

**A lecture, introductory to a course, on the science of life, organization, &c;
/ by Samuel Robinson.**

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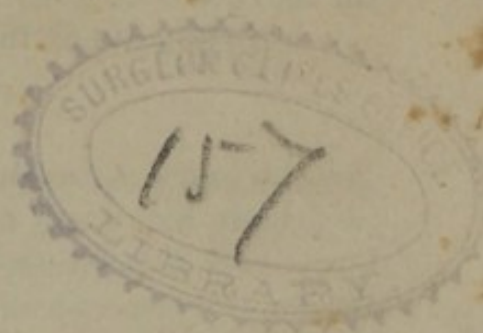
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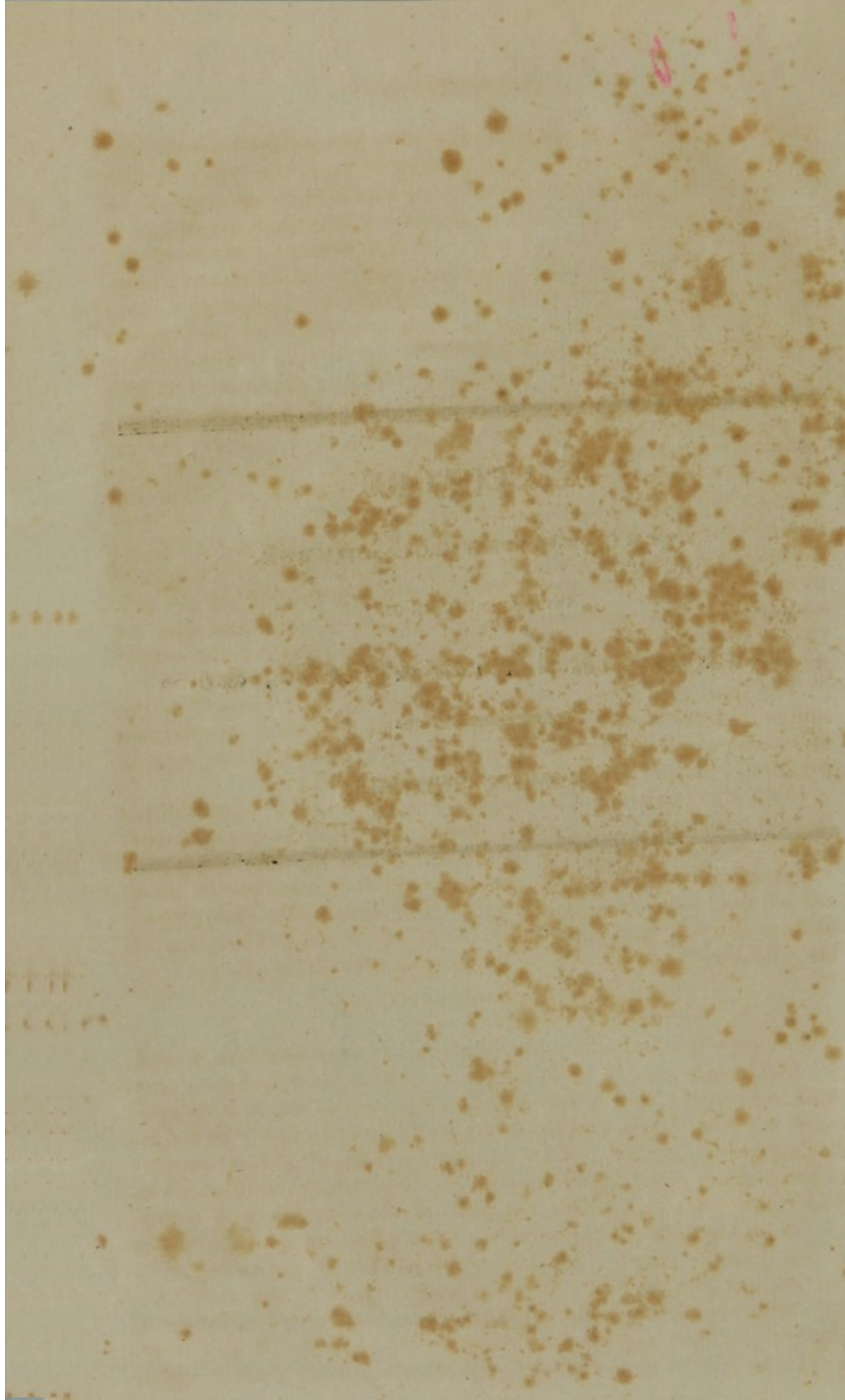
U. Robinson of Cambridge

no 10

**A LECTURE,
INTRODUCTORY TO A COURSE,
ON THE SCIENCE OF
LIFE, ORGANIZATION, &c.**

BY SAMUEL ROBINSON.





