

Drysdale (T.M.)

~~A D D R E S S~~

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

MEDICAL SOCIETY OF THE STATE OF
PENNSYLVANIA,

AT ITS

TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL SESSION,

HELD AT

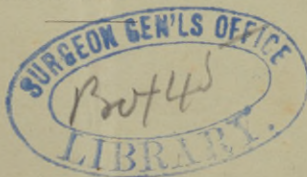
PHILADELPHIA, PA.,

MAY—JUNE, 1876.

BY

THOMAS M. DRYSDALE, M.D.

EXTRACTED FROM THE TRANSACTIONS OF THE MEDICAL SOCIETY OF THE STATE
OF PENNSYLVANIA FOR 1876.



PHILADELPHIA:
COLLINS, PRINTER, 705 JAYNE STREET.
1876.

COMPLIMENTS OF
T. M. DRYSDALE, M. D.
1531 ARCH STREET,
Philadelphia, Pa.

ROYAL SOCIETY OF THE STATE OF
PENNSYLVANIA

THIRTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING

PHILADELPHIA

THOMAS M. DRYSDALE

COLLIERSON
T. M. COLLEGE
NEW YORK
1887

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ADDRESS.

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN OF THE
MEDICAL SOCIETY OF THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA.

WE extend to you, in this old and beautiful city, the mother city of medical science, in this jubilee year of commemoration and congratulation, a most cordial Centennial welcome. Not the medical profession of Philadelphia alone, which has often rejoiced to greet you for communion and counsel, as brethren of the same noble calling, but the authorities of the great exhibition and the people of the city itself, accustomed to regard health as among the chiefest of blessings, and the guardians of health as the best of benefactors, delight upon this occasion to extend to you their heartiest welcome.

From north, and south, and east, and west, of our great Commonwealth you reverently gather, to watch the century plant as it bursts into blossom; and, most familiar with the aloe, you notice the growth and swell of a hundred years, as its petals expand in the Centennial, and from all over our States and the kingdoms and empires of the world, the multitudes press to the cosmopolitan exhibition of the arts and sciences.

Gentlemen, this is a year when, in every direction, those connected with the arts, the sciences, the trades, the professions, are instructively contrasting the present condition of things with the condition of things one hundred years ago; and can I do better in welcoming and congratulating you than by following the common current of thought, and glancing for a few moments at the progress of American medical education through the century? It is peculiarly appropriate that our profession should assemble here at this time to assist in celebrating our national Centennial; for, if we cannot regard this as the exact centennial of American medicine, we can, at least, claim that American medicine and American independence had the same birthplace.

It is a fact not generally known that, "in one of the large apartments of the State House," in the building which gave birth to American independence, was delivered the introductory lecture on anatomy by Dr. William Shippen, in the autumn of 1762. "The number of students who attended his course amounted only to twelve. This was the origin of our medical schools." "Dr. Shippen had given three courses of lectures unconnected with any institution, when, May 3d, 1765, Dr. John Morgan laid before the trustees of the college a plan for establishing a medical school under their auspices, accompanied by a letter from the honorable Thomas Penn, recommending the plan to their patronage."

In September, Dr. Shippen addressed a letter to the trustees, stating that the institution of a medical school had been his favorite object for seven years; and that he had proposed it three years before in his first introductory lecture; upon which he was immediately and unanimously chosen Professor of Anatomy and Surgery. "The anatomical lectures were regularly delivered, from year to year, until the fourteenth course, which was in the winter of 1775, when they were suspended by the war of the revolution;" and Shippen entered the medical department of the army in the year 1776, and became its Director-General. Thus intimate were the relations of the birth and early history of American independence and of American medicine. In this city, then, American medical education had its origin.

The question, has medical education grown equally with our growth as a nation and with collateral sciences, has been mooted so often of late, that it is to be approached with hesitation; but without entering deeply into the subject, let us compare the facilities of acquiring a knowledge of our science before and during the time of Rush, with the present, and, also, glance hastily at its early history, and at some of the prominent men of those times. That we may do this understandingly, let us see what was the usual method of medical education before the establishment of the first medical school, and what means of instruction the teachers had at their disposal.

A young man wishing to become a doctor, after an academic course more or less complete, was apprenticed to a surgeon or physician by whom he was supposed to be taught

all the science and practice of physic. The greater number of these teachers had never received a medical degree nor a proper medical education themselves; nor had they the facilities for teaching, even had they been competent; for, to do this, required books and instruments; but, it is well known, that these were rare, and came mainly from England, as at that time there were no native medical works and no American instruments. Medical journals were unknown, for no medical journal was published in America until near the close of the eighteenth century. This want of material for teaching was so well known, that later, Dr. John Fothergill, who took a great interest in the affairs of our colony, "employed Rimsdyck, one of the first artists of Great Britain, to execute a series of crayon paintings, which exhibited the whole structure of the human body of the full size, and the gravid uterus, with many of the varied circumstances of natural and preternatural parturition," and presented them to the Pennsylvania Hospital, which had just been erected.

