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Lecture Delivered at the Opening of Jefferson Medical College

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Gentlemen,

Having been too much honoured by my associates as to be allowed to commence the regular exercises of this institution, it may be considered necessary that I should explain the motives by which we have been influenced, and the prospects by which we are now animated, before I call your attention to the subject of which it is my particular province to treat. These circumstances, however, were so fully discussed in an address formerly delivered within these walls, that it will prove very difficult to suggest anything more in regard to them, either of a novel or interesting character. Reasons are always ready to justify every undertaking. But there are some general considerations which have not been fairly estimated by the public, and which, may, therefore, be advantageously discussed on the present occasion.
Our country has now become extended and populous, and would seem to require corresponding extension of every means of distributing knowledge: Our institutions are liberal and republican, and cannot be made to appear incompatible with any new effort to benefit the public. What then need be said in reply should objections be urged by the prejudiced and interested against the right and the propriety of this undertaking? It will no doubt prove a difficult task to convince their minds by any representations which we can advance; but the impartial and intelligent will be easily satisfied by a short exposition of the circumstances under which we have been situated, and with which we are now connected.

Perhaps it will be hardly necessary to state that the chief cause of all our movements has been the condition of the profession — both as regards the
science itself; and the cultivators of it. Medical
science had been proverbially unsettled and hypo-


tical. Unlike the other professions, its follow-

ers have no tribunal to which their conflicting
opinions can be brought and decided. Neither
as synod, nor as bench, determines upon their


disputes—nor can a jury ever be impannelled
to conclude with a decisive verdict. The conse-

quences have naturally been that almost every pro-

fessional difference has been an irreconcilable one,
and that opinions of the most opposite nature are

frequently brought into collision beside the very

bed of the patient. I need not describe the
effect which such a state of things had produced

upon the mind. It is well known to be the cause

of the comparatively low estimation in which the

profession is held in most parts of even the civil-

ized world. But this is not the leading circums-

stance, which should be brought forward on the
present occasion — it is the influence which the
causes just alluded to have exerted upon the
profession itself that has operated upon our
feelings.

The isolated state in which the majority of physi-
cians are placed, in consequence of the want of any
common tribunal or association, invariably gives
rise to mutual jealousies and suspicions. These
are not likely to be allayed so long as the individ-
uals between whom they are indulged remain se-
cluded from each other; — for esteem can never
grow up without the aid of those good feelings which
sociability induces. It is only by a combination that
we can ever expect to remedy this radical defect in the
nature of our profession. The most malignant
enemies have not long to be in the society of each
other before they discover that they are not altogether
base and contemptible. In fact, as it has been wisely
observed, no two persons can become well acquainted.
without imbibing some special regard for each other.

But I need not dwell upon the advantages, which such a combination among medical men as must tend to obliterate the harsh feelings they would otherwise indulge, is calculated to produce; they must be sufficiently obvious to every reflecting mind. My object is to point out the ill effects of such combinations where they occur under certain circumstances not fully appreciated by the public.

As in all other human institutions, very striking exceptions to the beneficial tendency of medical associations can be readily designated. In situations where an association can combine the whole medical talent of a neighbourhood there can be no danger of any inconvenience arising from it; but in large cities the case is very different, especially where the number of professional men is too great to be interested in any one institution.
In proportion to the whole number of individuals will be the number of those who are calculated to excel in public situations. Of ambition and enterprise, and, of course, reputation, are confined to a few, they may be safely and usefully appointed to fulfill those duties which require the exercise of such attributes. The others will then lend their assistance in every office which can redound to the advantage of the whole; and thus a harmonious combination in which the interests of all must be involved will be steadily supported. Where the circle of medical men is large, however, and where, of course, the number of those who are distinguished for popular talents, and enterprise, is also greater, it will prove impossible to amalgamate the interests of all in one application. There will always be some rebellious spirits who cannot be made to acknowledge themselves subsidiary to higher powers; and not infrequently such will be found to profess their full share of talent.
and reputation.

It is perfectly natural that those who are fairly established in office should be extremely jealous of their power, and anxious to retain every semblance of superiority over their less fortunate fellows. But on the other hand, their opponents will at the same time make proportionably greater exertions to overcome whatever obstacles may be thrown in the way of their advancement; and thus, between jealousy on the one side, and ambition on the other, an inequitable struggle will be maintained for the ascendency. It will not require much examination to ascertain the extent and kind of injury that must necessarily be inflicted on the profession by such a contention. Between the rival parties harsh and illiberal feelings will be sure to originate, which cannot be suppressed with less difficulty on account of the inequality of power with which they may be attended. As long as the original association
is allowed to claim exclusive possession of all the privileges of office, its members will be encouraged to conduct themselves arrogantly and unconcernedly. Not content with the immediate advantages of their situation they will be prompted to seize every opportunity, and to monopolize every concern, which can possibly be made to supply a tribute to their interests.

