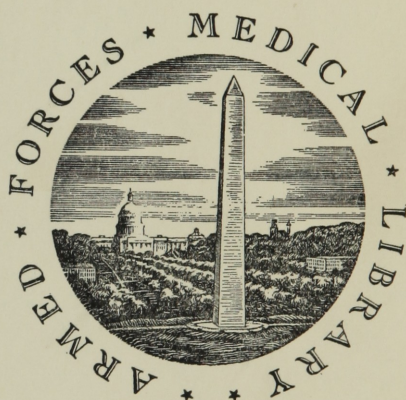


UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



FOUNDED 1836

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Glover (Jos.)

AN ORATION

DELIVERED

BY APPOINTMENT,

BEFORE THE

MEDICAL SOCIETY

OF

SOUTH-CAROLINA,

AT THEIR

ANNIVERSARY MEETING,

ON

The 24th December, 1809.

AND

PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST.

BY JOSEPH GLOVER, M. D.

And President of the Medical Society of S. Carolina.

"Ore trahit quodcunq: potest, atq: addit acervo." *Hor.*

CHARLESTON, (S. C.)

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1810.



AN Oration

BY A. POLLENT

MEDICAL SOCIETY

OF THE TOWN OF

ALBANY, N. Y.

DELIVERED AT THE

THEATRE OF THE CITY

CHURCH, ALBANY, N. Y.

ON THE 10TH OF MARCH, 1810.

1810

PREFACE.

WHEN the following pages were written, the author did not suppose, they would have transpired beyond the walls in which they were delivered; but, the high respect which he feels for the Medical Society of South-Carolina, has induced him to yield to their request of putting them to press. He therefore hopes they will be received as an earnest of his wishes for an annual collection of facts, which may serve at a future day, as the basis of a correct Medical History of his country.



to Mr Benjamin S. Barton
with the respectful compli-
ments of

his affectionate friend
The Author

ORATION, &c.

Gentlemen,

I CONGRATULATE you on the arrival of the twentieth anniversary of our society. On this day twenty years ago, some of the most eminent physicians of our city, combined to form a society, founded on the best principles for improvement in the science we cultivate, and for extensive usefulness in the relief of the sufferings of humanity. They succeeded in their attempt. The society I now have the honour to address, was the result of their industry. We have reaped the fruit of their labours, and it is expected of us in our turn, that we should continue the work which they have begun, and perpetuate their memories, by making this society instructive to ourselves and useful to the community in which we live.

In the following address, it is contemplated to “ review the weather and diseases

es of the current year;" to point out as many of the causes of disease in our city, as have suggested themselves to me; to make a few observations on some of those; and lastly, to submit a few suggestions to your consideration.

*A review of the Weather, and Diseases of
the current Year.*

A statement of the vicissitudes of the weather, and of the diseases of the year, constitutes a very important part of the records of our Society. From these it appears, that the winter months of the present year, have been unusually mild and temperate, the thermometer* in the house having never been but once below the freezing point, and that was on the sixth of January, when it was at twenty-nine degrees. The fifth and sixth were the two coldest, and the nineteenth and twenty-second were the two hottest days of the month of January. The thermometer ranged from 29 to 68. The barometer

* The observations were made with the Thermometer of Fahrenheit.

from 30 0, to 30 50. The Hygrometer, damp, from 60 to 145. The fall of rain was 5 inches. The days of rain were 8. The prevailing winds were, s. w. six days; n. w. nine days; n. e. eleven days; e. one day; and w. four days. The month was healthful. The prevailing diseases were catarrhal and inflammatory.

February was more mild and dry than the preceding month. The eighth and ninth were the two coldest, and the eighteenth and twenty-eight, were the two hottest days of the month. The thermometer ranged from 36 to 70. The barometer, from 30 0, to 30 50. The hygrometer, damp, from 52 to 120. The fall of rain was 3 inches, $3 \frac{1}{2}$ tenths. The days of rain were six. The prevailing winds were, n. w. 12 days; n. e. 7 days; s. w. 6 days; w. 2 days; and s. e. 1 day. The prevailing diseases were catarrhal and inflammatory. The month was as healthful as the last.

