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Medical Ethics

AND

MEDICAL DISSENSIONS:

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE

ALBANY COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY.

By CHARLES A. ROBERTSON, A. M., M. D.

MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN OPHTHALMOLOGICAL SOCIETY, AND OPHTHALMIC AND AURAL
SURGEON AT ST. PETER'S HOSPITAL, ALBANY.

FROM THE MINUTES OF THE SOCIETY

ALBANY:

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MEDICAL ETHICS:

WITH REMARKS CONCERNING THE

Present State of the Medical Profession in Albany.

PUBLISHED FROM THE RECORDS OF THE ALBANY COUNTY
MEDICAL SOCIETY,

revised
BY CHARLES A. ROBERTSON, A. M., M. D., 1829-1880.

MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN OPHTHALMOLOGICAL SOCIETY, AND OPHTHALMIC AND AURAL
SURGEON AT ST. PETER'S HOSPITAL, ALBANY, N. Y.

“ For right is right, since God is God;
And right the day must win;
To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin.”

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P R E F A C E .

“ —— To thine own self be true :
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.”

In committing the following pages to print, the writer has consulted only his own disposition, as in writing them he acted in response to the promptings of his own spirit. While he would turn from his path, if necessary, to avoid crushing a worm, while he would willingly wrong no one, and would “do all that may become a man” to preserve peaceful relations with his fellows, he will not hesitate, in the exercise of his rights, to employ any legitimate measures, because deemed severe, that seem honorable, proper and available for his purpose, although he may anger some and shock others. The glory of the medical profession is to seek truth and “*swear in the words of no master* ;” but the reader of this work will not finish its perusal, without the conviction that some members of the profession do not contribute generously toward magnifying and perpetuating its glory in any respect, and especially do not in regard to truth and independence.

This pamphlet contains a copy from the records of the Albany County Medical Society of a paper read by the author before the Society on the evenings of January 9th and 23d, 1871. After the reading on the first evening, it was voted “that Dr. Robertson be requested to read the remainder of his paper before the Society.” After the reading on the

second evening, it was "remarked that in view of the peculiar interest of Dr. Robertson's paper, as a matter of historical record of the dissensions that existed in the medical profession, and that members in future might refer to it, be it therefore *resolved* that the secretary of the Society be requested to copy in full Dr. Robertson's paper on *Medical Ethics* in the records of the last and present meetings of the Society. The resolution being seconded was voted upon and was *adopted*." [See Minutes of the meeting.]

Those who do not read these pages, will find nothing offensive in them, and will be under no necessity of displaying, by means of their comments, how presumptive they are to substitute the freaks of their fancies and the play of their prejudices for the exercise of intelligent judgment: those who do read them, have the right of forming their own opinions, and of considering both the merit and the expediency of the statements contained in them. The author holds himself responsible for all that he has said, and is ready to substantiate his assertions before any competent tribunal.

"Thus much I've dared to do; how far my lay
Hath wronged these righteous times, let others say;
This let the world, which knows not how to spare,
Yet rarely blames unjustly, now declare."

CHARLES A. ROBERTSON,
No. 17 Washington Avenue, Albany, N. Y.

MR. PRESIDENT, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE
ALBANY COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY :

It is about a year, since I published, in pamphlet form, a reprint of an article which appeared in the *New York Medical Journal*, of January, 1870. This was a critique of the pamphlet concerning the *Last Illness of Dr. Alden March*, the substance of which was inserted in the same medical journal by Dr. James H. Armsby.

Of course, a review, marked by so much directness of utterance, and so unsparing in critical severity toward the responsible surgical attendant of Dr. March, could not but elicit feeling, both in and out of the profession. You will remember that I was charged, by an old and then respected physician, but who was an interested party, with having committed the grossest violation of medical ethics ever committed in this or any other country.

The vituperation visited on me by individuals, at that time, has suggested topics fraught with interest.

A full year has passed, and no expression of the society's displeasure has been made; but, on the contrary, you have honored me with the responsible position of Chairman of the Board of Censors, whose duty is to challenge the qualifications of candidates seeking admission here. Owing allegiance to this medical society, which implies reciprocity, and respecting its intelligence, I feel it proper to declare the causes which impelled me to severity in the exercise of my right of criticism, and I have determined to prepare a paper comprehending some points of medical ethics, with a review, under the light of medical ethics, of the controversy and dissensions which have sprung up here, and also incidentally to consider the existing *status* of the medical profession in Albany.

