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Shipman (A. B.)

AN

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE

TO

A COURSE ON

SURGERY,

IN

THE INDIANA MEDICAL COLLEGE,

SESSION 1847-8,

BY

A. B. SHIPMAN, M. D.,

PROFESSOR OF THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF SURGERY, IN THE INDIANA
MED. COL.—HONORARY MEMBER OF THE PHILADELPHIA MED.
SOCIETY—CORRESPONDING SECRETARY OF THE NORTH-
WESTERN ACADEMY OF THE NATURAL AND
MEDICAL SCIENCES, ETC.

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PUBLISHED BY THE CLASS.

LA PORTE, INDIANA:
W. & J. MILLIKAN, PRINTERS.
1848.

INDIANA MEDICAL COLLEGE. }
Laporte, Nov. 27, 1847. }

PROFESSOR A. B. SHIPMAN:

Dear Sir—At a meeting of the Class of the Indiana Medical College, held on Friday evening, in the College Room, JESSE WASSON was chosen Chairman, and H. S. HAHN Secretary, it was unanimously *Resolved*, that a Committee be appointed to solicit a copy of your beautiful and appropriate Introductory Address, delivered before the Medical Class, the present session, for publication.

Permit us to add, that a willingness to gratify the Class and your numerous friends, will enable us to place before the public, a production, alike honorable to yourself, and creditable to the Institution with which you are connected.

With sentiments of the highest respect, we are

Very truly and sincerely yours.

R. R. STEERE. }
WM. B. MAY. } *Committee.*

INDIANA MEDICAL COLLEGE, Nov. 29, 1847.

MESSES. STEERE, and MAY:—

Gentlemen—I have to acknowledge your letter in behalf of the Class of the Indiana Medical College, requesting a copy of my Introductory Lecture, for publication. From the hasty manner in which the address was written—the great variety of subjects embraced—the absence of systematic arrangement—the slight and disconnected relations of the several portions—the broad field over which the remarks are spread, skimming merely, as it were, over the surface of things—the rapid and abrupt transition from one topic to another, and many other things, too numerous to be overlooked—render me sensible of its many imperfections. Yet as the Class have done me the honor, in expressing a desire for its publication, I most cheerfully comply with their request, in furnishing a copy, so soon as it can conveniently be performed. You will please convey to the Gentlemen of the Class, my warmest wishes for their health and prosperity. With great respect, I remain your very obed't serv't,
&c &c.

Respectfully yours,

A. B. SHIPMAN

DR. SHIPMAN'S INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

GENTLEMEN:—

WE have met where a few years since all was solitude; untouched by the hand of civilization, nature reposed in quiet and undisturbed tranquility, the flowers of the prairie bloomed and faded; the Summer wind bent the tall grass, and sighed through the groves: The blast of Winter swept over these plains; Seasons went and came in one unceasing round of solitude, Solitude! No, the Red Man of the forest was here the undisputed Lord of these fair and lovely plains. He hunted the nimble footed deer; he caught the fish from the Stream and Lake; he pitched his frail tent on the borders of these groves; he planted his corn and worshipped the Great Spirit, with such zeal and light as Nature gave; he met his enemies in deadly conflict; he lived, and loved, and died, and was buried here.

How beautiful must have been these broad praries, and these delightful groves, ere the hand of civilization was laid upon them, when yonder mighty Lake reposed calmly and tranquilly, save when its waters were disturbed by the wing of the wild fowl or the breath of the Almighty.

Where now is the inhabitant of this fair land? He has fled affrighted at the approach of the pale faced race; he lies down to die far from the mouldering graves of his forefathers, or he is driven Westward to those immense plains at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. The Anglo Saxon race have taken up their abode here, and are rearing towns, villages and cities, with a rapidity that is truly magical. The hum of industry is heard in every nook and corner of the land. Where once the Indian moored his bark canoe, the mighty steamer rides at anchor. Where once he chased his game, on his wild steed, the pant of the locomotive, is heard as on wings of the wind, it hurries over its iron way; Colleges and Seminaries of learning are fast springing up to dispense the blessings of education and refinement to the youth of these fertile fields. With a country of unparalleled beauty and a soil of surpassing fertility, the march onward to prosperity and wealth, must be certain and rapid. Emigration has been unprecedented in the annals of the world, and will continue for years to come. From the worn-out fields of Continental Europe; and the downtrodden, famishing, starving, pestilence stricken Ireland; from the bleak shores of the Baltic and Caspian; the sunny fields of Italy, or the classic shores of the Blue Mediterranean; the fertile lands of Holland; and the green lanes of England; from the mountains of Scotland and Wales, the land of Bruce and Cromwell; from the banks of the Rhine, the Rhone and the vine clad hills of France and Germany; from the Alpine heights and the winding vales of Switzerland, a

race of men have wended their way to the West, and have taken up their abode, to mingle with our sons and daughters, and to enjoy that freedom which their own country denies them. The Son of New England, with his tidy housewife, surrounds his home with comforts and even luxuries; he has exchanged the sterile soil of his native Granite Hills, for the deep, rich mould of the Western Prairie, his sons and his sons' sons, who visit the ancestral mansion, in after years, will wonder how enough could be extorted from the niggardly soil to sustain life. Here the enterprising seeker after wealth and a home will have their anticipations realized, and become blended with its interests. On the surface of these fair domains, on the banks of these beautiful lakes and rivers, among these groves, whose beauty surpasses the parks of hereditary lands, dwells an enemy of human life. No age or condition is exempt from its invisible and malignant onsets. The infant at its mother's breast; the school-boy at his sports; the maiden in the first flush of womanly beauty; the robust young man in all his pride of manly strength; the matronly housewife at her domestic cares; the old man with his staff; all feel its enervating influence, and wrestle with this subtle fiend

"Who hovers in darkness dire and flings,
Destruction on mephitic wings."

Do you know the name of this enemy? One of the reasons why we are assembled here is to deliberate on the best means to vanquish and disarm this foe to human life. Malaria, is the name we give this enemy, that is so widely diffused throughout the broad West. It sits with you at the social board, it surrounds the couch of rest and repose; at the banquet and feast, the hand writing on the wall attests its presence. It is not my purpose or province to discuss the nature and history of this wide spread poison. This you will have from an abler source, at its proper time and place; but allow me to premise, that we are infinitely better able to disarm this monster at the present day than formerly, although its specific nature remains in comparative obscurity. One of your first duties will be to make yourselves masters of such facts and observations as will in future enable you to cope with this great evil. I trust, Gentlemen, before you leave these walls, to go forth on your pilgrimage of life, that all which science knows of this all important matter, will become so familiar that success will attend your footsteps.