After a dreary winter, we generally welcome March as the harbinger of spring. Not so the present year. The month wore the garb of a protracted winter.—

The spring was dry and backward. The fourteenth and twenty-eighth, were the two coldest, and the third and fourth were the two hottest days of the month. The thermometer ranged from 39 to 77. The barometer from 30 3 to 30 70. The hygrometer, damp, from 30 to 118. The fall of rain was only 1 inch and 3 tenths, and the days of rain were only 2. The prevailing winds were, w. 3 days; s. w. 13 days; n. e. 9 days; n. w. 4 days; s. e. 1 day; and e. another day. The prevailing diseases were, catarrhal and pulmonary complaints, pneumonia, hooping cough, and chicken pox.

April in general the most pleasant of our spring months, was more warm and dry, than the same month of any preceding year since 1804, when the highest and lowest degrees of heat indicated by the thermometer, were exactly the same as in the present year. The twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth were the two coolest, and the twentieth and twenty-fourth the two warmest days of the month. The thermometer ranged from 57 to 82. The barometer from 30 20 to 30 50. The hy-

grometer, damp, 32 to 124. The fall of rain was two inches, and the days of rain were two. The prevailing winds were, s. e. 4 days; s. w. 16 days; n. e. 8 days; n. w. 1 day; and s. 1 day. We had thunder on one day. The diseases of the month were, as in the last, with the addition of a few cases of cholera infantum.

The month of May was temperate and pleasant. There were not more than two or three days, in which the heat of the sun was disagreeable. The seventeenth and eighteenth were the two coolest, and the twenty-fifth and twenty-ninth were the two warmest days of the month. The thermometer ranged from 60 to 87. The barometer from 30 2 to 30 60. The hygrometer, damp, from 38 to 150. The fall of rain was 3 inches $4\frac{1}{2}$ tenths. The days of rain were 6. The prevailing winds were e. 8 days; w. 3 days; s. w. 15 days; n. e. 4 days; and n. w. 1 day. The days of thunder were 4. The diseases of the month were, cholera morbus, cholera infantum, catarrhal complaints, and hooping cough.

Our summer commenced with every appearance of pleasantness and of health.

The month of June was cooler than it had been, in the same month of any preceding year, since 1802. The second was the coolest, and the twenty-eighth was the hottest day of the month. The thermometer ranged from 63 to 87. The barometer from 30 15 to 30 70. The hygrometer, damp, 34 to 101. The fall of rain was 6 inches $6\frac{1}{2}$ tenths. The days of rain were 5. The prevailing winds were, w. 3 days; n. w. 2 days; s. w. 17 days; n. e. 4 days; e. 1 day; and s. e. 3 days. The days of thunder were 6. The diseases of the month were, intermitting and remitting fevers, dysentery, cholera infantum, and hooping cough.

On the first day of July, the thermometer was as low as 71 degrees. The weather was cooler in this, than in the same month of any preceding year, since 1802. We had likewise a greater fall of rain in this, than in the same month of any preceding year since 1802. The first was the coolest, and the twelfth, twenty-sixth, and twenty-eighth were the hottest days of the month. The thermometer ranged from 71 to 89. The barometer from 30 14 to 30 44. The

hygrometer, damp, 58 to 97. The fall of rain, was 14 inches and 5 tenths. The days of rain were 16. The prevailing winds were, N. E. 8 days; E. 1 day; S. W. 19 days; S. E. 2 days; and W. 1 day. The days of thunder were 19. The diseases of the month were, hooping cough, cholera infantum, and typhus fever.

August, in general one of the hottest, most sickly, and most disagreeable months of the year, commenced with a considerable fall of rain, and with thunder, the thermometer being at 73 degrees. The first was the coolest, and the twenty-eighth was the hottest day of the month. The thermometer ranged from 73 to 90. The barometer from 30 20 to 30 44. The hygrometer, damp, from 72 to 100. The fall of rain was 9 inches, $5\frac{1}{2}$ tenths. The days of rain were 9. The prevailing winds were, N. E. 9 days; E. 6 days; S. W. 17 days; and S. E. 3 days. The days of thunder were eleven. The prevailing diseases were, hooping cough, cholera infantum, a few cases of bilious remitting and intermitting fevers, and of endemial or yellow fever.

