

# **A review of the memorial of Doctor John Bell to the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania.**

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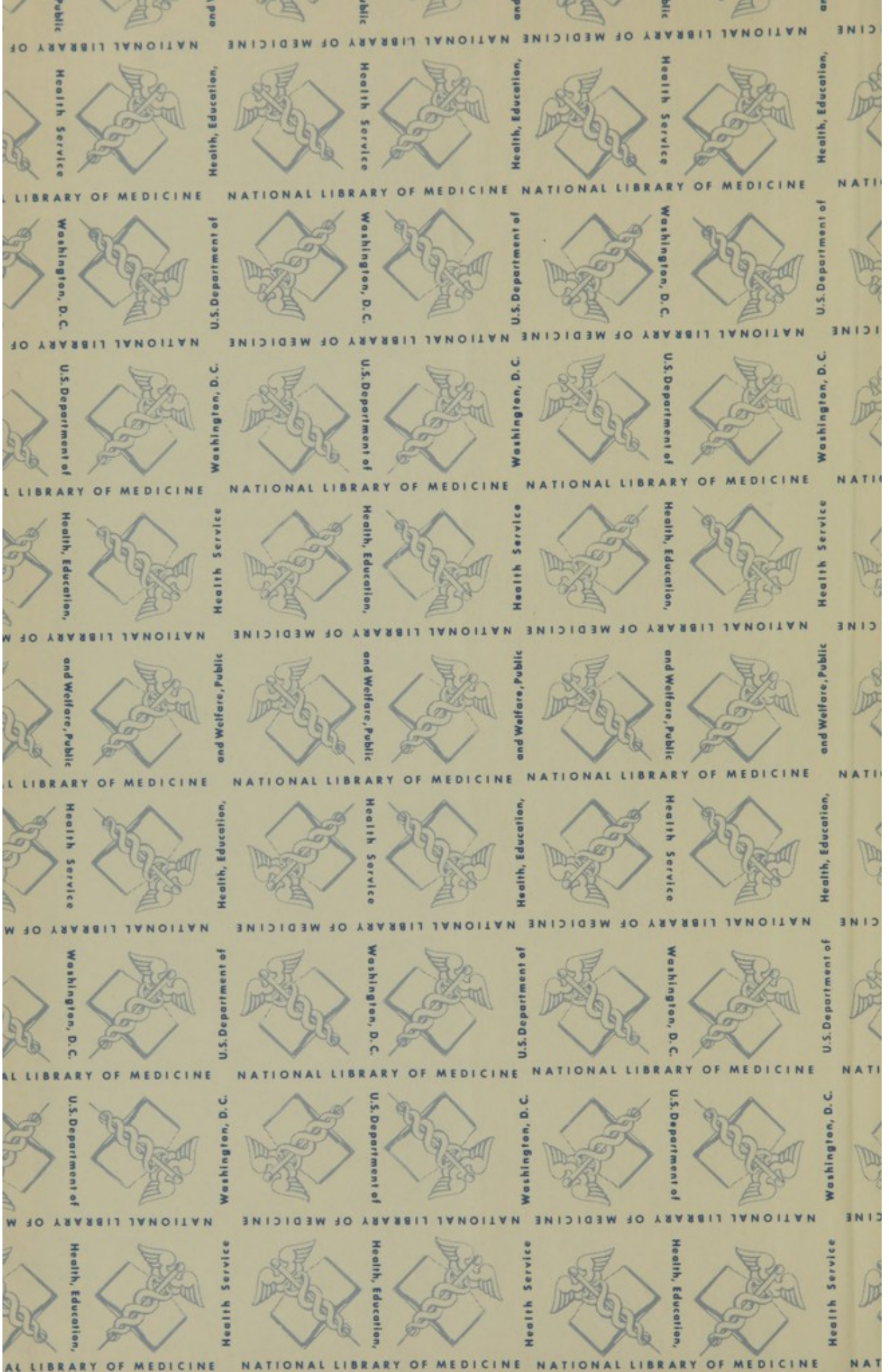
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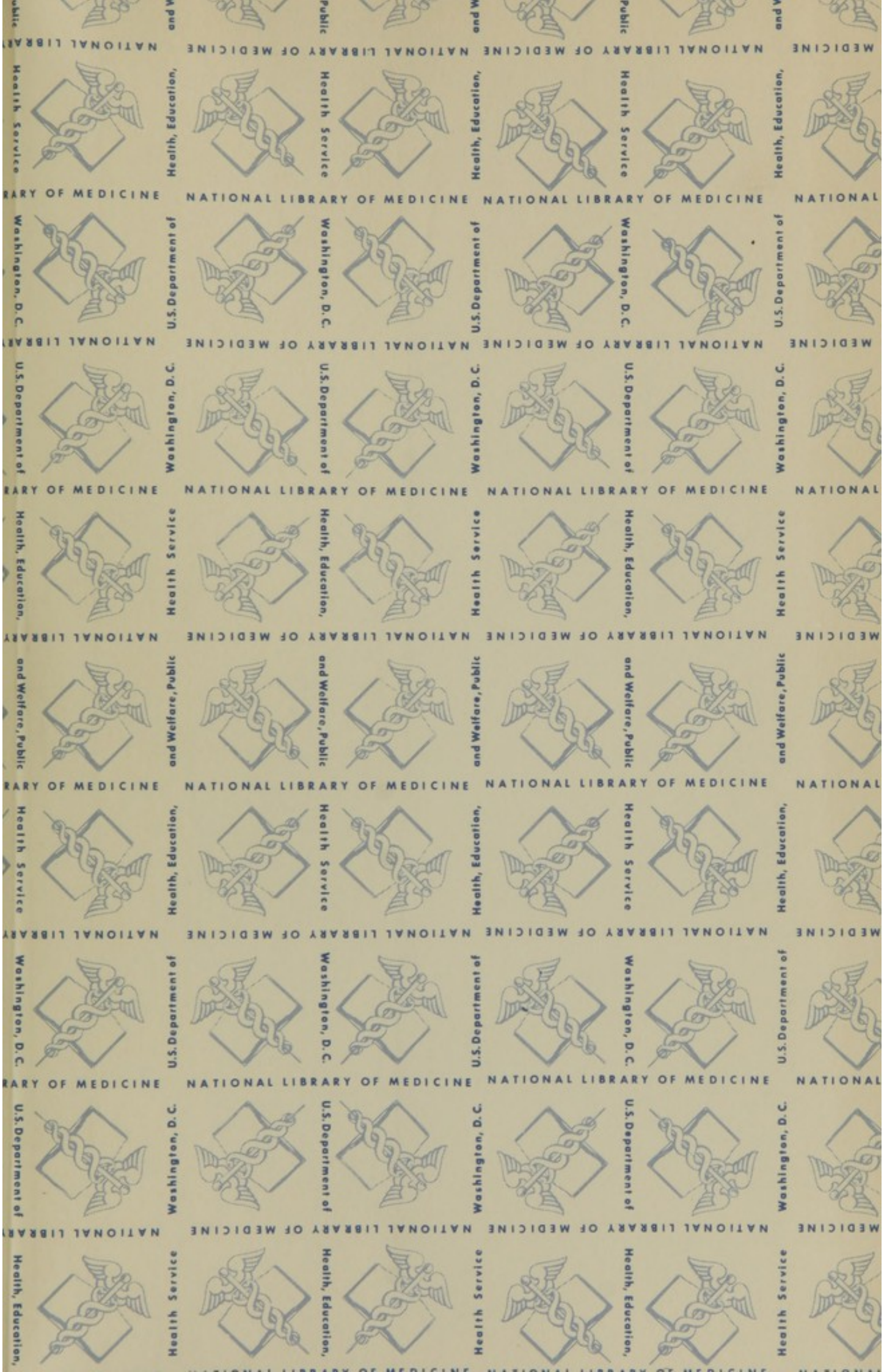
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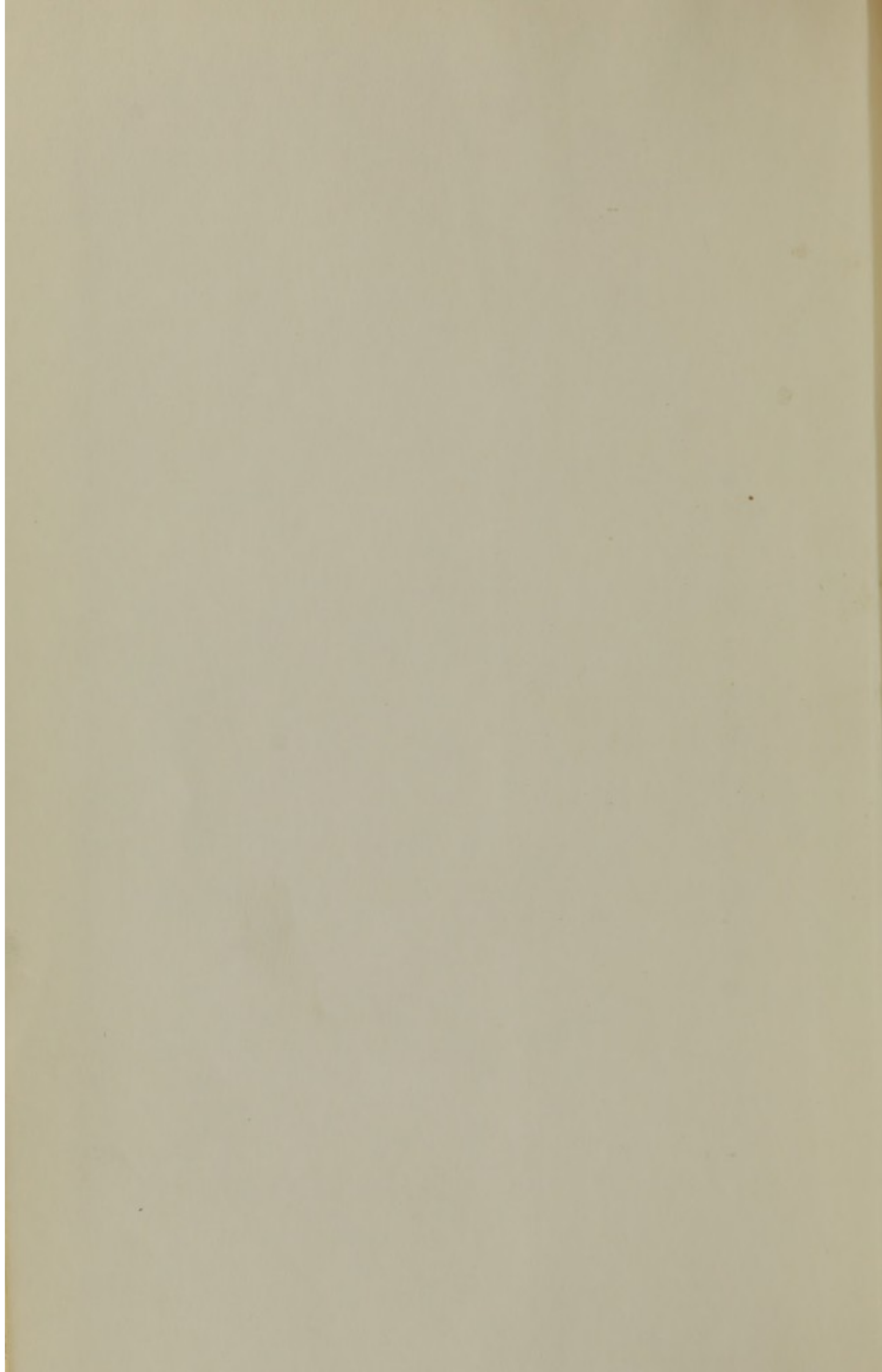
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# REVIEW

