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1835

# ADDRESS

OF THE FRIENDS OF THE

## Thomsonian Botanic System of Medicine,

TO THE

## PEOPLE OF MARYLAND.

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“O, that mine adversary had written a book.”

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The friends and advocates of the Thomsonian Botanic practice cannot urge this indignant exclamation of the good and deeply afflicted Arabian, *Job*, against his enemies; for if one of their inveterate and *interested adversaries* has not *written a book*, he has at least disburthened himself of a speech, and so highly estimated its value and importance as to furnish a copy for publication in the Maryland Republican, whose editor, with a large share of prejudice against a system, of which he appears entirely ignorant, and placing full reliance upon the testimony of an *interested partizan opponent*, without examining the courtesy of its style or incongruity of its parts, has ushered it to the world with a mighty flourish of “cow-horns;” and, under these circumstances, given his gratuitous opinion that Thomsonianism has been “a kind of rowed up salt river,” by Dr. WILLIAMS, one of the delegates from Worcester county.

We rejoice that the Dr. has deviated from the course usually practiced by the regular faculty. They have generally parcelled out their envious and malignant darts, to male and female gossips, to be privately sped as time and opportunity presented, and thus shielded themselves from animadversion or responsibility. Dr. W., if less prudent than most of his brethren of the lancet and calomel, has in this instance at least, acted a more bold and fearless part; and, although the legalised administerers of poison may feel some weight of obligation to him, for his aid in retarding the establishment of a Thomsonian Infirmary in Baltimore, it is problematical whether they will, as a body, pass a vote of thanks for having the speech he delivered on the occasion, put in a tangible form, for the benefit of the people.

Be that, however, as it may, Dr. *Williams* shall have no cause to complain that the Thomsonians used any means to suppress this “great” and “reluctant” effort to “row” their system of practice “up salt river;” they have, on the contrary, resolved to spread it before the people in every part of the State to which ready access can be had—and even out of its limits. Should, therefore, this wide dissemination of the Dr.’s fervid and gentlemanly eloquence, scientific attainments, fertile genius, and extensive knowledge of *physiology*, *pathology*, *nosology*, *semiology*, and all the *ologies* of a monopolising *craft*, (not even excepting *astrology*, if it please him), be the means of procuring him a call to a lucrative professorship in some favored Utopia, we humbly hope he will at least kindly remember, if not suitably reward, the efforts of those to whom he will be indebted for the dignity.

As the Thomsonians were not the assailants in this case, it is justly presumable that their defensive attitude, in repelling the unjust and wanton assaults which



have been made against them, will be justified by a liberal and impartial public. And if, in giving vent to an honest indignation, they should expose to ridicule and contempt some of the positions assumed by Dr. *Williams*, as well as a part of the *regular* and *scientific* practice of medicine, their motives will also be duly appreciated.

It has been deemed advisable, with a view of affording the reader a more ready method of understanding the merits of the subject, to offer a commentary upon Dr. *Williams*' text, in the way of *note*. We beg indulgence of the public, if the construction of our sentences, or the purity of our language and style, should be found greatly inferior, and less felicitous than that of our learned and scientific opponent. His opportunities have been superior to most of the friends of the Botanic Practice. And as the Dr. has pronounced them "better fitted by nature and education" for "peaceful and innocent employments," we feel an assurance that our defence will be received, even by him, with a liberal indulgence. All we desire is to make ourselves understood by the great body of the people; hence, we have not been particular in selecting high sounding words, or using technical terms, not comprehended by those whose interest we intend to subserve. We are neither *practitioners for pay*, nor *manufacturers of medicine for sale*; nor have we, directly or indirectly, any interest in the success of the Thomsonian Practice of medicine, separate from that of the great mass of the human family, the sum total of whose afflictions we honestly and conscientiously desire to see lessened; and *we know*, for the fact has been demonstrated, that this can only be done by banishing *poisonous* mineral and vegetable substances from the *materia medica*, and abolishing the use of the lancet.

In conclusion we would remark, that we do not entertain a particle of ill-will towards Dr. *Williams*; for should he at any time visit our city, and require any medical aid at our hands, we promise most solemnly to attend him as faithfully as we would any of our own family or friends, without fee or reward—for we, like the regulars, do not charge each other for such services. The Dr. probably raised a hearty laugh, at our expense, in ridiculing the "old woman" practice, and exposing our "ignorance and quackery"—if we, therefore, in our turn, unmask and place him before the public as the defender of *learned* "quackery," possessing also a few of the harmless qualities ascribed to us, and convince the people, besides, of the fact, that he acted as the *willing instrument* of the regular faculty, instead of the "reluctant" opponent of Thomsonians,—which to us is very apparent,—we hope he will take it all with as much good humor, as we did the *reluctant* "rowing up salt river" which friend Hughes avers Dr. *Williams* gave to

April, 1835.

THE THOMSONIANS.



81-15783

## MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES.

### Dr. Williams' Remarks

*On the Bill to Incorporate the Thomsonian National Infirmary,  
March, 1835.*

MR. SPEAKER—

Being entirely unaccustomed to public speaking, and feeling inadequate to do that justice to the subject under consideration, which would have been done it, by those whose seats I am sorry to see unoccupied, it is with great reluctance that I rise on this floor, in the midst of those who have so often entertained, and who are so able to entertain this house with their eloquence, to present, in my feeble manner, the views I entertain in regard to it. But as one of the committee to whom this bill was referred, and who concurred, both in the conclusions and details of the report, presented by the very intelligent, high-minded, and honorable chairman, I feel bound in duty to the majority of that committee, in duty to the citizens of my State, and in duty to my own opinion, to say something, or attempt to say something, in support of that report. (A) What, sir, is the subject now before this house? It is a bill to incorporate certain men, their associates and successors, to practice the healing art, on the Thomsonian System. Is this, sir, the real subject, or is there not something behind the curtain? Is this merely intended for the benefit of the few individuals who come here and apply for this act of incorporation, and to be confined within the limits of Baltimore? (B) Do

(A)—Dr. Williams is very candid in thus acknowledging his "inadequacy" to do justice to the subject under consideration. Before we have done with it, we confidently expect to prove his utter ignorance of the Botanic system, notwithstanding Mr. Hughes, the editor of the Maryland Republican, has gratuitously announced that it had been by Dr. W. "rowed up salt river." There is not an honest man in the community who would not discredit Dr. Williams, upon the simple principle of being an *interested* witness; because he belongs to a law-protected craft, and appears in court as advocate, judge and juryman in a case in which he, as a *craftsman*, is a party concerned. Query—Was he not selected expressly for that duty, and prepared a written speech, which he afterwards placed in the hands of Mr. Hughes for publication? We "ask for information." Was it not also a matter of great delicacy that Dr. W. should have permitted himself to be named as a member of that committee? Would he not have objected to the appointment of Thomsonians to report, even upon what is universally acknowledged, viz. that Calomel is a rank and deadly poison? Certainly he would. The subject of the Botanic practice is now before the legislature of New-York, where it was proposed to refer it to a committee composed in part of physicians of the calomel tribe, but the motion was withdrawn upon the principle that they were a party interested. The committee, to whom it was referred, made a favorable report on the 16th of February, and a bill in conformity with the report was made the special order for the 26th ult. It was, of course, opposed by the *regulars*, but carried by a vote of 46 to 36.

(B)—Dr. W., one of the *interested* craftsmen, "concurred, both in the conclusions and details of the report," against an antagonist system of medicine! Wonderful! And, moreover, he thought there was "something behind the curtain." Now what could that "something" be! We answer, an honest and sincere desire of publicly testing the merits of the Mercurial and Botanic Systems, (see Appendix, No. 1,) for



not these men get paid for their medicine, and their services. I am sure they may sell as much medicine as they choose, and obtain as much as they can sell. (C) This in my humble opinion is not the principal object. It is, sir, to obtain legislative sanction, to obtain a character for their system. (D) And what, sir, will be the consequences of passing this bill? This legislature will have said, virtually, to the citizens of this State, and to the world, we have examined this subject, and have compared this Thomsonian System, with that which is denominated the regular scientific system, to practice which, it is required by the laws of this State, that all practitioners shall have pursued a certain course of preparatory studies, and have obtained from competent judges such testimonials of their acquirements and qualifications, as will afford some security to the community against imposition. (E) (And here, sir, I wish to impress on the minds of the members of this house, that this provision was not intended for the benefit of any privileged order of men, but to protect society and advance the science of medicine.) (F) And having thus examined and compared those systems, we are prepared

the general benefit of the people; and it needed no ghost to apprise him of our intentions, as they have long been known, and will, ere long, be fully manifested through the popular voice. Can the Dr. inform us in what part of this State regular medical Colleges and Infirmarys are established, or whether they are "confined within the limits of Baltimore?"

(C)—Dr. Williams' ignorance of the very law legalising learned quackery is here wofully manifest. In charity we will inform him that all medical practitioners, who cannot exhibit a sheep-skin diploma, or a license granted by permission of the faculty, are liable to a penalty of fifty dollars, in every case where they receive payment for their services, one half of which goes into the coffers of the college granting the privilege of attempting the cure of sickness by giving poison as a medicine.

(D)—The present law-protected system of Calomelising and blood-letting, maugre its boasted antiquity, is still in its swaddling clothes, and notwithstanding the sanction which it has by law, it is in a rapid decline, and will die, rot and be forgotten in less than half a century. It was born and reared a cripple, and destined never to reach maturity, for there would be no subjects left to experiment upon. The Dr. is, however, grossly in error; the Thomsonians solicited no "legislative sanction" for their practice; its own intrinsic merits constitute the only claim it puts forth for public patronage.

(E)—This, to be sure, sounds very pretty, and is intended to exalt the "regular scientific practice," with those who are ignorant of the fact, that medicine is, of all the so termed sciences, the most uncertain, and of course the least scientific. To illustrate this we refer to document No. 2, in the Appendix. Besides we know, and pledge ourselves fully to satisfy Dr. Williams himself, if he desires it, that there are some "regular" practitioners in this State, who have "pursued a certain course of preparatory studies, and obtained, from competent judges, such testimonials of their acquirements and qualifications," as would legally authorise them to experiment upon human life, by administering the most subtle poisons, mineral and vegetable, as remediate agents, to cure disease, if the people generally were as stupid as Dr. W. believes them to be, and they would consent to employ them. But the very professors, under whom they pursued an uncertain "course of preparatory studies," would not, we are satisfied, even employ them to compound the drugs they use. This is affording "security to the community against imposition" with a vengeance.

(F)—Is there nothing like "monopoly" in an act which, whilst it professes to "protect society," grants an exclusive privilege to a body of men, forming a distinct class, who, alone, are legally authorised to kill or cure, as they are more or less skilful in administering poison as medicine, and among whom there are such as described in the preceding note? Besides, are they not also entitled to a moiety of the legal mulets arising from an infringement of the rules of their privileged order?

Is it not monstrous that a Thomsonian shall be enabled, by his simple and efficacious means to rescue a regularly abandoned patient from the jaws of death, and on re-



to say, that the Thomsonian System is a distinct and perfect system, adequate to meet all the varied indications of disease, and worthy your confidence and patronage. (G) Sir, under the influence of this legislative recommendation, which will be trumpeted forth to the world as such, and, deluded by the boasting and specious, but false pretensions of this system, hundreds of our virtuous and really well disposed citizens will be induced to leave those peaceful and innocent employments, which they are now pursuing, and to which they are better fitted both by nature and education, to enter upon the practice of the healing art. And sir, not only these, but numbers who care not what they do, whether evil or good, for gain; men destitute of intelligence, good sense, or moral worth, who can raise twenty dollars for a Thomsonian Book, which is really all that is necessary to qualify them, will take advantage of that credulity and misplaced confidence on the part of a large portion of our citizens, which our legislative proceedings will have produced; and which will preeminently fit them for that awful experiment which will certainly be made. (H) Pass this law, or any such law, and you may pass such a one for every county in the State; for what reason or justice would there be in denying those inestimable advantages to some

ceiving payment for his services, of some 2 or \$3, find he has incurred a PENALTY OF FIFTY DOLLARS, one half of which goes into the coffers of the very order, one of whose members had abandoned the grave-rescued victim; and, thus, by Thomsonian means, also given the regular doctor a chance for his own claim against the patient for a bill of no trifling sum, without benefiting him. Will the people submit to such "protection" of a monopolising craft?

(G)—The Thomsonians solicited no "legislative recommendations"—their system requires none—its intrinsic value and efficacy recommend it, and therefore *feilicious* aid or legal sanction would be superfluous. If it were "delusive and specious," or "false in its pretensions," what danger could the community encounter? They would not trust or encourage it, unless they preferred falsehood to truth, or were incapable of distinguishing the difference. But it is not a fact that the Thomsonians desired legislative recommendations; "they wanted an act to enable them, as a body, to hold certain property they contemplated purchasing, for the purpose of erecting an infirmary, in which to test and demonstrate the superiority of their means and mode of practice, which has already elicited the approbation of many who have graduated in the regular schools. Besides, who is it that is creating a perpetual clamour against the Botanic practice? Not the people; but the interested calomel tribe.

(H)—The people generally are not so reckless as to employ any and every one who may put up a sign as a physician. If any "awful experiment" is tried, it is only when all the *pretended science and skill* of the regular faculty have failed, and left the miserable victim of poisonous experiment to perish like a dog. Then has the Thomsonian frequently exhibited the *power* of his remedies, and the "awful experiment" to the regulars, (who had already, perhaps, apprised the undertaker or sexton of a job) of a "resurrection" to long life.

It is a mistaken notion to suppose that hundreds of well-disposed citizens, would leave their employments to practice the healing art. It is not so lucrative as Dr. *Williams* supposes. Thomsonians do not carry a large box of mercurial pills about them, and after feeling the pulse, or gazing at a protruded tongue, indiscriminately administer them for all complaints. They give no poison, but go to *work*, combat with the disease, and stick to their patient until they vanquish it, or life is extinct. Not so with the regulars.

It is a libel upon nature to suppose it more difficult to discover and prepare medicine to cure our maladies, than to discover and prepare food to nourish and sustain our bodies; and instead of requiring a knowledge of chemistry, anatomy, &c. it requires nothing more than good judgment and common sense (a rare ingredient among some regular quacks) and good *anti-poisonous* medicines, to master all curable forms of diseases. We have no pretensions to general surgery, in which a knowledge of anatomy is essential; but in ordinary cases of luxation, Thomsonians can impart more important



which have been extended to others. (I) Now, sir, what is this system for which we are called upon to say so much, to recommend so strongly? Is it worthy of such commendation? How many of us know any thing about it, either practically or theoretically?

Sir, I have this system, if a system it can be called, and believe I have spent as long a time, perhaps a longer time, in studying it than the learned, and no doubt sir, very skillful and successful agent, from whom I obtained it, thought necessary to qualify me to enter upon the very important and highly responsible duties of a physician—that was about a week. And now, sir, as a matter of course, having had this work a much longer time, and previously possessing some knowledge of the human system, the diseases to which it is subject, the principle remediate agents (K) which have been, or are now used, and the history of their application and mode of operation, it will I hope, at least be conceded to me, that I ought to know something of the merits of this system. (L) This system originated with a man by the name of Thomson, who according to his own narrative, was born in obscurity and bred in ignorance. (M.)

