

# S. B. M. College Journ.

EXTRA.

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AN

## ADDRESS:

INTRODUCTORY TO OPENING THE

SOUTHERN BOTANICO MEDICAL COLLEGE.

FOR THE SESSION OF 1842-3.

Box 6

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BY A. M. SPALDING, M. D.  
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1842.

## PRELEMINARY CORRESPONDENCE.

Prof. A. M. SPALDING, M. D.

SIR: The Class having heard with much pleasure the Introductory Lecture delivered by you at the opening of the present Session, have appointed the undersigned a Committee to solicit, in their behalf, a copy of the same for publication.

With sentiments of esteem, &c.

L. C. QUIN,  
D. S. JONES,  
F. T. CAPERS,  
W. J. MILFORD, } Committee.

Southern Botanic Medical College, }  
Forsyth, Ga., Nov. 15th, 1842. }

To Messrs. L. C. QUIN and others, Committee:

GENTLEMEN—The flattering manner in which you are pleased to notice the Introductory Lecture which I had the honor to deliver on Monday, commends my warmest acknowledgements, and if its publication can afford you the least gratification, it is at your disposal.

In the highest consideration,

Yours respectfully,

Nov. 16th, 1842.

A. M. SPALDING.

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The patrons and friends of the Southern Botanic-Medical College Journal are informed, that the Faculty have engaged Messrs. Harris & Johnson to print it, and that the first number will be issued, according to promise, about the 1st of December. Those having either our late Prospectuses, or money received for subscriptions, will please forward the same as soon as convenient.

# INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS,

On opening the Southern Botanic-Medical College for Session 1842-3.

BY PROF. SPALDING,

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

The occasion which brings us together must be one of exciting interest to every friend of science; but particularly so to the honorable members of the medical profession. This day's convocation, affords striking and convincing proof, that a spirit of deep and thoughtful inquiry is awakened on the claims of the Botanic System of practice, and furnishes a multiplied testimony that such investigation, is not confined, even by the precincts of this wide extended State? Under these circumstances, has not the system, if false, every thing to fear. and *if true*, how wide, how flattering is the prospect before us? Add to this, the pleasure which the advocates of the system realize, in the present favorable opportunity, of voluntarily subjecting themselves to the scientific scrutiny of an ever jealous public, whose praise-worthy vigilance is at once a safe guard of individual property and life, and a touchstone, whose withering influence will forever blast the pretensions of ignorance, and the claims of Empiricism. Happy, indeed shall we be, if professional criticism may assist us in the detection of those errors which must exist in the infancy of every Institution, and aid us in the further reformation of every thing, which may not be able, to bear the touch, of the wand of medical erudition,— We are fully aware that the prevalence of the sentiment, is little less than universal, that every possible theory has been already invented, tried, and (most of them) discarded; that nothing new in medical science remains to be proposed — that those who renounce the opinions and principles at present received, are visionaries and enthusiasts, deserving the indignant reprehension of the wise and good. — Is this the spirit of proscription? Shall every passing age be characterized by some noble, and useful invention, and the nineteenth century reach its very zenith and have nothing to mark her proud, her progressive career? Shall it ever be said of freemen, whose investigations and announcements are as untrammelled, as free as the air they breathe; that *they* are so enamored of existing dogmas, and so devoted to avowed principles that they are unwilling to

“Seize on the truth wherever found,  
On heathen or on Christian ground?” *W*

Forbid it, Heaven!

To us there appears but one system of medicine with which the present could reasonably be confounded or which might be made by our conscientious opponents to dispute with it, the palm of utility. We allude to the strange, the deservedly repudiated theory of the

