

312

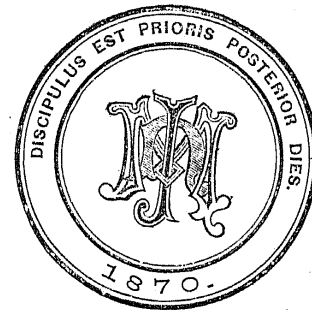
Rational

Medical Journal

EDITED BY

CHRIS. C. COX, M. D., LL. D.,

*Professor of Medical Jurisprudence and Hygiene
In Georgetown College.*



VOLUME II.

1870-1.

WASHINGTON, D. C.:
JUDD & DETWEILER, PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS.
1871.

ascertain the possibility of a complete or partial substitution, in the bone, of other salts for those of lime.

No. 1 was subjected to a diet from which lime was as far as possible excluded, and dosed with phosphate of alumina.

No. 2 was dieted as No. 1, but received phosphate of magnesia.

The treatment began September 16th, and the rats were killed, apparently in good health, upon the 25th and 29th of November following. The bones of both were perfectly normal in appearance, but yielded on analysis:

No. 1.—Alumina, 6.95 per cent.

Lime, 41.10 per cent.

No. 2.—Pyrophosphate magnesia, 3.56 per cent.

Lime, 46.15 per cent.

It will be observed that this substitution took place in a time which, considering the slowness of the vital processes in bone, is remarkably short.

THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

The American Medical Association held its twenty-first annual meeting at Washington, D. C., from May 3d to May 6th, inclusive.

As usual, the morning hours were devoted to a general session of the Association, and in the afternoons it was divided into various sections. With the exception of the section on surgery and anatomy, both in attendance and interest, they were too meagre to be talked about. The papers before the surgical section were about up to the standard of our well-sustained local societies, and worthy of record in our medical journals.

The opening address of the president, Dr. George Mendenhall, of Ohio, considered in a plain and practical way the objects and results of the Association. For the failure of the body to illustrate the topic of his discourse, he is not accountable, and although his unfortunate inexperience in parliamentary usage

prevented him from realizing the hope that he might "so give direction to our proceedings that a fair and full expression of the views of every member" might be secured, yet we need not doubt his good intent. Such blunders as forgetting to take the yeas and nays, and deliberately deciding a speaker to be in order between the yeas and nays, and a call for a division, were more than equalled when real excitement rendered the body itself unparliamentary, and he was evidently too amiable to be able to secure the impartiality which his heart desired. Not much need be said of Dr. Sayre, to whom he vacated the chair in the great emergency. The chief question of interest before the Association had reference to the admission of delegates from the Medical Society of the Alumni of Georgetown College, the National Medical Society, the Howard Medical College, the Freedmen's Hospital, and the Small-Pox Hospital.

It is known to many of the profession that a difference of opinion had arisen among the physicians of Washington, growing out of the rejection of colored physicians as members of the Medical Society of the District of Columbia. As a result of this, another society had been formed, known as the National Medical Society. These differences had evidently given rise to much acerbity of feeling between members of these different bodies, but only concerned the Association in so far as it became its duty to decide who were duly-accredited delegates. It was not a question as between these two bodies, for our organization admits of various representatives from the same district, but only involved the investigation whether the various bodies above named were entitled to that membership which most of them had enjoyed before, and which with us could only turn on eligibility, as defined by our constitution.

The animus of a large representation in the convention was early shown by an attempt to exclude Dr. C. C. Cox from membership. His well-known ability, his commanding and unflinching opposition to the exorcism of certain men in the District of Columbia, and his heroic resistance to medical partisanship, made him obnoxious to those who could neither rule nor ruin him, and hence, notwithstanding he is throughout the country

recognized as one of the chief ornaments of our science and art, they sought to debar him from membership. The attempted ostracism proved a wretched failure, but its method and malignancy were instructive.