*knowledge*, in five minutes, than can be found in the thousands of volumes which have been published upon the subject, unless their authors acquired it from the “noted empiric,” Dr. Thomson, or some of his followers.

The whole craft is, moreover, a mere *matter of money*. Regular and irregular quacks may practice as much as they please, but they must not interfere with the *diplo-matised by receiving payment for their services*—That’s all.

(I)---And why not? If every county in the State was desirous of having a college, in which to manufacture regular M. D.’s to be erected at their own expense, surely Dr. *Williams* would not have refused his assent to the measure.

(K)---“Principle [principal] remediate agents.” And what are they? Mercury, arsenic, opium, nitre, prussic acid, tartar emetic, corrosive sublimate, sulphate of copper, and a few other such *innocent* articles, besides draining the life-blood from the human system, and *Job-ifying* the body with blisters. Abstract these “agents” from regular quackery, and you launch its practitioners into the midst of a tempestuous sea, without rudder, compass or chart. And do these vile poisons cure disease? No! The *vis medicatrix nature*, has, where they are given as medicines, frequently to combat with disease and the efforts of the doctor to kill---and so strong is this healing power of nature, that she often triumphs in despite of the doctor’s efforts; but in her triumph the patient seldom fails in carrying the doctor’s instrument, a *mercurial barometer*, about him for life.

(L)---There are sectaries in medicine as well as theology. Dr. W. studied in a school, whose disciples can serve 100 patients per diem, without performing much *labour*. They feel the pulse---look at the tongue, then bleed, give directions for a blister and administer calomel. Next day they call again; go over the ceremonies of the previous day---bleed or blister and give *more* calomel, and for each visit charge from fifty cents to a dollar or more. We dare not trust even ourselves; for human cupidity is such that no sect appears to be free from its influence; and even Thomsonians might, perhaps, enter into the practice, if it afforded so rich a harvest. But their main object is to enable every one to become *his own physician*. We are acquainted with a regular physician in this city, who admitted the efficacy of the Thomsonian medicines, but it did not suit him to practice the system. He was perfectly aware of Dr. Rush’s opinion of the science of medicine, that it was “like an unroofed temple, cracked at the foundation.”

(M)---We refer the reader to two letters from Dr. *Benjamin Waterhouse*, of Massachusetts, whose talents and standing as a professor will not be questioned even by Dr. *Williams*. From these he may learn the character of the “obscure and ignorant bred” Thomson. We shall not venture a prediction of Dr. W.’s posthumous fame, either as a physician or a legislator; but hazard nothing in saying that the very name of calomel and other poisonous substances, as medicines, will have been buried in oblivion and totally forgotten; whereas that of “*Thomsonia Emetica*,” like the herb it-



It appears that his early life was characterised by two very remarkable dispositions, one was a curiosity to learn the qualities and names of plants, the other an unconquerable repugnance to work, (N) and I very much suspect, sir, that it was to the latter of these remarkable dispositions, which has no doubt been well cherished, the world is indebted for his admirable system. (O) But whatever may have been the peculiarities of his early years, his after life has proved him to be one of the most bold and reckless experiments with human life and happiness that ever attempted the practice of the healing art. (P)

self, will live, and the discoverer of its medical virtues be cherished by millions: "whilst the earth bears a plant or the sea rolls its waves." (See Appendix, Nos. 3 and 4.)

(N)---Thomson acknowledges he "hated the sight of a plough." This was frank and candid; and although we have seen a more "unconquerable repugnance to work" among the "privileged orders," we have seldom heard them acknowledge it, though it is universally known that they hate even the *idea* of labour and exposure. An effort, it is said, was made during the "scientific" contention between the yellow fever *contagionists* and *non-contagionists*, to invent a species of tongs by which the former might ascertain the state of a patient's pulse, without hazarding their lives. If they did but know the fact, they might generally use such an article now for all they learn by feeling the pulse. It is to Thomson's "curiosity to learn the names and qualities of plants"---that is, their medicinal virtues---that the human family is indebted for his simple and admirable system of curing disease; which is daily and hourly encroached upon by the faculty, by using his discoveries, and at the same time disparaging their virtues, and decrying him as a quack. And it certainly required some effort of mind and body to gratify his laudable "curiosity."

(O)---This remark, after acknowledging his curiosity to learn the qualities of plants, and he might justly have added in "*discovering* them too," is highly illiberal, and worthy only of the most meanly jealous and grovelling of the whole calomel tribe. Has Dr. W. any sons? Do none of them evince "repugnance to labour," and how many are destined for the "learned professions," by which they may eschew labour?

(P)---This is a "bold and reckless" asseveration, unsupported by a single fact or reference; an unwarrantable and foul calumny and libel against an honest and worthy man, whose whole life has been sedulously devoted to promote the good of his fellow-man, and who is ranked among the benefactors of the human family. Such a declaration made in the warmth of debate, whilst zealously engaged in the defence of his own *craft* or *trade*, might be excusable; but deliberate, written, and sent to the printer for publication, it is utterly unpardonable in a legislator, who should have taken up the subject without prejudice, or an unjust bias, and least of all dealt out his anathemas against the botanic system which he does not understand, and which it is probably not his *interest* to know or understand in the present state of the public mind. We shall not fail to present Dr. W. with a copy of his speech, and our commentary, and urge him to furnish us with the proof of Dr. Thomson's having been "one of the "most bold and reckless experiments [experimentalists] with human life and happiness "that ever attempted the healing art." Bold he certainly has been in exposing the malpractices and quackery of the regular faculty, by restoring many to health and length of days, who had been doctored by them to death's door and then abandoned.

What an immense amount of *bad work*, performed by regular *quacks*, has been concealed from public notice and merited censure, by the labour of the sexton, and the blind and almost unlimited confidence heretofore entertained by the public in the certainty of medical science. Whereas, many who are not obliged to follow the trade for a subsistence acknowledge it as totally *uncertain*---experimenting and trifling with human life---administering to the sick, as a remedy for disease, what would make a well man sick;---nay, more---contemptuously terming the regular practice, a "POOR CONCERN!"

Who envies Dr. *Williams* the *laurels* he won in becoming the legislative champion of the calomel tribe? or the *fee* he may have received from the faculty for supporting



Sir, I shall not attempt to expose all the errors, inconsistencies, and preposterous absurdities of this pretended system for several reasons. One is they are entirely too numerous, and the time of this house is too precious to be thus wasted; another is, as a system, whatever claims some of the remedies used may possess, it is too contemptible to require a general, or to be honored with a grave and serious refutation. But for the information of this house I will notice some of its principles and practice, and expose some of its errors and absurdities. (Q)

It professes to be founded on these assumed facts. First, that the human body is composed of four elements, earth, water, fire and air, that earth and water form the solids, and fire and air give life and motion. Second, that heat is life, and cold is death. (R) Third, that all constitutions are the same, and all diseases are the same. (S) Fourth, that cold produces all diseases. Fifth, that obstruction produces all diseases. Sixth, that all diseases are to be cured by the same remedy. (T) Seventh, that fever is a friend of the human system, and not an en-

the cause of their order. For "bold and reckless" assertions he certainly carried off the palm; and we challenge him to inform the public, *when* and *where*, and *by* and *upon whom*. Dr. Thomson or any of his practitioners made those "bold and reckless experiments" he so feelingly denounces. He has placed himself before the bar of public opinion, and that public will not be satisfied without some *testimony* to support his denunciations.

(Q)---The Dr. is very indulgent in not attempting to expose all the "preposterous [absurd] absurdities" of our system. To him they are too contemptible; and we agree in opinion with him, that all "absurd absurdities" are too "absurd and contemptible" to merit "grave and serious refutation;" yet, strange as it may appear, it cost the Dr. the labour of five or six hours to write out his speech, and some time besides to *speak* it---and all this for the honor of the craft."---"*Great is Diana of Ephesus!*"

(R)---This enumeration of elements corresponds with that of the ancient philosophers. *Fire, light* and *heat*, are the same substance, in different states and conditions, and acting in a different manner, and are signified by the same word in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. Plato, (called the *divine* Plato,) in *Timæus*, asserts that fire and heat beget and govern all things. Ignorant as Thomsonians, generally, are said to be, they are aware that many substances heretofore enumerated as simple elements, are compound bodies, and have been decomposed by a chemical process.

(S)---Dr. Thomson, as has been admitted by his friends, and acknowledged by himself, is an "unlearned" man, and intended to convey the idea that "heat is the cause of life," and "cold (or the absence of heat, or vital warmth) death." If he spoke of "cold" in a manner to induce learned physicians to believe it a *positive* quality, in stead of a "negative," he is not to be blamed. It is a common mode of expression, and readily understood. It is written that Joshua commanded "the sun and moon to stand still," and that the sun "ascends and descends," neither of which we are certain, Dr. *Williams* will affirm.

This doctrine of Dr. Thomson is at least as philosophical as that of Dr. *Rush*, who says "that motion, heat, sensation and thought, when united, compose perfect life." And that "cold is death," corresponds with the "extinguished excitability" of Dr. *Brown*.---An egg cannot hatch without heat and air, consequently their dominion over animal life is absolute.

(T)---Experience has demonstrated that this is *essentially* true. Habit no doubt has a powerful influence in modifying the human constitution; but as it came out of the hands of nature all constitutions are essentially alike. Is not the poisonous drug, *opium*, given as a sedative, and does it fail in blunting nervous sensibility, and stupifying the patient, excepting by long and habitual use? exemplifying the fact, that, although by nature all constitutions are essentially the same, man is a "creature of habit," and may, in the course of time, effect a visible change in his physical nature.

In regard to cold, or obstruction, producing disease---suppose half a dozen or more persons, in a high state of perspiration, should, for a brief period, expose themselves to a current of cold air, it is not probable that all would be similarly affected, owing to



emy. (U) I am well aware, sir, how difficult it is to present these errors, inconsistencies, and absurdities, in their true light, even before this intelligent assembly. I know that there are but few of us who have directed our mind to the in-

their various habits and the condition of the body, and even mind, at the time. One might be affected with rheumatic pains, or a paroxysm of the gout; a second with sore-throat; a third pleurasy; a fourth, erysipelas, and some might escape uninjured. What produced these various forms of disease? Exposure to cold---the consequent check of perspiration, by suddenly closing the pores of the skin, and thus obstructing a free circulation: and where there is obstruction there necessarily exists comparative cold; or, in other words, a diminution of vital heat. Does not this demonstrate that cold, or, obstruction, is the cause of disease, and it is only requisite to remove the existing cause to produce a cessation of the effect; for which, like satisfying hunger with food, one general remedy only is required. Be it however made known, *confidentially*, to the regular craft, that Thomsonians do not mean to say, or to be understood as saying, that, if a man cuts his hand or foot with a knife, or any other sharp instrument, the wound was caused by cold, in any other sense than that by obstructing the circulation, cold, and consequently disease, is produced. And then, in ordinary cases, although it more properly appertains to surgery, a Thomsonian, with his few general remedies, will effect a sound and perfect cure in half the time it would take a regular with his widely extended materia medica to perform it.

Drs. *Rush*, *Brown*, and others maintained the *unity of disease*. The first asserted its cause to be *morbid excitement*, and after its state or condition was ascertained by the pulse, promptly decided on the mode of cure---"to equalize the excitement." Dr. *Brown* reduced all diseases into two classes, *sthenic* and *asthenic*; which are thus explained:

*Sthenic diathesis*---diseased habit of body, occasioned by *excess of stimuli*; called indirect debility---oppressed state of the system.

*Asthenic diathesis*---diseased habit of body, occasioned by a *deficiency of stimuli*; called direct debility---exhausted state of the system. The former was to be removed by *depletion*, and the latter by *repletion*.

Thomson said disease was caused by *obstruction*, by removing which he effected a cure: Removing the *debility* was *Brown's* cure, and removing the *morbid excitement* *Rush's*. And all by various diffusive stimulants.

(U)---Dr. Williams ranks the important fact that "fever is a friend of the human system instead of an enemy" among the "absurd absurdities" of the Thomsonian practice. He says it is "not a new doctrine, but existed in the very infancy of medical science, and the practice founded upon it, gave rise to the most fatal consequences." No particular facts are given to illustrate or corroborate these assertions. That the doctrine advocated by Thomson is correct, it were useless to attempt to sustain by a long argument. It is self-evident, and the practice by Dr. Thomson, founded thereon, has been demonstrated to thousands; but the treatment of Dr. Thomson differs materially from that of the "infancy of science."

Dr. *Cullen's* views corroborate the Thomsonian theory, though the latter probably did not know, for years after he announced his theory, that such a man as Dr. *Cullen* ever existed. Dr. C. says, "the increased action of the heart and arteries, which takes place in the hot stage of a fever, has long been considered by physicians, as an effort of the *vis medicatrix natura* (the healing power of nature) to repel disease." Dr. *Ripley* in his Thesis to the professors of the medical college of Ohio, says: "There is no fever without disease. There is, in the first place, before fever is developed, a loss of vital energy, and certain functions suspended; certain vital tissues and organs are suffering under the premonitory symptoms of dissolution; the alarm of distress is communicated by the medium of the nervous system, for a reinforcement to impel the performance of function, hence the increased action. There is no exaltation or increase of power, but nature's reserved forces, which are deposited in the muscular structure of the sanguiferous system, are put in requisition as need requires. The increased action, then, is owing to nature's efforts, and the powers of nature should not be subdued or diminished."

A diseased state of the body (says Dr. *Terry*) cannot long continue without giving



vestigation of the subject under consideration, who are acquainted with all those established facts, and possess that information which would at once render those errors, inconsistencies, and absurdities, apparent. I am well aware, that the very name and pretension to simplicity, possesses a talismanic charm, which philosophy and logic do not possess over the minds and opinions of those who cannot understand. To attempt to show the absurdities of this system by logical reasoning, would be, in many cases, to offer an insult to human understanding and intelligence. (V) As to the first fact, or assumption, every intelligent or scientific individual, knows that instead of the human body being composed of four elements, analyzing hand of science has proven to the world, that it is composed of almost four times four elements; (W) that some of those which were once believed elementary principles are compounds, and that others are only the phenomena of matter, or the mere result of life and organization. As to the discovery, that heat is life, and cold death, the proposition of itself is absurd. (X) If it be meant that heat is the primary cause of life, and if this be so, it is only necessary to preserve health, and protract human ex-

rise to certain exertions of nature, which are commonly termed fever, and looked upon as real disease; but which are called by Dr. Johnson, a "salutary action, or an effort of the constitution," &c.; by Mr. Hunter, "a necessary action---a good symptom," &c.; by Dr. Gregory "the operations of nature tending to the restoration of health; the steps of nature in curing disease," &c. &c. Notwithstanding this corroboration of Thomson's theory, Dr. Williams considers it an "absurd absurdity;" and no doubt would resort, in all cases of fever, to bleeding, in order to diminish the action of the heart and arteries and thus reduce fever; without reflecting that "venesection increases irritability (by producing direct debility) and causes, as Mr. Hunter avows, an increased disposition to act, without the power to act with;---"in other words, diminishes the strength of the constitutional efforts of fever, and, at the same time, adds to the strength of the disease; and consequently occasions a protracted recovery.

Does Dr. Williams really believe fever a disease? If so, the acknowledgment of his incapacity to do justice to the subject under consideration was by no means malapropos; although he only designed it as a trap to inveigle a compliment.

