

A letter addressed to a Republican member of the House of Representatives of the State of Massachusetts : on the subject of a petition for a new incorporation, to be entitled "A College of Physicians."

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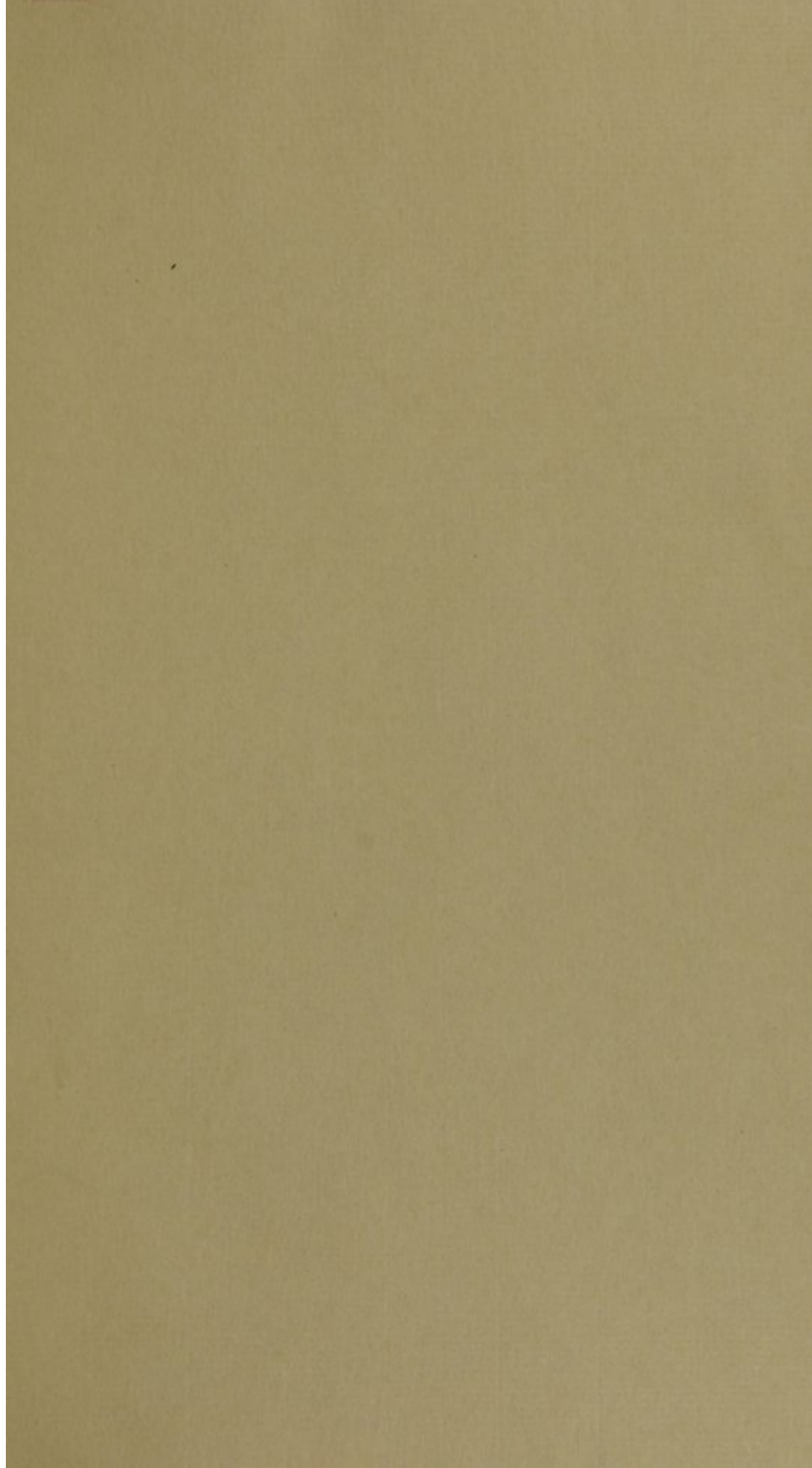


