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delivered in the Broadway Tabernacle, November 10th, 1847 / By John W.  
Francis.**

**Contributors**

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QAB

Francis, who founded  
The New York Academy  
of Medicine in 1846  
was New York's foremost  
obstetrician and  
was called "the most  
representative physician  
of his generation." He  
was compared by his  
contemporaries to Dr.  
Johnson & Benjamin  
Franklin.



Ergebene und

von

Mr. Wm. R. Hunt, Jr.

August 1912







PROF. FRANCIS' DISCOURSE

BEFORE THE

NEW-YORK ACADEMY OF MEDICINE.







# ANNIVERSARY DISCOURSE

BEFORE THE

NEW - Y O R K

ACADEMY OF MEDICINE.

DELIVERED IN THE BROADWAY TABERNACLE,

November 10th, 1847.

By JOHN W. FRANCIS, M.D.

1789 - 1861  
see DAB

[PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE ACADEMY.]

NEW-YORK:

PRINTED BY HENRY LUDWIG, 70 VESEY-STREET.

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1847.





## ANNIVERSARY DISCOURSE.

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VENERABLE PRESIDENT, AND GENTLEMEN  
OF THE NEW YORK ACADEMY OF MEDICINE :

WHEN I survey the large number of professional men now within this hall, contemplate the occasion of this assemblage, and realize the interest which all feel in the occurrences that have led to this evening's exercise ; when I recognise around me so many votaries of science, whose laurels are both fresh and enduring, and more than one familiar face, endeared by years of professional sympathy and personal friendship, I hesitate, like the worshipper who stands upon the threshold of his sacred temple, oppressed by feelings of self-distrust and reverence. Let these emotions, Gentlemen, while they indicate to you the gratitude I feel in being honored by your choice, atone for any inadequacy I may betray in the honest endeavor to fulfil your desires. I need not urge upon your kind consideration the allowance you will naturally make in my behalf, on account of those overwhelming cares with which you are all so well acquainted ; cares that so greatly interfere with the elaborate reasoning and rhetorical finish, a theme and an occasion like the present demand.



He who has proved himself an attentive observer of the transactions of man for the last fifty years, will not hesitate to pronounce the transpired portion of the nineteenth century the most remarkable in the history of our species. The philosopher, the scholar, and the philanthropist, will be ready to declare, that at no period, in all former times, have the intellectual energies of our race been directed to more momentous discoveries, to more erudite researches, or to more exalted plans of benevolence for the benefit of mankind. The mighty achievements in mechanical science have given new capabilities to old powers, and created new ones of vast results, alike profitable to nations as to individuals. The revelations in language and in inscriptions, in the customs and laws of nations, have unfolded treasures of knowledge of indubitable excellence, important in history, sacred and profane, and eminently subservient to a more profound and philosophical investigation of man; while the more precise knowledge now possessed of nature and her laws, has enlarged the domain of humanity with results of vital consideration. Learning is now no longer confined to the cloister, nor wisdom locked up from the multitude. Like the rays of heaven, intellectual light beams on almost every countenance; instruction is imparted to almost every individual; knowledge unfolds her ample page to almost every inquirer. Man is aware of his capabilities, and apprised of his lofty destiny. The hall of the academy, the lyceum, the workshop of the mechanic, all give demonstrations of improvement; and the masses re-



cognise the blessings which science and literature afford. I speak more particularly of those nations which enjoy the advantages of civilization and government ; and I would with emphasis apply these remarks to our own favored land, where the general equality of condition so forcibly strikes the observation of the beholder ; where this fundamental principle of the social compact is so widely carried out ; and where man is sustained in the exercise of the highest prerogatives of existence. Onward is the watchword, progress is the spirit of the age. To divine the nature of things, to awaken new powers, to summon new resources, physical and mental, are the objects of the period in which our lot is cast.

With the honest pride of Americans, let us congratulate ourselves on the prominent and indefatigable part our country has taken in these movements. As it is our good fortune to live in such a crisis in the affairs of men, we hail the principle of unmolested action, and rejoice in that liberty of thought whose aim is so exalted. While we wait with philosophical composure the issue of these mighty operations in their transition state, let us remember, that the successful application of steam to navigation, and of electricity to the communication of human thought, originated here ; that the inventor of the cotton-gin sleeps in the burying-ground of New-Haven ; and that European commissioners have been sent hither to profit by our invaluable experiments in prison discipline. The ministry at large, a protestant measure, adopted from the most beneficent feature of catholi-



cism, has driven pauperism from Boston, while life-insurance in New-York is rapidly introducing a conservative element amid the hazards of trade ; and public school systems, cheap newspapers, and periodical literature, historical, geological, philosophical, art-unions, mechanic, mercantile and agricultural societies, are constantly promoting the welfare of each class of our widely-extended population.

This, too, is an age of investigation, and the rationale of causes is ever sought : mind penetrates every thing. Theories born in the twilight of past ages are submitted to a more searching alchemy in the crucible of the present. New truth is evolved, old truth is confirmed ; error and prejudice vanish before the gradual dawn of a better day ; and the principles of all human faith, and every vocation and science, are tested, arranged, re-considered, and luminously demonstrated. In an epoch thus fraught with change and alive with conflicting elements, the very activity and daring by which experiments are tried and speculation indulged, give rise also to extravagance, fanaticism, and ill-regulated energy. Yet from this chaos order must inevitably arise. When the ocean tide of humanity is thus agitated, gems alone are not cast on the shore ; but the philosopher will welcome the tempest that purifies the atmosphere, and the earthquake, which re-constructs of more fertilizing materials the exhausted soil.

I have adverted to some few of the striking circumstances which mark the present age : it is for the philosophical observer to examine nicely their special



bearing and record their issue. In our own land, and during our own time, another distinct feature presents itself, whose influence we all are compelled to recognise and severally to feel. A remarkable characteristic of our Republic is *association*, and this powerful agent we find brought to our cognizance by numerous examples: our social system abounds in it; and we are compelled to yield to its inherent operation, though, perhaps, remotely connected with its proximate designs. This principle of association, however, has for the most part been applied more especially to self-improvement, and the augmentation of knowledge, to eleemosynary and charitable designs, or to fiscal experiments. It is on the broad platform of the first of these three objects, that we are here assembled. In the present instance, an organization has been formed, the distinctive feature of which is, that it is the inevitable result of the wants of the profession itself, and of the community at large. An Academy of Medicine in this city, was a moral necessity; it was demanded by the daily increasing perversion of a noble science, by the sullied dignity of an honorable vocation, by the predominance of evils of saddest issue, and by the long-neglected claims of injured humanity. This language cannot, I apprehend, be deemed too forcible, when contemplating the condition of practical medicine, in this our own day and generation. Yes, the venerable art of physic, rich with the achievements of the mightiest intellects, and the accumulated wisdom of more than two thousand years, with its divine claims of origin, and its



vast train of blessings in our behalf, seems threatened with distrust of its noble capabilities, to have lost of its repute as a disciplined science among us, and to have surrendered its long-earned resources to the specious appearances, and absurd practices, which the necromancers and zealots of the darkest ages might hesitate to tolerate. How sadly such a condition of the profession harmonizes with the great objects of the sacred art! Philosophy can scarcely abide the reflections which spring from an examination of the causes which have led to the formation of this Association of the disciples of *Æsculapius* in behalf of their cherished science. That ignorance of the laws of life, of the rules of health, and of the remedial powers of medicinal substances, prevails to a wonderful degree, even in exalted places, is an incontrovertible position; and hence the innumerable calamities which popular delusion in the curative art entails. Most unfortunate for its victims, like fraud in fiscal concerns, it has a wider influence in its effects than with the immediate objects with whom it traffics. Its dire malignity is often extended through a large circle of the unconscious and unsuspecting.

There is at times an obtuseness in the public mind in regard to the legitimate claims of the profession, a want of discrimination in recognising the genuine tokens of success, and an absence of veneration for the dictates of experience. The new, the striking, some wild fancy, or chimera, a system which appeals to the curiosity, or flatters the imagination, is often suffered to blind the vision of the multitude



to the utility of positive knowledge, and the appeal to unaided truth. Insensible or indifferent to the responsibilities of the profession, countenance is given by individuals of high social position, equally as by the illiterate and the vulgar, to measures, the inefficiency of which has been proved by long established facts. The wisdom slowly but surely earned by positive experiment, is thus thoughtlessly put aside for the speculations of the hour, and absurdities a thousand times exposed. How deservedly contemptible, nay, criminal, may all this be pronounced, in an age which boasts its general intelligence ! Yet what mind, of comprehensive views, that looks truth in the face, observes the relation of things, and calculates consequences, but must feel assured that this great enormity must lead to its own destruction, and that the hour of retribution must arrive. Its toleration cannot much longer be granted. The mischief which it engenders, wide as is its influence, assimilates little with the enlightened philanthropy of the times ; it must disperse as the product of a period, portentous of novelties, too much devoted to sordid concerns, and criminally indifferent to the value of human life. Nor is there need of any marvellous sagacity to foretell the future. The abettors of these unhallowed schemes already appear dissatisfied with their own doings ; and, distracted by the conclusions of their own understandings, already they begin to suspect the fidelity of their senses, and seem alarmed at the scepticism of their deluded victims. To hasten so beneficial an advent, to disenthral a



people thus abused, on a subject of deeper interest than even wealth, according to popular estimation, is a design of no ordinary importance. More exalted motives to action in this deplorable condition of medical practice, can never influence man in his associate relation, nor higher objects awaken his zeal, or greater good follow his efforts. With fixed intentions to exercise a duty which has become imperative, if we would claim the homage of pure disciples in our high calling, and in default of public solicitude, the errors and absurdities which beset us, to the disgrace of the Hippocratic art and the sacrifice of human life, must be visited with a wholesome supervision, both as a labor of love and as a duty the most exalted. A strenuous yet peaceable policy is to be cherished, and liberal maxims inculcated; yet between alternatives, a preference is to be given to a just and honorable maintenance of legitimate medicine, rather than a disgraceful repose when her proper sphere is invaded. Nor can a richer recompense be promised to the state at large from the measures which this Academy contemplates, in its potential character, by a wise exercise of its powers, and an unwavering prosecution of its disinterested designs.

I have already, in part, hinted that the spirit of the age is a reforming one. In social institutions, in jurisprudence, in criminal legislation, and in political economy, the leading minds are ardently invoking new ideas of progress. Is not this divine principle also to be made evident in the practice of the



healing art? Shall the just administration of so vast a public interest as health be neglected? Is it for a moment to be admitted, that, in a cause so holy, involving the comfort and happiness, not only of the present but of future generations, a lukewarm zeal is justifiable? Shall the benevolence so unceasingly at work in this awakened age, for the benefit of the poor, the ignorant, the desolate, and the oppressed, be restrictive in its attribute, and overlook, with unconscious indifference, the warfare on life and health, waged by unlicensed imposture? Individual aggrandizement, under whatever pretext, is not endurable at such a cost, when real proficiency in the divine art and moral energy afford more than a counterpoise.

A shield must be held up to protect the community from the poisoned arrows of charlatanism: a standard must be raised beneath which the loyal disciples of medicine can rally. Death indeed is no respecter of persons, and a like summons waits upon all: but public and individual health is the great concern, the absorbing subject of the physician's solicitude: whatever afflicts the latter, modifies the condition of the former, and the general weal must inevitably suffer by the retributive laws of society. Identified in all its sympathies with these fundamental principles of sanatory regulation, the members of this new Association feel assured of the excellence of their intentions, of the benefits to the community, that must flow from their united efforts; and, fortified in the belief that no cause is more sacred than



that inherent in the principles of their confraternity, they, with a true love of and devotion to their art, have pledged, with a grave earnestness, their best endeavors to sustain the cherished business of their lives, the study and the practice of medicine.

Without the exercise of any antiquarian research into the causes which have led to the present momentous condition of their profession, or a labored investigation into the motives and designs which have co-operated to debase a high calling to a mercenary and nefarious traffic, they would abstain from all such debatable topics. Aware that opinions have less weight than actions, they purpose encountering legitimately and without fear, the existing state of things, as the true exponent of the times, confiding the issue to the purity of their intentions, the soundness of their deliberations, and the acknowledged nature of their professional pursuits. Nor are the indications which summon their philanthropy so cheerless as to incline them to believe that their case is beyond the reach of remedies. Encouraging tokens present themselves; the cause in which they are embarked is vital to the best interests of mankind, and too monopolizing of the charities of life, to permit indifference to lessen the energy requisite for the accomplishment of the exalted work.

I have thus briefly alluded to one of the prominent motives which have actuated our practitioners to organize this Academy of Medicine. It is one in which the public interest has a deep concern, and one in which I apprehend they cherish a becoming



solicitude. In a science so unbounded as the healing art, it is essential that its dignity be vindicated in the example set by its professors ; that its inherent excellence be presented independent of meretricious aid ; that the means of its exercise have an appropriate bearing to its legitimate ends ; that its accompaniments correspond with its positive merits ; that in what is rejected, no less discrimination and judgment be summoned, than in the measures adopted to secure its purposed results. Its columnar dignity, free of the grotesque, is to be sustained by the proper culture of all its branches : the just appreciation of their several importance, is no less an obligation than the exercise of the intellectual capabilities in order to mete out, with efficacy, the treasures of wisdom with which it fortifies its possessor. The art thus comprehended and thus practised, can neither be overrated in its importance, nor circumscribed in its utility. In itself it is all-sufficient. Its powers are to be exercised free of servitude, and in defiance of vulgar criticism and vulgar prejudice. As in its nature it is too intricate for general comprehension, its credentials for acceptance must rest with the character of those who present them, and the precious gifts it holds out for the alleviation of suffering humanity. Thrice fortunate may he be pronounced, who, adorned with real knowledge thus accumulated, and thus dispensed, shall have acted his part through life in the ministration of its divine powers to the necessitous applicant. Blessed, indeed, is the good which he bestows, blessed in the gratitude which rises



from the liberated heart and spirits freed from anguish; blessed in the self-satisfaction which heroic actions ever inspire.

There are other aims which this Academy has in prospective:—To guard the profession against the delusion of the times, to watch the snares and pitfalls which molest its march in its great career of beneficence, to preserve it uncontaminated by the abracadabra and the specious sophistries which perplex its votaries and sully the light of demonstrative truth is one obligation. Another duty, springing from the heart and pressed upon us by every consideration, is no less sublime. The nobleness of the physician's art, as Lord Bacon hath it, is well shadowed by the poets, in that they made *Æsculapius* to be "the son of the Sun, the one being the fountain of life, the other as the second stream: but infinitely more honored," he continues, "by our Saviour, who made the body of man the object of his miracles, as the soul was the object of his doctrines."

Medicine, as a science, proffers her claims to our considerations by the magnificence of her possessions, and demands our obedience to a thorough study of her numerous relations, both for her sake and for our own, if we would attain her treasures and distribute her benefactions. Carelessness or indifference will in vain reach the seat on which she is enthroned. He alone is the true searcher of her recondite mysteries, who can divine her nature and demonstrate her utility. She requires neither showy speculation nor inane disquisition;



she imposes obedience to her laws, a just appreciation of her powers ; she asks a patient investigation of causes and consequences, a close cognizance of the relationship of things, whether the most subtle or the most palpable ; a pure, unbiassed study of her decisions, the offspring of infinite wisdom ; a systematic devotion to truth. Other method of philosophizing than this she repudiates. Approached in such a spirit, every department of her wide domain is open, and invites to free intellectual effort, and holds out unspeakable enjoyment and reward. It is, then, the scholar armed ; it is he who seeks, with enlightened understanding, with enlarged views, and with an unadulterated love of knowledge, nature in her great domain of medicine, who secures the harvest of triumphant joys. By previous acquisition, invention is quickened, inquiry more happily directed, and discovery better attained.

