

An oration. On the improvement of medicine: pronounced [sic] before a respectable auditory of citizens, in the Federal Hall in the city of New-York; according to appointment of the Medical Society of the State of New York: at their anniversary meeting, on the 16th January, 1794 / [Amasa Dingley].

Contributors

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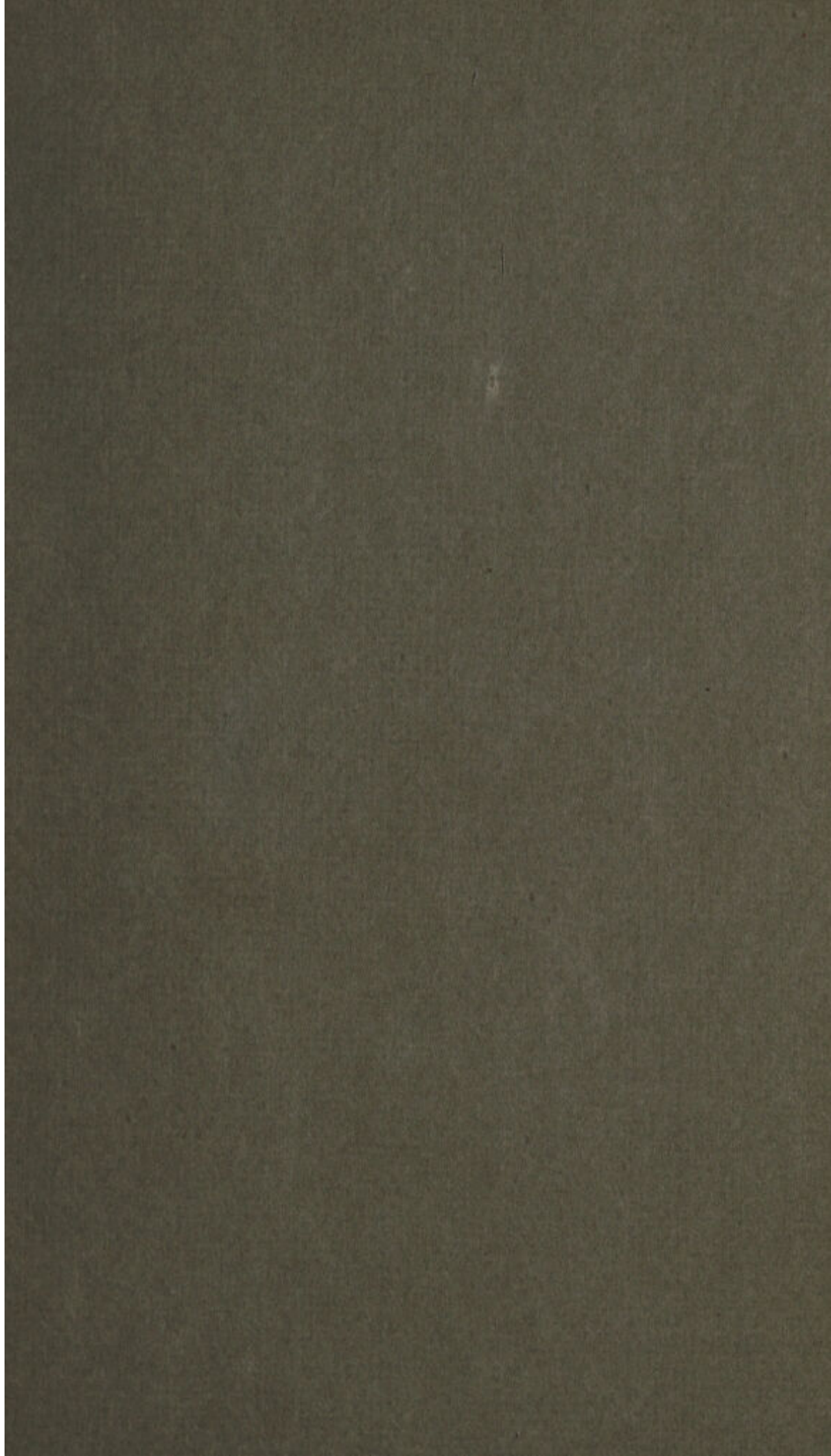
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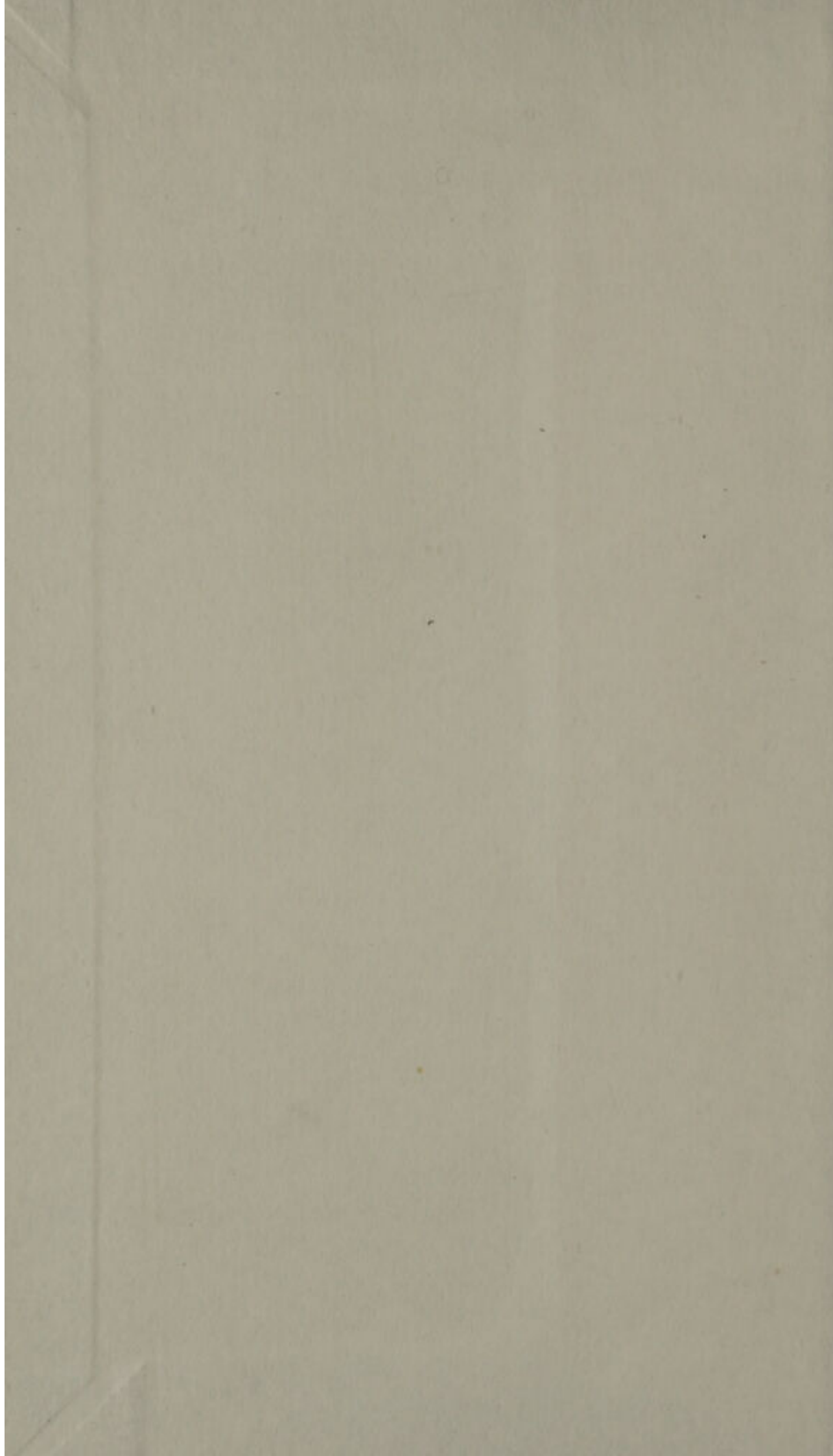
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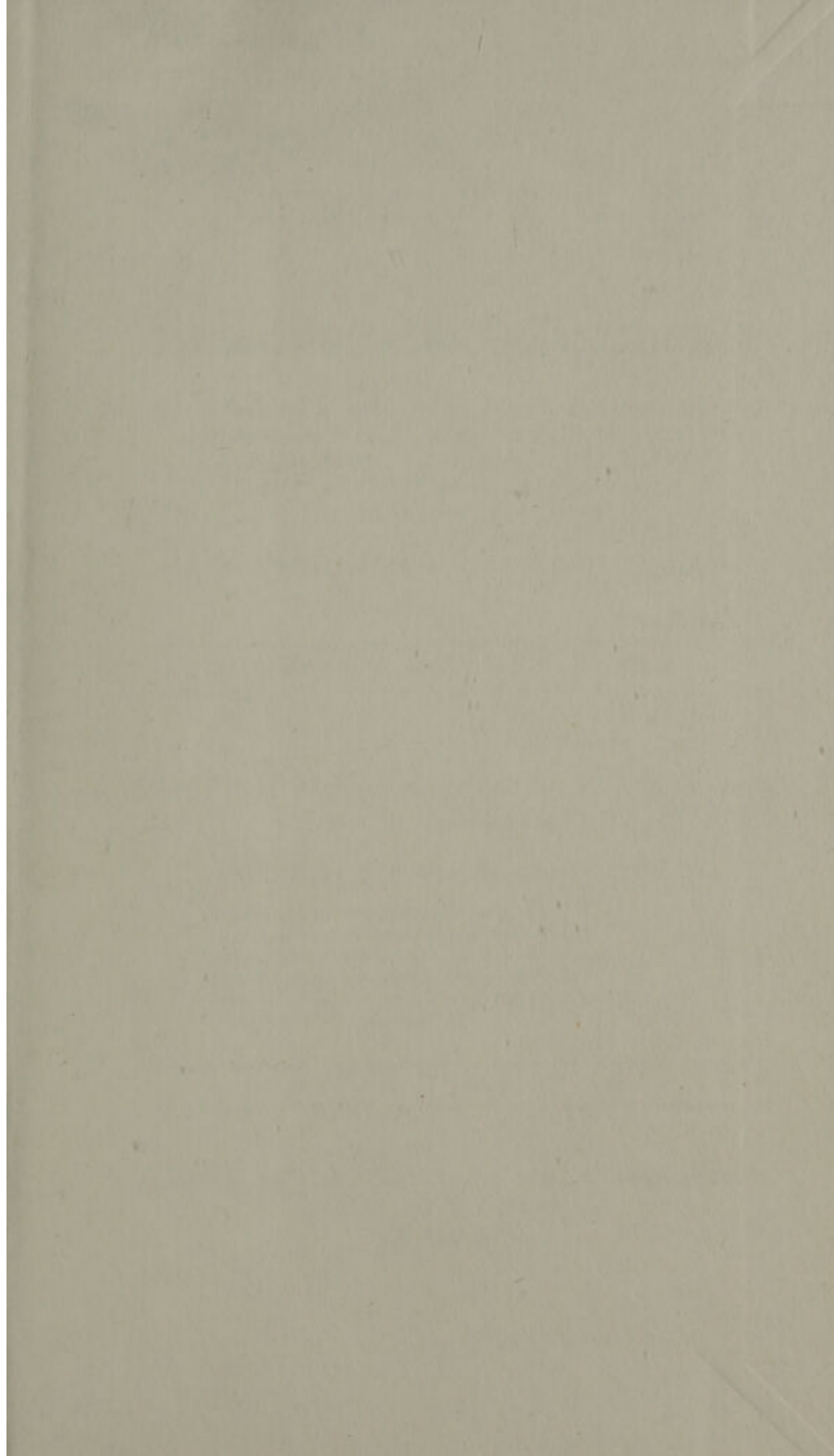
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A N
O R A T I O N.