At the very outset there was evident on the part of some members of the Committee on Ethics, to which this matter was naturally referred, a disposition to delay report, which wholly lacked the frank, straightforward meeting of an issue which is always due to such an organization and to such a respectable number of medical men claiming admission. The question before the committee involved the right of participation in a convention actually proceeding, and to be closed in two or three days, and concerned some who had been prominent members of the body. It was due to justice, and due individually to them, that the case should receive the promptest attention. Yet, so far from this, we find on the second day the committee were taking leisure, and, without report, had quietly adjourned for several hours, and when called on in convention to give reason for such unusual course, Dr. N. S. Davis gravely informed us that they had adjourned in order to give opportunity to two or three members, who were also on the nominating committee, to attend that body. Now it so happens that this nominating committee had to do with officers for 1871, and their report would have been sufficiently early ten minutes before adjournment on Friday. Yet this accommodating ethical committee must adjourn for this, and having disposed of the little amount of business before them, finally reach the one as to the right of membership in the pending Convention, at the close of its third and next to its last day! This Talleyrand policy may be shrewd, but doctors are used to diagnosis, and don't like to be hoodwinked thus. If it is thought best to postpone a report involving the rights of sixty members to a sitting in a convention rapidly passing away, to its *sine die* adjournment, then say so, and write "*fenestra lente*," and call it politic or shrewd, but do not attempt to tell those who have eyes and ears that diligence has been used.

At length the report is reached. That of the minority is pre-

sented, signed by Doctors A. Stille and J. J. Woodward, and thus condenses all argument into a statement of fact:

MINORITY REPORT.

The undersigned, members of the Committee on Ethics, while subscribing to the greater portion of the report of the majority, feel it their duty nevertheless to dissent from the final resolution recommending the exclusion of the members of the National Medical Society of the District of Columbia from the present meeting of the Association. They offer, therefore, in lieu of that resolution, the following:

Whereas the institutions excluded from representation by the action of the Committee on Credentials, viz., the National Medical Society, the Howard Medical College, the Freedmen's Hospital, and the Smallpox Hospital, are regularly organized, as the constitution of the Association requires; and whereas the physicians so excluded are qualified practitioners of medicine, who have complied with all the conditions of membership imposed by the Association; and whereas, in the judgment of the undersigned, no sufficient ground exists for the exclusion of such institutions and physicians from this Association: Therefore—

Resolved, That the institutions above named are entitled to representation, and that the physicians claiming to represent them are entitled to seats in the American Medical Association.

ALFRED STILLE.
J. J. WOODWARD.

But the chairman of the ethical committee had a different problem to solve, and with two others, making a majority of *one*, proceeded to concoct its solution. It was fortunate for those who believe in the color test for science, to have such a man in position.

With that kind of admiration which one feels for executive tact, I have in former associations studied, as I would a "*rara avis*," this Thaddeus, who knows the quips and pranks of legislative manipulation; who, when he makes a point of order, always, if he chooses, takes occasion to throw in the remarks with which he desires to interrupt a speaker's argument, and

who, whether in the chair or out of it, I have never seen fail to make an opportunity to turn a current or gain an advantage, even though it had to be done under the covert of professed parliamentary order. I have a kind of hero-worship for this talented audacity, and the only criticism is that it should be brought to bear on doctors, most of whom, although skilled as to other insidious diseases, do not at once see but that the smooth pretence is a necessity. The known facility with which, during the long years of the war, he sandwiched himself between Union and confederate batter, made him especially skillful and natural in his present position.

How were these colored men who claimed admission to be excluded, and yet it be made to appear that they were not excluded on the ground of color?

Nothing less than this would please or satisfy the southern brethren and their sympathizers, and yet the thing was somewhat monstrous, and would need plausible excuse before others.

This Association had been formed avowedly as the great sign-manual of demarcation between true, legitimate medicine and the "irregulars"—not a mere social or local compact, but as the great national idea of legitimate practice. It boasted itself as exclusive only of the false in science and character, and it seemed too great a slander on its avowed purpose and too big a blot and too bold for this advance guard of regular medicine, aspiring to be the great papal of orthodoxy, to propose tests for membership totally irrelevant to capacity or character.

To refuse to receive the delegates from the National Medical Society would not reach the case, for there were colored delegates presented from college and hospital, as representatives of institutions before recognized, and which it could not be claimed had been guilty of any irregularity.

But it so happened that these men were members of the National Medical Society, and although not representing it, a resolution like this would cover them:

Resolved, That the charges lodged with the Committee of Arrangements against the eligibility of the National Medical Society of the District of Columbia have been so far sustained

that we recommend that "no member" of the Society should be received as delegates at the present meeting of the Association.

N. S. DAVIS,
H. F. ASKEW,
J. M. KELLER.

Thus representatives of medical institutions, recognized "as regularly organized," as the constitution of the Association requires, and qualified practitioners of medicine, "who have complied with all the conditions of membership imposed by the Association," are refused admission on the ostensible ground that, as belonging to the National Medical Society of the District of Columbia, they are ineligible!