The period when medicine and theology were the secret resources of a caste, when the vocation of the priest and the physician was beclouded in a darkness that awed the vulgar, no longer exists. The spirit of the age is penetrating and exacting. Universal common sense, enlightened by popular education, challenges every profession to ascertain the grounds of its practice and the reasons of its faith. Hence the necessity of liberal and comprehensive acquirements, of a clear understanding, and a bold investigation in all who assume the functions of the healing art, at the present day. Consider for a moment the sphere of medicine. Through anatomy it is allied to



the fine arts ; by its cognizance of natural laws it embraces the highest principles of philosophy ; as it derives its powers from terrene, aqueous, and gaseous bodies, its materia inevitably leads its votaries to explore the animal, the vegetable, and mineral kingdoms ; and the modern discoveries in relation to the brain and nervous systems render it an indispensable ally to mental and moral science. A distinguished philanthropist,\* whose honored remains lie beneath the sarcophagus that first strikes the eye of the visitor to Mount Auburn, used to declare that “ man will be happy when he confines himself to understand the laws of his Creator, and to find out the best means of putting them in execution.” The performance of this responsible mission is clearly obligatory upon the physician. As the interrogator of nature, he explores the utilities of creation ; as her beneficence is universal, his achievements are to mitigate the sufferings and increase the joys of millions. All the reverence, enthusiasm and sagacity ; all the moral courage, wisdom, and industry of which human nature is capable, may find unlimited scope in such a pursuit ; and one important end that Institutions like the one whose foundation we now celebrate, are fitted to promote, is to secure the recognition of interests so vast, and create a standard of character worthy of their espousal.

Thus, then, the province of this Society would seem to be two-fold : to discountenance error, what-

\* Dr. Spurzheim.



ever form it takes ; to be sedulously careful in the rejection of those measures which, if adopted, render the art, in its practical bearing, nugatory, if not absurd and pernicious ; yet that the spirit of exclusion indicate knowledge, judgment, and freedom in philosophical research. And next, with a due appreciation of tentative knowledge, and of the important issue at stake, that investigation be conducted with all the aids of experimental science, to propound new truths, and give new faculties to the art itself, by new demonstrations of its laws. High as may be the objects of this Association, they are to be reached only by legitimate means ; no toil is to be considered oppressive, nor the application of the recognized rules of philosophizing deemed an useless labor, even in matters the most minute. Facts flow from speculation thus conducted, and inferences thence deduced must accumulate wisdom, reciprocally beneficial to him who dispenses its blessings and to him who receives them. But I forbear to enlarge on principles understood by all who hear me.

In a science so comprehensive as that of medicine, that aims at exactness, deduced from well-considered observation, and the authority of facts ascertained by the scrutinizing process of intellectual analysis, it behooves its possessors to be impressed with the value of the substantial knowledge thus obtained, nor barter its claims for popular favor, and the sinister arts of the selfish and the designing. A lover of truth cannot pander to fraudulent expedients, any more than honesty amalgamate with roguery, or Christian



belief with the sophisms of infidelity. The medical man must possess an abiding faith in the demonstrative truths which enrich his profession, and by the use of which he becomes the agent of Heaven's healing mercies. To surrender the positive for the conjectural, to yield the means of certain conquest to measures from which victory is scarcely to be secured, even by accident, is a poor vindication of a noble science, which disdains the abettors of such principles, whatever may be their protestations.

In giving utterance to these sentiments, I hope I am not misunderstood. No practitioner among you estimates at a higher standard the philosophical spirit of the times; or contemplates with warmer feelings the advancement of knowledge, by the countless discoveries which mark the progress of our science. It is the nature of all physical studies thus to move onward, and the art of healing is conspicuous, for the contributions which it has received within a very limited time past. It is delectable to think that the family of mankind is benefitted thereby, and that the greatest good must truly result to the greatest number. But we are not to confound the philosophy which thus enlarges our powers, and thus blesses us, with the empiricism which robs us of our dearest possessions, and cripples the means on which humanity relies. It cannot be disputed that the widest difference exists between that wise conservatism which advances with cautious induction by known truths, to others still hidden, and that restless spirit of innovation, which in order to secure its



ends, spurns all control, and rejects the clearest demonstrations established by our predecessors for the best interests of man. I am ready to allow that every man's brains are not possessed of like faculties; and we know that there are unconscious dupes as well as artful knaves, and that the organ of credulity is in some cases of so disproportioned a size, as to usurp the controlling faculties of some of the best minds. But philosophy has her prescribed laws, and is tenacious of allegiance to them. She presents herself in the simplicity of truth; and if we would unlock her secrets, we are to pursue her with singleness of purpose, and in our process be consistent with ourselves. If she ask for bread we would not give her a stone. It is the mistaken, the perverted, the unhallowed treatment she receives from some who call themselves her disciples, and the evils which afflict society from this source, of which I complain. I think I echo your united voice, when I declare that this Academy can have no affiliation with the abettors of such measures, however specious their sophistry, or insignificant their number.

It is occasionally asserted as an objection to our profession, and I have heard it more than once since our organization, that it is behind the age, that its votaries are wedded to the past, and fail to keep their minds open to new convictions, or sedulously watch for avenues to new truths. I will not stop to inquire whether those who utter this declaration are versed in the history of our



art, and are justified by knowledge in this their denial of our progressive desires and scientific advancement. A declaration less in unison with truth, it would be difficult to utter. I know no pursuit in which so quickening a spirit exists among its votaries. No human investigation is sought with greater energy; there are few more frequently honored by the gratifying results of actual discovery; and the laborers in the field of medical science are, perhaps, better sustained in intellectual and physical toil by the divine emotions which enkindle the soul from this spirit of progress, than from any returns the otherwise toilsome nature of their calling secures. It is often the sole prize of their severest efforts; yet, after all, a prize to be distributed for others' benefit.

Have those who cast this reproach upon the laborers in our science, of being contented with the past, ever severely examined into the actual state of the profession, at distant and distinct eras of its cultivation? Have they compared the different systems and theories of medicine which have held sway at different times, and among different nations at the same time? Have they weighed the facts and reasonings which have led to the diversified results which have crowned both, in the speculative and practical branches of the art? Have they observed the evil and the good arising from the authority of renowned names, and been prepared to fathom the difficulties inherent in the vast study of the philosophy of life, and the means of its preservation? Have they been able to weigh the controlling influ-



ences of the kindred branches in physic upon the art of healing? All these circumstances have exercised at various periods a modifying power in the advancement of the great science. Have they, fortified with the requisite knowledge, compared the anatomy taught in the schools some forty years ago, with the knowledge of the human structure as now set forth by the teachers of these days? Have they compared Monro and Ffyyfe, with Bichat and Cruveilhier? Have they looked at Blumenbach and Andral, and Edwards, and Müller, to find whether there be progress in physiology? Have they ascertained what Gall, and Spurzheim, and Teideman, and Solly, and Noble, have done with the brain and nervous system? Have they sought knowledge of cerebral structure by the methods of procedure formerly in vogue, by the researches of the scalpel, and then compared it with the elucidations of the encephalon, derived from the new system of investigation, notwithstanding the preceding great efforts of Varolius and Willis? Have these skeptics dwelt upon the coincidence which obtains between particular structural developments and functional manifestation and mental phenomena? Have they arrived at a determinate result whether Charles Bell's discoveries on the sensitive and motor nerves, have a real foundation, and shed new light on pathology of the deepest practical value, and simplified a mighty train of complex disorders? Do they know that that philosopher presented us with new revelations of richest results, and have they opened the pages of his volume, in order to



comprehend its diagnostic problems in perilous intricacies ?

Allow me to propound a little further. Have these doubters and disputers of our progress compared the *materia medica* of former times with that had recourse to at present ? I mean not the correctives of disease, and the auxiliaries of health indicated by palmistry and astrology, nor the treatise of Culpeper nor the *Primitive Physic* of Wesley. I will limit myself to the *materia medica* of our immediate predecessors. Let, then, an estimate be formed of the articles modern discovery has introduced, drawn from the several kingdoms of nature, and let scrutiny be directed to the qualities of the substances now added as remedial agents to our pharmacopœia. Look at that once universally-admired book, Duncan's *Dispensatory*, and then turn to Pereira, or to the commanding volume of Wood and Bache. Therapeutical science was never enriched with such copious treasures as at this day, nor ever before yielded a moiety of her benefits.

How will these unbelievers in progress sustain their fallacies when they compare the surgery, of even John Hunter, with the operations of the chirurgic art of these times ; on what ground can they rest when they witness the achievements almost daily performed in this important branch of healing, both in private practice and in public institutions ? Have Abernethy and Cooper, and Dupuytren and Larrey, and Physic and Post, lived in vain ? But though I am not fairly prepared to grapple with chirurgical sub-



jects, yet I nevertheless feel sustained in the declaration, that the art has been one of uninterrupted progress, amidst every mutation, and a succession of benefits to the descendants of Adam, from the day that a drop of water from the spring was first given to allay traumatic suffering, and the bruised leaf applied to stanch the wound, up to the present era of its brightness, when there is scarcely a fibre of the body beyond its research, and by its powers not rendered medicable.

Were I asked what part of the honor of such advancement in this demonstrative art our countrymen have claims to, I might reply, a faithful record of their operations determines the question, and places their intrepidity and skill beyond a cavil. These convincing demonstrations of chirurgical ability, in a large degree, are vivid in the memories of most of you; but you are still more fortunate in the historical permanency which has been secured to many of them, in the accessible works of Cooper and Velpeau, and other writers, made yet more satisfactory to the cultivators of American genius by the industry and talents of their enlightened editors, Dr. Reese and Dr. Doane; Dr. Mott and Dr. Townsend. Indeed, there seems an aptitude in the practice and improvement of the art among us; and we have the felicity of occasionally tracing back from abroad to our own operators as their origin, some of the highest surgical principles adopted in Europe.

It is, however, a work of supererogation to attempt a vindication of surgery from the imputations of



those who deny that her march is onward. I see too many before me, who, by their skill and manual dexterity, have swelled the renown of their country in this department of science ; and many of you, I know, have grown ripe in all that pertains to it, by the learned prelections of those distinguished teachers, whose labors have signalized the rival Universities and Colleges of our Commonwealth : Mott, Stevens, Physic, Parker, Warren, Gibson, Dudley, Marsh, Knight, and others.

Let those who withhold their assent to the truth that obstetrical science has, within a short period, made rapid advances, both in the operative department and in the clinical practice of the art, examine into the nature of the improvements and the treatment which the professional skill of the moderns have introduced, and acknowledge that humanity has reason to congratulate herself at the issue of her beneficent labors. Where can a disciple of the rash instrumental practice of Smellie now be found, while before the period of Denman, Bard, Dewees, and Meigs, the advocates of that once great Scotch instructor, both in Great Britain and in her colonies, here and elsewhere, usurped nature of her rights, and inflicted on suffering mortals trials too melancholy and painful to dwell upon. Let the fact be here reiterated, that parturition is, in the actual state of the science, fatal to less than one-half the number that formerly died from causes associated with this inevitable law of continuous human nature.

It is discomfoting to rebuke, but the provocation



forbids silence. In what perplexities do these skeptics involve themselves, when we consider Botany, Zoology, Mineralogy, and Chemistry ; when we contemplate the discoveries of Lyell, Agazzis, and Dana. All these sciences are departments in which medical men toil, and from which they have enriched their special pursuit. I must limit my observations to Chemistry. Chemistry is the handmaid to our art, whether medical or chirurgical. Has any other branch of philosophy made such rapid strides in improvement, since the time when Priestley, the founder of pneumatic science, flourished, up to the era of our Hare, and our Draper ? Within the limited period of my own medical career, we have had four distinct systems to solve the problems which this great study has furnished us, each better and more satisfactory than its predecessor ; and the adepts in its mighty secrets tell us, that its wonderful laws and products are still yielding us new powers, new compounds, new curative agents for the afflicted.

Pathology, as prosecuted by our contemporaries, may be deemed a new science. Its value to the healing art is too palpable to gainsay. The researches it is daily bringing to light, by such investigators as Carswell, Bright, Horner, and Gross, rendered still more definite and clear by chemical appliances and microscopic anatomy, give the well-assured hope that the most salutary results will flow from its further cultivation by such writers as Vogel and Raspail. I would appeal to those who can find no progress in medical science, if they see not greater merit



in the works of our present pathologists, than in the writings of Bonetus, Tulpius, Morgagni, and even Bailey.

There is one other department of our profession to which I am anxious to allude. Every advocate, every enlightened divine, and every accomplished physician, knows the value of medical jurisprudence. Its relations, in their fullest extent, embrace every branch of medical science subservient to the preservation of public health, and the protection of individuals from personal injury. Wherever man possesses personal rights, its principles must have some bearing on his enjoyments and his duties. It occupied a large share of the attention of the ancients, but the renowned Paulus Zacchius is the recognised father of the science. It is popularly known to be divided into two great parts, Forensic Medicine and Medical Police. This great study, which seems to be the extractive principle of all knowledge, deduced from an acquaintance with physical and intellectual man, in health and in sickness; which takes within its grasp the legal enactments and regulations of communities of beings; which derives its elucidations from the laws of the physical universe; which combines the two great topics of law and physic; exhibits a tolerable criterion by which to determine whether any grounds of animadversion exist of tardiness in the progress of truth, by the disciples of our vocation. An hour might be exhausted in placing before you the present condition of medico-legal science. Scarcely a single feature of the study remains as in the days of



William Hunter, so copious have been the materials, so deep and extensive the investigations, which our profession has made. The inadequate productions of Farr, and Male, the only books which Great Britain for a long while could boast, are displaced by the enlightened volumes of Orfila and Christison on Toxicology, and the elaborate system of Paris and Fonblanque; and the many works of late days on Insanity, and other disordered manifestations of mind, have flooded the science with countless important facts. That the great ends of justice will be better attained by all these labors, that life and property will be better protected, health and happiness rest on a surer basis, is demonstrable. In his address to the Graduates of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the President, Dr. Stevens, remarks: "In respect to the uncertainty of medicine, it is less uncertain than law, and settled as much as theology. Like both law and theology, its fundamental principles are clear enough; but many of its details are more or less uncertain, and are the subject of inquiry and research." The medical jurist need not concede so much as the learned President does, if he speaks of juridical medicine. Its results are among the confirmatory truths of fixed knowledge, in many of its strongest relations. There is a charm in the reflection on this vast and important subject, that America has done so much towards its elucidation. The publication of the Medical Jurisprudence of Professor Theoderic R. Beck, in 1823, constitutes an epoch in its progress: that



great work, so rich in facts, so admirable in the colocation of its principles, so vigorous in demonstration, has proved the source of that impulse, which has awakened the mental acumen of the philosophical world to the closest research and the severest analysis, effectively to place the entire science in the light of axiomatic verity. I have various editions, in various languages, which the foreign press has issued for enlightened Europe. This, of itself, is eulogium enough concerning the work. Its latest editions have been much enriched on several vexed questions, by the contributions of Professor John B. Beck, of this city; and the inquirer now turns with additional satisfaction to this prominent treatise for aid, when doubt and difficulty impede his conclusions. The thought has sometimes crossed my mind of the peculiar circumstance, that the empire state which so long was rendered famous by the high decisions of the great Chancellor Kent and Chief Justice Spencer, should contemporaneously have had its renown in legal authority still further augmented, by the elaborate work on Medical Jurisprudence, with which the names of the Professors Beck will ever be identified. Other evidences of a devotion to this species of investigation by American writers are to be found in the compact treatise by Williams, in the late production of Dr. Taylor, edited by Griffiths; and in the still more lucid performance of Dr. Guy, enlarged by copious appropriate additions by Professor Charles A. Lee. The statistical papers and other essays on insanity,



by Drs. Earle, Macdonald, Blatchford, and Brigham, and the treatise of Dr. Ray, show how native talents are enlisted in the cause of important truths.