Thousands and tens of thousands have been consigned to a premature grave by the "absurd absurdity" of bleeding and calomelising to drive off or kill a fever. It was in truth physicking a name, or giving medicine to remove an effect instead of attacking and removing the cause; and we feel a strong and confident assurance, that when the Dr. shall coolly revise his speech and duly reflect upon the subject, he will be induced, if not too proud or vain to admit he ever erred, to acknowledge the injustice done to one who always will rank among the benefactors of his race. See Appendix, Nos. 5 and 6.

(V)---Here the Dr. wishes to impress upon the minds of his readers, that his objections are purely "philosophical and logical." To the pseudo scientific, they may appear so; but tens of thousands would be more likely to view it as reasonable, that regular physicians, when they administer their remedies, should honestly and candidly apprise the patient they were subtle and deadly poisons, destructive of human life, and, if given to persons in health, would produce disease, and sometimes death; instead of assuring them they were admirably calculated to restore the health of the sick, when scientifically administered by diplomatized physicians. This is truly insulting to the "understanding and intelligence of the public."

(W)---Doctors will disagree. Thomson mentions but four elements; Dr. Williams enumerates them as "almost four times four"---say fifteen and a fraction. They have been variously estimated from 4 to 14, 16 and even 47. Modern chemists, however, scarcely use the term element, in consequence of their acknowledged ignorance upon the subject. Thomson follows the ancient philosophers in their enumeration.

(X)---This same philosophic and erudite doctor would have told Lord Bacon that it was absurd to say, that "knowledge is power." Would any one in his senses understand Bacon to mean, that the mere possession of knowledge, without any relation whatever to its practical application, constituted power? Surely not.



istence to an indefinite length, to confine man in a warm and well regulated temperature, and give him number six or red pepper. That cold produces all diseases, is another fundamental principle of this system. Cold, undoubtedly, is a very fruitful source of disease, but it is not the universal cause. Heat also produces disease of the most threatening character; and I have no doubt, sir, that I can kill a patient with heat or steam, as soon as a Thomsonian could destroy him with cold, or freeze him to death. It is also stated that obstructions occasion disease. This is not unfrequently the case. But I should rather think disease is more frequently the cause of obstructions. (Y) Every organ in the human body has a function, or duty to perform, and as every organ is subject to disease, when an organ is in a state of disease, no rational being can suppose that its ordinary function will not be suspended or imperfectly performed. Sir, the exciting and predisposing causes of disease are too numerous to be here detailed. Every physical agent which operates upon us, as well as numerous others, as the causes of small pox and cholera, the intimate nature of which are inscrutable, and which we only know by their melancholy effects, produce disease. And sir, the cause of disease may exist in the human system itself from constitutional defects, and thus the germs of disease are often planted before the first breath of life is drawn. A blow on the head, or the long continued influence of the rays of the sun, may, and will produce an inflammation of the brain. Send for the Thomsonian, he tells you your disease is produced by cold, and in the delirium occasioned by a violent inflammation, and may give you a puke and steam you to expel the cold. Or suppose you have taken powdered glass, or any other agent which, from its physical or chemical qualities, has occasioned a violent inflammation of the inner coats of the stomach, and what is the remedy? Why you are stuffed with Cayenne pepper, steamed and puked, to dislodge imaginary canker and cold. (Z) This system tells us that all constitutions are the same, and that all diseases are to be cured by the same remedy, and that fever is a friend of the human system, and not an enemy, and of course should be promoted or encouraged, instead of resisted or opposed. That all constitutions are the same, is what no intelligent being can for one moment believe. Sir, human constitutions are as various as human forms and dispositions, and liable to as great a variety of diseases, and require a treatment equally as various. (a) This doctrine of fevers,

(Y)---The Dr. "should rather think that disease is more frequently the cause of obstruction." He does not positively affirm it. But if "disease is more frequently the cause of obstruction, and "obstruction," he admits, "is not unfrequently the cause of disease," it results, of course, that the human system may be diseased without obstruction in any of its parts, and that obstruction may exist and the system possess in all its parts a free and healthy action! This is a "bran span new" doctrine, calculated to engage the attention of the philosophers of both the new and old world; and may become the source of high and immortal honor to its distinguished founder. And upon this a new theory will be established, at some future day, that disease is alternately not only cause and effect, but indispensably necessary to conserve the general health and happiness of the human family!

(Z)---If "powdered glass or any other agent" has been thrown into the stomach, where it ought not to be, and remains there any length of time, we are simple enough to believe it will cause both "canker and cold"---that is, *morbid excitement* and a diminution of free circulation and consequent *obstruction*. In that case we expel the "powdered glass," and with it the "canker"---restore the free circulation, and give such medicines as will repair the injury sustained by the organ, and our end is accomplished. And to expel any foreign substance which may have been thrown into the stomach, or by any other means taken up its residence there, nothing can perform the office more promptly or effectually than the "Thomsonia Emetica," when properly administered.

(a)---If the various forms of disease to which we are liable (and they must be *infin-*



like many other things in this system, is not new. It prevailed in the very infancy of the medical science, and gave rise to a practice similar to this, and which in many diseases produced the most fatal consequences. The influence of this erroneous theory and similar practices was peculiar evident in the small pox; under a highly stimulating treatment scarcely one half of those who were attacked were saved. (b) But what is the result of the present systematic plan of cure? Sir, it has been met by science and philosophy, and not one case in ten on an average is now lost. (c) Thus we see, sir, that the very foundation is false, contrary to established facts, and preposterously absurd. What are we to expect of the superstructure? Now, sir, let us notice the materia medica of this system of the remediate agents used under those monstrous views, human organization and disease which we have exposed. The principal are Lobelia, or Indian Tobacco, which is an emetic, and sir, I have no doubt, a very valuable remedy properly used, and which is, or may be, in the hands of every physician. (d) Steaming, it is well known, is not new—It has been used in domestic practice from the earliest periods, is common to barbarian nations, was found in use among the aborigines of our own country, and of course does not exclusively belong to the Thomsonian System. The bark of the root of Bay or Myrtle bush, the Hemlock bark, White Pond Lily, Peach kernels, Raspberry leaf tea, and a few other common domestic, old woman remedies, the most of which are, and have been in use, where Thomson's Book was never seen—with Cayenne pepper, which, by the bye, sir, is the most important remedy of the whole, and

*ite*, so far as we can comprehend that term, if his position is correct) require an equal diversity of treatment, how is it that the regulars mainly rely upon calomel and bleeding? The former is the Sampson of the craft. When called to visit a patient, if there are any indications of fever or inflammation, they bleed copiously and give calomel. If upon a second visit the symptoms have not abated, they demand *more blood*, and give more calomel. Giving a fever a specific time in which to *turn*, after bleeding and administering calomel, is leaving the patient in the hands of nature, with reduced power to effect a cure; still she sometimes baffles the science and efforts of the Dr. to furnish a job for the sexton, and perhaps a subject for his anatomical class.

(b)—We have no *knowledge* of the existence of the Thomsonian doctrine of fevers, as stated by Dr. W. in what he terms the “very infancy of medical science.” Something resembling it existed, no doubt, long before Thomson was born; and it is to be regretted that a doctrine founded upon common sense and the nature of things should have been obliged to make room for some visionary theory. This science is still viewed as in its infancy, although 4000 years of age. When, alas! will it reach the age of vigorous manhood? We unconditionally aver, and facts will bear us out, that at no period of the world was the regular practice similar to that of the Thomsonians in their treatment of the small pox, or any other form of disease; for under their charge the deaths (by small pox) have not exceeded *five* per cent. and those generally from neglect or a refusal to comply with the given directions.

(c)—We have before adverted to the *uncertainty* of the pseudo science; for that which is uncertain is the very antipodes of science. And if Dr. W. will consult the bills of mortality and then question the boards of health, he will find his assertion, that “not one case in ten, on an average, of the small pox, is now lost,” to be wide of the mark. (See appendix No. 7.)

(d)—Is Dr. Williams not aware who first discovered the important medicinal qualities of Lobelia—more properly surnamed the “*Thomsonia Emetica*,” of the Botanic Practice—and who has successfully administered it for nearly half a century? Let him consult Dr. *Waterhouse's* letters, in the appendix, No 3 and 4, and he will find it was the “bold and reckless” empiric, Dr. Thomson. And does Dr. Williams, or any one else suppose, after so long a practice, in almost every form of disease, Dr. Thomson does not know how properly to use that valuable remedy? We are opposed to wagers, otherwise we would bet the whole amount of his *per diem*, as a member of the house of delegates, and the professional *fee* he may have received into the bargain,



enters largely into most of those famous numbers, one, two, three, four, five and six, as well as into almost every prescription. (e)

Then, sir, the principles which we have noticed, the monstrous notions of disease, and those remediate agents, with slander, foul abuse, and misrepresentations of regularly educated physicians and their system, illogical and nonsensical reasoning, and preposterous absurdities, mingled with sentiments of atheism and blasphemy, an attack upon the sacred priesthood and religion, and a foul reflection on the female character, which alone would entitle the author to the universal contempt of mankind, constitutes this much famed system. (f)

that we can produce a cobbler's apprentice who can exhibit it with more beneficial effect than Dr. *Williams*, with all his learning, science and skill.

(e)—We shall have the Dr. yet as a convert; and what an acquisition he will be! *Lobelia*, he says, is good—and “steaming has been used in domestic practice from the earliest periods;” [but not as by Thomsonians] and it must have been discontinued by *civilised* physicians, because it was common to “*barbarian* nations and the aborigines of our own country.” “Bay or myrtle bush, hemlock bark,” (not professor *Potter's* hemlock) “white pond lily, peach kernels, raspberry leaf tea”—“old woman remedies”—all very good; and “Cayenne pepper, by the bye, sir, the most important remedy of the whole.” Well done, for a Calomel Dr. Here is testimony in favor of the goodness of some of our medicines, at least; and all we have now to do, to conciliate the good will of the Doctors, is to obtain a diploma at the medical college, and acquire skill in administering those articles, so as not to burn the stomachs of our patients to a cinder with Cayenne, or parboil them with steam.

Simple as the Thomsonian system is, the Doctor's one week's study of it displays only his own ignorance. He states that “Cayenne enters largely into the composition of almost all the numbers, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6,” not knowing, or forgetting that No. 2 is Cayenne itself. Had a Thomsonian observed that calomel, the No. 2 of the faculty, enters largely into the composition of calomel, what a hue and cry the self styled scientific would have made of his ignorance, and how uncerimoniously would they have denounced such an expression as a “preposterous absurdity.”

The Doctor, by stating that Thomsonians administer Cayenne extensively, bears strong testimony to the consistency at least, of the Thomsonian theory and practice. Considering a due proportion of animal heat as essential to life, they freely and fearlessly administer such medicines as will effectually restore and sustain that vital principle.

Calomel is used by the faculty as regularly and indiscriminately as Cayenne is by the Thomsonians: but upon what principle is this practice based? It makes no difference whether the patient be in a state of debility or excitability; whether they wish to deplete or stimulate; the everlasting prescription of the scientific is *Calomel!* CALOMEL !! CALOMEL !!! Yes, and these learned *leeches* even extract the blood of their patients when they are already too feeble to sit up, or to lift their hands above their heads!!! Oh *reason!* *science!* *philosophy!* *consistency!* whither are ye fled? where are ye to be found? not certainly in the ranks of the diplomatized sons of Esculapius. *Reason* is at war with their practice:—*Science* discards it as a system of preposterous guessing:—*Philosophy* repudiates it as contrary to the physiological principles of man:—and *Consistency* condemns it, at every point, as a system of irreconcilable absurdities.

(f)—Dr. *Williams* is dreadfully annoyed with the monstrous notions of Dr. Thomson, as well as his “absurd absurdities.” He also complains of Dr. T.'s “slander of the regularly educated physicians and their system.” We have frequently expressed our opinions of the faculty as *men* and as a *craft*. Dr. Thomson has had just cause severely to animadvert upon the character and conduct of some of the tribe, who caused his imprisonment in a loathsome, narrow cell, from which *light, heat and air* were excluded, loaded with chains like a criminal, at a distance from his home and friends, besides sordid witnesses to swear away his life. We do not entertain similar feelings towards any of the regular faculty with whom we are acquainted; yet we



Now, sir, let us see what is the nature of, and what constitutes the regular scientific system of medicine. Sir, it is but the recorded experience of all those who, in every age, have devoted their time and talents to the study and observation of diseases, and their cure. It embraces an intimate acquaintance with, or knowledge of, the anatomy of the human system; all the organs which compose it, their connections and relations to each other, their various functions, the laws which govern or regulate their action in health and disease, and the symptoms which denote the diseased condition of each of those organs, so far as has been ascertained; the history of every disease which is known, their particular symptoms, their origin or cause, their treatment, the success of the plans or means which have been used for their cure, with the views of those who gave their history, and the history of all the remediate agents which have ever been known—no matter where produced or found, whether in the fertile regions of Asia, the highly cultivated soil of civilized Europe, or in the wilderness of our own America—no matter where applied, whether in the gaudy chambers of royalty, or the humble cottage of the peasant—no matter by whom discovered and used, whether by the ignorant, daring, and desperate quack, or by the intelligent, cautious, and conscientious physician. (g) This, sir, constitutes the scientific system

can at least palliate, if not justify all he has said against those who instituted the vile system of persecution against him. And no one can say, after reading Dr. W's speech, that he has been particularly courteous in the selection of his phrases when speaking of Thomsonians—abated any in diplomatized rancour, or not freely indulged in petty scandal, and coarse and vulgar epithets.

It is not our province, nor do we feel any inclination, to defend his sceptical opinions; but on the contrary sincerely deprecate their introduction into his *New Guide as entirely foreign to the subject of medicine*; and just as relevant as their introduction by Dr. *Williams, is potent as an argument against his system!* Professor *Cooper* of South Carolina, is generally acknowledged as the very "*Prince of Infidels*," in this country; yet no one has presumed to urge his "heretical" opinions of the "sacred priesthood and religion," as a conclusive argument, that he is destitute of a knowledge of the sciences, or is not a profound and learned man! It is only reserved for such soulless beings as Dr. W. to travel out of the record; and for lack of legitimate argument, or well attested facts, to foster prejudices and assail Dr. T's system with the cry of "Infidelity and Blasphemy." Such a course is worthy of demagogues of every school, whether medical or political, and finds no more favor in our estimation, than the introduction of irrelevant matter by the author of a system of medicine we admire and defend; and both are welcome to this frank expression of our opinion.

As conclusive evidence that the friends of the Botanic system have nothing to do with the author's opinions upon other subjects, and that they were considered as improperly introduced in his "*New Guide*," it is only necessary to state, that at the *first United States Botanic Convention*," held at Columbus, Ohio, in December, 1832, a committee was appointed to "examine books, papers, documents, &c." who suggested that all irrelevant matters "should be stricken from the pages of the *New Guide to Health*." Since which period all matters not having a direct bearing upon the system and practice of medicine, have been omitted in the several editions subsequently published. (See Thomsonian Recorder, vol. 1, No. 7, page 153.)