Brunonian school. But, a moments serious reflection will convince the most incredulous that the vapour bath, (itself a powerfull agent in depletion) could never be held compatible with a mode of practice, whose avowed and sole indication was stimulation, and in the absence of every other test, it must be admitted, that those who, for past ages have been in the constant habit of classing *Lobelia Inflata*, among the most deadly of vegetable narcotics, regarding its action, (even under the most judicious administration) as dangerous in the extreme. would never be able to identify *their* practice with the recent improvements in medicine, nor withhold from the Botanic system its claim at least to originality. Like all other systems, neither its existence nor perpetuity can be established upon mere novelty. It must pass the ordeal of medical investigation, and rise by its intrinsic merit to a place in popular esteem; and if, at length, it is seen to be unequal to the test, it will certainly be time enough to abandon it to the fate that may be awarded it. And even then, it would but sink as does the pilot, to perish where numbers are involved in the general catastrophe. Unblessed however (like other systems) with the sanction of high sounding names; unsustained by those to whom with the greatest reason, it had appealed, and from whom the warmest support was most reasonably and confidently expected. Where are now those splendid speculations to which we have but just alluded? The theory of Cullen for example, characterised as it is by great ingenuity and still greater professional lore—a system hailed with enthusiasm, originating a form of nosological arrangement, for which none are so reckless as now to avow themselves the advocates. It exists only in the records of medicine, a lasting memorial of what has been, an affecting remembrancer of what may be, a touching example of the influence of a *name*, a beacon to warn us against the adoption of opinions, not based (as all our professional principles should be) on anatomical demonstrations, and pathological argument. What is affirmed of Brown and Cullen, will apply with equal force to many others, who were *justly* esteemed the luminaries of the particular age in which they lived. These incessant changes in medical theory, and the consequent diversity of practice to which they gave rise, have produced an almost unconquerable incredulity in the public mind, touching the truth of medical science and consequent value of all remedial agents and shaken their confidence even in the profession itself; and every age has furnished abundant reason in its turn to establish the populace in the conviction that “Doctors disagree.”

No student in medicine can read, without pain, the productions of the master spirits even of modern date, without being driven to the mortifying conviction, that all he has to expect from books, as it respects **THEORY AND PRACTICE**, is confusion and contradiction, and that his only hope must be laid in his own personal experience and observation. It may be asked, do we propose to remedy these evils? Do we set at naught the professions, investigations, the arduous labor of past centuries? By no means. We only ask your assistance, in carrying out a system of medicine which may appeal constantly and confidently to reason: and lay before the Student *facts*, and facts only; upon which relying, he may trust in his future prescriptions, and on which he may *reflect*, and *build* and *improve*, both for his own advantage and the general good. And who shall say that such an enterprise

impracticable? Who shall presume to fix limits to that immortal and incomprehensible principle, in which the beneficial changes of the past have originated, and whose mighty exertions must give birth to every improvement of the future?

Of the discoveries of former ages let us be understood as foremost in our profession of indebtedness. The names of Harvey, Sydenham, Rush, Jenner and others, will even be associated with the noblest discoveries, and the most valuable illustrations which adorn and distinguish our profession; by which we are directed in safety in many of our pathological investigations, and in the general application of therapeutic agents. But at the same time, we, in common with others, claim for ourselves the right to reject whatever we deem unsound in theory, or unsafe in practice, frankly awarding to all the privilege, of judging and deciding for themselves.

We now approach a point, Gentlemen, upon which, as a basis, the whole superstructure of Botanic medicine is to be reared—a theme to which, if we were capable of doing justice, we should flatter ourselves that if a signal triumph were not readily gained over the blindness of prejudice, still the way would be successfully paved for the introduction of future arguments but little short of irresistible. Are the remedies, by which it is proposed to combat disease in its almost endless forms, sufficiently potent to answer the indications of cure? To this most important question, let reason, sustained by facts, reply.—And first to the *argument*: It is well known, that Lobelia, since its introduction into the catalogue of medicines, has maintained its position, rather as a *caution* to bold experiments, than as a *remedial* agent. Text books and periodicals have been loud in their denunciations against its use, and the strong arm of civil authority has been invoked, to aid in crushing the daring spirit that would urge its employment, in defiance of the ignorance and prejudice of the people. We stand now side by side, with a large majority of our professional brethren, on the lofty summit of practical experience, and look down with pity, on those false descriptions, and with deep regret upon that prejudice, which proscribes its use; and ask why this hue and cry? If Lobelia be wanting in power, what means this array of learning, and talent, and influence, to prohibit its exhibition? We are glad for mankind, that not only the power, but the *remedial efficacy* of this incomparable plant, is now being conceded by many of the best writers in our country, and I but repeat the opinion of those in high places, when I declare “that if there be a specific in asthma and croup, it is Lobelia Inflata.” Every drug that possesses emetic power, must necessarily be, either directly or indirectly, expectorant and diaphoretic. That Lobelia proves emetic (whenever properly administered,) none deny—it is therefore a strong and efficient emetic, diaphoretic, and expectorant, and this we shall hereafter prove by facts. Another sanative agent by which the Botanic practice is characterized, is the vapour bath, and what argument is needed to prove the efficacy of a means upon which all rely? Its power is universally *admitted*—its employment, too frequently *neglected*. This is the chief mode of depletion used by Botanic physicians, because it effects at once, the twofold object of depletion and relaxation. It is superior in every point of view to the water bath, for while the latter chokes the pores, preventing cutaneous transpiration for the time, the vapour overcomes spasm, always produ-