September, was more cool and pleasant, than the preceding month. The first and second were the two hottest, and the thirteenth was the coolest day of the month. The thermometer ranged from 63 to 87. The barometer from 30 20 to 30 45. The hygrometer, damp, from 72 to 102. The fall of rain was 3 inches $2\frac{1}{2}$ tenths. The days of rain were 8. The prevailing winds were, N. E. 18 days; E. 10 days; S. 1 day; S. E. 5 days, S. W. 5 days; and W. 1 day. The days of thunder were 5. The diseases of the month were, hooping cough, dysentery, bilious remitting and intermitting fevers, several cases of endemial or yellow fever, two cases of tetanus, and one of phthisis pulmonalis.

October was wet and disagreeable. The fourth and fifth were the hottest, and the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth were the coolest days of the month. The thermometer ranged from 55 to 82. The barometer from 30 15 to 30 47. The hygrometer, damp, from 63 to 125. The fall of rain was 10 inches and 1 tenth. The days of rain were 10. The days of thunder were 6. The prevailing winds were, N.

E. 23 days; S. E. 2 days; S. W. 1 day; E. 2 days; N. W. 2 days; and W. 1 day. The diseases of the month were, bilious remitting and intermitting fevers, endemial or yellow fever, and hooping cough.

November usually one of the pleasantest months of the year, was disagreeably warm, to all those prudent persons, who on the first approach of cool weather, had put on their winter cloathing and were unwilling to risk their healths by changing their dresses with the frequent variations in the temperature of the atmosphere. The third and fourteenth were the warmest, and the twenty-third and twenty-fourth were the coolest days of the month. The thermometer ranged from 36 to 76. the barometer from 30 0 to 30 62. The hygrometer, damp, from 70 to 110. The fall of rain was 4 inches $6\frac{1}{2}$ tenths. The days of rain were 5. The prevailing winds were N. E. 13 days; S. E. 2 days; W. 2 days; N. W. 11 days; and S. W. 2 days. We had thunder on one day, being the twenty-first, and a slight fall of snow on the evening of the twenty-third, the wind being at N. E. The diseases of

the month were, endemial or yellow fever, bilious remitting and intermitting fever, consumption, dysentery, hooping cough, dropsy, and a few catarrhal complants.

The weather during the greater part of December, was mild and temperate. The sixth was the warmest, and the fifteenth was the coldest day of the month. The thermometer ranged from 42 to 71. The barometer from 30 7 to 30 60. The hygrometer, damp, from 64 to 126. The fall of rain was 4 inches and 1 tenth.— The days of rain were 7. The prevailing winds were, s. w. 4 days n. w. 14 days; n. e. 7 days; e. 2 days; s. e. 2 days; and w. 2 days. The diseases of the month were hooping cough, croup, catarrh, pleurisy, angina and rheumatism.

Of the causes of Disease in our City.

Among the prominent causes of disease in our city, may be enumerated, the public burial grounds within its limits, the drains, which are receptacles of putrid animal and vegetable substances, ponds, cellars, and other reservoirs of stagnant wa-

ter; the bad construction of the vaults or privies of our city, and the neglect of cleansing them; intemperance in either eating or drinking; exposure to the night air; change of air during the summer or autumnal months; excessive exercise of either mind or body; and too great exposure to the heat of the sun. These are the causes which produce the greater number of diseases with which we have to contend. All of them may be either remedied or removed; to do so therefore, our efforts should be particularly directed.

We have in Charleston and its suburbs, fifteen different cemeteries; in which were interred in the course of the year, 779 dead bodies. Many of these have been gone over again and again, of course those who are interred at one time, must of necessity in their turn, be removed for the accommodation of others at another; and, when a grave yard has been gone over several times, they are necessitated to interfere with other graves, and that too frequently, before the decomposition of the bodies they contained is complete, to the great annoyance, and sometimes to

the ill health of those exposed to the noxious effluvia arising from them. A practice so injurious, ought no longer to be permitted. Another objection to public burial grounds being within the limits of a city, is the great injury they do to the water. It has been correctly ascertained, that water in their neighbourhood, always holds more or less of nitre in solution, which we know is the product of animal and vegetable decomposition. I hope the day is not far distant, when this great nuisance will be remedied by legislative interference.

I have mentioned the drains of our city, among the causes of its diseases; but, I should rather have said, their improper construction. It is evident, that they are necessary to carry off the water which falls, and thereby to prevent its becoming stagnant. Two things however seem essential in their construction, in both of which they have hitherto been defective. The one is, that their contents should be regularly discharged, and not suffered to become an accumulating mass of putrified and putrifying animal and vegetable mat-

ters—the other, that the effluvia generated within them, should be confined, and not permitted to roam at large, to the great annoyance of every passenger in our streets, who may come within the sphere of their action. The former can be done by having them frequently cleansed by a stream of water—the latter, may be more easily accomplished, by having their gratings covered with stone or cast iron, which will likewise prevent persons from throwing the offals of their kitchens, and other offensive matters into them.

