



State of Rhode Island Jan. 25, 1798.

SIR,
YOUR being a Member of the Hon. the Gen. Assembly of this State, and our taking into our serious consideration, the great and important object of promoting the increase of medical Knowledge in this Country, must be our Apology for troubling you with this Letter.

We beg leave to mention, that the medical Art has been rising to higher and higher degrees of Perfection, in proportion as the new medical Discoveries and Improvements have from time to time been ushered into the world, ever since the Days of *Melampus*, the first noted *Physician*, mentioned in prophane History; and, who lived about an hundred Years since the Death of *Moses*.

That this Art appears at present, to be raised to a much higher degree of Perfection in Europe, than it is in America, on Account of a great number of new medical Discoveries and Improvements, made known to the European *Physicians*, *Surgeons*, and *Apothecaries*; but chiefly unknown to the greatest part of our Country *Practitioners*, for the want of proper Publications.

That although the old medical Books, now in use in this Country, contain some judicious Observations; yet, by reason of the new Discoveries in the different branches of Medicine, they are found to be replete with Error; giving an erroneous Account of the Virtues of Medicines, and the genuine Methods of curing Diseases.— And from hence the study of those Books ought to be suppressed, because it has not only a direct tendency to lead *Students* into Error; but to expose the lives of the People, by misguiding *Practitioners* in their attempts to alleviate the Distresses of their fellow Mortals; for where the theory of any Art or Science is wrong, the Practice of it will be so in general.

If proper Encouragement was given by the Public, it appears to us that the medical Art may be raised to as high a degree of Perfection in America, as it is in Europe; nay, perhaps higher, for some things have been discovered here, which have not as yet been published. Now if our own Discoveries, with those made in the other parts of the world, were published, and spread amongst all our *Practitioners*, it would make the healing Art more perfect and useful, than it has ever been since the world began.

That although 190 Years have revolved since this Country was first settled by the Europeans; yet we cannot learn that any man ever attempted to compile a regular System of *Pharmacy*, *Physic*, and *Surgery*, in America, till the Year 1772; at which time, Dr. *Stearns*, an American Physician and Astronomer, on discovering that both the Theory and Practice of Physic stood in great need of Reformation and Amendment, undertook the laborious task; and has since travelled in Nine of the American Governments; and in England, Scotland, Ireland, and France, for the Purpose of collecting an Account of the new medical Discoveries and Improvements that have been made in the different parts of the world; has expended more than 4000 Dollars, and the greatest part of his time for ten years past, in the Prosecution of the work, which is to be printed in two large Volumes in *Folio*, under the Names of an *American Dispensatory*, and the *Columbian Practice of Physic*, and *System of Surgery*; being intended for a complete medical Library, Anatomy excepted.

That these Productions have been examined by sundry learned *Physicians*, who have found that the work is well executed, and that it contains Systems of medical Information of an immense value, founded on those things that have stood the test of Ages in the cure of Diseases, and on the late Discoveries and Improvements in the noble Art of Medicine.

That it was the *Author's* Intention to have published his Productions by Subscription; but has found, that that method will by no means answer the great and good purpose of giving the new medical Discoveries and Improvements, a speedy and general spread amongst the Gentlemen of the

Faculty, because many of them, and especially in new settled Places, have had their Learning to pay for, after they began to practise; Medicines and Horses to purchase; Lands to buy; Houses to build; Families to maintain; Taxes to pay; and a large number of poor People to visit, who are unable to make payment; and that for these Reasons, many of those *Practitioners* are unable to pay for his Productions.

That as the new medical Discoveries and Improvements ought to be immediately published and spread amongst all the *Practitioners* in Physic, that their minds may be enlightened, and their Practice regulated, it has been proposed by a number of *Physicians* and other respectable *Gentlemen*, that the sum of 30,000 Dollars be raised by a *Lottery*, to be drawn in several Classes, for the purpose of defraying the expence of compiling and publishing the said *medical Productions*, and that Copies of them be given gratis, to the *Physicians*, *Surgeons*, *Apothecaries* and *Others*, who may be inclined to become acquainted with the medical Art.

That for the following Reasons this is esteemed the best method that can be contrived for the purpose of spreading medical knowledge in America, for,

1. It will make medical Information free, for all the *Practitioners* and *Students* in Physic.
2. It will prevent *Students* from wasting their time in the study of erroneous Books; and help them to attain those qualifications which are necessary for regular bred *Physicians*.
3. As the money will come principally out of the rich *Adventurers* in the *Lottery*, who will stand the same chance of drawing Prizes as in other *Lotteries*, it will be a great help to those unable to procure medical Libraries.
4. It will furnish the *Physicians*, the *Surgeons*, and the *Apothecaries* with an excellent *Guide*, in all the difficult and dangerous Cases, Operations, and Processes they may have to encounter.
5. It will exhibit the Virtues of a great number of our American Productions: bring them more and more into use: lessen the importation of Drugs; and, thus prove very advantageous to the Citizens of the United States.
6. It will raise the medical Art to a higher degree of Perfection: make our *Physicians* (instead of being called *Quacks* and *Imposters* by foreigners) appear more respectable in the Eyes of the Learned: the cure of Diseases more easy; and the practice of Physic less expensive; for a regular bred *Physician* stands a better chance to do a patient more good by 7 visits, than one groping in the dark can by 20.
7. It will prevent millions of Dollars, from being sent out of the United States, for Medical Books published in foreign Kingdoms; and thus be a great saving to the Country.

It is therefore evident, that a *Medical Lottery*, is a matter of such importance, that it ought to be promoted, and encouraged by all Persons; and we think it would be a dishonor to any State, if requested, not to grant one; and it is also our opinion, that the *Doctor*, ought to be assisted by the Public, in the great and important Work he has undertaken, as well as the *Physicians*, *Surgeons*, *Apothecaries*, and *Students* in Physic, who are unable to purchase those Books, which are absolutely necessary for every *Practitioner*.

That when People esteem themselves unable to build a Meeting House, a Hotel, or a Bridge; or to carry on some necessary Branch of Learning: they often Petition for *Lotteries*, and their requests are granted.—Why then may not the *Physicians* have similar Advantages?—Are they not a very useful part of the Community?—Do they not frequently relieve us in times of great Distress and Danger?—And instead of suffering them to remain groping in the Dark, is it not necessary to furnish them with that *Medical Light* and *Information*, which exhibits how to Cure Diseases in the most easy and expeditious man-

ner?—Surely every rational Person will say, *Yes*.

That it is the Opinion of those who have duly considered of the matter, that a *Medical Lottery* will be of such Public Utility, that it will be greatly encouraged by the *Citizens* of the United States in general: that it will bring money into this State, and immortalize the Name of the General Assembly.

That a *Petition* upon the Subject, will be presented to the Assembly; and as you are a *Member* of the same; we trust you will not be backward in encouraging a *Scheme*, which tends to promote your own *Felicity*, as well as the *Health* and *Happiness* of Mankind in general.

We wish your Health and Prosperity; and have the Honor to be,
Sir, your most Obedient humble Servants,

Samuel Hudson
of Cranston
Daniel Shugart
John Smith
Cyril Lane

for
Representative
Mr. Holden,
Warwick.

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A.M.L.

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