If, then, the circle of the medical and physical sciences has in each of its sections enlarged in the ratio now hinted, what must necessarily be the condition of practical medicine at this time? Whether we look abroad, or limit our attention at home, we find the age prolific of writers of admirable powers and a truly philosophical spirit, on the practice of the art. What a cyclopædia of soundest wisdom, deduced from modern research, has been given us, but yesterday, in the masterly Dictionary of the erudite Copland, and in the system of Practical Medicine, by Dr. Watson, of London! Your copious reading, however, supersedes even a partial enumeration of the great minds of Europe, engaged in the service. While American medical bibliography is seen constantly to increase by such original works as those of Chapman, Dickson, Wood, Coxe, Parish, Condie, Metcalfe, Jackson, Lee, Stewart, Holmes, Payne, Bartlett, Goddard, and others, we find the catalogue still more imposing by the improved editions of standard authors, enhanced in value by the learning and practical views of Dunglison, Morton, Doane, Mütter, Detmold, Hays, Gerhard, Meigs, Clymer, and other able disciples of our profession.

In short, the practice of Physic has participated in every improvement, it has advanced by every discovery, and enriched itself with every new truth fitted to its designs. The answer seeks no equivocation;



skepticism may hesitate, but the disciples of Apollo remain unshaken in the great truth : the science of healing, embracing practical medicine and the surgical art, never fulfilled its sacred mission to the measure and extent of the blessed powers it now summons to its trust.

I know you are familiar with the facts at large, upon which this decision is given ; but I cannot on that account be deterred from offering a brief summary of the obvious circumstances which sustain this triumphant belief. Turn over the ponderous quartos of Sauvages, the great nosologist, and look at the almost interminable number of diseases which he has recorded, to which poor human nature was formerly subjected ; and consult the practical works of those times. Examine for yourselves, how many of these disorders fall within the observation of the practitioners of the greatest business in these days ; how many of these physical sufferings have disappeared : Where is the vast group of direful fevers which once cut off life with such prodigality ? Where would Howard go to take the gauge and the dimensions of the human sufferings which once enkindled his philanthropy ? Where are now the once formidable class of the cutaneous affections ? Sydenham contended that fever constituted nine-tenths of the diseases which afflicted mankind. Idiopathic fever is now comparatively a rare disorder, and the cutanei have dwindled in numbers, so that our nomenclature of them is a task of easy labor. The modern principles of Hygeine have done much in bringing about this beneficent change ; and an improved diagnosis and



a better knowledge of specialities united in its accomplishment. Affections of acknowledged specific virus have lost immeasurably their once formidable character, and come within the scope of certain measures, to an extent our predecessors never anticipated. The misshapen trunks and disfigured countenances which once succeeded the treatment of some of these disorders, no longer harrow our sensibilities. The variety of suffering to which the tender sex and her offspring are liable, have found improved means of relief, from the more philosophical spirit which has marked our inquiries into the mysteries of nature, and the adaptation of newly-discovered agents, more appropriate to our indications. Other demonstrations, of mathematical precision, furnish us with proofs of the progress of the science of healing, of most benign omen. In a late work, abounding in interesting materials, on the Hospitals and Surgeons of Paris, by an associate of our Academy, Dr. F. Campbell Stewart, I find a table of the number of admissions, and proportionate mortality among the patients of the Hotel Dieu, for a period of twenty-five years; from 1816 to 1840. The average sojourn of each patient within the wards at the latest of these dates, is in the comparison of now seventeen to forty days formerly; while the mortality bears the ratio of less than one-half at the present time to that of the year 1816.

There is a curious, but instructive popular fact, which may be here presented, that must carry conviction to the mind of every unbiassed reasoner. I al-



lude to the principles upon which life assurance, now so much in favor, is carried out and sustained.

The testimony which exists in relation to particular instances of human longevity in different places, is often dubious ; yet it seems in the present state of our knowledge, that female life is better than male, and almost at every age ; in the existing state of medical science, the refinements and improvements of our art would appear to have resulted in greater benefit to the tender than to the hardier sex. Still the principles of hygienic science deserves especial regard in the rearing of female life.

Those who study the tables of Price, deduced from the Northampton records, and the subsequent reflections of Morgan, can form an estimate of practical value in discussions on this interesting subject. Let a comparative view be instituted of the doctrine of annuities at the period of those writers, and the condition of the science at this day. The Carlisle tables of the mean duration of human existence, and those of Finlaison, a recent authority, demonstrate an actual improvement in human longevity, embracing the insurable period of life from 10 years up to 70 years. If the period of infancy is added to that portion of human duration in which the resources of our art have been so signal, the general improvement in the prospect of life is about three or four years, or ten per cent. I have said the greatest improvement is in infancy. Three centuries ago, the deaths in infancy at Geneva, the only place where records of mortality were kept, were five times as



great as in our time ; an improvement altogether owing to the advances made in medical science.

I should not have dared to detain you so long to disprove the declaration, that the profession is behind the age, reluctant of improvement, fearful of new principles, and contented with the knowledge of our forefathers. The utterance of such sentiments has often annoyed me, when I knew how hard we toiled to better the condition of the afflicted ; what midnight cares absorbed us, what pains and penalties we endured, to become the successful prescriber ; but this is not all : sentiments like these too often proceed from the enlightened members of the most sacred profession ; and hence, actuated by the belief which such opinions sustain, they, with all their benevolence, superadded to the weight of their sacerdotal office, sustain theories, and give credence to alleged facts, which are often at war with the best established principles of medical science, and indirectly do harm to that calling which is like unto their own, corporeal nature demanding physical relief, as the immortal soul the support of divine counsel. There is not one among you, who is not qualified by experience to appreciate the bearing of these imperfect remarks ; and sorry am I to say, that nothing other than my duty in discharge of the service I am summoned to perform, has led to an allusion to such occurrences. The Right Rev. Bishops of the Church of Great Britain, with their subordinates, who set forth in solemn testimony their convictions of the cures in diseases derived from Perkins' metallic



tractors, humiliating as was the spectacle, impugned not the orthodoxy of their religious faith; but it would be difficult to exonerate them from blindness in observation, and fallacy in judgment, in medical affairs. Pope Innocent II. forbade all the clergy to meddle with physic. He was wrong in the universality of his prohibition. There are intellects in that order of men, who, with profundity in the requisitions of their own vocation, add the precious treasures of the heart and of the head, and can scan the grounds of our practice, however astute may be the doctor. Yet, on the other hand, there are examples which show us, that even in the priesthood as in the profession of the law, sometimes the most exalted in their specified pursuit are bad umpires in medical cases.

I well remember an interview I enjoyed with the late Rev. Dr. John M. Mason, the unrivalled preacher of this country in days past. He had repeatedly travelled abroad, and extensively visited Great Britain. He was asked why he did not give to the public the results of his observation. "Alas!" he replied, "what sort of travels can I write? I neither understand the nature of the air I breathe, nor the water I drink, nor the earth I tread upon: my life has been appropriated to polemical divinity." The frankness of this answer was characteristic of this honest and great man, who long bore the name of the American Paul. But no more. I should feel deeply aggrieved if these recitals on the art of healing led any to suppose I was deficient in reverence to the ministers of gospel truth. They have too many points of



resemblance in their career with our profession, not to excite our esteem and affection: their office is humanity; their service springs from the grandest principles of our nature. We meet, together, in season and out of season, too often, the same objects of distress; we approach the same sufferer, and mutually commiserate his calamity; we are wearied in mind and in body by the same agonizing causes. We sympathize with each other in beholding the uncertain struggles of life with death; we are actuated in the ministration of our offices by a like spirit of benevolence; we know that our most certain recompense is our future reward; for few doctors, as few divines, leave this world with more riches than they first entered it. Like offices, like impulses, like sorrows, like gratifications, and like reflections, endear us each to the other. These messengers of peace, to use the language of the Earl of Peterborough, are often most delicious creatures; and if we be enamoured of our art, we will foster them as auxiliaries in our extremest need.

I might now proceed to an illustration of the position, that even the fluctuations of opinion, and the medical frivolities which, from time to time, have disfigured the profession, have, nevertheless, subserved at different periods the progress of the medical art in a closer approach towards positive science. Research has followed with renewed application; and renewed research, with new theories or methods of reasoning, has sprung up. Closer and more extensive observations have augmented the treasury of facts: these,



better classified, have yielded more tenable information, and ultimately given that precision to knowledge that principles have been confirmed, demanding an estimation by the practical physician, equally as strong as those furnished by the exact sciences. There is nothing unreasonable in this view of philosophical medicine; it is only a restoration of the Hippocratic art, corroborated by the great discoveries of modern experiment. Every cultivator of the science, in whatever situation he may be placed, may to some extent promote so desirable an undertaking—the co-operation of many, with proper devotedness and perseverance, would hasten the accomplishment of the noble object. Positive medicine, so lofty and yet so reasonable in its aim, investigates every peculiarity in disease, however numerous the causes, however diversified the subjects of it; and the scientific physician, influenced by a proper inspiration, cannot rest satisfied until he shall have mastered every inquiry pertaining to the art to which he is cordially devoted. The age, moreover, has reasons to demand that appropriate efforts be made for the greater utility and honor of the high calling. Never were the thinking faculties more awake, and resolution will vanquish difficulties.

The influence of this Academy, it is hoped, will contribute in no small measure to destroy that casuistry which sometimes insinuates itself in discussions among minds of limited grasp, on the supposed ultra-conservative tendency in medicine. It will unfurl the banner of philosophy, and in the march for



truth, allow every one to pursue the path he deems best for its attainment. Free discussion will be cherished in good faith, as the light thus emanating imparts the purest lustre, and detects error in its most hidden recess. It will exult in discovery. It will be vigilant in investigation, and strive in all becoming ways to discriminate the true from the false, the certain from the conjectural, the indeterminate from the definite. Philosophical doubts are inseparable in philosophical research; and true science aims at demonstrative solution; and we have the authority of the Stagyrice, that "he who is ignorant of the knot cannot untie it." It will offer the right hand of fellowship to the honest and intelligent seeker as well as to the man of established attainments. It will cheer on the lonely enthusiast, whose intellectual energies are concentrated upon the analysis of facts, and heartily encourage the assiduous observer, who is never weary of collecting the materials for induction. The only permanent object worthy of a liberal mind is truth, and the history of every science shows that her domain is infinite. It is the part of a narrow and feeble spirit to suffer any limits to aspirations; and while the rational physician will never proceed an iota beyond the boundaries of scientific authority, he will be ever on the alert to detect every dawning star in the horizon of his art. In entering on this march of improvement, so congenial to a sound medical mind, impressed with its responsibilities, an enlightened inquirer of this character will cherish a becoming deference for the wisdom which



his predecessors have supplied him, and look with proper caution whither his steps are tending: innovation has its apprehensions, and the utility of reform ought to be urgent. Lord Bacon says it is well to be aware, that it is the reformation that draweth on the change, and not the desire of change that pretendeth the reformation.

Let me not be thought egotistical in claiming such high requisitions, both of the heart and head, for the profession to which we belong. That observing and reflecting faculties of a superior order are indispensable to the successful pursuit of medicine, cannot be denied; and that society has a right to demand in its practitioners evidence of a certain amount of acquired and experimental knowledge, is universally admitted. Too frequently, however, public opinion has, I fear, failed to recognize the essential moral dignity of the profession; and, as I have before stated, this Academy springs primarily from this fact. If we contemplate the subject in the light of pure reflection, distinct from all the familiar associations which tend to blind us to its true glory, no rhetoric can be too urgent in defence of its claims. Brought nearer to his fellow-being than any, save those who have the authority of kindred, the physician daily sees the inmost recesses of the heart, and becomes the involuntary recipient of all the secrets of domestic life. It were idle to suggest how imperative is the need of integrity in circumstances like these. Much has been said of the indurating influence of the profession. Scenes of pain, it is argued, become



so familiar, that the most delicate sensibilities are steeled at last ; that the practice of the art deadens sensibility—the higher powers of the soul becoming too much subjected to the influence of material causes ; that the clinical prescriber finally becomes case-hardened. The imputation is heartless, unworthy the liberalized culture of the age, and at war with the soundest science of the schools. The intricacies of life, the wondrous sympathies of the body, lead ever to the contemplation of the mysterious union of mind and matter ; the laws by which they reciprocally act, and to the recognition of that master power by which they are controlled. The great fact, so pregnant with the richest instruction, of creative intelligence and illimitable power, may be equally proclaimed, and prove equally instructive, from the occurrences of the sick chamber as from the consecrated oracle of the pulpit. Pathology and the phenomena of health are each equally demonstrative of infinite wisdom : if the Pagan Galen, amid such contemplations, could give his voice in a hymn to the Deity, what could not a Christian Galen do ?

Civilization and the practical influence of Christianity have changed the social aspect of our profession, and rendered the zealous care of its interests and dignity imperatively a duty. As a great self-constituted charity, it ranks with the benevolent institutions of the church ; and the amount of gratuitous advice and support yielded by the conscientious physician, has become an important element of the social compact. The Spanish professor who found Cervantes



among his hospital patients, and was startled to hear from the death-bed of genius a Latin ejaculation, amid the profane and vulgar victims to whose safety he was ministering, experienced what falls to the lot of all who go about doing good, in a world where the strangest vicissitudes beset the gifted not less than the brutal. No class of men, indeed, enjoy such frequent opportunities for the exercise of kindness, or have it in their power to reap a wider harvest of actual utility.

There are, moreover, instances of noble and touching fortitude, of sublime patience, and of heavenly faith, which every medical man that deserves the name must treasure as among the richest lessons of his life. Who that has kept vigils at the couch of genius, and marked the wayward flickerings of its sacred fire, made yet more ethereal by disease, or seen beauty grow almost supernatural in the embrace of pain, and has not felt his mission to be holy as well as responsible? And when a voice that has thrilled millions is hushed, or a mind upon which rest the cares of a nation is prostrated, who has not realized how intimately the healing art is knit into the vast and complex web of human society? Let not that be thought a light office which summons us to minister, as apostles of science, to the greatest exigencies of life; to cheer the soul under the acute sufferings of maternity, and alleviate the decay of nature; to watch over the glimmering dawn and the fading twilight of existence; to stand beside the mother, whose sobs are hushed



that the departure of her first-born may be undisturbed; and be oracles at the bedside of the revered minister of holy truth, the halo of whose piety softens, on his brow, the lines of mortal agony. What a mastery of self, what requisites, mental and corporeal, are demanded in him who is the observer of scenes like these, whose sympathies are awakened to services such as are befitting the mighty crisis, and whose talents are efficiently enlisted for the triumphant accomplishment of his devout trust! The advent of such an ambassador, when his calling is duly understood, must awaken the heart to its profoundest depths, and cannot be inoperative upon minds of intellectual and moral culture. I indulge the conviction that the appreciation will be made when medical science, freed of collateral annoyances and adventitious hindrances, shall assert its proper claims and exercise its rights within its proper dominion, aloof from the treachery of spurious hypothesis, and laden with inductive truths. This desirable future is the sooner to be realized, the sooner a proper mental atmosphere is created.

It requires but little acumen to perceive the identity of medical knowledge with the progress of society. As civilization advances, industry has greater demands and greater variety of occupation, and hence the requirements of an improved condition and a greater population, tax more severely human intellect to meet them. The medical art, like other pursuits, comes within the scope of this observation. In its earliest and crude state it arose from the wants



and necessities of man ; as the exigency increased, its laws and appliances enlarged, until, by the amplitude of her domain, her healing powers were aroused to that extent and consideration, which have given to what was first an humble experiment, the precision and certainty of an enlarged inductive science. Her struggles have borne a ratio with the very pulsations of society, and her career has been progressive from the very nature of her existence. She exhibits, therefore, in her story, that which every other branch of philosophy presents, advancement in the ratio of the progress of successive generations of men. The estimation in which her cultivators have been held, bears also a remarkable correspondence with the spirit of the age in which her promoters flourished. Her career and her character would seem then to be typified by the condition of contemporaneous mind and humanity ; her fluctuations have been neither isolated by the progress of knowledge at large, nor proved antagonistic to the estimation in which philosophy and philanthropy have been cherished by public appreciation and constituted authority. Hand in hand with science in general, her advance has ever been simultaneous with the march of intellect. As the general good is acknowledged to be advanced by its application, no ignorance has been so impenetrable as not to recognize the demonstrations of its excellence.

