

Gibson (W. D.)

Box 3

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE

BEFORE

THE MEDICAL CLASS

OF THE

University of Pennsylvania,

DELIVERED NOV. 4, 1844.

Box 3.

BY WILLIAM GIBSON, M. D.

PROFESSOR OF SURGERY.

PHILADELPHIA:

ISAAC ASHMEAD, PRINTER.

1844.

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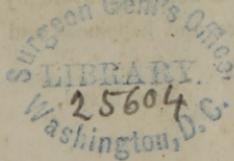
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CORRESPONDENCE.

PHILADELPHIA, NOVEMBER 18, 1844.

Professor GIBSON.

DEAR SIR;—In behalf of the Medical Class of the University of Pennsylvania, the undersigned, their Committee, respectfully solicit of you for publication, a copy of your admirable Introductory, delivered on the fourth instant.

Very respectfully your obedient servants,

THOMAS J. SALE, Ky.	ROBERT D. ROSS, Cherokee Nation.
LEVI S. YATES, N. C.	GEORGE L. BEARD, Upper Canada.
ALFRED W. HARRIS, Tenn.	STARK B. SMITH, N. C.
B. F. RICHARDSON, Ohio.	GEORGE W. VARNUM, Va.
FRANKLIN HART, N. C.	W. E. WALKER, Va.
JOHN E. SHAFFER, Pa.	J. W. BLOUNT, N. C.
JAMES GRAHAM, Ohio.	J. W. WILLIAMSON, N. J.
S. C. HUMPHRIES, Miss.	

PHILADELPHIA, NOVEMBER 18, 1844.

GENTLEMEN,—

I accede to the request made through you, by the Class of the University of Pennsylvania,—to submit a copy of my Introductory, delivered on the 4th inst. for publication. This evidence of regard from one of the largest and most respectable classes ever assembled within the walls of our venerable institution, is peculiarly grateful to my feelings; and I beg you, gentlemen, to accept, individually and collectively, my best wishes for your welfare and happiness, and to believe me to be, very respectfully and truly,

Your friend,

W. GIBSON.

TO MESSRS. THOMAS J. SALE, Ky.
LEVI S. YATES, N. C.
ALFRED W. HARRIS, Tenn.
B. F. RICHARDSON, Ohio.
FRANKLIN HART, N. C.
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INTRODUCTORY.

“IN the summer season, the warm temperature of the air, the beauty of a vivid foliage, and the smiles of universal nature, allure men from their studious retirement, and tempt them to roam in the sunshine from flower to flower; but when the days are gradually contracted, and the cold weather causes the swallow to wing her way to more genial climes, the butterfly to retire to a warm and safe concealment, and the leaf to assume the yellow and russet tinge of autumnal decay, and at length to drop from its parent branch, man sympathises with the scene around him, shrinks under his roof, and into himself—seeks that solace, which the sunny hill and the verdant mead no longer afford him, at the fire-side, in reading or writing, and in contemplating the productions of art during the repose of nature.”

“There seems to be something in the garish splendour of a bright sunshine, rather unfavourable to contemplation. One would almost conclude that the powers of the mind, like vapours, are dissipated in the warm month, and concentrated in the celd. Heat undoubtedly, relaxes the body, and causes an inertness which disposes the mind to partake of any diversion which offers itself in the open air, rather than retire to the laborious occupations of reclusive study. Cold has a contrary effect; and therefore the winter favours the operations of the mind, and induces it to exert itself with peculiar vigour.”

These beautiful passages, quoted from a very celebrated moral and literary writer,* are applicable, I think, to the duties and scenes in which we are about to engage; for in all parts of the world it has been customary to select the winter as best adapted to favour the progress of studies so various and diversified, so complicated and difficult as those pertaining to the science of physic. Hence medical schools have flourished to the greatest extent in all countries where the winters have been so protracted, and at the same time so uniform, clear and salubrious, as to afford that wholesome stimulus to the mind and body, without which exertion sick-

* Vicesimus Knox.

ens and determination dies. But there are extremes of cold, especially when combined with moisture, which are almost as adverse to the human constitution, as the most elevated temperature of even a noxious southern clime. On this account, cities exposed to the piercing blasts of easterly winds, commingled, as they generally are, with driving sleet and rain, and all the force of an ocean storm, which on some of our coasts during the winter months are of weekly, and almost daily occurrence, are little suited to even the temporary residence of the vigorous and strong, and are totally unfit for delicate frames and invalids.

In our own beautiful town, containing at this time several hundred thousand inhabitants, situated in the centre of the United States, surrounded by a picturesque and fertile country, which affords abundant supplies of the most wholesome food, so accessible as to enable the poorest individuals, by moderate exertion, to live in comparative comfort, and even luxury; where the stranger finds board and lodging, and all the necessaries and elegancies of life so cheap and moderate, as to induce him, in many instances, to sojourn for months and years amongst us;—where the freedom from noise and bustle and din, remind the scholar and student, as he perambulates the well-swept streets and verdant, spacious, squares, of academic groves, and all the appliances so favourable to retirement, meditation and research;—where the bouyancy and freshness of the atmosphere, the greater part of the year, tempt the valetudinarian to partake of that exercise in the open air so conducive to bodily health and mental recreation;—where consumption, that direful scourge of the human race, which has almost depopulated so many portions of the habitable globe, is so rare, and so seldom found to *originate*, as almost to establish a proverbial exemption in its favour;—where a refined, cultivated, literary and moral society, as select and as extensive as any in the United States, has, for a very long series of years, exercised a corresponding salutary influence on each rising generation within its circle;—where religious associations, abundantly and bountifully established, spread happiness around, and scatter among distant and heathen nations the light of the gospel, and the vivifying radiance of divine truth and Christian benignity and charity to the ends of the earth—making, through missionary enterprises

