

Baldwin (J. F.) ✓

[COLUMBUS MEDICAL JOURNAL—SUPPLEMENT.]

The Columbus Medical College Imbroglia.

A REPLY TO CERTAIN WIDELY-CIRCULATED MIS-STATEMENTS AND SLANDERS.

“Mark, now, how plain a tale shall put you down.”

TO THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

On the 14th of June, 1882, the writer was “summarily discharged and ejected” from the professorship of anatomy in the Columbus Medical College; this being the culmination of a series of studied insults, though the exciting cause was that I had inadvertently exposed some of the questionable ways of the college. As I had already repeatedly informed members of the Board of Trustees that my resignation was at their disposal, I experienced no grief at this severance of my connection with the school; but I was somewhat annoyed and incensed at the method adopted by the Trustees to bring about the result. Still, as time passed on, this feeling abated, and I had made up my mind to ignore the college and let it, unmolested by me, gang its ain gait to perdition, when on Sunday, Aug. 6th, there appeared in the Columbus *Sunday News* an exceedingly bitter personal article, charging me with all manner of deceit and general wickedness. This article compelled a reply; and as my enemies have circulated this paper widely over the country, I am compelled to reply by a method which shall, so far as possible, reach the same territory. I shall quote from my reply as it appeared in the *News* of Aug. 13th, with such changes and additions as may suggest themselves.

I was very much surprised—and I presume my surprise will be widely shared—to learn from the publishers of the *Sunday News* that Dr. J. W. Hamilton, to whom had been so long conceded such a high position in the community, had so far forgotten his own dignity, and the dignity of the profession, as to condescend to write such a bitter, vindictive and scurrilous article as that which appeared, *anonymously*, in that paper of the 6th inst.

As I have been charged with being a “traitor” to the college on account of my letter to Dr. Reeves, I wish to let the following correspondence speak for itself, premising that the letters contain all that ever passed between Dr. Reeves and myself, relating to the Columbus Medical College, up to the last date given. The correspondence shows that I

did not vote for Dent, as Dr. H. says I did; that I did not indicate any questions that *he* failed to answer; and that Dr. Hamilton himself confesses to the poor quality of his examination. That I signed his diploma, as Dr. H. charges, and those of other incompetent men, is true; *the rules of the college require all professors to sign all the diplomas.* That an oral examination is contrary to the rules and practice of the college, is not true. I repeatedly examined students orally, and so did others of the Faculty. It is also a fact that the outrageous replies which I got during my examination, some of which are given in my letter to Reeves, I announced in Faculty meeting, in connection with my negative vote.

But to the letters and their history :

In February, 1881, after some correspondence on the subject, Dr. James E. Reeves, of Wheeling, West Virginia, became manager of the West Virginia department of the medical journal, which I at that time edited. The acquaintance thus begun soon ripened into a friendship which, on the occasion of his visit to this city in June, 1881, soon after his election to the Presidency of the West Virginia State Medical Society, became of an unusually warm and personal nature. I found him to be a high-toned, estimable gentleman, well worthy of the honor which the profession had conferred upon him.

On March 10, 1882, I received the following letter from him :

“WHEELING, March 9, 1882.

“MY DEAR BALDWIN :—I am afraid the Columbus Medical College will soon receive from West Virginia an unwelcome advertisement.

“Some one has sent me a marked copy of the *Ohio State Journal* containing notice of your commencement exercises on the 24th of February. In the list of graduates I find ‘A. M. Dent, West Virginia,’ and am utterly and painfully astonished! That there can be no mistake about the *luck* of this man Dent before your Faculty, I have the proof in a West Virginia newspaper, published at Weston, his place of residence, which tells its readers that ‘the Columbus Medical College conferred its first honors upon Dr. A. M. Dent, he having stood at the head of the graduating class.’

“Now, here is what the State Board of Health of West Virginia knows of the man who has carried off your ‘highest honors.’

“On the 13th of last January, he presented himself before the State Board, at Wheeling, for examination, and was found wholly unqualified to be entrusted with authority to practice medicine in West Virginia, notwithstanding he had been attempting to practice for seven or eight years prior to the passage of our new law establishing a State Board of Health. He started out from a drug store, and, several years ago, matriculated at Starling Medical College; attending, it is said, the lectures for four or five weeks, and came back to West Virginia and formally and boldly put out his shingle. He has figured quite prominently in Democratic politics in Weston, and on Governor Jackson’s entrance into office, he (Dent) was appointed on the Board of Directors of the Hospital for the Insane. He took an active part, one year ago, in turning out of office the old Hospital staff and putting in their places men who had no special training or fitness for the responsible trust. He is a man of drunken habits, and has won his prominence by and through cun-

ning in party politics in the town of Weston. A committee of the Legislature appointed to investigate charges preferred against the management of the Hospital reported to the House last evening, and recommended the *removal of Dr. A. M. Dent* from the Board of Directors for drunkenness!

"About the 23d of January, or 10 days after his rejection by our Board, he made application to enter the graduating class of Starling Medical College, and was refused admittance. Hence, you see the reasons for my surprise on receiving the proofs of his graduation at your school after a four weeks' course!

"Now, the conclusion is irresistible that either the State Board of Health of West Virginia did him gross injustice by rejecting his application for medical certificate, or your Faculty have committed a blunder, or that your college rules are easily relaxed! I know he has passed a shameful examination. But admitting that we erred, is a *four weeks' lecture course* sufficient to win your highest honors?