ON THE
IMPROVEMENT OF MEDICINE:

PRONUONCED BEFORE A RESPECTABLE AUDITORY OF
CITIZENS, IN THE FEDERAL HALL IN THE CITY
OF NEW-YORK; ACCORDING TO APPOINT-
MENT OF THE MEDICAL SOCIETY OF
THE STATE OF NEW-YORK:

At their Anniversary meeting, on the 16th January, 1794.

By AMASA DINGLEY, *Physician.*

ἸΗΤΡΙΚΗ τέχνη μὲν πάσων ἐστὶν ἐπιφανεστάτη
ἸΠΠΟΚΡΑΤΟΥΣ ΝΟΜΟΣ.

Errores non sunt Artis, sed artificum. NEWTON.

Haud equidem credo, quia sit divinitas illis
Ingenitum, aut rerum fato prudentia major:
Verum, ubi Tempestas et cœli mobilis humor,
Mutavere vias; et Jupiter uvidus Austris,
Densat, erant quæ rara modo; et quæ densa, relaxat;
Vertuntur species animorum: P. V. MARO.

S E C O N D E D I T I O N.

NEW-YORK,
PRINTED BY JOHN BUEL, N^o. 151, WATER STREET,
CORNER OF FLY-MARKET.
M,DCC,XCV.

TO THE PUBLIC.