and sacrifices, the heart of the poor Indian glad, and the burning sands of African deserts send forth, from her sable and benighted sons, loud hosannas to the Lord of Hosts;—where Sunday-schools, those pure and blessed fountains of Christian charity and beneficence, which, by watering the root of the tree that in by-gone days only cumbered the ground, have enabled it to bear blossoms, and to mature fruit of the most delicious kind, have flourished to an unprecedented extent, and by the force of example, have been propagated from shoots and cuttings which cannot fail, in time, to take root in every soil, and fertilize it to the core.

But by some it may, possibly, be contended that this favourable picture I have drawn is overcharged, or exaggerated; that whatever may have been the condition of our society in former years, that the glory of our house has now departed; that we stand before our country and the world as a disorganizing and rebellious people, as riotous and tumultuous, as blood-thirsty and murderous, as men not having the love and fear of God before our eyes, but as followers of the devil and his works, and as such deserving of the condemnation and execration of all true Christians and peace-loving citizens.

I will venture to ask, in reply to such allegations, if the many are to be made responsible for the acts of the few; if the lawless desperadoes that infest every large town, or capital, who live by crime and murder and rapine, who plan and perpetrate enormities of the deepest die, who, though small in number and individually insignificant and contemptible, yet when combined and bent upon destruction, are not capable, for a time, of disturbing and disgracing any community however large and respectable? That our city has been the scene, latterly, of such exploits, emanating from such ruffians, chiefly foreigners—many of whom, no doubt, have been driven by the laws from their own country, and have taken refuge in ours—has been proved by the investigations that have recently taken place; in which it has been shown that the rights of American citizens have been violated and trampled upon, their persons wantonly assailed and their lives sacrificed; and that they, in a spirit of retaliation, have, most improperly, for such unprovoked and unjustifiable injuries, taken the law into their own hands, and visited upon the heads of their aggressors, and, un-

fortunately, upon innocent persons, in too many instances, the same outrages that were committed upon themselves.

Far be it from me to offer any extenuation for such offences, criminal, in the highest degree, in the eyes of God and of man, and deserving of the severest punishment, to both parties, that laws, divine and human, can inflict. But, why should our fair and beautiful and hitherto quiet and exemplary city, be singled out for insult and degradation, and become a proverb for misrule and violence, as if Baltimore and Boston and Brooklyn and New York and Nauvoo, and some other cities and even villages, had never enacted similar scenes and been equally guilty of mob law and lynch law and mob violence. The truth is, such occurrences are not peculiar to this city, or to other cities, or to our country at large; they are common to European cities and to the world; and it is absurd and ridiculous to throw the odium of such mishaps and misdemeanours upon any one of our communities to-day, when another shall be equally liable to be visited by them to-morrow. I truly believe, however, that nothing has contributed, in the case of Philadelphia, so largely, to the revolting and disgraceful scenes which have recently stained the fair pages of her history, as the acts of leniency and humanity, which for years have been advocated by many of her most pious and exemplary citizens, towards culprits and offenders—by diminishing the severity of the laws, by interfering with prison discipline, by attempts to abrogate capital punishment, and thus assuring rogues and disturbers of the peace and murderers that, if convicted, they will speedily be set at liberty and pardoned by executive clemency. If such be the fact, as there is too much reason to believe, it is, at last, resolved into this—that the very acts of kindness and humanity for which so many of our most peaceable and humane and religious citizens have been so long renowned, and which have shed a lustre upon the city and its benevolent founders, have been the means, through mistaken policy and the purest intentions, of tarnishing her fair fame.

But as bodies politic are like the natural body—which is liable to corruption and decay in proportion as it is bloated and overstrained—is it not to be hoped that, hereafter, through the medium of wholesome laws and a vigorous police, our city will rise above

such disasters, and reassume that station among her sister cities she has so long, deservedly, held in proud pre-eminence? That she will I am very confident; for we are taught by the salutary lessons of experience, that whenever a community has reached an enviable elevation it is apt to fall into disease, and will require, for its recovery, the most vigorous sanatory measures—measures which necessarily lead to enterprise and exertion, and which are sure to be crowned, in the end, by glorious results.

If the views I have taken be correct, can it be surprising that a city, possessing such advantages, from position, climate and all the other attributes I have mentioned—religious, moral, literary, physical—should have taken the lead, at so early a period in the history of our country, in all that pertains to the cultivation of the important and august science of medicine; a science which requires thorough intellectual education and various accomplishments to prepare the way for the investigation of those speculative and theoretical studies, that are essential to practice, and to afford to “*ægris mortalibus*” that comfort and consolation all anxiously seek in the dark hour of tribulation, which too often brings

“Delirious anguish on its fiery wing.”