"Of course he will come back to us with his diploma and demand to be registered; but knowing all the *facts*, how can we recognize his claim? Nothing of my official experience has given me so much regret as the *outlook* concerning the *issue* soon to be forced upon our Board. The matter cannot be hushed—the whole truth must go to the profession when Dr. Dent presents his diploma for registration. I may see you soon.

"Believe me faithfully your friend,

"JAMES E. REEVES."

I had already heard, through a student, that Dr. Reeves had been making some inquiries into Dent's case, and had therefore been expecting to hear from him. I immediately, on receipt of his letter, sat down and wrote hastily, and without any premeditation, the following *personal* reply:

COLUMBUS, OHIO, 3-10, 1882.

"DEAR DOCTOR—

"Shake not thy gory locks at *me*,
Thou canst not say *I* did it."

"Your letter has been received; I have been expecting it for some time.

"I voted against Dent in Faculty meeting, both on account of his lack of time and also his lack of knowledge of anatomy. But I am always the "*kicker*," and was, as usual, voted down. Dent, I am satisfied, is by no means the biggest fool in the graduating class. One man was graduated who didn't know what the iris was; nor the pupil; could not locate the mitral nor tricuspid valves; placed the valvulæ conniventes in the *brain*, and the ileo-cecal valve in the *rectum*! We had several of that sort, but they are now just as much *doctors* (in Ohio at least) as you or I.

"But I want you to understand *distinctly* that I did not vote for them.

"I have just telephoned to the Dean, who tries to defend his action by saying that Dent brought letters of recommendation from prominent gentlemen in West Virginia; and that Dent represented to him that he (Dent) had not been fairly treated before the Board, owing to personal spite, etc., etc.

"Under the circumstances, I should not feel that the college had been unfairly treated if your Board should see fit to go back of the returns and refuse to recognize the diploma.

"If you will write the matter up, in connection with other matters for your West Virginia Department, it will not be rejected.

"I shall be pleased to see you at any time you can come over.

"Very truly yours,

BALDWIN.

“P. S.—We have no *grading* of our class; *they all graduated alike*, except three, who were rejected (?) because they had *no* previous course of lectures. Dent’s claim as to ‘the head of his class,’ etc., is, therefore, an utter lie. B.”

Dr. Reeves made no reply to this letter, but, without any further communication with me, direct or indirect, delivered his now famous Address, containing the following allusion to the Columbus Medical College, under the caption,

CHEAP DIPLOMAS.

“On the 13th of last January an applicant for a medical certificate, a resident of West Virginia, came before the District Board at Wheeling and failed to pass a satisfactory examination within the meaning of the law. Ten days later, or about the 23d of January, he knocked at the door of the *Graduating Class* of the Columbus Medical College, and was admitted. Within one month from that time he was graduated; and at the brilliant display at Comstock’s Opera House, on the evening of the 24th of February, he received his diploma!

“I have it from an eye-witness that he presented to the faculty ‘letters of recommendation from prominent gentlemen in West Virginia,’ and that in the distinguished graduating class (which was spoken of by some of the professors as one of the brightest and best which ever came from that school) ‘one man was graduated who did not know what the iris was, nor the pupil; could not locate the mitral nor tricuspid valves; placed the *valvule conniventes*’ in the *brain*, and the ileo-cecal valve in the *rectum!*’ ‘There were several of that sort, but they are just now as much doctors (in Ohio at least) as you or I.’

“What an impressive, never-to-be-forgotten scene at the commencement! The stage decorated with beautiful flowers—the orchestra discoursing sweet music, and stirring the hearts of the audience—the faculty, in double file, marching upon the stage—the 59 graduates taking their places in the front rows of the parquette—and the applause! and the bouquets! which greeted the new doctors!! It was most appropriate that a *prayer* was then and there offered.”

I knew nothing of this speech until my attention was called to it by Dr. Halderman, who had received a copy of the Wheeling paper containing it.

June 12, I wrote out my resignation and took it to the office of one of the Trustees, under the impression that there was to be a meeting of the Board that evening; but being informed by him that there would be no meeting, and desiring to retain a copy of my resignation, I did not present it. During the next three days my time was fully occupied by professional engagements and my duties as Secretary of the State Society.

June 14, it seems, the Trustees had a special meeting, at which there were, as I am informed by President Moore, *four* of the seven members present, including himself. Here, where, as I am informed by the President, Drs. Hamilton and Hyatt seemed to have had everything prepared, in this Star Chamber Court, three members constituting themselves persecutor, judge and jury, without specific charges or the formality of a trial, with no opportunity for explanation or defense, I was “summarily

ejected" from my professorship by the "unanimous" vote of three men! What a spectacle of justice and "forbearance."*

As soon as the State Society adjourned I wrote to Reeves, accusing him of bad faith in publishing extracts from my letter without my knowledge or consent, telling him of the state of affairs here, and telling him to either come over to Columbus or to write out fuller details of his connection with Dent.

Dr. Reeves replied as follows:

"WHEELING, June 17, 1882.

"MY DEAR BALDWIN—I returned home last night from my wild-goose chase through Dakota and Montana, perfectly worn out and sick from my long travel. So soon as I am able to go from home, if you think my presence in Columbus necessary to help you out of the *fire*, I will come and see you through. But I am very sure you need no such help, especially when, as in the present crisis, your cause is so *just*. Don't be alarmed. 'The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church;' and I beg you to 'stand still and see the glory of the Lord.'

