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## DR. WEBSTER'S INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

SINCE Geneva Medical College has become known and taken its position among the standard schools of the United States, it is natural that the medical public should wish an acquaintance with those to whom its destiny, for weal or for woe, is entrusted. When we first received the pamphlet which has called forth these observations, it was supposed to be the introductory lecture of Dr. Webster, the professor of chemistry in the institution for medical instruction in this city. This is by no means strange, since he opened the course in Boston, a few weeks ago, and his discourse was so highly spoken of, that some have probably been waiting in full hope and expectation of its publication. The manuscript, however, is presumed to be in the learned author's desk; and the one so prim and neatly printed, to which we have above alluded, is by another Dr. Webster, a light of science in the West, whose personal influence and usefulness will favorably compare with the accomplishments, literary industry and perseverance in the pursuits of science, of his namesake of the East. James Webster, M.D., holds the chair of Anatomy at Geneva. When the present course of lectures commenced, a few weeks since, the introductory delivered by this gentleman was so much admired, that permission was sought to put it in a form to be accessible to others. Like a sensible man, he gratified the applicants. But the Professor must be permitted to speak for himself.

"But little more than half a century since, and the place we occupy was a howling wilderness, tenanted only by the wild beast of the forest, and peopled by a savage race, over the remembrance of whose wrongs we pay the tribute of a tear, as we track their flight in characters of blood, from the wigwags of their fathers, the altars of their sires, and their happy hunting-grounds, to find a refuge beyond the haunts of civilization, where they may again assemble around their council-fires, undisturbed by the intrusion of the pale face. Touching but incidentally upon this topic, memories of the recent past crowd upon us in rapid succession, and the mighty revolution which has here been effected within the life-time of man, tells, in characters of living light, the glorious destiny which is reserved for this favored region of our happy land. And now, therefore, whilst the ear can almost catch as it fades in the distance, the dying echo of the moccason tread of the last of the Senecas, imagination carries us back to that period of our history, when the wild notes of war were borne upon the breeze, and re-echoed from the mountain glen; when the martial tramp of the war-horse, and the shrill click of the Indian's rifle, told here of contention, of struggling, and of death."

After the introduction of a few further historical recollections of western New York, and appropriate observations in regard to the origin of the school he is addressing, he strikes off boldly with a new theme.

"In these days of self-adulation, when every year brings us intelligence in the form of introductory lectures from what are represented as

the *special* seats of learning and science—whose authors spend their brief introductory hour to laud their own exploits, or praise their own fitness for the place and station—surely an humble teacher in a country medical school may say a few words, complimentary to his colleagues, without risking the charge of ‘o’erstepping the modesty of nature.’”

He then introduces the names of his colleagues, Drs. Hadley and Delamater, and without circumlocution speaks just what he feels in respect to them, viz., that they are hardly equalled, and the inference is that they are never excelled. From our personal intercourse and former official connection with one of them, we can cordially acquiesce in the sentiment. Finally, the discourse possesses one grand feature which might be copied to great advantage by those prolix professors, of sleepy fame all through Christendom, who never find a convenient stopping place. In this instance, certainly, Dr. Webster positively closed, and in reasonable time, too, and yet left nothing unsaid which could have materially improved the discourse. Before closing, we are unwilling to deny the reader a single extract, illustrative of Dr. Webster’s refined and exalted views of professional duty and acquirements.

“In our day—in the days of Peter Parley, when Hume and Smollett, Locke and Newton, and Copernicus and Kepler, are remembered only by name—when ‘learning made easy’ might be an appropriate motto for some of our schools, I am aware that I touch on dangerous ground, when I question the fallibility of our laws and our law-givers; but neither my connection with an institution which justly prides herself upon her advantages, nor any feeling of mock-modesty, can prevent me from expressing freely my sentiments in relation to a subject of so much moment to the public weal. An apprenticeship of six years is considered a short period to form a good and skilful mechanic—whilst by the modern high-pressure system (thanks to the wisdom of our Legislature), three years, eight months of which shall be devoted to collegiate exercises, are deemed amply sufficient to make a doctor! Yes, that’s the phrase, to make a doctor.

“Well, then, at the end of this probation, many of our young men leave the precincts of the college vainly imagining that their education is complete, and that they are prepared at once successfully to encounter disease in all its varied forms. It is true, I am aware, that there are others of more liberal and expanded minds, who feel their own weakness, and toil ceaselessly by day and by night to make up for their acknowledged deficiency. Now, however, too often begins the struggle without sufficient preparation, for what will yield “immediate profit.” Gentlemen, there is something radically wrong here—the profession is ennobling in its influence, yet I have known an individual, I will not dignify him with the appellation of a man, sit by a patient, when nature cried aloud in her utmost agony for that assistance which he could render, but which was denied, until the dollars and cents were meted out to him! Let me tell you, the very moment you begin to prostitute the noble ends of your sacred calling, merely to the base purposes of ‘profit,’ you sacrifice all the generous aspirations of your manhood—you become callous to all the finer and better feelings of human nature; careless alike of human suffering, and reckless of human life. If, then, any of you come here solely for purposes of ‘profit’ hereafter, in God’s name, I say, turn back. Agriculture, mechanics, commerce, all invite you to the shrine of Mammon; but this is not the field for you—it is a field only

for the exercise of all the benevolent affections; it is a field for the exhibition of zeal in the promotion of science, and tender sympathy for others' sufferings; it is a field, the proper cultivation of which will yield you a rich and luxuriant harvest, in an approving conscience, for time and for eternity."