The very atmosphere, indeed, of this community has been redolent, for the last eighty years, with the fragrance of medical cultivation and skill; emanating from that original fountain of instruction, which so many thousand graduates of our land have quaffed to repletion; and which still continues to pour out copious and undiminished streams of professional information, to the best educated and most respectable class of students, from every quarter of our country, that ever adorned any literary or scientific institution. Do not understand me, however, to show any disposition to boast of the advantages we possess. Great as they are known to be in every department, in all that pertains to the illustration of the lectures, and not excelled, we have reason to believe, by those in any part of the world, still the very act of proclaiming, in detail, what is so well and so generally understood, might be mistaken for that vanity and ostentation so common among individuals and families, who, in proportion as they descend in the scale of pedigree, are loud and boisterous in making known their ancestral

merits, and in claiming kindred with those of rank and birth; while men justly entitled to all the privileges that high and undoubted station can confer, are not apt to blazon them forth, but to pursue, in a meek, quiet and unpretending way, the even tenor of their course. We may be permitted, however, to say, in very general terms, that there is nothing in the shape of preparation, or model, or drawing, or instrument, whether belonging to the anatomical, or obstetrical, or surgical departments; no plant fresh or dried, or specimen relating to *materia medica*; no form of chemical apparatus, of any value, that Europe or America contains, but may be found in the different cabinets attached to our university; all calculated to illustrate every form and variety of disease, every theoretical and practical subject, every experiment, manipulation, and operation.

I have spoken of the salubrity of Philadelphia, as a *city*, and of this there cannot be the smallest doubt; but it would be unfair not to say, that its precincts, and many portions of the surrounding country, are very far from being free from malarious, and even pestiferous influences, which operate powerfully during the months of August and September, upon the constitutions of most of those exposed to the intensity of their action. Hence the various forms of intermittent, remittent, bilious, and congestive fevers, which prevail, every season, to a greater or less extent, in the suburbs of the city, Southwark, Northern Liberties, Penn Township, Spring Garden, and Kensington, having precisely the same type, character, and even malignancy, of those regular and occasional epidemics, which, from time immemorial, have originated in, and been disseminated over the greater part of Virginia, the two Carolinas, Florida, and so many of the Western and South-western States; giving rise to the same secondary forms of disease, showing the same post-mortem appearances, and requiring the same remedies precisely, that have been found for ages past to exercise so powerful an influence over such affections throughout the regions of country just specified; showing an exact correspondence between Philadelphia and Richmond, the latter being, decidedly, one of the healthiest towns in America, while the country surrounding it, furnishes its quota of malarious disease, in proportion to the number of its inhabitants and the den-

sity of its population. The persons mostly exposed to the influences I have mentioned in the vicinity of Philadelphia, are, generally, foreigners, and chiefly Irish emigrants, who, as labourers, weavers, and other manufacturers, settle in the districts liable to infection, and from being unaccustomed to it in their own country, are the more apt to suffer from the virulence of its operation. These people are, generally, too poor to purchase medicines or to avail themselves of private medical attendance, and are, consequently, obliged to become the tenants of our hospitals and almshouses, some of which (especially the Philadelphia Hospital, the largest in the United States, and situated in the very focus of the malarious district and its influences) are filled to overflowing with patients of each sex, and of every age and condition, all labouring under various modifications of autumnal disease, and whose cases, from thus being congregated together, furnish the medical student, attending lectures in this city, with unbounded means of acquiring information in relation to a disease the most prevalent, perhaps, of the state in which he means to reside—information which he could not obtain without great trouble, labour and fatigue, during months or years, in a rural district; where the cases are sparse and scattered over a wide extent of country.

The comparative exemption, too, of this city from phthisis pulmonalis, to which I have already alluded, may be, in part, explained by the fact, long established, that the disease is rare in all districts and countries where intermittent and bilious disorders are found to prevail to the greatest extent. Throughout New England, for example, consumption is a very common disease; and yet we scarcely ever hear of a case of intermittent or bilious fever—so much so that the very names of these diseases are almost unknown among the inhabitants. In the malarious districts of the United States, on the other hand, consumption is comparatively rare. From recent investigation, too, it appears, that the same immunity from phthisical tendency prevails in certain marshy districts of France, where, according to Crozant, intermittents prevail from one end of the year to the other, and often in the most malignant form. From information furnished Crozant by Dr. Lizon, who practised extensively for twenty years in the canton of Donzy, it appears that he has only met with seven cases of

phthisis, most of which were peculiar in their origin and history. It is shown, then, by all I have said, that Philadelphia, as well as its appendages, constituting in fact one large, compact, closely built city, is remarkable for its salubrity, but that the surrounding country is, comparatively, unhealthy for a few weeks in the year, and that this very unhealthiness contributes largely (by furnishing medical students so many examples of prevalent forms of disease, such as they will meet with afterwards in their practice, particularly if they settle in the Southern or Western States) to render it one of the most desirable locations in the Union for most purposes connected with medical instruction.

In reference to the same advantages I may state, that from the numerous rail-roads and canals to and from the city in every direction, the increasing multiplication of manufactories of every description, the vast working population of the city, suburbs and adjacent country, diseases and accidents are becoming more and more frequent, and the patients thereby created so numerous as to fill the large and splendid hospitals, which, for so long a period, have been celebrated throughout the United States for the order, cleanliness, and good management, pervading every department, and the various asylums for the blind, the lame, and the insane; most of which furnish ample opportunities to the industrious student to acquire information, independently of the numerous dispensaries, public and private clinics, and the various arrangements and provisions for obstetrical cases—all affording inexhaustible practical resources, which have long rendered Philadelphia conspicuous and pre-eminent, as the centre of medical and surgical distinction, and thereby the most attractive theatre to students on the continent of America.