"I cannot remember of showing your letter to Leonard,—am confident I did not; but, no doubt, he heard the name of my "eye-witness" from some of the Wheeling brethren. You will see, from the copy of your letter herewith sent, that you gave *no charge of secrecy*, and hence I had no hesitancy in showing it to several of my friends in justification of the action of our Board. One thing, however, I distinctly remember. After I made my speech, Dr. Leonard seemed entirely well pleased, and said to me 'the college deserved the exposure' I had made.

"You will see from the inclosed letter from Hamilton that he is in doubt as to the name of the 'eye-witness.' This letter from him I found on my table among other mail matter awaiting my return home. I have not yet answered it, but shall do so when I get ready, and in a manner becoming the occasion. You will see that he himself confesses that Dent's examination 'was not all that an examination should be, by any means.' Permitting it, was only the result of *extraordinary circumstances*.' Mark those last words! You want no better proof of the justice—the absolute necessity, of your course in exposing the *mill*, than this letter from Hamilton, who gave Dent a flaming letter certifying to his (Dent's) 'extraordinary' accomplishments in medicine and surgery."

[I here omit the balance of this letter, as it pertains to Dent's examination, character, &c., all of which is given more fully by Dr. Reeves further on.]

DR. HAMILTON'S LETTER,

In which he virtually admits Dent's ignorance, reads as follows:

COLUMBUS, O., Monday, June 12, 1882.

"DEAR DR. REEVE—I write to ask a favor. In your statement in regard to the action of the Columbus Medical College, you say—as I understand the matter—that your information concerning Dent's examination was derived from an 'eye-witness'—whatever that means.

*Since the above was written, Pres. Moore has said that there may have been one more present, which would make a *bare quorum* voting. I wish to state, also, that the announcement of the name of Mr. F. C. Sessions, as one of the Trustees, was made without his knowledge or consent, he having resigned last winter.

Dr. Warner, Prof. of Physiology, has also just resigned.

"Will you please name the 'eye-witness'? I wish to add that Dent was subjected to an examination in writing. It was not all that an examination should be, by any means. Permitting it was only the result of extraordinary circumstances.

"By it, and not by the testimony of *eye-witnesses*, our act must be approved or condemned.

Very truly yours,

"J. W. HAMILTON, W. D. H."

The suggestion seems a reasonable one, that the two following facts may have been important factors in the production of those "extraordinary circumstances," viz:

1. That the attendance at the Columbus Medical College, notwithstanding its well advertised new college building, had fallen from 147 in 1881 to 131 in 1882; 2. That during the same time, and with no new attractions, and in spite of higher fees, the attendance at Starling Medical College had increased from 99 to 116.

I have thus given a full presentation of my connection with Dr. Reeves, and of the nature of my conduct as a "traitor." I would like to let the matter drop here, but Dr. Hamilton's charges against me are so grave that, although he offers no proof to sustain them, I am obliged to defend myself.

He intimates that I have failed "to establish a lucrative practice." I am not in the habit of boasting of my professional success, but, with one exception, I would not exchange my professional income to-day for that of any member of the Faculty of Columbus College in this city; though nearly all of them are much my seniors in age and in the profession. Moreover, this success has not come unearned, nor without hard study and diligent attention to business. That Dr. Hamilton sent me a few cases—*mostly paupers*—is true. It is also true that I paid him for them thrice over by personal work as his assistant for three years. That "generous assistance" column was fully balanced long ago. But I was a man, not a toady, nor a puppet; and I dared to do some surgery, and so—"Off with his head," for he who would retain the friendship of this man must do no surgery in Central Ohio, nor fail to call him in consultation in surgical cases.

My connection with the college has never been used by me to secure practice. Few of my patrons have ever known that I was so connected. Indeed, the honor of such connection has always seemed to me to be so questionable that I have never even allowed students to call me "Professor."

In this connection I wish to state that the assertion that I ever "begged to be retained" in the college is a gratuitous lie; my resignation was openly and repeatedly talked of.

I am charged with much wickedness in connection with the medical journal. Suffice it to say that all that was done in this matter, by either the publishers or myself, was done like any other legitimate business trans-

action, and under the advice of eminent attorneys, having in special view the *equity* of all our acts. All that my contract called for was rigidly performed. If the college had not facilities for carrying on a journal, it was no fault of mine. I am not now publishing a journal, as stated, neither have I anything to do with any subscription list—"fraudulently appropriated," or otherwise; I am simply *editing* a medical journal, and am *paid* for doing it.

Dr. H. says that the State Society "declined to continue the publication of its proceedings" through me. On the contrary, the Society made me a member of its publication committee for the next *five years*, and chairman of the committee; and the proceedings are now being printed, under my supervision, by the *Gazette* Company.

But the most detestable lie of all is contained in his insinuation that my accounts with the Society were not square. I think this will be effectually disposed of by the two following statements:

TREASURER'S STATEMENT.

"COLUMBUS, OHIO, August 8, 1882.

"To whom it may concern:

"In the Columbus *Sunday Morning News*, of the 6th inst., in an article signed '***,' is a statement intimating that the accounts of Dr. J. F. Baldwin with the Ohio State Medical Society were not correct. I now, therefore, as Treasurer of said Society, certify that the above statement is incorrect and entirely without foundation. During the past year I paid to Dr. Baldwin \$50 salary for the year ending June 16, 1881, as per resolution of the Society June 16, 1881; \$75 salary for the year ending June 15, 1882, in accordance with Art. IV, Sec. 3, of the Constitution; \$374 for the publication of the proceedings of the Society in the *Ohio Medical Journal*, in accordance with the resolution of the Society of June 16, 1881; and \$33.49, incidentals for last year, as per his itemized statement and resolution of the Society of June 14, 1882.