THE HEALTH OF THE PEOPLE IS THE SUPREME LAW. *Therefore, to the people the following pages are dedicated. To them it belongs to fix the merit of every work, and to appretiate the true character of every citizen; for they are the only legitimate source of sovereignty. If these pages contain any thing useful or new, the people will approve it, and give credit to the Author for a part of the debt, which he owes to society. The remainder shall be paid hereafter. If, on the contrary, this pamphlet should be found to have no tendency to promote the interests of medicine and of try 'b, the people will reject it; for, their good sense will enable them to judge accurately and determine fairly.*

A. D.

February, 1794.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Pamphlet was intended for the benefit of the Medical Society, and for the entertainment of the Gentlemen who honored the speaker by hearing him—Several of his friends considered the facts and sentiments contained in it not unworthy of publication—The Society also unanimously requested “A Copy of the Discourse”, which they were pleased to denominate, “judicious and excellent, for the PRESS.” This polite demand was obeyed—And afterwards a few copies were printed at the request of those friends, whose judgement the Author respected more than his own—Frequent enquiries having been made for the pamphlet, since that time, the performance, now in the form of a new edition, and not without the hope of promoting the common good, solicits the candid attention of the PUBLIC.

NEW-YORK, January, 1795.



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lent designs for which you are associated. They have brought us to the gate of the temple of nature; they have drawn aside the veil of ignorance and mysteries; they have invited us to enter and accompany them, as patient inquirers in the investigation of life, health, and disease.... With the other parts of united America, let us join our Brothers of the old world, in this excellent work of the study of nature. Thus shall we pay a debt that is due to society and mankind, and "learn* to venerate ourselves as men." For, in the great republic of human nature, these societies are what virtuous families are in a single State.

NORTH America is replenished with a rich variety of objects for the improvement of every branch of medicine..... After we have attended to the geography of our country, one of the first subjects that should arrest our attention, is the effect that is produced on the public health, by the progress of agriculture, and the consequent salutary changes of our climates.

THE changes of temperature, and local situation, that are constantly taking place on this globe, afford subjects for useful medical researches.....It may be permitted to adduce a few facts to illustrate this point.....All the northern and western parts of America, exhibit a good picture of the ancient condition of most of the European climates:-----

IN 860, the Mediterranean was covered with ice:

IN 1296, the Baltic was frozen from Gothland to Sweden:

AND in 1423, the ice bore riding from Prussia to Lubeck.

IN

* Pythagoræ aurea carmino. Pythagoras fled from the tyranny of Polycrates in Samos, to Crotona in Italy, where he founded a school of physic: He was the first who joined the study of medicine with that of philosophy. History of Surgery.

IN the time of Galen, it was observed, that the peach-tree could not flourish in Italy, by reason of the cold of the winter.†

DURING these periods, most of the kingdoms in Europe were overshadowed by impenetrable forests, and the greater part of the people lived by hunting and plunder. But, after a long interval of mental and moral darkness, when agriculture, with the other arts, were restored, we find no satisfactory account of the progressive melioration of those climates, by clearing the countries of their forests and perfecting agriculture. The solution of this problem is left for the Physicians of America. To effect this desirable object, many ingenious experiments and researches are necessary.||

It will be useful to make methodical registers of the thermometer, barometer,§ hydrometer, and ombrometer. This will require a multiplicity of meteorological observations; and by experiments with the eudiometer and other chemical investigations, perhaps, it will be found, that the true cause of intermitting fevers, and various other disorders, both epidemic and endemic, is the carbonic acid,

† Vide Dr. Forster's observations during Captain Cooke's voyage round the world, 1772—1775; page 81.—Henry Home's sketches of the history of man.—Drs. Arbuthnot and Huxham on air.—Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. i, 8vo. Lond. 1788; particularly chap. 1 and 2. See the improvements in agriculture, and introduction of fruits into the Western Empire; and chap. 9, climate of Germany and its effects on the natives in the time of Decius.—Dr. Hunter's Georgical Essays.

|| Vide Jefferson's notes on Virginia.—Captain Carver's Travels.

§ From the history of the barometer, we know, that the weight of the atmosphere is greater at one time than another, in the ratio of one tenth of the baroscopic column of mercury; so great a difference cannot but greatly affect us who are subject to it, seeing it amounts to 3200 lb. Dr. Huxham.

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tions on epidemics, says, that his Medical Library, which consisted of four thousand volumes, was inadequate to furnish a sufficient number of authentic facts, from which an accurate history of epidemic diseases could be made.* This proves the necessity of collecting new facts, at the same time that it shews the usefulness of a common and well-chosen Library.

THE philosophy of the Atmosphere and Winds, so far as they influence health, is an important subject. Which winds are most salutary, and which most noxious? The effects of Evaporation, Rain and Snow, on health, remain to be explained. Is water held in solution in Calorique---is it dissolved in air? Where do our most remarkable winds begin---and where cease to blow? In what sort of weather, and in which seasons of the year is oxygene gas, or the vital part of the atmosphere, and hydrogene, or inflammable gas,† subject to the greatest increase or diminution? In dry seasons, what becomes of the water taken up by evaporation, and what new combinations take place to produce a condensation and precipitation of water? In attending to this sublime Chemistry of Nature, should we not carefully observe and record electric and magnetic Phænomena? These are inquiries worthy of the attention of a society of Physicians. Every inquiry of this

* Vid. Memoirs of the Med. Society of Lond. vol. 1, 1787.

† Mr. CAVENDISH has shewn that this gas is at least ten times lighter than common air: Mr. Lavoisier contends that it is one of the component parts of water, and it is by him called hydrogene. It is supposed to afford their principal nourishment to vegetables, and thence to animals, and is perpetually arising from their decomposition.—This source of it in hot climates, and in summer months, is so great as to exceed estimation.—Vid Dr. Darwin's Botanic Garden,

this kind will contribute to an accumulation of facts for completing an history§ of the atmosphere.

THE rapid improvements in agriculture, and the increasing commerce of these *States*, constantly bring us acquainted with new articles in diet. The comparative effects of all these, as well as those that have been habitual to the people, ought to be carefully noted and explained.

THE diseases that will probably be produced by manufactures in our country, will become an object of the greatest consequence in a political point of view. It is to be expected that new diseases will be discovered; but of those that are now known among the class of citizens, who are employed in the very useful labors of mechanics, there are many that have not yet found a safe and perfect remedy. As it is probable that most of the manufactures of these states will be carried on by means of machinery, for facilitating the operations, rendering the productions better and cheaper, and superseding manual labor; the diseases of all sorts of ingenious artisans * will often put the skill of the physician to the test. In many, the ill effects of a sedentary life will be united with the danger that arises from being exposed to poisonous bodies and vapors necessarily employed in the manipulations and operations of art. The substances, therefore, which occupy the labors of the artist, also become objects highly worthy of the study and observation of the Physician.