Nor were there any institutions, such as hospitals or dispensaries; for the Philadelphia Dispensary, the first institution of its kind in the United States, only came into existence in 1786, and the Pennsylvania Hospital in 1756. With such teachers and with so little to aid him in acquiring a knowledge of our art, the pupil could not be expected to be very proficient. At a period anterior to the formation of the medical school, which may be called the period of *dependence*, there were about 3000 physicians in the colonies to prescribe for 3,000,000 of people. To be a trained doctor, it was necessary for the aspirant to cross the ocean, to spend some years attending lectures in Edinburgh, to stop for a few months in London, and then to come back courtly and conceited, to give British pills and potions to the colonists, as he had learned to compound them on British soil. But the greater proportion of these men were, as we have seen, wholly uneducated in medicine. Hence the few well-trained physicians in that period of ignorance shine so brightly among their compeers.

With the early emigrants came to this country, in time, a number of competent practitioners. It is early in the century that we find John Bard and John Redman apprentices to Kearsley, an English surgeon in Philadelphia; for at that day

apprenticeship was required equally for a clerkship in a store, in an attorney's office, and for medicine. Kearsley was a churl and a tyrant, and Bard, the intimate friend of Franklin, was restive at making fires, chopping wood, doing errands, polishing shoe buckles, and helping Mrs. Kearsley on wash days. The system of medical teaching in those times was merely reading with an instructor, and following and assisting in his practice, until those who had the means could complete their education in Europe.

John Redman, the other apprentice of Kearsley, thus finished his training in Europe, and, in his day, ranked among the most eminent of the faculty in Philadelphia, and was the first President of the College of Physicians. He early in life declined the practice of surgery and midwifery, and confined himself to the practice of physic. With Redman studied Benjamin Rush, the true father of American medicine, and this brings us to the next period of progress—that of *medical independence*, when Americans could attend lectures without departing from their native land. But before leaving this part of our subject, let us have a word or two more on the primitive old eighteenth century doctor.

Excluding a large proportion of practitioners, who were intensely ignorant and inexperienced, although probably quite as competent as were a large class at that time in Great Britain, we have as the early representative men of American medicine, Bard, Shippen, Morgan, Kuhn, and others of that standing, as splendid specimens of manhood, manners, and skill as the world could present. Samuel Bard visited his patients dressed to the minutest detail of a substantial, cultivated gentleman, with his hands enveloped in a muff, lest the winds of New York should dull his fine sense of touch; and in his palmy days he carried off the greater portion of practice in the diseases of women, from his extraordinary reputation with the sex. The Shippens were proverbial for their calmness and unflinching good humor. Kuhn with his queue hanging down his back, his powdered hair, his cocked hat, his short clothes, gold knee and shoe buckles always shining brightly, will stand forth as a model physician of the early revolutionary period. And Redman, though deaf and nearly blind in his later years, was down to old age cheerful, even facetious, charitable and

eminent in all the graces of a devoted Christian. From him Rush learned bleeding and the use of mercury. He considered bleeding in old age as the very first of remedies.

But Benjamin Rush, his great pupil, rises to close that early period and usher in the era of American medicine. Like the others of whom we have spoken, perfectly educated, and courtly in manners, the farmer's boy came from the plow to be the angel of healing to the despairing population of Philadelphia, stricken with the yellow fever. There is no character in medical annals that will better bear the full blaze of scrutiny than that of Rush, calumniated and abused, as he was, by Cobbett and other libellers, on account of his good strong principles and unwearied philanthropy. His devotion to his profession is well known. "Medicine," he said, "is my wife, science is my mistress, my books are my companions." He was convinced, after learning all that could be taught abroad, that medicine, in his day, was only in its infancy. If the prejudice still lingers against Rush for the excessive use of the lancet and calomel, let him have a fair field, and be judged by the standard of his own day. If he called calomel the Samson of the materia medica, and the wits could respond that this Samson had slain his thousands; and if his bleedings, which are now so universally deemed excessive, are condemned by the practice of the hour, let us not forget that bleeding and calomel were approved by his preceptor and by the best doctors of his time, and were then pronounced, by those most competent to judge, a great improvement in treating the diseases of the United States.