The Profession which you have chosen for good or for evil, has many difficulties which perhaps few of you have well studied. In the first place, to make an accomplished and thorough Physician, requires an amount of knowledge and acquirement, that if seen on first setting out, would deter the most courageous and persevering from the start. But the Student of Nature, for such the young medical aspirant may be called, at first is invited onward by many things that are alluring to the eye and captivating to the senses. Many flowers grow by his pathway, and bloom and cover the rugged steep that he surmounts; many cool and shady places, where he can pause and rest his weary senses, as he mounts upward towards the object of his wishes and aspirations. Now he

is encouraged onward by some dimly discovered object in the distance, which excites his ambition to press on. Now he sees some curious specimen, that awakens a desire to discover more. There a bird of magnificent plumage, or a grotto of wonderful beauty: On passes the student; he sees many paths that diverge from the one he is pursuing, that appear far easier to travel, and some that lead to far more alluring and brilliant prospects, yet he has tasted of the fruit of knowledge, and drank at the fountain of philosophy, and he has become a votary of science: Upwards, he mounts still higher, with his eye steadily fixed on the summit, around which are gathered a host of pilgrims pressing to carve their names high on the Temple of Fame. It is not to be expected that all who start on this race will press forward to the end. Many will turn back before they have entered the vestibule. Others will stray off by many of the diverging ways. Some will lie down and sleep away their time in slothful and inglorious ease. Others will retrace their steps and turn back from whence they started, discouraged by the difficulties which beset their way.

The great Book of Nature is the volume from which you are to draw all your knowledge. The strata of everlasting rock; the record of earth's history, its changes and mutations, are there written so plainly and distinctly, that "he who runs may read."

Nor is the study of earth alone, or the things upon it, to limit your knowledge. Astronomy should claim a portion of your time, not only from its ennobling and elevating tendencies upon your minds; but the action of the celestial bodies, from time immemorial, have been supposed to exert an influence in the production of epidemical diseases. Comets were once looked on as harbingers of war and pestilence, and Meteors were set down as magazines fraught with disease and death. Natural History is one of the most pleasing, as well as important, studies, and one that should never be neglected by the Student of Medicine. Man, the head of the Animal Creation, should claim that share of attention, which his position demands. He should be studied, not alone as he exists at the present time, but as he lived in ages long since past.

Sacred History is the only authentic source from which we learn the condition of man at the earliest period of the world! The most remarkable thing in man's early history, is his longevity:—Man, formed with the same organs as at present; the same feelings, passions and circumstances in operation, would appear to be subjected to the same laws of decay and death. It may be (and that too without, in the least, impeaching the authenticity of the Sacred Writings,) that time was computed in a different manner from what it is at present. The sacred writings also give us the earliest account of the diseases of the ancient race. From the Tombs of Thebes and Memphis, we are brought, face to face, with man as he existed in the days of the Pharaohs, forty centuries ago. We find him, so far as physical organization is concerned, the same as his living neighbor of to-day. Man, as he exists on the earth at present, should be well studied. We there find that wonderful power of adaptation which man possesses. Notwithstanding the

widely varying situation in which he lives, for what can be more dissimilar, than the poor stupid inhabitant of Iceland and Kamskatka, and the tall and fiery dweller on the burning Deserts of Arabia; yet, from the power which man possesses of adapting himself to surrounding objects, he may, with proper care and attention, change place with impunity. No other animal has the like power. The camel, who will cross the burning plains of Africa, carrying a supply of water in his stomach for 20 days or more, would die of cold, in a winter of Southern Europe. The white bear of the Arctic regions, who is at home amid polar ice and snow, would perish of heat in a Summer temperature.

From a perusal of the sacred writings, you will draw much that relates to the physiology of our race, in an early period of the earth, and likewise many things, both curious and instructive, in regard to diseases which prevailed and were peculiar to that epoch of earth's history. Many of the religious rites, ordinances and ceremonies, had reference to the preservation of health, and the cure of disease. What but an acquaintance with certain physiological laws, led one of the ancient Patriarchs to try an experiment in Natural History, that resulted in one of the most curious phenomena in existence? The speckled and streaked rods of ancient Jacob, show him to have been learned in the laws that govern the doctrines of generation, and is both curious and instructive. How far he was justified in the experiments, which he practiced on Laban's flocks, in a legal or moral point of view, I leave for those learned in such matters to settle; but in its scientific application, it belongs to physiology. In the laws enacted to prevent the spread of leprosy, we have the earliest records of sanatory regulations, which show their early acquaintance with the prevention of diseases. The Hygienic practices which prevailed in the Israelitish camp, in their long sojourn and wandering in the wilderness of Sinai, and which were enforced as a religious observance, if looked at with attention, will be seen such as were best calculated to promote the health and happiness of the people. The washings and ablutions, the purifications and anointings, are so many methods to preserve the physical condition of man in a state of health and purity.

The rigid observance of cleanliness, and which was enforced as a divine rite, in regard to females, might well be practiced in modern times, as going far, not only in preserving health, but in maintaining that purity of person, that adds so greatly to the charms of the sex.

Descending from man, as placed at the head of the universe, and for whom the whole earth and its creatures are made to subserve his ends, we pass to the brute creation. Their relation to man, and their uses, are to be studied with much attention. Many of the inferior animals furnish food, clothing, ornaments, luxuries and medicines. Some of them are the natural enemies of man, and require to be investigated, so far as to guard and protect ourselves from their deleterious power. The whole class of poisonous serpents, reptiles, and venomous insects, require to be well studied, for our protection and safety.

From many animals we obtain articles of luxury, food, clothing and ornamental things, for comfort or show. The ostrich, whose plumes grace the head of beauty—the silk-worm who weaves her wool to clothe the body of her sister worm—the cochneal insect bleeds to give color to a lady's scarf—we strip the ermine and lynx to warm and ornament our bodies—there is scarcely an animal but what man, in some way, appropriates to his uses. Descending still in the scale of animal existence, we pass from known and described genera and species, to animalcula. The wonders of the microscope have opened fields beyond the reach of the unaided vision of man. The most powerful glasses show that there is yet animal life that art fails to reach. How far and to what degree these microscopic animalcule are concerned in the production of disease, yet remains to be demonstrated.

Epidemical diseases have, by many writers, been conjectured to originate from this source. That myriads of them swarm in the atmosphere at such seasons; enter into the cavities, penetrate the tissues of the body, and are carried by the circulation into the remotest portions of the system. But this is mere hypothesis, and remains yet to be proved; the subject, however, is a curious one and requires investigation.

The next step of the student of nature should be, a survey of the vegetable world; and here we shall find some of the most beautiful as well as useful productions of the earth. It is from this source that much of the food of man is obtained. The most agreeable, nutritious and salutary articles of diet, are those from the vegetable kingdom.

From some of the articles we clothe the body, and decorate the person, while others furnish us the means of building houses to shelter, and ships to waft us to distant lands, in search of wealth, luxuries and friends. The most important and useful medicines are derived from vegetables. The poppy, which furnishes opium as a medicine, may truly be said to be a Divine remedy. The power to allay pain and assuage anguish, justly entitle it to such an appellation. And here, Gentlemen, allow me to digress a short time, to speak of this ancient and much abused article. Of all the numerous articles of the materia medica, this is the most important, whether we view it as a palliative to mitigate human suffering, or a powerful and efficient agent in the cure of disease. I have often heard it remarked, (and many of you may have done the same) that opium never cures a disease; that its action is merely palliative; lulling disease into fatal security; smothering pain and giving a false and treacherous security where none really exists. Were it not for this medicine, or one having like power, few would be found willing to practice medicine a day. To be compelled to witness human suffering in all its frightful forms, without the power of alleviation, would present so gloomy and repulsive a life that few would be willing to engage in.

