AN INAUGURAL DISSERTATION
ON
Abuses of Medicine

SUBMITTED TO THE
PRESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, AND MEDICAL FACULTY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF NASHVILLE,
FOR THE DEGREE OF
Doctor of Medicine.

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BOOKSELLERS AND STATIONERS,
NASHVILLE, TENN.
It is evident from the best of historians, that medicine was practiced long before the civilizations of Greece; and that it was greatly mingled with the grossest superstition, and the wildest hypothesis. Being confined, almost exclusively to the care of the priests, who generally entailed the profession upon their eldest sons. Those inheriting the abominations and superstitions of their fathers, confined the science to the narrow precincts of their own limited views. They had accordingly, fixed days appointed, for the application of all remedies; and then they supposed to be under the influence and direction of some supernatural agency, and like all ignorant and semi-barbarous people, they
believed that diseases were to be cured by the special interposition of some superior being, and that religious ceremonies, or forms of worship, were more efficacious in the recovery of health, than any of the most effectual remedies in medical science. Emerging however by a slow and gradual step, from those depths of ignorance and superstition, through a lapse of years, it was at length arranged into a regular science by the learning of Greece, and taught, in the temples of the famed Asclepius. And from this epoch, our best authorities generally state, the dawn of medicine as a science. Homer we think speaks of him as a God of the healing art. His remedies were engraven in durable tables, which in all probability aided in perpetuating his
name to posterity. From this ancient
day of science and literature, we have
but few names on record, who were much
distinguished for medical science, until
the days of Hippocrates, who was his
eighteenth lineal descendant.
The profession being hereditary followed
from the days of Esculapius to this day.
Upon this ancient worthy, the Faculty in
general of all ages, as by common consent,
have conferred the enviable name of the
Father of physic.
He flourished four hundred and sixty
years, before the birth of Christ. He esta-
blished the science upon the firm basis
of reason, and supported many of his
positions upon the principles of pain
and legitimate deductions. But notwith-
standing from the imperfect state of many
of the science at that day; he still retained some of the remnants of Egyptian superstition. It was at length transferred to Italy, by Archigenes a Greek, and treated as a science by Cato, who with all his learning and praises attributed the art of healing to secretive incantations and charms.

Shortly afterwards arose Galen, whose unlimited learning, unrestrained researches, and indefatigable application, crowned him with a fame commensurate with the existence of medicine.

After the fall however of Rome, the Galenian authority began to decline, and with its decline medicine soon deteriorated into mere empiricism and quackery. In the lapse of time however, this shroud of ignorance was
removed and medicine with the other sciences, began again to assume their former stand. Shortly after this, we find the names of Boerhaave, of Hall, and Hoffman, with a host of others; and of still later date, a Bucull, a Brown, and a Bichat, who with many others, by their learning and abilities, have succeeded in establishing the science upon a firm, and immutable basis.

Since the introduction of the Baconian, or inductive philosophy, which has been properly applied to physical, or natural science, in which medicine is included, we have many as well attested facts, which are as conclusive in their results, as the solution of any of the problems of theology. The broad basis it seems which is assumed by this philosophy
is to take nothing for granted, admit no proposition in science whatever to be true, until it has been proven to be so. As long then (it really seems) as this course of reasoning is pursued, and rightly applied to medicine, it is so long strictly scientific; and self-evident facts must be the result. Medicine, we do content, has property this claims and rests in many respects upon positions as immovable and unalterable in their nature, as a Pythagorean right-angle triangle. But it is also equally true that as literature advances, we have almost immeasurable additions, drawn forth from these well-tried positions, and by the aid of science, additions and well-tried facts are accumulated.
and medicine upon the principles of science is still advancing.
But in this advancement, which has for its object the happiness of the human race, we have too frequently to regret the many obstacles, which are thrown in its way; which oppress and obscure its and in many respects materially retard its progress.

