

A lecture, on the best mode of discouraging empiricism : delivered before the Ohio Medical Lyceum, January, 1843 / by John P. Harrison.

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Harrison, John P. 1796-1849.
Ohio Medical Lyceum (Cincinnati, Ohio)
National Library of Medicine (U.S.)

Publication/Creation

Cincinnati : Printed by R. P. Donogh ..., 1843.

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Harrison (G. P.)

A LECTURE,

ON THE

Bind this cover in front

BEST MODE OF DISCOURAGING

EMPIRICISM:

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE OHIO MEDICAL LYCEUM,

JANUARY, 1843,

Box 4

BY JOHN P. HARRISON, M. D.

Professor of Materia Medica in the Medical College of Ohio.

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ington, D.C.

CINCINNATI:

PRINTED BY R. P. DONOGH, AT NO. 106 MAIN STREET,

1843.

MEDICAL COLLEGE OF OHIO, }
February 1st, 1843.

DEAR SIR:—

The Ohio Medical Lyceum has appointed us a Committee to request for publication a copy of your able and interesting Lecture on the best modes of discouraging Quackery. While performing the duty assigned us, permit us to assure you of our profound regard and esteem, and that in complying with the wish of the Society which we represent, we but express our own sentiments.

M. L. BROOKS, *Ill.*,
DAVID A. DONIPHAN, *Mi.*,
WM. J. BIRCKHEAD, *Va.*,
D. B. VAN TUYLE, *Ohio*,
ISAAC VAN EATON, *Ala.*,

J. J. PENNINGTON, *Ia.*,
J. R. MANTLE, *N. Y.*,
A. G. WEBB, *Ky.*,
J. W. HARMON, *Mo.*,
E. C. TOWER, *Pa.*

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*Race Street, February 2nd, 1843.*

GENTLEMEN:—

In reply to your polite note of yesterday, I herewith send you a copy of my lecture on Quackery, which was delivered before the Ohio Medical Lyceum.

Accept my assurances of great regard,

Yours, &c.

JOHN P. HARRISON.

MESSRS. BROOKS, }  
DONIPHAN, &c. }



# A LECTURE ON THE BEST MODE OF DISCOURAGING EMPIRICISM;

*Delivered before the Ohio Medical Lyceum, January, 1843.*

By JOHN P. HARRISON, M. D.

*Professor of Materia Medica in the Medical College of Ohio.*

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GENTLEMEN OF THE OHIO MEDICAL LYCEUM:—

IN obedience to your request, I am, on this evening, to deliver you a lecture on quackery. This is a fertile topic, and opens a wide scope for the exercise of all the powers of a severe animadversion. For the sad results of empirical pretension and imposture haunt our daily steps, and its path is marked by the ravages of death. But why is it, that quackery in medicine receives so much countenance and support from an enlightened community, if its essential character is replete with evils to society? Let us examine this question before we proceed to the consideration of what constitute the leading, governing elements of quackery, and how this great power of mischief in society can best be counteracted and repressed.

Mankind are enamoured of mystery, and delight in the wonderful and extravagant. When, therefore, a man comes forward with vast pretensions as regards the discovery of some remedy, undivulged, and hidden from all others, and makes solemn asseverations of his great ability thus derived, to cure disease, he ever finds a very ready acceptance on the part of the public to credit his declarations, and a soft yielding to his overtures of service. There is a captivation about this matter, which defrauds many minds of their accustomed capacity of examination. A wise reserve, a prudent skepticism, in the ordinary transactions of life, is looked upon as a proof of a discriminating judgment, and of a sound understanding. But, in things pertaining to medicine, good sense, and the exercise of reason, are often kept in abeyance, and by the blandishment of a seductive quackery, are subdued into a practical denial of some of the most obvious truths.

There is another principle in the human mind, besides its love of mystery, which is appealed to most successfully by the daring pretender in physic. The desire after novel modes of practice, and the fondness of change, as grafted on this desire of



novelty, impel people to catch up and devour, without examination, all the impositions of the charlatan. In their conduct they say, "We are tired of this everlasting repetition of your regular administration of drugs, and we want a physician who will cure us of our diseases by a more compendious method than that pursued by the regular Faculty. Nay—it is certain, that in the march of mind—it behooves us to patronize men who have risen on the sublime wing of genius, to heights inaccessible to you plodding, leaden spirits of the old system of medical practice."