Ponds, cellars, and other reservoirs of stagnant water, may likewise be enumerated among the causes of disease in our city. These however, I am happy to say, are daily diminishing, and if the improvements of our city continue, will in a short time, cease to exist. The late regulations of our Board of Health, oblige us to keep our cellars dry, and to drain our low grounds, and they are moreover daily filling up. We have therefore good reason to hope, that the health of our city will be greatly ameliorated, from the diminution of this very prolific source of disease.

Another cause of disease to which we are exposed, is the disengagement of noxious effluvia from our vaults or privies. This may be remedied, in a great measure, by attention to cleanliness, by ventilators, and lastly, by having them frequently emptied. The throwing of quicklime and of carbone into them, has been recommended; but, there is perhaps no more effectual method of remedying this evil, than by attention to the construction of the building in the first instance.

The other causes of disease which I have enumerated, do not like the foregoing way-lay the unwary and unsuspecting; but, are dependant on our will, and completely under our controul. I mean intemperance in eating or drinking, exposure to the night air; change of air during the summer and autumnal months; excesssive exercise of either mind or body; and too great exposure to the heat of the sun. These are so much in the power of every prudent person to avoid, that I shall say nothing of them.

Observations on the Diseases of the Year.

Reviewing our obituary for the present year, the following facts present themselves:

1st.—That from the first of January 1809, to the first of January, 1810, 779 persons have died in Charleston.

2d.—That nearly one third of that number, or 257 were children under 5 years of age; and that the next greatest mortality, was between the ages of 20 and 30.

3d.—That February was the most healthful, and October the most sickly month of the year.

4th. That hooping cough, consumption, endemial or yellow fever, and dropsy, occasioned more than one third of the deaths of the year.

The diseases of the year took place, nearly in the following order of time, to wit: chicken pox, catarrhal and pulmonary complaints, hooping cough, tetanus, dropsy, croup, cholera infantum, dysentery, bilious remitting and intermitting fever, typhus fever, and endemial or yellow

fever. Four of these have been so conspicuous in filling our bills of mortality, that I shall say a few words of them. I mean hooping cough, consumption, endemial or yellow fever, and dropsy.

Hooping cough was the most fatal disease of the year, no less than 96 persons, having fallen victims to its ravages alone. It was noticed on our records, as making its appearance here in March, and yet no deaths from it occurred until May. It was mild in its attack and easy of cure at its onset, but as the season advanced, it became more severe, and proved more frequently fatal. Its increase and decline may be seen, by a recurrence to our monthly obituary, from which it appears, that six persons died of it in May, 18 in June, 24 in July, 22 in August, 11 in September, and 9 in October. The most useful remedies were, blood-letting, castor oil, ipecacuanha, the arum virginicum or indian turnip, the polygala senega, salt of tartar, tincture of artificial musk, tincture of cantharides, tincture of opium, squills, the lac ammoniaci, and the lac asafœtidæ. An unfortunate opinion has

prevailed among many persons, that this disease requires no aid from the healing art. An opinion so erroneous, frequently proved injurious to the children and servants of those who embraced it. The obituary of the present year, affords ample proof of the error, and shews how much depends on the timely aid of a physician. It there appears, that of ninety-six persons who died of hooping cough in Charleston, only twenty-one of that number, were white inhabitants. The reason is obvious. They had earlier medical aid.

Of consumption it has been said, that of late the number of cases has greatly increased. This however is not correct, for on comparing the deaths, from that disease, of the present, with those of some former years, they appear to have diminished. We have been told,* that in 1803, 92 persons died of it—in 1804, 175—in 1805, 223—in 1806, 200—in 1807, 207—in 1808, 143,† and the obituary of the present year reports 82, a very material diminution, from those of the years I

* Johnson's Oration—Deliv. in 1803.