The positive cures which this remedy effects are truly wonderful. The whole range of nervous, spasmodic and neuralgic disease, it is almost the only medicine that is capable of giving temporary, or permanent, relief. In dysentery, diarrhœa, and the

most formidable of all, the frightful cholera of India, it cures more than all other remedies combined. But were it only for its palliative powers, it would still be worth all the encomiums bestowed upon it. To be able to appease the most agonizing pain; to give sleep and quiet to a troubled breast; to dispel the gloom of the profoundest melancholy, and strew even the tomb with flowers, is what can be done with no other agent. The abuses of this article I will not dwell upon; for like everything useful and potent in nature, it is liable to evil. Its fascinating and exhilarating power has been sought with much avidity, by those who have once experienced its delightful and enchanting power. Individuals have fallen under its control and been held in worse than iron bondage, and abandoned to its dreamy and pernicious influence. Oriental nations, as China and Turkey, have suffered most from this debasing practice, it being one of the common luxuries in daily use, with many of the inhabitants of those countries.

But I must leave this subject, fertile as it is in matters of weighty import, to pass on to other things which will engage our attention. The subject of vegetables will be freely and faithfully discussed in its proper place by your Teacher of *Materia Medica*. By many this branch is considered dry and barren; but let me assure you, gentlemen, none is more worthy your serious attention. By the aid of some of the most simple articles, you may do more in curing disease than the boldest operator with knife and saw.

Of the mineral kingdom, which will occupy a share of your time, but few, comparatively, will be found as articles of medicine.—The public, it is true, have erroneously supposed, that minerals were almost exclusively used in our practice. This idea has been encouraged and strengthened by the graceless Quack, who trims his sails to every breeze, and rides triumphant on the wave of popular prejudice. What has produced this unworthy clamor against minerals? Certainly not its intrinsic merits or demerits, for where shall we find so deadly a poison, one that extinguishes life with almost as much rapidity as lightning, as prussic acid?—The stramonium, the hemlock, the aconite, the nux vomica, are all more deadly poisons than arsenic or mercury; and yet we hear no popular outcry against them. Another popular error, and one that is as absurd as false, is that the Great Author of Nature has planted the remedy beside the disease. That on the ground where the serpent burrows in his den, grows the specific to arrest the venom of his fangs. Nothing is more unreasonable, or more contrary to the laws which govern the universe. You might, with equal propriety, expect guineas to grow on an estate where empty pockets prevail; or clothes ready made on the hedge that shelters the naked beggar. You might as well say that tea, coffee, spices, and sugar, will grow on the spot where nature requires. The spices, and tropical fruits, and dye-woods, are articles of necessity, yet they grow far from the countries that demand them. Commerce was designed to promote the interchange of such productions as cannot be raised with facility, in countries where they are required; besides this, there are diseases for which no remedy can be found. Such is the order of Nature, and such the laws by

which we are governed, that man, in common "with the beasts that perish," or as "flesh that is as grass," must return to its original elements, and mingle with the dust from whence he sprang.

Geology is a branch of Natural History that cannot fail of being both pleasing and profitable, as it can be carried on without books, in your professional excursions, that you may in truth, literally "run as you read," and hear "sermons in stones," and this will be a perpetual feast, and one that never cloys.

From the time the "Earth was with out form, and void," and darkness brooded over the face of things, to the period when the first living thing began its existence, to the present time, how many ages of unwritten history has gone by? Yet there was a time, long before the advent of man, when monstrous shapes, realizing the wildest fables of Antiquity, such as the imagination can scarcely contemplate; when the Ocean and Rivers teemed with huge Leviathans, the Gigantic Saurian lashed into form, the solitary waters of a primeval world. The Lizard Dragon hissed out his wrath amid the dark forests that now lie buried in the coal fields of an ancient world. Their remains come to the light of day in the strata of everlasting rock, which has for so many ages been their tomb. The stone we quarry from the mountain's side; the dust we tread beneath our feet; the Islands of the Ocean, yea, and even whole Continents, are the cast off garments of beings that were once in possession of animal life; genera after genera, and species after species, have lived and died, and been succeeded by others, in one long series of ages, until earth has become one mighty sepulchre of animal remains. Man, standing on the earth, contemplates this mighty wreck, with the light of science beaming around him, discovers ever and anon some new family to challenge admiration, or to awaken astonishment. We should never have known the existence of the Mastadon but for the fragments of bone and teeth that are now and then turned up to the light of day, from the bed where he laid himself down and breathed out his mighty spirit. The study of Geology will make you acquainted with the great and striking changes earth's surface has undergone, previous to man's coming, who is a being of comparatively recent creation. Geology will teach you that there was a period when the mighty Niagara had no existence; that the waves of Lake Michigan and Ontario beat far inland from their present limits, and that a river like the present Niagara, flowed off towards the Gulf of Mexico; that a great portion of this State was once the bed of an ocean, and that a great portion of the earth's surface, has at one or another time within the lapse of ages, been covered with the waves of a rolling sea.

It is not my intention to touch upon all the branches of Natural Science, which you will do well to acquire; but some of the most prominent and important, and such as each of your individual opportunities will give you time and inclination to cultivate.

In a class of Medical Students, we find all the varieties of temperament and disposition which exist in the various inhabitants of a community: The ardent and ambitious, the sanguine in feeling, confident and full of hope, who masters each subject with the ra-

pidity of intuition; there are no obstacles which can impede his progress; to see is to understand at a glance; to hear is to comprehend; he rushes on with the impetuosity of a torrent; his restless spirit brooks no delay; meteor like he shoots upward; the goal is in sight; his eagle eye looks sunward, undimmed by the glare of light that breaks around him. Do you envy him his brilliant career, you who move more carefully along? No, depend upon it, there are many who, like the tortoise in the fable, will pass him ere he is aware of it. It is the slow, the deliberate, the industrious, the systematic, that will finally triumph. Nature, who is always just, giving to one while she withholds from another, has been so considerate, that in giving to one a lively and ardent imagination, denies the more solid and weighty qualities of the mind, as judgement and discrimination. The brilliant and witty are rarely profound, and more rarely are they studious. They may laugh and despise the plodding one who acquires his stores of knowledge by the sweat of his brain; but tell me who is eminent in his profession ten or twenty years hence? And there are reasons why this is so; good substantial philosophical reasons. The love of company draws away the youthful votary, and books and science are dull things compared with the convivialities of the assembly room, or the charms and seductions of the social circle.—A mind of ordinary capacity, cultivated by industrious habits, good common sense, with a well balanced intellect, free from all moral obliquity, is that which conducts its possessor most often to eminence and happiness.

There is no branch of the profession you have chosen, above your comprehension or attainment; nothing but what will be a pleasure to acquire, if you commence as you should, and hold out as you are instructed. Study, like a good and healthy appetite, if regularly and rationally indulged, will become a habit which, in time, will create a necessity; like a healthy appetite, it must not be abused one day to excess, after a long period of fasting, for there is sometimes a morbid craving for study, as for food, and should be carefully guarded. Reading spicy, high seasoned, imaginative works of fiction, unfits the mind in youth for the more sober and weighty works of science. By training the mind to the study of scientific subjects, we become greatly interested, as those who live on simple fare, have the appetite and taste so exquisitely cultivated, that simple bread and water become luxuries.