There is another view of this subject which should not be lost sight of. It is a well known fact, that change of climate contributes more, in most instances, to foster delicate constitutions and restore broken-down health, than any other remedial agent within the reach of the physician and surgeon. How often does it happen that a trip across the Atlantic, and a sojourn of even a few weeks in England or France, does more for a patient with delicate lungs or stomach, or disordered liver, or shattered frame from almost any cause, than the best medicines ever concocted by the most expe-

rienced chemists or pharmaceutists! Upon the same principle, a student, who, from natural delicacy of constitution, has suffered from the rigour of a northern or eastern atmosphere, or who has been worn down by the extreme summer heat, or the muggy, inelastic, winter temperature of a southern climate, and still further prostrated by the effects of malarious disease, will experience the most salutary change by a few months residence in the middle states. On this point there cannot be a difference of opinion, as all will be ready to testify who have witnessed the extraordinary revolution that has taken place in the appearance and constitution of those students who have come from a distance with delicate frames, but, by a winter's residence in Philadelphia have become robust and ruddy, and lost their sallow complexion and almost cadaverous hue. This change, independently of the temperate climate our city enjoys, may be traced, in part, to the neatness and comfort, and admirable construction of the boarding-houses; kept, for the most part, by ladies who have experienced better days, and are thereby better able to understand the use and mode of preparation of the abundant supplies of wholesome animal and vegetable food with which our market abounds, as well as to the various other comforts growing out of the well-regulated temperature of anthracite fires, which, from thousands of chimneys and furnaces, diffuse a genial heat around that can never be experienced by smaller towns, or in northern or eastern cities, exposed to a rigorous atmosphere, or the noxious influence of easterly winds. In proof of all this I may remark, that there are very few examples of disease or death among medical students sojourning in Philadelphia, notwithstanding their *bona fide* number, in the aggregate, is nearly equal to that of the rest of the United States. When I add that to all these and other salutary influences I might enumerate, the price of board and lodging of the best quality is cheaper than in any other large city of the Union, very strong inducements are held out to those students whose fathers, grandfathers, and, in some instances, great-grandfathers,* have honoured

* A great great grandson of the late Dr. Bond, a distinguished professor in the University of Pennsylvania in 1768, is now, 1844, attending a course of lectures in the same institution.

our city with their attendance on lectures, to follow in their wake, instead of being influenced by the mountebank advertisements and annual proclamations which (through the assistance of postmasters written to, *previously*, for the names of every white man, I had almost said, in their village and county) are showered unsparingly, and at no little cost to the party honoured, upon every respectable physician and student and clergyman in the United States, Canada, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland—not forgetting to pay the same equivocal compliment to every apprentice and tinker, no matter how obscure and retired the nook or corner may be in which he vegetates.

I have thus presented in one general view, the advantages, natural and acquired, belonging to our city and its institutions, and will, in the next place, proceed to offer some remarks upon what I conceive to be the best mode of conducting those studies in which you are now engaged, and, for the completion and consummation of which so many of you have made important sacrifices, by leaving your distant homes, families and friends, and taking up a temporary abode among strangers; with whose habits and modes of life and views and peculiarities you have but slender acquaintance.

Allow me, then, in the first place, to remind you, that however finished your intellectual education may be, whatever abilities or native talent you may possess, you must not calculate upon making much progress in the study of our science, any branch of which is difficult and complicated enough to require all the activity and energy of the most acute and best-regulated mind to unravel its mysteries and master its intricacies, unless you resolve, from the very incipiency of your undertaking, to devote yourself night and day to the accomplishment of your purpose

Having started with this determination, and with inflexible resolution to overcome every difficulty that may lay in your path,

“Et tollere humo victorque virum volitare per ora,”

you are next to lay down a judicious and systematic plan of study; such as will lead you, gradatim, from the most simple elementary principles and truths pertaining to each subject, within the range of your investigation, up to the intricate, and too often inexplicable

phenomena, which involve doctrines and practices of the deepest interest and highest importance to professional reputation, and the security and welfare of those patients, who, at no distant day, will fall into your hands. You are to determine, ab initio, what particular courses you will attend, or whether you will attend them all, which, for those sufficiently advanced, is always the better plan, and then select for your reading such standard works, whether of ancient or recent date, as have received the unqualified sanction and commendation of the best professional judges, carefully avoiding the trashy and catch-penny publications that will assail you at every corner, whether manufactured by young and inexperienced writers on the other side of the water, or by a few compilers and hucksters of other men's brains of our own country, who often take bodily, without acknowledgment, or permission, whole pages and even chapters, besides illustrations and plates, of English, French, and German publications, with as little hesitation and compunction concerning other men's rights, and with as little respect for public opinion, as if it were impossible to include *them* in the class of drones to whom will apply the well known lines,

“Sic vos non vobis mellificatis apes.”