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and depletion, relaxation, and perspiration immediately. With these two means then judiciously applied, we can generally secure the following effects: expectoration, diaphoresis, depletion, relaxation and perspiration, and by these results alone, every medical gentleman well knows, most of the diseases which scourge our race must be removed if cured at all. And where, it is asked, are the substitutes for the anodynes and anti-spasmodics in general use? We answer, they are few, simple and powerful. What is the action of Lobelia in strangulated hernia? The usual nervine (Cypriped Lute. or American valerians,) will seldom fail to answer the indication in such cases, as we judge from experience. Of its special *modus operandi*, we know no more than physicians have hitherto learned of the peculiar action of opium and its compounds. Two brief cases will sustain my remarks.

1st Mrs. V. of ———, in a state predisposing to peritoneal inflammation, imprudently indulged in eating baked sweet potatoes—through the night the cramp and pain in the body were tormenting. The next day at 10 o'clock I saw her—prescribed pulverized cypriped, in a diffusible stimulant tea. to be repeated in 15 minutes if necessary—after the lapse of 1-2 an hour found that my patient become easy. In 10 minutes after the first dose, administered oil, and of course she did well.

2d. Mr. R. ———, case of hiccup. Oxyd bismuth failed. A compound of tinct. Lobelia and valerian. These two cases (selected from a large number,) surely demanded, in the first instance, anti-spasmodics. The cypriped took effect in both, and if every medicine of this class were entirely wanting, I am inclined to the opinion, that neither patients nor practitioners would lose much by the deficiency. Another particular to which I must advert, is the specific action of medicine. That calomel acts on the liver and glandular system generally is attested by the observation of ages—that such an action in many cases is indispensable to health and life, I frankly admit. If the indication in such cases cannot be met by other agents, I should feel it my duty to administer calomel.—Another fact to which I invite your attention, it is the general use of sanguinaria in chronic affections of the liver. It is given to sustain the effect produced by mercury; and how can it succeed so happily, if it have no specific action on that viscus? If you will try it you will find, that in this particular, it will seldom disappoint you, and increasing experience will lead you eventually to adopt it as a substitute for that mineral in Hepatitis, and affections of other viscera, requiring topical treatment. With reference to purgatives. Think for a moment on the question: How many mineral medicines are there of this class, after withdrawing calomel? to which (strange as it may seem,) I deny this property. Have not the advocates, for the use of Botanic remedies access to a large list of purgatives in universal use? And do they not prescribe a medicine of this class, superior to every other; and whose administrations is directed chiefly by themselves? We say *superior*, for contrary to every other aperient, it never produces tormina, tenesmus or other distressing symptoms, and instead of being succeeded by a state of obstipation, it leaves the intestines in a soluble condition for some time after. Who will avow so much for any purgative of all the catalogue besides? The books deny this statement we are aware, but this is not the only instance in which medical experience is in direct contradiction to the books. Botanic physicians will pardon me for

saying, that I allude to the *Podophyllum Peltatum*. In connection with the last mentioned agent, *Enemata*, a curative means too much neglected, forms a material part of every course, and if physicians of Botanic schools are notorious for the prescription of *Lobelia*, they are not less popular in the employment of this humble of means.— One word more on general remediate agents. Sthenic diseases (as they have been classically termed,) it is well known, do not require tonics, as a subsequent treatment, unless the mode of practice employed, produce a state of enervation in the sequel. In all nervous diseases, so called, where these remedies are needed throughout, botany supplies the physician with a rich field from which to cull his materials; so that he may select a simple tonic, or compound a diffusible stimulant at pleasure, according to the state of the case. And now, gentlemen, what do we lack yet? You answer, *that proof of the correctness of your theory which practical experience alone can give.* Now then for the proof. We have furnished argument in support of the efficacy and adaptation of vegetable remedies to disease. We, now briefly present facts and cases, upon which, faithfully detailed, every one may pass his own decision, and we shall place the treatment of both schools in juxtaposition.