It is astonishing how a habit once formed, clothes the most dry and cold scientific treatise, with all the splendor of an Oriental romance. A habit of study also is the surest protection against the vices and follies of youth. This is a fact so self evident that it requires no argument to sustain it. Cultivation of the intellect is the strongest barrier that can be thrown around youth and inexperience. The passions will never gain ascendancy over one whose head is filled with science. It elevates, it purifies, it ennobles the human mind, and next to the truths of Revelation, fits and adorns man for a higher destiny. The passions and desires of youth, subjected to the control and guidance of reason, like the gentle zephyr, that fills the sails and bears the bark onward in

gentleness and safety, while the same passions, uncontrolled and unregulated, are as the sweeping tornado, driving before its fury, the mastless and rudderless vessel, to destruction.

A man profoundly learned in the natural sciences, can scarcely be other than a Christian. The habits of patient study, the hours of calm contemplation, hush the stormy passions to repose, and leads the mind from "Nature up to Nature's God."

A class of Medical Students must necessarily present a great diversity of talent and disposition. Each Student stands alone, guided by his own views of propriety. No rigid College rules, and ordinances of discipline, which renders the violation so sweet to the youthful mind, will here be applied to you. You are now supposed to be capable of self government. The only law to guide you while here, is such as exists between one gentleman and another.

The conventional rules of society alone, are such as we expect and desire from you. We look for such conduct, as men who by nature and education are destined for a high and honorable profession. In this I have little fear of being disappointed. Most of you have left friends who feel a deep and abiding interest in your future prosperity. Perhaps you have friends who feel an honorable pride in your career of usefulness—on you they may in time to come lean for support. Some of you, perchance, may have a widowed mother, with helpless brothers and sisters, who look on you as their protector. Or you may have closer ties that bind you to your own hearth-stone, with household gods that claim your devotion. Now is the season to lay the foundation for future usefulness. It is therefore most important that you begin your course in such a manner that you will remember this winter as a bright era in your career. The youthful mind is more open to impressions, and remembers its early companions and teachers, more vividly than in after years. What Physician can not look back with pleasure, or pain, to their first course of Lectures. The individuals of the class are followed in after years--their career noticed, as one after another of their early associates arrive to eminence, becoming distinguished in one or the other branches of the Profession—or occupying high situations of trust, in civil or political life, and with feelings of mournful interest we read, ever and anon, of the death of one whose face was once familiar within these walls. Yes, and even here, some one who now hears my voice, may never more return to make glad the hearts of distant relatives. It is short of two years since one as young, as full of life, of hope and fond anticipations of future eminence, came here from his distant home among the green hills and vallies of his native State. No one was more buoyant in spirit, no one more keenly alive to the pleasures of social intercourse; no one more honorable, or esteemed as a companion or a friend. In him Christianity may be said to have been an inherent principle; in him Religion was honored as the pearl of great price; in a few short weeks he won the hearts and friendship of his class, and a large circle of the youth in this community. But disease laid its withering hand upon him—his fellow Students did all that friendship

and kindness could, to soothe his last hours—Medical Science all that skill could dictate and ingenuity devise—his last hour had come—the Almighty, in his inscrutable wisdom, had willed that he should never return to his friends, but removed him to a higher state of existence. Some of you followed him to his grave, where he sleeps in peace, on the borders of yonder beautiful Lake, there to await the resurrection of the just. I could not forbear, gentlemen, to pay this small portion of tribute, due to the memory of one who was my friend. Though he closed his eyes in a land of strangers, far from a father or a sister's care; yet the tears that flowed over his untimely fate, and early death, were those of sincerity and affection.*

In a class of Students, we have so great a variety of temperament and disposition, that every branch of the healing art has some one who cultivates a particular speciality. This is as it should be, for there are so many departments, that few are found who can excel in every branch. It was formerly the case, that the practice of Medicine and Surgery were exercised by different individuals; and it is even so at the present time in some countries; but in this country, we do not educate, or give credentials for the separate practice of the two branches of the Profession. A man having credentials at all here, has them for the practice of every branch; yet individuals, from taste or talent, or inclination, or some accidental circumstances, generally select some one department which they cultivate with more assiduity, and usually obtain more skill and reputation in this particular branch.

There is one point you will allow me to make a few remarks upon. It is the ambition to excel in the more showy and striking branches of the Profession. This wish, or desire, if not carried to excess, or to the neglect of the minor details of practice is not reprehensible. There is no branch of the healing art so humble as to be beneath your notice. It is in the small and insignificant details of business that you are to arrive at great results.

The good and faithful Physician at the bedside of some poor and forsaken son or daughter of Adam, is a spectacle of greater moral sublimity, than the most brilliant operation. It is true some branches of our art are more attractive, and excite a livelier interest, than others; but all have their attractions. *Materia Medica* is one of the branches upon which too little attention is commonly bestowed; but when we view it as the magazine from

*Died, at La Porte, Indiana, January 15, 1846, Henry Flint, aged 24 years—a student of Medicine from Fayetteville, Onondaga Co. New York.

Mr. Flint was a native of Dutchess County, New York. His father, Mr. Philip Flint, removed to Fayetteville when Henry was quite young. His father was a very worthy and exemplary man, and gave his son a good classical education.

Henry entered the office of Dr. J. O. Shipman, of Fayetteville, in 1844, as a student of Medicine. He came to the West to attend the Medical Lectures of the Indiana Medical College, and was taken sick with the Epidemic Erysipelas, January 3, 1846. His case was one of great malignity, and although most active treatment was applied, he died on the 15th of the month. His remains were followed to the grave by a large concourse of citizens and students, who sincerely deplored his early death.

which we draw all our stores, to combat disease, it is at once invested with its proper dignity. What cure may not be wrought with some simple herb, root, or bark? How the glow of health may be returned to the palid cheek? The spirit lifted from the depth of the profoundest woe and melancholy, to the enjoyment of calm and tranquil happiness? This is no trifling thing, and yet you may daily witness such results, as the good Physician moves with noiseless steps along his humble pathway.

Chemistry is voted by many of secondary importance, and unless the Lecturer has a winning manner and a happy power of illustration, will speak to empty benches. But all must admit, in the rapidly increasing developement of chemical science, and the part it plays in the preparation of medicines, the changes constantly occurring in the body; the action of poisons on the system; the relations which it bears to all objects which surround man, and are lying in wait for his destruction, invest chemistry with an importance that all must acknowledge. Its principles are of daily and hourly application, while many of the great operations in surgery are of comparative rarity. I believe it to be a fact, that most Students begin with a determination to become great Surgeons. This is not strange, for there is something extremely gratifying in the eclat of a brilliant and successful surgical operation. It seems to me we attach to Surgery, (that is, Operative Surgery,) more than the intrinsic value of it demands. We regard it something in the same light we do military subjects—the more bloody the affair, the more it excites our admiration. The circumstances surrounding the whole business—the glittering knives in their polished cases—the note of silent preparation—the awful array of assistants—the gushing blood—the quivering flesh, as the cold steel glides through the muscles of the pale and anxious victim. These to many have all the excitement and curiosity of an execution; and in many instances is little better. It is this striking array of action that captivates many an youthful aspirant, as the “pomp and circumstance of glorious war,” is more attractive than civil life.

But my young friends, let us talk this matter over in a calm and sober light. In the first place, you cannot all become Napoleons or Wellingtons, any more than you can Coopers or Dupuytren's; few are fitted by temperament or taste, to become great Surgeons; nor does it detract in the least from your credit, that you do not perform great operations. You may be equally eminent in the more quiet and peaceful branches of your profession. It requires a higher order of intellect, a cooler judgment, and a more profound acquaintance with nature, to make the thorough and accomplished physician.