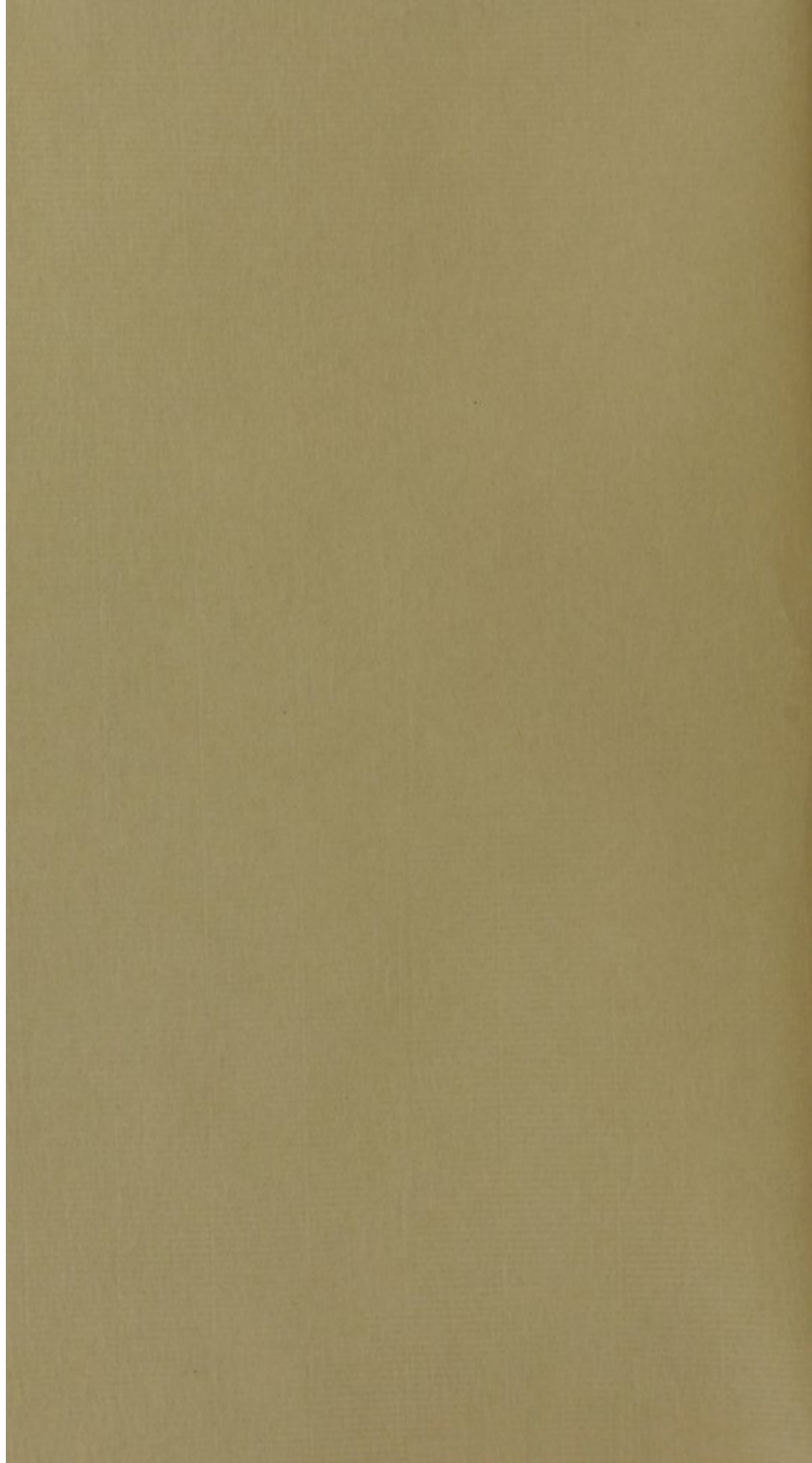
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



FOUNDED 1836

WASHINGTON, D.C.





Bay. Weld Esq

A

LETTER

ADDRESSED TO A

REPUBLICAN MEMBER

OF THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OF THE STATE OF

MASSACHUSETTS

ON THE SUBJECT OF A PETITION FOR A NEW INCORPORATION,
TO BE ENTITLED "A COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS."

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY JOHN ELIOT, JUN.

1812.



Some apology is necessary for the appearance of this letter in print. It was not originally intended for publication; but having been thought by some of the friends of the Medical Society and Institution to contain the principal truths in favour of these establishments, its publication was recommended, especially as these truths had never been presented to the public view; the friends of these institutions having considered it improper to *obtrude professional disputes into the newspapers*, on a subject, which was to be fully discussed by the legislature. The gentleman to whom it was addressed coinciding in the recommendation, the publication was consented to, from a sincere desire to prevent the repetition of disturbances and disgraceful scenes, which formerly occurred at PHILADELPHIA, and are now existing at NEW YORK; on condition however that the deficiency of attention to the style and the arrangement of the facts should be excused, as it was not convenient to the author to put them into better form. For accuracy in the statement of these facts he is responsible.

BOSTON, JANUARY 1, 1812.

Dear Sir,

NOT having been so fortunate as to meet you when I had the honor of calling on you a few days since, I will take the liberty to put on paper those thoughts, which have occurred to me respecting a petition for an incorporation of a college of physicians, by the legislature of this state. I hope you will excuse the length, to which these observations may extend, when you discover the extraordinary nature of this petition, and that it is almost unprecedented in this or any other state.

In order to expose the subject fairly, allow me, in the first place, to state what arguments might be employed to induce the government to give their sanction to an establishment of this nature. All that I have heard of, or can imagine, are comprised under the following heads.

I. That the powers of the medical institutions already existing, under the authority of the government, are not sufficiently extensive for the purposes of the present improved state of medical science in this country.

II. That although the powers vested in these bodies may be sufficient; yet that through the neglect of those who possess them, they are not so actively employed for the benefit of the community as their nature will admit.

III. That the individuals who have been appointed to important situations in these establishments are inadequate to the discharge of the functions allotted them.

IV. That the existing institutions exclusively and unjustly favor particular sets of men, or particular opinions.

V. That allowing none of those difficulties to exist in the old institutions, still the formation of a new one, from the spirit of emulation excited, or from the mere increase of number, must be attended with public advantage.—These comprehend I suppose all the arguments, that can be ad-

duced on this occasion; and I freely admit that, if they are correctly founded, some change ought to be made.

I. Are the powers possessed by the institutions already in existence sufficiently ample?

The answer to this question is brief. These powers are all the legislature have seen fit to grant, in repeated acts for the advancement of medical science. If they are not sufficient, the justice of the government would be ready to bestow on ancient laborious associations, as great privileges as they would allow to a new one; which would at once destroy the force of this argument, in favor of any new society.

The principal additional power, which has been desired by some medical gentlemen, has been that of controlling quackery; or compelling individuals to submit to a certain education before attempting the practice of medicine. This subject has been more than once discussed in the legislature, and they have seen reasons sufficient to prevent their granting such power. It is certainly of the utmost importance to the community that quackery should be restrained, and that gentlemen looking forward to the practice of physic should be induced to obtain a sufficient education. But it is impossible in any country, and more especially in a country like ours, to effect these objects in any other way, than by influencing public opinion. Such an influence it has been the design of the Massachusetts Medical Society to exercise, and while its efforts are not thwarted by a rival in such ways, as will be pointed out, while that society continues to comprehend the great body of respectable physicians in the Commonwealth, this just and salutary influence, in these important respects, will be continually increasing. It does not appear however that any powers of this nature are demanded by the memorialists for this corporation beyond those already in the hands of the Medical Society.

II. But are the powers which have been granted, properly exerted? Are they not, through the negligence of the possessors allowed to lie dormant, and thus the liberal intentions of government to be defeated?