(g)—There are, no doubt, many "intelligent, conscientious physicians." As private citizens and neighbours we esteem many of them; but medicine is a *craft*, taught differently in different schools; as a science holds a very humble rank, and is extremely *uncertain*, and consequently destitute of a regular system. We have already furnished some evidence upon this subject, and refer to Appendix No. 8 for additional testimony. And we cannot here refrain from stating the fact, that a regular practitioner in this city, whose standing is as good as that of Dr. *Williams*, admitted that the exhibition of Calomel in pulmonary affections must ultimately prove fatal to the patient; yet because this hateful poison was deemed useful in the affections of the liver, and probably both lungs and liver *might* be simultaneously diseased, it was essential to ad-



of medicine. It is based and founded on established facts, philosophy, and experience. It has been cultivated, and is still cultivated, by such men as Hippocrates, Galen, Hervey, Sydenham, Cullen, Hunter, Bell, Broussais, Lænnec, Baudelock, and our own immortal Rush and Physick, men who have been, and are still to be found, in every department of life, whether civil, political, or religious, devoted to the best interests of mankind, studious to better the condition and to promote the happiness of their fellow men, at once among the most useful members and brightest ornaments of society. Sir, it is as wide as the whole range of human knowledge and human experience. It embraces all that is known, or ever has been known, of diseases. It includes in its expanded arms every remedy, whether of the animal, mineral, or vegetable kingdom, that a beneficent Providence has been pleased to bestow on the world, and which experience has proved capable of relieving disease, or mitigating the sufferings of mankind. This, I contend, is the only rational system of medicine. (*h*)

Now, then, compare this system, founded on established facts, philosophic research, and the experience of two thousand years—each successive generation improving on the attainments of the past, cultivated by men of the brightest genius; most brilliant talents, and of moral worth, and, conscious of the high responsibilities under which they acted, with the erroneously predicated, absurdly sustained, imperfect system of Thompson; originating with, and perfected by, one obscure individual, who knew nothing of the organization of the human body, who never saw one half the diseases which afflict our race, or one tenth of the remediate agents which have been found successful in the relief and cure of disease, and decide between them. (*i*)

minister it. The question was then asked,—suppose there should be no disease of the liver, would you, notwithstanding, give calomel? Certainly we should, was the reply. And the reason is obvious; the learned quacks (for this is downright quackery, if not worse than quackery,) have no remedy—no *Sampson*—no *Hercules*, if you deprive them of that misery creating drug. How far we are justified in using the term, when speaking of the regular faculty, we leave the public to judge, and refer them to Appendix, No. 9 and 10, for some precious specimens of *modern scientific quackery*.

(*h*)—This certainly presents a powerful array of names; but what of all that? Did they not differ with each other both in theory and practice, and do not some of them sustain Thomson's principles? And our Rush also taught, that disease was an unity. *Science* is an unity. It is *certainly*—*demonstration*. Dr. *Williams* might have greatly enlarged his catalogue of names, and yet not demonstrated that medicine as now taught and practised, with all the lights and experience of 4000 years was any thing more than a "bold and reckless experiment" upon human life. What says Dr. Rush upon the subject? As already stated, he compares it to an "unroofed temple, with its foundation cracked;" and in his lectures, as a professor, he remarked to his class—"Dissections daily convince us of our ignorance of the seats of disease, and cause us to blush at our prescriptions. What mischief have we [not] done under the belief of false facts and false theories;—we have assisted in multiplying diseases; we have done more—we have increased their mortality!"—What a commentary upon the *scientific* practice of medicine! Such is the boasted "accumulated knowledge of ages;" and upon this "cracked" system—this squalling "infant" of 4000 years of age, with its 21,000 remedies, the people are to rely for relief in sickness! Away with acknowledged uncertainty; "disease multiplying" practice and legalised error. Give us, in preference, the simple, innocuous, "old woman" remedies of the Thomsonian system, and throw "physic to the dogs!"

(*i*)—Medicine is not a science, in the true meaning of the term—it is *uncertain*—there is much *guess* work, experimenting with human life: and in severe cases, if the patient, by the healing power of nature, is enabled to rise from his sick bed, how often does he find a large crop of various forms of disease, planted in the system by poisonous



What, sir, has been the result of the cultivation and practise of the scientific system of medicine? Diseases which once threatened to depopulate the world, the very name of which produced horror in the minds of men, under the influence of the science of medicine, have been rendered far less fatal, and some entirely, others almost entirely, robbed of that terror, by which, with more unerring certainty, they destroyed the trembling victim. And notwithstanding civilization, with her concomitants, luxury and refinement, has tended much to weaken and render more delicate the human constitution, subjecting it to diseases which were formerly unknown, it is computed that human existence has been extended on an average about five years. Sir, the regular system of medicine has been denounced as founded upon theory and speculation. This is a mistake. (k)

From settled facts, and the known operation of the laws of nature, every man has a right to form, and will form some notion of the cause; intimate nature, and influence of what is brought under his observation; and other things being equal, the man of intelligence, who is acquainted with the facts and the experience of others in relation to any subject, is more likely to be correct. It is true, sir, that many men, under mistaken and enthusiastic notions, anxious to advance the science, or ambitious of fame, departing from those settled rules or laws for the advancement of science, philosophic investigation, and sound and legitimate deduction; have wandered far into the unproductive regions of speculation and hypothesis. Yes, sir, those established principles and settled facts of the medical science, the application of those settled rules under which it is cultivated, with the touch stone of cautious experiment, in the hands of scientific, intelligent, conscientious men, like the refiner's furnace, have separated the dross from the mass presented, and if any pure gold has been found, added it to the the stock previously possessed,—and if only the fact that all was error, that alone is valuable; as a warning to the theorist, a beacon to the course of the skilful practitioner, and one more safeguard to secure mankind.

Sir, it has been attempted to repel the imputation of quackery and empiricism contained in the report. I think I have proved to the satisfaction of every individual in this house, and, if I have not, I here assert, on the responsibility of a member of this house, and on my own responsibility as a member of society, without the fear of successful contradiction, that this system is a boastful pretension to what it does not possess, that it affects to teach what its author never understood, and is calculated, under the specious pretention of simplicity and unerring certainty, to impose on a large portion of mankind. And if this does not stamp it with the character of quackery, the common acceptance of the word is incorrect. (l) And, sir, if the entire independence and ignorance of, and contempt for all

“remediate agents,” follow each other in quick succession, until the friendly hand of death cures him of the ills of life!

(k)—Always prating about science. It is all verbiage—fustian—and not credited by those even who retail it. It is mostly, as Dr. Rush observed, “false facts and false theories,” which undergoes a radical change three or four times in a century. An entirely new system has recently been presented to the public, and a journal, advocating it established in New-York, by Drs. Hull and Gray. It is the *Homœopathia*, or German system of medicine, by *Hahmemann*. We cannot enter into an explanation of its practice, but we rejoice to say that it approximates nearer to our system than the *Allopathic*, or “old school” practice, in the administration of *Mercury* (and other poisonous drugs,) assuring us, that the *less they give* the more *powerful* its effects; hence we may reasonably calculate, that, in time, it will approach as near to *none at all*, as practicable. One grain of mercury is rubbed with 99 grains of sugar of milk, and then one grain of this with 99 more of the same, and so on until it is reduced to the *decillionth* part of a grain. Science pours it down by *hundreds of grains*!

(l)—Walker and Johnson afford a definition of the term “quackery.” Dr. Waterhouse's letters in the Appendix, (Nos. 3 and 4,) ought to satisfy every reasonable



past experience, in an author, and the establishment of a system upon his own limited experience, and by mad experiments, entitles it to the character of empirical, this pretended system richly merits it, and I humbly conceive no one can successfully dispute its claims. It is said that very intelligent and correct men approve of this system, subscribe to it and practice it; and that the terms quacks and empirics applied harshly to them. Sir, there is no one less disposed than I am to cast reflections and imputations upon, or wound the feelings of individuals, but if they will connect themselves with, and stand forth to support this system, they are liable to the same imputations, to which the system itself is obnoxious. It is also said that learned physicians sanction and approve the Thomsonian system, and have decided in its favor. Sir, that any intelligent physician or scientific man, that is perfectly sane, however willing he may be to acknowledge that some of the remedies used, and some of the means employed, are valuable, and may in many cases be successfully applied, which I do not deny, can recognize this as a new and distinct system of medicine, perfect in itself, and capable, as it professes to be, of answering all the various indications of disease, and sanction its principles, its falsehoods, abuses, and absurdities, I hold to be utterly impossible. (*m*)

Sir, tell me of the man who is acquainted with the advantages of civilized life, who has felt the genial influence of the light of science, and tasted the pleasures of truly refined society, preferring the destitute, barbarous, and benighted condition of the Hottentot, or a native of some of the South Sea Islands. (*n*) Tell me of the skilful and experienced mariner, who has often seen the ocean wrought into mountain waves by the tyrant storm, and who knows that dangerous shoals and rocks lay hid beneath its surge, throwing away his compass, his quadrant, and his chart, and committing himself to the mercy of the waves and the winds, without a landmark or a beacon to guide his course towards the destined port, over the trackless sea,—but tell me not of any learned physician recommending this monstrous system to the world. (*o*)

man, of the full extent of Dr. Thomson's claim to that slanderous epithet. In the appendix, Nos. 9 and 10, we have given a "pair of remedies" from a "brace" of the regular *scientific* faculty, to which public attention is most respectfully invited. If this exposition should cause a modest man to blush for such trophies of medical *science*, he will not fail, upon examination, to discover that no injustice has been done to these distinguished members of the *regular* faculty, who have presented them to the public.

(*m*)—But we insist upon "telling" Dr. Williams that many gentlemen, formerly of the *regular* faculty, acknowledged to be men of scientific attainments, not inferior to Drs. *Ewell* or *Jameson*, possessing *mens sana in corpore sano*, actually have abandoned the murderous practice of bleeding and giving calomel, from honest and conscientious motives, and successfully practiced the "quackery" of Dr. Thomson:—and moreover, saved the lives of many a poor mortal, who had been reduced to a mere skeleton, and abandoned to death by the scientific; and who had taken a final leave of their family and friends, and been, as it were, raised from the dead by following a system so much derided by the mineral tribe. We can, surprising as it may appear to the "gentleman from Worcester," furnish indubitable evidence of such facts. (See Appendix, Nos. 11 and 12.)

(*n*)—Nothing but *science*! SCIENCE!! SCIENCE!!! in which there is, in general, nothing but *uncertainty*! who would not prefer the "barbarous remedies of the Hottentot or South Sea Islander," to those of the regular scientific mercurialiser, whose poisonous remedies so frequently transform a man, afflicted perhaps with a trifling cold---an obstruction---(which our grand-dam---good old soul; blessed be her memory---would have promptly removed with a bowl of hot sage tea,) into a living mass of foul, loathsome and disgusting corruption?

(*o*)—It is an insult to the principles of reason and common sense, to attempt a parallel between astronomy, navigation, or any of the physical sciences, and that of ad-



Mr. Speaker, this system professes to be perfectly simple and intelligible to all, to be reduced to the comprehension of the most humble intellect—and all, sir, I would ask, is, for it to be placed in the hands of the public. I feel no doubt that there is sufficient intelligence in this house, if it can be brought to bear on this subject, to compare this system with reason, established facts, (p) and experience, and to reject it, as false in its premises, setting up claims and pretensions which cannot be sustained, and from obvious imperfections, slander, abuse, and indecencies, utterly disgusting.

Sir, in order to give the house some notion of the nature of this system, and the mind and principles of the author, I beg the indulgence of this house to read some extracts of this celebrated work. Sir, I am going to read some of the commencement of his treatise on *obsterix*, (q) one of the most important branches of medical science, on a proper knowledge of which not unfrequently the life of mother and child depend. Thomson says:—"This is a very difficult subject to write upon, as I know of no words that would be proper to make use of to convey the necessary information to enable a person to practice with safety."

Now, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I ask the members of this house, this grave and intelligent assembly, whether they are prepared by any act of legislative sanction, to recommend to their fellow citizens and the world, this pretended system of medicine, with all its boasting pretensions, its imperfections and preposterous absurdities, (r) and all its abuse and vile slander, intended to prejudice the mind of the people against the regularly educated physicians, and which I do contend, is as much apart of this system, as steaming and red pepper. (s)

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ministering poisons scientifically. How often is the Dr. obliged to confess that his medicine did not produce the desired effect---and that he now intends to *change his course of treatment*. Is not this downright quackery and trifling with human life?

(p)---In a late debate in this city upon the propriety of encouraging the Thomsonian practice, our worthy fellow-citizen, Dr. Bond, senior, repudiated the idea of aducing "established facts" as evidence of the efficacy of that system. "*Knowledge is an accumulation of facts*;" and is worth all the two-penny theories that ever were promulgated. Upon that base, knowledge, founded upon experience, Thomson reared his medical structure, and it will stand the test of rigid scrutiny. Dr. Hersey, formerly of the regular medical school, bears ample testimony in favor of the college in which Thomson graduated. (See Appendix, No. 13.)

(q)---We omit that portion of Dr. Williams' speech relating to "*obsterix*" [obstetrics] on account of the delicacy of commenting upon the subject, with this remark, that, if he ever visits Baltimore, and will give himself the trouble of calling upon any of the Thomsonian agents or practitioners, they will, no doubt, furnish him with an opportunity of ascertaining the value and importance of Dr. T.'s "old woman" system, from the lips of some of those who have had experience both in that and the *regular practice*.

For reasons stated in note (f) [pp. 13 & 14] we also omit all having any relation to Dr. T.'s sceptical opinions, or reference to the "priesthood or religion." Its introduction by Dr. Williams was as cogent as its introduction by Dr. T. in a work on medicine, unless Dr. W. designed in the legislative hall, to make up in *sound and fury* what was lacking in *sense and argument*.

(r)---This appears to be a singularly favorite phrase of the Dr. We should no doubt be able promptly to recognize *our man*, without a formal introduction, if, by any means, we could elicit an opinion respecting Thomsonianism.

(s)---We have no desire to prejudice any one against the "regularly educated physicians" as men; but against their depletions and mercurial practice we are determined to wage an unceasing course of hostilities. We are certainly under no obligation to them for any *extraordinary civilities* towards us; hence they cannot urge a claim for reciprocity; yet, as fellow-citizens, laying the craft aside, we hope ever to regard them as members of the same family—having the same origin and entitled to full share of our kind offices.



Sir, are we prepared to pronounce the experience of all those who have devoted their lives and talents to the study and practice of medicine, for the last five thousand years, under a deep sense of the responsibility under which they acted, entirely worthless? Are we prepared to usher a host of ignorant, boasting pretenders upon the community, without the guarantee that they know, even a part of that imperfect system, which they pretend to practice, utterly ignorant of the human system, and the diseases which affect it, and destitute of every qualification but the proof of having paid twenty dollars for a Thompsonian book? (t)

Sir, let us pass this bill, or any similar one, and we do all this. I am now willing to submit this subject to the intelligence, justice and humanity of this grave assembly, and take my seat. (u)

(t)---Whatever time men may have devoted to the study and practice of medicine, "for the last five thousand years," it is acknowledged to be yet in its infancy. During that long period, how many "false theories" have been started and successively overthrown? Not an hundred, but many hundreds, which have had their fleeting days, and then made room for one equally erroneous, and so on, in regular succession, to the present period. The calomel and blood-letting practice is even now on the wane, and the fate of all "false theories and practice" awaits it. As to "the" responsibility of the regular faculty; is there nothing like it exhibited elsewhere? Has no one regard for character or reputation, and the life of a neighbour or friend, but the holder of a sheet of parchment, which, not unfrequently, is the only tangible evidence he can produce of either; and but for that and a smattering of *technicals*, would cut a sorry figure in society. "Away with the bauble," and let merit be tested by some more just and equitable standard.