Operative Surgery is purely mechanical, as independent of the intellectual part of your business, as the instrument you use, is separate from the hand of the one who guides it. It is true a reputation is sooner earned in Surgery, but it is also sooner lost. The young Surgeon is surrounded with perils that others know nothing of. The unavoidable accidents; the disastrous termination of an important case, are open to the censure and criticism of the pub-

lic, who never fail of pronouncing a verdict. When we look at the nature of the injuries we are called on to repair; the perishable nature of the material we have to deal with; the complicated and unmanageable difficulties that beset our path; the capricious and unreasonable patients that we have under our care, it is not surprising that failure so commonly attends. A wound will not heal; a bone refuses to unite; a scar will be left after the most careful management, and even our cherished limbs, however skillfully nursed, will sometimes mortify in spite of all our applications. The mechanic who repairs our watch or our carriage, is not expected to make it better than it was originally, but the poor Surgeon, if he does not mend a broken bone, and restore it to more than its former beauty and perfection, will be asked an equivalent from his pocket to pay for his patient's misfortune. And then it costs nearly as great exertion to maintain and support a high surgical reputation as it does to earn one. The envy and detraction which awaits the eminence you so ardently covet, is to a sensitive mind, a source of much annoyance.

"He who ascends to mountain tops shall find,
The loftiest peaks most clothed in clouds and snow;
He who surpasses or subdues mankind,
Must look down on the hate of those below."

I think, Gentlemen, that I have presented you with some of the evils that attend the steps of the young Surgeon. It has its attractions too, and one possessing the proper qualifications, may reap a rich harvest, as a reward for zeal and exertions. Its results are more palpable and demonstrative than medicine, in many instances. A man opens a large blood vessel; the purple tide of life is fast ebbing away—the Surgeon takes a delicate instrument and a bit of thread, and lo, as by enchantment, the blood ceases, the man is saved. You can lay your hand on your heart and say, I have saved a human life, it was done quietly, without pain, without ostentation. Where can you say as much from the exhibition of medicine? Great improvements have been made within a few years, in every department of our art; but in Surgery we have advanced with giant strides. Every year adds some fresh laurel to the brow of some worthy son of Æsculapius. Every year some startling invention breaks upon us like a dazzling light. To-day one discovers a remedy for human deformity; and to-morrow a panacea for the pain of an operation. One may now sit down to the loss of a breast or a limb, and have a pleasant dream while the operation is being performed. The fabled waters of Lethe have been realized in the nineteenth century, and on the Continent of America.

What shall we have next? We have conquered deformity—We have subdued pain—We have conquered a place among the benefactors of the earth.

In the race for professional renown, our own countrymen stand out preeminent in the eye of the world. We have reason to be proud of the achievements in surgery, by men born, reared, and educated on this side of the Atlantic; men who have ennobled the profession, and in doing it honor have gained imperishable renown.

To a **PHYSICK** we are indebted for some of the most important and interesting discoveries within the last third of a century.—Born and educated in this country, he went to Europe to perfect himself in his profession, at a time when the facilities for study here were comparatively meagre. In London he had the good fortune to enjoy the instruction of the celebrated **JOHN HUNTER**.—Under the tuition of this great Surgeon and Physiologist, he laid up stores of knowledge, which in after years he so richly dispensed to the youth of this his native country. It was my good fortune to sit for a short season, under the eloquent outpourings of this great man; his whole soul seemed given to the vast interests, wrapped up in his wish to alleviate human misery; he worshiped at this altar with all the ardor of an Eastern devotee.

He seemed always impressed with the solemnity of the high and holy mission. "No mirth or jollity, or playful sarcasm, ever escaped his lips; he stood like a statue of Pentelican Marble, while words of choice wisdom poured forth from his lips." No smile ever lit up a face, that was cold, stern, and passionless as a piece of statuary; his dark eye, alone, gave token of the slumbering fire that burned beneath his cold and icy brow; and when some tardy laggard entered the Amphitheatre at a late hour, the light of that eye which you could "neither bear nor forbear," was truly withering.

But the excitements of a life wholly devoted to the exercise of a laborious profession, prematurely shattered a constitution of original delicacy, and the Father of American Surgery, went down to the grave with a fame which few have won.

Since his time, Surgery has held that rank which its great and growing importance demands, until now, it has assumed almost a demonstrative character. We have a **WARREN**, who has done much to elevate and improve the science; especially, his great work on Tumors. We have a **MOTT**; whose reputation has penetrated the remote corners of the earth. A **GIBSON**, who is a worthy successor of **PHYSICK**; a **STEVENS**; a **PARKER**; a **SMITH**; a **MARCH**; a **MUTTER**; a **PANCOAST**; a **BARTON**; a **RANDOLPH**; a **NORRIS**; a **McNAUGHTON**; a **POST**; a **RODGERS**; a **HOFFMAN**; a **CHEESEMAN**, and a host of others whose names, would fill whole pages, and whose inventions and improvements would require volumes.

The Student, at this day, is required to believe only such doctrines as are susceptible of demonstration. No fine spun speculative theory will be taught or forced on your belief. Facts, supported by facts, and truths, sustained by truths, are now taught in all our Medical Colleges. Not that every physiological and pathological principle is clearly understood; but such as are doubtful, are so taught, and you will not be required to believe hypothetical doctrines.

A field of unexplored science lies before you. Enter upon it and make new discoveries. The Nervous System, where the Physiologist and Pathologist have discovered so much that is new and interesting, within a few years, is a field where future discoverers have much to hope for. The manner in which mind is united to matter, remains yet to be discovered. The diseased mani-

festations of mind, or the diseased tissues through which it is displayed, for we believe that the human mind is always bright and perfect, the diseased medium gives its apparent imperfections.— We place a bright light in a clear and transparent glass, and it sheds its clear and dazzling rays upon every object. We place it in a colored medium and we find it tinges every thing with its altered color, or we surround it with darkness and its light is gone; still it blazes clear as ever. The poor benighted idiot has still the same divine spark within, but it is surrounded and bedimmed with a dark, impenetrable, night. The various multitude of insane, have the soul shining out in a great variety of fantastic forms and hues, now flashing with the most intense and brilliant light, now flickering and wavering as if agitated by the wind, or going out in gloom and darkness. Here there is a field where new discoveries are to be sought. Some future Philosopher may yet arise to systematize and arrange these apparent mysteries, and clear away the mist that has hung like an impenetrable veil between the boundaries of mind and matter.

What a curious and wonderful organ is the brain! A tissue of matter, whose appearance gives little import of its high and lofty uses. Take, for example, the brain of Napoleon Bonaparte—look on that few ounces of soft pulpy matter, enclosed in its bony case, surrounded by membranes and pierced by nerves and blood vessels. That was the field whereon were marshalled the five hundred thousand troops, scattered over a great extent of country, yet so disciplined as to concentrate within an hour of each other on some field of strife. Each man had a place on that wonderful brain.— The five hundred battles were fought there. The thirty millions of the French nation had a place; the snowy Alps; the Sacred Mountains of Palestine; Egypt; the Pyramids; the Nile; the Lybian Desert; the mighty Oriental Empire; all these, with vast plans for national glory, found a place; and yet there was room for his beloved Empress and darling boy.