In answer to this question we must state something of the history of the Massachusetts Medical Society and of the Medical School of Harvard University; institutions with which the projected one is to be brought in competition.

The Medical Society was founded in the year 1783 by a small number of physicians, comprehending the most respectable practitioners in the State. In addition to the power of making internal regulations, they received authority to examine candidates for the practice of medicine, and when approved to give them testimonials of their ability to exercise their profession. In a subsequent act, they obtained leave to designate the authors to be studied by candidates. After some years of trial it was found, that the numbers of the society were too limited to have a general influence on the profession. A new act was obtained to enable the society to embrace all the respectable physicians in the State; and they immediately proceeded to exercise this power by the selection of every individual of eminence, so far as they could gain information, from the banks of Connecticut river to the eastern boundary of the District of Maine.

The society has now become a popular body, and assumed a new aspect. About two hundred and fifty of the faculty of all parties are at this time engaged in the attempt to increase the honour of their profession, to check the intrigues and artifices of the selfish, and to ameliorate the condition of suffering individuals. Between 70 and 80 of these convene annually for the purpose of inspecting the proceedings of their executive officers, of improving their regulations, and considering what can be done for the advantage of the profession and the public. The counsellors meet with great regularity three times a year to perform the duties assigned them by the society. The censors meet the same number of times for the examination of candidates; and no instance has ever occurred of complaint of their want of patience, impartiality and intelligence in the discharge of an important and painful duty.

District societies are established in various parts of the state for the purpose of scientific improvement, and for the convenience of those candidates for examination, who cannot readily present themselves to the censors in the capital. While the society have thus industriously pursued the regulation of the profession, they have not omitted the improvement of it by literary publications. Since the year 1806 the society have issued six works of acknowledged importance and ability, all of them their own productions, and entirely supported by their own funds. (See Note A.) Of these, one especially has effected a complete change in the language of a branch of medical science, and produced an exactness

in the use of the names of medicinal substances, and a precision in their preparation, which has greatly relieved practitioners of medicine, and contributed to the safety of the community. A change of this nature, although universally desired, has never yet been attempted by medical societies of other states of the union, excepting one, which has adopted the production of this Society. So that the labours of the Massachusetts Medical Society for the regulation of the profession, and for its improvement by literary publications, are not paralleled by those of any in the United States.

You will ask me whether provision has been made to instruct, as well as regulate the medical profession. This duty has been very properly confided to another body, springing from the fountain of science in the state. In the year 1780 lectures on anatomy were first given in the town of Boston, by a hospital surgeon in the service of the United States. On the invitation of the head of the University, President Willard, and with the concurrence of the government, these were transferred to Cambridge, and three medical professorships were established in the year 1782. From that time to the present, lectures have been annually given in Cambridge, though under considerable disadvantages, especially in the earlier years of the institution, when the access to Cambridge from Boston rendered the labors of the professors residing in the latter place particularly severe. About two years since, on a representation from a majority of the medical professors, of the superior advantages to be obtained in a large town, for the improvement of medical students, the corporation of Harvard University were induced to consent to the delivery of annual courses of medical lectures in Boston; stipulating at the same time, that a course of anatomy and one of chemistry should also be given at Cambridge for the benefit of the students in the University. The labours of the professors of these two branches were thus at once more than doubled without any addition of pecuniary compensation; but rather a diminution as to one branch. The professors, with the aid of the corporation, then obtained permission of the overseers of the poor of the town of Boston to attend the sick in the almshouse, and to allow the medical students to see their practice. This was granted on condition that the professors should relinquish the salary usually allowed the physician, and *should also defray the expence of medicines for the sick*. The attendance on the sick has been much improved by this change. The professors

then prepared convenient rooms for the purpose of giving their lectures, and commenced the first public course in Boston, in the year 1810; and after concluding a course, occupying about ten weeks, the professors of anatomy gave another course at Cambridge of about six weeks, for which two courses their receipts have not at present equalled the expenditures, although the number of students has been double that of former years.

Having made this simple statement of facts, it is to you I must leave the decision; whether the officers of these institutions have neglected to exercise the powers and to perform the duties assigned them; whether it can reasonably be expected that others will exhibit more zeal or devote greater exertions to the publick good, and whether a contemptuous treatment of such exertions would not be discouraging.

III. We have now a delicate affair to consider, and that is, whether they, who fill responsible stations in these institutions, are qualified for the duty of their respective offices; or whether they are stupid and ignorant pretenders, who have obtained their places by accident or favoritism.

The officers of the Medical Society are elected by and from among the counsellors of the society, and as they have been annually continued for some years back, they probably are not peculiarly inadequate to their stations, otherwise the counsellors would have omitted them, or the SOCIETY would have struck their names from the list of counsellors. We find that the superior officers of the society have always been men of the first respectability in their profession, as will appear when we mention the names of the former presidents, viz. EDWARD A. HOLYOKE, WILLIAM KNEELAND, COTTON TUFTS, SAMUEL DANFORTH, ISAAC RAND. The office of censors is perhaps the most responsible of any. The same gentlemen have fulfilled this duty many years, to the acceptance of the society and of the candidates, without a charge against them; unless you consider as such, the gross and contemptible insinuations of anonymous newspaper writers.

As to the ability of those who are invested with the office of instructing students of medicine, I shall not venture to say any thing, as it involves considerations of a personal nature. If you would be informed on this head, I beg leave to refer to the students, who have attended the lectures, since the removal of the institution to Boston. From them

you will ascertain, whether there is a deficiency of zeal or ability on the part of these lecturers. They will be able to inform you whether they have made considerable improvement in this institution, and whether the advantages of it are such as to give promise of rivalling any other school in the United States, and making it an ornament to this commonwealth, provided it be not pulled down, as soon as built up. (See Note B.)