There has ever been a faith in the medical art, wide and unwavering, among all conditions of men, rude or refined ; but that faith has been purest and



deepest where society is most matured, because of the truths she inculcates in her several departments for human well-being. Among our aborigines, the medicine-man was deemed the prophet or wise man of the tribe. The cabin is not tenantable, nor the field productive, without some attention to her precepts. Take society advanced: the improved processes of draining, ventilation, transportation of water, preparations of food, ablutions, costume, furniture, and in fact, all the domestic arts which multiply our pleasures or increase our comforts, are based upon the sanatory regulations gradually suggested by physicians. Colonization and settlement would be vain without her aid; and if we look at the progress of mental philosophy, we find that the discoveries in regard to the functions of the brain and nervous system, have completely modified the speculative and erroneous theories originated by Aristotle, and prolonged by the Scotch metaphysicians. Indeed, the philosophy of man has only become a practical science, by the clear communication of physical laws and the relation between mind and matter. There is something inexpressibly great in this mutual relation between the cravings of man in his progressive movement, and the support he derives at every stage from the art of healing.

Shall we strengthen these positions a little further? Let us advert to historical parallels. While the light radiating from the intellectual sceptre of Pericles yet lingered over Greece, Hippocrates announced the primary facts of the art of healing, and the *Æsclepi-*



ades sustained the sanatorium. When Augustus ruled the Roman Republic, Celsus, the ornament of the Alexandrian school, wrote his elegant theorems, and added to the glory of the empire of the Cæsars. During the Arabian period of our art, the knowledge of medical science was not only preserved, but its glory augmented, by the most enlightened Caliphs, and the University of Bagdad became the most celebrated of the middle ages. Hospitals were founded, and the medical literature of preceding periods was translated at the most enormous cost for public benefit. The constellation of genius that adorned the period of the Commonwealth of England, was rendered still more conspicuous by Harvey the discoverer, and Sydenham the second Hippocrates. Of the great masters in our art, of that nation, since that time, pages would be requisite to record their names. Italy, the domain of the arts and the retreat of the invalid, is too familiar to the scholar not to be ranked in the highest order of intellectual achievements : and in the age of Leo X., we find among her greatest ornaments, Fallopius, the great physician, and Vesalius, the restorer of anatomical knowledge. Metaphysical Germany is in like manner entitled to our regard. In the most prominent period of her advancement in classical and philosophical learning, in the times of her political reform under Francis I., and Joseph II., we recognize her Haller, that prodigy of learning and science, a fit contemporary of Lessing, and to whom was applied what Plutarch said of Aristotle, concerning his universal



wisdom. And Holland too, after she had arrived at the acmé of political renown, by the sagacity of her Barneveldt and her De Witt, claims still stronger consideration by the trophies of discoveries, borne by Ruysch, De Graef, Albinus, and Swammerdam, and the matchless career of her Boerhaave. Nor dare we, even in this hasty enumeration, omit France, whose triumphs were swelled by the long career of Ambrose Paré, during the reigns of no less than four sovereigns: and the learning and wit that enlivened the saloons of Louis XIV., included names that have a lasting reputation in the medical Calendar. Our art, in its several relations, was adorned in the age of that proud monarch by many of the undying names in our profession. We can now mention only Mauriceau and Tournefort. And what was France in medical and chirurgical science during the career of Napoleon? What is she at present? That Imperial Sovereign surrounded himself with the erudite and the scientific in all departments of human inquiry—and our studies held an ascendancy in his estimation. Read his visit to the Hotel Dieu, when he ordered the sculptor's best efforts to perpetuate the services of the departed Bichat, and bear in remembrance his paternal solicitude to give impulse to the brilliant career of Bertholet, Chaptal, Larrey, Dupuytren, and others. Read how he decorated, and applauded, and enriched, the philosophers both in the arts and in healing.

I think I hear the interrogatory, what inference



is to be deduced from facts like these, and a thousand others of a similar nature, that might be accumulated ? That medicine is a science so broad in its relations, that in every state of society, as at every period of life, it is called in requisition ; that it is appreciated at a high standard by the humblest and the loftiest communities ; that the rude and uncivilized, the cultivated and the most refined nations, at the most elevated eras of their celebrity, have honored the art and its professors ; that its disciples have been favored with becoming consideration, wherever the arts, erudition and philosophy have found claims to regard : that it is a progressive pursuit ; that it finds circumstances favorable to its advancement in every stage of man's civil and political condition ; that in its nonage, like the other sciences, it had its struggles with imperfections ; that in the most refined periods of social organization, its cultivation is most mature, and its culminating point at nearest approach.

It is needless to dwell upon the eminent advantages which our country and this metropolis possess for the efficient action of an Institution founded on the principles which have given birth to this Society, and which it is designed to advance. The immense force of public opinion under our form of government ; the necessity that exists here in every pursuit, of consulting that mighty agent instead of royal or princely favor ; the independent position we occupy in reference to European schools ; the facilities for



circulating ideas through a free press, among a reading people, are among the privileges that will readily occur with the very name of a New-York Academy of Medicine.

And here let me crave your indulgence, while I digress somewhat from that professional tone hitherto maintained, in order to express feelings to which I am confident you are equally alive. I refer to the associations of country, to that patriotic instinct which gives dignity and inspiration to the labors of the physician, not less than to those of the legislator or the author. We have been accused, as a people, and not without reason, of a want of nationality, indicated by a lukewarm recognition of native merit, and an indiscriminate admiration of foreign authority. My experience and observation, as well as my strongest personal sentiments, are directly opposed to this spirit. Let us never for a moment lose sight of our responsibilities and privileges as citizens, and in the study and practice of our art, let us sometimes forget selfish interests in considerations having reference to the glory of the land in which we dwell. It is a noble heritage.

To the philosopher it is a striking coincidence, that while the discovery of the mariner's compass and the art of printing, and the enunciation of the great principles of the Reformation, were exciting their dawning influence upon the prospects of humanity, the great minds of Europe recognized the fact, that for its complete development a scope was required, unrealized by existent political systems. What though



Bacon in philosophy, and Sydney in manners, had illustrated the most hopeful theories? Despotism opposed an iron barrier to any true relation between the great heart of the people and liberal culture. At this very juncture, the eyes of every philanthropic thinker were turned to the new world. Already it was felt that "westward the course of empire takes its way;" and the words of Berkeley, to minds of an enlarged speculation, might have been prophetically uttered, "Time's noblest offspring is his last." As in a later day a Coleridge and a Southey dreamed of a Utopia within its free borders; and a Priestley, and a Vanderkemp, and a Spurzheim crossed the sea to plant their doctrines upon its fertile soil; Hampden and Cromwell had looked thither for an asylum, and Locke meditated a visit. There was good reason for such projects. Time has proved their wisdom. The seeds of learning and truth have flourished with unexampled rapidity under the wings of our eagle. In every colony were scholars enriched with foreign lore, and glowing with the enthusiasm of progress: here was a free arena. In his introduction to the first Sermon ever printed, delivered in America by the elder Robert Cushman, at Plymouth, in 1621, may be found the following description of the destined scenes of some of the great experiments in modern civilization:

"New England, so called, not only (to avoid novelties) because Capt. Smith has so entitled it in his Description, but because of the resemblance that is in it, of England, the native soil of Englishmen; it



being much about the same for heat and cold in summer and winter, it being champaign ground, but no high mountains, somewhat like the soil in Kent and Essex; full of dales and meadow ground, full of rivers and sweet springs, as England is. But principally, so far as we can yet find, it is an island, and near about the quantity of England, being cut out from the main land in America, as England is from the main of Europe, by a great arm of the sea which entereth in forty degrees, and winneth up Northwest and by West, and goeth out either into the South Sea or else into the Bay of Canada. The certainty whereof, and the secrets of which we have not yet so found; but if God give time and means, we shall, ere long, discover both the extent of that river, together with the secrets thereof, and so try what territories, habitations or commodities may be found in it or about it.”\*

It may be here remarked, that previous to this geographical account of the new world, John Verazzanno had visited nearly the whole extent of the Atlantic coast of the United States, and that De Soto's expedition to Florida had terminated disastrously. Yet in the extract which I have read, we have the most authentic view of the country as entertained by that collection of distinguished colonists who reached our shores in December, 1620. With this unsophisticated picture, compare the actual facilities afterwards

\* Cushman; in the Library of the New York Historical Society.



opened to the emigrant; the now populous region, extending from the Alleghany range to the Atlantic coast, the valley of the Mississippi, which can support inhabitants equal in number to the whole of Europe, and feed the whole world; and the yet wild territory lying between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean. Imagination is lost in the grand scale of future probabilities. But the physical extent and variety of our country is not the only thought which demands our notice in this connection. The child is now born who will witness a population of one hundred millions of human beings occupying this area of soil, under that form of government which concentrated its constitutional power during the administration of our anointed Washington. The political institutions here established have made the United States the very home of free inquiry; and whenever and wherever that most glorious charter of human rights, a mission second only to the revelation of God's own word, in its influence on the welfare of mankind, our Declaration of Independence, is known and honored, let it be announced that a disciple of the healing art was the first distinguished martyr whose blood led to the immortal covenant; for the monument on Bunker Hill shall crumble before the name of WARREN is forgotten.

Without considering the motives of the puritan settlers, a theme well nigh exhausted by New-England eloquence, or the chivalric spirit of the southern cavaliers, so nobly embodied in Sir Walter Ra-



leigh, let us turn to those who came from our own fatherland, the scarcely-appreciated home of Erasmus and Grotius.

Scarcely a dozen years had elapsed from the time when Hudson, in 1609, discovered the waters that surround us, ere De Laet, in his *Novus Orbis*, gave his favorable account of the delightful climate which blessed the island of Manahatta; and Colden, one hundred years after, confirmed the description. If we except the occurrences at Jamestown, at New-Amsterdam was the first gathering of that settlement, which, within a period of somewhat over two hundred years, has converted the Indian cabin into the metropolis of the American Union, whose foreign trade at that period consisted chiefly in beaver-skins, by the factors of the Dutch West Indian Company, and which now holds commercial ties with every nation; yielding a revenue of twenty millions of dollars, and exporting more than seventy millions; whose tonnage is seven hundred thousand tons; whose location once sold for sixty guilders, or twenty-four dollars, and which at this hour, with its improvements, is estimated at more than three hundred millions of dollars. I see at this very moment among this honorable audience before me, a distinguished descendant of the first white child\* of European parentage, whose early ancestor was born on the 6th of June, 1625. The population of the commercial emporium may now be estimated at nearly four hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. Such is

\* Sarah, daughter of George Jansen Rapelje.



our position, and such the people who have occupied our soil. How well authorized was the declaration of the eloquent Massachusetts orator, Rufus Choate, in his late address. After dwelling on her unrivalled locality, and her numerous advantages, he no less truthfully than beautifully exclaims, "such is New-York, in her right hand grasping the boundless harvests of the West, and in her left, like Venice, espousing the everlasting seas !"

To speak of New-York in adequate terms is not my design, and is beyond my reach ; her physical attributes have in part been unfolded by the able men who, under government authority, have completed her geological survey. Her humorous chronicle has been already written by the classic pen of Irving ; let us hope that the graphic ability which has recorded the martyrdom of Leisler\* will yet elaborate the serious history of this great member of the American confederacy. She, however, is known to every enlightened mind by the vastness of her resources ; her mighty rivers and inland seas ; her prolific soil ; her rich mineralogy ; her salt springs. There is but one Niagara, and she claims it ; and her splendor is not lessened, when the ethnologist, like Morton or Pritchard, contemplates her aborigines, the Iroquois, those Romans of the West, and studies the physical and mental characteristics of the Seneca orator, Red Jacket, the great purpose of whose life was to sustain and preserve the habits,

\* Life of Leisler, by Charles F. Hoffman, Esq., in Sparks' Series of American Biography.



the religion, and devotion to country of his warlike tribe. I am constrained to declare, that the recollections which I cherish for the memory of the great Indian orator, are blended with the delectable associations which I retain of my intimacy with him at different periods of his advanced life. Mr. Jefferson has memorialized the Mingo Chief, Logan, the daily theme of the school-boy's recital. Red Jacket may be venerated with equal justice ; and if man be the crowning work of his maker, then may the eulogium of the French nobleman be reconciled with our best reasoning faculties, who affirmed that Red Jacket was a greater wonder than the falls of the mighty cataract near his residence.

In the city we now occupy, have originated those springs of action which stamp an historical renown on our people ; beneficial to the race at large, and enduring through all time. We can neither recount the sufferings of settlement, nor the horrors of Indian warfare ; we are forbid the details of colonial dependency, and the declaration of rights inherent in human nature ; but we would not omit to state, that in New-York, the liberty of the press was first vindicated among the Colonies, by the trial of John Peter Zenger, in 1735 ; that the memorable Congress on the stamp act, was first held in this city, in 1765 ; that no state spent more treasures of money and of blood in the conflict for independence ; that the glorious constitution of the United States was here vindicated by Hamilton, and



Jay, and Madison, and first carried into operation under the presidency of Washington, inaugurated as Chief Magistrate of the Republic in this city, by the renowned Chancellor Livingston, who had previously acted with Franklin and Jefferson, as one of the committee to draft the Declaration of Independence. At an early date, our Dutch forefathers established schools for classical, as well as common education, and Van Hoboken seems to have been prominent among our first teachers; and if Columbia College was not so prompt in its formation as Harvard and Yale, it is to be borne in recollection that our venerable institution is still with us; that her annals enrol many distinguished sons, in law, literature, and divinity; alumni who, amid the responsible cares of worldly strife, often revert with pleasure to the days of their collegiate association; though, alas! their alma mater appears to be often too tardy in designating their bright career in professional life by the insignia of her higher academic rewards. In extenuation for defects which an impartial historian might record concerning the earlier period of our progress, let the fact be ever cherished, that the tyranny of James II. exercised a benumbing influence on knowledge, by his long prohibition of printing among us until 1693, when Bradford gave us the first book on our laws from a New-York press; and let it ever be imprinted upon our hearts, as patriots, that New-York's



fealty to the Union, in days of greatest prosperity, and in hours of saddest trial, has never for a moment been questioned.

Let it not be said, that in this delineation I enlarge beyond the proper limits. We group these facts as interesting reminiscences; as citizens of this place, we at this day reap advantages from these occurrences, and gratitude inspires us in the recital. They are, moreover, circumstances which, in their several combinations, have exercised a dominant influence on the political, religious, and moral features of the inhabitants among whom we have our being. And what a host of names crowd upon the memory in recalling the great minds who have adorned our annals, political and intellectual! Can a native of New-York forget that George Clinton and Philip Schuyler were among the heroic sons of the war of the Revolution; that Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay, were united with Madison as the expositors of the glorious Constitution, which binds together nearly twenty millions of freemen; that New-York, as one of the old thirteen states, first projected that scheme of finance and revenue, which has rendered all subsequent labor in that branch of fiscal device, the mere study of an alphabet; that her delegated wisdom in the Senate of the United States, has been represented by Gouverneur Morris, Rufus King, and De Witt Clinton; that our school-fund system, for the diffusion of public knowledge, has secured an annual appro-



priation of nearly one million of dollars, among the people of a single state, to rear up the moral and intellectual edifice of the nation; that here, on the waters which lave our shores, Fulton exhibited the first successful illustration of navigation by steam, an experiment which, it is truly said, has annihilated time and space, and brought within familiar communication remote nations; that in the great work of internal improvement, New-York takes precedence, and exhibits the proud triumph of entire success, having amidst difficulties the most appalling opened new regions to commercial intercourse, in her canal policy, effectively brought into practical operation by her dauntless son, De Witt Clinton? The military events of the last two years, on this continent, have also fixed upon our state the grateful regards of the whole nation. In defiance of the strong political prejudices which existed, the recent brilliant results of American tactics have demonstrated the vast utility of the noble institution which originated in the wise foresight of Washington.