TO THE READER.

THIS course of Lectures on the science of life and organization, is based upon the principles of "*Howard's Improved System of Botanic Medicine*," and was prepared with an eye to simplicity and conciseness. A popular and general view of the human system was deemed at once interesting and desirable to those who wish to devote a portion of time to its study. But there is a higher object in this concise development of the structure of Man. It is designed to impress upon his heart, love and gratitude to God for the possession of a *form so fearfully and wonderfully made*: And that his thankfulness be evinced by his *care for a work, which is the masterpiece of all material things*.

The man who loves God for his goodness, and himself as the image and glory of the uncreated Deity—*his public manifestation and representative below*—will be inclined to show all due care, to preserve in its *primeval beauty, a form so admirable*.

If we can excite in man, this love to God and to himself; this fervent gratitude for a being so noble, and supreme and elevated; placed at the head of the creation, as the sublime display of Jehovah's power and goodness—we shall then have placed medical science on a sure foundation. The invaluable endowments bestowed upon Man, preserved out of gratitude to God, that all his gifts may be improved in the best manner to his glory;

"For God is paid when man receives;
To enjoy, is to obey."

To enjoy life and all its blessings, and to exercise them according to the *law* of God, is to glorify him, and *honor* and obey HIM. And to preserve health with all due care, is essential to this enjoyment and obedience, and to that *honor* which we owe him for his distinguishing bounty. To value the giver by his gift, we require to have some right apprehensions of its extent and magnitude. The divine care in forming the parts of Man and the skill in putting them together, so bountifully impressed in the countless worth of the finished frame, we have endeavored to delineate with brevity and perspicuity. It is not to be expected, that a full detail, of every item of all the parts, of magnitude and minuteness, which enter into the sublime structure of majestic Man, can be here unfolded! But enough is done to render the subject clear,

and comprehensive, and it is believed that the subsequent work will prepare the *mind* to move with *care* and knowledge in the administration of medicines to recover health; and, that a system of excellence and exquisite beauty is disclosed, in terms sufficiently conspicuous, to show that food, and nourishment, and remedies, should be administered, to preserve its harmony, and health, and sustain its being. It will be a consolation for many sorrows, to be engaged in filling up the plan of the *benevolent* RUSH—placing medical knowledge within the reach of the people. Some may demur—thousands will be saved; and

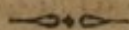
“Gentle Health her golden wings expand.”

The tyrant, Dionysius punished Philoxenius for singing, and Plato for disputing, better than himself. If better remedies arrive than those which have been in general use, I am willing to bear freely the portion of the evil which may be ascribed to me. It is not the lot of man to pass without rebuke—but “*Quid de me alii loquantur,*” &c. What others say of me, let them beware.

SAMUEL ROBINSON.

CINCINNATI, *March 1, 1832.*

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.



THE pre-eminence of medical science, furnishes a sublime object on the general map of human knowledge. It comes to the mind recommended by all the felicities of life, by the joys of existence and the great sum of human happiness, and human power, in the world below.

Could it reach that lofty eminence, and proud distinction of other sciences, called perfect, to cure our diseases and heal our pains without fail, how great would be the enjoyment of life, and how vast the sum of human blessing! At this noble object it *aims*; and we shall not despair, but here it will arrive at last.

The humble and industrious mind, led by the Deity, and improved by the indications of his works, may yet attain to that perfection of knowledge in medical wisdom, which shall render *life* a general blessing, and *death*, the dissolution of a tabernacle worn out by time and exhausted by slow decay.

It shall be our duty and determination that what re-inforcement we may obtain from hope, shall not be lost by irresolution or despair. The mind was made for victory; and he that overcomes, shall wear the victor's crown.

In this sublime scene of human knowledge, to pursue our course with success and certainty, we must keep in view, the operations of that mysterious power, which the Deity has placed in the living system, to repair and renovate its energies, when shattered by accident or worn down by disease.