IV. Do the existing institutions favor unjustly and exclusively particular sets of men, or particular opinions?

I do not know that it has been ever openly asserted, that any peculiar medical tenets or opinions are intended to be supported by the medical institutions of this state. If such assertions have been made, they are destitute of foundation. It has always been a leading principle, with those concerned in the instruction of young men here, to prevent them from adopting exclusively any particular theory, before their reading and experience could be sufficient to enable them to modify general opinions to individual cases. The exclusive adoption or entire rejection of particular sets of opinions has therefore been uniformly avoided; although it is well known that nothing is so adapted to captivate the minds of young men, and spread the popularity of a medical school, as the enthusiastic propagation of brilliant theories.

Whether any particular sets of men, or parties have been favored, is a point important to be examined, because it has been more than insinuated, wherever it was thought such insinuations would have a favourable effect.

The constitution of the Medical Society is elective and highly popular. From sixty to seventy counsellors are annually chosen by the fellows, and the counsellors in turn choose all the officers of the Society, so that there are such frequent opportunities of changing officers, that it is impossible any set of men, who might get into office by intrigue, should support themselves without the confidence of the society. So far from this being the case, it is a fact that many of the present officers of the society continue to hold their places, because others cannot be found who are equally willing to assume the laborious duties connected with their situations. The elections of fellows into the society are as liberal as can be devised. Practitioners of a certain standing and of a good reputation are *sought for*, and admitted without regard to any other consideration. The

subject of political party has been farthest from view in all discussions, as to the qualification of candidates ; and any fellow who should make objections to a candidate on such ground, would be publicly censured. Gentlemen of different political opinions have, as far as professional acquisitions entitled them, equally shared the honours of the society. We find, for example, that of the two gentlemen elected last year to give the annual dissertation, there was one of each political party, and the same thing has happened this year, and in both instances, without a question, whether they had the same or different political opinions.

V. Fearful of fatiguing you with discussions, which, though vitally important to the successful cultivation of the medical art, can be of no other interest to you than as a friend and protector of science, I pass to the last inquiry, Whether the rivalry excited by a new institution would not be beneficial in its effects ; and whether the mere increase of these societies would not be advantageous to the community ; for it has been asserted that " experience has proved, that two literary and scientific societies produce more than double the advantages of one."

Let us then examine the results of experience. As there are no other literary or scientific societies in this state, which can be considered as nearly resembling a medical society, that undertakes at the same time to govern and instruct the profession, which the proposed one to is do, we must search for precedents in the pages of medical history. We find in this country two, one at PHILADELPHIA, which so far as I can ascertain, nearly, though not exactly, resembles the present case. (See Note C.) A medical school was constituted at Philadelphia, about fifty years ago. This, excepting in the revolutionary war, has been improving since that period, till some years ago, when, in consequence of private animosities, a rival society was established. Great divisions and disputes between the physicians of that state were the consequence. All engaged in one party or the other, and no medical subject could be brought forward, respecting which, the opponents did not maintain different opinions, and pursue them at all hazards. Medical science was obscured, the progress of medical instruction was checked, and some fortunate rival at that time might forever have extinguished the hope of Philadelphia, to give the first medical school to the United States. The danger was discovered, the parties agreed to bury their disputes and

unite their efforts for the same object. Since that period, various circumstances have elevated the medical school of Philadelphia to the highest reputation. These circumstances are its connection with the university, its central situation, the impossibility of pursuing some parts of medical instruction in the southern states, the industry and learning of its professors, the liberality of its government, and its excellent hospital.

Had the legislature of the state of Pennsylvania patronized another medical school in opposition to that established, or were they to do so now, they would ruin an institution which is an honour to that state and to the whole country.

The recent occurrences in the state of New-York bear so close a resemblance to what may be expected here, as to carry conviction to the mind of every unprejudiced individual.

A medical school was established in Columbia College in the city of New-York in the year 1769. The labours of this institution were interrupted by the revolutionary war, and not resumed till the year 1792. The re-establishment of the School would probably have taken place sooner but for the terrible outrages of a mob excited in the year 1787, by imprudence in carrying on the dissections. After the renovation of the School, it gradually improved till the year 1806, though its progress was checked by an apprehension produced by former disasters. In that year the legislature was prevailed on, by various means, to establish a College of Physicians, which, however, was placed under the superintendence of the University, as well as the other institution. Among the inducements to create this new establishment, was undoubtedly the opinion that it might have a political influence. Whether this hope was realized, we shall see presently. As soon as the new College was set up, then commenced the emulation and rivalry between the two Schools. Every method was practised to destroy the old institution, by a series of intrigues. The whole profession engaged in one party or the other, and were so far from thinking of the improvement of science, that they employed their principal exertions to interrupt the progress of each other. At last the members of the new College began to quarrel among themselves, and thus a perfect chaos in the medical world was soon generated. The students of medicine, were so disgusted with these feuds and animosities, that the new College was entirely deserted in the year 1810--11,

and the professors being unwilling to lecture to the walls were compelled to relinquish their courses. A leading federalist now obtained an influence in this College, and undertook to terminate the whole difficulty by a combination of the two Schools. This plan was agreed to by the University. (See Note D.) A new brood of professors was soon hatched, in number *thirteen*; but so singularly arranged, that those parts were stuck together, which ought to have been separated; while others were disjointed which had a natural connection. The consequence was, that three quarters of the new professors were dissatisfied with the arrangement, and resigned their offices. Thus arose a source of fresh difficulties and disputes. The new College was set at variance not only with the old, but with a still more formidable party of those, who conceived themselves ill treated; whose numbers were swelled by an addition of young and active recruits. A considerable portion of these were of the federal party; but singular, as it may seem, they arranged themselves under the banners of a high republican. Thus the republican College was led by a federalist, and the federal institution by a republican. From which, it appears very clearly, *that it is vain to expect political influence from scientific societies.* The new institution soon prepared a novel and captivating plan, modelled on that of the French national institute; and being resolved not to be behind hand as to *professors*, they produced to the public a flock of seven new ones. (See Note E.) This new institution sets at defiance the legislature and the university, the old college and the new college. Their animosity is however principally directed against the latter, which they expect to overturn.