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*National Institute for the Promotion of Science.*—A circular is abroad, inviting the attention of scientific men in the United States to the subject of a general meeting for the promotion of science. There is a prospect, therefore, of some concentration of forces, which has long been wanted. Every attempt, thus far, has been abortive. The physicians, the geologists, &c., have each exerted themselves to organize a national society, but fell short of the attainment. Dropping all other interests, the geologists have united in a body, and brought into being an association that is already honorable to the country and to the progress of knowledge in the new world. We hope that the efforts now making will finally result in the formation of an institution analogous, in character and design, to the British Association. It should not be exclusive—not the instrument of a few men to rise into distinction by the labor of others: but it should call in the aid of every order of talent, and show that universal good is the steadfast pursuit of all its members.

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*Medical Students at Yale College.*—There was a class of fifty-two students in the last printed catalogue. In course of conversation, not long since, with Dr. Knight, the well-known professor of surgery, in the medical department of Yale College, he incidentally remarked that the medical institution of Connecticut was really educating no more professional men than were needed in the State, to keep pace with the increase of population, and to supply the places of those who died or left the active pursuits of practice. Instead of being ambitious of astonishing the world with the numbers that annually concentrate at New Haven, the policy of the Faculty has been of a higher order, viz., to furnish their friends and neighbors with judicious, well-instructed medical practitioners. This they have done, for no State in the Union has a more unexceptionable and able body of excellent physicians than the Commonwealth of Connecticut.

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*Medical Convention of Ohio.*—A pamphlet, containing the proceedings of the medical convention held at Cincinnati, from the 16th to the 20th of May, with papers selected from those read before that body, has been received. It is full of interest, and we know of no better way of showing the estimation in which it is held, than by republishing, hereafter, such parts of the published papers as are most striking, in a medical point of view, to the profession generally.

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*Boylston Medical Society.*—MR. EDITOR—Sir,—Let me ask, through your pages, if the Boylston Medical Society is entirely extinct. For several past years nothing has been heard of it, and I greatly fear that it has ceased to exist. If this is so, it is much to be regretted. The Society was one calculated to be eminently useful to the students attending the

medical lectures. The members of it had access to a considerable library, and had meetings weekly, at which a dissertation was read, and a debate held on some subject connected with the studies in which they were engaged. It is a matter of some surprise to your correspondent that the Faculty of the College should have allowed so useful a society to decline. But it is still in their power to renovate it. Would they but encourage the students to join it, give them the library for an assembly room, and a donation sufficient to enable them to subscribe to half a dozen medical periodicals, I feel confident that the result would be in the highest degree satisfactory. One fact the students themselves should be informed of, which may influence them somewhat in attempting to restore this ancient institution. Funds are placed in the hands of a medical gentleman of this city, from which are directed by will to be awarded prizes to meritorious dissertations presented by the members of this Society.

AN EX-MEMBER.

*Hufeland's Enchiridion Medicum.*—MR. EDITOR—Dear Sir,—I observed in your last Medical Journal, a notice of Dr. Hufeland's "*Enchiridion Medicum*," &c., and you remarked that it was "*homœopathical*." In this, you are mistaken—it is an allopathic treatise, and a very good one of that kind. I find much valuable information in the work, and think it worthy of perusal by all medical practitioners. Dr. H. has displayed, in my opinion, much medical literature in regard to the diagnosis and concise views of diseases. It embraces fifty years' experience. You can correct your error if you please.

Yours with sincere respect,

ROBERT CAPEN.

*Bennington Co. Medical Society.*—Officers of the Bennington Co. (Vt.) Medical Society for the year 1842-3:—Simeon Littlefield, *President*; Abram Locke, *Vice President*; Luther Moseley, *Secretary*; Henry Sheldon and John Cook, *Corresponding Secretaries*; Herman Tucker, *Treasurer*; F. Johnson, H. Sheldon, and L. Moseley, *Censors*; — Mason, *Librarian*.

*Extirpation of the Uterus.*—Drs. Herman and Werneburg, of Pittsburg, Penn., removed nearly the whole uterus a short time since. The patient had a cancerous disease of the organ, that called for vigorous measures, which had existed for two years.

*Protracted Suckling.*—Mr. Orwin, of Worcester, publishes a case of epilepsy, from protracted lactation, in which the suckling was continued for the unwarrantable period of three years and a quarter. The woman was 27 years old. The worst symptoms of debility at last attended the monstrous proceeding, and several fits of epilepsy were experienced. With great difficulty only was she persuaded to wean the child. The fits became less violent then, and, the pain in the head being reduced, the citrate of iron was afterwards given, and recovery ensued.—*Lon. Lancet*.

Number of deaths in Boston for the week ending Dec. 3, 58.—Males, 21; Females, 17. Stillborn, 2. Of consumption, 4—influenza, 2—fits, 2—lung fever, 3—apoplexy, 1—typhus fever, 2—smallpox, 2—child-bed, 3—old age, 1—teething, 1—accidental, 1—dropsy on the brain, 2—infantile, 4—tumor on the breast, 1—stoppage in the bowels, 1—bronchitis, 1—pleurisy, 1—bilious fever, 1—loss of blood, 1—drowned, 1—inflammation of the brain, 1—spasms, 1.