Some of these evils which are making their invades upon the progress and greatly obstructing and retarding its progress; we now propose to notice.
The first, and a well-known set of crafty and ignorant pretenders, who are infecting the country with their poison, their seeds, and their steams, under the self-styled appellation of Root Doctors.
Steam Heaters. Thompsonians and
a mongrel breed we have, professed
something of the nature of both.
These bold and ignorant pretenders,
with a stern front and brazen
know frequently assume to themselves,
all the knowledge of the profession
and even pretend to more, than the
most scientific has ever yet ventured
to claim. The knowledge to be
acquired by them in a few
months, with but merely a show
of application and study; and in
such a proficiency as to condemn
three fourths of the greatest musical
talent in Europe, which has had its
growth and progress for near three
thousand years, and nine tenths of that,
of the United States. What a wonderful discovery of modern age! How a few ignorant pretenders, are able to detect the pernicious qualities and deleterious effects of long reputed remedial agents, is truly involved in mystery. Almost one third of our most potent remedies, which have borne the test and scrutiny of the proudest science, and which for ages have been successfully cultivated by skilful hands, against the inward attacks of disease, are by one broad sweep stricken from the catalogue of medicines, and condemned without trial or mercy, as being destructive to the happiness and health of the human race.
ignorant, of even their component parts, and leading properties, or any of their affinities or adaptations to disease; how they could ever arrive at a knowledge of their mode of operation upon the human system, or pernicious results; except through the influence of magic alone, we are unable to determine. Yet they condemn them with so much boldness and confidence, as though they knew all about them, and with so much assurance and belief, that they actually knew more about the nature of those remedies, than the greatest medical talent that the world affords. Nor does this look reasonable. Or rather, is it not approaching to the preposterous; or
or absolutely ridiculous, in its degree of absurdity. But from the nature of peculiar circumstances, many are disposed to believe it. And such is the nature of a singular prejudice of many against scientific medicine; withholding their minds, from the proper exercise of their functions, and leading them into such a strange infatuation upon this subject; that they are actually disposed to believe the most unproven reports, and insinuous abuses from its enemies. Of all the professions which have a name or a stand in the world, there is none which is so necessarily defensible, and so much exposed to the meritorious abuses of unblushing pretending as the science of medicine. Being in many respects occult in its
nature, and profound in its claims; its knowledge of course is confined to the few; and unfortunately for our country, it is but to too few. We have many who are professed doctors, but comparatively few, who have any just claims to the distinguished name of scientific physicians. But so far this evil really is and as much as it is truly to be regretted, such must be the state of the science as long as its present obstructions continue to exist, and due rewards are withheld from true worth and merit. Those public evils, however, under which modesty and worth have been so often repined, are owing more are are persuaded, to a misconception of
the public mind, than any intentional disparagement of true worth and merit.

But these evils are to be corrected, only by the Faculty asserting their claims, exposing those absurdities, and showing to what depths of art and hypocrisy many would have the community their willing dupes.

In order that we may see what acquisitions are absolutely indispensable to entitle one to any just claims of the Knowledge of medicine, we will briefly relate its leading branches.

First Anatomy, which treats of the organization and structure of the human form. Physiology, which teaches the science of life and the laws which regulate it through the various functions
of the system. Morbid Anatomy which is closely connected with the two former, and exhibits the various alterations of structure affected by disease.

The Theory and Practice of medicine, which investigates the cause and symptoms of all morbid affections, and teaches their treatment and cure. Materia Medica which Treats of the virtues and properties of all medicines whether animal, vegetable, or mineral.

Surgery which explains the art of performing surgical operations which is practicable and safe upon the human system. Midwifery which instructs in the management of diseases peculiar to females alone. The Institutes of Physic, explaining the true method of medicinal
instruction, and treating of the established truths of the science and the manner of comparing the natural heal. 
The state of the system with the various changes suffered by disease. Chemistry, which investigates the properties and character of all medical substances; and Pharmacoeutic chemistry, a branch of which directs the methods of preparing them for use.

To these we may add: Philosophy of the human mind, Mineralogy, and Medical jurisprudence.