You probably will hardly read this true and genuine history supported by authentic documents, without a smile of ridicule, at such furious contentions among men of science. Their effect however is extremely pernicious; for the tumults of so large and active a body of men as the medical profession, must vibrate through the whole of society. The legislature especially is continually harrassed with applications, and petitions, and remonstrances, and protests. Had this body, in the first instance refused their sanction to a measure intended to destroy the old college for the sake of gratifying two or three ambitious individuals; had they granted their encouragement to an institution, which was radically good, all these embarrassments would have been prevented. Instead of *three* petty quarrelsome Schools, we should have seen one useful institution in great activity, excited to con-

stant exertion by the example of *Philadelphia* and the liberality of the legislature.*

It may be said that New-York gives to the world three periodical publications in medicine ; but this is no proof of a flourishing state of science. These *three* publications are of a piece with the *three* medical schools. The majority of them are the emanations of party spirit, and the weapons of mutual attack. We believe the three to be less valuable than one formerly was, and than one at Philadelphia now is. The rays of science ought not to be dispersed in this way. They must be concentrated, to produce their full effect.

The productions alluded to are not the works of incorporated bodies ; but of individuals. No Medical Society in the United States has published any literary work except the Societies of Massachusetts and Connecticut. The latter has made but one publication, while the Massachusetts Society has published at least seven works of some importance.

Shall we cross the Atlantic in search of instances like the present ? I believe we shall find none. No example can be discovered where a government has sanctioned two bodies with the same medical jurisdictions in the same place.—In France we find two great medical Schools, the School of medicine at Paris, and the University of medicine at Montpellier ; but these are situated some hundred miles apart.—In Great Britain we find that in Edinburgh, as in this State, there are two great medical institutions, one for the instruction, the other for the government of the profession. The medical school of the University instructs nearly all the physicians of Great Britain ; and the Royal College of physicians, is an institution for the regulation of physicians. In London, we find *the two separate bodies* of physicians and surgeons each controlled by a Royal College ; but no example of two institutions for the government of the same body of men, in the same place.

So much for “experience.” We find that no experiment of this nature has been tried in Europe ; and that the experiments of this country prove that two medical institutions should not be admitted in the same jurisdiction. Is it necessary to point out the absurdity of establishing two sep-

* The legislature of New-York have granted to the College of Physicians, 20,000 dollars in cash, the Botanic garden, worth 70,000 dollars, and are now about making further provision. Besides which, their professors have access to the hospital.

arate bodies to effect the same object, when it ought to be, and can be, and is effected by one? Who would think of proposing to have two State legislatures, because one is beneficial?

The new Medical Society would in all probability attempt to increase the number of its supporters, by the admission of men into the profession who would otherwise be rejected as unqualified. The most important of the powers given by the legislature to the present Medical Society, that of examining candidates for practice, would thus be virtually annihilated.—The qualifications required of candidates by the new institution, would in all probability vary from those established by the old; for this rival society would be little disposed to adopt the measures of its antagonist; or, if the Legislature compelled it to adopt them, the evil would not be materially lessened, for the decisions on examinations would be such as to prevent the young men from throwing themselves into the arms of the other society. Thus, by the establishment of a new society with the powers demanded, would be prostrated in a moment, what it has cost the present society the labours of many years to erect; I mean their regulations to prevent impositions on the public, by persons not qualified to practice the art of medicine.

Whether there would be any interference with the medical school may be decided by the following considerations.—This institution has been gradually raised by a labour of thirty years, to be as important and efficient an establishment as the country can well support. Or in other words; the number of medical students which would resort to a school in the town of Boston, cannot be more than sufficient to present an adequate compensation to any set of men busily engaged in their profession. If the legislature give their sanction to other institutions for the same purposes, the existing one will be robbed of its nourishment, and become less flourishing and useful than it now bids fair to be; and the advantages of it, at present small to those who support it, will be too diminutive to induce a sacrifice of other concerns. It must not be said that if this institution has merit, its success cannot be impaired by the creation of another; it is well known that a multitude of arts may be put in practice to attract students to a new institution of this kind, especially when it has extraordinary privileges and the hand of government to support it.*

* The two or three zealous advocates for the proposed College, would have it believed, that their designs are opposed from an apprehension of their tal-

Would there not be some degree of injustice in depriving an institution, raised by a long series of labours to a promising condition, of that cheering countenance and encouragement which men, who exert themselves liberally in public works, have reason to expect of their government. If there are men anxious to make themselves conspicuous by some new exertion, let them do it. Let them form associations for mutual improvement, let them offer to instruct the public, let them do any thing but demand of the legislature an assignment of powers to themselves, not bestowed on any other body of men, and to which they certainly have no peculiar claim. Is it not probable also, that they will hereafter make a demand on the legislature for funds to support their institution?

Having, as I believe, fairly represented the fallacy of the arguments in favour of this new corporation, let us view, in a distinct form, some of the objections to it.

The first is the unavoidable destruction among practising physicians of an honorable ambition to attain and preserve respectability, with a view to get admitted into the medical society, because the desire of making proselytes would, in all probability, procure them admission into the new institutions *without that respectability*.

Second, the loss of a necessary stimulus to students to prepare themselves thoroughly for their professional duties; because, for the reason above mentioned, they might probably be admitted to practise without proper qualifications.

Third, the annihilation of that extraordinary harmony, which has prevailed in the medical profession of this state. This though at present somewhat interrupted by the conduct of a small number of the petitioners, is still very general, and it is important to the community that it be preserved.

Fourth, the accumulation in a single body of powers and privileges, such as never were granted to any medical corporation in this state, which no such corporation ever ventured to ask, and which if bestowed at all ought to be allowed to those, who, by their exertions, have acquired some claim on the public.