"The above statement is based on the items contained in my cash-book, the individual vouchers, which I had for all the principal items, not having them returned by the Finance Committee, to which they had been referred by the Society.

"T. W. JONES, Treasurer."

PUBLISHERS' STATEMENT.

"COLUMBUS, O., August 9, 1882.

"We hereby certify that of the \$33.49 in the itemized account presented to the State Society by Dr. J. F. Baldwin at its last meeting, \$23 was for printing and stationery obtained at our office during the year for the Society. Also, that we received from the said Baldwin \$374 for publishing the proceedings of the State Medical Society in the *Ohio Medical Journal* and sending the same to 374 members of the Society.

HANN & ADAIR."

Of the \$10.49 unaccounted for above, seventy cents were paid to Mr. A. E. Angier for pens, ink, etc., for use in Lyndon Hall during the session, and \$9.79 for postage stamps used by me for the society during the year.

Dr. H. insinuated that I was "ousted" from the Secretaryship of the State Society for sinister conduct. On this point allow me to quote from a letter dated July 14, 1882, from Dr. Vance, Professor of Surgery in the Wooster University, of Cleveland: "The fact of the matter is that feeling has been excited all over the State against the Columbus Medical College, and you, as a member of its Faculty, were marked for destruction on that ground alone. Quite a number of distinctively Columbus men were on the ground ardently urging the election of men to all offices, outside of college faculties. In this way influence was consolidated against you that could not have been brought against you on personal grounds. Then you must give due weight to your own colleagues' efforts. When all these things are considered, I think it wonderful that you were not distanced, instead of being defeated by a beggarly majority of a dozen or so."

The following choice expressions indicate a state of affairs such as exists only in the imagination of the writer: "Destitute of gratitude," "goaded by jealousy," "low cunning and petty malice," "trickery," "without friends," "a professional outcast," "many villainies," "malady of heart," "professional Ishmaelite," "obscure position," "devoid of honor," etc.; truly, in the use of Falstaffian Billingsgate, the writer has "acquirements, ability and success" which I can never "hope to equal." A letter just received from a neighboring city contains, in reference to this attack, the following exquisite expression: "*Jumbo* has a large foot, but he can not raise it high enough to crush you."

Since my retirement to private life, I have learned several things in regard to the college of which I was previously ignorant, and which, had I known them, would have led me to resign long ago. I have absolute proof of the graduation of one man who had never attended a previous course of lectures, and who made no claims to have done so. I am in possession of facts, also, which I have not yet verified, to the effect that at least two others have been granted diplomas on a single course of lectures. And this, too, since the college has been a member of the Association of Colleges, whose by-laws, like its own, require attendance on *two full* courses of lectures before graduation. Short time men, *a la* Dent, are too numerous to mention. Finally, I have been shown a letter, written by the Dean, in which he tells the person addressed, who has had but one course of lectures, that he can graduate by paying half the term fee, all the graduation fee, and passing an examination in Practice, Surgery and Obstetrics, and that he need not come to lectures *until examination week!* This student, to his honor be it spoken, thought the diploma too cheap to be good, and secured a fairly earned one at Starling. But how many less worthy ones may have secured the diploma in this easy way, only the Dean knows. It is no wonder that a last spring's graduate, who knew all the facts, after reading Reeves' exposure, wrote to a friend: "A man might as well have an almanac as a diploma from

such a school;" that another said he "would not show his diploma at home for a thousand dollars;" and that first course students of last winter—even office-students of the professors themselves—are looking elsewhere for an *alma mater*.

It is almost unnecessary for me to indicate the cause of the personal attack on myself. Three years ago the Columbus Medical College was at the zenith of its prosperity. At that time, Dr. Halderman, who had become obnoxious to the Professor of Surgery by his impertinence in attempting operations in that department, was compelled to resign, and with him went Drs. Culbertson, Gilliam, Wirth, and Brush. I felt that that was the turning point in the fortunes of the school, and urged upon the remaining members of the faculty that we honorably disband, and so quit while our reputation was good. I think that the alumni of the college wish that my advice had been followed. But it was not followed, and so I again put my shoulder to the wheel. But it was up hill work to support the declining fortunes of a school which, founded in hate, was not, at best, expected to outlive its founder. The school, having no hospital, no clinics—save the Saturday morning clinics of Dr. Hamilton—no museum worthy of the name, none but the crudest means of instruction, and only an ill-arranged college building, was unable to stand the pressure of honorable rivalry with a school having all the advantages which it lacked, and so it came, through its officers—for the Faculty as such was kept in ignorance—to prostitute itself to diploma-seekers. Being reduced to desperate straits by the exposure in West Wirginia, and unable to deny the facts as shown by Dr. Reeves, it became absolutely necessary for its manager to devise some means of diverting attention from it, and so, instigated by jealousy, he decided to attack me, and with what reason and propriety the profession may judge from what has gone before.

One line of attack, too vile for even the anonymous writer to put on paper, has been reserved by him for the private ear of those prominent citizens in whose esteem he wished to undermine me. To such he has gone and related the disgusting details of a pretended conversation which he says I had with him years ago, and in which, he says, I accused these gentlemen of the vilest practices. Such a statement seems too monstrous for belief, but I have it directly from the lips of one who was thus approached.

