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1833

Bedford (The author ~ E.S.)
AN

ADDRESS,

INTRODUCTORY TO

A COURSE OF LECTURES,

DELIVERED IN THE HALL OF THE

MEDICAL COLLEGE OF SOUTH-CAROLINA,

BEFORE THE

TRUSTEES AND FACULTY, THE STUDENTS OF MEDICINE,
AND THE PUBLIC GENERALLY,

AT

THE OPENING OF THE SESSION OF 1833-4.

BY GUNNING S. BEDFORD, M. D.

PROFESSOR OF OBSTETRIC MEDICINE, AND THE DISEASES
OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

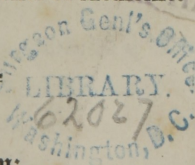
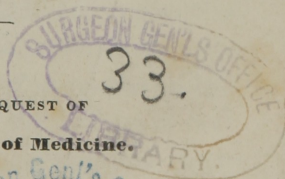
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ADVERTISEMENT.

The author having been honored with an appointment in the Medical College of South-Carolina, expected on his arrival in Charleston, to be met by that high toned, moral, and chivalrous feeling for which he had always understood Carolinians were remarkable. He was aware that a schism had taken place in the Medical College, and that an opposition school had been established.

In the acceptance of a Professorship in one of the Institutions, he did not wish, he did not expect to be regarded as a mere partizan—nor did he expect to be treated with coldness, indifference, and distrust, much less to encounter obloquy, from any quarter.

Although a difference of opinion existed among Medical Gentlemen, in which the public at large seemed to participate, and much strife had been engendered on account of that Legislation, which resulted in the establishment of two Medical Colleges—the author could not be supposed to enter into the feelings of individuals, and whatever animosity (if any) existed among themselves, it was not to be expected, that it would be extended to him. Judge, then, of his surprise, when, on entering a rival Institution, at the Introductory Lecture of Dr. DICKSON, (on Monday, 11th of Nov.) which the *public* were invited to attend—to hear the Professor villifying the Lawyers, libelling the Judges,

and upbraiding the City Council, by whom all the cases and all the questions, which could be raised, had been decided against the new School,* and himself and his colleagues from New-York and Philadelphia, were referred to in a manner unbecoming the dignity of the occasion.† And if among those from whom he experiences so much kindness and hospitality, he expected to find formidable opponents—he hoped at least to find them generous enemies.

A portion of the following address has reference to that Lecture, and will be well understood by those who heard it. To others, the author owes some apology for the allusions which it contains, as the obnoxious expressions, if not expunged from the printed Lecture, which it is understood Dr. DICKSON is about presenting to the public, may perhaps never come under their observation.

*The new School is now distinguished from the other, by the style and title of the Medical College of the *State* of South-Carolina.

†To say nothing of the illiberal sarcasms, and vulgar abuse of the *Columbia Telescope*, and other newspapers.

TO G. S. BEDFORD, M. D.

DEAR SIR—At a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Medical College of South-Carolina, held this day, it was unanimously “RESOLVED, That a committee of three be appointed to make application to Dr. Bedford for a copy of his Introductory Lecture for the press.”

We, the subscribers, have been appointed to constitute that Committee; and in compliance with the duty above assigned us, we now respectfully request for publication, a copy of the able and eloquent address, which you delivered before the public at the opening of the present session of the Medical College of South-Carolina; and by whom it has been so much commended for its liberal, enlightened, and at the same time, independent and fearless character.

Suffer us, in behalf of the Board of Trustees whom we represent, to tender you their best wishes for your present success, and for your future usefulness and renown, in the sphere of action to which you have recently been called.

Accept, Dear Sir, from us personally, the expression of our cordial good feelings, and the great respect and esteem of your obedient servants,

J. B. WHITRIDGE, M. D.	<i>Chairman.</i>	} <i>Committee.</i>
H. S. WARING, M. D.		
ELIAS BALL, M. D.		

Charleston, S. C. Nov. 26, 1833.

GENTLEMEN—It would be affectation in me were I to conceal the high gratification I feel at the very flattering compliment, which you have been pleased to bestow on my Introductory Address. The sentiments it contains are the honest convictions of my mind, and that they should have received the approbation of so intelligent and discriminating a body as the Board of Trustees of the Medical College of South-Carolina, is to me a very gratifying circumstance.

I shall take great pleasure in complying with the request of the Trustees, and beg that you will express to them my thanks for their kind wishes in my behalf. I pray you, Gentlemen, to accept for yourselves the acknowledgment of my regard, and permit me to offer you my best wishes for your health and happiness.

I have the honor to be your obliged servant,

G. S. BEDFORD.

TO J. B. WHITRIDGE, M. D.	<i>Chairman.</i>	} <i>Committee.</i>
H. S. WARING, M. D.		
ELIAS BALL, M. D.		

Charleston, Nov. 27th, 1833.

At a meeting of the Students of the Medical College of South-Carolina, held Nov. 26th, 1833, Mr. JAMES RUMPH, of South-Carolina, was called to the Chair, and Mr. GEO. T. ALLEN, of New-York, appointed Secretary.