It may be urged that some of the petitioners are respectable for their age and rank in their profession. I shall read-

ents. This is a mistake. It is not an apprehension of their talents which would create any opposition; but an apprehension of those means which are usually employed to *supply a deficiency of talent*.

ily allow this to be true ; at the same time, it must be remembered, those gentlemen are of that age in which men usually retire from these associations, and leave the labours and honours of them to younger men. The gentlemen in question have actually done so many years back, after some of them had held honorable stations as long as they seemed to desire. Nor in reality do those persons mean to take an active part in the projected society, and to render it respectable by their talents and exertions. The persons who would probably take the lead in the contemplated institution, if it were granted, are of a very different description. They wanted the names of some respectable men, and by importunity in most cases they obtained them. They probably wanted the names only ; it is at least known, that they will not have any thing more. It is known that nearly all who possess titles to respectability and importance, have unequivocally declared that they felt themselves very little interested in the success of the application, and that they did not intend to perform the labours of the society, if it should be established. Even among the junior petitioners the same avowals of indifference have been made in some instances, so that we cannot set down as heartily engaged in the cause, more than three or four of the petitioners. Is it just that a few men, who have no extraordinary claims on the public, should be supported in introducing confusion into the medical profession, and rewarded with privileges withheld from a mass of meritorious characters, because they have induced a few respectable men, to lend the use of their names to the petition ?

Fifth. The probable demand on the legislature for funds to support this College of Physicians.

Sixth. A very strong objection to granting this petition is founded on the impropriety of the methods, which have been employed to obtain it. Instead of placing the cause on the broad foundation of truth and public good, and relying on the wisdom of the legislature to do justice, we must state with regret, that no artifice has been spared to influence the public opinion. Some of the means employed must be mentioned to you, the others are too unworthy to admit of my putting them on paper.

The methods employed to effect the establishment of the College of Physicians have been such as follow.

1st. Attempts to excite a jealousy in the public against the Medical Society ; to excite a jealousy between the Medical Society and Medical School ; to excite a jealousy, *in* the Medical Society, of the physicians of Boston and its vicinity ; to excite a jealousy in Boston of two or three individuals.

2dly. To impose an opinion on the public, that the Medical Society has not done its duty by making publications, and that the petitioners bid fair to do better than the Medical Society, when it is notorious, that only one of the latter has contributed to any literary publication of consequence.

3dly. To excite a political influence in favour of this petition, when fair arguments failed. The republicans are told this is to be a high republican institution, (with a *federalist* at its head;) the federalists are told there is nothing political in the thing; that it is merely a scientific institution to renovate the degraded doctors of Massachusetts.

4thly. To obtain an interest in the legislature, by personal application and solicitation among the members of that honourable body, to a greater extent than has been usually practised, or than a good cause requires.

5thly. The publication of a great number of papers filled with misrepresentation and falsehood; some of them actually libellous; others calculated to excite the commiseration of the public by the convenient cry of *persecution*.

It should seem from these various statements, at one time that the medical institutions now existing are buried in torpor and stupidity, and entirely deficient in public exertions; at another time that these same bodies are active and insatiate devourers of all the medical power and influence of the state. In short this and every thing else has been represented exactly in the way to suit the occasion, without any regard to previous statements, or to the truth.

These, Sir, are a part of the methods that have been employed to obtain the establishment of an association with the high sounding title of COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS. These are the harbingers of "a friendly and liberal intercourse between professors of medicine," and of "the discouragement of selfish, unworthy, and monopolizing practices."

On the other hand, Sir, it is impossible for the friends of the Medical Society and the Medical School to employ such methods to influence the public mind. Satisfied with the goodness of our cause, we rely on the enlightened fathers of this Commonwealth to give to it a fair consideration, and to decide on it justly. We have no desire to see the institutions we value continue in existence, if they cannot be supported by honourable means, and for honourable ends.

I am very respectfully, &c.

NOTES.

Note A. The petition for a College of Physicians is signed by twelve Gentlemen, most of whom have been, for many years, members of the Massachusetts Medical Society, and some of them in distinguished offices under that institution. The Society have repeatedly and urgently called upon their members for communications, and such as have been received have been published as fast as their funds would admit. The transactions of the Society since the year 1806, together with other communications, contain the following original matter from its members in this State.

A Dissertation on Narcotic Plants by Dr. Joshua Fisher, Vice Pres. of Mass. Medical Society.

A Case of Ruptured Uterus, by Dr. Oliver Prescott.
 On Dislocation and Fracture, by Dr. Richard Hazeltine.
 On Puneture of the Bladder, by Dr. James Thacher.
 Remarks on a wound of the femoral artery, by Dr. J. C. Warren.
 Observations on Worms, by Dr. Joshua Fisher.
 On Retroverted Uterus, by Edward A. Holyoke, M. D.
 Singular Affection of the neck of a child, by Dr. John Bartlett.
 On extravasated tumour, by Dr. Joseph Osgood.
 On Tetanus, by Dr. Josiah Bartlett.
 Extra-uterine case, by Dr. George Osgood.
 On Strangulated Crural Hernia, by Dr. J. C. Warren.
 Case of Calculi in the bladder, by Dr. Josiah Bartlett.
 On the Vesicating Properties of the Potatoe Fly, by Dr. John Gorham.
 On Lymphatic Swellings, by Dr. James Mann.
 On the Influenza of 1807, by Dr. James Jackson.
 Ovarial schirrus, and incised dropsy, by Dr. Amos Holbrook.
 On Organick Diseases of the heart, a work of 60 pages, by Dr. J. C. Warren.
 An Account of the Spotted Fever, in a report collected from various parts of the State, a work of 234 pages, by

Drs. Thomas Welsh,
 James Jackson,
 John C. Warren.

History of Medicine in Massachusetts, by Dr. Josiah Bartlett.

An Account of vaccination in a report of 138 pages, by

Drs. John Warren,
 Aaron Dexter,
 James Jackson,
 John C. Warren.