And in connection with circumstances which so strongly mark our position, let us not pass silently by that grand sanitary achievement which scatters through the multitudinous dwellings of this great metropolis an abundant supply of that pure and crystal element, which is at once the natural safeguard from infection, and the most refreshing and healthful of nature's gifts. The fragmentary arches which rise at intervals, venerable and ivy-clad,



along the Roman Campagna, far-reaching as they are, span a level or slightly-undulating country. The Croton aqueduct winds beneath lofty hills, tunnelled for its channel, and impends over deep ravines filled up to sustain its noble masonry, for a length of nearly fifty miles, to gush at last in sparkling fountains in the very heart of the city, and yield ablutionary privileges to her meanest denizen. And when these rich supplies for physical comfort and mental growth are required no more, the woodland eminence of Long Island, our beautiful Greenwood, offers a resting-place, beneath the variegated foliage, amid countless monuments, that commemorate, by their chaste architecture and eloquent inscriptions the endearing renown of genius and virtue; a Campo Santo, like that of which the English poet said, "it makes one in love with death." It gives buoyancy to the reflections of the solitaire, when pondering over the progress of improvement around us, that the Croton aqueduct and the Greenwood Cemetery owe their successful projection to native genius, and have added to the catalogue of American worthies the name of Douglass.

I have thus dwelt upon some of the promising features of our condition as inhabitants of this state and city, from a conviction that a clear understanding of the elements of life makes evident the responsibilities of the profession we have associated to elevate and advance. The history, soil, climate and social peculiarities of a country have no



inconsiderable bearing upon individual duty and destiny. Montesquieu notices this circumstance, but he only reiterated what the ancients had said. Cicero informs us that the air of Athens was sharp, and that from this cause, in part, the Athenians, were quick and witty; that the atmosphere of Thebes was thick, and the Thebans were heavy and corpulent. Yet Boetia produced Pindar and Plutarch, and Holland Johannes Secundus. Cabanis has confirmed by example like principles. Rush has further illustrated them, and we possess a small volume on a kindred topic from Professor John Augustine Smith. The mountain winds of Florence have been supposed to account for her intellectual superiority to Naples; the fogs of London, by rendering home more necessary and attractive, doubtless in part account for her literary fecundity. The air of Switzerland nerved her patriots; the want of picturesque scenery in Holland caused her artists to seek materials in homely subjects; and to the extreme vicissitudes in the weather of America, may be attributed, in some measure at least, the excitability and enterprise of our people.

It is the same with moral causes. The freedom, activity and inquiring disposition, especially the public spirit and experimental tendency which prevail here, illustrated by the men and circumstances to which I have partially alluded, render it imperative upon the physician to establish a high standard, to keep abreast of the progressive march of the general mind, and to emulate the noble exemplars in



other departments of science and action. Otherwise, all around him will suggest landmarks to indicate his want of loyalty to the dominant principles of his country and the age. But, as yet, no such reproach is tenable. The annals of our profession offer every encouragement, and, notwithstanding the kindly hint I have received from a venerable brother, to "let the dead doctors alone," it will, I feel assured, not be considered unmanly or inappropriate if I yield to a characteristic, but, I trust, pardonable weakness, and devote a moment to those departed worthies, who, were they alive, would have hailed the present movement with enthusiasm, and been among the foremost to enrol their names in our Academy.

New-York has been signally blest in her physicians. Imperfect as are the records concerning our early Dutch doctors, I find many prominent individuals among them, who, to medical erudition and scientific knowledge, added experience in political councils, and rendered services of no small consideration to the public weal. Several came direct from Holland, the land of their birth and the place of their education. Their public trusts were for the most part assigned them by the authorities of the Dutch West India Company. Johannes Megapolensis, and his son Samuel are recognised as the most conspicuous of these public worthies; they were men of learning and character; the son, Samuel, was a physician, and received his earlier education at Harvard University, and graduated M. D. at Leyden. He practised medicine at New-Amsterdam for some time; but was



subsequently elected by the people as one of the commissioners to negotiate with the British the articles for the capitulation of the province. About the same time Johannes La Montagne, who was also one of the council, was pronounced a skilful doctor of medicine. It appears from the Rensselaerwick papers,\* that a surgeon of the name of Abraham Staes was also here. Hans Kierstede, still earlier, was a practising surgeon here; and a daughter of Tryn Jansen was eminent at the same period as a female obstetrician. Gerardus Beekman, also, for a short time exercised the active duties of a physician. About 1660, Jacob D. Commer was noted as the city surgeon, but soon after removed to New-Amstel, now Newcastle, Delaware. A post-mortem examination is recorded in 1691, and Johannes Kerfbyl and five others of the faculty testified to the accuracy of the statement set forth. The subject was the body of Governor Sloughter, who had died suddenly under suspicious circumstances. The details are sufficiently minute, and evince an acquaintance with autopsic investigations creditable to the pathological knowledge of the times. There was sufficient variety in the nativities of these doctors: Kerfbyl appears to have been the most eminent among them; he was a graduate of the University of Leyden, a member of the colonial legislature under the Earl of Bellamont, and a friend of Leisler. He came from Holland, and died about 1699. John Lockhart was a Scotchman;

\* See O'Callaghan.



Thomas Thornhill and Robert Brett were Englishmen. Lucal Van Eflinchoone seems to have been from Germany. Gilles Gaudineau, who signs himself Chirurgo-Physician, was a Frenchman. He was a liberal contributor of money to church affairs. The prevailing language of the place was the Low Dutch; some, however, used the German, some the English, and others the French, while the Portuguese was used by the Jews. The population of New-York at that period was 4202, (a little over the number of this audience,) including 575 colored slaves. Among the records on the subject of the pathological examination, we find that the council ordered that eight pounds eight shillings be paid by Mr. Collector to the chirurgeons for opening and inspecting the said body. This, I believe, may be pronounced the first or earliest example of a post-mortem examination in the annals of our science in this country. John Bard and Peter Middleton, sixty years after, 1750, dissected in this city the human body, for the purpose of imparting medical instruction.

At the commencement of 1700 there arrived in this city an individual, whose name has, in his descendants, become familiar to our ears, and historical in the political annals of the Union. John Van Beuren, of Van Beuren, near Amsterdam, in Holland, a pupil of Boerhaave, and a graduate of Leyden, at the age of twenty-two years was, upon the recommendation of his great teacher, appointed surgeon of a Dutch fleet which sailed for New-York, after touching at the coast of Africa. Soon after his arrival in this



city, he, at the instigation of the governor, was chosen physician and surgeon to the then Alms House; he enjoyed a large practice; at the age of 25 years he was married, and had five sons and three daughters, and from him issued the whole family of the Van Beurens. His youngest son, Beekman, was born in this city in 1727 and died in 1812. He succeeded his father, the first settler, as physician to the Alms House until the English army entered the city. At the peace of 1783 he again accepted his public trust but resigned it in 1784. He was the first physician who introduced the practice of inoculation for the smallpox in our public institutions. All the sons of John Van Beuren attained to the age of eighty and eighty-five years.

The distinguished Cadwallader Colden, eminent as a philosopher, naturalist and writer, gave us the first particular account of our climate in 1720. He also wrote on the sore throat distemper in 1735, and observations on the malignant fever which prevailed in New-York in 1741-2. His Principles of Action in Matter evinced great acumen, and was a production of high repute. His History of the Five Nations is universally known. Colden was remarkably skilled in botanical knowledge; and from the Linnæan correspondence, recently published by Sir James Edward Smith, we find that it was Colden himself, and not his distinguished daughter, who received, the high compliment of having a plant of the tetrandrous class named *Coldenia*. Colden was the first American expositor of the Linnæan system, in



the New World. This classification he taught on the banks of the Hudson, almost immediately after its announcement by the illustrious Swede. Kalm, the traveller, the Professor at Abo, a pupil of Linnæus, with whom Colden became personally acquainted, might have given him the first intimations of the artificial system, as it is known that its principles were expounded in America before they were recognised in Great Britain. Indeed, Hudson first naturalized the sexual system, by adapting it to English plants, in 1762.

About a century ago, Dr. Johnson, of Perth Amboy, in New Jersey, was sedulously devoted to Flora, and maintained a correspondence on subjects of natural history with the philosophers of Europe. In one of his letters he says, he thinks the information he imparts will be found profitable to an inquirer of like facts, one Mr. Linnæus. I have not yet satisfied myself whether Johnson was a practitioner in New-York at that early date. In 1740, Isaac Dubois took his degree of Doctor in Medicine at Leyden, at which time he published a dissertation on the use and abuse of blood-letting. He, doubtless, had listened to the instructions of Boerhaave. He exercised the art in New-York. Contemporary with Dubois, was a physician of note of the name of John Nicoll. He was imprisoned by Leisler, and subsequently presided as judge on the trial of the accused Governor. Dr. John Dupuy was also another contemporary who flourished in this place ;



he was learned and eminent in his calling, but died early, in the 28th year of his age, in 1745.

Dr. John Bard, long a distinguished clinical practitioner in New-York, published several papers on the Yellow Fever, and an essay on the nature and cause of the malignant Pleurisy which proved so fatal to the inhabitants of Long Island in the winter of 1749. He further added to the usefulness of a life of great toil by private instruction in practical medicine. I at present remember but one of his immediate pupils, Dr. Henry Mott, who exercised for many years the art, both on Long Island, where he was born, and also in this metropolis, and where he, in 1840, died at the advanced age of 83 years. Dr. Mott was a promoter of the mercurial practice in the sore-throat distemper and in other diseases, and was much associated during his professional career with Dr. Ogden and Dr. Muirson: but he will be long remembered in our annals as the father of Valentine Mott, the great surgeon of our times, the improver of the art, and the introducer of surgical anatomy and pathology in our schools of medical science. Dr. Peter Middleton's Historical Inquiry, on the ancient and present state of medicine, delivered twenty years after, 1769, was a most effective essay. Middleton was learned, acute, and practical; in manner singularly refined, and of a generous nature. He arrived in this country with Dr. William Hunter, of Scotland, who came to Rhode Island in 1752; and who was rendered fa-



mous by his anatomical lectures there. Middleton also wrote an excellent paper on Croup, and was the first professor of the practice of physic in the newly-organized medical school connected with Columbia College. Middleton died in New-York, in 1781. He was a man of rare excellence, widely known, and admired by all.

Dr. John Jones, ever to be remembered as a physician to Washington and the surgeon to Franklin, was a native of Long Island; he completed his education abroad, at London, Leyden, and Paris. As surgeon, he holds the first rank among the practitioners of the art in that day. In 1768, he was chosen an associate in the same school with Middleton. His volume on Wounds and Fractures, published in 1776, and subsequently re-printed, attests his great qualifications. Percival Pott and William Hunter are to be enumerated among his scientific friends.

Dr. Samuel Bard, the associate of Middleton, Clossy, Smith, Tennant and Jones, as the founder of our first medical school, was conspicuous for his classical and general knowledge, and his great practical skill in medicine. He was first professor of natural philosophy, and subsequently of clinical medicine, and was long Dean of the Faculty in Columbia College. In his later years, he was the first President of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of the University of the State of New-York, upon its re-organization in 1811. His acquirements while at Edinburgh se-



cured him the Hope medal for Botany, and Haller commended his thesis for the Doctorate, *De Viribus Opii*. His inquiry into the nature, cause, and cure of Angina Suffocativa, first appeared in the Transactions of the American Philosophical Society. He wrote some papers on the nature of Yellow Fever, printed in the Facts and Observations, in the Additional Facts and Observations of the College of Philadelphia. His Compendium of Midwifery has had a wide circulation. To Dr. Bard, clinical medicine and humanity at large are greatly indebted for his successful efforts in laying the foundation of that important institution, the New-York Hospital. Few surpassed Bard in all the best and noble qualities which constitute intellectual and moral excellence. His memory is still cherished with the most grateful associations by the few of our venerable citizens who still abide with us.

Our profession is indebted to Dr. Jacob Ogden, of Jamaica, Long Island, but who practised largely in this city, for his Letters on the malignant sore-throat distemper, bearing date 1769 and 1774. Ogden was a bold and vigorous practitioner, and urged with great earnestness the mercurial practice in pneumonic affections.

In 1781, Dr. Richard Bayley, of this city, published his letters, addressed to Dr. William Hunter, of London, on Angina Trachealis, a tract of singular merit, and from which we are justified in giving to him the merit of being the first writer



who understood the nature and treatment of Croup. He wrote a volume of deep interest on the Yellow Fever of New-York, as it prevailed in 1795; and in which work he attempted to give distinctiveness to the terms contagion and infection. As Health Physician of the Port of New-York, he addressed a series of letters to the New-York Common Council on that subject, which more than any other for a long while engrossed his attention, the origin of the Yellow Fever, and the nature and expediency of quarantine laws. Too much cannot be said in behalf of the exertions he made to establish our Lazaretto, and the State regulations which originally existed, to lessen the evils of pestilential miasmas.

The first medical degree conferred in this city, was that of Bachelor of Medicine, in 1769, upon two candidates, Samuel Kissam and Robert Tucker; and in 1770, that of Doctor of Medicine, upon Samuel Kissam, the first-named of these gentlemen. I must trespass a moment concerning this Kissam. The first graduated Doctor of Medicine in the Western Hemisphere, calls for a word or two. John Kissam, of the family of the Kissams, early left England, and embarked for America. A part of them emigrated to Long Island, where the aforesaid Samuel was born, at Madnan, now Great Neck, about the year 1745. His father, John, had five sons, of whom the most eminent was Benjamin Kissam, eminently distinguished as a lawyer at our bar, and the



preceptor of the late venerable statesman, John Jay. He was also the father of the late prominent surgeon, Dr. Richard S. Kissam. Samuel, our first graduate, entered upon the practice of physic in the city of New-York, but left it soon after his graduation, with Tennant, the Professor of Obstetrics, to enjoy better prospects in the West Indies; an ample field of business enabled him soon to realize a fortune, but he and Tennant within a few years fell victims to the Yellow Fever of that climate.

I am forbidden to be more minute on individual characters, or to extend these observations at this time. Nor can I at present dwell on the history of our first Medical School. It would gratify individual feeling, and be, perhaps, not without its use, to commemorate the services of the generous Clossey, a sound anatomist, a good writer, and an ardent and excellent teacher; to contemplate the moral worth and acquirements of Tennant, our first Professor of Midwifery, who found a premature grave in the West Indies; and dwell for a little while on the excellent Crosby, whose professional sagacity and private worth still secure him a grateful and honorable remembrance in this city; to note the labors for the promotion of knowledge, medical and classical, of Dr. James Jay; and record the more striking circumstances which marked the career of Dr. James Smith, the first Professor, chronologically, of Chemistry, among us: few men possessed greater opportu-



nities of learning; and that he was not an inapt scholar, his Dissertation at Leyden, *De Febre Intermitte*, evinces.

As we approach a period nearer our own, we find no dearth of memorable individuals for medical approbation. Among the number who won domestic renown, was Magrath, who is immortalized by Smollet. He was by birth an Irishman, and arrived in New-York about 1740, where for nearly forty years he was conspicuous for the boldness of his practice, and the austerity of his character. He was strenuous in the recommendation of water, internal and external, as a curative agent, and might be classed as the first hydropathist among us, if we are ready to withhold the claims of our Indian aborigines to that conjectural treatment. During that memorable epoch in the history of New-York, when British rule held dominion by the army of occupation, the professional tone of this metropolis was well sustained by the medical men who, as army surgeons chiefly, resided here. Van Dyke, from Holland, Farquhar, from Scotland, Proctor and Nooth from England, Michaelis, from Germany, are to be enumerated as the most prominent. Bard, Nicoll, Tillary and Bayley, were also of the number who, at times during that crisis, practised here.