If, in the end, we must "bow to the great teacher Death, and God adore;" let us in life bow to the great *teacher*, the *vis medicatrix*, and learn lessons of medical wisdom, which the Deity has thus placed before us in the mighty volume of his works! By the right use of reason, our success in the pursuit both of knowledge and of happiness depends. And by it, man is distinguished from the beasts that perish, in the most essential characteristics of his nature.

When it was found that a wound, merely bound up and a little cold water poured on it, healed better and quicker than by all the labored application of pompous surgery; the people thought there must be a charm in the water, or magic in the words.

It was the simple application of reason to the process and operations of nature herself: her short and easy method of uniting her separated points, and repairing her broken texture, fell upon the mind with that conviction, which never more can be resisted.

When clear and certain knowledge cannot be had, even in the dark, the mind is not left to grope like the blind. No; the mind is her own light, and life, and power, and penetration. She carries with her into the region of darkness, that inextinguishable *torch of reason*, which the Deity has bestowed upon her—and there finds a path to the conclusions of wisdom and the temple of truth.

The subject of MEDICAL BOTANY, like every other science, may be branched off to infinity; but the nature of this particular scheme, and the single point of view, which we intend shall limit our researches, demand particular illustration. And it is due to that deference, which every man owes to public opinion, to state fairly and fully, the reasons which induce him to establish or promote a new system.

Mr. HOWARD was agent for Dr. THOMSON. He was drawn unwillingly into that agency, as he was already embarked in public business. But being once engaged, he entered with all his mind and strength, into the prosecution of an object, which he conceived to be of immense value to the human family.

He had originally pursued the study of medicine, for the purpose of practice; but declined, from the dangerous tendency of the medicines in common use. On the trial of this new system of practice, he was convinced of the great safety and utility of the botanic medicine and method of operation.

In order to diffuse its blessings, he entered largely into the duties of his office—encountered vast toil, exposure, and expense, that he might bring it into general notice; while he was thus conscientiously and earnestly employed, jealousies were stirred up in the mind of Dr. THOMSON, by interested persons, from motives that were not good, as he verily believes. The result was, Dr. THOMSON suddenly revoked his agency, and arrested his career in the full tide of his usefulness and rapid approach to the goal of his most ardent hopes and expectations. He was here brought to a full pause—What was his duty?—His friends urged him to go on—strangers urged him to go on—the monitor within urged him to go on and do good!

The more he weighed and examined the subject, the more he was convinced of the absolute duty and propriety of prosecuting the practice with vigor. The system of medical botany was in its mere infancy; it could not so remain. No system is stationary—It must advance—and if he did not advance it, it would be seized by some sciolist, who neither had the skill nor experience to which he might modestly and justly lay claim.

He therefore, now, for himself, organizes this system of medical botany, on distinctive principles, of great utility, and superior interests to all laboring under disease, and yet so as not to infringe on the rights or interests of any living man—as may be seen by an examination of the work itself, now presented in its order, arrangement, and its abundant, and original matter.

It is a delicate matter to do any thing that may even appear to be wrong. Mr. HOWARD is, therefore, anxious, as every good man ought to be, that the public should be perfectly satisfied on this point; and perceive that he has truth and justice to sustain him with a desire to benefit the human race—and leave behind him, if the Deity will please to grant him that distinction, the name of—FRIEND TO THE HUMAN FAMILY!

Mr. HOWARD belongs to that society so famous for its practical wisdom and general benevolence—the society of Friends. And this itself, is a high recommendation in the opinion of good men. But there is another incident in Mr. H's history which is a matter of judicial record, and ought to have a prominent place, wherever his motives may be questioned or his integrity doubted.

In his youth he was left in possession of a considerable amount of property, constituting the principal part of his inheritance, which he subsequently came to the deliberate conclusion was incompatible with his duty to retain. And in resigning his right he had no applause—no eulogy, nor note of fame to cheer him to his duty—nothing save the “still small voice” of conscience, and the living oracles of his God.

And these were great, you say—they were great indeed! but in the time of which I am speaking, they were overwhelmed by the noise, and pomp, and fashion of the world.