THE

§ When we observe phænomena, and collect facts, we form a history. When we discover the nature and relations of phænomena and facts, we acquire a science. When we apply the result of science as rules of conduct, we practise arts.—Vid. Bruce's First Principles of Philosophy.

* The surprising advances of Chemistry and the effects of its application to manufactures; the wonderful combinations of Chemistry and Mechanics, for the reduction of labour—These are the happy means by which bankruptcy has been hitherto averted. The genius of Watt, Wedgwood, and Arkwright, has counteracted the expence and folly of the American War. Jasper Wilson's letter to Rt. Hon. Wm. Pitt.

THE mariner, from the distinguished rank that he holds in modern society, and especially in all commercial nations, deserves great attention from the Physician. Several of the diseases of seamen, and particularly the scurvy, have hitherto baffled medicine. The investigation and cure of their diseases remain, in a great measure, for the future labours of medical men. In doing this, many facts may be ascertained for the explanation of that most remarkable property which exists in animal bodies of accommodating themselves to the various conditions of life; such as the changes of climate, heat and cold, diet, action of body and mind, sleep and watching, the healing of wounds and the re-union of broken bones. To the honor of our country it may be said, that a large proportion of the mariners are well instructed, and they have an inquisitive spirit of observation. They can furnish useful hints and remarks that ought to be examined, because they may lead to useful conclusions.

To investigate the diseases of mankind with success, we must learn to look up to the heavens, as well as down to the earth. The question respecting the effects of solar and lunar attraction † on health, remains yet to be solved, particularly as these effects may influence fevers, hepatic diseases, puerperal medicine, animal secretion and excretion, and the diseases of the mind.

VESALIUS, that great, injured name, * was the first author of note who adventured to detect the errors of Galen. In his work *De Corporis Humani Fabrica*, first published in 1543, he attempts to prove that the gravity of the fluids

† Dr. Mead, *De Imperio Solis et Lunæ*.

* Vid. *Opera Andree Vesalii*, and Manning's *Physiology*.

fluids contained in the veins and arteries, exerts no manner of effect within them, so far as relates to the principles of hydraulics. There are, however, some pathological appearances that favor the supposition that the effect of the gravity of the fluids is not entirely lost, in their living and containing vessels or tubes, particularly in hydropic patients. But, the doctrine of Vesalius has lately been adopted by an ingenious author,* who has rejected, entirely, the mechanical philosophy from his system, after it had long been ingeniously defended by Boerhaave and others. There belongs to animal and vegetable bodies, an organization differing essentially from all other modifications of matter. And, to this organization there is superadded a quality, called, *irritability*, *nervous*, *inherent or contractile Power*, by some; *Excitability*, by others, on which the functions of life depend. Therefore all the supposed analogies, with the innumerable errors thence resulting, between animate and inanimate bodies, ought to be rejected from rational Medicine. On this subject much remains to be done.

IT is one of your professed designs to establish an extensive chemical museum, to contain all the natural productions of this state, that are the objects of medical chemistry. This must necessarily furnish a large correspondence with the non-resident members, who are gentlemen of learning and ingenuity, and being on the places that furnish these productions, much of the honor of perfecting this establishment will fall to them.---Our country is rich in articles of Botany,† and our

C

materia

* Vid. Joannis Brunonis, M. D. Elementa Medicinæ. Sect. cvii. ex. Editio prima.

† My highly respected friend, Dr. S. L. MITCHELL, Professor of Chemistry and Botany, in the College of New-York, has favored me with a communication containing the following note on a Botanic Garden; and a translation of Girtanner's Theory of Respiration

materia medica might be copiously furnished in America, from all the three kingdoms of nature. A history of these substances, some of which are contained in the unsettled western territories, is a desideratum in physic; I hope therefore it will not be deemed too enthusiastic to anticipate the happy day when New-York shall boast of its Pharmacopœia, that shall vie with those of Europe, in its account of new and more successful remedies, effected by the associated labours of this Society.

THE investigation of the American Materia Medica,† would lead us to a better acquaintance with the state of medicine among the Indians; and to a more perfect knowledge

Respiration, (vid. page 22.) which are inserted on account of their beneficial aspects on the true interests of our country; as well as for a testimony of my sincere respect and esteem for the virtues and talents of that Gentleman:

“*Note on a Botanic Garden.*”

“The Trustees of Columbia College, have made BOTANY a part of their system of public Education; but, although they have constituted a Professorship, and appointed a Professor, still no provision has hitherto been made for a Botanic Garden. This establishment is so nearly connected with Botany, that the Lectures must ever be very lame and defective without it. Nothing but a more full conviction of its importance and utility, is wanting, to set on foot such an institution, and to carry it into effect. A Botanic Garden is one of the genteelest and most beautiful of public improvements. It comprizes within a small compass, the history of the vegetable species of our own country, and by the introduction of exotics, makes us acquainted with the plants of the most distant parts of the earth. By facilitating experiments upon plants at this time, when the theory of nutrition and manures is such an interesting desideratum, it may be considered as one of the means of affording substantial help to the labours of the Agricultural Society, and of improving in some degree the practice of modern husbandry. When these things are duly considered, it can scarcely be doubted that Botany will receive a further share of public patronage.”

† As a specimen of what has been done in this way, see *Materia Medica Americana, potissimum regni vegetabilis*. Autore, D. J. David Schoepf. 8vo. Erlangae, 1787.

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any nostrum, you have, in this particular, vindicated the profession from the imputation of quackery. The toleration and encouragement of this practice, have, with the enchantments of Mesmer's animal magnetism, and other popular impositions, uniformly been most fertile and disgraceful sources of empiricism.

WITH their government, the French have regenerated their medicine, the annals of which have not been stained with blood, like those of their politics; because their war has not been carried on against reason and truth, but against error and tyranny.

FRANCE, in her present volcanic state, like fiery Ætna, perhaps, may destroy a Pliny, but, she has however, thrown out many precious substances, that will enrich the world. Among these the *Nouveau Plan de Constitution, pour la Médecine en France*, † deserves to be considered as one of the first good fruits of their political regeneration. From this plan we learn, that the Medical Society at Paris have exerted the most active vigilance to oppose the dangerous illusions of ignorance; and the nation have decreed, that for the future, “*No Medicines shall be kept secret.*”

IT remains among the desiderata of the healing art, to shew the advantages that may result to medicine from Electricity; and to determine in what cases and in what manner this powerful agent may be further employed for the advancement of the health and happiness of mankind. A sage of America “invaded the lowering sky,” and was able to arrest, controul, and bring down from the clouds this omnipresent ‡ agent in the great operations

† See a translation of this excellent work in the *Med. Comment.* for 1792, Edinburgh.