With the standard books you have selected as your guides—and remember you can use no other during the winter—you are to enter upon the study of each branch of the lectures. You are to fix your minds attentively upon every subject presented to your view, and suffer no extraneous circumstances to divert you from the details and demonstrations you may hear and witness; endeavouring to hoard up in your memory every striking fact and important observation, by very brief notes, or memoranda, quickly taken; not attempting, as too often done, to write down every word, a task the most experienced stenographer could hardly accomplish, and in aiming at which you, necessarily, lose the chain of the discourse, and are rewarded, for your pains, with a mutilated fragment, in too many instances expressing directly the reverse of what the lecturer has said and done. After each lecture you are to refer to your books and notes, in order to correct false impressions, and to fix, indelibly, in your mind, the fundamental

principles that have been inculcated; for when these are once thoroughly understood, the inferences from them are easily deduced and stored up in their proper place—whence they can be drawn at any moment, and applied to a great variety of purposes.

Most of you come to this place with some preparatory knowledge of elementary branches. You are versed, perhaps, in the rudiments of anatomy, chemistry and materia medica, without which preliminary studies you would find it impossible to acquire minute and extensive information on surgery, obstetrics, institutes, and practice of medicine, engrafted as these latter departments are upon the former, and between which there exists a connecting medium, or link, that cannot be displaced, or broken, without deranging, or destroying, the totality of the fabric.

With these advantages on your side, advantages you could not possess in the incipency of your studies (for the beginning of every undertaking, however simple and unimportant the nature and character of it may be, presents obstacles to its attainment, which can only be overcome by inflexible determination and assiduous perseverance) your task will be found comparatively easy; provided you do not suffer, for a single moment, sloth to benumb your faculties or overpower your exertions; for mental indolence is a weed of such sure and rapid growth as soon takes possession of the richest soil, and not only chokes and smothers the roots of the most vigorous plants, but, in a little time, annihilates their vital principle, leading to that decay and fermentation which necessarily result from the process of putrefaction. Suffer not your minds, then, to become torpid and stagnant by the contagious and withering influence of idlers and drivellers around you, if any such there be, who, whatever talent they may inherit, or possess, are so hurried away by the busy and pleasurable scenes that occupy their thoughts, amidst the gay and dissipated haunts of a large metropolis, as to waste their activity and time in worthless pursuits, to the destruction of their dearest interests, and the neglect of those duties the fulfilment of which alone can lead to future prosperity and fame. Few, if any such, however, I am happy to say, are ever to be found within the walls of this institution, occupied, as it ever has been, since its foundation, with young and educated men and with gentlemen, many of whom are now

spread over our whole country, and exercise an influence, literary, moral and professional, not exceeded in extent and importance, by any other class of society in the Union.

And why have such respectable students continued to flock to our standard, from the remotest corners of our land? Why are our graduates more distinguished, more respectable, more honoured, more influential than most other graduates? Because our laws are as fixed and unchangeable; because our examinations are as uniform, liberal, considerate, unembarrassing to the student, gentle, paternal, pains-taking, as they were fifty years ago. Because our means of furnishing information to our pupils are unbounded, our devotion to business unceasing and untiring, and because we endeavour, to the utmost, to be honourable and upright, and conscientious in the discharge of all our duties. And it is equally true that our students are as well prepared by education, by previous training here, or under the guidance of distinguished preceptors at a distance, by the knowledge they acquire from lectures, public and private, from reading, from attendance upon hospitals, as any young men, individually or collectively, upon the face of the globe. And if it is also true, as it certainly is, that rigid as our examinations are, we have occasion to reject but few, considering the great number of our candidates, this is more owing to their own intelligence and uncommon qualifications, the result of intense application and study, and regular attendance upon the lectures, than to any favouritism or want of care or want of strictness on our parts. Before, I may add, we could be induced to resort to any devices, or tarnish, by any foul means, the high standing of our ancient and respectable school, we would sooner see it irretrievably ruined and sunk beyond the possibility of resuscitation, into that yawning gulf which, inevitably awaits, sooner or later, every institution, no matter where it may be situated, which fails to pursue, from beginning to end, an open, manly and honourable course.

I have said that anatomy, chemistry, and materia medica, are the elementary branches upon which other superstructures are afterwards to be reared. How important then that such foundations should be closely examined, and the materials composing them accurately laid together, and built up, before you venture to

erect parts of the edifice requiring nicer adjustment, more complicated adaptation and higher finish. To anatomy, especially, your first and most earnest attention should be directed, not only because it constitutes the basis of all medical and surgical and physiological knowledge, but because it leads, irresistibly, to the conclusion that every part of the animal frame, from the most simple in construction up to the most minute and complicated, is the result of an all-wise and beneficent design, and that the Divine and Almighty Architect, in the multiplied and innumerable and varied contrivances for the particular ends and purposes displayed, has furnished irresistible and irrefragable evidence, without the necessity of further demonstration, of consummate power and wisdom and adorable goodness—such as should turn the most skeptical and confirmed infidel from the error of his way, and lead him to acknowledge the infinite glory and mercy of a God. With minds thus imbued and made to feel, at every step of your progress, how weak and insignificant and worthless and perishable you are, how delicate and complicated and liable to derangement and disease the texture of your own frames, will you not be led to exclaim,

“Strange that a harp of thousand strings
Should keep in tune so long,”

and to pursue with increasing ardour and devotion that study, the knowledge of which may be so important to yourself and to those fellow beings who may hereafter trust you with their diseases and their lives? Will not the same pure, devotional spirit prompt you, whilst in the pursuit of this and other kindred branches of science, to conduct your investigations with that seriousness and attention to decency and decorum which are so becoming in the youthful and inexperienced, which will lead you insensibly to avoid waste and profusion in your dissections and operations upon the sacred relics of the dead, and inspire you with such pure and holy sentiments as will conduct you, safely and honourably, through every path of human duty, and finally lead to that imperishable glory and immortality, without which your career, however successful and brilliant in this hemisphere, will prove but as “vanity and vexation of spirit.”