† Gough's Oration—Deliv. in 1809.

have mentioned, and yet the number is considerable, for a place like this, the climate of which appears to be well adapted to the relief of persons labouring under that disease. Indeed, I have the authority of Dr. D. Ramsay for saying, that the late Dr. Garden, who died of a pulmonary consumption in England, had that disease completely suspended, for a period of no less than thirty years, by a residence in South Carolina. Our obituary, I have said, states that 82 persons have died of consumption in our city during the year. Eleven of those were foreigners. Only seventy-one of them therefore are chargeable to our climate, and many of these were probably owing to the late influenza, and perhaps some of them to our habits and fashions.

It is next in order, that I should say a few words on endemial or yellow fever. Of that herculean disease sixty-four persons have died during the present year. The first case which occurred in our city, was that of Nicholas Johnston, and is dated on the first of August, as appears from the books of the Marine Hospital, of

which he was a patient. The rise, progress and decline of the disease, is best delineated by our obituary, from which it appears, that 9 persons died of it in August; 20 in September; 27 in October; and 8 in November.

An opinion having prevailed that this disease has been approximating to the natives for some years past, it is proper that I should remark, that the six inhabitants stated by the obituary of the present year, to have died of endemial or yellow fever, were either children, or persons unaccustomed to the climate.

Heat and moisture the two great exciting causes of putrefaction, occurred this year in a degree highly favourable for the decomposition of those animal and vegetable substances, the effluvia of which are supposed to contribute to the production of endemial or yellow fever.

The limits of this paper will not admit of my saying much of this disease; but, I must request your indulgence while I mention two innovations in its treatment, which have occurred during the present year. I allude to the internal use of the

sugar of lead, and the frequent spunging of the body with alcohol on the principle of evaporation. Those gentlemen who have adopted these innovations, speak so favourably of them as to assert, that they are worthy of more general attention.

On the subject of dropsy so much has been written, that I should not have mentioned it here, were I not induced, from the circumstance of sixty-one persons having died of that disease during the year, to state to you a case which occurred in my own practice. An African boy, about fifteen years of age, who had ascites to a great degree, came under my care on the 23d. of November, 1805. The boy having a very prominent umbilicus or rather a disposition to umbilical hernia, I tapped him, by puncturing it with a common lancet and introducing a grooved director or female catheter. By this mode of procedure, the operation was rendered very easy, gave very little pain, and yet evacuated the water completely. On the morning after, I gave him a cathartic of calomel and jalap, and kept him afterwards on a solution of nitre.

In a few days I found that another collection of water was forming in the abdominal cavity. This I had no sooner perceived, than I evacuated it as before, and had recourse to the same medicines. Successive collections of water, obliged me to repeat the operation again and again, I was induced however to persevere, from observing that the boy gained strength, and that there was evidently a longer interval between every subsequent collection. It was not until the operation had been performed fifteen times, and an immense quantity of water evacuated, that it ceased to collect, and the boy recovered his health. I mention this, in evidence of the advantage of early and repeated tapplings in the cure of ascites.

The following suggestions are submitted to your consideration.

There are three institutions which having emanated from this society, appear to have claims on our patronage and care. I mean the Humane Society, the Dispensary and the Botanick Society. Of the first of

these it may be said, that excepting what appears from the records of our society, little more remains of this laudable institution, than a box with an apparatus badly provided, and so much out of order, as to be of no essential service in the relief of persons labouring under suspended animation. The institution having been founded expressly for this purpose, and being as I understand under the patronage of this society, does it not behoove us to have the necessary apparatus always in readiness for the relief of such unfortunate persons as may need the assistance of the Humane Society. Besides, so many improvements have been made in the treatment, within a few years, that I presume many and very material additions may be made to the rules formerly laid down by this society. Permit me to recommend this subject to your particular attention, and to suggest the propriety of a committee being appointed to re-consider those rules, and report if any, and what alterations are necessary, and what apparatus is wanting to carry into effect the objects of the Humane Society.

The Dispensary which owes its origin

to your exertions, and still flourishes by your patronage and care, I am happy to say continues to increase in public utility, by being more extensively useful in the relief of the sufferings of humanity. This humane, this charitable institution, is so honourable to human nature, and so useful to the community in which we live, that I do not hesitate to pronounce it the brightest constellation in our medical hemisphere. A constellation, which while it adds a lustre to this society from which it emanated, reflects its rays in a manner highly honourable to the gentleman,* with whom it originated.