‡ Ignis ubique latet, naturam amplectitur omnem;

Cuncta parit, renovat, dividit, unit, alit. VOLTAIRE.

operations of nature. To give a triumph and consummation to the art, requires a complete examination and discovery of its action and effects on animal bodies. In doing this, we have reason to hope, that many of the perplexities that have hitherto embarrassed the doctrines of inflammation and animal heat, as well as several other phenomena of the animal economy will be happily solved.

Is electricity an inflammable fluid, subject to a law of elective attraction? If heat be the oscillatory motion of the minute particles of bodies, wherein does animal and vegetable heat differ from that of inanimate or unorganized* bodies? What are the extremes of heat consistent with animal and vegetable life? What degrees of heat are sufficient to destroy animal, vegetable, mineral, and aerial poisons and contagions? The subject of poisons and contagions opens an immense field for the researches of Medical Philosophy.

It still remains to determine the full effects of warm and cool bathing, both partial and general, on animal bodies. The baths lately made in this city and its neighbourhood, afford excellent opportunities for experiments in this subject. What are the combined operations of moisture, under different degrees of temperature, motion and pressure?

It is now well known, if a person should be immersed two feet under water, and the area of his skin be fifteen feet, he would sustain a weight of circumfluent water, pressing on his whole surface, added to that of the air, equal to two thousand two hundred and eighty pounds. How will

* L'Organization, le sentiment, le mouvement spontané, la vie, n'existent qu'à la surface de la terre, et dans le lieux exposés à la lumière. *Traité de Chymie par M. Lavoisier.*

will the circulations, thoracic and abdominal viscera, perspiration and the nervous system, be affected by these circumstances?

THE ingenious, but unfortunate Stark, by experiments on his own body, found that the perspiration is almost twice as much, during those hours when the body is naked, as it is in an equal space of time, when covered by our ordinary garments :---By the same clear and decisive experiments, it appears, that the perspiration is not half so great for a given number of hours in the night, when in sleep, as it is for the same number of hours in the day, when awake. These discoveries have yet had very little influence on the practice of physic.

IF we except the discovery of the circulation of the blood, and that of the absorbent system, no modern discovery is more useful than that of the perspiration. Is not this discovery to be perfected by future statical experiments?

WE are constantly told, that almost all diseases depend on an increase or diminution of the perspiration ; and that cold constantly checks, and heat increases it. Perhaps we seldom know when it is checked, or when it is increased.---In connection with this subject, will it not be useful to attend to the effects of air and earth-bathing on animals.

An inquiry into the causes and cure of Cholera Infantum, would be a work of the greatest utility. Infants are the hope of society.* This disease destroys multitudes every year.---What are the effects of tea and coffee on infants, received by the medium of the milk of the mothers and nurses? The Chinese avoid above all things, the drinking of tea on a fasting stomach.† In this city, the properties of the tea-water,

* Vid. Dr. Gregory's Comparative View, and Dr. Hugh Smith's Letters to Married Women---and Dr. Buchan's Domestic Medicine.

† Vid. Du Halde's Description of the Empire of China.

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THE extremes of luxury and abstemiousness, the customs, manners and fashions of the people and their habitations; the effects of celibacy † on health and political prosperity; the artificial diseases originating in excess of refinement; and in a particular manner, the all-conquering power of habit, present themselves to medicine, and demand a large share of her study and careful attention.

A TRUE account of the effects of burying-grounds in populous cities; an accurate bill of mortality; a general registry of marriages and births; and an account of the number of people who migrate into the United States, and particularly into this city, would be attended with great public advantages. In some places this work is begun, by which it appears that many parts of New-England are more remarkable for longevity than any countries in Europe. This work never can be completed but by the united labors of societies of active and ingenious men. May not a future American PRICE want facts to enable him to make calculations on the value of lives, annuities and reversionary payments? And, may not the future Historian of America want facts to enable him to explain the *true indoles and characteristics of the people of a great Republic, that is to consist of a heterogeneous and mixed mass of all the nations on earth?*

THE publication of *Brunonis Elementa Medicinæ*, will probably form a new *Æra* in the annals of the healing art. You will therefore permit me to observe, if in the 18th century, a genius has appeared, the light of the
medical

† Vid. Gibbon on the effects of the monastic life, Roman empire, chap. 37—and the present political, moral and physical condition of the people of the West-Indies—Southern States of America, and all other countries where the labour is principally done by Slaves.

medical world, to dissipate the darkness of hypothesis and system, by the most successful application of philosophy and general principles to THE SCIENCE OF LIVING MATTER ; and if this author has been more successful in demonstrating that man is nothing of himself, but depends altogether on extraneous causes, and that all his dormant energies must be awakened into motion by these causes, before he can exhibit the phenomena of sense, perception, thought, reasoning and action ; then it follows, that Philosophy, which is the immovable basis of this doctrine, must be more intimately studied by Physicians than formerly. Hence, all the frivolous objections of some, against this doctrine, that it leads to idleness and superficial study ; and all the vain pretensions of others, that a few months of inattentive reading and a little practice, according to this theory, are sufficient to make a good Physician, fall with their authors to the ground.

THE author of the new theory of Medicine, had a fiery imagination, which, like

“ The Poet’s eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,

“ Did glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,”*

and grasped the most distant analogies of nature. His subtle genius did discover the nice connections and differences of animal facts and animal functions : And, his profound and luminous judgment, by long and laborious inductions, led him to conclusions, that, in their ultimate practical effect, must be the source of innumerable evils, or of uncounted blessings to mankind. Are these conclusions true ? Let them be acknowledged. Are they false ? Let them be confuted. Are they a mixture of truth and error ? Let the gold be separated from the dross.

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IT

* Shakespeare.

It yet remains, to determine the advantages that may accrue to Medicine, from a faithful relation of unsuccessful cases. We learn from the writings of CICERO and JULIUS CÆSAR, not only the virtues, but also the defects and errors of these personages. Physicians ought not to be unwilling to publish their want of success in the administration of Medicines; for this has hitherto been a department in physic which has been much neglected: Though Hippocrates and some others who have been greater BENEFACTORS † to mankind than kings and heroes, have given a few laudable examples in this way.

LONG has Medicine been traduced as a mere conjectural and experimental art.* In a partial sense, this is true.--- It is also true of agriculture and politics: and even some of the sublimer parts of the mathematics, are involved in perplexities that the mind of NEWTON himself could not perfectly remove.

In this age, however, it is acknowledged by all candid and well informed men, that many of the operations of the animal œconomy are as well explained and understood, as any phenomenon in natural Philosophy--- Many facts might be adduced in support of this declaration. It is sufficient to instance the subjects of Digestion and
Respiration

† Among the Physicians of this class in America, Dr. Z. Boylstone and Dr. Douglass have merited a distinguished rank. To Dr. Boylstone and the Rev. Dr. Cotton Mather, America is indebted for the introduction of the practice of inoculating for the Small-Pox, Vid. Mather, Boylstone and Coleman's Historical account of the Small-Pox inoculated in New-England. Boston. 1721—1730.