OF THE

MEMORIAL OF DOCTOR JOHN BELL,

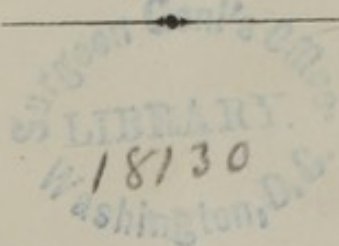
TO THE

## TRUSTEES

OF THE

University of Pennsylvania.

18130



PHILADELPHIA:

B. MIFFLIN, PRINTER, 74 WALNUT STREET.

1850.



## A REVIEW.

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MEN of moderate abilities, or having a particular kind of talent, if possessed of "a deplorable egotism of character," fancy themselves destined by nature for greatness. They indulge in the most extravagant pretensions, and exhibit, on the stage of science, the fantastic pranks of a Malvolio of comedy.

In their great conceit they undertake different departments of knowledge, any one of which is sufficient to task the highest order of intellect. They claim offices or stations of emolument or honor as due to their superior merits. A denial of their extraordinary abilities, and a resistance of their demands, are resented as personal grievances and affronts; are attributed "to a spirit of clique," to envy of their merits, "to professional rivalry," and other motives, the mere coinage of their brains.

When disappointed in their expectations, the welkin rings with their complaints. The truth cannot penetrate the envelope of their self-esteem. "The fault is not within themselves, or in their stars," but is the work "of secret ambush and unfair designs." They vituperate and malign whoever is supposed to have stood in their way, or has thwarted their schemes.

In the intemperance of their passion, they are inconsistent and ridiculous. The men whom they courted and flattered while they expected favors from them, are insulted; those whom they sought to associate with, but who declined the honor, are reviled as unfit companions; and the institution they would have given the apple of the eye to have entered, when its doors are closed on them, is slandered as in decrepitude and decay.



So long as these outbursts of wounded vanity and offended self-esteem do not break through the bounds of propriety, they may be borne with, and passed by unnoticed. Querulousness and invectives extorted by disappointed hopes are evidences of suffering; and though the moral sensibility they display cannot command respect, charity teaches to forgive and forget.

But when all sense of self-respect and decency is discarded, and the malignancy of a cynical temper and ignoble nature seeks its revenge in insults, libels, falsification and slanders, the propriety of a passive quietism is questionable. Forbearance misunderstood encourages offences. It may become a duty, forced on those thus assailed, to justify themselves by a calm and truthful statement of the facts and motives that governed them.

The preceding remarks have been elicited by the recent proceedings of Dr. John Bell, on which they are a commentary, while his conduct is an exemplification of their correctness.

The resignation of Professor Chapman led to the vacancy of the chair of *Materia Medica*, by the transference of Professor Wood to the chair of the Theory and Practice,—Dr. Bell was prepared to take either chair. He was disappointed of both.