He was then young and without experience; and yet listened to the voice of the counsellor, “*whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.*” One whose path in youth, has been so distinctly marked by obedience to the divine will, in opposition to the fashions of this world and the treasures of Egypt, will not now be left in his age, weary and old with service, to the overshadowings of a conscience, darkened by dereliction.

A fortune was here sacrificed in the morn of life, from love to his fellow men. And should it be regained in the evening of his days, by the unwearied effort of doing them good, will it be regarded unkind or disreputable?

It is also justice to Mr. Howard, to mention, that he does not assume any merit to himself for the sacrifice which he has made; nor does he, by any means, reflect upon others who have not felt it their duty to follow his example. He himself is a native of one of the southern States, and he well remembers, when he himself believed it right, to hold this kind of property: he believes that his own parents, who never divested themselves of it, were pious

persons; and he has ever felt charitable towards those who still continue to possess it. He believes that this subject must be left to the people of the southern States, to dispose of, under the guidance of Divine Providence, who is able to effect his own purpose in his own way. And he has therefore, ever believed it to be his duty to discourage all illegal and improper interference in this delicate matter: and the liberality of his general course has been such as to procure for him the friendship of his fellow citizens; the confidence and patronage of the Government of the United States, for many years, and subsequently the patronage of the Legislature of his adopted State, which continues to the present time.

It was the general opinion which was entertained of his character, and his large acquaintance over the United States, which induced Dr. Thomson, and the friends of his system generally, to insist on Mr. Howard's taking the agency and drawing his attention from his other interesting concerns to the diffusion of the knowledge of the Botanic System of medical practice: which agency he lost, through misrepresentation and jealousy, as shall be more fully developed hereafter. It is therefore, but an act of justice to him and the public, as he is now presented before them as the proprietor of the *Improved System of Medical Botany*, to state these facts—that this course of things was forced upon him—that he was unwillingly wrung from the public business in which he had been long engaged, to attend to the agency of Dr. T.—that after he had incurred vast expense and loss in the pursuit of this agency, it was improperly taken from him—that the system itself was so good and invaluable and so susceptible of improvement and cultivation, that he considered it his imperious duty to devote himself to its prosecution and perfection. To this duty he believes himself most solemnly called by the voice of God and his country; and to it now he freely devotes his labor and his life.

We believe and trust, when the whole matter is fairly weighed, so far from censure he shall receive applause; and be cheered on his journey to the consummation of his benevolent purpose. And as men are not only ingenious to find fault but also to discover truth, a few reflections may serve to direct the train of their cogitations.

It may be proper to remind them, that the infancy of a system, if truth and utility have stamped their seal upon it, cannot remain—it will not perish there—it must advance—the common sense and necessities of the world demand a progress to perfection. The first steps in the entrance of any subject, can give but little intimation how, or where, the path may terminate. From the first links in that immense chain of scientific discovery—extending from the Priests of Memphis to NEWTON and LA PLACE—how many were they who labored on the fabric, or toiled in the construction of the intermediate parts? And yet all were useful and perhaps necessary to the perfection of the structure; for even the errors which

obtained in the operation, were turned to the advantage of the system, and served to render astronomy, at least, the most certain and best established of the sciences.

It is delightful to trace, even in thought, the progress of scientific knowledge; but how much more, its benignant and beneficent results.

From the first feeble efforts which mark its infancy, to those majestic and matured systems, which have been strengthened by discovery and established by time, there is a mighty and impressive admonition. It is the solemn voice of eternal Providence, urging us to perseverance. To buckle on the armor of truth and press on to the portals of eternal wisdom.

On this path Mr. HOWARD is now determined to advance. The necessity is obvious; the call is urgent; the prize is human life; and the reward—it can only be measured by him, who regards the approbation of a good conscience, beyond all earthly inheritance.

Although the curative art may never be raised to a level with the certainty of the physical science of the Newtonian school, yet, it may reach a state of safety if not certainty; and it gives high and early promise of speedily attaining that distinguished elevation, by this new mode of practice, that the patient will not be injured, if he cannot be cured.

And this is no slight recommendation to those, the least conversant with the history of medicine and disease. The fundamental principles which ought to govern in all cases, in the treatment of the sick, are, that as their peculiar temperament and sympathies cannot be certainly known; the medicine given should be certainly ascertained—both in quantity and kind—to be perfectly innoxious to the system, and safe from all injury or detriment to its organs. And there is, most certainly, in the abundant store house of Jehovah's goodness, medicines which can rouse the energies of nature and repair the injuries of diseased or inert organs, without wasting their vitality or ruining their structure.