The medical profession is at once a scholarship and a vocation. In its organization may be found the extreme right, or those who hunger and thirst after knowledge as an end, who summon to their inquisition light, heat, magnetism and actinism, who explore the influence of climate, of solids and fluids, who scrutinize the animal and vegetable kingdoms, and every department of inorganic creation, who analyze all matter with the chemical reagent, determine the proportions of its constituents with the balance, or with microscopic eyes, of many thousand magnifying power, peer into an otherwise invisible world, and study the formative processes of ultimate particles of matter; and all this, that they may know man, and his relations with the physical world in which he is placed, the influences which vitiate his body and pervert the action of his system, and the conditions which insure his health.

Then, there is the extreme left. Here are men of little intellect or little attainment. They have a diploma from some medical college or society, and that is the Constantine cross, the banner under which they are to conquer. It has mysteriously converted them from boys of sadly slight schooling into accredited philosophers and physicians, furnished with authority to play the rôle of doctors in medicine. They have done all the study necessary—and perhaps that was very little—to secure their degrees, and they now lay aside their books. Business is all they want, and boasting is their way of getting it. They possess a staple store of medicaments, which they use in a routine way. They talk drugs and doses, never principles; but I need not go further in the picture, you all know the *genus*, the tradesmen, whose profession is a craft. Between the extremes which I have noted, are all grades, some tending to the right and some to the left. Now, it is simply impracticable for all physicians to be constant students; but it is practicable for them to aim high, to do their best, and not sink to merited contempt

by neglecting all effort to rise above the low plane of charlatanism. It is this latter class, and the business aspect of the profession, with its attendant rivalries, jealousies and selfishness, that make a code of ethics seem necessary.

I am not aware that there is an expressed code of medical ethics in any country but our own. At all events, I constantly read flings in foreign journals at our too frequent talk about it. A code of medical ethics is simply a code of manners. Against portions of the code adopted from the State Medical Society in the county medical societies, the assertion will stand, that they are simply superfluties among honorable gentlemen, and perhaps it is not singular that they who prate most of ethics need most to be hedged by strictest regulations. If a man is not naturally, or from breeding, a gentleman, the only safeguards against his selfishness or boorishness are society laws, that he shall not contravene. Associated with his betters, you will then hear him boasting of his knowledge and observance of ethics; and what to a gentleman are matters of course, which he never thinks of remarking, are to him merits that he is afraid you will not recognize and concede, unless he takes pains to mention them. Does a woman above suspicion ever vaunt her virtue? Are you better satisfied that a man has "clean hands and a pure heart," when he grows eloquent with pious talk concerning himself? Is not a dishonest merchant more likely to announce his great resources, when on the very verge of bankruptcy? One of these impostors was denouncing one of my professional brethren for a breach of ethics. I heard him through with smothered contempt, and remarked, with mock-seriousness, that it was shameful that any should be so lacking in courtesy, and then remarked that a patient had been sent to me for treatment by a physician in another town. Being a stranger in Albany, he did not readily find my office, but passed on and stopped where he first observed a doctor's sign to

make inquiry; "Oh, it is a long way from here," the doctor said; "Got something the matter with your eye? I can fix that." And he did "*fix*" it. The next time the patient called, he told me of the circumstance; and this was the manner in which I played the part of Nathan to that David.

A code of ethics having been adopted by the profession, all members of medical societies are bound to observe its requirements, or dis sever their society connections. It is not a question whether they like or dislike the imposed regulations; whether they think them wise or unwise; whether they tend to their individual profit or operate as a hindrance. They have voluntarily joined the organization and subscribed to rules for government of its members. Considerations of their own interest influenced them to form the connection, and if they find the detriment exceed the advantages of association, they are always free to withdraw. But to maintain a connection with the society in order to reap advantage, or consideration, or profit from it, and at the same time to persist in violation of its regulations, is intrinsically ungentlemanly and dishonest, and is an offense to which the self-respect of any member may properly call attention, and so demand of the society discipline or expulsion of the recusant member. While he is a member, any fellow of the society has full right to object to any law of the society, and to use his best endeavors to have it altered; but until he succeeds, he is bound to obey the law or dissolve his relations with the society.

As an instance, I, for one, am frank to say that I regard the regulation which forbids consultation with homœopaths, botanics or old women, as unwise; and it is particularly with respect to homœopathy, as not the least important, that I think we are very seriously in the wrong. This opinion I utter with diffidence, and with great respect for the contrary judgment of the profession. I cannot but think that we should have treated it with