No candid person can suppose that the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania were actuated by any other motive, in the transfer of Dr. Wood, than that of promoting the best interests of the Medical School. There appeared to be a general acquiescence in the propriety of the selection, for there was no open opposition to the election of Dr. Wood. Dr. Bell would have been a rival and contested the chair, had he not seen the hopelessness of the attempt. He was not the less boastful of his pretensions to the chair, and free in his intimations of his high qualifications for this branch of medical instruction. He now accuses the Board of Trustees, in this instance, of a direliction of their duty in being mere passive agents registering the edicts of the Medical Faculty, and of other highly culpable conduct. To show that he has some smattering of logic, he falsely states the grounds of the selection of Dr. Wood by the Trustees, that he may talk of propositions, sequents and antecedents.

Dr. Wood was not elected to the chair of the Theory and Practice of Medicine because he had distinguished himself as a teacher and lecturer in the chair of *Materia Medica*. Dr. Wood had created a reputation as a practitioner and teacher of the Practice of Medicine. He has been engaged many years in the Practice. He is an attending physician to the Pennsylvania Hospital, where he has for several winters given courses of clinical instruction to large classes, with distinguished success. He has published the most extensive and best work on the Practice of Medicine, in its present state, that has been produced by an American author. Dr. Wood, moreover, has an enviable reputation as a scholar, writer and lecturer. He is indefatigable in industry and application, and liberal in procuring every means for the illustration of his course, making it demonstrative as well as didactic. These are the grounds, full and sufficient, that governed the Trustees in the choice of Dr. Wood for the chair of the Theory and Practice, and that amply justify it. They are well known to Dr. Bell, but the truth would not answer his object of calumnious imputation.

For the chair of *Materia Medica* Dr. Bell became an applicant, and canvassed for it most ardently, directly and indirectly, by personal solicitations and the intercessions of friends. He proved for the second time an unsuccessful candidate.\* It is not surprising that he should feel vexed and disappointed, but it is not a justification for seeking revenge "per fas et nefas."

In pursuing this end he has addressed a printed memorial to the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania. Viewing this step in the most favorable light, it can only be regarded as intrusive and impertinent. The plea he puts forth as an excuse is curious and highly characteristic.

In the "palmy days of the University he had listened to the lessons of a Wistar, a Physic, a Chapman and a Rush, through the readings of his gifted son," which readings, after struggling through three years, ceased to attract a class. There were other Professors in the school—were their lessons not worthy of being listened to, though amongst them

\* For the chair of the Institutes in 1835.

were "the tasteful prelections of James;" or were they beneath his notice, and unworthy of regard?

The opportunity to listen to those eminent men was certainly not exclusively enjoyed by Dr. Bell. Thousands of others possessed the same privilege. The Trustees would find the office no sinecure, if all who have listened to the lessons of those teachers should arrogate from it the right to inundate them with memorials.

The second member of this plea is truly rich, and a ludicrous specimen of inflated conceit. "On his return from foreign travel and study he seized on every suitable occasion to impress on the minds of the Professors the propriety of an increase in the number of branches to be taught, and of an extension of the lecture term."

The newly-fledged doctor, just returned "from foreign travel," condescendingly constituted himself the guardian of the University, took it under his patronizing care, offered his "friendly criticism," and held a "watchful regard over its prosperity."

On these ridiculous premises he assumes a right to interfere in the concerns of the University, and to lecture the Trustees on its management. But from the tenor of what he calls a memorial, it is evident he makes this flimsy pretext the occasion to insult the Board of Trustees, to libel the Faculty, and to slander and falsify the state of the school.

Doctor Bell insults the Board of Trustees of the University in representing them as mere tools of the Medical Faculty, of remissness in the government of the institution under their charge, and of being influenced by unworthy motives.

In Philadelphia, where the parties and circumstances are known, the assertions of Dr. Bell are of no moment—at a distance they might obtain some credence. The Board of Trustees is composed of gentlemen well known as the most distinguished of our citizens for social position, moral worth, and intellectual eminence. It will not be asserted that they are faultless. Like other men, prejudices, friendships, religious and political influences may be felt by them. It is believed, however, that few bodies can be more relied on for correct intentions and independence of action.

The Medical Faculty are more directly and deeply interested in the

filling of vacant chairs than any others. A judicious appointment may make, a bad one mar, their fortunes and prosperity, and those of the school. Self-interest, a keen sharpener of the perceptions of most men, renders the Faculty the best judges of the qualifications of candidates. Their opinions are not consulted, and cannot be expressed as a Faculty. Such a proceeding is opposed to the organization of the University. As a matter of course, therefore, the Professors, when conscious their interests are endangered, feel they have a right to call on individual Trustees and express their opinions. It is absurd to suppose the Medical Faculty would oppose a candidate whose known qualifications would advance their own interests, and the reputation of the school. It is no more than reasonable to believe that the unanimous opposition to a candidate must be founded on solid grounds; and it is no more than reasonable and proper that the Trustees should listen to the opinions of the members of the Faculty, if openly and fairly stated; and if found, on inquiry, to be correct and valid, give weight to and be influenced by them. Indeed, it could not but be looked on as exceedingly disgraceful were the Trustees to force on the Faculty an associate to whom they were unanimously opposed, without very strong evidence that the opposition was unjust and unfounded.

The ground of opposition to Dr. Bell was not kept a secret; it was not whispered in private; it exhibited no evidence of "ambush or unfair design;" it had no foundation "in personal feeling or rivalry." These insinuations are salves to fretted self-love,—as such let them pass, and Dr. Bell derive all the consolation they can give him.

The objection of the Faculty was openly avowed and limited to a single fact. That fact was true or it was false. If not true it could have readily been refuted. The witnesses were residents of the city, the daily associates of the Trustees. If not true, the Faculty would have been promptly convicted of misrepresentation, and overwhelmed with obloquy and defeat.

The statement of the Faculty was simply this, that whatever might be the qualifications of Dr. Bell in other respects, yet he unfortunately had not the power to interest an audience, or to induce a class to follow

him. This opinion was formed from observation and an experience of many years.

Dr. Bell was a lecturer for about ten years in the Philadelphia Medical Institute. His subjects were at first the Institutes of Medicine, and afterwards *Materia Medica*. Alterations were made in the management of the association, in order to favor Dr. Bell, and to place him, at a sacrifice to his associates, on a pecuniary footing with themselves. At last those who had the most work to do found the compensation so trifling, that the organization of the institution was dissolved. During the whole period, Dr. Bell was attended by a mere fraction of the class, the majority, though paying, refusing to avail themselves of his lectures. His unpopularity as a lecturer is of common notoriety.

As a speaker, Dr. Bell is not more happy. He belongs to various societies. He is not backward; he occupies the floor on all questions, trifling or grave. His calibre and force are known to numbers. It would have been an easy matter to have refuted a false aspersion. The evidence was at his command. The profession at large were acquainted with the opposition of the Faculty to Dr. Bell, and the ground of it. They would not silently have acquiesced in an untruth and an injustice.

Dr. Bell has not attempted to repel the statement, or refute the disqualifying fact averred by the Faculty. He has endeavored to make out a case of injustice and collusion on the part of the Trustees and the Faculty. The insufficiency and fallacy of his plea have been shown. He adduces no evidence; he confines himself to insinuations, without a shadow of foundation, in order to insult and abuse.