A few further facts for the benefit of those who are unable to read between the lines of his attack, will not be out of place.

Dr. Hamilton owns the college building, for which he gets a good rental from the college; he owns a majority of the stock of the college, so that he elects his own Trustees; he causes himself, through the Trustees chosen by himself, to be elected Treasurer of the college; also, and in the same way, to be elected Secretary of the Board, and to be placed

in charge of the college building, and even of the dissecting material. No wonder he worships his college; it is certainly like nothing on the face of the earth; its building owned by one man, its stock controlled by one man, its Trustees chosen by one man, its funds handled by one man, its accounts kept by one man—and that man *himself!* Czar of puppets, “unanimous” autocrat.

And now I am done. If there are any charges to which I have not replied, it is because they are too vague to be reached. Dr. Hamilton's article is made up of statements entirely unsupported by any outside evidence; in this reply I have relied almost exclusively on outside testimony. All letters, from which I have quoted, are on file in my office, where they can be seen at any time by proper parties. Of all quarrels, those of doctors are bitterest and most contemptible. Having now refuted all charges brought against me which reflect on my personal and professional honor and integrity, I shall pay no further attention, through the papers at least, to any additional filth which Dr. Hamilton may pour out.

“Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow,
Thou shalt not escape calumny.”

J. F. BALDWIN.

THE DENT MATTER IN DETAIL.

“STATE BOARD OF HEALTH OF WEST VIRGINIA,
“OFFICE OF SECRETARY,
“WHEELING, W. VA., August 10, 1882. }

“J. F. BALDWIN, M. D.

“*My Dear Doctor:*—When I took the liberty, last March, of sending you a sharp letter of inquiry concerning the standard of requirements for graduation at Columbus Medical College—a letter so *sharp*, indeed, that after it left my hands I was afraid it would offend you—little did I think it was the beginning of so much trouble to you, and that your frank and very manly reply would become the excuse for leveling at you repeated charges of low personal abuse. Again, it is not less surprising and painful to me to recall a very kind letter written me last year by your *very dear* friend Dr. D. N. Kinsman. I had sent him a newspaper report of the organization of the State Board of Health of West Virginia, and he was so well pleased with my simple address before the Board, pointing out the duties under the law, that he ‘pasted the slip’ in his ‘scrap book, along side of the Dance of Death—an article on the sanitary condition of New York City.’ How prophetic of the present *tempest* in Columbus—truly a very ‘Dance of Death.’

“But this was not all that Dr. Kinsman was pleased to say. He continued: ‘I am thus collecting ammunition for the battle *we* have to fight which you have already won. But with the lead of West Virginia, or at least the advice and aid of a successful Captain like yourself, I rather enjoy the prospect of a field fight. I am pleased with your State Board of Health Bill, and know of nothing better than it in the list of bills in the country. Indeed, I think it the best.’

What a change! Can it be possible that this is the same gentleman who now reviles the State Board of Health of West Virginia for having dared to perform its sworn duty? and is making the furnace for his ‘friends so hot that he may scorch himself’?

“ Besides having the benefit and pleasure of your acquaintance and the pleasing thoughts of Dr. Kinsman's sincere good opinion as shown in the letter above referred to, I had flattered myself that Prof. J. W. Hamilton, M. D., the central figure of Columbus Medical College and an ornament to the medical profession in Ohio, was also my friend; for we had exchanged the hospitalities of our homes, and I will not suffer him, even at this date, to exceed me in expression of the real pleasure I enjoyed when, last year, I drank to his good health both in Wheeling and Columbus. I am glad therefore, very glad indeed, he is of more philosophic turn of mind than his inconsiderate Dean, and has not rushed into the Sunday newspapers to defend the sufficiency of a *three* or *four* weeks' college course in making a Doctor of Medicine, nor to charge the State Board of Health of West Virginia with sinister personal motives in the exercise of the high and responsible trust conferred by the State and medical profession.

“ If the conduct of the faculty of Columbus Medical College in granting diplomas has been such as to justly subject it to severe criticism, it may blame itself, nobody else, that its soiled garments have been unavoidably exposed. God knows I have had no pleasure in handling them, and would have escaped the disagreeable duty which I performed in exposing them before our State Medical Society, the 24th of last May, if the very highest interests, both public and professional, had not been at stake and would have suffered by my silence.

“ So much then in reply to Dr. Kinsman's unkind and unwarranted charge that I am an *enemy* of Columbus Medical College. If the situation embraced Starling Medical College instead of Columbus Medical College, I might find it more difficult to defend myself and repel the false charge in the face of my friendly relations with yourself and Dr. Hamilton; the kind letter from Dr. Kinsman, in which he expresses himself ready “ to fight ” under my captaincy; and particularly my connection with the editorial department of your medical journal, which a short while ago was the acknowledged organ of Columbus Medical College.