gentleness instead of severity ; have regarded its claims with appearance, at least, of judicial consideration, and not with invective and derision ; have met its practitioners, as well as other practitioners, in instructive "consultation," instead of standing aloof with lofty self-approbation, and unconcealed contempt, while the deluded patient died. Doubtless, plausible arguments could be brought against this opinion, and evils might arise from practicing on this theory ; but I have yet to learn that truth need ever fear contact with error ; that "heaven-eyed science" can be lured by blinking sciolism ; that a staunch ship need fear to float on the same level with a "flying Dutchman ;" that the Christ was contaminated by association and conversation with Pharisees and Sadducees. We have fought homœopathy instead of "hugging it to death." By opposition, instead of destroying it, we have dignified it, so that it has its hospitals and colleges, as well as "*the regular profession.*" I know nothing of their quality ; but I would willingly swear they are not inferior to what have come under our observation, where the practitioners claim to be "regular." I wish to disclaim having any sympathy with homœopathy, and to assert that I regard its doctrines as visionary and preposterous. Yet I find many of its practitioners apparently honest and intelligent. I cannot account for persons, for whose intelligence and judgment in other matters I have great respect, avowing belief in theories and speculations and creeds, that seem to me most unreasonable, and yet I should not feel justified in terming them dishonest or foolish. If "a school of medicine" springs out of a mere dogma, it seems a whimsicality to me ; but still the fact exists, that such a "school" has sprung up, and wields an influence to-day which, I believe, is in no small degree owing to persecution rather than its intrinsic strength.

Again, an injury is done to the vocation of medicine by an arbitrary restriction like this respecting consultation ;

for we have practitioners, and usually not the wisest among our numbers, who clandestinely, if not openly, consult with homœopathic practitioners, and so pass for liberal men, to the manifest disadvantage of physicians of different tone, who cherish no unkind personal feelings toward homœopaths or others, whose antagonism to homœopathy results from intellectual belief in medicine as a science and not as a dogma, and who feel that honor and honesty demand that they conform to the society obligations, which they have voluntarily assumed.

Perhaps, in this connection, it may not be altogether foreign to my subject to note professional conduct as to relations with druggists, as well as with doctors.

At a regular meeting of the Academy of Medicine of New York City, held February 19, 1868, the following action was the result of deliberation respecting physician's prescriptions.

“Dr. O'Sullivan then submitted the following preamble and resolution, which were adopted unanimously, and referred to the State Medical Society:

“Whereas, The attention of this Academy has been called to the repetition of prescriptions, containing active ingredients, by druggists, without the written order of physicians; and whereas, serious consequences to patients are liable to ensue; therefore,

“Resolved, That we respectfully request the druggists of this city not to repeat such a prescription without the written order of a physician, he being the only competent judge of the propriety or necessity of such renewal.”

I think that the attention of this society has been called already to this matter, and I introduce it here as preliminary to another consideration of the relation between physicians and druggists, which has an ethical aspect, if it be not directly alluded to in the code.

I asked a druggist a short time since for my account, which had been standing unsettled for several months. He presented it, and I found to my surprise that I was credited with *ten cents a-piece* on every prescription I had sent to him, the total sum being equal to two-thirds of his

account against me! I felt that I had been the unconscious and innocent means of a large number of persons being compelled to pay ten cents each more than was just, or that in order to secure business, the druggist was compelled to submit to an extortion of ten cents from his legitimate profit every time he compounded a prescription for some members of the profession. I am sure there are not many in the profession who would barter their self-respect in this way. It is not merely unfair—it is simply contemptible. I know no one who does it, and I should regret to know any one. A physician is entitled to his fee; but let him state it in a manly way, and not stoop his dignity, and creep around to solicit a druggist for a pittance from his legitimate, or still worse, his illegitimate profits.

Turning now to the matter of public advertising, the code of ethics appears sufficiently explicit and direct. It is termed “an absolute act of quackery;” that is, an act, which in one respect places the offender on a par with those who, having no medical skill, deceive the public by placarding great pretensions. There are two classes of evils, the *mala in se* and *mala prohibita*, or things essentially wrong, and things wrong because forbidden. Advertising is of the latter class. It is objected to, for it is regarded to be undignified. Its tendency is to degrade the profession, because the *smartest advertiser*, and not the most sagacious and skillful physician, would make the deepest and broadest impression upon the unthinking and unintelligent public, and so extend his field of hurtfulness, if it were generally adopted. The ideal of the profession is that the art of medicine is practiced directly for the welfare of humanity, and only incidentally for the lucrative profit of the physician. The more successfully this noble ideal can be sustained, the higher becomes the plane on which the profession moves, and the greater the gulf which separates it from charlatanism. But the incidental and personal interests of the physician are not to

be ignored, for he must live, and he is entitled to emoluments that shall enable him to live, not meanly, but in the possession of gratifications and position, to which his knowledge and skill entitle him. The aim of the advertiser is evidently to secure by a quicker process than the slow growth of confiding recognition, the fiscal benefits of medical practice. He therefore takes advantage of his fellows by adroitly parading his name and wonderful deeds before the public eye, which he means to daze. He is aware that his conduct is not ethically proper, and therefore he usually acts covertly and indirectly, until he becomes brazen with effrontery from repeated boasting, and then his own hand does the puffing, and his own feet carry him to the newspaper offices, where his name and signal abilities are to be gazetted.