To me the duty does not belong to point out, specifically, the mode of acquiring anatomical information. This will be furnished by others thoroughly competent to the task, and better able, by weight of undoubted authority, to enforce all they recommend.

Than chemistry there cannot be a more interesting and important science, because it relates to almost every department of physical knowledge; furnishes to the physician and surgeon some of their most potent and valuable remedial agents; and is so closely connected with innumerable operations of domestic life, as to deserve the study and investigation of every human being capable of thought, or able to understand its application and uses. But it is, at the same time, so abstruse in its nature, so endless in its details and manipulations, so changeable in its character, owing to the perpetual discoveries that are taking place, so universal in its operation, so extensive in its applications, so remote in many of its bearings from medical inquiries and pursuits, as to render it impossible for any student, however brilliant his mental powers may be, and indefatigable his industry and perseverance, to unravel all its mysteries, and make himself master of its intricacies—so long, at least, as he has other difficult and important studies to engage his attention. Nor will such proficiency be asked or expected of him. All that can be reasonably required will be an accurate acquaintance with such general principles as are known to be firmly and unchangeably established, and with such practical details, as are indispensable to every man destined to engage in the duties of the medical profession. Such, too, have ever been the views of the distinguished gentleman presiding over this department of our lectures; a gentleman who, from the brilliancy of his discoveries, the originality of his views, the multiplicity of his inventions in the shape of most ingenious and useful apparatus, the unbounded extent of his chemical and philosophical knowledge, the liberality and profusion of his expense in the illustration of his lectures, and the kindliness of his disposition and heart, has no competitor on this side of the Atlantic; and who has won from European chemists that meed of praise which has never been awarded to any American since the days of Franklin.

The department of *materia medica* and pharmacy, simple and uninteresting as it is too often considered, in most institutions, is

one of very wide scope and extensive application ; embracing, within its range, not only an immense number of active remedial means and noxious agents capable of exerting the most deadly power, unless properly directed and controlled, but requiring for its illustration extensive chemical information, and a large share of practical knowledge, in medicine, surgery, and other branches. Not only so ; but the very materiel required for the elucidation of such a course is almost unlimited in extent, and so expensive in its character, as to be beyond the reach of most individuals engaged in teaching it. On this account, it has been customary, from time immemorial, both in Europe and in this country, to treat the subject *theoretically*, and, at the same time, to indulge in copious disquisitions upon the causes, symptoms, and treatment of disease ; in some instances to such an extent, as nearly to furnish a course upon the practice of medicine. For the last ten years, this department in our University has been treated as a *demonstrative* branch, and every plant of any virtue, or held in estimation, in any part of the world, for its medical properties, exhibited in its fresh and growing state, and in full luxuriance, as well as dried specimens of the same, and of every other article in materia medica, from the mineral and animal kingdoms, at all known or appreciated—thus presenting to the medical student, unbounded opportunities of acquiring information on subjects not, perhaps, to be obtained to the same extent, in any part of the United States ; and derived from a gentleman of ample resources, and in every way qualified, by nature and education and practical skill in his profession ; all of which are made tributary to the support and improvement of his chair, and to the reputation of the school to which he belongs.

Having devoted yourselves assiduously, and mastered these fundamental branches, you will then be able to comprehend without difficulty, all you may hear and read on the other departments. You will enter at once with spirit, upon the principles and practice of obstetrics. You will divest yourselves of the erroneous impression, so prevalent among the ignorant and the vulgar, that this department, from the supposed simplicity of its character, and the facility of its practice, will not require much of your thought and study. This you will soon discover to be a most serious and

sometimes fatal mistake. You will, indeed, speedily ascertain that of all the branches of art it is, in many respects, the most complicated and difficult, demanding close attention and observation to form accurate conceptions of the anatomical structure, much ingenuity and judgment to understand the different measurements, diameters, and malformations of the pelvis, the various fœtal positions, the diseases accompanying and growing out of pregnancy, and above all the judgment and discretion, and cool, imperturbable, patient, and courageous character required by nature for the exercise of the art,—an art practised exclusively upon the loveliest portion of the human race; upon the refined, the delicate, the accomplished partners of our bosoms, upon those we would not willingly see exposed to protracted and cruel sufferings, upon those often unnecessarily sacrificed, together with their innocent offspring, by the rude hands of temerity and ignorance. Surely, if there were no other motives to prompt to the study of this most important and difficult branch, these humane and fatherly and brotherly considerations should have their full effect and weight. But to those, if there be such, to whom appeal of this kind may be made in vain, may I not condescend to suggest selfish motives when I say, that of all medical occupation or employment, there is none so surely followed by the gratitude of patients and families, none so munificently rewarded, and at the same time, none so arduous and responsible, and followed by such tremendous retribution and public indignation, if practised without skill, without delicacy, without humanity? To this I may add, that many a practitioner, in other respects skillful and intelligent, from mismanagement of an obstetrical case, and the death of the patient, has lost his business and been utterly ruined. It affords me much satisfaction to say, that long as our city has been celebrated for practitioners of consummate skill and experience, in this most important and intricate of branches, foremost among whom were a Shippen, a James, and a Dewees, that she has lost nothing, in latter years, through their successors a Hodge and a Meigs, both deservedly held in the highest estimation at home and abroad, both occupying positions from which they are dispensing incalculable good to the rising generation of medical men, by illuminating the

path in which they have so devotedly trodden, by the light of their example, experience and success.