“ But why all this unpleasantness—this virulent abuse of our State Board of Health generally, and of myself in particular? Let us see how far Dr. Kinsman's conduct is warranted by the facts, and excusable. Here is the history as brief as I can make it: On the 13th of January, 1882, A. M. Dent, of Weston, Louis county, W. Va., came before the members of the State Board of Health for the First Congressional District—Dr. Geo. B. Moffett, of Parkersburg, President of the Board, and myself—for examination for medical certificate. He represented that he had been engaged in medical practice in the town of Weston for several years prior to March 8th, 1881, when the law establishing the Board and regulating the practice of medicine went into effect. Neither Dr. Moffett nor myself had met him until the day he appeared before us at my office in the city of Wheeling; and I can say truthfully that no applicant had appeared before us whose gentlemanly address, high family character and political standing entitled him to greater consideration and respect. Besides, he was a member in good standing of the State Medical Society, and a Director of the Hospital for the Insane at Weston. And this is not all, for I had a personal interest in him because some of his best friends and relatives were my warm personal friends; and hence, as far as my friendship and sympathy could assist, he had the full benefit of them. I know Dr. Moffett, my colleague, had equally kind feeling for him.

“ He was given the same written questions that had been presented to every applicant that had preceded him in the First Congressional District, and to our utter astonishment failed even to tell how many bones in the spinal column; what muscles form the calf of the leg; to name the internal cavities of the heart, and describe

the circulation of the blood! I know he will never forget his mortification when he was required to subscribe his name to his written examination. Indeed, he said to me: "Doctor, I hate to do this."

"When it came to his oral examination, he was equally unprepared. Although he professed to have attended more than a hundred cases of obstetrics in his practice, he could not tell in how many stages is labor divided; what are the superior and inferior openings sometimes called; the difference between position and presentation; by what indices or distinguishing marks the particular position of the head relative to the pelvis is determined; the mechanism of the *first position*; nor the difference between accidental and unavoidable hemorrhage. In other departments he was equally deficient. He did not know the divisions of hernia; the difference between *idiopathic* and *symptomatic* fever, nor an antidote for arsenical poisoning. He seemed to possess every other accomplishment except the one he most needed—sufficient medical knowledge to warrant the Board in granting him a certificate.

"On the 16th of January, 1882, I sent him the following letter, and I was never more sincere in my expressions:

'DR. A. M. DENT.

'*Esteemed Friend*:—I am very sincere when I tell you that nothing of official duty has given me greater regret than the necessity of this letter informing you of your failure to pass 'a satisfactory examination' within the meaning of the law.

'By reference to the 11th Section of the Act passed March 8th, 1881, you will see that you may appear again before the Board at any time within nine (9) months for a second examination; and I trust you will take advantage of this provision. Herewith find draft for ten (\$10) dollars, the sum deposited with your application for examination and certificate.

'Believe me very truly, Your friend,

'JAMES E. REEVES, M. D., Sec'y.'

"The next I heard of him was that, on or about the 23d of January—10 days after his rejection by our Board—he made application at Starling Medical College for admission to the graduating class, but was refused because of 'short time;' but my surprise was complete when I received the *Ohio State Journal* for February 25th, sent me, duly marked, by an unknown friend, which contained a report of the Commencement Exercises of Columbus Medical College, Friday evening, February 24th, and that the degree of M. D. had been conferred upon A. M. Dent, of West Virginia.

"I gave expression to my surprise by the 'sharp letter' above referred to, addressed to you March 9th, and which I feared would offend you. I asked: 'is a *three or four weeks*' course of lectures sufficient to win your highest honors?' You answered good-naturedly in the language of the great bard—

"'Shake not thy gory locks at me!

Thou can'st not say *I* did it!

"Supposing the lecture course to have closed at least a week before commencement day, February 24th, Dent had, in fact, about *three weeks*' benefit at Columbus Medical College. Yet, Dr. Kinsman says his grade was high—particularly in obstetrics!

"In order that the profession might be able to form a just opinion on the subject, the *quality* of the questions submitted, as well as the *quantity* of answers should have been given. Even Dr. J. W. Hamilton himself, as late as June 12th, in a letter to me says that Dent's examination 'was not all that an examination

should be, by any means. Permitting it, was only the result of *extraordinary circumstances.*' (Italics my own.)

"These 'extraordinary circumstances' have been published by Dean Kinsman in justification of Dent's easy honors; and the State Board of Health of West Virginia, in answer thereto, has expressed its opinion of what is meant by a 'reputable medical college,' and not less emphatically its judgment of Columbus Medical College.

"But, let us see, what is meant by 'extraordinary circumstances?'

"1st. Dent represented to the Faculty of Columbus Medical College that he had been unfairly treated by our Board—in this, he had been refused a medical certificate. *Answer.* He was patiently and impartially examined by Dr. Moffett and myself, and found unqualified, within the meaning of the law, to be entrusted with authority to practice medicine.

"2d. Dent 'brought to the Faculty of Columbus Medical College letters of endorsement of both his social and medical standing from *two* prominent physicians in West Virginia.' *Answer.* The 'two prominent physicians' are well known. But I submit that it would have been more generous in the Faculty of Columbus Medical College to have taken the opinion of the State Medical examiners rather than the opinion of 'two prominent physicians' who may have no other interest than their own advancement to serve!

"3d. 'This man Dent was a member of the State Medical Society of West Virginia, and had for years been an honored member.' *Answer.* He reached membership in the State Medical Society with even greater ease than he obtained his degree from Columbus Medical College—namely, *without* the pretense and farce of an examination, but simply on the recommendation of one of the 'two prominent physicians' who endorsed him to the Faculty of Columbus Medical College. Drs. W. H. Sharp and L. C. Hunt, both of Parkersburg, and who were members of the Committee of Censors, when Dent was admitted to the State Medical Society, can be addressed if deemed necessary. But he is not now a member of the Society.