And then the pride of proselytism mingles its delusion in this cup of intoxication, and the mind becomes fired with a glowing zeal for the reputation of the empiric employed, until, at last, you find men eager to abet some ignorant, presumptuous dealer in physic, who would have disdained to permit such a man to act as their guide, or counsellor in the lowest grades of human service. But to visit the sick, to sit in authoritative decision on the disordered states of that body so ingeniously wrought by a Divine workmanship, and balanced in its various parts with such nice adaptations and reciprocal ties, this is a work of such easy attainment that any one may assume the office, irrespective of special and protracted preparation for the task.

Credulity opens a wide door for the introduction of quackery in society, and in a special degree does superstition lend its powerful misdirecting influence in laying prostrate all the barriers which common sense may raise against the machinations and sordid purposes of the charlatan. Zimmerman tells us, that among the Chilians, the whole duty of the doctor is comprised in his blowing around the bed of his patient, and that to blow well is the highest excellence of the medical attendant. A physician who knows how to blow well among the people, even here, is accounted a man of such cleverness, that to employ him is considered a proof of clear sightedness.

But what is quackery? First, we answer, that it is characterized by four indubitable attributes,—ignorance, presumption, cupidity, and inhumanity. The essential, predominant feature of empiricism, is ignorance of the duties appropriately attached to the responsible position assumed by the medical practitioner in society. Instead of a careful and diligent cultivation of the science of medicine, the quack speaks contemptuously of the knowledge possessed by enlightened physicians, and arrogates to himself some special exemption from the lot of mortality: the acquisition of truth by an industrious application of the mind to the objects of research, embraced by the science of medicine. Not aware of the vast compass and variety of investigation required to constitute an adequate foundation for the practice of the profession, the irregular and reckless practitioner of medicine rushes forward on the arena to display the wonders of his skill in the cure of diseases with which he has no scientific acquaintance. Ignorant of the very first elements of anatomy



and physiology, (the branches of medical science which lie at the very foundation of all correct knowledge of diseases) and their appropriate methods of treatment, the empirical pretender, with blind temerity deals out the instruments of death to his unhappy patients. Nor can general culture of mind, nor enlarged scientific inquiries, ever grow under the upas shade of empiricism. With defective scholastic attainments, possessing no literary taste, and no aspiration of thought after enlarged conceptions of nature, the conceited and ignorant charlatan, delights in depreciating the reputation of those whose days are devoted to the practice and cultivation of a correct and scientific art of healing.

The impudence of the bold pretender in medicine, is always commensurate with his ignorance;—they go hand in hand, mutually sustaining each other. Mere ignorance, if felt, and acknowledged, in an ingenuous, modest mind, would actuate to strenuous efforts towards its removal. But ignorance, shielded by presumption, is the acme of a voluntary debasement of spirit and character. Boastful, proud, dogmatic ignorance, by converting folly into guilt, deprives the empirical pretender of all legitimate claims to our sympathy for his intellectual and moral debasement, and renders it a duty on the part of every benevolent man to spurn with contempt, all such vicious, premeditated ignorance from the walks of life, along which it moves in steps marked with blood.

But why should the forward pretender in physic, push his way, with such determined obstinacy, in all the circles of human society. Does the infatuated man rejoice over the ruins which it is his daily work to scatter on every side? Gratuitous cruelty, perhaps, he may not delight in, but his cupidity prompts him to urge on his dark career of depravity and wo. Base and sordid feelings engross his entire nature. Too proud to seek some worthy mechanical occupation, and too indolent to make suitable preparation for the exercise of the functions of the medical profession, with groveling views of responsibility, and bereft of all elevating impulses of soul, the ignorant and daring charlatan preys on the misery of his fellow men, and extracts from the groans of tortured humanity the means of his subsistence. Such is quackery, dark, ruinous, depraved: fattening on human weakness and credulity; and scattering the elements of disaster around its daily course. Spurning knowledge, despising literature and science, blowing its polluted breath on the fair fame of every regular physician, quackery is the offspring of ignorance engendered by impudence and cupidity, and carries on its foul brow a mark of reprobation affixed by the hand of scorn. Turning away from it with revolting, and filled with deep abhorrence at its abominations, let us enquire, during the remainder of this lecture, What are the best modes of discouragement to its dark and ruinous career?