To Dr. Douglass of Bolton, and Dr. C. Colden of New-York, America is indebted for the first judicious method of treating the malignant Quinsy, which prevailed in Bolton and several other parts of America, in 1735 and 1736; and which has since that period, several times prevailed, being attended with great mortality, in this country. Vid. Douglass de Angina Ulcusculosa.

* *Arts nostra conjecturalis est—experimentis nitens. Celsus.*

Respiration. The former has been almost exhausted by the lucid experiments and by the ingenious and successful labours of Stevens, Spallanzani, Hunter, Senebier, and Carminati; and the latter has been happily elucidated by Priestley, Crawford, Lavoisier and Girtanner†.

THE stomach and the succus gastricus, afford an excellent lesson of instruction. Who would not wish to profit by it in all his enquiries? If we imitate the wonderful operations of the organ so happily explained by the before-mentioned authors, we shall find, that many a bulky volume of hypotheses will pass down the *primæ viæ* of our minds, without leaving more than a few sentences of useful truth, to invigorate the mind of the Physician in the acquisition of medical knowledge.

THESE facts will soon induce us to believe, that error is the sole cause of the misery of man. That the detection of error is the discovery of truth, is an excellent aphorism. A faithful detail of medical errors, properly managed, would have

† “ Mr. Girtanner’s Theory of respiration is briefly this :” “ During respiration the oxygene-gas of the atmosphere is decomposed. One part of the oxygene unites with the venous blood and changes its dark colour into a scarlet. Another part of the oxygene combines with the carbone which is disengaged from the venous blood, and forms carbonic acid gas. A third portion of the oxygene connects itself with the carbone of the dark coloured mucus, which is separated in the branches of the Trachea in considerable quantity; and in like manner turns to carbonic acid gas. A fourth portion of the oxygene, combines with the Hydrogene separated from the venous blood, and constitutes the watery exhalation manifest in the breath.

“ The caloric of the decomposed oxygene gas continues in part with the combined oxygene, and together with it, forms a combination with the venous blood; and hence proceeds the greater quantity of caloric in the arterial than in the venous blood, as Crawford has remarked. Another part of the caloric goes into union with the carbonic acid gas. A third part of it enters into the formation of the Halitus.”—The products of respiration he enumerates are these; 1st, a fluid animal oxyde arterial blood. 2d, Carbonic acid gas. 3d, water. And 4th, a small quantity of uncombined caloric. (Girtanner, *anfangsgründe der anthropologischen chemie*, kap. xxxiv. 260)

have the happiest effect on practice---It would prevent the misapplication of talents and time, and so facilitate the way to truth. This can no where be done so well as in a Medical Society---For, the truths that are dispersed among various persons, may be here collected and united into one general mass of knowledge, which will enlarge the mind, and regulate the judgment of the practitioners, who having regularly received instructions from particular teachers, are now to consider the ARS MEDENDI as their best teacher---The variety of facts, that each may shew to the other, will prevent partial views, and inspire comprehensive conceptions; thus the judicious Physician, to whom are committed the dearest interests of society, will be enabled to steer his course more safely between the dangerous extremes of dogmatism and empiricism. It is very apparent that this practice must lead indirectly and ultimately to a great improvement in medicine---The collision of mind with mind, ought to strike out some light, and we ought to collect the scattered rays to a focal point, by which some of the darker and more interior recesses of the temple of medical science might, in a future period, be happily illuminated.

IN the present state of society, it is difficult to obtain subjects for facilitating the study of Physiology and Pathology. The morbid appearances of dead bodies are examined under great embarrassments---If we unite to demonstrate to the public the advantages of these enquiries, we may hope to obtain the interest of the wise and prudent part of the citizens in favour of these pursuits. Prejudice and feeling are opposed, but reason may do much to remove these obstacles. The best apology that ever could be offered for what has been done in this business is, that "*men are sometimes induced to violate the laws of society to study those of nature.*"---But we should reflect, that the laws of
society

society are a part of the general system of nature, and, therefore, they cannot be violated in these instances with impunity. One of the first characters|| in the French Republic, has observed with great truth, that, "Respect for the remains of men who have been dear to us, is no prejudice ; it is an affection inspired by nature herself ; who has placed in the recesses of our hearts, a veneration for every thing that can recal to our remembrance, beings whom friendship, or gratitude has rendered sacred to our feelings. The liberty of offering a sorrowful homage to their ashes, is then a precious right, to delicate minds ; and the power of choosing that which their sensations dictate, cannot, without injustice, be taken away."

ON this day it is proper to commemorate some of the benefits of the City-Dispensary. This Institution has been encouraged and supported by the liberal contributions and well-directed charity of the citizens. Since the establishment of this medical asylum for the poor and sick, more than one thousand poor patients have been received into its hospitable bosom. By a careful examination of the Registry, I am able to lay before you the following statement of facts, viz.

70 are returned on the books, *dead*.

When you consider the circumstances of this class of citizens, you will all readily acknowledge, that this is a small proportion---

42 have been sent to the Alms-house and Hospital.

13 being disorderly, have been *dismissed*.

75 have been relieved, some of their very complicated diseases being incurable.

8 have removed into the country :

And 730 are returned on the journal, *cured* :

Contri-

|| Condorcet.

CONTRIBUTORS to the dispensary ! your bounty and charity have poured wine and oil into the wounds of sensibility, and caused the abodes of sickness, pain and misery, to echo with grateful joy. On this day, the blessing of more than 700 persons, many of whom have been ready to perish, comes upon you. Physicians of the Dispensary ! have we attended the bed of hopeless, beggared, sharp-pinching poverty, with the same fidelity, as we do the sickly couch of wealth and luxury ? If we have done this, to day we participate the divine pleasure, which springs from the consciousness of doing good.

IT is hoped you will not tax me with arrogance, while I endeavour to call your attention, one moment, to the most useful subject of resuscitation,

THE apparatus annexed to the Dispensary for the relief of unfortunate persons, who may suffer suspended respiration, by *drowning, lightning, suffocation, convulsions, suicide, intense cold, mephitic air and noxious vapours* ; and other causes that produce apparently sudden death, particularly in the *case of still-born infants*, has not yet answered the important uses for which it was intended. Could not this society by uniting their exertions with the managers of the Dispensary, and other benevolent citizens, effect all the excellent designs, that the Humane Societies of our sister States and those of Europe, have most happily achieved ?