"4th. 'In 1878, Dent was one of the essayists of the State Medical Society at its annual meeting, and this essay will be found in the transactions of said year.' *Answer.* It was a brief paper, if memory serves me correctly, on Public Health; of no special merit, and there was nothing in it which pointed to medical knowledge or his capability as a physician.

"5th. 'In 1879, Dent was appointed delegate from the Medical Society of West Virginia, to represent it in the American Medical Association, which met that year in Richmond, Virginia.' *Answer.* Any member of the Society is eligible to that honor. The president of the Society is the appointing power, and Dent's uncle, my friend Dr. Wm. M. Dent, was at that time, I think, the presiding officer. Dr. Kinsman would not claim that such an appointment was *proof* of medical knowledge?

"6th. 'Dent claimed that his rejection by the Board would ruin his business, etc.' *Answer.* The law regulating the practice of medicine in West Virginia went into effect June 8th, 1881, and all persons practicing medicine without a certificate from the State Board of Health after July 26th, 1881, were violators of law. Dent did not profess to be engaged in practice from and after the last mentioned date, and from this fact the *value* of his business may be judged. He made no application for Medical Certificate until January 13, 1882. He had the choice of appearing either before his District Board or the whole State Board. After he was rejected by Dr. Moffett and myself, he could have appealed to the whole Board without incurring a farthing's expense to him, and in fifteen days thereafter he could

have been heard and examined by the *six* members composing the State Board, instead of the two appointed for his Congressional District. But it was not, perhaps, an *impartial* examination and *justice* that he wanted.

"7th. 'Dent was of sufficient political as well as medical influence in the State of West Virginia to be appointed one of the trustees of the only lunatic asylum in that state.' *Answer.* Here again he was served by one of the 'two prominent physicians,' who recommended him to the Governor; but how long did his hospital connection last? The Journal of the last House of Delegates, 1882, will tell. In answer to specific charges of mal-administration of the affairs of 'the only lunatic asylum in the state,' a joint special committee of the two Houses was appointed the first week in February, 1882, to visit and examine into the condition and general management of the Hospital. The committee, after investigating the charges, reported that A. M. Dent had been intoxicated to an extent disqualifying him from the proper transaction of business, and therefore his *removal* from office was recommended. And not only Dent, but one of the 'two prominent physicians' who recommended him to the Faculty of Columbus Medical College, was also charged with drunkenness by the same Legislative Committee, and his removal from office recommended. In other words, at the same time Dent was *finishing* his professional character with the ornaments and honors of the Columbus Medical College, a Committee of the West Virginia Legislature was engaged in investigating his behavior and insufficiency as a Director of the Hospital for the Insane; and with what result, has already been told. You will remember I sent you a Wheeling newspaper containing the Report of the Investigating Committee. Both Dent and his friend—one of the 'two prominent physicians' who endorsed him to Columbus—speedily stepped down and out from their connection with the Hospital, and thus ended their official career.

"These then, no doubt, were the 'extraordinary circumstances' referred to by Prof. Hamilton, which influenced the Faculty of Columbus Medical College in allowing A. M. Dent 'short time' and awarding him a diploma; and for not consenting to the professional propriety of permitting 'extraordinary circumstances' to decide the question of fitness to practice medicine in West Virginia, the State Board of Health has been disrespectfully spoken of by Dean Kinsman, as a Board 'organized to reject.'

"The State Board of Health has been intrusted with a high and responsible duty to the people of West Virginia and to the medical profession. In its discharge, I, as one of the members of the Board, have found to my great sorrow that it is not always a pleasing service. Indeed, many times it has been painfully disagreeable, and never more so than in the case of A. M. Dent, who is now a citizen of Ohio (?) and enjoying the professional privileges vouchsafed by his Diploma from Columbus Medical College. But the experience of mankind teaches that the only *true* way out of such trouble is to *try* to do one's duty without fear, favor or affection, and let consequences take care of themselves.

"If any and every man who is refused a Medical Certificate by the State Board of Health of West Virginia, can step over into the State of Ohio, and after a *three* or *four* weeks' course of medical lectures receive a College diploma, then return to West Virginia and be registered as a legally qualified medical practitioner, our law becomes nothing more nor less than a *mere feeder* to cheap Diploma Mills, (which God forbid!) for it *drives* men and supplies to them. But the State Board has a far higher aim—nothing less, indeed, than the elevation of the standard of medical education in West Virginia; and it has been clothed with sufficient authority to enforce its judgments. In the exercise of authority, it will always endeavor to

be impartial, temperate and just; and no man—dean, professor, or other commanding personage—can turn it out of the path of straightforward duty. It has given and published its definition of the essential elements to constitute a ‘reputable Medical College’; it has charged Columbus Medical College with having violated its professed and published standard of requirements for graduation, and has solemnly resolved, on reading the confession of Dean Kinsman in the *Philadelphia Medical News* of July 22d, to refuse recognition of Diplomas from that College until such time as the Faculty shall give satisfactory evidence of strict and honest adherence to their published Requirements for Graduation. Then, the State Board of Health of West Virginia will gladly rescind its present action and bid Columbus Medical College Godspeed in aiding in the good and grand cause of higher medical education in America.