And in the first place, let us consider the profession of medicine as established in all civilized and intelligent communities. The plain question to be put to every thinking man, is this, "acknowledging, as you must, that there should be a separate body of individuals in every community, whose business it is to exercise the functions of medical advisers, and surgical operators, for the mitigation and removal of the many diseases and accidents to which mankind are liable, should these be well instructed, thoroughly trained physicians, whose habits and modes of thinking have been moulded to the work, or shall this whole matter be left at loose ends, and is every idle and foolish fellow to be allowed to enter upon the responsible duties of doctor in physic, to deal out remedies, and mutilate the limbs of men, women, and children, at his pleasure, under the promptings of ignorance, presumption, and cupidity?"

To the attainment of all great and good ends, there must be a special preparation given. No one comes into the world qualified by miraculous gifts and graces, to practice medicine. The science of healing has ever been, and still is, a cumulative power put into the hands of physicians, to arrest disease, and for a time to postpone the final catastrophe which threatens our daily path. It is made up of the copious contributions of facts and inquiries, and deductions, emanating from the cultivated and vigorous intellects of a great multitude of men living through several thousand years, and in every quarter of the globe. And there are strong bonds of union which bind together all the members of the regular profession of medicine over the earth, as far as it is erected into a distinct and scientific avocation. In the most rude and degraded conditions of society, medicine is practiced as an art, but the pervading and binding influences which unite all the members of the regular profession together, do not exert any controlling action upon these scattered and unenlightened portions of medical practitioners.

Medicine, wherever erected into a separate, regular and scientific pursuit, owes its intellectual advancement, moral dignity, social weight, and practical usefulness to three great, penetrating, and vivifying principles,—these are, the spirit of scientific research, the spirit of honor—which may be properly named the spirit of a gentleman—and the spirit of humanity. Deprived of either of these fundamental principles, which confer upon the profession of medicine all its excellence, and all its extensive and varied capabilities of usefulness, it degenerates rapidly into a low, and contemptible calling. For, were physicians ever so well instructed in the scientific and practical truths of their profession, still, destitute of the spirit of a gentleman and the spirit of benevolence, they would be grovelling, in their motives of conduct, and their profession would never reflect the glories of moral greatness. We rejoice to reflect that our profession



has been adorned with some of the noblest specimens of human excellence. That the page of history is luminous with the virtues, and endowments of men who made medicine their practical calling, and who, with gratitude acknowledged, that to the assiduous culture of the science of medicine, they owed their fame and their goodness. Call up to mind the high intellectual qualifications which are demanded in our profession, in order to attain its highest honors. Reflect upon the accurate scholarship and disciplined activity of mind, essential as a preliminary step to a successful entrance upon the study of medicine. To become an eminent physician a man must be a scholar, well grounded in classical learning, and possessed of varied culture of mind. And then advert to the very *præcognita* of the art of healing; anatomy, physiology, chemistry, *materia medica*, general and special pathology and general and special therapeutics, which are to be mastered to a considerable degree, before a man is adequately qualified to practice medicine. What a vast and complex scheme of inquiry is presented in the science of medicine, and what strenuous toil of mind, and persevering devotion of time, are required to fit a man for the successful exercise of skill in the three departments of the *ars curandi*. Take the surgeon for example, called on in an emergency, to secure by ligature a bleeding vessel. If ignorant of anatomy, how can he explore the site of the artery above the point where it bleeds, and thus secure the main trunk, by which means alone the patient can be snatched from a rapid dissolution.

Again, there is a case of midwifery which demands on the part of the medical attendant a thorough knowledge of the rules of the obstetric art, which always has anatomical facts for its basis; here the conceits of impudent ignorance are of no avail in saving mother and child from a premature grave. But why should we argue these points so open, so demonstrable to the dullest capacity, and yet it is by losing sight of such obvious truths that the public are deluded by the promises of ignorant presumption, and circumvented by the evil designs of empiricism.