LET us cast our eyes over the map of New-York : We instantly perceive that no country affords so fine a theatre for the establishment of HUMANE SOCIETIES as this State. On the one side we are presented with a delightful view of the East-River ; on the other, the Hudson, covered with the floating wealth of the Farmer and Merchant, appears

appears before us. Northward and Westward, we behold the Iroquois, Champlain, Erie and Ontario. In the extensive and fertile territories between these extremes, we observe the Mohawk, Senaka and Genesee; next, the intersecting branches of the Delaware and Susquehannah, and then the beautiful ponds, canals and smaller lakes, appear before us. And may we not anticipate the northern and western inland lock-navigation? All these masses of water are situated in a climate that is exposed to the most sudden changes, storms and tempests; and in the winter, to intense cold. Now let us behold the traveller, whelmed beneath the ice, the fragile bridge of his delusive way! Here let HUMANITY come in aid of life and restore the SUFFERER to the bosom of love and gratitude--- then will HE wipe the tear of sorrow from the eye of conjugal and filial affection! For, while all this yielding element furnishes an ample scene of dangerous business and pleasure, it forms at the same time, "the floating grave," to employ, as the Poet observes,

"the resuscitating breath

"Of medical benevolence!"

ON this theatre, *contentions and disputes* ought to be exhibited, that would be *worthy of Physicians and useful to men*: Here, the genius of Medicine might *contend* with that of the Drama † for the honors of philanthropy. Here *disputes* on the nature of animal life, and on the best methods of rekindling its quenched flame, might be managed in such a manner as to compel all men to acknowledge that Medicine is a most useful art. When we shall have accomplished these excellent works, we shall rejoice

† Referring to a theatrical exhibition, of the Old American Company, for the relief of a number of orphans and widows of the Fishermen who were drowned in the North-River, in March and April, 1793.

rejoice as many of our professional brethren have already done :

“ Our’s is the task, the greatest task, to save
 “ Friend, Lover, Parent, from the watery grave;
 “ To snatch from death the victim of despair,
 “ And give the means of penitence and prayer.”——

IN America we have always enjoyed, what France has lately restored to her Citizens, the union of Medicine with Chirurgery, which constitutes the Healing Art what it was in the Hippocratic Age. To separate the practice of Physic from that of Chirurgery, would be like a disunion of Light and Fire---Medical Surgery is, therefore, highly interesting to the Physician and to the public---Perhaps, it is reserved for the Physicians of America to discover the best methods of preventing or superceding many of the severer operations in surgery----Too much praise cannot be given to the humane, judicious, prompt and dexterous operator. But when will the presumptuous exercise of the bloody scalpel and catlin of Radcliffe and Sigault be suspended? When will their vanity, rashness and pertinacity no longer boast of what is in reality the greatest disgrace of the healing art? How long shall human nature be struck with horror, at the detail of their barbarous and ill-judged operations?*

ANATOMY is justly said to be the eye of all rational Medicine. In like manner, the theory of the human mind, may justly be considered, as a kind of Anatomy of the Passions, Intellect and faculties of Man; which discovers all the mental diseases. Contemptible are the resources of that Physician, who is solely dependent on Nosology, for the name of a disease, and on a Pharmacopœia, for a specific remedy. To

* Vid. Principles of Puerperal Medicine, by John Aitkin, M. D. Wm. Dease's Observations on Midwifery—and Dr. Hunter's Remarks on the Sigaultian operation.

To the praise of this age, the pathology of the mind is considered as a subject of as much utility to medicine as that of the body. There is but little doubt, but Tetanus, Epilepsia, Hydrophobia, Mania, or Madness; Vifaniae,† or the several kinds of Insanity; and even Hysteria and Hypochondriasis, with some of the diseases of the Moral Faculty, would in several parts of Europe and America, in 1692, have been ranked under the head of Witchcraft,§ and consequently, all these diseases, with many more, would have been considered as capital crimes, in the penal code of that day.

LET the sober, wise and judicious part of the public now determine, how much praise is due to Physicians for investigating and radically curing many of these diseases.

A FEW years ago, it was considered as a kind of daring impiety, for a Physician to attempt the cure of several diseases of the mind; particularly those of the moral faculty. But as long as we believe that men have the power of resisting inclination, and to weigh the motives of action, we need not fear the consequences of trying the full effects of medicines that may operate by physical necessity on man. And, let it be remembered, when Hipparchus undertook to number the stars and trace their motions, his attempt was also derided as impious; because, it was considered as a work that baffled all human labor and observation, and could be done only by the Deity.

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Mark

† Vid. Dr. T. Arnold's Treatise on Insanity, Lunacy and Madness.

§ See Hutchinson's History of Massachusetts.—Mr. Calef's work on Witchcraft—Mead's Medica Sacra.—Mather's Magnalia.—Case of the Demoniacs mentioned in the New-Testament, by N. Lardner. Lond. 8vo. 1758, and Gibbon's Roman Empire, chap. xxi.

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on health and disease. The ebullitions of enthusiasm, with dreams, visions, trances, and all the illusions of the senses, particularly sight and hearing, should likewise engage the serious and careful attention and study of medical men. And, while we contemplate the injustice and impolicy of the slavery of the poor Africans, in our boasted republican and free governments, shall we forget to observe the effects of slavery on the health, temper, genius and character of the people, who advocate and practise this traffic and bondage of man?

THE doctrine of the association of ideas is more useful to the Physician, than to the Professor of any other art. Whoever knows how to avail himself of this subject in the practice of physic, may be said to be in possession of a key to unlock many of the apartments of the cabinet of nature. How often, by this talismanic charm, may the morbid condition be changed to the healthful! This was the BRAZEN SERPENT and the TALITHA-CUMI of Dr. Willis, when he cured the King of England.

WHILE medicines are administered to change the diseased action, or to remove the irregular action, to equalize the excitement and to vary its degree, and thus to restore health and happiness; we find ample scope for scrutinising the operations of the mind, when we shall often obtain the greatest advantages in changing the train of ideas

“From grave to gay, from lively to severe.”

In doing this, may we not hope, that, it is reserved for the professors of the healing art to unravel all the curious tissue of feeling, emotion, passion and thought more successfully, than has ever yet been done by the unaided light of solitary philosophy.

THE

THE effects of reading Novels and Romances, on the Imagination, appetites and passions, particularly in young people, have not yet been investigated by Physicians. To keep the passions† regular and in temperate balance with each other, is the way to preserve health, and at the same time to promote virtue and happiness. Temperance is the only panacea that Medicine knows. This saved Socrates, Thucydides and Justinian from the ravages of the plague which depopulated the earth in their days. Hence, the necessity of the professors of health enforcing their instructions of temperance by the eloquence of example. But the time allotted for this discourse does not permit me to go into a regular detail on these subjects.

THUS, Gentlemen, I have endeavored to call your attention to the *improvement of Medicine*, by giving a slight, tho' very imperfect, sketch of the principal objects of your Institution. The advantages are too obvious to need any comment. Many of them are of such a nature, that they never can be effected by individuals, but must depend solely on the united labors of societies of active and ingenious men. Active men, it must be remembered, for all who are not active in these societies, are like negative quantities, which being added to positive, too often make the whole negative.