The libellous delineation of the Faculty scarcely deserves notice. Dr. Bell is a poor artist; he fails in this as in most of what he has undertaken. His sketches are mere daubings. From vulgarity and coarseness they have not the spirit of caricature. It is the fate of Dr. Bell always to mistake his genius. He believes himself a satirist; nature has made him a cynic.

If the lectures of the Faculty have been truthfully characterised, their effect must have been as repulsive to the students as were the lectures of Dr. Bell in the Medical Institute. Yet with all his eagerness to dis-

parage, he has not dared to say that they have lectured like himself—to empty benches ; that the classes, as to numbers greater than in “the palmy days,” year after year have not crowded the lecture rooms ; that the students have not been more thoroughly and fully taught in the branches he decries than they ever were before in the University. Nor will he dare to say that the zeal and ardor for which the students of the University have been noted in the pursuit of their studies, have not been characteristic of them for the last ten years.

Dr. Bell, by descending from the looseness of rhetorical phraseology, and making specific objections, enables us to understand what he regards as the perfection of teaching. Modern science, becoming positive, places the highest value on truth of facts, precision of observation, and soundness of practical experience. They are, for the most part, incompatible with the arts of rhetoric and ornamental style. The plainest, simplest and most direct method of expression can best convey them to the mind. The acquisition of knowledge for practical purposes is the object that attracts students to a school. The revelations of scientific truth, and facts derived from a direct observation of nature by a reliable authority, are more intensely interesting, and more exciting to their zeal and ardor, than all the blazonry of language and the meretricious arts of oratory.

Dr. Bell is ignorant of this. Students, according to him, are to be cheered on by “flowers of literature, amused by jests from Hamlet,” (why not from Joe Miller, more fun in it?) by scraps of “poetry snatched from Childe Harold,” (why not from Don Juan, far more spicy and redolent?) or tit bits of philosophy from Paley. These, with “sprinklings of humane letters,” are his recipe for compounding lectures to instruct students in the serious and solemn truths of medical science. These phrases are not misapplied ; for on the truth or falsehood, the accuracy or looseness of the teaching of lecturers, and of the facts and principles of medicine, depend the suffering, the life and happiness of thousands. Is it because the rhetorical Dr. Bell treated his students with such vapid trash they left him to empty benches, while the dull Professors who cared little for the ornamental, but cultivated the truthful, have been followed by crowds?

In holding up the example of Dr. Gregory, Dr. Bell shows an entire misapprehension of the true ends of teaching. He informs us "the learned author of the *Conspectus Medicinæ* displayed more anxiety for its pure latinity than for its doctrinal accuracy."

If this be true the course of Dr. Gregory was most reprehensible, even criminal. He preferred to inculcate error, to hazard misdirection in the treatment of diseases, to teach the false for the true, rather than write a defective style.

The approval of so serious a dereliction of duty exhibits the spirit of a pedagogue, not the principles of a physician or philosopher. It is well for the University and its pupils that they have been saved from such "a sprinkling of humane letters."

Dr. Bell is quite wroth in his critical denunciations of the Professor of the Institutes. He is here on his own ground. He was for some six or eight years a lecturer on the same subject, and has always entertained pretensions to occupy the chair. He appears in full panoply, and puts forth all his strength. Whether the Professor or the critic excels in the "facundia oris," may be a nice point to decide. Whatever the critic may think, it is most certain others have been unable to discover this faculty in him. As to the "lucidus ordo," a demurrer may be entered as to his capacity to form a judgment. Dr. Bell shows that he is unacquainted with the true character of the Institutes or "Philosophy of Medicine." He knows not that they have become positive and demonstrative. He believes they are to be investigated by "dialectics." This was so in times past and "the palmy days." They were not then a positive science, or a philosophy, but mere cobweb dialectics, spun in dusty closets from the subtleties of the brain, fitted only to catch light-winged insects. Until Dr. Bell proved to the contrary, it was not believed that any one would, at this day, be entangled in such flimsy texture.

Dr. Bell exists but does not live in the present time; his existence is in the past. He is a caput mortuum of antiquated notions, from which all spirit has evaporated and life departed, laboriously gathered from books. He knows not nature; he does not understand her language or comprehend her signs; to him they are Egyptian hieroglyphics; he

neither studies nor interrogates her ; he does not look to her for knowledge. What is drawn fresh from her stores, and he cannot find in his intellectual recipient, dimly lighted by the flickering torch of the past, he rejects as dark and wanting order. The light of modern science has not illuminated his mind, and his own darkness he blames on others.

Dr. Bell, in presenting his notions of lectures on the Institutes, exhibits a deplorable incapacity of adaptability to circumstances. He can originate nothing. He is helplessly dependent on books. He must resort to Gaubius and Boerhaave to learn what are the Institutes. His authorities, with the exception of a few positive facts, are extinct. Their dialectics produced nothing that belongs to science ; they occupy a paragraph in its history. Dr. Bell does not know the distinction. The past is with him always the present. The works of Allison and Williams are not intended or calculated for medical students. They are addressed to practitioners, to those whose medical education is completed. They are filled with speculations that have not been verified. Their method cannot be made applicable to the peculiar circumstances of American schools and American students. Our critic does not comprehend the difference ; it is the source of his blunders.

Dr. Bell parades his school-boy knowledge of the Institutes, what every physician is familiar with, in enumerating and defining three of its divisions, Physiology, Pathology, and Hygiene, "the true foundation of medicine." He omits Therapeutics, yet this department is as truly a part of the Institutes as Pathology and Hygiene. Can medicine, without Therapeutics, "be any other than empiricism and random conjecture?"

The Institutes of medicine do not form a course of medical instruction in any of the European medical schools of the continent, and, with the exception of the Edinburg, in no medical school of Great Britain. The separate divisions of the Institutes are distinct courses of special chairs. On the continent these courses are of ten months' duration ; the whole period of attendance, five years. Andral, of the Paris University, the Professor of Pathology, does not complete his course on that one division under two courses ; that is, his course on Pathology continues for twenty months. The course of lectures on the Institutes in the Uni-



versity of Pennsylvania is limited to nineteen weeks, and must be condensed in about sixty lectures. Dr. Bell, knowing these facts, is so ill informed on the extent and nature of the investigations embraced in the separate divisions of the Institutes, that he believes they can be comprised in the narrow limits of the American courses. Such a course of lectures would be a mere jumble of scraps, fragments and baseless dialectics, utterly worthless. If Dr. Bell is not too ignorant to make so gross a mistake, then is he so shameless as to revile the incumbent of the chair of the Institutes for not blunderingly attempting an impossibility. He may choose either horn of the dilemma.

From the definitions he has given of Physiology, Pathology and Hygiene, it may well be suspected he has impaled himself on the first. Those definitions might have been tolerated fifty years past: a student of a year's course of lectures would be ashamed of them now. "Physiology is not the study of man in the discharge of his healthy functions," it embraces a far wider range of investigation: nor is Pathology "the study of these (that is, the healthy functions,) when diseased." This definition is as shallow as that of Physiology, and displays a sad want of knowledge of the advances made in this department of medical science. The definition of Hygiene is nearly as loose; it appears to include Therapeutics. They are beneath critical notice.