Medicine is grounded on an enlarged, philosophic, view of man, not merely in his organization, and in the fine adjustments of his physical frame, but as endowed with various susceptibilities of being acted upon by exterior agents. The laws which govern the modes of receiving such impressions, and the corresponding phenomena thence arising, have to be carefully studied in order to a just comprehension of physiology. Besides, the natural history of the various substances which can be made subservient to the rectification of the disorders of the body, with the chemical preparations educed from them, to be subjected to the inspection of disciplined powers of thought. And then the noxious agents to which the system is liable, must be sought



out and detected in their lurking places, that fevers and other dangerous epidemic maladies may be prevented.

A spirit of philosophic modesty will always accompany true science. Whilst pushing far her victories over the territories of error and ignorance, science is humbled under a sense of what vast accessions are yet to be made that she may be enthroned on the glories of the universe, and be decked with the spoils of nature. Ignorance prates with infinite self-complacency over its fancied treasures. Science weeps in secret over her deficiencies. Ignorance measures its narrow attainments by a standard derived from pride. Science with modest look contemplates the boundless opulence of creation, and like the great conqueror of antiquity considers nothing gained, whilst any conquests remain to be made by her efforts. The science of medicine cultivated aright, always fills the mind with a deep, abiding consciousness of the imperfections attached to all human knowledge. The true, scientific physician is a constant learner in the school of nature, and as each day revolves, fresh disclosures of truth spread their enlivening beams on his awakened faculties. Independent of the love of truth, that urges the scientific physician to be ever alert and active in the investigation and obtainment of knowledge, there is another principle at work in the bosom, which greatly contributes towards rendering our profession one of dignity and commanding weight in society. The principle or feeling, to which allusion is now made, is that which prompts to an honorable bearing, and high minded conduct of one physician towards another. This *esprit du corps*—this refined and liberal sentiment, made up of personal respect and politeness, with a just regard for the standing of the profession in society, maintains an ascendant and harmonizing control among all correct and scientific physicians. Without this honorable principle pervading our profession, it would become a mere heterogeneous mass of jarring and warring elements. A physician should be not only a philosopher, a lover of truth, and an earnest inquirer into the mysteries of nature, but a gentleman, and a philanthropist. He must be governed in his intercourse with his professional brethren by the spirit of a liberal, high minded man. Courtesy and comity will characterize his interviews, professional and private with other physicians, and a forbearing generous deportment, and respectful language towards them, will ever accompany him among his patients. Such a man will utterly detest the petty tricks, and mean indirections of low and base minds, by which they hope to supplant a rival. Nor will the honorable physician meanly insinuate charges against an absent medical attendant; and he will not allow patients, under the instigation of resentment against another physician, because he has reprimanded them on account of disobedience of his injunctions, to rail out against a friend or even rival



in the profession. A quick sense of obligation towards the profession and of gentlemanly feelings towards an absent medical man, will induce the honorable physician to seek an interview with the practitioner dismissed, in order to ascertain the real bearings and difficulties of the case. In an especial degree does christianity come in to enforce the observance of such a line of procedure, that the mouth be not opened in malediction, and the lips speak no guile in matters involving the reputation of another physician. There are, unhappily, for the dignity and standing of the profession, men in our ranks who wish to be considered, and treated as gentlemen, and whose minds have never been lit up by a single generous emotion towards the profession, but whose souls are steeped in most abject, sinister views, and who rejoice, with cormorant satisfaction, over the failures, real or fabricated, of their professional brethren, and exultingly point the finger of derision at the persecutions got up, perhaps, at their dark suggestions, against those towards whom they entertain envious, or vindictive feelings, because they stand in their way.

Superadded to the spirit of scientific investigation, and of the high and generous sentiments of honor and of courtesy, which medical men should possess; their minds should be animated by an urgent desire of doing good. And to the glory of the Medical Profession, civilized society every where is filled with the multiplied demonstrations of the humane regard felt by physicians, for the well being and happiness of their fellow men. From the cradle, where sleeping innocence draws its sweet infant breath, down to declining years, when tottering age bends beneath its infirmities, through all periods of human existence, the eye of medical skill in the prevention as well as the cure of disease, is fixed in watchful earnestness over the health of man.