We may not be enabled to acquire a critical knowledge of all those various branches, but it is all important that we should have a general idea of their leading truths. This being the case, how is it possible
for those to form any correct idea of the most simple branches connected with this science, who are perfectly void of the first sentiments of education. But as obvious as this inconsistency really is, there are many who enter upon the profession without ever the traces of a preparatory education, under the impression, that by remaining a few months in some of the shops of the Sobelians, they will be prepared for all the difficult and arduous duties of the profession. Now what can be expected of such upon the most rational conclusions, more than flippant boasters and loud trumpeters of their own mighty deeds and the wonderful powers of Sobelia.
Still these are our great reformers, who are pouring their perpetual an-
thernas upon scientific medicine, and
especially upon that monster Salome.
These are they who would have the
world believe, that they are actu-
ally in possession of many safe
prompt and effectual means, which
the regular faculty are entirely
ignorant of, or have not as yet appli-
ced to the cure of disease.
But unfortunately for this system
of fraud and intrigue, with all its
coverings, it cannot stem the current
of science, for even its exhibition
alone, it can but develop its own natu-
ral deformity, and like the frost work
of fancy, it will ultimately dissolve
into its original nothingness.
When however we take into consideration the state of the public mind, in regard to scientific medicine, and the art, and artifice, and maneuverings of many of the propagators of this system of fraud, the mystery seems naturally to solve itself.

Thus the arch intriguers in many respects and we give them credit for knowing how to conduct it to their own advantage.

In proof of this, we have seen a striking instance in the case of a young man who had been laboring under chronic affection of the liver.

He was treated by scientific physicians.

But the disease being obstinate the case of necessity was serious.

About the time however that the
disease was being brought to a favorable issue, one of these Thompsonians happened in and with his lobelia and flaxseed commenced his operations. The lobelia from its nausea-producing and relaxing properties probably produced a happy effect, and the young man continued to mend as formerly and perhaps something faster. The cure was at once attributed to the lobelia, which was declared to have specific effects in all diseases of the liver. From its specific effects upon the liver it was soon confidently asserted to be a cure in asthma, and consumption, and various other diseases.
Now is this the way to deal with an important science?
Should not such an entire departure from all canons, such a gross violation of all that is decorous and noble in science, and in fact such an aggravation unto base fraud in imposture, meet with the severest reprobations?
We should therefore with the true spirit of candor, expose those attitudes of whatever shape, grade, or character, they may be.
The lives of our fellow beings never should be made the sport of mere whims and tricks, or a wild alternative game. Frequently they are in a good work committed to the care of the physicians. We often have to stand by the bedside, between the
grappling of some powerful disease, and the apparent approach of death. The scene is momentous and the moral responsible to well-known facts and well-tried truths, we must then advert, all our knowledge be it more or less, and all the faculties of our minds must be brought to bear. The powers of the judgment should be concentrated upon the phenomena, that are then present. A speedy and final dissolution is threatened, and can only be prevented by the restoration of proper order, upon the principles of science. What then should we do with Rootism, Thompsonianism or mongulism.
Should we suffer, our reason dethroned, and be driven from the last act of hope in this perilous and momentous hour; when the life of a fellow-being is in jeopardy and the issue perhaps depending upon our skill and judgement, should we then be moved by capricious whim or fanatical delusion, or drawn from our post by the machinations of heretic pretenders? Humanity forbids it, all honesty forbids it, and a just and proper regard for the worth and importance of the science forbids it.

Nothing should divest us from the basis of truth, but upon those firm pillars of the science we should rest unyielding at our post.
amidst all the glowings of an empirical flummery, or even the sneers
and scoffs of malignancy.
Those who would willingly blind
and deafen we can but regard as
ill-fated thrones of an unnatural
growth, which would grow and
harden the proposition for a time;
but being incapable of maturity,
their speedy death is inevitable.
As meteors of the night which have
originated from the foulness of
the atmosphere, they can but show
their splittings for the moment,
and sink again into their
original nothingness,
But let even therown of indigna-
nee, continue to rest upon all such
attempts at the adulteration of
Those principles which ages of wisdom and learning have established for the care of humanity, let us hail with the spirit of philanthropy, the onward march of all true worth in science, whose aim is the mitigation of the condition of man, and whose end is bliss eternal. Let monopoly divest its course or no such hand obstruct its path.