The medical schools generally of the United States have a chair with the title of Institutes. They copy the University of Pennsylvania in this respect, yet the courses, with few, if any exceptions, consist of pure Physiology. It will be conceded by every intelligent person in the least acquainted with the subject, that the Institutes of Medicine, which embrace the theoretical principles of every department of medicine, cannot be given in full detail in a single course of lectures.

Physiology is the foundation not only of the Institutes, but of the whole science of medicine. It is indispensable in the instruction of the student. Pathology, Therapeutics, and Hygiene must wait on the advances of Physiology for their improvement. Without previous instruction in Physiology, they cannot be made intelligible. Physiology presents different aspects, and possesses varied relations and connexions. In medical schools it should be taught in its relation and connection

with Pathology, Therapeutics and Hygiene—in other words, with the Institutes.

This course, as far as it is practicable, has been pursued in the University of Pennsylvania. From the commencement to the termination of the lectures, the direct relation of every Physiological principle and fact with the allied departments, are demonstrated. In this mode the general principles of Pathology, Therapeutics and Hygiene, that is, of the Institutes, are brought before the students. They are initiated, as far as our science admits of its being done, in the processes of investigation. They are taught to analyze every phenomenon of the organism, to assign each to its special category, to determine the laws that develop and control it, and to understand its relation to Pathology, Therapeutics and Hygiene.

Dr. Bell supposes the Institutes of Medicine include the details of each of its subdivisions. This is a most mistaken notion. No one acquainted with the vast accumulation of materials in these departments could fall into this error. The Institutes, as the name implies, are confined to general principles, to the fundamental theories of medical science, drawn not from dialectic rhetoric, but from facts ascertained by positive observation, by experiment, and rigid induction.

For the details of Pathology, Therapeutics and Hygiene, special lectures are required, and works written expressly for their investigation must be consulted.

The barrenness of Dr. Bell's conception of a course of Physiology, at this day, cannot but excite "our special wonder." He rejects from it microscopic anatomy, histology, and, of course, morphology, its richest and most fruitful portions in application to the Institutes. He sneeringly terms "transcendental" the investigations into the laws of those mysterious, but not the less real forces, that give a specific direction to chemical actions, that produce specific organic materials for structure, that create from formless substance organic forms, tissues, organs or instruments of life—actions and a perfected organism. They are, in truth, transcendental; that is, they form super-eminent knowledge. They carry our mental perceptions beyond matter, and behind pheno-

mena. They demonstrate the ever-acting agency and directing wisdom of God, through the medium of special laws, in the greatest as in the least of his works. These investigations, (it may be that they are peculiar to the course of the University, on which he casts a slur,) are vindicated in the late lectures of Professor Owen and Paget, two of the most illustrious of the physiologists and medical philosophers of Great Britain, who have of late entered on the same line of research with so much ability.\*

The same looseness of ideas, incapableness as a teacher, and superficial knowledge, are displayed when he lays down the subjects for the instruction of the chemical chair.

Medical students are for the most part wholly ignorant of the elements of chemistry, yet he would have them initiated in the most abstruse, difficult, and even unknown departments of organic chemistry. They are to be taught "the changes to which the living body is subjected in the various states of health and disease during respiration, digestion, circulation and nutrition, as well as the processes of secretion and calorification."

These are not subjects of instruction, they are matters of investigation, as yet hidden, unknown, and not likely to be elucidated in the next half century.

A similar confusion of thought exists when he undertakes to point out to the Professor of *Materia Medica* and Pharmacy, the Therapeutics, he should introduce into his course. "It is not enough to say that such an article cures a disease, without we add the precise circumstances of general and local derangement to which it is applicable, and the remedial measures that ought to precede as well as follow its administration." Dr. Bell supposes the above to be "general principles of Therapeutics." A candidate for a diploma might incur the risk of losing it by such a mistake. In this quotation are comprised special Pathology and special Therapeutics, or the Practice of Medicine. Here, as in the preceding

\* On Parthenogenesis, by Professor Owen; Lectures on the Processes of Repair and Reproduction after Injuries, by Dr. Paget.

instances, there is no discrimination; subjects entirely distinct are confounded together.

Dr. Bell has exposed, in his animadversions on these subjects, his strength and his knowledge. The feebleness and poverty exhibited cannot fail to excite surprise and even regret. It is obvious he would have struck with sterility the course confided to his charge. It is the most complete justification of the opposition made by the Medical Faculty to his election, and of the vote of the Trustees that excluded him from the University.

Dr. Bell forgets consistency in his slanders of the University. He represents it, using Scriptural allusion, like an old garment, not worth the piecing. Yet it was the ambition of the Doctor to be the patch that was to renovate and make it whole. A patch, at best, is but a botch, and this was the very ground of opposition to Dr. Bell. The school has had a lucky escape. He would have proved not only an old patch, but a cross patch.

Dr. Bell, in his indignation, falls under his own censure—"Vain is the attempt to rejuvenate an old and worn out body; such a result is one of the promises of empirical pretenders, but it can only find credence among the ignorant and credulous." What is Dr. Bell, then, but an "empirical pretender?" He offered himself for this "vain attempt," and promised this great result; but, unlike most "empirical pretenders," he did not find the "ignorant and credulous" to give him credence.

Instead of venting his spleen, if there be truth in his statement, he should rejoice in having escaped a calamity. Who would desire to enter a falling building? Rats run from, not to, the tottering edifice.

On what grounds does Dr. Bell hazard this slander of the University? He adduces no evidence, for he has none. Dr. Bell never deals in facts; "dialectics" are his forte. Certainly from no falling off in the numbers, intelligence or respectability of the classes and graduates. For the last six years, in these respects, the University has never known more "palmy days." The following table will show the disregard of Dr. Bell as to facts. A thimble-full of facts is worth a painted ship-load of dialectics and assertion.

List of Matriculants and Graduates of the University of Pennsylvania from the years 1845 and 1850, inclusive, viz. :

Matriculants, 1845, 447,	Graduates, 1845, 160.
do. 1846, 464,	do. 1846, 171.
do. 1847, 413,	do. 1847, 162.
do. 1848, 508,	do. 1848, 174.
do. 1849, 499,	do. 1849, 191.
do. 1850, 439,	do. 1850, 176.

Average of Matriculants for the last six years, 461.

Average of Graduates for the last six years, 170.

In the last session the unfortunate breaking down of Professor Chapman, obvious at the opening of the lectures, was too clear an indication that in his important branch the instruction of that course would necessarily prove defective. The effect was to diminish the class a small number below the average of the preceding six years, though it was above the average of the last twenty years.

It is characteristic of the self-conceited to extol themselves and to depreciate others, and of the shallow special pleader to distort and exaggerate some trifling circumstance to obtain a subject of declamatory abuse. Dr. Bell furnishes the example.

One of the Faculty suggested as a desirable measure, calculated to advance the interests of the school, the transfer of the Professor of the Institutes to the chair of *Materia Medica*, connecting with it *Therapeutics*; and the introduction, could it be effected, of Dr. Leidy into the chair of the Institutes. This proposition never became a Faculty question. In the course of a few days the subject was dropped.