Let me close this portion of our medical history with a short notice of one, whose professional excellence as a clinical physician, united to his strong intellectual qualities, high moral integ-



rity, and protracted life, enabled him to act no inconsiderable part in the responsible vocation of healing. George Christian Anthon was born in Saltzungen, in the Duchy of Saxe Meiningen, in Germany, in August, 1734, and died in New-York, December, 1815. He obtained his medical diploma at Amsterdam; entered the service of the Dutch West India Company, and sailed for Surinam in South America; was captured by a privateer, and brought into the harbor of New-York: he was appointed Garrison surgeon at New-York, by Lord Amherst, transferred thence to Detroit, and appointed surgeon-general at that post. He continued at Detroit during the French and Indian wars, with the exception of a period, during which he was taken prisoner by the Indians, and conveyed down the Mississippi to Pittsburgh. At the close of the Revolutionary struggle with the mother country, he turned his attention to New-York, and arrived in this city in 1784, where he continued almost uninterruptedly devoted to his profession until the close of his long life. It is to be regretted that we have no writings of his on the art to which he devoted himself. He was an assiduous observer, and fertile and energetic in medical appliances. Few observed so much of the yellow fever, as it laid waste this city in its several visitations, and none more heroically braved the pestilence. His wide knowledge, from personal observation of febrile disorders as they afflict city and country, densely-inhabited localities, or a sparse population, gave commanding weight to his opinions on



such topics. His philanthropy was characteristic of the liberality of his sentiments, and his benevolence an attractive feature in his character.

I have said sufficient to demonstrate the talents, acquirements and activity of the professors and practitioners of our art, at a time when motives to exertion were less urgent than at the present day ; when, to win favor and secure fame, still stronger resolution, a more systematic distribution of time, and uninterrupted efforts, both mental and corporeal, are indispensable.

Within the preceding age, and also during the present, many eminent members of the faculty in this city have descended to the grave, whose lives shed a radiance over American practical medicine. Mc Knight, Addoms, Hicks, Buel, Wm. Pitt Smith, Elihu Hubbard Smith, Moore, Borrowe, Forrey, Dyckman, Watts, and McLean, are among the names that might be dwelt upon ; and, indeed, while the ink is scarcely dried with which this paragraph is written, I am compelled to add to this honorable catalogue, the name of our deeply-lamented associate and accomplished friend, James A. Washington.

The records of our science would fail of fidelity, were the individual excellence of several other cultivators of our art who have comparatively recently departed, omitted on this occasion. Not a few who now hear me must have a more thorough personal knowledge of many of them than myself, and be better qualified to pronounce on their respective merits ; yet, at the hazard of taxing your indulgence,



I cannot, in gratitude to their memory, withhold a partial effort to awaken reminiscences congenial to the dearest feelings of our nature. Diversity of opinion as to special merits may exist among us; the aggregate worth which they embodied gives the cheering consolation, that New-York has steadily advanced in her professional career; that medicine has in these later days flourished with increased renown, in all its departments, and that she has furnished her full quota of elevated minds, cultivated understandings, benevolent hearts, and real practical disciples, to grace the noble faculty of healing.

The direful pestilence, once called the great sickness, and now popularly denominated Yellow Fever, which first invaded our city in 1702, during the administration of Cornbury; which was seen and described by Colden in 1741-2; which made its appearance to a limited extent in New-York in 1791, as described by Addoms; which again reappeared in 1795, and was recognized by the clinical acumen of John Bard as a type of febrile infection, identical with that which he had not witnessed before in this city for an interval of nearly forty years; that pestilence which has spread death and dismay often, in subsequent years, in many cities and seaport towns through the United States, while it has given us repeated assurances of its formidable and fatal nature, has also borne painful yet consoling evidence of the heroic devotion of the medical faculty to their high behest. I see some of the survivors of these scenes of former days now before me; I know



at what cost they earned their experience; I can anticipate the emotions which swell their bosoms when, in retrospection, they number their associates who, while Health Officers of the Port, fell victims to its fatal embrace, and reflect that the accomplished and skilful Malachi Treat, the intellectual Ledyard, the classical Wm. Pitt Smith, the sagacious Richard Bayley, the ingenious Benjamin De Witt, are included in the sad catalogue.

Where could we have found, amidst a population of the number which this city possessed, a more learned, enlightened, and effective corps of professional men than that which honored and blessed New-York at the period to which I refer? Edward Miller, the finished scholar, of varied erudition, alike conspicuous for courteous demeanor, exact morals, active benevolence and zeal in medical research: "The silence of pain and the eye of hope," says Dr. Rush, "which took place in his patients the moment he sat down at their bed-sides, were produced not more by their conviction of his skill, than by their unlimited confidence in his sympathy and integrity." It is impracticable to dwell at present on his medical writings. That, in several of his pathological views, he anticipated many of the recognised doctrines now in force, admits of no dispute. He increased our renown in medical literature. Archibald Bruce is long to be remembered for his love of natural history, his zeal as a mineralogist, as the projector of the first American Journal appropriated to that science, and the correspondent of



Haüy and Jameson. Valentine Seaman claims respect both as a man and a physician, by the excellence of his life and his untiring industry in clinical practice; his zeal in promulgating the benefits of the vaccine discovery, amidst great opposition, was second only to that of Waterhouse; his medical papers on divers subjects received the commendation of Chisholm: Nicholas Romaine's scholastic attainments in many languages, dead and living—his broad and deep knowledge of the several departments of medical science, and commanding talents as a collegiate instructor, stamped him as one possessed of special gifts; nor were his claims to such exalted distinction lessened, when, as first president, he delivered his discourse upon the opening of the College of Physicians and Surgeons in November, 1807.

Besides these, let me concisely enumerate others. James S. Stringham, a practitioner of repute, learned in classical and professional knowledge; a curious investigator of medical doctrines, a successful professor of the then new French Chemistry, and to whom belongs the signal honor of being the first teacher of legal or forensic medicine in this country; a voluntary undertaking, for which he had long prepared himself by extensive reading and reflection, from the elaborate investigations and details of Zachas down to the recent productions of Foderé and Mahon. As the successor of Dr. Stringham in the College of Physicians and Surgeons, I may be tolerated in the remark, that he best can estimate the



services of the departed professor who has best qualified himself by a proper devotion to that intricate and responsible branch of medical study, and has carefully compared the lucid principles which he first taught, now nearly fifty years ago, with the condition of the science as at that time unfolded by the Duncans and British writers. Stringham added to the literature of our profession by several medical papers. He was a native of New-York, and born in 1774.

John C. Osborn, associated with the medical faculty of Columbia College, and afterwards with the College of Physicians and Surgeons, was a reader of many books, an earnest promoter of the American materia medica, and a clinical prescriber in the New-York Hospital. He held the pen of a keen satirist, and published some effusions of that nature, always, I believe, anonymously. His conversational powers were lively and instructive.

I have already recognised the Kissams as a name identified with our profession. He whom I now summon to recollection is Richard S. Kissam, alike favorably known in practical medicine and in surgery. An approved classical scholar, he, by a five years' residence at Edinburgh, qualified himself for the active discharge of the duties in which he afterwards became so conspicuous. As a physician and surgeon, he was a blessing to this city for upwards of thirty years; as a lithotomist he was particularly celebrated. Nearly the whole period of his career he was a surgeon of the New-York Hospital. While on the continent, after his graduation, he enjoyed a personal



acquaintance with Zimmermann, and seems to have fallen in love with retirement, from the study of that eminent writer's work on Solitude. His fondness for classical pursuits never forsook him: and it was curious to observe the great surgeon, while preparations were being made for him for an operation, to run over an ode of Horace, as a mental stimulus for the better accomplishment of his immediate duty. Kissam was an exemplar of philanthropy.

Very many of my auditory must have been personally well acquainted with the late Wright Post. He blended medical and chirurgical talents to a greater degree than any other of the Professors of our art among us. His literary acquirements were slender; his acquisitions in his vocation of the highest order. He signalized himself as a student in his great calling under John Hunter, William Fordyce, William Cruikshank, and John Selden. He was for a period of nearly forty years a Professor of Anatomy and Surgery in the Medical Colleges of this city; and excelled as a teacher of his branch beyond all comparison. As a physician, he evinced a clear and admirable judgment; as a surgeon, he was most accomplished. In his intercourse with his brethren, he was signally observant of the principles of medical decorum. He stood aloof at all times from those petty jealousies and disputes which occasionally beset professional life; and so rigidly moral was his character, and so high his estimate of the pursuit he had chosen as his occupation, that no persuasion could



ever lead him to sacrifice a moment of time to the debasing contentions of party politics. Much might be written of Dr. Post, for the instruction of the juniors in our art, winning without violence, but by commendable perseverance, his way through every obstacle in early life ; in the meridian of his career glowing with the fruits of prosperity, and venerable in his latest decay. He was a pattern of the domestic virtues. Our regret at his death is increased by the reflection, that he has left us few memorials of his great professional achievements. A memoir of him has been given to the public by our associate, Professor Mott.

This catalogue of our eminent predecessors, I must enlarge with some few other names : Dr. John R. B. Rodgers, a favorite pupil of the celebrated Rush, was long an ornament of the faculty of this city. He was a ripe scholar, graduated at Edinburgh, and during our Revolutionary contest for Independence encountered practically, as one of the medical staff, the privations of the American army at Valley Forge. He was the first Professor of Obstetrics in Columbia College, upon its re-organization, after the general peace. As clinical teacher at the New-York Hospital, he won great distinction. Several of his medical essays may be found in the New-York Medical Repository ; but his renown promises greater durability by the surgical career of his son, Dr. J. K. Rodgers.

Among the professors of the faculty of medi-



cine of Columbia College, was the late Dr. Wm. Hamersley. He was an excellent scholar in the classics, and a graduate of the Edinburgh school of physic. He long held a Professorship in practical medicine. His lectures gave evidence of the deep conviction of his mind, as to the value of his instruction, and his style commended itself for its clearness and purity. He made himself well acquainted with the different theories of his art, but was often too much absorbed in their elucidation.

No allowance for the partiality of friendship, or long association, need be granted, in giving testimony in language most emphatic, of the bright assemblage of abilities, the rare acquisitions, and valuable services of the late Samuel L. Mitchill. No one among us was ever more admired for the excellencies of the heart, and the pure and single purposes of life; for devotion to the ennobling pursuits of intellect, and the advancement of our country's honor. By birth an American, his delight was in the promotion of every species of knowledge beneficial to his countrymen, and his ambition in all his efforts seems to have been her independence, both in physical and mental resources. That his labors were largely and successfully directed to these ends, the whole career of his private and public life demonstrates; and future generations, when his claims are thoroughly analyzed, will not fail to record him among those worthies who have faithfully served their country in the promotion of the useful arts, science,



and humanity. To a sound knowledge of the languages of ancient Greece and Rome, he added a wide acquaintance with those of modern Europe, and our Indian dialects. He was not inaptly designated as the Polyglot of our profession. To a scholar thus armed, no printed knowledge could be locked up. Every division of his life presents matter for study and improvement: his juvenile discipline and instruction on Long Island, with his preceptor, Dr. Latham; his medical studies and pharmaceutical displays under the direction of Dr. Bard, of New-York; his ceaseless labors at Edinburgh, with his fellow-students, M'Intosh, Emmet, and Kissam; and his argumentative disputations with the knight of the Roman eagle, John Brown, the famous projector of the Brunonian theory.

When he returned to his native country, invested with his doctorate, it was soon understood that a young man of great and varied knowledge had arrived among us. He saw fit, however, to add to his medical and scientific acquisitions, a knowledge of the profession of law, under Chief Justice Yates, by which, as he said, he was better enabled to comprehend our new constitution, and fix in his own mind an unalterable attachment to principles sacred to the rights and best interests of mankind.

Upon his appointment as professor of chemistry, in the Medical faculty of Columbia college, he first made known to his countrymen the new system of Lavoisier, and suggested several alterations in its nomenclature. This, with other evidences



of originality, involved him in a controversy with the celebrated Dr. Priestley: to cope with such a combatant on the doctrines of a science in which his opponent was a recognized discoverer, is proof sufficient of the intellectual power of the young American philosopher. Among his early chemical efforts, was his analysis of the Saratoga waters, his investigations on septic acid, his disquisitions on the nature of malaria, and his mineralogical survey of the state of New-York, the first attempt of that kind in this country. Volney availed himself largely of the knowledge it embodied. Mitchill inclined to the Wernerian hypothesis, though in later life he acknowledged the volcanic theory received support from many important physical phenomena in his own country. He for many years was the professor of natural history in the College of Physicians and Surgeons; and the wide and extensive range of topics which he discussed in his lectures on mineralogy, zoology, and botany, satisfied the most censorious, that his claims to compass of thought, capacity of generalization, and originality of views, were indisputable. In the congress of the United States, both as a representative and senator, his public career was marked by great usefulness: he, whom many apprehended was a mere abstract student, was found to be a man of high social qualities, gifted with enlarged ideas, and filled with researches on almost every subject of human inquiry. He wrote extensively. With Edward Miller and Elihu H. Smith, he



projected the first periodical ever issued in this country on medical science, the New-York Medical Repository : he was the principal editor of the first sixteen volumes. This Journal, so honorable to the scientific condition of American medicine, was subsequently continued, with no abatement of its excellence, by the learned Dr. James R. Manley, and other eminent associates, to the completion of the twenty-third volume.

Dr. Mitchill was the principal founder of the Lyceum of Natural History, and for many years its first president : he enriched its Annals with many contributions, and at his demise, bequeathed to that Institution his valuable cabinet. For twenty years he was a physician of the New-York Hospital. He was justly deemed the Nestor of American science ; his name was familiarly known in both hemispheres ; while the simplicity of his spirit and the benignity of his nature endeared him to all who were so fortunate as to enjoy his personal acquaintance.

The larger portion of the professional life of William James Macneven seems to have been spent in this country, and in this, his adopted city. His classical education he received at Prague, and finished his medical studies at Vienna. The distracted condition of his native country, Ireland, led him early into political associations with Lord Fitzgerald, Theobald Wolfe Tone, Thomas Addis Emmet, and William Sampson, from which he suffered imprisonment in Kilmainham, and at Fort St. George.



Severe as were the penalties inflicted on him, his long imprisonment was rendered less irksome by the vigor and elasticity of his mind. Books were his great resources, and the acquisition of languages his greatest delight. Upon his liberation, he embarked for America, and by a remarkable coincidence arrived on our shores on the day when the entire people were manifesting their joy at a nation's independence, on the 4th of July, 1805. He soon engaged in medical practice; and in 1807, shortly after the opening of the first session of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, delivered a course of lectures on clinical cases as they occurred in the then City Alms House. In 1811 he was appointed professor of chemistry; and upon the absence of the professor of materia medica, then in Europe, this branch was added to his chair. In 1826 he resigned his professorship, and received an appointment of professor of materia medica in the Rutgers Medical college. In 1830 he ceased his functions as a public teacher. He was the author of several works, *Rambles in Switzerland*, and *Pieces of Irish History*. His ablest essay is his exposition of the Atomic Theory, which was received with favor both at home and abroad, and translated into French. Dr. Macneven was among the most learned of our faculty in his time. He spoke the German and French with the same facility as English; and in the Italian, unlocked with delight the treasures of Dante and Ariosto. In his native tongue, the Irish, he conversed



with great purity. I have some reason to think he aided General Vallancey in his Irish Dictionary.

Dr. Macneven lives in the recollection of many as a man of great talents and extensive erudition. As a teacher of chemical philosophy, he was learned, and ample in exposition. At his death, it was felt that learning had lost a distinguished ornament, real knowledge a true disciple, the charities of life an ardent friend, and patriotism one who had sustained martyrdom in her glorious cause.