From the report of the Trustees of the Dispensary, it appears that 223 patients have partaken of its charity during the year which ended on the 30th of September last. Of that number 155 were cured; 34 remained under care; 4 were removed to the Poor-House; 16 had died; 10 were discharged as disorderly; 3 had left town; and 1 could not be found. How grateful is it to the feelings of humanity, that so many unfortunate fellow beings should be

* Dr. David Ramsay.

relieved from sickness and death, by the aid of this valuable institution. That it is easier to prevent than remedy an evil, is fully exemplified in the Charleston Dispensary. By its formation, the number of those who are reduced to the necessity of resorting to the charity of the Poor and Orphan Houses, has been diminished, and thus by converting a small portion of the expenditures of our city through this humane channel, much good has been done to our fellow creatures, society has been spared many valuable members, and the expenditures of our city very little if at all increased. How frequently had you seen, previous to its establishment, the heads of families, who aware of their own indigence, neglected to send for a physician, until from the rapid progress of their diseases, they were reduced to such situations, that he could do little more than witness the distresses with which he was surrounded, before the melancholy scene was forever closed. At once a widow and her orphan children were deprived of their support, and cast on the charity of the Poor and Orphan Houses, when the timely aid of a physician, would

have prevented their distress and misery. While on the subject of the Dispensary, permit me to say a few words to you on the obstetrick practice of that institution. One of the primary objects, and perhaps the most cogent reason, which induced this society to attempt its establishment, was to relieve those unfortunate females, who during pregnancy, child-birth, and all the perilous situations accruing therefrom, were left to the care of illeterate and unskilful mid-wives, to whose ignorance, with shame be it spoken, mothers may too frequently attribute the loss of their children, husbands their wives, and women their wretchedness through the remainder of their lives. I say, to obviate in some measure this great evil, was one of the chief objects of our society, in attempting the establishment of the institution of which we are speaking. This desirable purpose, from my own experience, has not been answered. I have witnessed its defect in this particular, and the want of something like a regular lying-in hospital. The Dispensary only provides for the relief of those, who are able to support themselves during their con-

finement at their respective homes; but, there is a class of unfortunate females, who although capable of supporting themselves when in health, are unable to do so during several weeks confinement. Hence it has occurred to me, and no doubt has been noticed by other gentlemen of the faculty, that on paying our subsequent visits to our obstetrick patients of this class, we sometimes find, that they have been removed to avail themselves of the charity of the Poor House, and that too, long before prudence would dictate such a measure. I hope, that this society, which has the cause of humanity so much at heart, will reflect a little on this suggestion, and devise the plan of a lying-in hospital.

The Botanick Society which was instituted by you in 1805, continues to flourish and is already enriched with a valuable collection of indigenous and exotic plants. I may moreover add, that it bids fair to be a very useful ornament to our state, and with proper arrangements will be extremely advantageous, in facilitating the acquirements of those, who may turn their attention to this branch of natural history.

The science of botany which has done so much good for mankind, and has added such a lustre to the names of Tournefort, Linnæus, Rosseau, Barton and others, has been much neglected in our state. In the present situation of our political affairs, which seems to call aloud for the assistance of all classes of citizens, does it not become us, to make some arrangement for the greater diffusion of botanical knowledge, and thus bring the immense treasures of the vegetable kingdom of this fertile and extensive country, to the aid of medicine and the arts. The emergency of the times, requires the exercise of ingenuity and economy. Let us not be backward, but embrace every opportunity of cultivating and preparing those articles of the *Materia Medica*, which are adapted to our climate or that we have the means of preparing. Let us endeavour to find substitutes for those which we are unable to procure within ourselves, and thereby evince that true love of country, which will be worthy of us as citizens of these independent states.

I cannot conclude without paying the homage of my respect, to the memories

of our deceased fellow members, and the more especially those who were the founders of our society. Alas! how painful is it to reflect, that there remains after the short lapse of twenty years, only six of those medical worthies. The cold hand of death has separated them from us forever. We trust that they are now enjoying that happiness above, which they contributed so essentially to bestow on their fellow-creatures while on earth.

Permit me now gentlemen to felicitate you on the good understanding and friendship, which so eminently exist among the members of this our medical family, and to conjure you, in as much as you respect yourselves, regard one another, and value the true interests of the profession, to continue to be attentive to that etiquette in your intercourse with each other, which is founded on the most correct principles of medical ethics, is the cement of professional liberality and friendship, and can alone ensure the long continuance of that harmony, of which we may at present boast.



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