Of the institutes of medicine, comprehending within its spacious domain, physiology, pathology, nosography, therapeutics, and indeed the entire range of our science, need I say, that talents of high order, finished education, ample stores of varied information on all the branches, connected with medicine and the auxiliary sciences, must be concentrated and made to bear directly upon each important disquisition presented to a student's mind. Few then, it may be imagined, very few, are to be found in this or any other country, from whom profound and enlightened views may be expected to proceed, during their attempts to unravel the mysteries of this almost unfathomable branch of medical literature. Fortunate, therefore, doubly fortunate, may we consider ourselves in possessing a colleague so highly gifted in intellectual endowments, so enthusiastic in temperament, and so untiring in research as to be willing and able to penetrate the depths of each scientific region, bring forth the hidden treasures of its recesses, and scatter them in every direction with a bountiful and unsparing hand.

Of the value of the department of the practice of medicine to every student who expects to engage, hereafter, in the duties of the profession, it would seem almost superfluous to speak—well known, as it must be, to the merest tyro, as the capital that crowns the column of the whole fabric. Still less needful is it to allude to the exalted merit and unequalled powers of that personage, who for the last forty years, with a rare combination of eloquence, wisdom, learning and popularity, may be said during that period, by his precepts and example and personal influence, to have educated and formed the character of more than three-fourths of our medical men, and who still retaining, though not “*ter ævo functus*,” all his varied powers and faculties unimpaired, now stands forth, in full relief, as the acknowledged and undisputed Nestor of the profession, throughout our wide spread land.

It still remains to speak of another department—that of surgery—one in which most students take a deep and abiding interest, because they realize in the principles by which it is governed, and in the practice which follows, if properly applied, those almost unerring and glorious results that have raised it in public estimation,

to the rank of one of the exact sciences. And such it has been considered, and ever will be by the great authorities in the profession. But it has unfortunately happened, that, in too many instances, its principles have been overlooked by those who are unable to comprehend their value, and the practice of it made to consist, chiefly, in bold and bloody operations, such as are calculated, from the horror they excite, and the interest they create for the patient's sufferings and safety, in the minds of those who hear of or witness such exploits, to lead ambitious young men to resort without judgment, upon many occasions to the knife, before they have employed more simple and less painful and hazardous means, that in the hands of wise and experienced surgeons have been often found of inestimable value, and to supersede, entirely, the necessity of an operation. Others, influenced by sordid motives, have pursued the same unwarrantable course to a greater extent, when there is reason to believe that their own heads and hearts have secretly condemned the work of their hands. Such examples are contagious and perilous, by captivating bold and illiterate men of weak understanding, whose only merit consists in slight mechanical ingenuity and a modicum of dexterity, and inducing them to take up, without license, certain parts of the profession, in order that they may obtain a living, and, at the same time, gratify their keen and unnatural appetites for torture and for blood. Men of this description are to be found in every large town, and in every state of the Union, and indeed throughout the world, sometimes in the shape of bone-setters, sometimes in the form of spine doctors, sometimes in the fashion of oculists, who stretch and tear and twist and crush the bones and joints, and cut and carve the necks and backs and limbs and eyes of unfortunate patients, weak and silly enough to trust to their promises, and submit to their cruel and wicked depredations upon their persons and pockets. But such arts and impostures are not peculiar to surgery; they pervade other departments of the profession, and are to be met with among those, who from fiddlers and dancing masters and mechanics have become homœopaths, or water doctors, or Thompsonians, or have turned to other species of quackery and have promised boldly to cure consumption and every other variety of incurable disease. To such a pitch of extravagance,

indeed, has this foul system of trickery now arrived, that we, not unfrequently, hear of intelligent and respectable patients, laying down, in advance, large sums of money, and suffering themselves to be charmed, from month to month, out of additional fees, by some glass-polisher or spectacle-maker, cunning enough to persuade them, that the medicines alone he employs, for the restoration of their weak and imperfect sight, cost nearly as much as all he demands for his services; and to prove the truth of his assertion, refers to some particular druggist who, alone, vends the genuine article, and who, in collusion with his employer, is dishonest enough to confirm the statement of the quack, and pocket his proportion of the fraudulent amount. In numerous instances, the exorbitant demand of five hundred dollars has been made for a very small quantity of the medicine prescribed or furnished; and what is still more remarkable, paid by the patients without hesitation. Quackery, however, of every description, has existed from the beginning of the world, and will continue to exist, so long as there are to be found victims weak enough to be governed by its delusions. It is to be found at the bar, in the pulpit, in the senate, among politicians, among the high, the low, the rich and the poor, in all classes of society, among the intelligent and the ignorant, among females and males, among matrons and maids, among the old, the middle aged and the young; and like the vagaries of *Millerism*, will continue to turn heads, and addle brains, until the time really arrives when the earth shall be burned up. Need we, therefore, give ourselves much trouble about it, and may we not honestly accede to the proposition—after having recorded our admonitions to the contrary—“*Si populus vult decipi, decipiatur?*”