The object of the meeting having been explained—

It was unanimously *Resolved*, That Mr. RICHARD M'GOLDRICK, of Georgia, Mr. W. H. WILSON, of South-Carolina, and Mr. JAMES KENNEDY, of South-Carolina, constitute a committee to wait on Dr. BEDFORD, and request a copy of his Introductory Address for publication.

GEORGE T. ALLEN, *Secretary*.

NOVEMBER 26th, 1833.

DEAR SIR—In compliance with the wishes of our fellow Students of the Medical College of South-Carolina, we respectfully request a copy of your Introductory Address for publication—and in performing this duty, permit us to express to you the high degree of satisfaction we all derived from listening to your very eloquent and independent lecture.

Very respectfully, your obedient servants,

RICHARD M'GOLDRICK, *Chairman*.
W. H. WILSON,
JAMES KENNEDY, } *Committee*.

TO DR. BEDFORD.

GENTLEMEN—It affords me great pleasure to learn that you were pleased with my Introductory Lecture. It advocates principles which I trust I shall never abandon, and which hereafter I shall be proud to learn are sustained by you. Accept of my thanks for your kind note, and present to the class the assurances of the great interest I feel in their regard.

I am, very truly, your friend and servant,

G. S. BEDFORD.

TO MESSRS. RICHARD M'GOLDRICK, *Chairman*.
W. H. WILSON,
JAMES KENNEDY, } *Committee*.

Charleston, Nov. 27th, 1833.

ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN—

I should be wanting in duty were I to omit, on the present occasion, the expression of my acknowledgment to the Trustees of this Institution, for the honor conferred on me in electing me to the chair of Obstetric Medicine, and the Diseases of Women and Children. An appointment in an Institution, having such strong claims on public patronage, I conceive to be no mean honor. The Medical Society of South-Carolina, composed as it is of men who have contributed much to the advancement of Medical Science, has called into existence, and now has under its protection, the Institution, which here presents itself to Students of Medicine, offering facilities for instruction, which, perhaps I shall be excused in saying, are seldom to be found. The intelligence and respectability, thus brought to bear on this school, cannot but prove highly valuable to its prospects, and its success is in a measure at once ensured.

But, Gentlemen, I would not have you suppose that we look for extrinsic aid—we do not wish to depend on the reputation of others, nor are we anxious to be sustained by aught but our own individual merit. Political intrigue should never be suffered to enter our Scientific Institutions—subterfuge and trick may for a while have their sway, but to secure any permanent advantage, other and more powerful weapons must be employed. It would be unworthy of us, were we to address ourselves to your passions, and obtain from the sudden impulse of your hearts, what, perhaps, you would be unwilling to grant us in your cooler moments of

reflection. You have higher and more vital considerations to govern you in the step you are now about to take, than the mere personal aggrandizement of those, who present themselves as your Instructors. Suppose, Gentlemen, that you had all resolved, before you left your homes, to attend this Institution, without any reference to the talent and acquirement that may be found in the rival College. Do you think you would have been prudent in adopting so rash a determination? It is not improbable, that, after it was too late to repair it, you might have become convinced of your error. If this rash step had been taken at our suggestion, if we had been instrumental in causing you to join this Institution, before you had enjoyed sufficient opportunity of comparing the relative strength of the two Schools, it would have been a bitter reflection for us to feel that our own *selfishness* had been the means of misleading you! Such conduct on our part, would have had no other tendency than that of affording you conclusive evidence of the consciousness of our own inability to compete, on fair and honorable grounds, with our professional rivals—and as soon as you had learned the cause of our wishing you to pledge yourselves to us, without even giving the other school a hearing, you would have entertained for us, what we certainly should have most richly merited, the profoundest contempt. The Student, who determines on attending lectures in an Institution, from the honest conviction that he will be benefitted by so doing, is worth a hundred who have been gained over by management. Here, I fearlessly challenge contradiction—and I feel satisfied that every honest man will bear me out in the truth of my position.

I am perfectly willing, so far as I am concerned—and I believe I speak the sentiments of my colleagues—I am perfectly willing that this School should fail, if the other should prove more advantageous to the Student. I trust you will give me credit for sincerity, when I declare to you that I

care more for the advancement of that noble profession in which we have embarked, than I do for the paltry compensation that might result to me from your attendance on my lectures. You will, therefore, understand that, so far from feeling displeasure, I am highly gratified that you will now have an opportunity of passing a verdict on the relative merits of the two Institutions. If you can learn Obstetric Medicine elsewhere better than you can here, I tell you it is your duty to do that which will prove most to your advantage. This is my solemn conviction, and, right or wrong, it is at least honest. The conflict in which we are about to engage, is a noble one—it is an honest strife after fame; and although I have not the honor of a personal acquaintance with our competitors, still I wish them every success, sincerely trusting that they may be rewarded in proportion to their merit. More than this will not be required by a generous adversary.