But I must hasten to suggest the best mode of discouraging empiricism. There are three aspects to this important subject. First, how far should legislative interference be called into requisition to discourage quackery. Second, how far, and by what modes of action, should the discouragement of empiricism, emanate from intelligent and good men in society. And third, what is the bounden duty, of the Medical Profession itself, in this matter, and both in their collective, and in their individual capacity, what are the most expedient and successful modes by which regular and scientific physicians can arrest the ruinous career of charlatany in the land.

At the threshold of the general argument in favor of legislative action upon the subject of quackery, it may be stated that without a rectification of public feeling, nothing effective can be attained by legal enactments. But indirectly, legislative action can be made to bear most effectively in the repression of medical imposture—and that desirable result can be accom-



plished by judicious encouragement, given to the cultivation of the science of medicine, by the endowment of schools for teaching medicine, and by making all irregular practitioners amenable to a loss of their demands for attendance on the sick. All civilized governments have given encouragement to the cultivation of the sciences, medicine among the rest, by affording every facility to the teacher, by the way of illustration and enforcement of his views through a well furnished apparatus, in appropriate places of instruction. The mind—that living, immortal, and prolific energy—whence is derived all the imperishable glory, as well as varied prosperity and civilization, of a nation—should be the special subject of patronizing legislation among a free people. And whether the immortal energy of thought is cultivated in our collegiate halls, where first the budding promises of a bright manhood are exhibited—or in our law or medical schools, where science trains the capabilities of the mind to future exertion on the great moral and social relations of life, or opens before the eye the mysteries of the human frame, and imparts her precepts of health—still the animating principle of a sound legislation is at work in providing the best means for advancing the great and abiding interests of a people.

Legislative superintendence and patronage will not go far, however, in elevating the profession of medicine unless a co-operation on the part of intelligent citizens, is given. How can educated men in society aid in discouraging empiricism? We answer, in the first place, they can, in a negative manner do much to discourage it, by abstaining from taking nostrums, and employing quacks, and by refusing to lend the sanction of their name to newspaper puffs in favor of secret remedies. In the next place, educated men in Society, can give direct encouragement to scientific physicians by confiding in them, and speaking favorably of their profession and skill. But to the disgrace, as we conceive, of educated men in various departments of life, their names, their influence, their certificates have been lavishly expended in upholding the cause of quackery: yes—we must, and will speak out—many of our judges, lawyers, and clergy, have brought a foul blot on their characters as good members of society, by their publications in eulogy of quack remedies. Can any candid, reflecting person doubt that it is a disparagement to a man's intellect, and his discretion, aside from the pernicious influence of such an example, to lend his name, and influence to the upholding of imposture in medicine. If these remedies are what their founders pretend them to be, why not, out of philanthropy, divulge their secret composition to the public, that the poor and suffering may freely and gratuitously partake of the beneficial power. Besides, the indiscriminate employment of secret remedies is calculated to



do an incalculable amount of evil. All remedies are relative agents, that is, they act curatively in reference to certain given states of the general system, or of particular parts of the body. Now, it is universally admitted by enlightened practitioners of medicine, that there is no such thing as a specific in the cure of disease. That is, there is no medicine that will act remedially on a disease in all states of the system, and in all stages of that disease, modified as it is so constantly, by temperament, climate, sex, and age. Then take any nostrum that proposes to cure a cough, such as Warren's Cough Drops, or Jayne's Expectorant, and let it be administered to four patients affected with cough. One of these patients, to whom it is given, has cough, arising from a recent cold, which has produced inflammation of the mucous surface of the bronchial tubes. In this case great injury may be sustained; for the remedy being stimulating in its character, by augmenting the inflammation, it enhances the patient's malady. Again, another of these patients has disease of the heart, and the cough is merely symptomatic of the cordiac malady; in this instance, injury is inflicted on the credulous minded person by the nostrum. The third patient has a cough connected with inflammatory dyspepsia, and he finds to his hurt that the medicine by increasing the gastric distress renders his cough more harassing.