A phamacopæia for Massachusetts of 272 pages, by

Drs. James Jackson,
 John C. Warren.

In 1804 was published a Dissertation on Phthisis Pulmonalis, and warm bath, by Isaac Rand, M. D. President of the Society.

From this account it appears that only one Gentleman of the twelve Subscribers to the petition for a college of physicians, has ever contributed any thing to the common stock of information.

Note B. Although it does not seem proper to discuss the personal merit and ability of the professors, yet it may be useful to present a slight view of the present state of the Medical School in Boston.

The lectures in this institution commence in November, and terminate in the beginning of February. They are continued daily for the space of three months.

In the lectures on Anatomy and Surgery, the students have an opportunity of seeing all the parts of which the human body is composed, demonstrated in the most careful and minute manner; these demonstrations are assisted by various preparations; the parts are afterwards exhibited to them in private, in order that they may examine them closely, and thus obtain a more distinct and satisfactory knowledge of them. The surgical operations are all performed before them and explained as far as is necessary, and the structure of parts concerned in important operations is minutely exhibited. They have some opportunities of seeing operations in the private practice of the professors, and in the Alms house; also a great number of common surgical cases in the latter place. The professors of this branch, finding themselves crowded with important matter, have for the advantage of students invited a gentleman to give separate lectures on midwifery, in which the principles of that important art are distinctly taught, and the practice, even so far as to allow the students to operate themselves on machines contrived for the purpose. In order to stimulate the students to avail themselves of their advantages, they are weekly examined by the professor of anatomy in all their studies during the preceding week.

The professor of chemistry exhibits all the important experiments, which belong to that brilliant and interesting branch of science. This is principally executed by the aid of an extensive apparatus belonging to himself. The galvanic battery alone cost one hundred and fifty dollars.

In the department of Medicine, Lectures on the Theory and Practice are given. Students are taken to visit the sick in the Almshouse, and afterwards, the nature of their diseases, the mode of practice adopted, and the probable results are explained. In case of the death of the patient, permission, if possible, is obtained to examine the body with the students, and point out the various changes produced by disease.

After the courses are concluded, the professors examine such students as wish to obtain degrees, and, if approved, the students afterward write a medical dissertation, which they read to the President and professors, and then gain their degrees.

The expences of this establishment are very heavy, and so disproportionate to the receipts, that the institution will be no object unless the resort to it be greatly increased. Thus far the professors have not considered private emolument as of any importance. No individuals can be expected to labour forever without reward, and they are induced to make sacrifices at present with a view to the future improvement of an institution, which shall be honourable to themselves and to their native state.

The expenses of this institution arise from the rent of the building it is placed in; from the important alterations and repairs which the professors have made and are still compelled to make occasionally; from the anatomical preparations; from the chemical apparatus; from the transport and care of the library; from the medicines supplied the Alms house, which cost each of the professors of Anatomy, Chemistry, and Clinical medicine upwards of one hundred dollars per annum, besides their attendance; from very heavy contingent expences; but above all from the sacrifice of a very large portion of valuable time to the various duties of the institution.

Is it to be expected that the emulation to be produced by another institution, (for all this was done or planned before another institution was heard of) will increase the exertions of these professors? By no means. It is impossible they can do more. On the contrary, the moment another is sanctioned by the legislature, a part of their stimulus to exertion is destroyed.

Note C. Extracts from a pamphlet published by Dr. Hosack in New York, in 1811.

"Similar documents which I have received, of the state of medical learning in the city of Philadelphia, for the same period of time, afford abundant evidence of the comparative success of the School of that city, and the stationary, if not retrograde, condition of our own. It will be also proper to add, that prior to the year 1791, owing to similar dissensions with those at present existing in New-York, there were two distinct Medical Schools in the city of Philadelphia, viz. that of the *College of Philadelphia*, and another connected with the *University of Pennsylvania*; and that, before they became united under the University of the state, they mutually injured each other, but neither became respectable. An union was at last effected by combining the talents of both in the same institution. Since that event, the Medical School of that city has acquired such celebrity, that in the number of its pupils it is at present only surpassed by the University of Edinburgh. It has not only been a source of honour and emolument to its Professors, but has also been the means of advancing the literary character of the state of Pennsylvania, and of increasing the wealth of the city of Philadelphia.

"It is calculated that at least one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars are annually expended in Philadelphia by the medical students resorting to that city from different parts of the union."*

Note D. "At a meeting of the Regents of the University of New York, held, pursuant to adjournment, in the Senate Chamber, April 1, 1811.

"The committee to whom were referred several papers relative to the state of the College of Physicians and Surgeons in the city of New-York, report, that unfortunate misunderstandings have taken place between several professors of that institution which have already materially impeded its operations, and unless something effectual be done by the regents, it will become degraded in the estimation of the public, and its usefulness will be inevitably destroyed.

"The committee have forbore to trace and bring to light the conduct of individuals, because in their opinion it would be both useless and invidious.

"Propositions have been made to the committee to re-model the institution, with a view of rendering its operation more simple, and of introducing into it several of the professors of the medical school in Columbia College, and other eminent and distinguished individuals; this proposition has been viewed by the committee in the most favourable light, as it may extinguish the feuds existing among the present professors of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and as it will, in all probability, be the means of uniting the two schools.

"The latter appears an object of the first importance, in as much as it will assemble, in one institution, a splendid collection of medical and surgical talents, and as it cannot fail to merit and receive the patronage and encouragement of the Legislature.

"It is unnecessary for the committee to attempt to display the important advantages to the state which a well organized medical school in the city of New-York must afford; its hospital, and the subjects furnished by the state prison, without the violation of law, present a field for the acquisition of medical and surgical knowledge unrivalled in the United States, and it is only requisite to establish an institution, under the fostering care of the Legislature, in which shall be united the best talents, and to secure these advantages to the state.