It may not be improper to advert for a moment to an error into which Students of Medicine not unfrequently fall. They but too often suffer their predilections to blind their judgment—personal friendship, the influence of party, a desire to uphold certain men and measures under all circumstances, are frequently the inducements, which determine them in the selection of their Teachers. This is radically wrong—it is a delusion—it is injustice to themselves, and most assuredly an imposition upon the public. The object of the Student of Medicine, in the prosecution of his studies, should be to avail himself of the most advantageous means of instruction—all his efforts should be concentrated to this one object; for when he enters on the career of practice, what will the friendship of this or that man avail him, if he should have neglected to possess himself of what certainly is indispensable to success in his profession—ample qualifications. This hint is worthy of your serious consideration. I would advise you to judge for yourselves—be not guided in your

decision by the representations of interested men—suffer not your minds to be trammelled by the avaricious warnings of those, who perhaps think more of their pecuniary emolument, than they do of your intellectual welfare. Look around you attentively—be not contented with a survey of the surface only, but, after a faithful investigation, judge and choose for yourselves. And, Gentlemen, permit me to assure you, that whatever your decision may be, it is my sincere wish, that it may be such as will secure you a permanent interest. If, after a scrupulous examination of the two Institutions, you rally around the other, from a well-grounded conviction that it will be more conducive to your advancement, I for one shall say to you—God-speed. Should you, on the contrary, conceive it to be more to your interest, to adopt this as your Alma Mater, I for one shall leave nothing undone, in order that you may hereafter have no reason to regret your choice. If we cannot sustain ourselves by the force of our own individual merit—if we cannot attract you to this School, without underrating the professional standing of our competitors, we deserve to fall.

Satisfied as I am of the incomparable advantages of competition in teaching, I cannot but look with much sanguine expectation at the ultimate issue of the contest, which is now about to commence in this city. If we prosecute our business with a fixedness of resolution—if we sacrifice every feeling to the great interests of science—if we are actuated by a proper regard for the dignity and honor of our profession, the result cannot be doubtful. We should remember that we are about to engage in a holy cause—the responsibilities which we have assumed are of no ordinary nature—they involve a stake of too vital a character to admit of vacillation. The eyes of the community are upon us—the talent, and the learning, and the influence of our competitors will be brought to bear against us, and if we do not struggle vigorously, the triumph of victory will not be proclaimed within these walls. Much will

depend upon our efforts—and if we fail, let it at least be said that we failed like men, struggling to the last moment for the wreath of victory.

I know not, Gentlemen, a spot on this great and flourishing continent, more admirably calculated for the establishment of a Medical School, than the city of Charleston. You here possess advantages, which are to be met with in no other portion of this country. The opportunities of studying Anatomy, the blandness of your climate, the acknowledged acquirement of the profession at the South, are all in your favor. Why is it that Charleston, with all her local advantages, cannot take the lead in Medical Science? But show the Student that he will have the facilities here, that are enjoyed in the more Northern Colleges, and you will at once secure his patronage. The Students from the South and the West, would find it their interest and their policy to resort to Charleston—the Students from the North would find attractions in your climate, that would readily cause them to yield preference to you, if they were satisfied that they could receive the same amount of instruction here, as is afforded elsewhere. You have among you all the elements for a great Southern School. The South claims talent and enterprize sufficient for the purpose—and it is high time that her sons should reap the benefits accruing from the advantages she possesses. May the present conflict be the means of establishing an attractive College in this favored city—may it call the attention of the public to the interests of the Medical Profession, and may our efforts in the cause of science and humanity result in this glorious achievement.

I am proud to say, that Northern Students are free from paltry prejudice, especially in matters appertaining to science and literature—they would not refuse, Gentlemen, to patronize a College, provided it presented the proper inducements, because it happened to be located in South-Carolina. No! we at the North, love our country for our coun-

try's good, and we have often paid our tribute of praise to the enterprize, the talent, and the genius of the South. The terms North and South should have no place in our vocabulary—they should be merged in the glorious title of American Citizen. We are bound together by lasting ties of friendship and of love—we inhabit the same country—are subject to the same laws—partake of the same blessings—and invoke in common the benedictions of Heaven on this land of peace and contentment. There is a free and generous interchange of sentiments existing among the people in the different sections of this undivided country, which cannot but be approved of by every liberal and expanded mind. In a country like this, there must of necessity be a mutual dependence. Our Bench at the North, our halls of Science, our Theological Institutions, have been honored, and dignified, and sustained by the powerful genius and intellect of the South—and, Gentlemen, you will admit, that some portion of the rich fame enjoyed by the South, is due to Northern aid. This is as it should be. Among a people, united and bound together as we are, there should be no sectional distinctions, no unbecoming prejudices. Like the glorious orb that illumines our way, Science is chained to no country, restricted to no people—it is universal in its influence, and it must of necessity be so in its results. Have you not patronized, taken to your bosom and cherished, a Ramsay, a Maxcy, a Dehon, a Nott, a Turnbull, and a host of others, whom you loved while living, and whose memories you revere, now that they are dead—who have reflected a flood of light upon your State, and formed a halo of glory around you, as brilliant and imperishable as the adamant of Raolconda! Have you not now clustered around you a Bay, an England, an Adams, a Hunt, a Forrest, and others who occupy a conspicuous place in Carolina's diadem?