The reason assigned by Dr. Bell for the abandoning of this design, like so many of his statements, is entirely gratuitous. The Professor of the Institutes, anxious to promote the interests of his friend, Dr. Leidy, inclined for some days to favor the proposal. On reflection, it was declined for two reasons: 1st, that it would be doing injustice to himself, just as he had succeeded, by an analysis and classification of the phenomena of living beings, in simplifying *Physiology* and connecting

it with the Institutes, to change his branch; and 2d, that his period of life, infirm constitution and deficient strength, would expose him to great risks in undertaking the labor of a new course of instruction.

This circumstance has been represented by Dr. Bell in a false light, and then seized on for the purpose of underrating Dr. Leidy, and venting his malice on the Faculty. For the second time Dr. Leidy has been attacked by Dr. Bell, envious of his rising reputation and spreading fame.

Dr. Bell has no acquaintance with Dr. Leidy. He has never conversed with him. He has no means of judging of the extent of his acquirements. He is compelled to concede to him, though grudgingly, "attainments substantial and praiseworthy," but asserts they are not sufficiently extensive for a lecturer on the Institutes.

It is not necessary to defend Dr. Leidy here. His attainments far surpass Dr. Bell's comprehension. Had he known, or were he able to appreciate Dr. Leidy, he never would have ventured the assertion and the untruth that it was thought either expedient or proper "to curtail the Institutes of medicine in order to adapt it to his capacity."

Dr. Leidy's appreciation of the Institutes of Medicine is far more just than Dr. Bell's, the absurdity of which has been exposed. Dr. Leidy's knowledge is not a stagnant pool filled by the drainings of surrounding rills. In him it is a living spring, gushing forth vigorous and pure. He has already a European reputation, and is the only American who has been quoted by English and German physiologists as an original observer and authority on their branch.

The attack levelled at the Professors on this point is the last that will be noticed. It is a fair specimen of Dr. Bell's dialectics, style, "lucidus ordo," and honesty.

"In what terms, (says Dr. Bell,) can the truthful student of his profession, who is accustomed to survey it in its grandeur, scientific bearings and beautiful and harmonious proportions, speak of the attempt of those who would tear away some of its most useful and ornamental parts to gratify the caprices of the hour?"

Notwithstanding the "lucidus ordo" of Dr. Bell, it is no easy task to comprehend this dialectic fustian. The *profession* of medicine is confined

to the practice of the art, and consists in conscientiously administering to the sick, to the strict observance of general and professional ethics, and to the due collection of fees honestly charged. What grand scientific bearings, and beautiful and harmonious proportions the truthful student can find in these duties, he "is accustomed to survey" in them, is a curious puzzle.

A century ago, wigs, rings on the fingers, a gold snuff box, a gold headed cane, and small clothes, were the useful and ornamental insignia of the profession. Is it possible the Doctor could have been so lost in the dreams of the past, as to forget that republican simplicity has torn away those "useful and ornamental" appendages of the profession?

Dr. Bell asserts "that a professor frankly acknowledged he did not know what was meant by the Institutes of Medicine." But he does not say what kind of institutes. The professor might be well excused if he alluded to Dr. Bell's institutes, for it is very clear the doctor knows no more of the institutes of medicine than the old definitions of Gaubius and Boerhaave.

He continues to say, "another of the three, more wonderful to relate, was the professor of this branch!" The meaning of this is somewhat obscure. Does he intend to say that the professor confessed an ignorance of what was meant by the institutes? This would be a gross untruth. They had no conversation on this subject. Does he intend merely that he was one of those "who would tear away the useful and ornamental parts of the profession." No great harm in that. Or does he confound the profession of medicine with the *science* of medicine, and designate the institutes—Physiology, Pathology, Therapeutics, and Hygiene as merely useful and ornamental parts, not the indispensable, the very foundation on which medicine stands. If the institutes are nothing more than "useful and ornamental," the entire omission of them would not be of material consequence in any course of medical instruction. The day for the mere useful and ornamental has passed. His objurgations are baseless and ridiculous, and his alarm for the integrity of the institute idle and affected. It is not true that there was an intention to curtail or "raze" the institutes, as he has expressed it in another publication. The proposition was to conjoin Therapeutics with Materia Medica, and to change the title

of the chair to that of *Materia Medica* and Therapeutics. The inconsistency of Dr. Bell in making this proposed arrangement a subject of attack is most glaring. In his enumeration of the sub-divisions of the Institutes he throws Therapeutics overboard; he omits them entirely—what assurance then, is it in him to assert, that the union of Therapeutics with *Materia Medica*, would have been a curtailing of the Institutes?

The practical application of Therapeutics does not belong to the Institutes. Therapeutics associate directly with *Materia Medica*, to which they give interest and importance, and render practical experience of disease and its treatment available. Without abridging or affecting in any manner the Institutes, the connection would have been a decided improvement. The objection of Dr. Bell to this proposition appears singular. He was an aspirant to the chair. The union of Therapeutics to it would have imparted greater dignity and a higher practical character, but would have required more elevated science and qualifications to fill it. Is it possible this consideration could have influenced him? His example will not be copied in making a suspicion an assertion.

Doctor Bell evidently has no distinct idea of the nature and special value of the Institutes. Hence he is contradictory, and his meaning obscure. It is evident his chief object was to libel, and in the absence of truthful grounds, he resorted dishonestly to a “weak invention” as an excuse for malicious invective, and for tacking to it a stale quotation.

*Nosce teipsum*, know thyself, is the wise admonition of the sage, and of the satirist and poet. This knowledge would save many from making ridiculous exhibitions, and from painful failures. With all his acquirements Dr. Bell is deficient in this one knowledge. He does not know himself. It will be doing him a service to make him acquainted with himself. We will draw his portrait. It may not be done with artistic skill, but it will not be a daubing or a caricature.

Nature has bestowed on him excellent qualities, which if rightly directed and restricted to the field of his capacity, would have insured for him success, and a solid well-earned reputation. He is endowed with perseverance, application, and industry. He is an indefatigable reader, oft mistaken for a student, and has learned nothing except from books. Nature has denied him genius, invention, the talent of observation, and



practical tact. He possesses no innate fervency of soil, without which cultivation can give no fertility.

Unfortunately for him he travelled, and supposed whoever was travelled was wise. In Italy he was indoctrinated in the modified Rasorianism of Professor Tomassini. This is the basis of his medical knowledge, and having faithfully "imbibed the lessons of a wise experience and truthful philosophy," which, singular for wisdom and truth, no longer exist in science, he believed his solid capital completed when he had only stuffed himself with reminiscences. Satisfied with his attainments, there only remained the power of communicating them to render them profitable. Self-destined to a professorship, he must needs be an orator to captivate students. Elocution became the pursuit of his life. *Orator fit; poeta nascitur*, has become an adage. The poet sacrificed truth for the antithesis. Dr. Bell has proved it. Never was labor more assiduously devoted to a purpose. It was in vain. The *vivida vis animi* is as much an attribute of the orator as of the poet. When not bestowed by nature no application can impart it. He has been denied the gifts that constitute the orator; he does not rise above the elevation of an ordinary speaker. His happiest efforts are a sneer. The ideas borrowed from the ripest scholars, and most erudite authorities, coldly delivered in monotonous tones fall paralyzed and lifeless on the ear. If Dr. Bell has failed to "win golden opinions" as an orator, he has been more happy in gaining soubriquets. One recalls some lines of a late translation of Æschylus:

Does a Providence rule in the fate of a word,  
Sways there in heaven a viewless power,  
O'er the chance of the tongue in the naming hour!