We are termed a "host of ignorant boasting pretenders;" we deny the charge, and challenge the coarse libeller to furnish his proof. We *pretend* to nothing which we cannot generally accomplish by the *power of our remedies*. If we are in general ignorant of the "human system," in consequence of not having studied anatomy, how much knowledge of the *living* body has Dr. W. acquired by dissecting a score of *dead* carcasses? Let him consult the opinion of Dr. Rush upon that subject; and then hide his diminished head in utter shame and confusion.

When Dr. *Williams* visits our city, if an opportunity presents itself, we shall, if he desires it, exhibit to him a statistical table, the correctness of which he will be able to ascertain, and by which he will perceive that the number of deaths in the families of the regular faculty and that of the Thomsonian right holders, for the last year, (being nearly equal in numbers,) is against the regulars in the proportion of five to one. If this disparity is a proof of a "destitution of every qualification" to practice medicine, excepting having paid the professors for their *parchment*, we are willing to let the people judge, which school, the Calomel or the Botanic, is entitled to the foul abuse and denunciation which *adorn* the peroration of his redoubtable effort to demolish the Thomsonian practice.

(u)---We are now also "willing to submit this subject to the intelligence, justice and humanity of the" people, and for the present take our leave of Dr. *Williams*, of Worcester.

## BALTIMORE THOMSONIANS,

On behalf of the Friendly Botanic Society of Maryland.

April, 1835.



## APPENDIX.

[No. 1.]

*Effects of Mercury*—Dr. Cox, of Philadelphia, admits that in some particular habits, mercury produces an “exanthematous disease,” that is, an eruptive, morbid redness of the skin, “which sometimes proves fatal, well known by the name of *erythema*, or *eczema mercuriale*, and *hydragyria*.”

“Mercury,” says Dr. Cox, “occasionally attacks the bowels and causes violent purging, even blood;” “at other times it is suddenly determined to the mouth and produces inflammation, ulceration, and an excessive flow of saliva.” “Sometimes also a morbid condition of the system occurs during a mercurial course, and tends to a fatal issue.”

N. Chapman, M. D., in his notice of the influence of mercury in the production of hepatic affections, [belonging to the liver,] observes, “that the inordinate use of this mineral, may in various ways derange the *primæ viæ* and liver, so as to produce the icterous affections, [jaundice,] seems to me highly probable. Many years ago I saw an inveterate case of jaundice developed, during a protracted salivation for syphilis, which I attended in consultation with the late Professor Wistar—and within the last few months, I was consulted in a second case of it under the same circumstances, in neither of which instances was there any reason to suspect any previous disorder of the chylopoietic viscera [having the power of forming chyle---concerned in digestion.] But doubting whether these were coincidences or effects, they attracted little attention at the time. More importance, however, do I now attach to them in this way, from having subsequently met with similar instances, reported by a distinguished writer. Cheyne, to whom I allude, states ‘that it does not appear to be generally known, that mercurials *actually produce jaundice*, though it is a fact, of which I have seen, within the last two years, three striking examples.’ The history of these cases agree in all essentials with that of those which occurred to myself.

“It is somewhat remarkable that this fact should not have been earlier applied to me, since for several years I have taught in my lectures that the extravagant employment of mercury by many of our practitioners, in autumnal fever, and other diseases, must be assigned as one of the causes for the general prevalence of chronic hepatic affections in some portions of our country.”

Extract from a written Thesis to the professors of the medical college of Ohio, February, 1835, by Dr. *Wm. Ripley* :—

“It [Calomel] seems to act upon the principle of irritation: it is carried, in a state of solution, into the circulation; and, wherever there is irritability, it produces irritation. On this principle, it sets many of the organs to work. For instance, it irritates the sublingual glands, and a profusion of saliva is secreted; but it is morbid, even if the patient is in a healthy condition, when it commenced. The redundant saliva produced by the influence of calomel, is not fit to mix with the masticated aliment, to assist in the process of chymification and digestion. It is evident that calomel tends to extinguish that peculiar instinctive principle of vital organs, which constitutes the elective power; and, although the organs are set to work, they work at random; the lacteals take up excrementitious particles, as well as pure and nutritious chyle, and all is carried into the circulation: the depurating organs carry off nutritious matter as well as extraneous. In these respects, its specific influence is inconsistent with the laws of the animal economy; it perverts the most important faculties of the vital organs, and their complete restoration remains uncertain in the most favorable cases; and in many cases, it is certain it never takes place. When local disease is removed by calomel, the whole system suffers while under the influence of this grand specific, in the way mentioned above; and, when it ceases to act, the patient thinks himself cured, because the diseased organ is relieved: but disease is not eradicated from the



system ; it is only dispersed throughout the whole system ; and when the patient recovers from the prostration which the medicine has produced, the disease is liable to locate again on the same organ or some other. In that case, it becomes, by metastasis, some other disease. There is reason to conclude that this penetrating mineral, when it gets into the circulation, is not confined to the channels that nature designed for the healthy fluids to travel in ; but that it pierces the parieties of minute organs, producing lesions in their intricate structure. This is evident in the soreness of the mouth. The same lesions may be produced in all other glands, though not so evident to the senses : then sciatices and indurations must be the consequences, and a portion of intricate organic structure entirely obliterated.

"If these suggestions are well grounded, it is no wonder if a system is quite worn out by being often cured of disease. Let us consider one, laboring under acute disease, whose vital powers are much exhausted, before any remedy is prescribed ; then exhaustion must still go on no less rapidly than before, by the specific action of the medicine : then is it not fair to conclude that, if the work of destruction is half accomplished by disease, the medicine will accomplish it before alteratives can be used?"

Dr. E. H. Barton, of Louisiana, says--"A thousand objections will apply to the indiscriminate administration of mercury, in the various and complicated affections incident to its use ; it is never certain in its effects, but always liable to abuse."

[No. 2.]

*Uncertainty of Medicine as a science.*---Extracts from "Inquiries concerning the intellectual powers and the investigation of truth on the *uncertainty of medicine* ; by John Abercrombie, M. D. F. R. S. Fellow of the royal college of physicians in Edinburgh, &c. and first physician to his Majesty in Scotland."

"There has been much difference of opinion among philosophers in regard to the place which medicine is entitled to hold among the physical sciences ; for while one has maintained that it "rests upon an eternal basis, and has within it the power of rising to perfection," it has been distinctly asserted by another, that "almost the only resource of medicine is the art of conjecturing." "The following apologue," says D'Alembert, "made by a physician, a man of wit and of philosophy, represents very well the state of that science." "Nature," says he, "is fighting with disease ; a blind man armed with a club, (that is, the physician,) comes to settle the difference. He first tries to make peace ; when he cannot accomplish this, he lifts his club and strikes at random ; if he strikes the disease, he kills the disease ; if he strikes nature, he kills nature. An eminent physician," says the same writer, "renouncing a practice which he had exercised for thirty years, said *"I am wearied of guessing."*

"The uncertainty of medicine, which is thus a theme both for the philosopher and humorist, is deeply felt by the practical physician in the daily exercise of his art. It becomes, therefore, an inquiry of the utmost importance,---what the sources of this uncertainty are,---what that point is in our researches at which its influence begins,---and, when we arrive at this point, what the means are by which it may be diminished."

"The uncertainty of medicine resolves itself chiefly into an apparent want of that uniformity of phenomena, which is so remarkable in other branches of physical science. There are, in particular, two departments of our inquiries, in which we feel continually the effect of this want of uniformity,---the characters and the progress of disease, and the action of external agents upon the body.

"Since medicine was first cultivated as a science, a leading object of attention has ever been to ascertain the characters or symptoms by which particular internal diseases are indicated, and by which they are distinguished from other diseases which resemble them. But, with the accumulated experience of ages bearing upon this important subject, our extended observation has only served to convince us how deficient we are in this department, and how often, even in the first step in our progress, *we are left to conjecture.* A writer of high eminence has even hazarded the assertion that those persons are most confident in regard to the characters of disease whose knowledge is most limited, and that extended observation generally leads to doubt. After



showing the uncertainty of the symptoms which are usually supposed to indicate effusion in the thorax, Morgagni adds the remarkable assertion to which I here allude: "qui enim plura corpora inspexerunt, hi saltem, cum illi nil dubitant, epsi dubitare didicerunt." If such uncertainty hangs over our knowledge of the characters of disease, it will not be denied that at least an equal degree of uncertainty attends its progress. We have learned, for example, the various modes by which internal inflammation terminates,—as resolution, suppuration, gangrene, adhesion, and effusion; but, in regard to a particular case of inflammation, which is before us, how little notion can we form of what will be its progress, or how it will terminate.

"An equal or even a more remarkable uncertainty attends all our researches on the second head to which I have referred, namely, the action of external agents upon the body. These engage our attention in two respects,—as causes of disease, and as remedies; and in both these views the action of them is fraught with the highest degree of uncertainty. In regard to the action of external agents as causes of disease, we may take a single example in the effects of cold. Of six individuals who have been exposed to cold in the same degree, and so far as we can judge, under the same circumstances, one may be seized with inflammation of the lungs, one with diarrhœa, and one with rheumatism, while three may escape without any injury. Not less remarkable is the uncertainty in regard to the action of remedies. One case appears to yield with readiness to the remedies that are employed; on another, which we have every reason to believe to be of the same nature, no effect is produced in arresting its fatal progress, while a third, which threatened to be equally formidable, appears to cease without the operation of any remedy at all.

"With these complicated sources of uncertainty, which meet us at every step in our medical inquiries, it is almost unnecessary to contrast the perfect uniformity of phenomena, or a confidence in which we proceed in other departments of science. When we mix together pieces of zinc, sulphuric acid, and water, we pronounce with perfect confidence, that the water will be decomposed, hydrogen evolved, the metal oxydated, the oxyd dissolved, and sulphate of zinc produced; we pronounce with equal confidence on all the properties, mechanical and chymical, of the new compound which is thus to be formed, and in no case have we the smallest doubt of the exact occurrence of every step in this complicated process. \* \* \* \* \*

"The difficulties and sources of uncertainty which meet us at every stage of our investigations are, in fact, so great and numerous, *that those who have had the most extensive opportunities of observation will be the first to acknowledge that our pretended experience must, in general, sink into analogy, and even our analogy too often into conjecture.*

"In a science encumbered with so many difficulties, and encompassed by so many sources of error, it is obvious what cause we have for proceeding with the utmost caution, and for advancing from step to step with the greatest circumspection.

"Why one medicine acts upon the stomach, another on the bowels, a third on the skin, we have not the smallest conception; we know only the uniformity of the facts."

Extract from Dr. Ripley's Thesis to the professors of the Medical College of Ohio: "The endless and unsettled controversies concerning medical science, taken into view, together with the frequent failures and uncertain results of all the modes of practice that have ever been adopted and published to the world, are all calculated to bewilder the honest inquirer after truth, who wishes to know all the whys and wherefores of his opinions and mode of practice.

"To me, the great importance of some sure landmarks; some premises to reason from; some abiding and immovable standard, by which contrasting theories can be tested, is an object that should be sought after, and one that should never be abandoned.

"When I consider that all the most efficient remedial agents that are known in the schools of medicine, are such as would by no means harmonize with the healthy functions, but would certainly produce derangement and disease, if used in a healthy state; I cannot divest my mind of the suspicions that all our philosophers and men of wisdom of ancient and modern times, have missed the mark.

"It seems so desirable, so fitting and reasonable, in the nature of things, that there



should be, somewhere in the garden of nature, some remedial agents, that would be efficient in removing disease from the animal system, and yet harmonize with all the healthy functions, that I cannot persuade myself that it is not true. I know it is often said, that those medicines which are safe and never do any harm, are too simple and inert to do any good in critical cases. But this maxim does not appear to my view as a self-evident proposition; and I know of no reasoning that afford us a demonstration of its certainty."

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[No. 3.]

Copy of a letter from Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse, formerly Lecturer on the theory and practice of Physic, in Cambridge University, to the late Samuel L. Mitchell, of New York.

Cambridge, December 19, 1825.

*My Dear Sir*—Mr. alias Doct. Samuel Thomson, who has the honor of introducing the valuable *Lobelia* to use, and fully proved its efficacy and safety, will deliver you this. He has cured and relieved many of disorders, which others could not, without being a regular diplomated physician, and dared to be a republican in a hot bed of federalism; for which he has been shamefully ill-treated, even to persecution.

I have aided and assisted Thomson from a firm belief that his novel practice has been beneficial to numbers, and that it may be placed among improvements. If he be a quack, he is a quack *sui generis*, for he proclaims his *mode and means*. Had John Hunter, whom I well knew, been born and bred where Samuel Thomson was, he would have been just such another man; and had S. T. been thrown into the same society and associates as J. H. he would, in my opinion, have been his equal, with probably a wider range of thought; but both men of talents, and originality of thought.

I am, indeed, so disgusted with learned quackery, that I take some interest in honest, humane and strong-minded empiricism; for it has done more for our art, in all ages and in all countries, than all the universities since the time of Charlemagne.—Where, for goodness' sake, did Hippocrates study?—air, earth and water—man, and his kindred vegetable—disease and death, and all casualties and concomitants of humanity, were the pages he studied—every thing that surrounds and nourishes us, were the objects of his attention and study. In a word, he read diligently and sagaciously the *Great Book of Nature*, as Thomson has, instead of the little books of man.

How came your Legislature to pass so unconstitutional an act as that called the *anti-quack* law? such as the parliament of England would hardly have ventured on—for *who will define quackery?* Were I sufficiently acquainted with your excellent Governor Clinton, I would write to him on the subject. You New Yorkers are half a century behind us in *theological science*, but your quack bill looks as if you halted also in physic.

By what I have seen and learnt of Mr. Thomson, I wish him success, and the notice of the eminent and the liberal in the profession, and with this view I give him this rapidly written letter to Dr. Mitchell, and am with an high degree of esteem and respect,

His steady friend,

BENJ. WATERHOUSE.

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[No. 4.]

From the Boston Courier.

DR. WATERHOUSE.

I read in one of your late papers an article entitled *THE BATTLE OF DOCTORS*, importing to have been contested at *Baltimore*, on Lyceum ground. The account seemed chiefly serious, but partially ludicrous. But, as it related to the very serious subject of health and disease, or in other words, life and death, I could not drive the narrative out of my mind. The practice of Physic, I am bold to say, admits of great reform; yet it is no joke, and is really a subject worthy the utmost attention of the people, and I have often reflected with surprise that it has been left at such loose ends in this State, where we scrutinize and find fault with every thing, and every profession, excepting that on which our comfort depends; for what are riches and elegant dwellings without health to enjoy them?