From a deep and powerful conviction of this important truth, and a hope that the sublime discovery of an antidote, powerful in banishing the dread and danger of disease, may be established by his labors, Mr. HOWARD has been impelled forward in the course he now pursues. To God and to his country he commits his cause with confidence, fearless of the result, and faithful in the exhibition of his reasons and designs. The issue cannot be doubtful, when the foundation rests on the basis of truth.

Knowledge on every subject, is the common inheritance of man. And he who would appropriate it, in any of all its branches, to the use of an individual, makes an attempt, at once preposterous and wicked.

The vital air, or Heaven's holy light, taken from us, would not be more injurious, than to rob us of the right of pursuing know-

ledge wherever she may lead us, through the boundless empire of the Almighty.

And we rest assured, on this infallible conclusion—that whoever disputes it, there exists in his mind, a total incompetency for enlarged views, or profound combinations on any subject, either of science, or practical affairs.

All his researches must terminate, like BUFFIER's madman, who could never see beyond the end of his logical syllogism. They are compelled to end in smoke and ashes.

When we speak to wise men, a single word unseals the fountain of thought and lays open the necessity of the cause; a necessity which springs from the condition of man; and not from the dictates of his voluntary power.

If any man could demonstrate that the science of medical botany, must ever remain precisely in the situation and order in which Dr. THOMSON placed it—he would furnish one of the most sublime arguments of the *reductio ad absurdum*, which ever appeared in the world!

The old axiom, that all reasonings were *ex præcognitis et præconcessis*, would be swallowed up and perish in this overwhelming flood of new and inaccessible light. The original principles and laws of human belief—the whole stamina of human reason—must be swept away, before we can conclude that any man is not bound to advance science, to reach the perfection of knowledge, as near as his means and powers may attain, or his opportunities may enable him.

Mr. HOWARD asks only this concession, for all the purposes he has now in view, in appearing before the world, as the proprietor of this improved and advanced system of *Botanic Medical Practice*—and he hopes it will not be unreasonable in him, to presume, that the practice in his hands, will deserve all the credit, and obtain the confidence which he claims for it. He has, already, had sufficient experience, to speak with the assurance of one who knows his theory, and has tested it by the most rigorous and indubitable experiments.

What he claims from public confidence, he humbly hopes, he can accomplish. The vain boast of untried hypothesis, can have no place in the stern decisions of the patient experimenter—who has seen disease baffled by the power of his art.

Mr. HOWARD will finally add, that he is neither afraid to fail through defect in the justice and goodness of his cause, nor the weakness of his premises, nor the *vis consequentiæ* of his conclusions. But for the satisfaction of those who may not have the means of viewing the whole subject in its true light, he has advanced these considerations.

And he might justly state the powerful appeals to his sympathies, and his love to humanity, not to abandon the prosecution of the

system. The entreaties and the loud and general call upon him, to continue his exertions, which, were he to state them all, might appear fabulous, or false; and which, as yet, memory could not supply half the amount of the reality. He therefore refers to the fact in a general manner, as another inducement to gratify at once his own sympathies and the wishes of the people.

I.—This New Practice, as now established, will connect with it, a Scientific Compendium, of the curious and beautiful structure of Man. The distinct and subordinate power of the parts, their particular and general uses, the separate and combined action and agency of the whole, forming one grand and amazing system of incomparable wisdom and infinite goodness.

When medicines, good in themselves, are combined with wisdom and intelligence in the administration, how vast the amount of confidence and complacency established in the mind! Whatever is done in the dark, carries suspicion in its very aspect, and perhaps, death concealed in its bosom!

“Put out the light—and then—put out the sight!”

The poet has most beautifully and forcibly conceived how necessary darkness is to all the deeds of evil and the purposes of sin. But the light—oh! the light, is associated with every thing great and good and glorious in this world, and beyond it.

“Eternal Light!—Eternal Light!”

“How pure the soul must be

“Who dwells within the dazzling Light

“Of vast Eternity.”

The intellectual vigor—that *animo presenti et acri*, which belongs to all well formed and active minds, absolutely require, in order to be satisfied, an entrance into the interior structure of man—a view and presence and immediate knowledge—with all the variety and of all the truth of the inward parts. We love to follow up conclusions, by their practical results, and pursue objects to the boundaries of thought, and walk by the light of reason, when the lights of nature fail!