With a view of illustrating to you the liberal and honorable feeling prevailing throughout the North, I might bring to your recollection a familiar instance, to show how little sectional prejudices have to do with the more important consideration of scientific advancement. In a neighboring State, famed for the generous and magnanimous character of its citizens, it was deemed expedient to look beyond its own immediate precincts for a Professor, to fill an important chair in the Medical University. After a diligent search for talent and acquirement, the attention of the Board was directed to the city of Charleston! Yes, Gentlemen, to an individual, who was born, reared, and educated in the State of South-Carolina, whose professional studies were prosecuted among you, and whose efforts were first displayed in his own native State, was assigned the honorable appointment of Professor of Anatomy in the University of Maryland. The name of GEDDINGS is familiar to you all. Many of you no doubt have listened with rapture to him, when delineating the human structure, and you can all bear witness to his industry and zeal, in behalf of Medical Science. He was one of your own citizens, taken from among you to fill a chair in an Institution, to which he is now adding new lustre by his indefatigable exertions. When he abandoned his own native State, it could not have been without a reluctant sigh—he left all that was dear to him—his associates, his friends, his birth-place—he left all to try his fortune in another State. In Maryland, he was not received as a *Stranger*—he was not regarded as a *Foreigner*—but with open arms he was welcomed as a free-born American Citizen. No pathetic appeals—no charms of eloquence were employed to excite prejudices against him, because it was his fortune to have been born at the South. If, Gentlemen, we are to be governed, in our appreciation of men, by the arbitrary boundaries which mark out the different States, in what, I would ask, consists the value of our Republic? When we travel

abroad, do we appear in the character of Carolinians, Marylanders, New-Yorkers? No! it is our pride and our triumph to be called citizens of happy and independent America.

The idea has been sedulously propagated here, that none but natives are competent to teach a knowledge of the diseases of a climate, and that the diseases of a climate can be learned no where but upon the soil where they exist.

This hypothetical opinion, I will admit, is, in some small degree, true. But it should be recollected, that the number of diseases *peculiar* to a climate, are very few, and the diseases of a climate are the same in the same latitude, in different quarters of the Globe.

Our books abound with the descriptions and best modes of treatment of the diseases of all latitudes, all climates, and all countries; and it is on these, after all, that Teachers in this department must principally depend; for, the subjects of the *peculiar* diseases of a climate, are seldom the inmates of the hospitals of this country. The subjects of our hospitals are made up principally of Foreigners, and persons laboring under chronic affections, and diseases incident to all climates. Hence the idea of learning, in a very minute and striking manner, the *peculiar* diseases of a climate at a University, or a public general Medical School, is delusive. And to say that none but natives are competent to teach a knowledge of the diseases of a climate, is to say, that none but themselves are acquainted with their profession. He who is master of his profession, is capable of giving instruction relative to the diseases of *every* climate. I once heard a gentleman of professional experience say, who was transplanted from a high Northern latitude to a warm climate, which he made his permanent residence, that he was never more successful in treating the peculiar diseases, and particularly the *epidemics* of that climate, than during the first year of his practice in the place of his new abode.

Gentlemen, your minds, and the public mind, ought to be

disabused on this subject. Therapeutics alone constitute but a very small part of the instruction given at any Medical College. It is the great *principles* of your profession, which you come here to learn. It is here that you are to lay the foundation of that superstructure, which is hereafter to constitute, not the *summum bonum*, but the basis only of your future usefulness, your fame, and your professional glory.

I will seize this opportunity of congratulating you and the profession generally, on the existence of two Medical Schools in the city of Charleston—and the fact is as plain and as demonstrable as the simplest problem in Euclid, that the profession must ultimately be benefitted by the establishment of these rival Institutions. The great principle with which I start, is free and open competition—“*ex collisione scintilla*”—and who that is truly interested in the advancement of Science, will deny the happy influence, which such a principle must necessarily exert over the Institutions of our country. Science, like every thing else, can only improve by competition—and where honest rivalry has existed longest, there shall we find the most brilliant discoveries in our profession—there shall we witness the most accomplished Scholars, and devoted Students. To illustrate the truth of my position, I ask you, Gentlemen, what country is it that has most distinguished herself for the last fifty years, by her advances in Medical Science—what country is it that is now attracting the attention, and eliciting the admiration of enlightened Europe? *France*, the land that has given birth to some of the ripest Scholars of the age—but for the immortal labours of Bouillaud, Bichat, Broussais, Andral, and their honored coadjutors, what would now be the state of Medical Science? Look at continental Europe—survey even the Medical Institutions of Great Britain—examine their merits faithfully and impartially—then turn to *France*, and see what she has achieved. Does she not present to the Student a spectacle calculated to rouse all his energies, and call forth all his intellectual vigor?