There are several others of our departed celebrities, whom a just contemplation of our profession would urge me to introduce on this occasion, were our limits adequate. I shall close, however, these imperfect outlines of our medical predecessors, with a brief notice of one, whom it is admitted by common consent nurtured and improved the science in which his life was spent, the late Dr. David Hosack. Few, perhaps, could have known him better personally and professionally than myself. He was a native of this city, to whose reputation in the arts, and in general science, he so extensively contributed. His American education was enlarged by a close prosecution of the different branches of medical and chirurgical knowledge at the University of Edinburgh, and by attendance at the hospitals and lectures of the renowned teachers in London. His range of investigation was comprehensive, and to the best acquisitions in the art of healing, he added the study of mineralogy, under



Schmybert, and botany and zoology, under Sir James Edward Smith. Upon his return to New-York, in 1794, he resumed with renewed ardor the duties of practical medicine, and for upwards of forty years was held in the highest estimation as a physician of great acuteness, profound and extensive views, and enlightened therapeutical resources. In diagnosis he was acknowledged a master mind, and his remedial measures were such as a prompt and almost intuitive sagacity would alone suggest.

As in clinical medicine he had no superior, so also as professor he is justly admitted to have been without a rival. His eloquence as a teacher was of the most commanding order : the physiology of health, the pathology of disease, and the capabilities of our art, were with him the theme of richest disquisition ; and the most indifferent student could not fail to have his attention riveted to the able expositions of this graphic illustrator of morbid phenomena and curative agencies. Many of his lectures contained the germ of those principles which have since budded forth in these our own days, with renewed vigor and fulness, and are now recognized for their mighty influence, in forming the minds of the medical philosopher for the adaptation of better reasoning on the intricacies of the science in its great relations. Our wide republic, at this hour, still reaps the saving advantages of his sound practical doctrines, in the number of practitioners scattered everywhere, fortified with his precious truths in



the science of healing; and sustained by the demonstrations of his skill, and the potentiality of his name, few indeed can possibly be found to swerve from the divine precepts of Hippocratic medicine, in order to adopt the fallacious novelties of the day. No individual whom it has been my good fortune to admire in the professional chair, ever inspired me with greater reverence for the wisdom he imparted, and the eloquence and heartfelt earnestness with which he meted out the treasures of his cautious and copious experience. He maintained an extensive correspondence with the philosophers of both worlds, and was honored with literary and scientific distinctions by the learned societies of every part of enlightened Europe and America.

Assembled, as we are, to celebrate a new, and what all deem a highly-important professional movement, I felt it incumbent upon myself, as your representative, thus to glance at the departed ornaments of the medical and chirurgical art. To them we owe a heritage of practical truth, which it would be thankless to enjoy unacknowledged. It has often been declared a reproachful characteristic of our nation, that we are heedless of the past; but the part of wisdom as well as reverence is to cherish high examples and guard noble bequests. The charities, learned institutions, and moral influence of the physicians of to-day, spring from the philanthropy, enterprise and character of the physicians who have gone before. It is meet that, on an occasion like the present, which revives the brightest asso-



ciations, and awakens the fraternal sympathies of the science, their memories should be recalled. It is an appropriate and essential part of the ceremony of laying the corner-stone of the New Medical Temple, to cast a garland on the sepulchres of the high priests who have once administered worthily at her shrine. As I look around me, auspicious omens greet my sight, and assure me that the integrity of that sacred function will never be invaded, where it has been so long and so trustworthily maintained. The glorious lineage has been most sacredly perpetuated, and the roll of honorable names seems only to lengthen with time.

Delicacy forbids more particular allusion to the living; but when renown has inscribed any name upon her immortal tablet, we are justified in seeking encouragement from its contemplation, especially now and here, consecrated as are the hour and the association, to progress and to truth. It is needless, gentlemen, for me to call your attention to those individuals around you, whose attainments and skill have added to the reputation of American medical practice; nor need I remind you, that while New-York has taken so prominent a rank in medico-chirurgical science, the brilliant success of more than one of her professors has been recognized as cordially abroad as at home.

Thus much, then, of New-York, once New-Amsterdam; thus much of its early and of its present state; of what has been done, and of what is now doing; of the leading individuals once on the theatre of



life, and of the actors conspicuous in our own day. But I crave you to reproach me not, either with being the eulogist of times past, or as satisfied with the actual condition of the profession at this period. The onward movement which we daily read of, and continually witness, imperatively urges us to new measures, in order to secure still higher, still newer and better results. The method of procedure requires to be conducted by legitimate rules, the advantages to be realized by normal laws.

I would fain dwell, at this time, upon the promptitude with which a distinguished member of our faculty\* early awakened attention to the state of our science throughout the United States; notice the excellent suggestions on medical education, as contained in the discourse of Dr. Alfred Stillé; and embody in this place some of the more striking animadversions on the condition of the profession in this country, from the recent address of Dr. Stewart; but the limits of the occasion forbid.†

There are desiderata, moreover, indispensable to entire success, which patriotism calls aloud for, and which the profession invokes. If the physical condition and moral eminence of a nation depend upon the healthy scale and intellectual tone of its people, and there is a wonderful connection between them, then does it behoove our rulers to do more in furtherance of the acknowledged designs of our Uni-

\* N. S. Davis, M. D.

† Anniversary Address to the New-York Medical and Surgical Society, by F. Campbell Stewart, M. D. New-York: 1846.



versities and Colleges; to aid with a liberal provision in promoting the higher as well as the common branches of professional science. The apparatus in our institutions ought to be more ample, so that our youth may need nothing to give them the fullest measures in quantity and in quality of that wisdom which can be turned to the best and most appropriate results. They may go abroad empty, and they may return filled with the learning of the schools; I shall always honor them for efforts thus made in these their laudable endeavors for knowledge' sake; but their efficiency as practical medical men is only to be secured by a proper course of study in their own land, by their becoming the observers of the diseases of their own climate, with the ethnological knowledge of those with whom they live and with whom they act. The sturdiest and most dexterous mariner on the broad ocean, may find himself a cast-away in navigating his bark on the uncertain waters of our inland seas, or by an unwarrantable confidence in the specious appearances of our mighty Mississippi. Climate has its diseases, and the topographical relations of a people will ever control their type and character. "The immediate and diversified effects of climate," observes an eminent American writer, Prof. Smith, of the University of the State of New-York, "are interesting to every class of persons; but to none is the study of its multifarious relations so important as to the student of medical science. Its direct influence in producing and modifying diseases and its subsidiary effects, in giving energy to



causes which otherwise would be inactive, should be subjects of special inquiry with every one who wishes to attain that knowledge which will qualify him to discharge his public duties, and elevate him in the scale of professional reputation." "The glory of Hippocrates," he adds, "was derived not more from his sagacity as a pathological observer, than from his knowledge of the character of diseases, as affected by the influences of air, water, and localities."

Far be it from me to depreciate the talents and the attainments of the faculties of other countries. I have some idea of their worth, admire their noble and humane efforts, and do homage to their labors: but I have scarcely ever seen an European physician who came among us, who had not many things to learn over again, and to abandon some of his most cherished doctrines in which he had been taught, ere he proved a successful general prescriber for many of the maladies endemial among us. Climate, soil, habits, and occupation, nay, the very government of a people, must be understood by the physician.

Honorable as the testimony is to the aptitude for inquiry displayed in the medical periodical literature of our country, by such observers as Manley, Roberts, Gardner, Wood, and others, there seems a deficiency sometimes of that exact topographical information, without which the best papers lose much of their interest, and therapeutical value. From the enterprise recently manifested in natural history, we may argue, that the American materia medica, so prolific in potent agents, will be explored by our countrymen with more precise aims, enriched with the is-



sues of chemical investigation and clinical trials. Our hopes of this important result are strong, when we reflect that pursuits so absorbing occupy the minds of Brown, Torrey, Bigelow, Grey, Griffith, Carson, Williams, and Harrison.

The history of our diseases demands more severe clinical scrutiny than is generally bestowed. A loose generalization of facts can never conduce to much benefit in the sick room. Many of our writers, I am aware, have been distinguished by their accounts of our epidemics ; but even in these we occasionally find deficiencies which the medical philosopher must regret. Rigid induction from closely-noted occurrences, is the only path the medical historian can follow. Nor does it demand of him that his field of observation be so prodigiously large, to become a faithful and valuable narrator. Who has excelled Cullen in the description of disease ? yet that great writer, compared with some of our physicians in extent of practice, was a man of limited observation. Behold, however, the scrutinizing mind with which he watched phenomena ; criticize the felicity of his diction ; compare the relative estimate he assigned to facts and circumstances associated with disease ; contemplate his description of almost universal application for the type of disorder he had in delineation ; glow with his eloquence. It is this severe accuracy, this precision unincumbered, that we need in philosophical papers on medical topics. Homer's battles, the classical assure us, have never been surpassed in fidelity of description. Yet they were only the descriptions of the exploits of petty con-



tests between petty states and a handful of people : yet is his martial story so faithful, that it has the faculty of transporting the reader to other ages, and becomes an anticipatory record of Waterloo, and the strife of the embattled field through all subsequent time. Like objects do not, indeed, strike the eye of every beholder in like manner, and the power of description belongs not to all. Millions have been enraptured by the Miserere at Rome ; but John Bell, the famous surgeon of Edinburgh, is the only one who has proved himself adequate to unfold to the imagination, the matchless excellence and recondite beauty of that exalted strain of divine harmony. It is of vast importance that more labor should be bestowed on the culture of this descriptive talent ; our faculty, of all others, would be most benefitted thereby.

There are several remarkable forms of disease, whose periodical prevalence is the occasion of great mortality, which have not yet received the attention their importance deserves. Few maladies committed to the charge of the medical prescriber are of deeper interest than the cholera infantum of our summer seasons. We may look in vain for anything satisfactory on the subject in the works of European writers. Mann and Jackson of Boston, Rush of Philadelphia, and Miller of New-York, have, I believe, given us the best views we possess on the nature and treatment of this distressing complaint. More recently, Dr. Horner and Dr. James Stewart have enlarged our knowledge of it ; the latter, in his valuable treatise on the Diseases of Children. It were almost criminal



not to make further efforts to ascertain the pathology of this most fatal disorder, which ravages infantile life, and bring to the test of experimental decision improved practical measures.

“In the philosophy of epidemics, and endemic diseases,” says an excellent writer, Dr. John Watson, “the literature of America is peculiarly worthy of notice. In no country has the subject been so thoroughly investigated as here; and in no other place so thoroughly as in our own city.” Notwithstanding this just tribute to the worth of our investigators into the causes, influence, and treatment of our various forms of epidemical and endemical fevers, a great field of inquiry remains unexplored. The source of yellow fever is still a vexed question; whether its pathognomic manifestations are identical with those of the Bulam fever of Africa, so signally described by Chisholm; whether it be an imported product of that vestal fire of the West Indies, so disastrous to new comers, or be indigenous to the soil of certain districts of our country. All, I believe, now concur in considering it a type of disease distinct from the bilious intermittent and remittent fevers of our land; and the cry, that we live in the latitude of pestilence, is no longer heard. Its unqualified contagious nature, once the cause of acrimonious warfare, is now scarcely advocated; while by many, its infectious nature, under certain coincidences, is deemed the nearest approach to truth. Sir William Pym, so long ago as 1815, fortified by a large mass of documentary evidence, directed the attention



of the British government, to the curious principle that the human constitution was invulnerable to a second attack of the disease; and, about that time, I felt justified in calling the attention of American physicians to the point at issue. The result appears to be a well-grounded inference, that this fever in this country rarely afflicts the human constitution a second time; and that those who have survived its first attack, with few exceptions indeed, enjoy an immunity from similar suffering. At New-Orleans this seems to be an opinion of universal acceptance. Practical observers there inculcate it; and those who have once gone through with the disorder, are fearless of all exposure. The doctrine of the recurrence of yellow fever a second time in the same individual was asserted long ago, but seems to have been greatly overlooked. Lining maintained it, and the fact is reiterated in the last work of importance on the practice of physic, by Dr. Dickson, of Charleston. I have numerous testimonies in my possession of a like import, derived from medical men who have encountered the yellow fever at different periods during its visitation among us, such as Post, Joseph Bayley, Van Beuren, Kissam and McLean. But I am not attempting to settle the question; I only think it should be settled so far as practicable, and that our Academy should move in the premises.

In a letter with which I have been recently favored, from Sir William Pym, accompanying a Report on the Fever at Boa Vista, he remarks: "You



will observe in my letter my decided opinion that an individual, after one attack of yellow fever, is secure against a second; and I have been rather surprised at the total silence of American medical men upon this immunity." This circumstance, however, has been more discussed in this country than Dr. Pym is aware of. Should the fact be established, it will serve to confirm the belief of the specific or idiopathic character of yellow fever, and cripple, if not destroy, the unitarian doctrine of fevers promulgated by Dr. Rush, and once so widely countenanced. The determined spirit in behalf of philosophy and humanity, evinced by the learned and practical Copland, on the subject of pestilence, in that leading work of the age, his Medical Dictionary, must strengthen the confidence of the profession, that many doubts of long standing will be removed, and many new truths be established, by that intrepid writer. However, be the fact as it may, a large majority of our native authors, as Bailey, Miller, Hosack, and Mitchill, deserve the meed of praise for the many facts with which they have enriched the science on yellow fever, on contagion, infection, and the laws governing the communication of contagious disorders. Being at one time deeply interested in inquiries on this head, most of the writers on yellow fever came within my perusal, and to reading I have added some personal experience of the pestilence itself. No writer, I think, has given us a more minute account of the symptomatology of the disease, as it afflicted us in 1822, than Dr. Town-



send, and none has furnished the profession with a more interesting work on the laws of epidemics than Professor Joseph M. Smith.

Death induced by the copious drinking of cold water, while the body is in a state of preternatural excitement, induced by an ardent temperature, and the mortality occasioned by solar heat, are so common and so peculiar to our climate, as to invoke attention to these frequent outlets of human life. It falls within the ostensible duties of the profession, to determine the pathology of the evil, and suggest the promptest remedies of relief and safety. Few occasions in practice are more urgent, and the abstractions of the closet yield information too vague for scenes of such energetic action. Moreover, the richest pathological facts flow from researches in such cases. The subject is scarcely, if at all, adverted to in foreign works. The many autopsic examinations I have made of bodies dead from this cause, have exhibited so great a variety of morbid phenomena, that an arrangement of results is demanded for the strongest reasons.

In our longings after a nearer approach to perfection in our art, it seems to me more than conjectural that many advantages would arise from greater attention to the diseases of the brute creation, and that comparative anatomy would yield rewards to its cultivators. There is often a strong analogy between the disorders of brutes and of the human subject. The science that has been dignified by Vicq d'Azyr, Cuvier and Owen, is not to be treated with indiffer-



ence ; and pathological discoveries in this study would prove an additional incentive to awaken zeal.

Many years ago the venerable President of this Academy, (Dr. Stearns,) among his other services to medical science, announced to the profession the discovery of the singular influence which the ergot, or *secale cornutum*, exercises on the female constitution in certain conditions, and also set forth a series of practical laws for the safe administration of that article, possessed of such specific powers. Time, too, has enriched the therapeutical views first promulgated with new facts. The philanthropy which prompted the suggestions of the many benefits which might flow from the use of this article, has, notwithstanding the important precautions with which its benevolent author accompanied it, been sadly abused by a reckless disregard of those saving provisions by which alone recourse may be had to it. If there be any one subject of paramount consideration within the influence of this society, it is unquestionably to circumscribe the practice now so unwarrantably pursued, and restrain within a tenable and judicious command, by example, that preposterous and fatal reliance which so often usurps from nature her appropriate functions. The consummate ignorance which has marked the practice, has largely sprung from the pernicious doctrine on the subject, inculcated by several writers abroad as well as by some of our own country. I know you will prove yourselves the professed and the practical enemies to the indolence and inhumanity which gives it countenance.