It is not my intention, in this discourse, to enter further into the merits of surgery—that department entrusted to my own care. My object, throughout, has been rather to glance at matters which pertain to the general course, and to touch, briefly, upon points that might, perhaps, be interesting to some of you as strangers, and likely to require information, at once, on topics of some interest or importance. It having devolved upon me to open the course, this mode of treating my subject has appeared the more necessary and appropriate. In other introductions that will follow, in due season, I shall dwell, with sufficient minuteness, upon the plan

that ought to be pursued to derive full advantage from the surgical course, in which we are about to engage.

Allow me, in the next place, to say a few words upon matters which as deeply concern your interests as any amount of information you may derive from the lectures. I will take it for granted that most of you—from inexperience, and at your age from the very nature, inherently, of your constitutions—like active and gay young men, all over the world, are liable to be led into the path of temptation. This feeling you will experience more or less at home, and in all situations, but it will operate with double strength, when surrounded by the gayeties of a large and fashionable city, where hundreds will cater to your appetites and wants, and lead you on from innocent amusements so insensibly to gross and pernicious indulgences, as at last to involve you in all the guilt and degradation of licentious and even criminal courses—such as will undermine or ruin your health, demoralize your principles, and sacrifice all your best hopes of conducting to an honourable close those studies in which you are now engaged,—studies which your parents and friends fondly hope, for your own sake and theirs, you will pursue “*caste, caute, diligenterque,*” and return when the term of your probation has expired, to your family and homes with that consciousness of having well acted your parts, and with those proofs of your success, which will make their old hearts leap with joy, and cause them to cluster around you with such affection as the heart of a parent only knows. Let your constant prayer, then, be from this moment,

“Lead me not into temptation.”

With this wish always in your mind, and this motto always before your eyes, how can you go astray? how can you be drawn towards those snares already set and baited for your destruction? how can you be enticed into those arms ever open to encircle you? into those bosoms palpitating for your reception? into dens of vice and iniquity, which, if you once enter, you can never return from unscathed? How can you be persuaded to touch that sparkling bowl which presents “*delicious poison to the eye,*” and which if you swallow once you will drink again? how can you trim your

midnight lamp in the delusive pleasure and toil of a game of chance? how can you, in short, be overcome by any temptations, however bright and alluring they may be, and induced to swerve from that pure and upright course you have chosen as your guide, and deviate into those paths which only lead to unutterable woe?

Viewing, as I do, the intoxicating cup as the root and branch of all these evils and a thousand more, calculated to sink him into interminable depths, who, "pleno se proluit auro," gives himself up to the fascinating emotions which spring from its habitual use, how can I avoid lifting up my voice, feeble though it be, to warn you against the temptations of that incarnate fiend, who with liquid fire and forked tongue is ever ready to lure you on to the gates of destruction, and then, with laughing scorn, to mock and gibe you amid the wreck and ruin he has wrought. Those of you who may have heard of revered parents lost, or known of beloved brothers crushed beneath the giant strides of this colossal power; who may have seen aged and tender mothers or beauteous sisters pine with grief, "then drop into the grave," can only realize the anguish which torn and bleeding bosoms feel under the degrading and afflictive pressure of such awful and calamitous desolation.

Two winters ago a society was formed, under the auspices and immediate agency of distinguished members of our class, with the view of breaking down the mighty power of the monster intemperance, who, at unguarded hours assailed some of the best and most talented of their body, whose warm hearts, social dispositions, generous impulses, and noble natures exposed them, in too many instances, to temptations they could not resist. The beneficial influences, thus resulting, from so praiseworthy a confederation, induced other members of the class, during the last session, in conjunction with a few of the original members, to reorganize the society. Their efforts were perfectly successful, so much so that Christmas, that period in former years so ominous of evil, and, in many instances, so disastrous to students, approached without any demonstration of irregularity, and passed away, so quietly, as to astonish the mayor and other city authorities, who were already upon the alert to meet the customary outbreaks. Not an instance, indeed, within my knowledge, occurred, during the whole winter, of any difficulty between our students and the citizens; and such an ex-

ample of order and regularity had not been furnished, previously, for twenty years. It is true, admonitions had been offered to the class in some of the introductorys, in relation to these expected difficulties; but I am well persuaded that the peace and harmony which prevailed, during the whole session, were mainly owing to the powerful operation of the temperance association of which I have spoken—for nearly two hundred students, I believe, were enrolled among its members, and most of them actively engaged in promoting its cause. Under all these circumstances may I not venture to call the attention of the class, many of which are, no doubt, members of the society, to its speedy resuscitation—in confident expectation that the same glorious results, from which were reaped so many laurels last season, will be renewed this winter, and with seven-fold effect?

I have trespassed, my young friends, too long, I fear, upon your patience. I will not detain you, therefore, further than to say,—that engaged, closely, as you will be with your medical studies, during the whole winter, you can still find time for the exercise of those higher duties you owe to that Omnipotent power, under whose fostering care you live and move; and from whom, alone, you are to expect that prosperity in this world and happiness in the next, you must all so ardently desire.