“Finally, I pray you to believe me when I declare my heartfelt regret at having been compelled by Dean Kinsman’s foolish, bad-tempered publications, to expose even to you, the character of A. M. Dent’s examination before our Board, and tell what became of his official connection in West Virginia; for I repeat my high respect for his good family name, and wish from the bottom of my heart I could have thrown all my knowledge of him into the wallet of oblivion, and thus saved him from this exposure which has been forced upon me by his intemperate friend, Dean Kinsman.

“Very truly, your friend,

“JAMES E. REEVES.”

STATE BOARD OF HEALTH OF WEST VIRGINIA AND THE REQUIREMENTS FOR PRACTICE OF MEDICINE.

At a meeting of the State Board of Health of West Virginia, held in the city of Parkersburg, on Wednesday, July 26, 1882, there were present Geo. B. Moffett, M. D., President of the Board; Geo. H. Carpenter, M. D.; C. T. Richardson, M. D.; Gabriel McDonald, M. D.; Lawrence Carr, M. D.; Wm. M. Late, M. D., and James E. Reeves, M. D., Secretary, the Hon. A. R. Barbee, M. D., being the only absent member.

By a unanimous vote the following preamble and resolutions were adopted, defining the words “reputable medical college,” as they occur in the law creating the Board:

1. *Whereas*, It is one of the special duties of the State Board of Health of West Virginia to protect the people against incompetent medical practitioners; and,

Whereas, The said Board is charged with authority of law to reject applicants for medical certificates who are graduates of *disreputable* medical colleges, unless they, the said applicants, shall appear before the said Board, and pass a satisfactory examination in all the branches of the profession; and,

Whereas, The test or proof of proper reputation of a medical college is the occupancy of all needful grounds and buildings set apart for lecture and laboratory work; the possession of such mechanical and scientific apparatus and appliances as are necessary to illustrate and supplement medical lectures; a *de facto* corps of capable professors, whose curriculum embraces not only both lectures and examinations in the eight ordinary branches of medical education—namely, anatomy, chemistry, physiology, hygiene, surgery, obstetrics, practice of medicine, materia medica, and therapeutics—but also the additional and important departments of hospital and clinical instruction; a preliminary examination as a condition of matriculation; the requirement of actual (not merely nominal) attendance upon at least eight-tenths of the lectures of *two* full winter courses; dissection, practiced during one full winter course; and finally, strict adherence to the measure of requirements for graduation established and published by its officers and faculty; therefore,

Resolved, That the State Board of Health of West Virginia will not hesitate to refuse recognition of all diplomas granted by *disreputable* medical colleges.

Resolved, That nothing less than the definition or measure of requirements expressed in the foregoing preamble, or a very close approximation thereto, will be accepted by this Board as proof of the "good reputation" of a medical college.

2. *Whereas*, This Board has before it a communication published in the *Philadelphia Medical News*, July 22, 1882, over the signature of "D. N. Kinsman, M. D., Dean of Columbus Medical College," which gives the standard of requirements upon which the diploma of that college is issued; and having other evidence of indisputable character that the said Columbus Medical College has grossly violated its published requirements for graduation⁶; therefore,

Resolved, That this Board can no longer recognize Columbus Medical College as worthy and "reputable" within the meaning of the law from which this Board has received authority to pronounce upon such cases; and all persons applying for registration on diploma issued by said Columbus Medical College will be rejected, unless they, the said applicants, submit to an examination by this Board, and are found duly qualified to practice medicine, surgery and obstetrics in West Virginia.

Resolved, That this action is based wholly upon recent proceedings on the part of the Faculty of Columbus Medical College, and there is nothing in it which is intended to, or should in any manner, reflect upon the professional standing of graduates of that school prior to the year 1882.

REQUIREMENTS IN ILLINOIS.

The Illinois State Board of Health, in which is also vested the sole power of granting certificates to physicians to practice within its limits, has recently resolved that, after the session of 1882-83, no medical college shall be considered "in good standing" unless the following requirements are enforced: First, a preliminary examination or its equivalent; second, instruction (and examinations *passed*) in the seven ordinary branches, and also in Hygiene and Jurisprudence; third, actual (not merely nominal) attendance upon eight-tenths of the lectures, etc.; and fourth, dissection during two courses, and hospital and clinical instruction for two terms during the three full years of study demanded. After next year, therefore, the graduates of medical colleges whose curriculum does not embrace these requirements, cannot practice in any part of Illinois without first passing an examination before the Board.

We shall probably soon hear that the Illinois Board, like that of West Virginia, was "conceived in sin and born in iniquity;" but the people and the profession will nevertheless approve of such conceptions and such births.

THE OHIO LAW IN THE CASE.

THE COLLEGE AT THE MERCY OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY.

Section 4403^b of the Revised Statutes of Ohio (Vol. 78, Ohio Laws, page 28,) reads as follows:

"Whoever shall make, issue or publish, or cause to be made, issued or published, for the purpose of sale, barter, or gift, any diploma, certificate, or writing, representing the holder thereof to be a graduate of any medical school, or college, or any educational institution of medicine whatsoever, unless such holder shall have, in fact, attended a complete course of instruction in such school, college, or institution for medical teaching, which course shall be equal to the average course of instruction in other schools, colleges or institutions where the various branches of medicine are taught as a science, in good standing in the State of Ohio, upon conviction thereof shall be fined in any sum not exceeding one thousand dollars, nor less than one hundred dollars, or imprisoned in the Penitentiary not more than three years nor less than one year, or both, at the discretion of the Court."

Columbus, Ohio, Aug. 15, 1882.

⁶See eighth Annual Announcement, page 13.