It seems the Lyceum question was, Whether the THOMSONIAN PRACTICE ought to be encouraged? Now, this includes another question, viz: Whether Regular Physicians ought to encourage it, or the People? If I mistake not, more than a million of people in the United States have already answered the question, and said—*Let it be encouraged.*

There arose a serious question in my mind—a question of honor and conscience, namely: Ought I to be silent on the solemn subject, or give my opinion. I have determined on the latter; and that because I have received a considerable number of letters, from Maryland and farther South, on the same subject; and, as I have received some loaded with postage, the writers may receive the trifling value of my opinion without a cent's expense to them or me.

With due submission to that *privileged* body of Physicians denominated, through courtesy *The Faculty*, I should place *Samuel Thomson* among the *Reformers* of the healing art.

The famous GALEN dictated the laws of medicine full fourteen hundred years after his death, by his then matchless writings. After the revival of letters, *Paracelsus*, who was born in 1493, in Switzerland, appeared as a reformer of the system of Galen. He was learned in Latin, Greek, and several other languages, and of respectable connexions. He first introduced mercury (*quicksilver*), antimony and opium, into the materia medica; but he was arrogant, vain and profligate; and, after living the life of a vagabond, died a confirmed sot. He studied mystery, and wrapped up his knowledge in terms of his own invention, so as to keep his knowledge confined to himself and a few chosen followers. The very reverse of Thomson, who performs numberless cures, and makes no secret of the means. The cant phrase of "quack," belongs to the learned *Paracelsus*; but not to the mystery-hating Thomson, who considers mystery and roguery offsprings of the same father—the man of sin—the old father of lies and deception. If Thomson be a quack, he is a quack *sui generis*, or a cheat of a new and singular class.

In one thing every thinking man must and will agree; for it admits of no dispute. It will be admitted as an axiom, namely: the Thomsonian Practice has been diffused through New England between 15 and 20 years and still maintains its credit; and every year its roots strike deeper, and its branches spread wider and wider. Now, make any man of due reflection believe that such a practice could have spread so wide and among such a discerning, inquisitive people as those of New England certainly are, without having discovered its *nothingness*—its worse than nothingness—its vain and nonsensical pretensions. The thing is impossible. If the *Lobelia* had been proved a worthless plant, it would have been, years ago, "thrown like a loathsome weed away" On the contrary, I had rather be without that nauseous powder, *Ipecac.*, which makes me spit while I write, than to be deprived of the more agreeable and efficacious *Lobelia*.

We import *Ipecacuanha* from South America, and sometimes use it after it has been a dozen or twenty years out of the ground; whereas, we can cultivate the *Lobelia* in our own gardens, and pick it up in our own fields. I not only prescribe it to others, but I take it myself whenever I have any occasion for an emetic. I value it equally with the Peruvian bark, or with rhubarb, jallap or senna, or any other medical plant you can mention. Instead of *Lobelia*, it ought in justice, in honor, and in gratitude, to be called the THOMSONIA *emetica*.

But the discovery of the medicinal qualities of this indigenous plant [the *Lobelia*,] is not the sole merit or *felicity* of *Samuel Thomson*. His vapor-bath process, to which the *Lobelia* is the *Prodromos*, (or in plain English, file-leader or fore-runner,) is taken together, a valuable *improvement* in our practice, if conducted by persons as experienced and sagacious as is the *Patriarch Thomson*; for the defect, or the circumstance the most to be lamented is, his setting up *Agents* who cannot be supposed to have his experience, skill, or *tact*, in conducting the whole process. For my part, I wonder that more fatal accidents\* have not occurred, by being entrusted to people who have purchased the patent privilege without obtaining the master's knowledge.

\*Query—When and where have any "fatal accidents" occurred?



In England, Parliament would probably have purchased the procedure, by a liberal grant. In France, at least under the old *regime*, the King would have bought it. But we, wiser than any of them, have only tried to pick it to pieces. Still I consider it a valuable anchor, the emblem of Hope, to which is attached a firm cable, that numbers have in vain been trying to pick to oakum; but which will, I trust, be like the strongly twisted cord that binds our happy States together, acquiring strength by age.

To weigh *Patriarch Thomson* in the scales of the regular physician, would be as unjust as for them to be weighed by his steelyards. They practice on different principles, feelings, and views. Each honest in their respective paths of art and nature.—They will both come out in the same road at last, and travel on together to the temple of honor and profit.

Samuel Thomson, like most reformers, has endured in our county of Essex, as much severe persecution as ever was perpetrated in it; which is saying a great deal, when we call to mind the days of the delusion of *witchcraft*. Though *capitally* indicted for murder, by using *Lobelia*, he was discharged without trial after something like a reprimand of the Solicitor General, by the Court. Yet it is remarkable that Chief Justice Parsons deemed it worth while to write the report of it in the VI. Vol. of Tyng's Collections.

I feel diffident and doubtful whether I have said too much or too little on the subject, that will increase in importance by time. Reformers—Originators—and Exterminators of loathsome and shocking diseases, are always considered as benefactors of the whole human race—not merely those who are now living, but of those who shall live after us, as long as letters and other records shall endure.

The measure of praise is too often given without due consideration or sufficient expansion of thought. Our friend Worcester might easily pose Christopher Columbus, were he to examine him on all the coasts, bays, islands and rivers on the Globe, while that immortal discoverer, standing alone on the shores of Cape Finistre, and casting the eye of his capacious mind, from the vast Atlantic moving before him, and then up to heaven, said with confidence—*There is another and a better world than this*; and he proved his theory by his practice, and thereby obtained the rich title of the *Benefactor of the Western World*.

BENJ. WATERHOUSE.

Cambridge, Dec. 1834.

[No. 5.]

Remarks on the pernicious effects and fatal consequences of blood-letting; designed by the author for the prolongation of the lives of his fellow-beings.—By I. F. Daniel Lobstein, M. D."

To this the particular attention of the reader is solicited. It is conclusive, independent of innumerable other testimony which might be adduced, as to the horrid and devastating effects of mercury and blood-letting, and is worthy of especial regard, in consequence of the high source from which it emanates.

Dr. Lobstein is one of the "Medical Faculty of Paris; late physician to the Military Hospitals and Army of France; Professor of Surgery and Midwifery; Member of the Medical Societies of Philadelphia, of the city and county of New-York, of Massachusetts, of Maryland, of Lexington, Ky. of New Orleans, of Pittsburg, Pa. of many others of Europe, and of several learned and benevolent societies of the United States; author of several works upon Medical and Literary subjects; Physician and Practitioner in Midwifery in New York."

"A long time," says Dr. Lobstein, "has elapsed, since I determined to publish my remarks on the pernicious effects of bleeding, which, not only during that time, but especially at present, is considered as almost a universal remedy, and frequently resorted to, as a restorative in the slightest indisposition; notwithstanding the direful consequences attendant on such practice, it continues to be the main pillar of the medical profession." "It is astonishing to find, that so many persons, and more so, to find so many physicians have fallen into this extravagance. Blood, as the most precious matter for life, is lavishly squandered where there is no necessity; yes, often without knowing for what purport."

"My remarks shall, therefore, convince my fellow-citizens, that so far from blood-



letting being beneficial, it is productive of the most serious and fatal effects. Should I contribute to save *more* lives in future, and arrest this cruel practice, I would feel that gratification, which rises from the consciousness of having performed a good act."

"How much is it to be regretted, that such an awful scourge of humanity should exist! During my residence of fourteen years past, in this happy country of liberty and independence, I am bound to say, that in all my practice of twenty-seven years as a physician, never have I seen in any part of Europe, such extravagance of blood-letting, as I have seen in this country, and their practice sanctioned and confirmed by the opinions of many physicians."

"How many thousands of our fellow-citizens are sent to an untimely grave! How many families deprived of their amiable children! How many husbands deprived of their lovely wives! How many wives of their dear husbands, who have fallen victims to this great extravagance of bleeding: the same may be said of mercury."

"We no longer count the loss of blood, (by blood-letting) by *ounces*, but by *pounds*! Each headache, each indigestion, each indisposition, is, among *many* physicians, quite a sufficient pretence to say, "*you must be bled!*" It seems entirely forgotten, that blood-letting, however the greatest, is likewise thereby the most dangerous of all remedies, and that it sometimes introduces a loss, which never more can be repaired."

"*In the blood is the human life;*" in the blood is placed the strength of the whole organic life,—without blood, there is no heat, no motion of the heart; nor is there any *feeling*, or general motion of the system. Yes, take away from the brain the blood, and the self-cogitative powers will be instantly extinguished. *Without* blood there is not any germination, vegetation, or function of life possible."

"If we diminish the strength by too much blood-letting, we also take away the means of recovery, and we make thus, the disease a malady, which, devoid of such treatment, would become either harmless or beneficial."

"The most simple fevers, by too much bleeding, become nervous and putrid fevers, of which I can attest many instances."

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[No. 6.]

Observations of the Surgeon of the Western Regiment of Kentish militia, England, on the effects of blood-letting, showing the inutility and absurdity of the practice:

"I have been upwards of six years surgeon of the western regiment of Kentish militia, during which time our number of sick has never been inconsiderable; whereby much opportunity of practice has been afforded me. I have been in the habit of keeping a journal of the different cases as they occurred, wherein, I carefully noted every symptom of which the patient complained, the various remedies exhibited, the time when, and with what view given. I also marked every change that took place in the course of a disease, and the effect of the medicine made use of; and lastly, my own opinion of the method of cure which I adopted. In the course of my practice, I have endeavoured on every occasion to determine the justness of preconceived theories by experience, and on every subject to think for myself, uninfluenced by the *tenets of schools, or the opinions of others*. The prevalence of any mode of practice is certainly not a clear proof of its being useful; nor is it a sufficient recommendation that it may be practised with safety. If it is not evidently beneficial, it ought to be laid aside. In this light I consider the custom of bleeding, as a means of cure in febrile and other diseases, which I have no hesitation in asserting, is not necessary in any complaint with which we are acquainted. If we grant that *any deviation from the healthy state denotes debility, either general or partial*, surely whatever has a tendency to debilitate further, it is reasonable to suppose, ought to be carefully avoided. It certainly cannot be denied, that in every disease wherein bleeding has been used, complete recovery has been protracted, owing to the debility thereby occasioned. We are directed to use blood-letting to lessen irritability, to take off the *phlogistic diathesis*, to deplete the blood vessels, and to prevent inflammation. I know by experience, that these indications can be fulfilled much better, with less danger, by other means. Though the ill effects of the loss of blood, unless excessive, are seldom perceivable in youth, yet they rarely fail of being felt before the age of forty-five.



People who have been often bled when young, about this period of life begin to be afflicted with chronic pains. They recover very slowly from fits of illness, and are very liable to paroxysms, and a variety of other disorders. I have rarely been deceived in my conjectures respecting patients of this description, when I have met with them. The cases mentioned by Dr. Denman show, that it does not prevent inflammation, or abortion; nor is it proved, that by taking away blood, we lessen the diameter of the blood vessels, as we find that six ounces from a large orifice has a greater effect than twenty from a small one."

We present the following summary of the tremendous effects of mercury, first exhibited for the cure of "ague and fever," and subsequently continued, as a remediate agent, for the various forms of disease it had, from time to time, implanted and was continuing to generate. Let the reader pause for a moment and sympathise with this miserable victim of learned mercurial quackery; although it is but a solitary case of thousands which might be promulgated by the faculty themselves, if their interest could be thereby advanced. Let the regulars, as an offset, furnish *one* well authenticated case, if they can, and we challenge their united efforts, in which the Botanic practice has produced *one ten-thousandth* part of the injury sustained by the bosom companion of this unfortunate husband, and we will then consent to abjure our innocent remedies, all of which may be eaten with our daily food with impunity, and return to the use of the Sampson of the craft.

"I was called upon, says Dr. *D. F. Nardin*, of Tennessee, in the spring of 1832, by a man, whose wan countenance gave striking intimations of his being the child of misfortune plunged in depths of poverty.

"He was no impostor. His case was well and extensively known. One of the most talented of the faculty in this place had attended in his family as related below. The man handed me a certificate having about a hundred signatures to it. The reader will understand this man was reduced to beggary. The cause of his ruin was briefly stated in the petition or brief request, in which he solicited public charity. We will give his story in substance agreeably to the best of our recollection. Mrs. H. had the misfortune to be taken sick, about 22 years ago. From that period she had been confined to her bed. Mr. H. had spent all his property in paying doctor's bills and other incidental charges. He had to devote his time to a constant attendance on her, himself of course was deprived of the opportunity of earning a livelihood for himself and family by the efforts of personal industry. Now old age had overtaken him, and from this complication of afflictive circumstances he was compelled to beg his support from door to door.

Curiosity led me to enquire into the cause of the malady of this unfortunate woman. It was with much reluctance the husband could be persuaded to give me a full and correct history; for, said he, "Dr. H. of this place attended on her. He is one of my best friends—I should be unwilling to have any blame attached to him. He did the best he could for her, to save her, if possible." However, he proceeded with his narrative, stating that, "22 years ago she was taken down with 'fever and ague,' the fever turned to be bilious, ~~and~~ after she had been salivated severely!" Take notice, these were his own words. "She was down with her complaint for several months, in the course of which time, she was repeatedly severely salivated. About two months after, she was accounted of as one recovered from the fever, her lower limbs ulcerated and discharged a great quantity of matter, and several pieces of bone exfoliated and came out of her legs—these healed—the sores broke out again—more bone sloughed or scaled off—the doctors were again called in—she was again salivated and kept under the influence of mercury for six months, by the skilful attendance of Dr. H. of this place. We understand another was called in to keep her in the same situation for two months longer; but the ulcers got worse, many more broke out, and now her body is completely covered with scars and sores, and many places have been frequently opened. She is in such misery that life has become an intolerable burthen. To palliate her extreme distress, she makes constant use of Opium! If she does not obtain her regular dose she gets deranged and quite distracted.

Here, my friend, you have the picture before you—an imperfect sketch is all I am able to draw. Great God—*Twenty-two years of continual, unceasing pain!* The



*happiness of a whole family destroyed and all reduced to beggary!* All this has happened to satisfy the foolish imagination of a learned \*\*\*\*\* quack, to support his reputation in keeping up the deceptive idea of the existence of a disease, that never had any real being, only in the disordered imagination of learned ignorance! In the brains of a science-bewildered quack. Reflect a moment,—what were the means resorted to through this long and perilous season, and how was all this mischief produced? Will you, candid reader, treasure the fact in your recollection that it was *Scalomet* administered by a learned and regular physician, that has reduced one of the fair daughters of our land, with all her family, to poverty and wretchedness.”

[No. 7.]

“The author of this work, (says Dr. Brown in his preface) has spent more than twenty years in learning, teaching, and scrutinizing every part of medicine. The first five years passed away in hearing others, in studying what I heard, and implicitly believing it, and entering upon the possession, as a rich and valuable inheritance. The next five years I was employed in explaining the several particulars, in refining them, and bestowing on them a nicer polish. During the five succeeding years, nothing having prospered according to my satisfaction, I grew indifferent to the subject; and with many eminent men, and even the very vulgar, began to deplore the healing art, as altogether *uncertain and incomprehensible*. All this time passed away, without the acquisition of any advantage, and without that, which of all things, is the most agreeable to the mind, the *light of truth*; and so great and precious a portion of the short and perishable life of man was totally lost! Here I was, at this period, in the situation of a traveller in an unknown country, who, after losing every trace of his way, wanders in the shades of night. Nor was it until between the fifteenth and twentieth years of my studies, that a faint gleam of light broke in upon my soul.”