The nervous system has much unexplored ground, that awaits some future discoverer. Here, too, the structure gives little evidence of its astonishing and varied functions; a few small white cords, emerging from the brain and spinal marrow, acted on by distant objects, gives all the exquisite beauties of nature, in all her gorgeous coloring. Or the vibrations of the atmosphere all the harmonious sounds of the Universe.

The study of the organs, concerned in the manifestation of Mind, is one of vast and absorbing interest. Within a few years past, the physiology of the brain and nerves has been investigated with great zeal and ability. The researches of Gall, Spurzheim, Combe, and many others, have given an impulse to this department, that has cleared up many unexplained phenomena in physiological and metaphysical science. We do not pretend to endorse every thing that is claimed by these men; yet there are facts enough elicited in their investigations, to render their labors exceedingly valuable. It will not appear strange that great error may have been mixed up and blended with truth; especially, where the subject is surrounded with great obscurity. The ardent and

sanguine, in their search for facts to sustain a favorite theory, may have seized hold of some plausible appearances, and baptized them into their creed. It should be your aim in all these vexed questions, to steer clear, on the one hand, of an overweening credulity, or an obstinate scepticism. You must remember that absolute demonstration is not to be expected in matters appertaining to the science of mind. Your evidence must be inferential in many instances; and let me tell you, it is exceedingly unreasonable to doubt all that does not appear plausible. The human mind, after all, is one of the most incomprehensible and mysterious things in nature. Can any one explain its most simple act? Can you tell me how I raise my hand and place it on my breast? What connection has my will with the muscles of my arm? What sympathy has my eye with that distant grove, that lies like an island on the prairie? Or can you explain how, by an effort of the mind, we are transported to our distant firesides, see the familiar faces of our relatives and friends, as we left them a few weeks since; or how, with the velocity of thought, send our fancy to distant lands, skimming the boundless seas, scaling lofty mountains, sinking into sunless abysses, traversing the whole earth, and even up to the highest heaven, at the very foot of the throne of the Eternal.

What a mysterious thing is the human mind? the tenant of a home so perishable as the human body. A structure of bone and muscle, of membranes, nerves and blood vessels, liable to a thousand accidents, more perishable than idols made of wood and stone, yet the tenement of immortality.

Our business the ensuing winter will be in endeavoring to render this structure a place of comfort and security. Where shall we commence our labors? How so likely to succeed as to make ourselves thorough masters of this curious habitation, to keep it from decay, to prevent the worm and the insect from committing ravages, protecting it from the storms that sweep over the plains, and the mouldering damps that collect beneath its foundations, to guard against the devouring fire from within, and the scathing lightnings from without, the rude attack of hostile foes, or the secret ambush of hidden enemies. Like skillful engineers, our energies should be directed in warding off the attacks of the sappers and miners of life. Then, after having perfected yourselves in every branch of our art, you will go forth into the world on your errand of mercy.

And now, gentlemen, allow me to say a few words to you as practitioners of medicine and surgery. On setting out in the world as candidates for its honors, its riches, and its distinctions, a few simple precepts, if followed, will amply repay you for your trouble in acquiring.

Your first object is to secure patronage. How are you to do this most successfully, most honorably? You have your diploma, with its large seal, and blue ribbon, as a passport to the patronage of society. Will it be necessary for you to read this in bar-rooms, to a gaping crowd, who, because they do not understand a word of it, will invest with tenfold consequence? Or will you

entertain in the same place and on all occasions, the rabble, with stories of your exploits with the scalpel and bistoury, or astonishing cures, with heroic or secret remedies, that you alone are master of? Or a fool hardy boast of your disregard for human life and human suffering—making derision of human weakness and infirmity, as coming under your professional eye? Or lounging in stores or places of public resort, idling away valuable time in trifling conversation? No—I trust you have been too well bred, and thoroughly educated, to demean yourselves in this manner.

The first is the selection of a place to commence the practice of your profession. Next obtain an office in which you will make your books your companions, devoting such time as you can spare in reviewing your studies, or reading one or more journals of the day. In the selection of a journal, I would advise that you take a weekly and monthly, and also a bi-monthly, or quarterly.—The weekly, coming often, will be sure to be read; while the others contain such elaborate articles as can rarely be admitted into a smaller work. If you do not take some of the periodicals of the day, and spend a portion of time in reading them, you will find, in a few years, that you have been taking a Rip Van Winkle slumber, that will make that which is familiar to others, strange to you. The first year or so, you will probably have as much leisure as heart can wish. But do not despair at this seeming neglect of your claims on the public. If too much hurried and perplexed in business, you will be liable to mistakes; and society, knowing this, considerately deny you more than is for your good. Better, therefore, that you have too little than too much. A slower growth is more desirable; for, like Jonah's gourd, that which is the growth of a night, will perish before the day is gone. If you go to a place where all are strangers, a few letters of introduction may be advisable, but in delivering them, be exceedingly careful not to offend those to whom you are introduced by officious visits; especially, if the family happen to be sick, let them seek you out and tender you their hospitalities, and be very tardy in accepting them. Observe the most scrupulous delicacy in your enquiries into the health of their families, especially, should the family physician be in attendance, and do not seem to expect, that because you was introduced to them as a gentleman, you have at the same time a claim on their confidence and purse. The first business you will have will probably be from the poor. There is a true reason why this is so, and it is well for you to know it.—The patience of the older physicians has in some instances been exhausted by a long attendance on families whose exchequer is as light as their gratitude, and consequently, the doctor, who has been rather inattentive for some time ere this, is dropped, and the new one employed. Perhaps the former physician may have politely requested them to do some little labor for him, or respectfully hinted at some trifling remuneration for his professional services. Be this as it may, you are installed the poor man's family physician, and he receives as many visits when sick, as his aristocratic neighbor across the way. And why should he not? "Who

has made us to differ?" Are not his pains as acute, his nerves as sensitive? Is not his poor wife crushed with poverty and hard labor, as greatly to be pitied as her sister, who is surrounded with luxuries and comforts? Is not that child, who lies panting with croup, or livid with scarlatina, on its squallid bed of rags, as much an object of sympathy and solicitude as the rich man's child in yonder comfortable mansion? These poor people will be your first patients, and their gratitude and thanks your first fee. Esteem not these lightly, either, for it is giving you experience, it is giving you reputation. You have restored some poor wretch to health and happiness; you have given him back his wife, or his child, and in the fullness of his heart and gratitude, he blesses you, and tells his sick neighbor of your priceless cure.— That poor servant girl you have attended so faithfully when all others forsook her, now goes to that wealthy mansion, rich in her grateful heart and buoyant health. She tells casually the story of her woes to her mistress, who falls sick with what her imagination fancies is the same disease. And now it is that your benevolence, like "bread cast upon the waters, is found after many days." In this manner you will go on, until, finally, you will secure a large circle of practice, and earn an enviable position.— Remember this maxim and practice upon it. Get, first, a good reputation, and riches and honors will soon follow. When you select a place of residence, courtesy requires that you call on all the respectable physicians in the place. They will give you much valuable information, and feel better towards you; besides, it is due them, as a mark of respect. Notwithstanding you may have treated your brethren of the profession with the most studied politeness and liberality, I am sorry to say, you will meet with many who will treat you ill in return. But your course is clear, let such ones fight their battles alone, and slander and villify you in all directions, yet you will live to thank them for many a fee; and they will serve to advertise you in all directions, without your being obliged to pay the printer. I have never known an instance where a worthy young gentleman was attacked by one of these belligerent doctors, but what it made his fortune. There is something so illiberal, and palpably gross, and wrong, in such a course, that every body is disgusted, and shun the man who does it. Be deferential to the senior physicians in the town where you reside, and if you have your choice in cases where consultations are required, choose those who have age and experience. In consultations and the etiquette to be observed, I shall not dwell. The code of medical ethics adopted by the N. York State Medical Society, and, I believe, by most medical organizations, are of universal application, and you will adopt them as your standard.