The reputation of the French Medical School, though high, has never been equal to its deserts. Medical men themselves are in general equally as careless and indifferent as the public at large of all high accomplishment in their profession. Medicine they cultivate not as a science, but as a *trade*, they are indifferent to all that transcends the sphere of vulgar practice, and affect to despise what they are unable to appreciate. Hence it is that we are almost in the daily habit of hearing the enviable Broussais condemned as an impostor—his doctrines are represented as the offspring of a heated imagination—and his deductions, forsooth, are pronounced unphilosophical. I will venture to assert, that very few of those, who are so fond of declaiming against this great Reformer's views, have ever read his works, or, if they have read them, they have not comprehended his reasoning. Never has an author been more shamefully misrepresented, or more unfairly interpreted. But this is only in accordance with the oppression which genius has so often suffered from envious, designing, and malignant men, at all periods of the world. Gallileo suffered the dungeon for having discovered the motion of the earth; Servetus fell a victim to calvinistic intolerance; and Harvey so far excited the reproach of his villainous competitors, that he was reviled as infamous, and but for his industry and economy, might have died in a beggar's cell. On this subject Locke observes:—"The imputation of novelty is a terrible charge amongst those, who judge of men's heads as they do of their perukes, by the fashion; and can allow none to be right but the received doctrines. Truth scarce ever yet carried it any where by vote at its first appearance: new opinions are always suspected, and usually opposed, without any other reason, but because they are not already common. But truth, like gold, is not the less so for being newly brought out of the mine. It is trial and examination must give it price, and not any antique fashion; and though it be not yet current by the public stamp, yet it may,

for all that, be as old as nature, and is certainly not the less genuine!" Let any one read Gallileo's letter when in prison, and he will have a fine idea of philosophic consolation.—How sublime were the dying words of Servetus, and how delightful must have been the meditations of the venerable Harvey, when, in the vale of life, he saw his enemies prostrated, and his immortal discovery indelibly stamped on the expanded pinions of time, to be perpetuated through all ages, as the most substantial discovery ever made in Physiology, —carrying in its consequences a healing balm to the heart of many a suffering child of nature's God!

I will now proceed to enquire what has given to France all the intellectual superiority she enjoys, and how it happens that she has done so much more than any of her neighbors for the advancement of Medical Science. The question is easily answered, and it can be demonstrated, that she owes her success in this particular to the encouragement of liberal principles. France, though monarchical in her political government, is the most republican nation on earth in every thing that regards Science. In her scientific department, she presents us with a model, which it would be well for us to follow, and the simple reason why Medical men are better educated than with us, is, that their industry is always amply rewarded. It is a fixed principle from which there is no departure, that a man to attain honor in France must have shown himself deserving of it. The admirable system of "*Concours*" has done more for the advancement of Medical Science in that country—it has given rise to more enlarged views, and produced greater discoveries, than the combined ingenuity of man could have effected without it. By instituting the "*Concours*," France has afforded to every aspirant after fame, an equal chance of elevating himself in his profession. No consideration, but the actual amount of knowledge he may possess, will have any influence in conferring upon him dignity and honor. The field is thrown open to

all who may desire to enter it—and the fortune, the friends, or the influence of the aspirants, will have no weight either for or against them.

Shall I furnish you with an instance of the democratic tendency of the French "*Concours?*" Do you wish to have it demonstrated to you, that the Student, whose means are scarcely sufficient to protect him against the winter's blast, has the same opportunity afforded him of attaining distinction, as the individual, who has been reared in opulence and luxury? Look at *Beclard*, a name venerated not only in France, but in every country in which Science is cultivated. But for the generosity of the French Government—but for the admirable system of "*Concours*," the name of *Beclard* would not be known beyond the horizon of his father's threshold. This gifted scholar was poor and dependant—he scarcely had the means of acquiring the rudiments of an ordinary education. His mind, however, was of that peculiar cast, that adversity could not oppress it. He prosecuted Science with a devotedness that soon attracted attention, and in 1804 he commenced the study of that profession, which he has since so much enriched and adorned. During his Studentship, a vacancy occurred in one of the Hospitals, which was to be filled by a trial at "*Concours*." Though his competitor was highly distinguished, and considered a formidable opponent to men, who had enjoyed far greater opportunities than *Beclard*, still this latter so astonished the judges by the extent of his erudition, and the precision of his language, that he was unanimously declared victorious. This was the commencement of his glory, which afterwards shed around him such a brilliant lustre, that he soon fixed the attention of the whole scientific world upon him.

Here is a man of obscure parentage, straitened in circumstances, but of transcendent genius, who, in our country, would most probably have been suffered to consume his life in a bettering house—but, from the magnanimity of the