[No. 8.]

Extract from the “New York Medical Enquirer,” since changed to the “American Lancet,” conducted by an association of physicians and surgeons;

“If we take a retrospective view of the science of medicine with its alterations and improvements in the last two centuries, the medical annals of this period will present us with a series of learned dissertations by authors whose names alone are now remembered, while their writings, under the specious term *improvement*, have left us only the deplorable consolation of knowing that their works have heaped system upon system, prescript upon prescript, error upon error, each in turn yielding to its follower. Year after year produces a new advocate for a new theory of disease, each condemning its predecessor, and each alike to be condemned by its successor. We wish a more rational mode adopted for the promotion of medical knowledge, than hair-brained theories and doubtful facts. Observation, practice, and experience in the administration of medicine, with its effect on the system, may take the lead of scholastic learning and hard names. We must have facts instead of opinions, reason instead of theory, knowledge instead of titles and certificates.”

[No. 9.]

Extract from “The American Domestic Medicine,” by “*Horatio Gates Jameson, M. D.*, “honorary member of the Medical Society of Maryland, late surgeon in the General Hospital for the army at Baltimore,” and consulting physician to the Baltimore board of health:

“*Bite of Rattlesnake and Copper-head.*

“Drawing with small cupping glasses is advisable. \* \* \* If such glasses are “not to be had, a hen may be set with the NAKED FUNDAMENT UPON THE PART; and I have been credibly informed, this has succeeded well, and that several hens have been thus killed in one case, which seems to raise the belief that the “poison was thus forcibly extracted.” [Baltimore, 1818, p. 412.]



[No. 10.]

Extract from "Plain Discourses on the laws or properties of matter," by *Thomas Ewell*, M. D. of Virginia, one of the surgeons of the United States' navy :

"*Kermes' Mineral; or Golden Sulphur of Antimony.*

"Besides the above preparation of antimony, the metal is given in the form of a pill, in the metallic state. It appears to be soluble in the stomach, in small quantities, and excites slight purging. This was called the *Perpetual Pill*, as it was frequently kept for ages in families, who, AFTER TAKING AND VOIDING IT, preserved it FOR FURTHER USE."—[N. York, 1806, p. 249]

[This could not have been esteemed *quackery* by the learned Doctor, or it would not have been so favorably noticed.]

[No. 11.]

Extract of a letter from Dr. *R. D. Montgomery*, of Liberty Hall, South Carolina, directed to the Rev. *Wm. Carlisle*, for the Thomsonians of Kershaw District; dated February 11, 1832.

"After I had finished my collegiate education, in the years 1794—5 and 6, I proceeded to the study of medicine in Columbia, S. Carolina, under the tuition of Drs. Montgomery and Henricks, both students of the Rushean school. After this, I attended the medical lectures in Philadelphia, given by Drs. Shippen, Rush, Woodhouse and Barton. Having attended the regular course of lectures under these professors, they adjudged me entitled to a diploma, for my medical knowledge, yet it was contrary to the rules of the institution to give me one, unless I went through another course; my finances would not admit of it at that time, and I never obtained a diploma. After my return from Philadelphia, I fell immediately into practice, but quickly found that the *theory*, however beautiful it might appear, would by no means agree with the practice. I entered the practice with all the ardor that it is possible for any young physician to possess. Every leisure moment was employed in perfecting my knowledge in the science of medicine; and I flattered myself that I was as successful in my practice as my cotemporaries: my prospects were flattering, and my practice lucrative for fourteen or fifteen years. I then became wearied of it, and during the latter part of my time, have given it over, unless constrained by the entreaties of a friend. I could do no better than to pity their distress. You would here enquire, what it was that could induce me to relinquish a gainful practice, and adopt a system of yesterday—to leave the old beaten track for one newly opened? I answer, because the marks to point the way to proceed in the old practice, were fallacious, and not to be depended on when life was at stake. Here I would ask the candid physician, if he has not been often deceived in the symptoms of disease, when flattering himself with the prospect of the speedy recovery of his patient, when he left him, perhaps at evening—the next visit, perhaps the next morning found him breathing his last? you beheld him surrounded by weeping friends, because they viewed him departing to his long home. In such circumstances, humanity sickens and anxiously enquires, "Is there no relief from disease and premature death?" The answer is to be found in the botanic practice. But is this practice infallible? Does it never fail? Yes, it may fail, has failed, and will fail in a number of cases. It has and will fail, of course, when the vital spark is nearly extinct, when the powers of life are destroyed by disease, or when the condition of the patient is such as there is not any thing remaining for the medicine to act upon. Medicine cannot act upon a dead body, though it be ever so active. At such a crisis, this practice, as every other, will most assuredly fail—yet, in the midst of these failures, the new practice will have a decided superiority over every other mode of cure yet known by man. I find by experience in my family, and among my friends, who have used the medicine as directed, that in fevers it generally relieves the patient in twenty-four hours, and often in less time. A number of cases in my own family, that have been as violent as any under the old practice, which required three or four weeks, before they were able to leave their bed; yet by the Thomsonian practice, these have been relieved in the short time already stated. This practice, under my direction has triumphed over an ascites, or dropsy of the abdomen, in which the old practice had la-



bored in vain. The bite of a rattle-snake, on one of the family, accompanied with violent pain, was freed from all pain in less than ten minutes, and the swelling of the foot and leg was but trifling. In myself, a violent attack of the rheumatism and cholera morbus, both yielded to the botanic applications. Another fact is worthy of notice; your patient does not suffer the great debility, by a course of the new practice, that commonly takes place in the old. The natural functions are soon restored to their former vigor. The patient forgets that he was sick. Do you wish me to account for this? It is easily done—there is not that prostration of strength, by depleting remedies in the new, as in the old practice. Another reason why the same degree of debility is not induced, is that the medicine used is in harmony with the powers of life; hence it is, that after the operation of the Thomsonian remedies, the patient feels invigorated and cheerful. One other fact which gives the new decided advantage over the old practice is, that the remedies are the same in all cases that can possibly occur, the object is uniform, viz: The restoration of the natural heat, as it is a primitive vital property; hence the practising physician, acting with any tolerable degree of common discretion, cannot err materially in administering the remedies—He is not liable to do any irreparable injury to his patient. This is not the case with the old practice—How often have we witnessed with grief, the baneful effects of medicine on the constitution of the patient? Where is the physician that will not acknowledge that his medicine has often operated in a different manner than he had expected, and that his patient was worse from the use thereof.

A Brown, a Rush and others, have declared firmly their belief in the unity of disease, and the unity of cure. Dr. Thomson joins them in the belief, and practices precisely on that principle. Away then with your thousand diseases, and your thousand remedies; and adopt that system of practice that is both safe and salutary to man.

In conclusion, I would add another reason which makes the Thomsonian practice valuable, and that is, its simplicity, or its plain, natural adaptation to the illiterate, untutored part of the human family. The poor and illiterate require the attention of the humane and benevolent in all countries, and such are the most numerous class in society:—To such the Thomsonian practice holds out the helping hand, to snatch them from pain and death, and such he invites to a participation of its benefits.

These are some of the considerations which have determined my judgment to the botanic practice of medicine. I am fully confident that whoever will give it a fair trial will rejoice at the success. I am, respectfully, yours, &c.

ROBERT D. MONTGOMERY.

[No. 12.]

Extract of a letter from Dr. Hersey, of Columbus, (Ohio,) to Dr. John Thomson, of Albany, (N. Y.)

"I have been more than forty years engaged in the regular practice of medicine. I was a surgeon during the last war in the army of the United States. I was one of the founders of the Western Medical Society of Pennsylvania, and also am a member of the Medical society of the state of Ohio. My practice has been extensive, my experience and opportunity for observation has seldom been exceeded, but I venture to pledge myself upon all that I hold sacred and valuable in the profession, that in my estimation, the discoveries made by your honored father, (Samuel Thomson) have a decided preference and stand unrivalled by all that bears the stamp of ancient or modern skill.

T. HERSEY.

[No. 13.]

The following extracts from an essay on Medical Contentions are from the pen of Dr. Hersey. Their importance is duly appreciated by all who value the laborious researches of that highly respectable physician and philanthropist.

"In Doctor Thomson's 'NEW GUIDE TO HEALTH,' we are not presented with the airy flights of a whimsical infatuated imagination, or, a book-worm's dreams. It is not the work of a hired scrivener, cloistered in a lonely garret, to brush cob-webs from his school-clogg'd brains, to amuse the querimonious multitude, fond of trifles: No, but 'AFTER THIRTY YEARS STUDY,' not in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, not in medical schools and colleges, not to acquire names, and technical terms, to conceal his



ignorance; not to make a farcical parade of learning, and by bombastic ribaldry and nonsense, impose on the credulous, astonish his former associates with his present wisdom, and confound the multitude by his profound attainments: No! But in fields and woods, o'er hills and dales, by purling streams, or lonely ponds, where e'er his medicines grew, by ditch, or wall, in sunny meadows, or the woodland shade: here was his *MATERIA MEDICA*:—Thence, he gleaned his harmless, inoffensive, but efficacious and unequivocal remedies.

“It was not in a class of young men, attending lectures, but in the rooms of labor and travail, in the presence chamber of parturition, *where children are born*, that he studied midwifery.

“It was by the beds of the sick, in the immediate halls of affliction, where suffering humanity implored his aid, that he studied therapeutics—he reduced his system to practice—applied his remedies, tested his skill, by adapting the means to the ends required.

“His trials and success have eventuated, in the establishment of a theory, “supported by facts, and experiments, and confirmed by observation and long experience.” He has permanently established the reputation of his system, and the character of his remedies on an immutable basis: He has kindled into visible light, many latent sparks of truth, that through the long toil of revolving ages past, lay hid in the rubbish of an absurd, bewildering, proscriptive philosophy.

“His cause, is the cause of humanity: He has a claim upon the confidence and gratitude of the world. Courts of law have decided in his favor—perjury has faltered in his presence, and the God of nature and providence has elevated him to a niche in the temple of fame, and he defies the competition of college standards of medical eminence.”

We cannot close the labour which has been imposed upon us, by the active exertions of Dr. *Williams*, to uphold the *calomel, blood-letting and blistering* practice of the regular faculty, (in which, as a practising physician he has a *direct interest*,) without presenting our friends with some further opinions and facts of *scientific* practitioners; in doing which we shall, no doubt, confer a lasting obligation upon some of the ignorant Thomsonians, who without these facts communicated upon oath, would not have known that “*No. 6 was a powder*”—“*Lobelia a narcotic*,” and when given in “10 to 20 grain doses *produced purging*”—nor that “*Hemlock is a poison, well known to Dr. Potter, growing three or four feet high.*”

*Read both sides, and then determine.*

Extracts from the “*Trial of Francis Burke, on an indictment for manslaughter, by administering to B. M. Hazlip certain Thomsonian remedies.*” [Verdict, not guilty. Balt. 1832.]

Dr. *Cole* deposed, “that cayenne pepper is a strong stimulant, and is, I believe, never used as an injection, but by the advocates of this system; but I have known brandy used under particular circumstances. The summer before last, when many died of drinking cold water, I used brandy, and *sometimes* procured relief. The effect of lobelia, it is said, is to act as a *purgative*. I have *never used it*, and have *no knowledge of it myself*. Lobelia I do consider ought not to be used by any but those who are *judicious* and acquainted with its effects and *qualities*. I consider it a *dangerous article*. \* \* \* They have a *powder* they use which they call No. 6. *I have seen it*. \* \* \* All our medical works mention lobelia as danger-

Dr. *Janney* deposed—“that before he would administer Thompson’s medicines, he took them himself first to try their effects. I have frequently taken it, always one teaspoonful at a time, this being about 16 grains—but I repeat it till it operates—I have used lobelia frequently upon others during the last two years. \* \* \* I should certainly say it was *not a poison*. I always use it when I want to cleanse the stomach. \* \* \* Hemlock is not a poison as has been stated here, but is perfectly harmless. It is taken from the bark of the pine tree, and is not a poison. These (Thomsonian) medicines *can do no harm in any case or under any circumstances*. The more I have used Thomson’s medicines, the better I am satisfied of their effi-



bus, and I do think it a dangerous article in *unskilful* hands. Ten grains of lobelia, in dry leaves, is an ordinary dose; this is sometimes increased to twenty grains. \* \* \* They have a powder they call No. 6. *I am well acquainted with it.*"

Professor *Geddings* deposed "that it was his opinion (after the post mortem examination and hearing the testimony) that he (Hazelip) came to his death by the medicines which were administered, particularly the lobelia and the steam. \* \* \* *I have seen similar appearances from OTHER causes.* \* \* \* I consider lobelia a safe medicine when administered in proper doses and with *discretion*. § I should not have arrived, perhaps, at the same conclusion from the *appearance*, [that Hazelip was killed with lobelia and steam], without taking into consideration the treatment practised. \* \* \* A system inordinately excited would be very injuriously affected with cayenne pepper. To illustrate it, a glass of wine may be taken when in health, and enlivens the system; but in acute inflammation it would be endangering health.

\* \* \* Lobelia is an active stimulant, and a *narcotic*. [This is learned ignorance.] In large doses, say 10 or 20 grains in substance, it produces vomiting and sometimes *purging*. [Not a fact.] \* \* \* § If *I had known nothing of this case except from the post mortem examination, I could not have said he died of the steam or the lobelia.* \* \* \* In Russia they go from a vapor bath into a cold room, [or roll themselves in snow, during the most piercing cold] immediately with *impunity*. I confess, my own impression is, that it would be dangerous *here*. [There is no reason assigned for this; the danger, perhaps arises from the fact that our climate is not as cold as that of Russia.]

Professor *Potter* deposed—that lobelia, "if it does not act as an emetic, it does as a *purgative*. Hemlock is a poison. I know it well—it grows 3 or 4 feet high."

Dr. *Barton*, (as quoted by Attorney General *Gill*), says—"If lobelia does not puke or evacuate speedily, it frequently destroys the patient in 5 or 6 hours." [Why did he not cite a case in proof?—there is none extant.

I believe they are not injurious in any disease. \* \* \* I have been myself under the effects of steam for 30 minutes. It was when I had the bilious fever. I took the lobelia and applied steam, with bricks and water poured over them while they were hot, and immediately had blankets wrapped round me. I am sure it cured me without having recourse to any other remedy—and I am satisfied also that I liad the bilious fever."

*Roger Brooke* affirmed—"that he never had reason to suppose any injury to result from the use of lobelia. I have taken myself 3 doses; and repeated them in that time as high as seven tea-spoonsful. I have used cayenne pepper in my own case and always carry a bottle of it with me. I have found cayenne the most permanent, powerful and pure stimulant known. Other stimulants shatter the nerves. Brandy is not as good as cayenne in cases of typhus fever. Dr. *Wright* of Barbadoes, represents it as being very effectual in some fevers which prevail, where no other medicines can have the same effect. A work of his treats of the good effects of cayenne in some particular cases. I never had the smallest reason to suppose it had done any injury. \* \* \* *Hemlock is not poisonous.* I have had a patient that had been under treatment for more than a week, by two physicians, who were near me. I gave him some of the composition, and some No. 3, and lastly some lobelia. He had the scarlet fever, accompanied with an inflammation of the breast. *By the use of these remedies he was relieved in an hour.* \* \*

I consider the system of Thomson as very much adapted to the *cure of all forms of diseases.* \* \* I have actually tried these medicines in a variety of diseases, some of them contradictory in their nature, some inflammatory, some the reverse, and I have relieved them in the course of a few hours and have *always* found these medicines to have their desired effects. \* \* All volatile remedies are injurious, having a tendency to derange the nervous system. Cayenne, instead of deranging it, strengthens and supports it. Lobelia is never used as a cathartic. Thomson says that in a practice of 30 years *he never knew it to act in that manner*, and this agrees with my own experience [and of every Thomsonian.]