In the course of your practice, scenes of woe and misery will cross your path, and you must fortify your mind to meet them with becoming firmness. You will be entrusted with the health, and even the life of a beloved woman. The young husband places in your hands that which he prizes above earthly treasures.— The hour so long hoped for, yet with trembling anxiety looked

forward to with dread, has at length come. You are summoned to the bed side of woman in her hour of trouble. You are to prove to her at this hour of need, a guardian of skill to save, or by your ignorance to destroy; to bring joy and tranquillity to this anxious family, or plunge it into an abyss of gloom and sorrow.

Here you will see a daughter, in whom a father and mother have garnered up their affections; she is their idol, and they worship her as a saint, or an angel of purity. And well may they, for she is beautiful in her hectic flush, which rivals the carnation in hue, that dark eye growing brighter and deeper, as her earthly portion wastes away to naught but mere spiritually. What does this great change mean? She has never complained, her spirits are buoyant, she dreams of naught but life and happiness. The anxious parents consult their physician. Alas! his sagacity but too plainly discovers the canker worm at work at the vitals; slow, certain, and fatal; and you will be compelled to witness the agony of suspense, the alternations of hope and despair, on the anxious parents, as their darling child glides onward to the grave.—Perhaps, in your desire to rescue your lovely patient, you order a visit to a southern clime. The sunny skies of Italy, or the orange groves of Florida, are tried. All that wealth, and skill, and kindness, and love, can do—all that the prayers of distracted relatives and friends can do, will not stop the destroyer, and as the fatal day draws nigh, gleams of hope flash up amid the surrounding gloom, ever and anon, to tantalize the hopes that are born but to perish. She sinks into the grave far from her native home, in a land of strangers; but to the last, her hopes were bright and her pathway strewn with flowers. Look on that mother with hectic cheek and eye of unearthly brightness—she is watching the gambols of that young child, scarce able to walk; her lip quivers, her bosom heaves; tears course each other over her burning cheeks. Why this emotion? Why that look of mingled sorrow and affection? The history of that woman is one of woe and suffering. That child “is the child of love, though born in bitterness.” In her days of innocent girlhood, she gave a woman’s confiding love to a villain, who swore before high Heaven to love, honor, and protect—but in one short year she is forsaken, and cast on a world’s cold charities. In the drunkard’s bowl he has smothered the last spark of affection, and forsook his love and his offspring.

In the course of your life, you will witness scenes of mental as well as physical suffering, that will defy the potency of your utmost skill, “for who can minister to a mind diseased?” In almost every state in this republic, noble asylums have been erected, which have done much to mitigate the sufferings of these unfortunates; still, all cannot be provided for, and the early stages of madness generally fall under the eye of the physician in private practice. From the slightest eccentricity of conduct to the furious onset of raging mania; a thousand shades will present themselves, requiring the keenest sagacity in many instances, to detect. The first paroxysm may be ushered in by a deed of horror that will send a thrill through community. An exemplary and dutiful

daughter may butcher her father and mother as coolly as if doing an ordinary act. A mother that has watched her babe with the affection and care that a mother only knows, takes the fatal knife and deliberately cuts the throat of her offspring, while sleeping the sleep of innocence. A tender husband may, in a moment of phrenzy, make his children motherless, and stain his soul with the murder of her whom a few short hours before, he would have "chid the winds of heaven for visiting too roughly." You will witness the strangest absurdities and inconsistencies. A son murders a father, from excess of affection, that he may escape a poverty that exists only in fancy. A mother kills her babes that they may go to Heaven with her. One hurries his soul before his Maker with his own hand, that he may escape some imaginary evil, and encounters dread reality from a fear that exists only in a distempered brain. Men have lost their senses from some good piece of fortune, and some real affliction has chased from the imagination a phantom that prosperity and affluence have nourished. A strong herculean intellect has sunk down to a driveling idiot, while a dull one, by the stimulus of insanity, has been quickened and regenerated. The blockhead has become a wit, and the wit a dunce. The exemplary and pious have been transformed into blaspheming demons, and the profane have assumed the garb and livery of Christianity. The weak and timid become brave as lions, while the strong of heart shrink from the most trifling appearance of imaginary danger.

In your intercourse you will witness many death bed scenes, and I advise you all, as Christians and philosophers, to draw a moral from each example. You will see youth and beauty surrounded by sorrowing friends, offering up prayers, and tears, and lamentations, while the object of their solicitude is waiting calmly and tranquilly, and with a smile of joy, the hour of dissolution; or we shall see age, and misery, and poverty, clinging, with iron grasp, to a life that has been one long series of trial and affliction. The triumphant death of the Christian, filled with the joys of immortality, or the sullen departure of the sceptic, who quakes with unmanly fears, or submits in sullen desperation. The miser, who has lived a life of want and misery, that his gold may rise up and taunt him with its worthless power to save in his final hour, and as he closes his eyes on his glittering treasure, he clutches it to his heart, as if to bear it along on his unknown journey. The spendthrift and profligate voluptuary, whose appetites and passions have long been extinguished on the altar of his lusts, now lies down with the vulture of conscience gnawing at his vitals. What an offering does he bring to the Author of his existence—the cold and worthless ashes of a misspent life. The child of sin and sorrow, she who was once the beloved of an admiring circle of relatives and friends—a serpent has whispered soft and treacherous words in her ear. She left her home of luxury and affection; that grey haired sire who nightly invoked blessings on her innocent head, that mother, who looked with pride on the budding loveliness of her second self. She left all these, friends, station, a home, to be cast forth upon the world a thing of

scorn and contempt, to die, perhaps, in a public charity, unpitied, unhonored, and alone.

Some of you gentlemen may be called to follow the armies of your country to the field of battle, and there, amid the shock of charging squadrons, or through an iron tempest of shot and shell, bear the wounded soldier to a place of safety, to bind up his wounds, and restore him to health and a nation's gratitude. Even now, the booming of cannon reverberates among the peaks of the lofty Cordilleras, and the clang of steel rises up from the plains of Mexico, while the smoke of battle hangs on the sides, and curls around the summits of her mountains, as if a new volcano had broken forth, and the glorious stars and stripes wave from the lofty battlements of the "Halls of the Montezumas." While man is striving against man in mortal combat, your brethren, like angels of salvation, are moving amid the carnage of the battle field, snatching many a brave soldier from his impending fate, mitigating the horrors of war, by a skill and assiduity that will return many a war worn veteran to health and a home in a land of liberty.