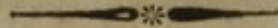
* The principal professors of the Philadelphia school receive from six to eight thousand dollars a year, for a course of lectures of four months. They have also an elegant building furnished by the public. In Boston the courses are three months long. The building is at the expence of the professors themselves.

"Under these impressions the committee beg leave to report an alteration of the Charter of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and to propose a new list of officers and professors."

Note E. *Extract from a Circular Letter, published in New York, in October, 1811.*

"THE advantages which have accrued to the Arts and Sciences by a concentration of the talents and exertions of individuals in public Institutions, are universally known. The National Institute of France, and the Royal Institution of London, present models of such establishments, which every enlightened community must feel anxious to imitate. The former, embracing an immense range of learning, has enhanced the solid and lasting glory of the nation; and the latter, though founded originally in voluntary association, is become the most illustrious school of Chemistry, and of all the other branches of physical knowledge, in the world. Animated by the example of these establishments, a number of friends of learning in this state, have been induced to associate for the purpose of organizing, in the city of New-York, an Institution for promoting instruction and investigation in medical science, and in all the branches of knowledge having an immediate connexion therewith.

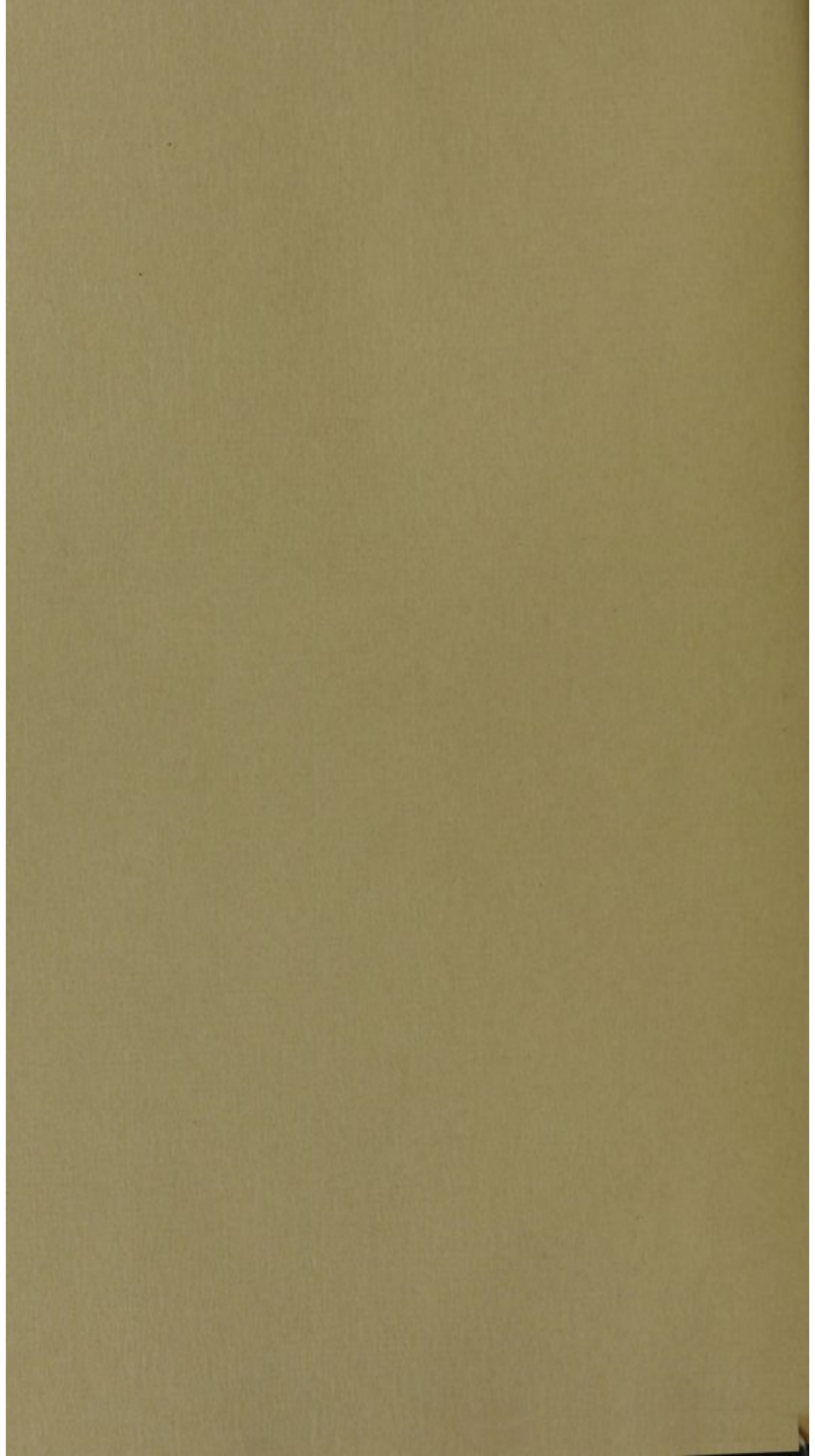
"The history of learning in every age sufficiently demonstrates, that the advancement of the Arts and Sciences has been promoted more by the zeal and labour of Individuals, than by the patronage of Monarchs, or the ordinances of Legislative Authority. The benefits which have resulted to medical science by the unassisted, and almost insulated efforts of individuals, are known to every physician conversant with the history of his profession. In Science, however, there is a communion of interests, which, when it combines the genius, efforts and talents of persons embarked in its service, frequently leads to the most brilliant discoveries and improvements."



JAN. 13th, 1812.

Postscript. Perceiving that publications continue to be made in the newspapers, which may with safety be called highly abusive of the officers of the medical society and medical school; and also that the latter are challenged to reply to these publications, I have taken an opportunity to consult the principal persons alluded to, and have liberty to declare, That they accept the challenge. They are ready to appear, not with abusive retorts in newspapers, but in presence of a committee of the legislature, or any other body of respectable men, and to examine, and reply minutely to all the insinuations and allegations that have been thrown out against them.





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