Dr. *Thatcher* "recommends lobelia for coughs, *whooping cough* and *hydrophobia*"—all this as well as its efficacy in *asthma*,



was obtained from Thomson, who was obliged to expose his discovery to prove the falsity of an indictment against him.

Dr. Barton recommends it in "croup," instead of the antimonials; and adds, "the United States do not contain a plant of more unequivocal action upon the system."

Dr. Cutler pronounces it a specific in *asthma*.

Dr. Eberle speaks of its excellence in *croup*, *hernia*, &c. &c. And Thomsonians can fully appreciate its value in all cases of disease.\*

It is proper to remark, that there are many species of *lobelia*, differing in their properties and effects; and that, *through ignorance*, they regret any have confounded the "Thomsonia Emetica" with the *lobelia cardinalis*, which is not used by them, and may, for ought we know, "destroy a patient in 5 or 6 hours."

We defy the utmost ingenuity to reconcile the conflicting testimony here presented to public view. On the *one side* is arrayed the evidence, or opinion, of a law-protected, monopolising *craft*, who confess they have no *knowledge* of the medicinal properties of *lobelia*, never having used it, yet they dogmatically pronounce it a *dangerous* article, "destructive of life in 5 or 6 hours," unless administered by "*skilful practitioners*;" that is to say, by their own delicate, labour-shunning *diplomatized* hands. On the *other*, you have the *testimony* of long and mature *experience*, of the affiants themselves, and thousands more might be adduced, who have used the article, and who have no *interest* in keeping the people in *ignorance*, or in *practising deception*;† which is

\* Here, then, we have the opinions of Drs. *Thatcher*, *Cutler*, *Barton* and *Eberle*, in favour of *lobelia*. All the knowledge *either* possessed of its medical virtues was originally derived through Dr. Thomson; although it has been alleged that it (*lobelia*) was known and used for centuries by the aborigines of the country: but this is an unfounded *assertion*; and Dr. Williams—nay, the whole of the calomel tribe, are challenged to furnish their evidence in the case. We boldly assert, that they cannot produce a single line to sustain them, anterior to the period Dr. T. made known its virtues.

Let the reader particularly observe, that the *learned* doctors above mentioned, (since a portion of Thomson's practice has *leaked out*,) testify in favor of *lobelia* as excellent in *whooping cough* and *hydrophobia*—in *asthma*, *hernia* and *croup*, all of which were successfully treated by Thomson 30 years ago. If, in their estimation, these are not *different diseases*, they are, at least, very *different forms* of disease; and they come as near pronouncing disease an *unit* as we could desire. Hence if all these can be cured by *Thomson's Emetic*, why may not a "blow upon the head," if the brain is not injured, and an extravasation of the blood vessels has not ensued, also be cured by it and the use of cayenne and *lobelia* as stimulants; or "stuffing with cayenne," as Dr. Williams has termed it? We ask the Dr. for information. There *appear to be* some shades of difference between *asthma*, *croup*, *hernia*, *whooping cough* and *hydrophobia*. *Apropos*—one of the *regular* methods formerly of curing strangulated *hernia*, was, to "place the patient on his head and toss him about," somewhat like you would a pig by the heels. Dr. Thomas protests against this *scientific practice*. [See his "Modern Practice of Physic," N. York, 1822, p. 179.]

† The following just remarks are copied from the writings of the Rev. John Wesley: "As theories increased, simple medicines were more and more disregarded and disused; till, in a course of years, the greater part of them were forgotten, at least in the more polite nations. In the room of these, abundance of new ones were introduced, by reasoning, speculative men; and those more and more difficult to be applied, as being more remote from common observation. Hence rules for the application of these, and medical books were immensely multiplied; till at length physic became an abstruse science, quite out of the reach of ordinary men. Physicians now began to be held in admiration, as persons who were something more than human. And profit attended their employ, as well as honour. So that they had now two weighty reasons for keeping the bulk of mankind at a distance, that they might not pry into the mysteries of their profession. To this end they increased those difficulties, by design, which were in a manner by accident. They filled their writings with abundance of technical terms, utterly unintelligible to plain men.

"Those who understood only how to restore the sick to health, they branded with



calculated to put to rest forever the malignant denunciations of the regular faculty. And if this all should not be considered conclusive by the most skeptical, we are willing to exhibit practical demonstration both of the absolute *innocence* and *efficacy* of our remedies, by having *any, or all of them* compounded and administered in tea-spoonful doses, to the *well* or the *sick*, until they amount, in quantity, to *four times Professor GEDDINGS' largest dose*, (20 grains,) by the *most stupid and unskilful plantation negro Dr. Williams has on his farm*; because none of these medicines are of a poisonous nature, and therefore cannot injure or kill; being in perfect harmony with nature and the principles of life—combating only with disease,—the enemy of health and life:—and “where there is no enemy, there can be no war.”

In return, we simply desire to witness the administration, *simultaneously*, of a small quantity of the usual remedies of learned quackery, such as opium, nitre, sulphate of copper, prussic acid, antimony, corrosive sublimate, &c. upon a healthy subject of their own craft, by the most learned and skilful brother, *merely by way of contrasting the two practices*; “that’s all.”

*Finally*, it has been said, and may be reiterated, that we have furnished no detailed account of our system! We have, however, exhibited a striking coincidence of opinion between *Brown, Rush, Thomson* and others, of the *unity of disease*, and the course of remedies necessarily resulting from this doctrine. We have also furnished a mass of testimony, drawn from the ranks of the regular faculty, of the pernicious and fatal effects of *bloodletting*, and the use of *mercury* and other *poisonous* mineral and vegetable substances, as medicines; and solemnly declared, and boldly reiterated the declaration, that Thomsonians never administer either, as preventives or curatives—and what more can the public desire? True, it has been widely circulated, by *regular means*, that the Thomsonians have poisoned Mrs. A. with lobelia; stewed Mr. B. with steam, and very *Handily* spoiled the beautiful complexion of Miss C. with that vile “composition” powder, &c. &c.; but where is the proof?—no where to be found. It is imaginary; haunting the regulars only in consequence of a heavy loss of lucrative practice, and a daily appreciation of the Thomsonian practice by the people.

Thomsonians could adduce volumes of testimony to sustain their system, by proving an *unity of cure*; but it would occupy too much time, and extend this publication far beyond its contemplated limits, having considerably exceeded that already. It is only requisite to add the following comprehensive synopsis of the whole secret of their system:

“Disease is an unity—there is one general cause of disease, and one general remedy—hence, that medicine which will promptly remove obstructions throughout the human system, without implanting new maladies; promote free perspiration, and restore the digestive powers; is suited to every patient, whatever *form* the disease may assume; and is universally applicable.”

Dr. *Rush*, proclaimed his opinion, “That the time *would come* when it would be as easy for every man to cure himself of disease, as it was now [then] to cure the most simple malady; and that old age would be the only outlet of life.” Happy period! it is near at hand; and learned quackery, with all its weapons, satire, ridicule, denunciations, and *their protecting law*, cannot long retard it.

To fill up what otherwise would have been a *blank* page, we are induced to believe that we could furnish our readers, and the enquiring portion of the public, with nothing more deserving their attention than the following extract from the “*Thomsonian Recorder*,” on Bilious Fever and the use of Calomel.

#### CALOMEL.

[The subjoined Essay, relates chiefly to the use of Calomel, and is one of a series, on Bilious Fever and the use of Calomel, by A. Hunn. We do not hold ourselves amenable for any of the theoretic peculiarities of the author.—We leave our readers

the name of Empirics. They introduced into practice abundance of compound medicines, consisting of so many ingredients, that it was scarce possible for common people to know what it was that wrought a cure. Abundance of exotics, neither the nature nor the names of which their own countrymen understood.”



to reject or adopt them agreeably to their own conviction of their merits or demerits. The facts stated in relation to the mercurial practice, deserve to be carefully noticed—for it is too notorious that the regular Faculty, as they are ludicrously called, rest upon calomel as their herculian remedy, and use it promiscuously in almost every case of disease.—Eds.]

*Essay on Bilious Fever and the Use of Calomel, by A. Hunn.*

This is the *æra* of calomel. The present medical practice might well dispense with every other drug besides it. I own the calomel practice is both cheap and easy to the physician; for the whole extent of both theory and practice is, give calomel; if that will not help, give *more calomel*; and if that again proves abortive, double, treble the doses of calomel. If the patient recovers, "calomel has cured him;" if he dies, "nothing on earth could have saved him." The reader will conclude that medical schools and academies, with the head-aching studies of anatomy, physiology, botany, pharmacology, and chemistry, have been laid prostrate by this giant, calomel. Half a day's, nay, in a genius, half an hour's study, will initiate any lady or gentleman into all the mysteries of the *Æsculapian art*, and the "*aurea praxis*," might swell the account of a modern Galenus to \$100 at the expense of 12½ cents. This is certainly for the doctor a "consummation devoutly to be wished." But there is a heavy drawback on our joy, which the fable of the boys and the frogs so ingeniously portrays: "what is joy to you is death to us," said the expiring frogs. I expect to show to my impartial reader that the present calomel practice in fevers, is a calamity in its ravages co-extensive with the empire of civilization, and that war, with all its ghastly concomitants, must hail calomel as its master.

The *proper* effects of Mercury on the human frame, are, 1st, *fever*, as I have before defined it. 2d, It is the cause of a peculiar action on the lymphatic vessels. 3d, It chemically decomposes the fluids, and particularly the lymph. This is, in my opinion, the true cause of the fetid breath in salivation. 4th, In constitutions prone to that effect, or under circumstances favoring it, or when too long used, it produces *mortifying ulcers* of a specific kind, which have hitherto proved absolutely incurable. Its accidental effects are, 1st, Salivation, which may also be produced by other drugs, and sometimes appear spontaneously, and which is not at all necessary to effect a cure. 2d, In a state of great visceral irritability, or when given in large doses, it proves a sickening and powerful purgative, with a singular sympathetic affection of the liver, which viscus is thereby thrown into a morbid convulsive action, creating bile, exorbitant in quantity and poisonous in quality; when in a healthy state the bilious secretion is mild, moderate in quantity, and salutary.

Now it appears to be a law in animalization, that two distinct fever causes cannot operate at the same time on the system. Thus for instance, if the infection of the measles lodges in the body when a patient is inoculated for the small pox, the latter will remain inactive till the first has run through its course. This law I apprehend, first introduced mercury into the fever practice; and it is a fact, that if the *proper* mercurial action can be produced, the fever produced by a miasma will speedily cease. But my reader will please to observe, 1st, that in all fever cases it is extremely precarious and doubtful to produce this proper mercurial action, and there are many cases in which it cannot be induced at all. Besides that, when induced it is unmanageable. 2d, If the bowels are very irritable and weak, or in peculiar habits, it will operate as a purge and throw the liver into bile-creating convulsions, like a blister-plaster on the very liver. It will attract more or less of the febrile impetus upon that vital viscus, producing a dangerous inequality, which is called "bilious fever." 3d, After a vast quantity of mercury has been introduced into the system, which for want of sufficient excitability, has lain dormant; if now by a sudden increase of that excitability, or from other unknown causes, it evinces its presence by salivation, this will be of course enormous and distressing. The teeth, those valuable instruments of our most substantial enjoyments, become loose and rot, perhaps fall out; or, worse still, the upper and lower jaw-bones exfoliate and rot out sometimes, as I have witnessed, in the form of horse-shoes; parts of the tongue and palate are frequently lost, and the poor object lingers out a doleful existence during life. A tremendous description this, indeed---yet this



happens when mercury performs a cure. In our summer and fall fever, the pestilential bilious symptoms occasioned or aggravated by it, carry the patient speedily off in inexpressible torments, and spread the multiplied miasma among the mourning family, the unwary bystanders, and nurses!

Is there any of my readers who would not by this time pray, "deliver us from calomel?" Yes, my fellow-citizens, you can be, the world will be delivered from it! Only drive away prejudice, that black thunder-cloud, which ever hovers over truth; think for yourselves, free as republicans ever should think; consult your precious healths and lives. Every free man should, at least to a certain degree, be his own lawyer, his own preacher, and his own physician. My method of cure in fever is entirely without mercury and its doleful effects. Were I even not more successful than those gentlemen of the medical profession, who trust so much to the virtues of calomel, still the gain would be immense; but from facts enumerated fairly by myself and others, I ween I have nothing to fear from an impartial comparison.

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*At a regular meeting of the "Thomsonian Friendly Botanic Society of Maryland," held in the city of Baltimore on the 2d day of March, 1835, the following preamble and resolutions were presented and unanimously adopted:*

*Whereas*, it has been the practice of the regular faculty, and their misguided adherents, on all occasions to deceive the public in relation to the highly valuable medicinal properties, and efficacious results of the innocuous plant, distinguished by the name of *Lobelia Inflata*, upon the human system;—and

*Whereas*, it is known that there are many varieties of the lobelia, which, in consequence of the acknowledged ignorance of its medicinal qualities, as well as the proper mode of administering it; or its salutary effects as a general remediate agent, by the regular faculty, may have induced them to confound those several varieties, with a view of poisoning the public mind, and bringing the Botanic practice into disrepute; and

*Whereas*, Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse, of Cambridge, Mass., disdaining the narrow limits which confine medical knowledge, or acquirements, to a privileged class; and bursting asunder the shackles of faction and prejudice, which would suffer no one to discover important remedies; project reform in medicine, or wear the honors which those discoveries or reform would confer, unless attached to their own order, has rendered to Samuel Thomson the meed of just praise for his valuable addition to the materia medica of this indigenous plant, the *Lobelia*, and declared that "it ought, in justice, in honor and gratitude, to be called the THOMSONIA Emetica:" therefore,

1. Resolved, by the "Thomsonian Friendly Botanic Society of Maryland," that in future this valuable herb shall be by us, known and distinguished as the "*Thomsonia Emetica*" [Thomson's Emetic] of the Botanic practice; and that it be recommended to, and enjoined upon all our friends of the Botanic practice, in this State and elsewhere, to distinguish the same by the above appellation, and no other, in honor of the experienced and sagacious "Patriarch Samuel Thomson."

2. Resolved, that the proceedings had in this case be respectfully laid before the United States' Botanic Convention, at their next annual meeting, for their approbation and sanction; and that they be requested to pursue such a course in the premises, as may to them be most likely to realise the object projected by this society.

3. Resolved, that a copy of these proceedings, signed by the president and secretary, be furnished for publication to the editors of the "*Thomsonian Recorder*," at Columbus, Ohio, and the "*Botanic Watchman*," at Albany, N. Y., with a request, on their part, that the same be copied into all papers not unfriendly to the performance of an act of justice to Dr. Thomson.

(Signed,)

WM. HOULTON, President.

J. WALKER, Secretary.