government under which he had the happiness to live, he had an opportunity of exerting his faculties to their fullest extent, and has thus been permitted to benefit mankind by his rare and surpassing attainments. Examine the annals of Science, and show me a name more honored, more venerated, shall I say more idolized, than that of Beclard. Gentlemen, rely upon my word, and I appeal to the history of this scholar for the truth of my assertion, that Beclard, fettered as he was by poverty, and stricken as it were to the earth, by the accumulated embarrassments of his family, never would have succeeded in elevating himself, had it not been for *free and open competition*. Let me advance a step farther—who was the immediate predecessor of this great and talented man? Who was it whom Beclard called “*le createur de l’anatomie generale,*” and of whom he said, could he but equal him, his ambition would be consummated—it is unnecessary for me to mention the name of Bichat. Was it not the study of general Anatomy that gave a new impulse to Medical Science—are we not indebted to general Anatomy, for the improvement our Science has undergone for the last twenty years? Admit these propositions, and the advantages of free and open competition are at once demonstrated. Where you have competition, there the facilities of Education will be increased. Is not this fact amply illustrated in France? Where is there a country in which the opportunities of dissection, the facilities of clinical instruction, can compare with those, which are there presented to the Student? Thanks to the care of a wise and vigilant government, the Hospitals of Paris, originally intended as Asylums for the alleviation of suffering humanity, have now become fruitful sources of Medical Instruction. Clinical Lectures are there given under the auspices of the most celebrated Physicians, from whom the industrious Student derives instructive lessons. Each Practitioner is observed to profit by the situation in which he finds

himself placed—he directs his efforts towards some one point, which he illumines by numerous researches, and ingenious experiments. He thus contributes, in a wonderful manner, to the progress and perfection of Science and Art.

The efforts of the human mind, to effect any thing, must always be in a direct ratio with the difficulties to be encountered—now, where there is no opposition, there will be but little inducement for mental exertion, and to prove the happy effects of competition in the promotion of Science, we have only to compare the state of Medical Literature in those countries in which honest rivalry has been encouraged, with what is presented in those in which a sluggish indifference has been manifested. No one will deny, that to this cause is to be attributed the exalted station now occupied by Great Britain among the Natural and Physical Sciences. Her brilliant discoveries in Chemistry, may be said to be the result of a properly directed ambition—with the most commendable zeal this Science has been cultivated both by the French and English Student, and it does not remain for me to determine, to which of these enlightened nations most credit is due, for our present advanced knowledge of this very interesting branch of our profession. Morbid Anatomy has of late attracted, in an especial manner, the attention of Great Britain, and some of our most valuable ideas of Pathology are to be ascribed to the industry and zeal with which this department of Medical Science has been prosecuted in that country. It must, however, be admitted, that the French School deserves some credit for all this—France, having awakened the attention of the scientific world to the importance of Pathology, Great Britain determined not to be dormant; and thus Science has been enriched by the rivalry, which has been so universally encouraged in these respective countries. Had competition been more general among us, our young Physicians, instead of becoming despondent at not getting at once into full practice, would have

had employment worthy of their best exertions—they would have been engaged in an honorable warfare—and a strife like this would have been the most efficient means of arresting the progress of Empiricism, which, unhappily for humanity, is now prevailing throughout this continent to a great extent. We have abundant materials to elevate the character of our profession—talent and genius are admitted to belong to America, and, if we adopt the proper means, we shall soon be able to rival the first nations in the world. To say, that the reason the Europeans are so much in advance of us, is owing to the influence of climate, or to any physical or mental superiority, which they may be supposed to enjoy over us, is to advance an argument unfounded in truth, and bearing on the very face of it, its own contradiction.

Having made these observations, which I think not ill-timed, considering the occasion on which we are assembled, I shall now allude briefly to the subject, which is to command our especial attention, and shall endeavor to demonstrate the importance of that branch of Medical Science, which it is my purpose to teach. Nothing can be more strange to an individual, who reflects properly on the subject, than the criminal neglect into which Obstetric Medicine has fallen in our country. That Midwifery, on the scientific and successful practice of which, the lives of the most interesting portion of our species often depend, should not have received greater attention in a country, so pre-eminently distinguished for humanity, appears almost incredible. This subject has been so little understood, so unpardonably neglected among us, that, by a majority of persons, it is deemed, if not entirely unworthy the attention of the Physician, at least as undeserving of any particular regard. That this science should have been thus neglected, is to me an enigma, which does not admit of an easy solution—that its importance should have been thus slighted, and the alarm-

ing accidents so frequent in the practice of it so little appreciated, is indeed an extraordinary circumstance, when we take into consideration, that ignorance of Obstetric Medicine will always endanger the lives of two individuals at the same time.

We must remember that woman shares with the other sex the pleasure and pain common to human nature. She is the chief means of propagating the human species—it is in her womb that the offspring is carried for nine months, and when born, it is from her bosom it receives its nourishment. Such are the noble attributes of the female, such the important functions, which she is called upon to perform. It is not, therefore, without reason, that this tender being, the procreatrix, as it were, of our species, should have attracted the attention of the Naturalist, commanded the admiration of the Philosopher, and excited the enthusiasm of the Poet. If, then, in her social character, and on account of the conspicuous part she takes in reproduction, woman so deeply interests us, should not the dangers by which she is surrounded at the different periods of her life, elicit the kind feeling of every intelligent and honest mind? Naturally timid, and susceptible of impression, the approach of labour is always a period of fearful apprehension for the female. Nothing can be more agonizing to the feelings, than the spectacle, which it falls to the lot of Accoucheurs but too frequently to behold. Even in the most ordinary cases, our sympathy will be extorted from us—for callous, indeed, must that heart be, that does not undergo some emotion at the excruciating sufferings of the female during parturition. In the whole range of Medical Science, there is no branch, which calls for more decision and firmness of character, and which more imperiously demands the exercise of sound and discriminating judgment. It is often in the power of the well-educated Accoucheur, to abridge, by timely interference, the sufferings of his patient, and this, too, in the

most natural labour. But, without a perfect knowledge of the subject—without a knowledge of those principles on which the whole science is based, it were cruel, it were inhuman, to attempt relief.