[Here the lecturer reported several interesting cases in detail. As these were given from notes, the following synopsis may serve to illustrate the fact, that physicians of both schools have the same objects in view in the treatment of diseases, and that Vegetable agents are sufficiently powerful to merit our confidence and command respect:]

PLEURISY.

*Old Treatment.*

Bleed, blister, diaphoretics, expectorants.

NOTE—Every description of inflammatory fever, involving the lungs, requires the above treatment.

*Botanic Treatment.*

Vapor-bath, stimulating liniment composition, expectorants.

BILIOUS FEVER.

Emetics, purgatives, blisters, diaphoretics; and in the sequel, tonics.

*Lobelia*, enemata and vegetable purgatives, rubefacients. (but seldom needed,) diaphoretics, tonics.

FACIEI MORBUS NERVORUM CAUCASIANS, (*Tic Doloroux*.)

Mineral preparations, division, &c. &c.

Comp. tinct. myrrh. anti-spasmodic tinct.  Living testimony of the success of this simple treatment can be had, from the highest source.

CATARRH.

Bleed, sudorifics, expectorants, pedilurium.

Vapor-bath and composition cures nine cases in every ten.

I hope to be understood as speaking for myself alone, when I declare my conviction that the remedies in general use for past centuries are deserving of all the merit which is claimed for them; and yet, with the same discrimination which has secured success in their employment, the botanic agents would be found equally successful, and like "the blessings of the Lord, they would make rich and add no sorrow therewith." But, without such discriminating powers, the vapor-bath, with *lobelia*, would often become the means of increasing debility, or heightening the pressure of the circulating fluids on some delicate and sensitive structure. Let physicians of proper cultivation make trial of the virtue of these means, and we have nothing to dread from the charge of exaggeration.

There is one subject of deep regret to every friend of science and humanity. I allude to the great deficiency in medical knowledge on the part of many who practice under the botanic system. We neither wish nor hope to shelter from public censure those who, for the trifling consideration of fifteen or twenty dollars, go forth with every confidence of success to the treatment of all diseases. The correct and safe practice of physic, whatever means be employed, must spring from a proper knowledge of the various systems, of which man is constituted—the symptoms of the normal and abnormal state—such an acquaintance with pathology as cannot be regarded as a natural gift, and to which we are indebted for all our powers of discrimination and prognosis, and by which we must be guided in all our prescriptions. And to what happy circumstance, gentlemen, are we to attribute the general success of those who are ready to make the mortifying confession of their deficiency on those subjects? Doubtless to the power, the efficacy, and the harmlessness of the means; but chiefly to the vapor-bath, which, in many instances, I am fully convinced, has been the conservative principle in their practice. We are advocates for education: with us the maxim is sacred, "mind is power," and we cannot be made to believe that men can avoid mischievous errors in the practice of physic, let their systems be what they may, whose *judgment*, previously trained, is not exercised on the case in hand. Nor is it possible for any man to know the true state his patient is in, when called to his bedside, who is totally ignorant of pathology. I may add, it will never require the repulsive efforts of educated physicians to keep the uninformed practitioner of any school at a distance. His own consciousness of inequality will forever prevent that friendly, social intercourse, which is so desirable and so becoming in members of the same profession; and take my word for it, that where proper literary advantages are enjoyed there need be no fear of collision nor apprehension of injury, resulting from the intercourse of those who have emanated even from different schools. By this means, and this alone, we expect to see botanic medicines advanced and elevated, and those who adopt it promoted to the same rank and distinction which have been enjoyed by the worthy of the medical profession from the very infancy of the science.

These very halls admonish me, that the sentiments just announced will find a response in every breast. This very edifice will carry down to succeeding generations the pleasing conviction, that Georgia has never been neglectful of her sons—that with you, an education is the best inheritance—that with you, whatever promises the promotion and advancement of the public weal, will ever meet with your most cordial support. Endow your institutions with the proper prerequisites continue to bestow upon them that vigilance and fostering care which have hitherto marked your course, and manifested your devotion to the cause of intellectual cultivation—and, apart from all personal considerations, you will (at no distant day) reap the reward of your labors, in seeing all your public seminaries occupying a distinguished position in that brilliant galaxy which already excites the admiration of surrounding nations. And even this infant institution (now struggling for existence) shall acquire for itself a character and reputation which shall only be equalled by the enviable distinction of him who "plucked his laurels from the vault of Heaven."