Your attention was lately called, by an able report read at the Academy, to a subject of great importance. I allude to the alarming adulteration of drugs sold in this city as genuine, and the sad consequences so obvious from these frauds, which defeat our curative indications. Other annoyances beset the medical prescriber, from the conflicting statements in pharmaceutical operations, and the discrepancies of the posological tables of our different pharmacopœias. These evils are of great magnitude, and require to be remedied. How far the labors of the Academy might prove efficient in abating them, is left to your wisdom: the suggestions of the able chairman, Dr. Drake, that we might advantageously second the efforts of the College of Pharmacy, in their laudable endeavors in the premises, cannot but be favorably entertained.

Hygeine, state or political medicine, has long constituted an important branch of medical education on the European continent. The Teutonic nation has long been conspicuous for its labors on the subject, and Italy recently has manifested the most patriotic spirit towards its encouragement. If we are the followers of Hippocrates, it will receive more regard at home. We have many detached papers in relation to it in our medical and philosophical journals. We need a concentration of what has been done, and further knowledge from original and more profound inquiry. From intimations which have occasionally been made at our academic sittings, I think we are warranted in the conclusion, that much valuable information will ere long be elicited. The



reports of the late Dr. Mitchill, of Emerson, Hayward, Drake, Griscom, and other observers; the United States Army medical reports, the work of the late Dr. Forry, and the excellent treatise by Dr. Dunglison, are proofs of the richness of the materials which may be brought forth in elucidation. I will here only intimate, that the prosperous condition of the Academy, already secured by cordial union, promises to render the contemplated reports, now in hand by the several committees, a work the accomplishment of which must prove of signal service to our medical police, and further improve quarantine regulations. There is qualification abundant, and zeal cannot be wanting among the members for inquiries of the nature of those to which I allude, to crown them with the best practical results. Too many excellent papers in the periodical literature of the day are constantly appearing from the pens of our associates, not to fortify the belief that the same energies, employed on specific topics assigned by the Academy, would prove available knowledge in regard to sanatory and economical objects to our population at large. The municipal authorities of our city could aid in the removal of the obstacles to be encountered, and give facilities indispensable to such investigation.

There is a branch of medicine which enforces itself in the present age with singular impressiveness upon our attention. I allude to mental diseases, or rather to the whole class of maladies traceable to the intimate connection be-



tween the body and the mind. What are called nervous disorders have increased in the ratio of civilization. In proportion as mankind have been freed from physical toil and intellectual resources been developed, a new sensitiveness of the brain and nervous system has betrayed itself. "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?" is the secret question which haunts the minds of countless patients, could their woes find adequate expression. We need a hygiene which will bring about harmony between the animal and the moral nature, which will reconcile the conflict between cerebral activity and the functions of life. Thousands die every day from over-wrought minds and baffled emotions. Leisure induces crime, and ennui breeds hypochondria, so that the benevolent physician is as often called upon to suggest mental discipline as topical remedies. That a certain method of life, a judicious use of agents fitted to equalize the circulation and calm the excitement attendant upon moral causes of disturbance, is a frequent desideratum, I need not declare to any auditory so experienced as the one I have the honor to address. My object in touching upon a subject apparently inexhaustible in its relations, is to urge upon your serious attention the necessity of looking more narrowly to the primary causes of that vast class of diseases which originate in ill-regulated, overtasked, or inactive mental and moral energies; unsatisfied sympathies, harassing domestic cares, and especially the almost rabid ambition for gain or distinction which creates so much of



the insanity and invalidism of this country, and which presents a field of inquiry and benevolent enterprise which no humane physician is justified in neglecting. Let him, therefore, not hesitate, where the intelligence of his patient permits, to deal openly with him; and with the holy boldness that should of right belong to a dispenser of truth, point out whatever there is in habits or situation to give occasion to the irregular action of the vital powers. Let him insist upon mental repose and variety of objects, upon due recreation and the cultivation of genial influences. Let him study the consequences of different pursuits upon the animal economy, and strive to detect the operation of the different passions upon the heart. Let him never lose sight of the important fact, that human nature is complex, and that those who truly desire to be healed, must enact their part and seek an element of cheerfulness, and a well-ordered cerebral activity, as well as the specifics he administers. The necessity of ablution, exercise, and appropriate food, are now more generally understood; but society is yet inexcusably blind to the moral and intellectual wants of its members, and the laws by which the Creator has ordained the maintenance of human well-being. To promulgate these is a physician's greatest duty, for prevention is confessedly better than cure; and among the foremost reformers of this inquiring age, should be the disciples of an art founded in solid facts, based upon nature's everlasting principles, and bound up with the essential welfare of mankind.



An ingenious author, Dr. Madden, has analyzed the moral defects of Pope, Byron, and other gifted but erratic characters, with reference to physical causes; and the result is, that the infirmities of genius appeal successfully to the charity of the pathologist, while they are flippantly condemned by the ignorant and thoughtless. I think I might with great ease set forth, from a knowledge of peculiarities of structural development, derived from personal intimacy, many extenuating circumstances for the errors of unduly sensitive and highly-gifted minds, as I have studied their characters during my professional career; and the jurisprudence of our land is unquestionably to be improved by the new light drawn from the sounder study of physical and mental association which marks this era in psychological inquiry. The astute researches which the late governor of this state, William H. Seward, has exhibited in the medical jurisprudence of Insanity, give us a partial idea at least of many fundamental principles which both divines and lawyers, as well as doctors, have too much overlooked.

Yes, the mental philosopher, and the physician ought to be such, must comprehend the causes of the infirmities of genius. An instance of practical value is at hand for citation in the case of our great and lamented painter, against whom it was so common to bring the charge of indolence. Even genius, I repeat, cannot be fairly understood without the aid of our science; and as this consideration is so seldom entertained, I shall be pardoned for quoting a recent writer of our country, whose



intellectual vision has cast no incurious glance on a subject too often veiled from the hasty and inconsiderate.

“The inequality of Allston’s efforts, and his frequent cessation from labor,” says the poet Henry T. Tuckerman, in his sketches of American Painters, “have been the subject of no little reproach. The habits of no man, and especially a man of genius, can be rightly judged when viewed objectively. To ascertain the strata of a geological formation, and to explain the workings of a mind, are two very different processes. Observation alone is required for the former; but sympathy is absolutely needed for the latter. It is astonishing, that with the new light modern science has thrown upon physiology, it is so seldom taken into view when mental phenomena are discussed. There is no fact better established, than that the integrity of the nervous system is necessary to the felicitous exercise of mind. Yet biographers and critics seem blind to its influence. This delicate medium of intellectual activity is refined and sensitive in all rarely-endowed beings, for vivid impressions are the source of their power, and to these a susceptible organization is essential. When our illustrious painter went to London, he threw himself ardently into the pursuit of his art. In order to work undisturbed, he adopted the custom of the country, and took no refreshment between morning and evening. The long interval of abstinence, to which he was previously unaccustomed, combined with intense application and great mental excitement, produced a chronic derange-



ment of the digestive organs; and when he retired to Clifton in pursuit of health, his medical adviser prophesied that he would never again experience the blessing. Immediately subsequent, a domestic bereavement still further reduced his vital energy, and from this period he could only exercise his profession when temporary vigor revived his frame." \*

Once more. One of the striking features of our time is the minute analysis to which everything is subjected. The present state of chemistry, with Liebig and a Dumas at its head, alone illustrates in a remarkable manner the refinement of investigation. In some respects it promises to revolutionize medical science. The same inference may be deduced from the manner in which physiological investigations are prosecuted, now that Gall and Spurzheim have traced out the map of the intellectual city. Disease, instead of being regarded, per se, (nosologically,) is now examined in connection with every possible influence. In France, observation in the philosophy of life has been carried into the most curious details. Statistics of longevity in relation to different professions, habits, and especially moral circumstances, have thrown a flood of light upon the latent manifestations of health and sickness. The effects of the passions upon human organization, and the appropriate treatment of disease thus produced, is another branch of inquiry, daily more prolific in important truth. Criminal legislation is undergoing modifications

\* Artist-Life; or, Sketches of American Painters. New-York: 1847.



founded on physiological knowledge ; and even the fine arts, especially music, are now adverted to on the score of their physical agency. The same indication is traceable in the fact that individuality is more widely recognised, and less faith reposed upon mere generalities. Medicaments and hygeine are adapted to particular constitutions, and native aptitudes : social position and domestic influences are considered in their relation to morbid symptoms.

From all that I have said, is it not obvious that the domain of the medical art expands to the eye of the philosopher, until it embraces the world ? Is it possible to exaggerate the importance of its claims, or to elevate too highly the standard of its requisitions ? Will not every noble mind spontaneously discard all petty jealousy or narrow prejudice in view of the dignity and interest of a common pursuit ? Your presence here, as members of a fraternity, assures me that such inquiries are needless.

Nothing but poverty of language debars me from a suitable expression of opinion of that calamitous proceeding of our state legislature, confirmed by enactment but recently, in relation to candidates for medical practice, which has broken down the door of the temple for all who please to enter and administer ; that law, not inaptly denominated a bill of pains and penalties, inflicted on the community. That strange act of popular caprice, though nobly opposed by one discerning and patriotic member of the House,\*

\* Hon. Luther Bradish.



betrays too volatile a spirit, which must evaporate while its grosser ingredients may, after all, serve as a poisoned chalice to the lips of those who, elevated to power in their brief authority, proved unmindful of their responsibilities, and ventured a game of chance with life and all that makes life desirable. We know, however, that every man cannot be a politician, even though a universal suffrage bill should attempt to make him so by force; and Macauley declares that the absurdity which precedes a period of general intelligence is often pleasing, while that which follows is contemptible. Will it be too much to add, that this worse than absurd emanation of legislative extravagance is a new incentive to effort on the part of this Academy, a further motive to action in the goodly work set before us?

A great principle of human success in all pursuits, and it seems to me especially the case in medicine, consists in a wise adaptation of means to ends. I have already said enough to indicate my deep sense of the necessity of original aptitude for the profession, an aptitude not confined to mere intelligence or attainment, but including also comprehensiveness of mind and quickness and breadth of sympathy. Let no one enter recklessly on a career demanding so much self-sacrifice and liberality of feeling. The mission of the physician, like that of the herald of gospel truth, is a divine mission: of the Most High cometh healing. In this age and country, a true disciple of Æsculapius, in any way faithful to his calling, must be a philosopher and a philanthropist. Adven-



titious circumstances may render him a wealthy practitioner, but he is unworthy of the title he bears, unless, actuated by motives above sordid considerations; unless, enamored of his art for its own sake, he pursue it with disinterested enthusiasm. Let the aspirant for true fame in this laborious sphere consult his natural powers as well as worldly needs, when he shall have accomplished his general professional education. Let him devote himself to the department for which he is best fitted, and ascertain whether his ability lies in observation, or in the application of principles; in communicating a theory, or realizing practical results. As the practitioner occupies no Arcadian territory, let him be armed with firm resolves to subdue the too often unexpected but inherent difficulties which at times present themselves. Let him judiciously apply the truths of political economy, and have faith in the efficacy of a division of labor. To all, universality is not allowed; and, seducing as the reputation of versatility is, it is an experiment fraught with danger. A wide range is the province of few. To seize general laws and unfold universal relations, is, perhaps, the rarest of gifts. Among the ancients, Aristotle stood alone; and Bacon's continued prominence in modern philosophy, proves him of the elect intelligences. England now boasts but of one Brougham, and America has no second Webster.

That the healing art is intimately allied with all sciences and the amenities of letters, its history sufficiently demonstrates; and this, indeed, is no small argument for its intrinsic dignity. Can any re-



corded illustration be more beautiful than the companionship of Cheselden with the wits of Queen Anne's time? Does private anecdote of any, the most refined in intellect or the most commanding in temporal possession, contain a more cheering occurrence in behalf of the nobility of the heart, than Mead's conduct towards Freind, upon his liberation from prison? Who added to the graces and the intellectual fare of Metastasio, who ornamented and cast a fragrance on whatever he touched? Morgagni, the author of that imperishable work, *De Sedibus et Causis Morborum*, at those refined conversationes which Joseph II. countenanced, and in which the Italian poet delighted. I am informed by Da Ponta, who was occasionally of the number of those spirits, that the venerable professor exhibited at upwards of 80 years of age all the vivacity of his juvenile days, and poured out, ad libitum, the varied treasures of highest cultivation. Dr. Franklin, intellectual idol as he was, said that the most delectable hours of his rich life were passed at the soirees of Sir John Pringle: Garth and Brocklesby were the favorites of Johnson and Pope; and the distinguished hospitality of our sister city dates one of its most charming features to the improving gatherings which originated under the roof of Dr. Wistar.

There was something most refreshing to all beholders in the character and expositions of the Medical Convention, which was held last spring in the renowned city of Philadelphia. It was the offspring of a suggestion made at a prior Convention of a similar kind in New-York. It would have proved



edifying to that class of persons who can discern no special elevation in medical pursuits, to have witnessed the deliberations of that body, and marked the noble principles of their action, and the disinterestedness of their views. Many of that bright assemblage had come, at their own expense, a thousand or sixteen hundred miles. There were delegates from the extreme south and the farthest north, convened together in the most cordial amity ; representatives of the two great domains of production and manufacture ; children of the sultry and the frigid climes of our vast Union ; and the warm sympathies of the one coalesced with the active intelligence of the other, to give vitality to the grand enterprise of medical reform. Heart and intellect were alike enlisted, and local prejudice vanished before the cordial greetings and harmonious action of an assembly, the aim of whose council was second only to that of the triumphant body whose combined wisdom in the same city, seventy years before, enacted the States' Declaration ; for it was the amelioration of the constitution of man and humanity at large. They separated with renewed respect for each other, and a more intelligent self-devotion to their vocation. In common with others, I felt these greetings of the heart, and am happy the cheering spectacle was beheld with my own eyes. Time must unfold the special benefits which this Convention shall have originated ; its virtuous motives and rectitude of purpose cannot be gainsaid. Already, indeed, I learn of salutary measures since adopted in our highest Universities. Nor among the least of its efforts to en-



hance the art of healing, is to be recorded the stimulus it gave to the organization of the American Medical Association, at the head of which, by unanimous concurrence, has been elected the eminent NATHANIEL CHAPMAN, so widely and so advantageously known in both hemispheres.

*Fellow Associates*, I have thus spoken with frankness and warmth, as one may be allowed to speak to contemporaries in the same art, after having devoted forty years assiduously, and with scarcely a day's intermission to its study and practice, or, as professor, in unfolding its principles. The progress of medical science is naturally an object full of deep interest to us all. But the circumstances of this era, and no inconsiderable reflection on the tendencies of our social character, render it, in my view, a theme fraught with vast probabilities. It has been my fortune to live at a transition period, when the elements of science and government have assumed new forms. In this, our own day, the most imposing names in philosophy weigh as nought in the balance of truth compared with deductions of experimental research; the age is eminently eclectic, and the Penny Magazine has become classical authority. Cicero, centuries ago, speculated on liberty in the forum; but Pius IX. now recognises from the Vatican the supremacy of human rights. I cannot but anticipate for humanity fresh and high principles on this soil, when I consider its exemption from what has elsewhere been the chief impediment to social progress—political restriction; and now that the spirit of reform as well as of inquiry has entered into our ranks, it does not seem



irrational to indulge in the most hopeful prophecies. It is as identified with the future welfare of my country, that I regard the institution of this Academy with pride and gratitude. Would that the feeble tribute to its grand objects, which I have been permitted to offer, were more worthy of the occasion! If it has awakened a single response in your hearts, or in any manner embodied your views, it will not be in vain.

Accept it, my fellow-associates, at least as a token of my candid and deep sympathy in the aims we cherish. May they be pursued with a zeal and wisdom which shall ensure their realization, that those who come after us, and who reap the harvest we have planted, may have cause to hold in lasting and grateful honor the founders of this Academy !

FINIS.