I propose, therefore, carefully, candidly, and anxiously to inquire what these charges, thus "lodged," were, and in what manner they were "so far sustained" before the Committee on Ethics as not only to exclude that society from representation, but prevent any member of it from representing a college or hospital in which he might be professor, and from which he was a delegate.

The following is the protest lodged with the Committee of Arrangements against the members of the National Medical Society of the District of Columbia:

Resolved, That the delegates representing the Medical Society and the Medical Association of the District of Columbia, protest against the admission of any delegate who is a member of the so-called National Medical Society of the District of Columbia, because said Society was formed in contempt of the organized Medical Society, and has attempted, through legislative influence, to break down the Medical Society of the District of Columbia, or of any faculty which is composed of any of the members of said National Medical Society, or of any one a resident of the District, and presenting credentials from any non-resident society or of any hospital the medical staff of which recognized or is in affiliation with the National Medical Society of the District of Columbia.

And be it further resolved, That the Committee of Arrangements of the American Medical Association be requested to withhold credentials to such persons, and to submit the question of their admission to the American Medical Association.

The above was adopted at a meeting of the delegates held April 28, 1870.

THOMAS MILLER, M. D.,
Chairman of Delegates, &c.

J. W. H. LOVEJOY, M. D.,
Secretary Meeting of Delegates.

Official copy :

C. F. NALLY,
Secretary Committee of Arrangements.

Now, we saw and heard enough of charges and counter charges among the contending physicians of Washington to know that these must need be subjected to the test of thorough scrutiny and evidence in order to know whether they were real or imaginary.

What evidence was adduced before this ethical committee?

What witnesses were called to explain or disprove these statements?

What opportunity had the defendants not only to vindicate themselves before the committee, but to show still further that the Society of the District of Columbia making these charges, although free from colored physicians, was *itself guilty of a breach of the ethics of the profession, as laid down by the Association, gross and palpable?*

In the case of a contested seat in Congress, what voluminous testimony is taken, what care is exercised in getting at real facts; but how summary and grand is the antelope logic of our committee! With brilliant somersault the three "medical ethicals" come bounding to the conclusion that the charges lodged are so far sustained that at this present meeting a member of the National Medical Society is not eligible!

No reasons further are given, and as you search into the history of that ethical committee, it is in vain that you seek to find any process of fair investigation that would stand even the moderate tests of a primitive country court.

So we have the fact that a Committee on Ethics, whose sacred business it is to secure to every regular physician, accredited according to the Constitution of the Association, a membership

in the body early enough for participation in its deliberations, wilfully or neglectfully delay report until the closing moments of the third day's session, and then refuse admission to delegates from various bodies because of their membership of a Society against which not one of the ethical committee dares today to table any charge at all affecting the highest subserviency to the principles of the American Medical Association.

Be it remembered also that this very committee had reported favorably upon the admission of delegates from a Massachusetts society against whom they reported that charges of medical irregularity "had been sustained," on the ground that they ought not to be excluded at this meeting, but allowed time for home trial. Here they are carefully jealous of personal rights, even in a flagrant case, while the whole band of honorable physicians who happen forsooth to have two or three colored doctors beside them, are most unceremoniously ignored.

Resolve and re-resolve, manipulate and re-manipulate as you may, the profession as well as the laity know that the report with all its characteristic plausibility was aimed at the exclusion of the colored physician.

Now, it is too late to attempt to deal with that question by side thrusts, or by any covert tactics, which attempt to conceal the real point by technicalities, and what the profession now so generally complain of is that the committee should have evaded the real issue, and were willing to sacrifice others in order to accomplish the object, and then wiping their lips attempted to convey the idea that the rights of colored physicians were not involved.

That was not scientific or professional manliness. I can brook it that a man should honestly, frankly, avowedly differ from me, but that he should try to tell me in such a case as this that the action had, had no bearing on the medical status of colored graduates, is subjecting me to an amount of "Gulliver" too much for endurance.

The work before that committee was plain and direct. If the admission of colored delegates was a necessary result of such a report as that of the minority, even those opposed to colored

members could not object, for the defect, if defect it was, would plainly be in the constitution, and the committee could easily place themselves upon the ground that the only question before them was the eligibility of delegates as defined by the constitution. It was only by going out of this line and adopting a plan by which to encompass and include the exigency, and so pander to sectional taste that the report of the majority was reached. If necessary, we will at some future time show by actual evidence in detail how utterly fragile and inconclusive is the pretended basis of the majority report. That phrase "so far sustained" as that no members be received at the present meeting, is verbiage, which is merely an authoritative, announced conclusion without premises.