Nor is it to be forgotten that every method of dealing with the yellow fever of 1793 had proved ineffectual, and the physicians of the day were standing helpless and aghast, when Rush, after studying fully and experimenting fairly, came back to the treatment he had abandoned; and, in the midst of the dying, for whom there seemed to be no hope, by his bleeding and purging saved the first four out of five patients, and then was able to write, on the tenth day of September, about mid-way through the fatal one hundred days, "Thank God, out of one hundred patients whom I have visited and prescribed for to-day, I have lost none." The more we read of Rush the more we find to admire. His is indeed a grand

figure, looming up through the mists of a hundred years, and we may well be proud of him as the great American physician.

But, continuing with our subject, we find that the next marked step of progress in native medical education was, the adding to simple apprenticeship to a surgeon, attendance on medical lectures. About ten years before the war, as has been already stated, the Philadelphia College of Medicine had been organized with a corps of very able professors. Beginning in the lectures of William Shippen on anatomy, a faculty was completed by the election of Benjamin Rush to the chair of chemistry in 1769. Shippen, Morgan, Kuhn, Bond, and Rush had joined to what instruction could be received at home, the best advantages of the great medical institutions of France, London, Edinburgh, and Leyden; and, at Philadelphia, as they had lavishly received, they sat down, freely to give to those who chose to be their brethren in the healing art. They were giants in their day, and are not to be underrated, the state of medical science being considered, either in comparison with the Cullens, Monros, and Hunters of their own day, or with the most eminent professors, physicians, and surgeons of our own more advanced and better furnished times. These were the men who constructed on a permanent foundation the medical institutions of our country.

One hundred years ago, then, this only school of medicine in Philadelphia had five professors lecturing upon the following subjects: Shippen, on Anatomy, Morgan, on the Institutes, Kuhn, on Botany, Rush, on Chemistry, and Bond, on Clinical Medicine. With this faculty and Benjamin Franklin as president of the college, begins the true system of medical teaching in America. Soon an opposition school was formed, but a harmonious union of the contending parties was effected, and in 1791 they were merged in the University of Pennsylvania. "From this period," writes Thatcher in 1828, "the progress and improvement of the institution have been no less honorable to the venerable founders than beneficial to the community. The commanding talents and profound erudition of Professors Rush, Barton, Physick, Dorsey, Chapman, and others have given the medical school of Philadelphia a celebrity which will probably long remain unrivalled in the United

States, and will enable it to vie with the most elevated seminaries of the European world."

Benjamin Rush well represents nearly the whole of the first half century, beginning with 1776. The University, to which he lent his name and talents, until long after the period of his death, which occurred in 1813, continued to be the centre of medical instruction for the whole Union. The great advance in medical science begins after the death of Rush, and is contemporaneous with the springing up of medical colleges in the main centres of population, and, in fact, belongs altogether to the last half century. Time forbids us to do more than glance at the growth of our medical schools, and we will at once leave the intervening period with its interesting history, and will note how the institutions and means of instruction to-day compare with what we have seen existed a century ago.

The progress is as remarkable as it is gratifying to our national pride. If Thatcher could write so glowingly of the condition of our single medical school in 1828, what would he say now? For this school has made giant strides since his day. Professorship after professorship has been added, until now its announcement displays the names of eleven professors and four adjunct professors; while its new and beautiful building, which "is the best for its purpose in the country, if not in the world," containing all the appliances and aids which modern scientific teaching requires, is an ornament to our city.

Nor does this grand old school stand alone, for we can boast of another equally celebrated, which, although much younger, rivals the mother school, both in the number of its pupils and in the talent of its faculty. Nor has this progress been confined to our own city; for all over our country, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, can be found medical schools, some of them celebrated for their thoroughness of instruction and the talents of their professors. But, besides our schools, what do we find? Then a single hospital and a lone dispensary; now so many hospitals and kindred institutions of instruction exist in our city, that it rivals, in the facilities for medical study and in the fame of her instructors, any city of the world.

Gentlemen, this is no idle boast. It is only necessary to consult the *Medical Guide Book*, furnished you by the committee, to prove what has been said. There you will find such an

array of schools, hospitals, infirmaries, dispensaries, and other places of medical instruction, that it would be wearisome even to name them. Suffice it to say, that in all our institutions, in our medical libraries, in private instructors and lecturers, in laboratories, in the manufacturers of surgical and philosophical instruments, in our books, journals, etc., we need not look beyond our own city to find all that a student of medicine may desire. Rush wrote in 1799, as the new century was about to come in, "I am satisfied that the rate of intellect (in the United States) is as twenty are to one, and of knowledge as one hundred are to one, in these States, compared to what they were before the American Revolution." In this general advance in intellect and knowledge, medicine, as fully as her sister professions, participated. But that improvement is scarcely to be mentioned in comparison with the stride of the next generation, and more particularly with the quick step of the generation closing with 1876. From 1800 to 1836 it was an arithmetical, from 1837 to 1876 it has been a full geometrical progression. The gentle silver stream of the mountain top has broadened and deepened, and thunders down now at the base a flashing, stupendous Niagara. Thus do we compare with our modest beginning one hundred years ago.