IN conformity with the design of this Anniversary Meeting, many more particulars might be mentioned, if the time and your patience would permit: Suffice it, to remark, wherever there is organization, spontaneous motion and life, there are the concomitants of Humanity, Disease and Death; and there are the objects to engage the attention and employ the study of the Physician.

ARE

† Vid. The Rev. Dr. Watts' *Doctrine of the Passions*, and Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding*.

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she stills the tumult of the passions, she supercedes personal antipathies, she disenchants the deluded senses, she dissipates the clouds by which truth is obscured, she sheds the rays of distinction on the apostle of truth; he presents her with modesty, he is received without unfavorable prepossessions." Let us, then, unite our labours for the common good of Society: Thus shall we render this Institution useful to the People, and honorable to its Members.

THE patriotic Citizens will give their approbation to an Establishment which has the public health for its object. May we not hope, that, the enlightened Legislators of a free People will give their sanction to its Incorporation? All the objects of the Institution can be promoted much better this way than any other. This Society may, hereafter, have a HUNTER,[†] a FOTHERGILL, a COPELEY, a LETTSOME and a HAWES, who will institute Incentives and Rewards for Genius and Character. She may, in some future day, have an Establishment for the relief of the Widows and Orphans of her poor or unsuccessful members.

I AM sensible, many objections are urged against all sorts of Incorporations in a free government. But, these all arise from the effects of the ancient Incorporations being misapplied to the present state of Society. Incorporations, were invented by the Emperors of Germany, in favor of the Peasantry, when the Barons, or Chieftains, under the feudal system, conspired together, in a formidable Aristocracy, against the Kings. Then it became the policy of Kings to check the encroachments of the Patri-

cians,

[†] Wm. Hunter,

cians, or Nobles, on the usurped and regal power; and artfully to strengthen and increase this power, which was ever operating the degradation and misery of mankind, by giving, as it was then falsely called, privileges to the Plebeians, or Peasantry, and so defending them against the equally unjust claims of the Barons, in uniting them in the support of Monarchy, which was constantly at war with Aristocracy. In America, there is no Peasantry; but in room of it, a collective and united body of Husbandmen, called **THE FREE YEOMANRY**. There are more modern Corporations, with peculiar powers, which have ended in monopolies. These, first, fattened on the blood and tears of the natives of the East and West-Indies, and having become enebriated with the sweat, extorted from the slave-wearied limbs of the Sons of Africa, they, afterwards, corrupt Society, with their unjustly accumulated wealth, and destroy themselves. In all those periods, the people were oppressed by an arbitrary Government, which did nothing relative to Medicine; if, you except the despotic decrees of the Parliament of Paris, respecting antimony; and the disgraceful edict of Charles V. to regulate Venesection.

INCORPORATIONS may be reformed, as well as any other political institutions. May it be a part of modern policy to establish certain incorporations, under such conditions, as will check the violence of democracy; and tend, by promoting useful knowledge, to the support, perhaps, to the perpetuity, of elective, free and well-balanced governments.

THE wisest physician† of antiquity observed, that the Asiatics were less warlike and more effeminate than the Europeans.

† Hippocrates de aere, locis et aquis.

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and pointed the way to truth. In Milton, immortal name! thou didst teach mankind that disobedience to the will of Heaven is the true cause of all the tyranny and misery in nature. When Clarke and Butler, by moral demonstration, proved to bewildered men the truth of that religion first taught in Judea, by Jesus of Nazareth, which carries in its divine bosom, peace on earth and good will to men; thou didst dispel the darkness of superstition. When Raleigh, Ridley, Sidney, Russel, and Hamden expired, in sealing the truth with their precious blood, thou, O FREEDOM! didst consecrate their names, in the sacred temples of Virtue, Honor and Fame.

IN thy venerable Rousseau, thou hast pourtrayed all thy charms; by his eloquence hast thou delineated the beauty and power of truth; and by his strength and courage, didst thou substantiate thy choicest blessings. In thy own Voltaire, thy benediction to all mankind was God and Liberty. In him didst thou avenge the cause of humanity and deliver Europe from the yoke of the ancient despotism of Asia: In him didst thou give to truth the sacred impressions of genius; and by his strong arm didst thou shake the disgraceful remains of feudal and Gothic vassalage. When Montesquieu and Beccaria, restored to humanity, her long lost charms, thy friendly spirit did direct them.

PRIESTLY, illustrious sage? The fruitless effort to save a sinking realm is his crime: The greatness of his virtues and his sufferings, prove the despotism and misfortunes of that nation, whose history his future fame will adorn. He, O FREEDOM! hath fought, successfully fought, under thy holy banners, and broken the fetters of reason. By him, hast thou confounded the blind partizans of antiquity, and demolished the antique pillars of the temple of superstition. But, in Britain shall it be said, that, Erskine his

friend, and the friend of Paine, can no longer defend the palladium of Liberty; and that he having become the christian victim of the riotous triumph of mad-hierarchical bigotry, such as would have disgraced the reign of Dioclesian or Nero, must flee his native land. Welcome, thrice welcome, to this western world; thou bringest with thee all the treasures of knowledge of all ancient and modern time. Come and animate the Americans with the amiable example of thy virtues.†

When Mirabeau, Condorcet, and that bright phalanx of patriots and heroes, arrayed in the divine panoply of reason, waged successful war against the many-headed monster, Tyranny, thou, O FREEDOM! didst nerve their mighty arm with more than Herculean strength.

THESE are the men whose fame will live forever: These are the benefactors of mankind: their glory will embrace all the future generations of men. Who can stop the progress of their works! What can check the progress of truth! As soon might man stretch forth his feeble arm and say to yon bright orb of day, retire and cease to shine.

BUT, what shall we say of the Legislators and Heroes of America? These all uttered their voices, strong as reason and sublime as heaven, saying, *Let America be free, and America was free.* Under the auspices of that freedom, in this Hall, are we now assembled.

PHYSICIANS!

† This was written after Dr. Priestley had informed several of his friends in America of his intention of leaving England, on account of civil and religious persecution, and fleeing to America, the asylum of those who flee from the Tyrants of the old world.

PHYSICIANS! you are convened on one of the most important occasions that can excite the attention of the wise and virtuous part of mankind. Your profession is to be the disciples of nature. Your object is to be the mitigation and cure of diseases. And, your ruling principle is to be active benevolence, by which you are to become the counsellors, the friends and the benefactors of mankind. Let us therefore make this day a solemn Jubilee, sacred to the memory of all those *who have improved the healing art*, and promoted the interests of humanity in the world.