We have spoken thus at length of the majority committee because those who know of its chairman, know that really with them rested the responsibility of the issue. The Association itself, it is true, must suffer both from its own action and from that of its legitimate exponents, but with the role carried out, there was no opportunity to canvass the report. Its success depended upon such rulings of the chair* as should make voters out of those who were complainants in the case, and upon a motion which should suppress debate. The minority report being laid on the table, the majority was regarded as sustained, and a scene of unparliamentary irregularity ensued that has seldom been equalled since the Charleston convention, and never on the floor of a scientific body. The scene itself, the actors in it, the partisan spirit displayed, completed the proof, if any was needed, that the negro question was the animus of all this pretended ethics; and none knew better than the chairman of that committee, how untrue this action was to the high and professed intent of the organization of the Association. Hence, his effort to perpetrate a pious fraud, which, while catering to the sympa-

*Dr. Sayre ruled that a report of a committee was in force before the body to whom it was presented voted to accept or reject it! Hence the whole brood of delegates from the District Society was suffered to vote on their own admission. Was the conduct of the temporary chairman the result of ignorance or willfulness?

thies of the "dominant," and securing the exclusion desired, would place it on other grounds. And then fearing lest the tissue-paper of the report would be blown away by the free breath of public, medical sentiment, in most ridiculous and stultifying grandeur, those that remained the next day resolved that they had acted without any color prejudices whatever, and adjourned! Ye artists in mock-heroic and pantomime beat that if you can!

The President of the Association, in his opening address, asks "what has the American Medical Association done to entitle it to the respect of the profession?" and we are glad that he could attempt answer before this convention was in progress.

Before this, some of its members, and a great many of high rank in our profession who have never been identified with this body, have felt that it has failed to represent the strength of the profession as much as could be wished; that its papers are not in originality or clinical exactness in advance of those of less extended organization, and that in its attempt to reform medical colleges and elevate the standard of medical education, it has not availed much.

The most that could fairly and frankly be said of it, was that it attempted to maintain the *esprit du corps* of the profession; to link in sympathy those of kindred scientific attainments; to propound and practice a code of ethics which excluded charlatanism and quackery, and which defended, maintained, and associated the disciples and practitioners of the regular, orthodox science and art of medicine. This was really its highest claim, and, if it had no other, this justified both its conception and continuance; for whatever puts members of the same profession in sympathy with each other, and excludes what is superficial, illogical, or pretentious, is a conservation and correlation of force favorable to united progress.

But, alas! the "Asso" of 1870 makes a flank move on its sacred principles. It puts up new barriers to entrance, and brings ethnological distinctions to bear on science. It actually puts on one of the liberal professions the cast-off garments of political strife; and after Sambo has shaken down the pillars of

a confederacy, the escaped ones accept his services to shake down the pillars of science also. It really seemed, as Dr. Mussey remarked, that our good medical brethren had heard nothing of what had transpired for the last ten years, except to get somehow a prejudice which, if tenable in politics, ought not to be transferred to the area of science.

Had I been a fifteenth-amendment politician, I could have asked no better pyrotechnic display. It seemed as if the doctors had just got ready to scintillate, and after Government and States and religious bodies and all sorts of associations had worked their way through, they walk into the old trap. In all the war I did not see a more acute attack of judicial hardening. I can conceive how men may dispute about the political status of the negro; how, by reason of numbers and his ill-culture, they may differ as to promiscuous citizenship, (for I myself am of that opposing element;) but when a man of certified competency and character knocks at the door of a great national association, claiming to represent legitimate practice, and because of his color a body like ours goes manipulating about for some excuse to keep the man out, it is too trivial and sad to record. Why, that question was decided long ago. The equalities of science are older than those of politics. The former does not involve the latter. Citizenship, at best, is a conferred thing, but there is a kind of organic right which attainment gives that has always in general scientific bodies entitled a duly-accredited delegate to recognition. I doubt whether, in the last fifty years, a national scientific body has convened anywhere that would have excluded a competent scientist on the ground of color, and least of all should a medical man take such a stand. We have enough to do to put down quackery and to vindicate the claims of legitimate medicine; but if we go to consign to the list of irregulars and Gentiles men of science because of national prejudices, we are subjecting science to a test which is itself more irregular than the direst eclecticism. We degrade not him but ourselves by such breaches of that law of ethics which indwells in science.