In this manner almost every avenue to success, or even the common opportunities for exertion, are shut out from the independent and enterprising. It is not surprising, therefore, that some feelings of resentment should be excited on the part of the latter class of individuals — or that their declared opposition should be returned with some degree of retribution.

Although some of you may hastily conclude that I have been too pointed in these observations, a little reflection will convince you that they have
not been made in reference to any particular persons, or circumstances. Look at the state of our profession in any large city, with the history of which we may have an opportunity of becoming acquainted, and you will find the same difficulties prevailing. Human nature is the same everywhere, and our profession has not been exempt from its frailties. It is not with a censorious disposition that they have been alluded to in this place:

On the contrary, I am desirous of calling your attention to inconveniences, which are natural and almost unavoidable under the circumstances wherein they occur; merely for the purpose of pointing out a method by which they may be remedied.

If instead of confining the public rights and offices of the profession to a few, you distribute them equally, you will produce a corresponding harmony of sentiment among its members. Instead of strife engendering opposition, you will then
witness a fair and open competition, which cannot
fail of being attended with the most generous feelings
of emulation. It is obvious that a partial dispensation
of privileges, such as might be permitted by an aristoc-
cratical or monarchical form of government, will not
be long tolerated in the free republican country in
which it is our happiness to live. The sooner,
therefore, you clothe any two rival parties in medi-
cine with the same powers and privileges, you will
hasten the period when mutual good faith, and a
becoming regard for the feelings and interests of
each other, will prevail between them. By doing
so, you will also conform to the true spirit and
tendency of our constitution, without the influence of
which no republican genius can ever flourish
either in medicine or its sister sciences.
What has been said in regard to medical associations in general, may be applied, with particular force, to the subject of the different schools of medicine in our country. Whenever the means of instruction, as well as those of encouragement, are limited, it is obvious that a multiplication of teachers will not be calculated to promote the public good: but, on the other hand, if the advantages which a large city holds out are sufficiently numerous, and the number and qualifications of its professional men are sufficiently great, there can, to say the least, be no objection to the incorporation of as many seminaries as the demands of the public may seem to require.

That enlightened and patriotic body of men who preside, as Trustees, over the concerns of this Institution, took these circumstances into full consideration before they proceeded to
organize the department in which we are especially interested. They perceived that the number of professional men whom the public judged to be qualified for the purposes of instruction in all the branches of medical science was fully adequate to justify an extension of the opportunities heretofore enjoyed by students of medicine, for acquiring useful knowledge. They understood also, that the means of practical instruction— the most important of all the advantages which a student can ever desire to enjoy, could be afforded to an extent altogether unexampled in any other part of this country, by the numerous public and charitable institutions of this city. And they knew that the number of students who annually resort to this place for information, would always be sufficient to employ an additional number of teachers.

In fact they conceived that too many pupils were crowded within the walls of the only institution at
that time in operation allow of any possibility of their receiving instruction in proportion to the expense and trouble which must be undergone in anticipation of it. Whether they have been equally judicious in their selection of individuals to fill the various professorships created by an extension of their chartered rights, a very short period of time will determine. It certainly will not be our aim to discredit their character in this respect.

As regards the right and propriety of the measure adopted by the Trustees of Jefferson College in locating their medical department in a place so remote from the parent institution there can be no difficulty in making out a satisfactory explanation. Their charter, granted by the legislature and governor of this State in 1802, allows them the privilege of conferring degrees in all the arts and sciences. It is as full and as complete in this respect as can possibly be desired; indeed it is expressly
stipulated in it that the institution shall possess all the rights and privileges which have ever been conferred on any other literary institution in these United States. In this country the distinction between a University and a College is altogether imaginary and unfounded. Every power which belongs to one, is also possessed by the other; and no difference whatever exists in the modes of incorporating and conducting them. It is very common for a College to exercise all the privileges of a University, properly so called, as in the controlling of several different faculties in the arts and sciences, in the conferring of the highest degrees, &c. While at the same time many parchment-styled Universities are not elevated above the dignity of so many common grammar schools.

Precedents were not wanting to justify our Trustees in adopting the course to which we have alluded.
The Corporation of Queens College in New-Brunswick, New-Jersey, formerly established a medical faculty in the City of New-York; by whom lectures were delivered, and degrees conferred, for several years, under the authority of the original charter, granted by the provincial legislature of New-Jersey. At one period that school of medicine was even more celebrated and resorted to by students, than its contemporaries, the medical department of Columbia College, which had arisen against the latter of the University of New-York.