But the fourth may be an asthmatic, nervous individual, who has been troubled for some time with a cough remediable by opiates and stimulants, such as those two nostrums cough mixtures contain, and with such a cough, relief may be afforded by the quack medicine. Forthwith there is furnished by the Judge Asthmatic or Reverend Easy Faith, a certificate, couched in the most extravagant strain of laudation, setting forth the wonderful virtues of this heaven derived remedy,—which was concocted by cupidity, ignorance, and presumption, and stamped with the imprimatur of clerical and legal stupidity, arrogance and subserviency to quackish knavery!

But at last, our final reliance in the discouragement of empiricism, must be placed in the great body of enlightened physicians. They are the conservators of the honor and dignity of the profession. From our predecessors in medicine, we have received this legacy, and with sedulous vigilance should we guard it. It is worthy in all respects of our attachment, and admiration, and of the unremitting consecration of all our best powers to its high and august service. For reflect but for a moment, upon the scope of action of our profession in society. Contrast it with the art of war, in their respective designs and results. War inflames man against his fellow man, spreads desolation wherever its iron heel has pressed, and fills the land with widows and orphans. It turns all the gentle human nature into hatred, arrests the progress of civilization, and dries



up the fountains of domestic love and enjoyment. Our profession, in its designs and results, is one of benevolence—it visits the haunts of suffering, and lays its healing hand on the tortures of the body, and restores the disordered intellect, filled with the horrible delusions of insanity, to the exercise of sound reason. Its beneficent power is felt in the mansions of opulence and in the hovels of poverty; by the tender frame of infancy, in woman's child-bed agonies, in manhood's vigor, and life's evening hours. The medical profession is a partnership in science, in honor, and in humanity. Its commission is replete with high ends—and its destiny is no less than the temporal well being of the race.

Such a profession should be guarded by its members from the polluting touch of every thing calculated to rob it of its essential dignity, eclipse its lustre, or degrade it in popular estimation. In the keeping of physicians is placed the rich deposit of its scientific advancement, its honorable standing, and beneficent influence. How can we best protect the essential interests of our profession from the inroads of empiricism and vindicate its just pretensions in the eyes of mankind? We answer—first, by cultivating assiduously the science of medicine, and the collateral branches of knowledge. Physicians should be literary, cultivated men;—they should addict their powers to the investigations of the natural sciences, and ever be earnest in urging on the discoveries of philosophy. And it affords the mind of the scientific physician a rich intellectual treat to contemplate the rapid conquests won within half a century by medicine over disease. Within that period, the life saving discovery of Jenner has been made,—and now, all over the globe, the name of that great man is sounded;—infant lips lisp his praise, and hoary hairs repeat the flying echo,—the Ganges and the Tiber, the Thames and the Mississippi roll forth his eulogy, and all nations attest the power and beneficence of that profession, among the members of which he labored, and of which he was so illustrious an ornament as a man of science, a polished gentleman, and a philanthropist.

Every where in the ranks of our profession a keen and exciting spirit of inquiry is at work, and every day the prolific press wafts to us new discoveries achieved in the art of healing, and fresh accessions made to our fund of facts and deductions in this vast field of research. Speed on, thou bright, auspicious era of improvement, till the science of medicine shall rise still higher in its glorious triumphs over pain and mortality, and reflect with augmented lustre the divine benevolence of its power. Additional to an earnest cultivation of the science of medicine, physicians should be ever alive to the diffused and active presence of a feeling of honor among the profession. And every disingenuous mode of conducting business, and every appeal made to vulgar prejudice, or to the sordid passions of the unreflecting in society,



must be discountenanced, and rebuked by high minded men in the profession. No trickery, subterfuge, or indirection should have scope among us. Neither should we associate with men who play their tricks on popular credulity by pretensions to novel modes of practice, or who cheat the populace by lying declarations, announcing some grand discovery, which is to cure disease by a new system of practice, or who strive to circumvent the regular physician by pouring out a feculent mass of words, to awaken vulgar prejudices against remedies employed by the educated faculty.