It has been well observed, that of all the causes which have tended to retard the advancement of Obstetric Medicine in this country, there is none more severely felt, than that arising from the vulgar, but specious objection, that as labour is a natural act, it does not require our interference either for its promotion or accomplishment. How shall we trace the melancholy consequences of an opinion like this! It has destroyed domestic happiness—it has filled the heart of many a confiding husband with deadly anguish—it has closed the grave on the devoted object of his affections—and left him the protector of his motherless children. This is assuredly one of the most dangerous errors, which has ever been attempted to be imposed on the human understanding—and sincerely do I regret to say, that Midwifery has been too generally practiced on this delusive assumption. It is my duty, Gentlemen, to guard you against this fatal hypothesis—and it shall be my especial object to demonstrate to you its absurdity, and at the same time to point out the disastrous consequences, which have resulted from its adoption. In order to practice this branch of your profession with credit to yourselves and safety to your patients, your first object should be to inform yourselves of the course which nature pursues in that most interesting and important function—the birth of man. The secret of Midwifery is to know when to let nature alone—when to interfere and act as nature's substitute. This I would denominate one of the fundamental maxims of the Science. It follows, therefore, as a matter of necessary consequence, that no man should attempt the practice of this branch of the Profession, who is not perfectly familiar with those laws, which obtain in the mechanism of natural labour.

There is another argument brought forward, why we should not attach any importance to Midwifery as a Science—and were it not that it is frequently employed by men, whose opinions in other respects are entitled to some weight, I should not obtrude on your patience by adverting to it in this place. Reasoning from analogy, it is contended that woman, during labour, does not require our aid, because animals bring forth their young without any co-operation, and comparatively with but little pain. But it must have been forgotten by those, who advance this opinion, that the pelvis of animals differs in a remarkable manner from that of the human species. If Roussel and certain other writers had paid attention to this difference of conformation, they certainly would never have entertained views so entirely opposed to the soundest principles of Physical Science.

If the mechanism of natural labour were better understood—if, in a word, the philosophy of the subject were more generally appreciated, we should have more successful practitioners—we should not be so frequently called upon to witness the dreadful destruction of children *in utero*. It is but too true, that, in more than one instance in this country, the child has been brought away piece-meal, because, forsooth, in the apprehension of the sage Accoucheur, there was a disproportion between the head of the fœtus, and the pelvis of the mother—whereas, the labour might have been rendered perfectly natural by a very slight change in the situation of the head, which the skilful practitioner, under ordinary circumstances, will be enabled to effect without difficulty.

In order that you may have a clear and comprehensive view of the necessity of a thorough acquaintance with the mechanism of natural labour, let us suppose for a moment that the pelvis of the female measures but three inches and a quarter in the direct diameter, at the superior strait, and that the diameter of the child's head corresponding with this

exceeds the measurement of the pelvis. What will be the consequence? Under these circumstances, it would be next to impossible for the woman to be delivered without the interference of art—and, at the least calculation, not more than one in ten could possibly sustain herself, if left to the operation of nature alone. If, through fear for the life of the mother or child, an ignorant practitioner determines on the use of instruments, vain indeed will be his efforts to move the head of the foetus from the position it occupies. He now finds that the Forceps cannot diminish the excess of diameter, and, as a last resort, his feeling heart, touched by the melancholy situation of the woman, who has placed her life in his hands, he resolves to mutilate the child. The result of this heroic achievement the mother is soon made conscious of, by beholding the bloody spectacle held up to her as proof of the sagacity of her Accoucheur—and for this, though he has, through criminal ignorance, been the destroyer of her offspring, he receives the sincere thanks of his patient, who really imagines, that, by his consummate skill, she has been miraculously preserved from the fate which awaited her. How different will be the conduct of the well-instructed practitioner; of him who understands perfectly the principles of this important branch of his profession. He saves the life of both mother and child, and because he dispenses with the horrid butchery, which characterized the ignorance of the other, does not seem in fact to merit as full a meed of praise, as was bestowed on the man, who sacrificed one, and hazarded the life of the other individual. The skilful Accoucheur aware, from his knowledge of the pelvis, and the correspondence of its dimensions with those of the foetal head, that delivery cannot be effected without great difficulty, and often without compromising the life of one or both of the individuals, changes in the first place the direction of the long diameter of the cranium, by placing the occiput towards one of the sides of the pelvis, and he

waits with security for nature to achieve the delivery. Should he arrive at a later period, and find the strength of the woman exhausted, instead of the hand, he employs the Forceps for the purpose of altering the position of the head, and thus extracts it with safety both to the mother and child.

