and toils peculiar to our profession. When however the inevitable crises of dissolution arrives, *as it must to all*, and we see no alternative, but to await the irremediable blow, tis, then not the least interesting of our duties, nor least valuable of our privileges, to sympathize with the bereaved survivors,—to dry, the orphans tear, *or* to cheer the rending heart of the widow; and to come in with the rich comforts of a *Holy religion*, and point to a world of unfading delights.

Let me in conclusion fellow members, exhort you to persevere in your toils, to promote an useful & God-like profession. One that promises to, soothe the pains of the dying, to heal the wounds of affliction, to dry the tears of the poor and distressed, and to pour consolation, into the suffering minds of the unfortunat victims of human woe. When we come to recline on our beds of death, and are about to pass forever the “visible diurnal sphere,” and enter an *invisible* world. We may then look back, with an approving conscience on a life well spent, in endeavouring to lessen the pangs of frail mortality, and look forward, with glowing anticipations, to an Eternity of happiness.

Finis.