Whenever you see a physician associating in consultation, or in personal familiarity, with an empiric, that he may use the poor creature to subserve his avaricious purposes by extracting fees from the unfortunate victims of medical imposture, rely upon it, that there is something rotten in that man's case. Either he does not feel aright, as an honorable physician should, for the dignity of the profession, or else he has a strong proclivity to the character of the person with whom he associates.

"Heaven with secret principle endued  
Mankind, to seek their own similitude."

A man who has once made a voluntary degradation of himself by practicing according to the thunder and storm system, with its fire and steam, lobelia and red pepper, or who is reeking with the stains of some botanical bubble, or who has sneaked along the by-paths of medicine, under the moonshine and mosquito system, with its infinitesimal doses and cozening buzz,—such an one never can put on the ennobling virtues of the thorough bred, educated physician. "The dead fly will send forth a stinking savor," and through all the plausibilities of his assumed character, there will be revealed the pollution, deep and incurable, which reigns within, and which diffuses its foul atmosphere around his steps.

Our profession does not want, nor should we recognise, these rickety, misshapen, dwarfed creatures, begot of a hermaphrodite, and brought forth in an eclipse,

"As half formed insects on the banks of Nile,—  
Unfinish'd things,—one knows not what to call,  
Their generation's so equivocal."

O no! we want among us men of erect attitude, of honorable bearing, "whose eye, even turned on empty space beams keen with honor," and whose path is that of the just, radiant with the excellencies and virtues of an honest, benevolent conduct. The medical profession is a unit. Regular physicians are bound together by the strong links of science, of honor, and of mutual interest in the cause of humanity. Every blow which is aimed at the prostration of one of its true members, however humble he may be, when in the discharge of the duties appertaining to his profession, and in strict conformity to those great rules which should bind each physician to a conscientious fulfilment of his



obligations, will, in the judgment of the world, tend to degrade and vilify the whole profession. With true moral courage, then, let the entire body speak out, in strong reprobation, against every professional delinquency that tends to disparage, or reflect discredit upon our noble calling. Intellectual power is a theme of fond admiration and applause to all who are capable of realizing the beauties of literary excellence, or the far reaching conclusions of logic, or the grandeur of philosophic discovery. But moral power, in the sight of Him who rules all things by the counsels of unsearchable wisdom, and who marshals all nature by a Divine tactic, far exceeds mere mental capacity, however grand and wonderful, in our view, may be the displays of human genius; for moral goodness assimilates man to the image of Him, by whose breath the fires of genius are kindled, and from whose inspiration cometh understanding. We glory in medicine, because it opens such a wide and fertile field for the exercise of the powers of mind;—because it elicits in all its true followers such a burning, quenchless thirst after knowledge. But in a more especial manner do we glory in our profession, because it is calculated to call forth such a varied and rich exhibition in life of the best sensibilities of the heart, and of the finest traits of moral goodness. The different parts which go to make up the oneness of our profession mutually sustain each other. The love of science contributes to the encouragement of the spirit of honor among us, and these two operative elements of power, reflect light and confer strength on the principle of humanity, which actuates the enlightened and high minded physician to forego all low selfish aims, and freely open his views, and communicate his discoveries for the benefit of mankind.

In the science of medicine there are no double doctrines, as among some of the ancient philosophers,—the exoterick or divulged doctrines for the vulgar, and the esoterick or secret, for the initiated. “Come and see,” is placed in blazing capitals over the portals of the temple of Esculapius, and whatever mysteries in nature we explore, and whatever heights of science we climb, we never return with closed hands, but freely pour the fruits of our labor before the whole world, through the teeming and groaning press. Our science utterly repudiates concealment and delights in spreading wide its treasures to the sun.

Gentlemen; With elevated eye survey the wide cope beneath which we walk. See what a galaxy of illustrious names diffuse their undying fires along the heavens, and as their mingled glory shines on your path, be encouraged to tread the ways of professional virtue, probity and goodness, till your deeds of beneficence and contributions to medical science, shall go to swell the brightness and grandeur of the scene; then shall the hideous forms of quackery, which now so much annoy our profession, be driven away with the shades of darkness, and find their congenial abode with the spectres of night.