But why should I multiply examples for the purpose of convincing you of the great importance of a correct knowledge of this Science, when it is only necessary for me to refer to many of the Gentlemen I am now addressing, for confirmation of the truths here advanced. If you imagine that a knowledge of this subject can be acquired by reading a few abstract precepts, or accumulating the various theories, which have been advanced with more or less ingenuity, it is my duty to say, that you labour under a palpable error. With all deference, I contend that too much time has been consumed in speculating on the different hypotheses of authors—an importance has been attached to the reveries of theorists, which they certainly do not deserve, and, in canvassing their respective merits, the practical part of the subject has been almost entirely lost sight of.

It is my intention, in the ensuing course of lectures, to facilitate the progress of the Student, by presenting him with a faithful outline of the operations of nature. The principles of the Science shall be most rigidly insisted upon—and, after these are perfectly comprehended, they will be illustrated by the various operations on the Manakin. As for myself, I am perfectly satisfied, that it is impossible to teach Midwifery without the aid of this useful, but neglected instrument. Why it has not been in more general use in this country, I know not—and it is difficult to conceive why Professors of this department should have neglected so important, and in fact so indispensable a means of affording instruction to Students. I have never yet met with an individual, who understood the use of the Manakin, who did not speak of it in strong and favorable terms. Perhaps, Gentlemen, it

will be more highly appreciated among us, when it is mentioned, that, in Europe, and especially in France, a perfect acquaintance with it is required before a Student is admitted to the Doctorate. Capuron, Desormeaux, Baudelocque, Velpeau, La Chapelle, Boivin, and a number of others equally distinguished in Obstetric Science, not only insist upon the necessity of understanding it, but have devoted much time to the improvement of this useful machine. If an individual in France were to announce his intention of giving a course of lectures on Midwifery, without the aid of the Manakin, he would not only be viewed as a something *sui generis*, but it would be *prima facie* evidence that he was ignorant of his subject.

The fact, Gentlemen, is simply this—there are certain rules to be observed in the practice of Midwifery—there are distinct rules for every different operation—and if they be not understood and practised on the machine, I shall not hazard much when I assure you, that the consequence will be a prodigal destruction of human life. After you have become well acquainted with the manual and instrumental operations on the Manakin, there will be but little difficulty in reducing them to actual practice at the bed-side. It is not my intention to content myself with the introduction of the Manakin into the Lecture-room for the mere purpose of having it gazed at. No good could possibly result to you, if there were five hundred Manakins in the Lecture room, provided their utility was not demonstrated. You must not be astonished when I inform you that with all my economy for time, I shall be obliged to consume at least one month in illustrating to you the various operations on this machine—and if I am not much deceived, you will readily confess that your time has not been disadvantageously employed. I am willing to admit, and perhaps it would be prudent for me to tell you this in time, in order that you may not be deceived, that it will be utterly impossible for me to show you all the oper-

ations on the Manakin in *two short hours* as I have been informed other more expert Teachers of this branch have done elsewhere. My object will be to teach you Midwifery as it is taught and understood in France—the opportunities which I have enjoyed in that country, and my situation in the *maternité* of Paris, one of the largest lying-in establishments in Europe, have, I am willing to believe, enabled me to acquire some little knowledge of this subject. What I know of Obstetric Medicine, I am willing to impart to you—more than this you cannot expect of me.

With the diseases of women and children I shall have nothing to do until I have completed all that I have to say on the subject of *midwifery proper*. I am aware that this is contrary to the established usage, but this is no argument that it is not the proper course. In due season your attention shall be directed, in a particular manner, to the subject of their diseases. Within the last five years, great light has been thrown on the affections of women and children, and especially on those of the latter. The difficulty of diagnosis, in many of the affections of infants, has been in a great measure removed, by the scientific investigations of Guernsent, and we shall have frequent occasion to refer to his valuable work. The admirable plates of Madame Boivin, taken in connection with the graphic descriptions by Dr. Davis, of London, will enable me to furnish you with many new and important facts, concerning the pathology and treatment of some of the diseases of females, which have heretofore baffled the healing art.

In concluding this address, I feel it to be my duty to apprise you of the peculiar situation in which you will be placed during the present course of Lectures. In consequence of the establishment of two Medical Schools, there must of necessity be two distinct parties—the feelings which have thus been engendered will not be confined to the profession, they will be cherished by the bulk of the citizens—and,

Gentlemen, you will no doubt enter largely into the general current of prejudice, no matter from what quarter it may emanate, or to what point it may be directed. Be careful how you participate—reflect upon the consequences of lending yourselves to any party—and remember that your object in visiting Charleston is to improve your minds, and not for the purpose of inflaming your passions. Do not, because you belong to different Schools, entertain feelings of hostility towards any man, or any set of men—cherish, on the contrary towards those whom you may think in error, forbearance, and let the only object of your ambition be, the actual amount of knowledge you may derive from the Institutions, which you will respectively attend. You are not called upon to take part in the present conflict—the warfare must be left to us—we have entered the arena voluntarily, and feeling as we do that our competitors will struggle desperately, they shall, we assure you, be met by a corresponding spirit. We will not suffer the palm of victory to be wrested from us by any lukewarmness on our part—we will not tamely submit to defeat, if, by the honest exercise of our talents, we can sustain the interests of this Institution.