It was a beautiful remark of that sage, who said “I would rather perform one good act with my reason and conscience, than an hundred by accident—for a fool might do the same.”

The better we understand what we are about, the nearer we approach to the likeness of Him who dwells in light ineffable. Milton’s fallen spirits seemed to be confounded at nothing more than the awful depth of that unutterable and eternal darkness into which they had fallen.

—————“Farewell happy fields,
Where joy forever dwells! Hail horrors! Hail
Infernal world! and thou profoundest hell
Receive thy new possessor!”—————

This is the language of utter darkness and undying pain! Light, therefore, as the great gift of the Father of Lights—shall be through-

out this subject, as far as it is practicable, in an improvement, at once concise and comprehensive; extending to an infinite variety of parts, and converging to one profound and grand conclusion—the health of the whole system.

The Greek geometers and Roman civilians, have left behind them immense and amazing piles of logical reasoning and profound science—the former being based on nature, remains unshaken and will remain; but the latter, although their systems be reasoned out by a most admirable ingenuity—yet, being founded on artificial ranks of society, and false principles of government, are hastening fast to destruction, and utter ruin.

How can they stand, when all the artificial ranks of society on which they were founded, are threatened with annihilation? The labor and time wasted on them will stand a curious monument of the efforts of man to establish systems on reason alone. Their fate often reminds us of the remark of a learned physician respecting his own profession—“Labored, but not improved; studied, but not advanced; multiplied, but weakened; enlarged, but rendered more defective and uncertain.”

All superstructures which have not their foundation in nature, but in the pride and vanity of man, must dissolve, and

“Like the baseless fabric of a vision—leave not a wreck behind.”

To reduce and simplify practical subjects to the laws and principles established in nature, would seem now to be the design and aim of every good man. One king is now pleading for the rights of his people, and though another be trampling them down, the decree has gone forth; and the temple of pride—the whole pile of human mockeries, is tottering on its foundations, and will shortly bury in its ruins all who will not abandon its profanity; leaving nothing behind but the memory of its crimes and the jubilee of its eternal destruction.

So passes away the follies of the world! And good it were, if we turn them to that useful account which wisdom always finds in the vicissitudes and revolutions of time. To a wise man nothing passes by unheeded or unimproved. Like a traveller on a journey through a foreign land, he marks down every object and every event, that he may return to his country improved by knowledge and replenished with lessons of practical wisdom.

A physician, approaching his patient, inquires into the nature of his symptoms, state of his disease, feels his pulse, and prescribes his medicine. How will this medicine operate? What will be its influence on that wonderful mechanism, which it puts into action behind the scene?

These questions can only be properly and safely answered by the certain knowledge, that the remedy administered will not add new impediments to life. And if by a sudden shock, one organ

should be relieved, an hundred others may not be embarrassed and impaired. Three, or five, or seven different substances compounded—whose chemical affinities and repulsions are not even known—how should their operation on the living subject be ascertained? The least that can be said for a random practice, is, that it should be careful to do no evil.

Reasoning, set in opposition to the laws of nature, resemble the School Theology. In attempting to find out the truths of scripture by the power of syllogisms—at the end of ten centuries of untiring labor, all the difficulties remained as they were—neither enriched by a new discovery, nor embellished by one single additional idea.

The labor of ages perishes, before one single principle of truth. A general maxim, properly established, is of more value than ten thousand of those small arguments which spring from the dreary confusion of a benighted intellect.

General principles may fail in particular cases, but they must always prevail in the general course of things; a general remedy, well established by practice, may likewise fail in a particular instance, and yet its general utility remain unbroken.

“When I was young, and became enamored of truth,” said TULLY, “It appeared to me so amiable and convincing, that I thought I could persuade all to adopt it: but now when I am old, and have some experience, I find its intrinsic loveliness not sufficient to establish it in the soul of man: Not that truth has lost its influence or its value; but the hope is lost, of making it succeed by its own merits alone.”

And by what power, do you ask, would he make it succeed, if not by its own merits? By making it the interest of the party that it should succeed! This is now required in the progress and success of the New System of Medical Practice. Let your interests persuade you to make the trial, and your safety will hasten the decision.

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