(*Ding-dong-bell!*)

Whilst Dr. Bell has been devoted to the fruitless pursuit of the decorations of style, gathering flowers of rhetoric and scraps of poetry "to cheer his youthful followers on their way," he has neglected the substantial and the true. He cultivated dialectics, and is ignorant of science. He returns to "the schools of Socrates, of Aristotle, and of Plato," to catch the faint echoes of the dialectics of the past, and refuses to enter

the school of nature open before him, where her clear voice is heard teaching eternal truths, and where are lavished unbounded treasures of knowledge with prodigal hand to her followers.

Dr. Bell believes that the old speculative medicine of the past still exists. His biblical erudition should have taught him "old things are passed away, all things are new." It is apparently unknown to Dr. Bell that speculative medicine taught by dialectics, is fast disappearing, its foundations sapped by the introduction into medical science of positive philosophy, observation and experiment. Medicine is demonstrative, not didactic; it has entered into the circle of the positive sciences. Had Dr. Bell devoted himself to science and not to idle dialectics, an intellectual process applicable to the sustaining of falsehood as well as of truth,—and had he confined himself to the substantial, and not vainly wasted his efforts to seize the shadow, he might have reaped the same success that others, inferior to himself, have secured.

Dr. Bell has been ambitious of the reputation of authorship. He is no more than a book-maker. This is no difficult art. "Books are made as apothecaries make mixtures." But when the principal alteration and addition consists in the erasure of an author's name on the title page, and the substitution of his own, some other appellation might be given to the act. In all the books he has made, not a single thought is his own, or an idea that has germinated in his mind.

The best of these is his edition of Stokes' Practice. To this, Dr. Bell has made liberal contributions, especially on the subject of fevers. Our southern physicians rely too much on English authorities. With the exception of those whose experience is obtained in the East and West Indies, they are unacquainted with remittent, bilious, and pernicious intermittent fevers, like those prevalent in the Southern and Middle States. The best writers on those fevers are to be found amongst the Italian authors, and some of the French, especially Alibert. Dr. Bell has drawn from those sources, and in this way has imparted valuable information, otherwise unknown to many of the practitioners of this country.

In giving this merit justly due to Dr. Bell, he remains no more than a maker of books, not a writer. The line of Voltaire's epigram on the Abbe Troublot, correctly defines the character of his authorship :

“ Il compilait, il compilait, il compilait.”

Controversies are to be avoided. Little good can come from them. They are painful and distasteful to correct minds. When engaged in useful pursuits they are a waste of time that could be employed to more advantage. This notice of Dr. Bell's memorial, or more properly, libel on the University and its officers, is the result of an accident, which caused a suspension of professional engagements. This leisure has been partly occupied by this reply. The necessity or propriety of it is felt to be somewhat doubtful, for “there is no slander though he do nothing but rail.”

S. J.

*Rockaway, Long Island, Sept. 1, 1850.*

P. S.—In a note, page 2, Dr. Bell has introduced a scrap of personal history. It is a small affair, but whatever is worth relating should be told correctly. Dr. Bell's statement is a distortion of the facts.

Doctor Bell “believes” that by him, and “his having taught the Institutes of Medicine in the Medical Institute,” the trustees were induced to consent to Dr. Chapman's proposal for an assistant to teach the Institutes in the University. This is no more than the “flattering unctious” of his self-esteem. He reproaches also “the present incumbent of the Institutes for not remembering his (Dr. Bell's) instrumentality in procuring him his first appointment.” It is certainly difficult to remember what never occurred. A plain narrative of facts will show the errors into which Dr. Bell is led by the delusions of his conceit.

The Institutes of Medicine have entered into the courses of medical instruction of the University since its foundation. They were attached to the chair of the Theory and Practice, as is proved by its original title, “Chair of the Institutes, and Practice of Medicine.”

They were taught in the University long before Dr. Bell had commenced his medical studies. The course of Professor Rush was divided into two parts: the first consisted of the Institutes, and occupied the period from the commencement of the session in November until the beginning of January; the second part comprised the Practice of Medicine, and terminated the first of March. Two months were devoted to the

Institutes, and two to the Practice of Medicine. From this statement can be seen the breadth and depth "of the wise experience and the truthful philosophy" of those palmy days it serves the purpose of Dr. Bell to panegyryze.

Professor Barton, who succeeded Dr. Rush, lived to deliver but one course of lectures. He attempted the Institutes, which consisted of some fragments of Natural History. As he had no time to prepare a course of lectures, it would be unjust to speak of this imperfect attempt.

Professor Chapman, who followed Dr. Barton, endeavored to carry into effect the intention of the chair, expressed in its title. He appropriated the two first months of his course to physiology, and the last two to the practice of medicine. After two or three years he discovered the impossibility of doing justice to either branch. He wisely changed his plan, and substituted for a course of Physiology, some general lectures on Etiology and Epidemics; and devoted his efforts and the larger part of the course to the Practice of Medicine. The Institutes, and with them Physiology, which until this time had entered into the instruction of the University, were in consequence for some years in abeyance. A plan of Medical Instruction without Physiology, one of its most important branches, was an inexcusable anomaly. No one felt the incongruity more sensibly than Professor Chapman. He required no prompter to induce him, as far as was in his power, to effect its correction. He accordingly applied to the Trustees for authority to appoint an assistant for the purpose of teaching the Institutes, and named "the present incumbent" as the one he had selected for that purpose. The application was granted and the selection concurred in, provided it met the sanction of the Faculty, which was immediately granted.

The official announcement of the appointment, by Professor Chapman, was the first information given to the incumbent that such a step was in contemplation. He mentioned at the same time, that he had not before spoken of it as he was uncertain whether his proposition would be agreed to, and he would not excite expectations that might not be realized. He further remarked, we agree in some opinions, in others we differ, teach what you believe to be true.

This is the correct statement of the transaction. In what manner Dr. Bell or his lectures procured for "the present incumbent" this appointment is inconceivable. For a logician the conclusion is a flagrant *non sequitur*. It should have been Dr. Bell who ought to have reaped the benefit of his own labors. He can not mean that his lectures caused him to be passed by, and another to be selected who had never handled the subject.

Dr. Bell's relation of the election to the chair of the Institutes is equally imperfect. The "present incumbent" made no application for it: he was nominated and elected without his action, solicitation or concurrence—he was contemplating to decline the office. Professors Chapman and Hare having heard of his intention, waited on him, remonstrated with and pressed him to accept the appointment. Professor Chapman made the request in such terms, as, from former obligations, to preclude a refusal.