Notwithstanding the jealousy which is so apt to exist between the institutions of adjoining states, there is no reason to believe that any objections were ever advanced against the operations of the New-Jersey college within the limits of a sister state. Its proceedings were suspended some few years ago, not on account of any legal difficulty, but in consequence of the ill-health of its most celebrated professor, John Augustine Smith, and the junction of the others with the medical faculty.
of Columbia college, which then assumed the title of the University of New-York.

But this was not the only instance of which our Trustees were aware. Harvard college in Massachusetts had long been connected with a medical department established in Boston; Williamstown college in the same state, also had one in Pittsfield at a distance of more than 20 miles; and the Middlebury college in Vermont was associated with another located in the town of Castleton, at the opposite extremity of the state. All these institutions were at that time in successful operation, and promised, what they have since fulfilled, to become abundantly useful to the public. No objection was ever started against the legality, or even utility, of such establishments; and the current of popular opinion has since been evidently setting in their favor of this continuance. The remote
does not at all affect the discipline or instructions of its associates. The connection between them is no more intimate when they are located in the same place, than when they are separated by the intervention of mountains and proverbs. The only relation which necessarily need exist between them, is that one shall have the power of conferring medical degrees on the recommendation of the officers of the other. This is, in fact, the only relation, which subsists between the medical faculty of Yale College, and the original corporation of that admirable institution:—or between the Medical Professors of the University in this City and the Trustees and teachers of its classical department. The same thing, indeed, may be said of almost every other medical institution in these United States. What difficulty, therefore, can be supposed to exist in the connection between any two departments of the same literary institution, when located in different parts of the
same state;—governed by the same code of laws;
and protected by the influence of the same body
of learned men?

It has been conceived by some, however,
to be an indecent and improper interference
for the trustees of our college, to establish either
of its departments in the immediate vicinity of
another institution of the same kind. This indeed,
may be regarded as "the very head and front"
of their offending—to atone for which, apologies
may be tendered without affording satisfaction, and
arguments advanced without producing conviction.

We shall will undertake, however, to represent
the thing in the light of its real merits, and if
the candid are not then convinced of the propriety
of the measure, we must remain content
under the weight of all the obloquy with which
such an impression would load us.

In all that portion of this State which lies
beyond the Alleghanies, as well as in the adjacent parts of this and Virginia, a very large number of young men are annually engaged in the study of Medicine. The distance at which all of them are placed from the only medical institution that has hitherto been in operation within this state, and the great expense to which they must necessarily be subjected in attending upon it, have presented such discouraging obstacles to their minds that it requires a very strong inducement to attract them hitherwards. An opinion has moreover, prevailed, in that quarter that the highly and long distinguished character of the University here will always continue to draw together such a crowd of pupils as to render it impossible for all to be well accommodated with the means of instruction. The consequence has been, that many of the students in that section of the Country go to the institutions of other states for instruction; while the greater proportion of them are altogether discourage
from making any attempt at enjoying the benefits of a public education.

The trustees of our College, being actuated by a laudable and patriotic zeal for the interests of their own state, as well as the institution over which they preside, conceived the plan of furnishing those young men in their own metropolis, with more accessible, and inviting accommodations than had before been presented to them. In doing so, they had the double prospect of preventing many students of medicine from turning their attention to the institutions of other states, and of enticing a still greater number, who might not otherwise have been induced to complete their education in a regular way, to supply themselves of all the advantages of public instruction. They also conceived that a competition between two rival institutions, would prove altogether more beneficial to both, when located in the same city,
than when separated from each other at a distance; while at the same time, the public interests would be much better consulted by such an arrangement. That they had a perfect right to select Philadelphia, in preference to any other part of the state in which only inferior advantages could be obtained for such an establishment, it would appear to be a work of supererogation to attempt to prove. Their charter confines them to the town of Canonsburg; in no other respect, than in the holding of a public meeting of the board of Trustees, to issue a mandate for the conferring of degrees. The qualifications of candidates for such degrees may be acquired anywhere, provided they are satisfied with them from the testimony of the professors. Whatever may have been the case in regard to politics, the legislature never intended to divide the state into sections, or districts, for the purpose of
literture. It members have always been willing to allow a full latitude to the operation of every institution — so that, for instance, Botany might be acquired in one place — Mineralogy in another, and Medicine in a third; while the degrees for all these sciences should still be conferred in every individual College. If this had not been the case, it would have proved necessary to provide for the conferring of Mineralogical degrees, in the mountains, and Botanical ones, in the valleys, as well as for the medical diplomas of large cities. Each college would then have been confined to a particular branch of education; and the professors of it would also, have been restricted, in their researches, to certain districts of country — as strictly defined, and as jealously watched, by the neighbouring institutions, as the territorial limits of petty princes ever were in feudal times.
pretensions to scientific monopolies, are of all things the most ridiculous. No government ever intended such a thing; nor would any people ever suffer it. "Carrière ouverte aux talents"—let the way be open to talents—was the maxim of Napoleon in regard to this subject, as well as to every other in which the progress of the human mind is concerned. We should look to no other, in attempting to regulate the condition of our profession. So long as we are governed by it, there will be no danger of our being forced to admit the pretensions of foreign schools to superiority, or of foreign practitioners to unrivalled eminence. We shall then continue to progress as rapidly in improving our science, as we have in perfecting the condition of our political institutions. With such a prospect in view, our feelings should be excited, and our minds encouraged to welcome every new institution which may promise to foster rising genius, or to
As this city is distinguished for the opportunities
which it's two great public charities, the Hospital
and Almshouse, afford to clinical students, special
care will be taken to allow our pupils the privilege
of resorting to them. On Wednesdays and Saturdays, the
days of public practice in those institutions, no lectures
will be delivered here, until one o'clock in the after-
noon; by which arrangement every possible advantage
will be allowed for the acquisition of clinical knowledge.
In the same days cases, selected from the infirmary
attached to this building, will also be exhibited to
the pupils; and occasionally, surgical operations
will be performed in presence of the whole
staff.
distinguish the love of knowledge.