But it is not in the treatment of wounds alone that the military surgeon displays the greatest heroism. To face the deadly vomito on the scorching sands of the Terra Caliente, or the pestilential atmosphere of Vera Cruz, requires an amount of moral courage that challenges admiration. Yet there your brethren are firm at their posts with the deadly pestilence raging around them, the long, fatiguing march, the battle, the cold bivouac on the mountain's top, the tempests of wind and rain, the hunger and thirst, and care and anxiety, are the lot of the soldier surgeon as he follows our armies to the field of glory. The instances of medical heroism on record, are unsurpassed in point of moral courage, by any thing we read of. The courageous devotion and self-sacrificing zeal which has characterized our profession in all ages of the world, is scarcely exceeded by the martyrs of an holier faith.—The Black Death of the fourteenth century, the terrible plague of London in the year 1666, the yellow fever of Philadelphia in 1793, and the epidemic cholera which swept over the whole world in our own day, called forth examples of moral courage in so many noble instances, that the heart swells with honest pride in the contemplation.

But time would fail me in enumerating the varied scenes, circumstances, and situations under which you will labor. Mental, as also physical suffering, will often be your lot as you hurry from one place to another.

Your constitution will undergo a severe ordeal, from exposure to all the "skyey influences," the drenching rain and driving snow storm, "the pestilence that walketh in darkness and striketh at noonday," the sleepless nights and days of ceaseless care, require a constitution of iron and a heart of steel.

But we do not always encounter woe and sorrow, even in our professional avocations. Our paths often lead us amid scenes of enchanting beauty; landscapes of surpassing loveliness and grandeur, will frequently rise up to our view, or we wander beside

crystal streams, and through vales, where Hygeia's self might rear her altar. From the close and noisome atmosphere of the hospital, or sick room, we go forth to inhale the pure and bracing air, and enjoy the glorious sun shine of Heaven. The good cheer that awaits and the hearty welcome that attends the step of the physician, goes far to soften the rigors of a chilly atmosphere, or the comforts of our own firesides, where "'tis sweet to know there is an eye will mark our coming, and look brighter when we come."

There is one glaring fault, I am sorry to confess, lies at the door of our profession, and the younger members are more obnoxious to the charge than others. It is the boasting manner of speaking of the great cures they have performed, and an exemption from losing patients by their peculiar treatment. Whoever practices medicine a certain length of time, must certainly meet with losses, and although it may grieve his heart, he must submit with becoming fortitude, to what he cannot control. There are some diseases, from their very nature, that a fatal issue must be the result. Of such are some of the cases of scarlatina. From the onset, the patient is a doomed victim; no known remedy is of any avail. Even while walking about, or calmly eating a meal, the livid and purple skin shows that decomposition has already commenced in the fluids of the body, and the dissolving chemistry of death is usurping and taking the place of the vital functions.— You cannot cure a case of this description, and it argues no want of skill that your patient dies. Many diseases have passed the curative point when you are first consulted. Some vital organ is irrevocably destroyed, and you may as well raise a second Lazarus, or animate a marble statue, as to be successful.— The early stages must be seen, the first approaches are carefully to be watched, and promptly subdued; the outposts once carried, the fortress soon falls, an easy victim. In your prognosis, be exceedingly guarded and circumspect, until by experience and success, you have learned the true value of it. That Physician must have more than human sagacity, who was never at fault in his prognosis. There are, no doubt, a great many Physicians, who have observed nature with so accurate an eye, and studied her ways with such unerring certainty, as to be rarely mistaken. But these are veterans in the ranks, and their superior powers are the work of years of observation.

Be careful not to interfere with the *vis medicatrix natura*, for it is to this friendly and conservative principle, that you have to look for all your success. Encourage, foster, and aid when aid is wanting; but never expect support when you too roughly and violently outrage this all-powerful principle. Death, after all, in a great proportion of instances, is the submission to an imperative and stern law of nature, that is beyond the control of science. As fruit that is fully ripe, "and as a shock of corn ready for the harvest," so "man that is born of woman" must go down to the tomb, the "house appointed for all living."

When we look abroad over the face of nature, we discover many things that are calculated to fill us with admiration and astonishment, at the wisdom of the Great Author of the Universe. We discover a tree loaded with fair and lovely fruit; but every now and then one falls to the ground, prematurely ripe, or with the worm and insect at the core.— We cast our eyes over a forest scene; the giant trees rear their heads of verdure one above another, strong to do battle with the storm and

the hurricane—a tempest drives and sweeps with fury over the plain—the tall oak is uprooted—limbs are torn and scattered far and wide—a scene of desolation usurps the place of beauty. Still many an humble shrub and plant are left beneath the fallen trunk of the lofty tree.—Again we take a survey of a beautiful grove, we may remark that all are not perfect; a knotty and gnarled branch on one; a spot of decay on another; the leaves of one are beginning to wither. We enter a garden of flowers; they bloom around us, loading the air with their delightful perfume; some are just expanding to the light; others are dropping their petals. The insect is preying upon one; the worm at the root of another. The work of *death* is here. No place you will find exempt from the withering breath of the destroyer. The lofty pine is splintered by the thunderbolt of Heaven, while the modest violet at its root is trampled to death by the foot of some prowling enemy.

Under the same roof where an infant is born, the old and worn out are at the same time dying. A gay bridal party follow close on the heels of a funeral procession. “And the tones of the lute and the viol have scarce died away, before the requiem for the dead comes swelling after.” The last expiring groan of a dying mother, is followed by the first feeble cry of a new born infant.

Death can only be parried off a few years at most, and is as natural an event as the birth and growth of a being.

But if we cannot avert the last great enemy, we can do much to mitigate its sting, and rob it of its terrors. A skillful selection of all the resources our art furnishes, is the business of your lives; by their uses you may restore the glow of health to many a pallid cheek, give the fire and sparkle of pleasure to many a dim and tearful eye.—The wasted and withered form clothe in the garniture of glowing beauty; the lame and crippled wretch the sprightly elasticity of youth. The gloomy and wretched hypochondriac, peace of mind and the sunshine of happiness; the gibbering maniac “clothe in his right mind;” hope to the desponding soul, and the balm of consolation to the wounded spirit.

The revelations and secrets which belong to the profession should be guarded with the strictest fidelity. There is not a more prominent fault, or one deserving severer reprobation, than a violation of the sacred confidence in our professional honor. So sacred has this been deemed, that like the secrets of the confessional, courts of law have no power to compel us to divulge. This is proper, for the physician may become the depository of what may blast the good name, and destroy the peace and happiness of whole families. You may admonish the wicked and the profligate, and it is your bounden duty to do so; but never, as you value your good name, wantonly expose a professional secret, or scoff and make ridicule of human weaknesses and infirmities. Be ever the well bred gentleman, as from your position and education, society has a right to consider you. No coarse vulgarity of manner, or reckless disregard of the wholesome rules and regulations of life, should you ever be guilty of. In questioning your female patients, observe the most rigid propriety of language and manner, and the most scrupulous delicacy in your enquiries into the nature of their complaints; make no immodest allusions, for there is a language and manner that can never offend the ear or raise a blush on the cheek of modesty.

And finally, gentlemen, I advise you all to be good practical Christians. The education you have received, the studies you have pursued, all have a tendency to fit and prepare you for a belief in the sublime doctrines of Christianity. The scenes of wretchedness and woe you have so many times had under your observation, all point you to a home of immortality beyond the skies, and that this life, brief and fleeting as a meteor, is but a prelude and a preparation for a brighter and a happier sphere.