A

REVIEW

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TO THE

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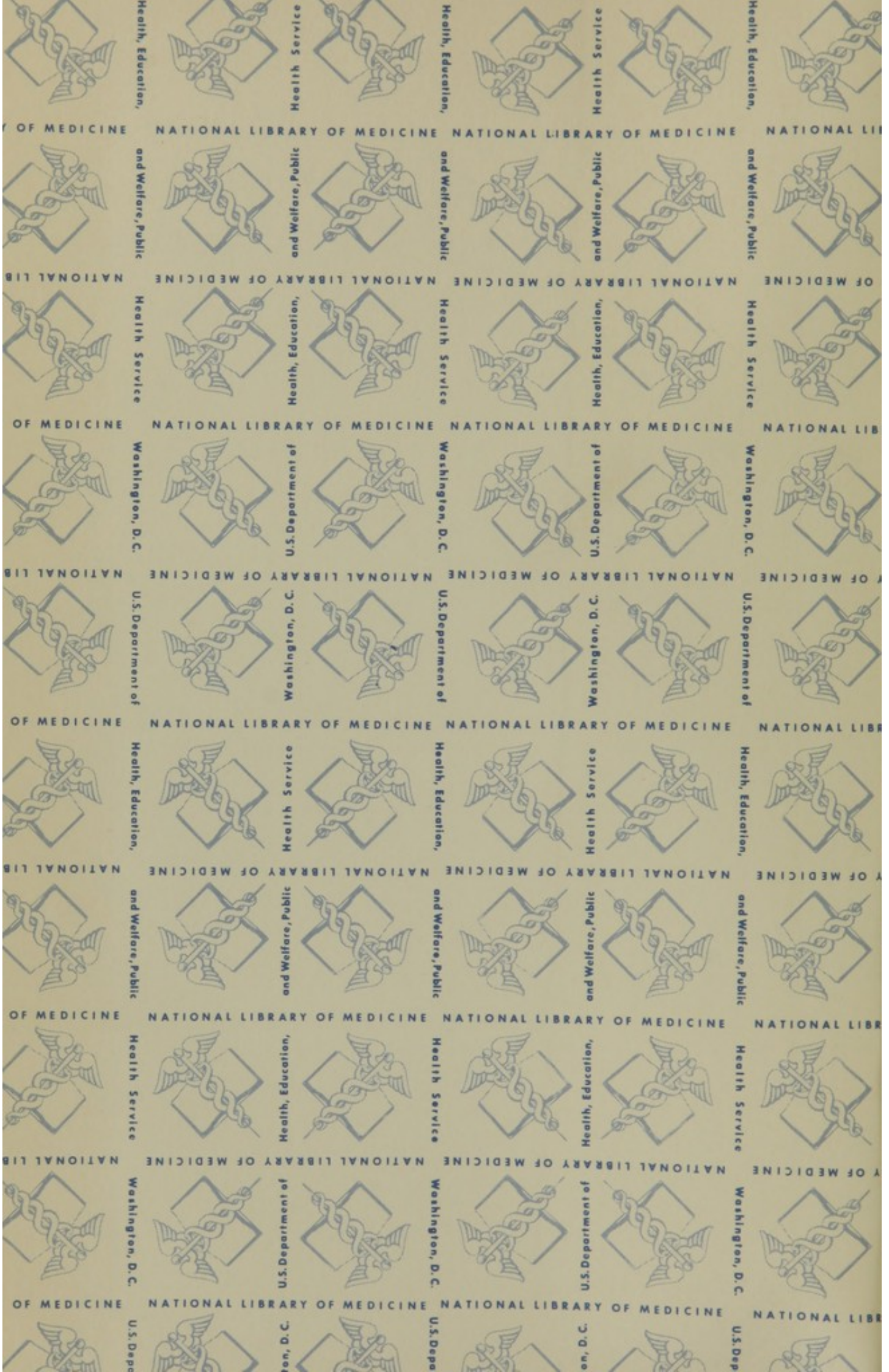
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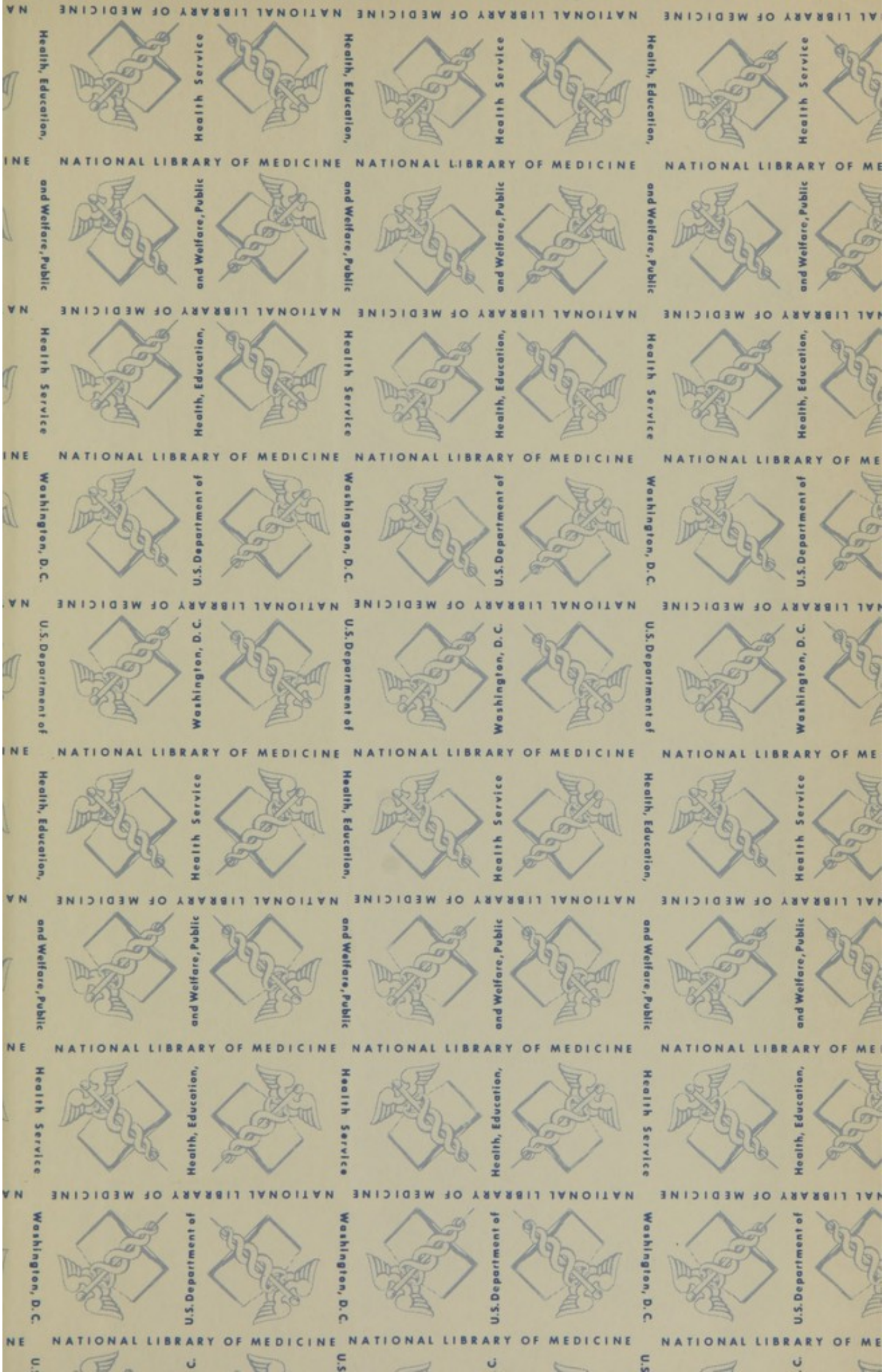
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