The plan of instruction to be pursued in this College will be as full and as extensive as that of any other medical institution in our country. The usual number of chairs are occupied by individuals anxious to promote the interests of their profession, and determined to exert themselves to the utmost for the benefit of their pupils. To communicate useful knowledge will be their chief aim, and if it shall eventually appear that they have failed in any one instance to produce all the good effects which may be expected to result from such a course, they trust that no degree of censure will be attached to their instructions.

Early in the month of March next, i.e. immediately after the termination of the present course of lectures, a strict and impartial examination will be held for the purpose of ascertaining the qualifications of such candidates as may apply for graduation, after having complied with the usual requisitions. The names of
The text on the page appears to be written in cursive and is difficult to read due to the handwriting style. It seems to be a continuous block of text, possibly a letter or a note, but the content is not legible enough to transcribe accurately.
all those who may be found deserving of the honours in our power to bestow, will then be forwarded to the town of Canonsburgh, in Washington County, for the purpose of being laid before the trustees of the college at a special meeting of that body. By them a Mandamus will be immediately issued, commanding us to inaugurate, in a public manner, with all the usual formalities, each and every candidate whose name they may be pleased to designate as a Doctor in Medicine. The President of the college, and the Committee of the classical department of the Board of Trustees, appointed to superintend the public proceedings in this City, will also be directed to affix their names to each diploma, opposite to the great seal of the College, and the names of the individuals composing the medical faculty.

On the 20th of March, a commencement will be held in this place for delivering the diplomas, and conferring the degrees in medicine according to
the customary ceremonies observed on such occasions in other institutions.

The names of the graduates will again be pronounced, with academic honours, at the commencement for the medical department of the college, in Canonsburgh, in the month of September.

I have already pointed out in what respects the government and arrangements of this institution resemble those of the other medical colleges of our country;—it will require but a few words more to inform you of the manner in which our mode of conferring degrees also resembles that which is pursued elsewhere.

In every other state in which medical colleges have been in operation, with the exception of New-York, the respective medical faculties are connected with literary institutions, to the trustees of which, the names of such candidates
as may have been approved of by the Professors, are sent up for consideration. A mandamus is then returned to the medical faculty authorizing them to confer the degrees, in the same manner as I have already represented in the description of our own case. In Harvard and Yale Colleges, particularly, the forms are precisely the same as those which will be adopted here.

In the state of New-York, there are two medical colleges in operation; one, in the City of New-York, the other in Fairfield, Herkimer County, both of which are under the direction of a board of Regents, who assemble every spring in the city of Albany. The candidates for the degree of Doctor of Medicine, in both of these Colleges, are recommended by the Trustees to the board of Regents, who at their annual meeting, issue a mandamus to the
Professors of each college, authorizing them to confer the degree.

In Europe the customs are generally similar to those which we have followed in this country.

In the universities of Edinburgh, and Glasgow, and Dublin, the mode of conferring degrees in Medicine, is exactly the same with that pursued in Harvard, in Yale, and of course, in our own college.

Thus you perceive, gentlemen, that there is nothing informal, or novel, or deficient, in the powers which have been delegated to us, or in the regulations by which we shall attempt to conduct ourselves. The graduates who may hereafter proceed from this institution, will be as regularly, and as fully constituted Doctors in Medicine, as those which can be drawn out from the halls of any other college in our country.
It will be our care to prove that they shall also be as well as educated.