One word more. Whilst viewing our present in connection with our previous condition, the thoughts naturally turn to a comparison with our brethren in Europe. Do their means of instruction excel our own? Can we really learn more in Europe than in this country? As late as twenty-five years ago this would have been answered most decidedly in the affirmative; but now, except in a few special studies, we can truthfully assert that our facilities are equal to theirs. What has been said in regard to our institutions need not be repeated, but it may be affirmed, that our city rivals, as a place for medical instruction in all the practical branches, any other city in the world.

The only exception is, perhaps, that of Vienna for obstetrics; nor can we ever expect to equal this school of gynecology. The habits and superior civilization of our people forbid us to suppose such a thing possible; and this should be a source of congratulation to us, rather than a reproach. A recent writer, in speaking of this school, asks, "Whence come so many

patients?" and answers: "First, the standard of morality among the people is exceedingly low—so low, indeed, that a domestic who retains her chastity for any length of time, is considered a marvel of good morals. Advertisements are daily to be seen in the principal newspapers emanating from some one who desires to live with another of the opposite sex as companion or housekeeper, etc. Some idea may be formed of the extent to which the 'social evil' prevails in Vienna, when statistics show that of 27,000 births in 1875, 11,000, or more than 40 per cent., were illegitimate."

Lately it has been too much the fashion to depreciate not only the institutions of our own city, but of our country, and to point to those of Europe as superior in every respect to our own. Much of this feeling is a mere lingering of the old prejudice against the native doctor, when the means of education were wanting; and some of it is owing to that admiration for distant objects, which is not peculiar to this subject. Putting aside the question of the temptation to which our sons would be subjected—for the standard of morality in Europe is very different from our own—when we consider that new habits have to be acquired, which often unfit them to act as good citizens on their return, a new language to be mastered, and many inconveniences to be borne, may we not say, in the words of that close observer, Rush, "That an education in our own is to be preferred to an education in a foreign country"?

In 1874 the opportunity presented itself to me to visit some of the most celebrated schools and hospitals of the old world, and to witness the practice of their physicians and surgeons. I had also the good fortune to see the modes and result of much private practice. I do not wish to detract from the merit of our foreign brethren, but, gentlemen, I came home impressed with the belief that no country can excel our own in teaching practical medicine, and that no physicians or surgeons can surpass ours in diagnostic skill and dexterity.

In one point we have far distanced our European brethren—in the perfect organization of our profession; for no other country possesses such medical educators as our County and State societies. These associations have elevated the standard of medical propriety and medical science, and, bringing physicians into pleasant acquaintance, and uniting them in mea-

asures for their common interest, have been of incalculable benefit in advancing the profession, and binding us together as a grand brotherhood. In thus hastily contrasting European with American medical education, it is not to be understood that it is claimed that ours is perfect. I merely wish to assert that, with our method of teaching, men are graduated fully equal in all the practical branches to theirs.

And now may we venture to suggest that the career of American medicine, beginning really with Rush and the first medical school in the United States, about 1776, ought to culminate in 1876 in the perfecting of our American schools of medicine, in the exclusion of foreign text-books from these institutions, and an elevation of our profession to a height which it can easily attain, where medical instruction and medical skill shall not merely be equal to any that can be afforded at London, Paris, Vienna, or Berlin, but be superior to anything that the world anywhere else can present; where, in short, the student in European cities, wishing to complete his preparation for practice most satisfactorily, shall have to consult books of American authorship, and turn his face to American medical colleges carried to the utmost point of skill and efficacy by the best medical tact and talent that America can afford.

As the Jew came up to Jerusalem in the year of jubilee, singing exulting songs all the way, the nations are moving in procession this year to Philadelphia; and it *may* be, it *should* be, we are almost disposed to say it *must* be, that from this Centennial of 1876, all distances in the future progress of medicine, in the progress of the sciences and of the arts will be estimated, as the Romans counted distances from the golden milestone which the Emperor reared in the Imperial city. When American cutlery is entering Sheffield, and competing in knives, sickles, saws, and instruments of husbandry with English manufactures on English ground; when in reaping machines, in sewing machines, in all kinds of machinery, America surpasses her competitors, and attracts the eyes of the world upon her as the home of invention and the nurse of improvement—the time has arrived for a forward movement all along the line; and medical science must go forward with the rest, not to equal merely, but to surpass the medical science of France, Germany, England, and all other countries.

