

Copy of an address, read to his students, after lecture, on Monday, November 21 / [John Thomson].

Contributors

Thomson, John, 1765-1846.

Publication/Creation

Edinburgh : [publisher not identified], 1808]

Persistent URL

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COPY
OF AN
ADDRESS,

READ TO HIS STUDENTS,

After Lecture, on Monday, November 21,

BY JOHN THOMSON,

PROFESSOR OF SURGERY TO THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

It is with no small degree of reluctance, that I feel myself called upon to take notice, in this place, of an assertion contained in a publication which has been put into my hands since our last meeting.

The publication to which I allude, is entitled, 'Result of the Operation publicly performed, in order to refute or confirm the Principle of Surgical Operation proposed by Mr. Walker.' In page 7th of that publication, you will find the following paragraph:—'But to make the proposition a specific one, I am willing to repeat the operation, even in Dr. Thomson's Lecture-room, on any day and at any hour he may appoint, and on a subject in every way entire and obtained by him-

‘ self, and if I do not, simply by these precise measurements, perforate,
‘ at one incision, a deep seated artery, while he, without them, is half
‘ an inch distant from it, I shall abandon the principle, *and either I shall*
‘ *then be refuted, or he shall regret the assertion, which he publicly*
‘ *and unauthorisedly ventured to make, that the principle had been*
‘ *tried and had failed.* Surely nothing can be fairer than this; and
‘ no man of honour, who presumes to make any assertion upon the
‘ subject, will refuse to abide by it.’

Of Mr. Walker, the author of this paragraph, I have no personal knowledge whatever. I have never read any of his publications, a single note in the ‘ Prospectus of his Lectures,’ and one or two pages only of the publication which I now hold in my hand, excepted. He sent me indeed a copy of his Preliminary Lectures; but as I had been informed by some of my friends, that they contained much illiberal abuse of me, I returned him the copy unopened. I have never read, nor ever will read, one paragraph of those lectures. Of the precise nature of Mr. Walker’s grand principle of surgical operation I am at this moment completely ignorant. I have been told that it consists in *measurements*: but the manner in which these measurements are to be taken and regulated, I have never had the curiosity to learn.

That I have never in this place made any allusion, direct nor indirect, to Mr. Walker, his operation, or publications, is a fact for the truth of which I need only appeal to the recollection, candour, and veracity of every Gentleman who has done me the honor to attend my Lectures. That I have never in any other place, nor upon any occasion, either in public or in private, made the slightest mention of the *trial* of Mr.



Walker's grand principle, of its failure or its success; and that the charge which he has been pleased to bring against me in the paragraph I have read to you, is in every respect as unprovoked as it is unfounded, I feel myself entitled to affirm without fear of contradiction. Whether, therefore, what Mr. Walker has asserted regarding me be entirely the creation of his own fancy, or an accurate relation of false reports communicated to him by others, concerns not me. But I will not easily be brought to believe, that, among those who attend my Lectures, there can be found one so base as to have reported to Mr. Walker that which he must have known to be false.

After this statement, Gentlemen, it only remains for me to apologize to you for this employment of your time. You and I are as yet in a great measure strangers to each other. Had it been otherwise, I should not have thought it necessary to have said so much about the author of this publication. You may however be assured, that as this is the first, so it is the last time that I shall ever allude in this place to Mr. Walker, his proposals, or his publications; or ever take the trouble to read or to contradict any assertions which he has been or may be pleased to publish concerning me.

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Wm Brown