Here, in this local Society, no question of a social nature is

involved, for it claims to represent medicine as a profession, as a science and an art, in which the associative element is only subsidiary and incidental to the scientific, and the only exclusiveness recognizable is that which excludes ignorance and worthlessness.

Oh, that such a genial, ecumenical council as this should allow such a mite of a thing to disturb its equilibrium, to discharge its catholicity, and to demonstrate a false foundation!

It was my lot a few days since, in the city of Philadelphia, to pass a day in the great assembly of a prominent religious denomination of the country. Scattered over the house, amid six hundred other delegates, were five or six colored ministers; and yet the decorum, the social elevation, the moral dignity, the professional status of that body was in no wise disturbed; and even in southern assemblies the same construction obtains.

I could not but draw a mortifying contrast when I remembered the scene at Washington, two weeks previous, and pity the blind zeal of those who, in order to maintain a false chivalry, were willing to follow the Davis track, and seek a round-about pretence for the exhibition of partisan exclusiveness. It is very late, and in very bad taste at this late hour, to begin such manifestations in civil life, but such untamed fury bedaubed and spatters far worse the robes of science and the grand toga of that liberal profession which asks no other test than "certified character and competency." We ever will degrade both our science and ourselves when we show the world that our minds are capable of such narrow contractions and illiberal exclusiveness as this; and no wonder that in this trying with covert hand to turn the dial of accomplished events backward, we have from Maine to San Francisco made ourselves the occasion of the most pungent obloquy. Would that some good spirit of magic could confine the fact within our own national bounds! In the name of our professional science we beg that the medical profession of America be not judged by this ill-advised misconduct. It is not American practice or medical sentiment that is thus represented. The delegates from the District of Columbia were more than from all New England, and in other respects

the profession was not represented. Let the responsibility rest where it belongs. He who has some claims as a chief founder* of this Association has the best right to tear it down, and if, in so doing, he falsifies its declared intent, and at the behest of others makes rubbish that cannot be covered up, let not this dust be thrown into the eyes of the universal profession. We refuse to wink or to have our nostrils and lungs inflated by such adynamic air, nor will the profession of the United States accept any such Association as its representative or mouth-piece. If it will not repudiate such management, American doctors who stay at home, and work and think, and honor their profession by giving it position as a science, and a practice in the neighborhood and States to which they belong, will repudiate it, and will not follow it, with free tickets over Pacific railroads, when the terminus is either stormy, wrangling over dead issues, or feeble utterances as to real intrinsic, scientific and practical questions of medicine. The Association has unharnessed itself from its code of ethics, and until it readjusts and defines itself, and shows such signs of vitality as real doctors will be quick to discuss, its head-centres and chief fogle-men must not complain if the profession hesitate to acknowledge it as first-class authority.

If its volumes are in small demand, and its dictum is less regarded in the future, charge it not to apathy or indifference amongst the laborers in medical science, but it will rather be because it is outstripped by societies of more principles and better talents, and has become more suggestive of the art of Hogarth than that of Sydenham.

M. D.

*N. S. Davis.

COLLECTANEA.

LECTURE ON DEATH FROM CHLOROFORM.

BY BENJAMIN W. RICHARDSON, M. D., F. R. S.

[From the London Medical Times and Gazette.]

GENTLEMEN: I am following, I believe, your own wishes, in taking up death from chloroform as a subject for the present course of lectures. The time is fitting for a careful study of the important question before us, for the deaths from chloroform seem to be—I do not say they are—seriously on the increase, and hearts of the boldest men are in some fear whenever they summon the agent to their aid. Certain ascertained facts respecting the cause of death from the agent are insufficiently known, certain new facts admit of being added to what are known already. Finally, certain conclusions require to be arrived at as to the possibility or impossibility of making chloroform so safe an agent that it shall maintain its place as the chief instrument for the production of general anæsthesia.

We have work enough on our hands if we include in our labor some of these various subjects. Happily for us in this place, secluded from the multitude, we can study the difficulties we would have solved, with patience, quietude, exactitude. We can read, in short, from nature, who, as Walter Lander tells us, never reveals herself to the crowd nor by sound of trumpet, but of whom we must inquire with the simplicity of children, looking earnestly in her face for the reply.

In the outset of our work I think it best we should honestly admit this truth, that whatever our admiration may be of the scientific advancements which have in our day been made for the relief of pain during surgical operations, we are bound to season the admiration with the disagreeable knowledge that the