Some forbearance of judgment might be had, if these advertisements told the whole truth, not only the first part, but the sequel. If the paragraphs were meant for interesting news, and not for personal notoriety, they would be followed out to the consequent and final event, bad as well as good. But the complement of these interesting items for the press is not supplied by the great man, who lauds himself, or by his admirers. The witnesses in the car may tell of the daring leap of a person from a train moving at thirty miles an hour, but somebody else tells of the imposing funeral to-morrow. To-day, it is published that Mr. X., who was hopelessly blind, from *glaucoma*, with even an iridectomy vainly done sometime before, has been successfully operated on by Dr. Microcephalus, who "*depressed* the cataracts." In a few days we learn that the senseless work of an ignoramus is followed by fearful general inflammation of the eyes; and later we learn that the suffering continued for many weeks. Now, we read that a stone as "big as a paving-stone" has been successfully cut from a man's bladder by Dr. Prodigy, whose skill is duly chronicled; and, anon, we read from another pen that the patient had died from

the *successful* operation. The fatal result was attributed to *ague*; so the rigors were termed. One day, we read of the terrible injury of a man by a railroad accident, who is receiving, at a "*charitable* institution," "every attention that skill can suggest;" the next day, the story is continued, and we learn that Dr. Shameless has done an amputation; and now, the *great* surgeon having acted, the doubt is past, and the newspapers declare that the patient is doing well; but, anon, pallid death mocks the advertiser for his boastful parade; and, to him worse than all, the charge of *one hundred and fifty* dollars, he dare not try to collect, for the poor widow threatened the great surgeon with an action at law for malpractice, because he had amputated a limb of her husband, in his "*charitable* institution," after it had been declared that death was inevitable. All this in the case of a poor man, who was not allowed to have the valuable judgment of the ablest surgeon of the hospital staff, because the great advertiser's spleen and vindictiveness against a rival precluded a consultation.

The objectionable custom of names of physicians repeatedly appearing in the newspapers, in connection with accidents is easily explained, and the purpose well understood. It is, no doubt, accidental at times; but much more frequently it is designedly done, and effected ingeniously through collusion with local editors. A man cut his fingers, the other day; with a circular saw. The next day, it was published that Dr. Prodigy dressed the wound. Dr. Prodigy felt it necessary to get a little notoriety in this way, gratuitously. His name, in connection with this trifling matter, did not get into print accidentally, any more than in the "paving-stone" affair.

If this advertising did not *pay*, pecuniarily, (not the newspapers, to be sure, but the doctors) it would not be so persistently practiced. But it is unjust to physicians who will not practice it; and it is certainly in violation of the code of ethics, to which we assent,

You remember well the phenomena resulting last winter, when it was determined to take formal measures respecting advertising. You recall the scenes at the meeting, January 10th, 1870, when a committee was demanded to investigate a grossly offensive piece of public self-laudation by Dr. Armsby, and laudation of other lecturers and lecturings at the Medical School. I will not rehearse the entire matter now, for the records of the Society contain the secretary's report of the proceedings of that meeting. You remember, doubtless, the manner in which Dr. Armsby, who was the party guilty of unprofessional advertising, objected to the reading of his disgusting newspaper article, and voted against the proposition to have a committee appointed to investigate the authorship of it? You remember how desirous certain parties were to deprive Dr. Robertson of the sole honor or shame of criticising Dr. Armsby's malpractice, and how Dr. James McNaughton moved as an amendment, that the critique be referred to the same committee, *which amendment Dr. Robertson seconded*, at the same time avowing his full responsibility as the author. You remember how packed was that meeting by the relatives and friends of the three signers of the *report* concerning Dr. March's illness and death, and you may recall to mind the rumor that a resolution denouncing Dr. Robertson was contemplated! But the majority was on the other side, and Dr. Armsby, with haggard face, showed that evening how agreeable it is to be "hoist with his own petar!"

You will readily picture to memory the meeting of the 24th of January, 1870, when that committee made a formal and complete report to the society, which may be found in the records of the society.

This was to be a test meeting. It was to determine whether Dr. Armsby and his faction, aided for the time by sympathizers of gentlemen whose names were in unfortunate association with his in the criticised report con-

cerning Dr. March's case, should control this society, or independent men, who will not act as dogs and "let the candied tongue lick" the hand of arrogance in order to get a bone to gnaw in college or hospital, or as contemptible sycophants

"Crook the pregnant hinges of the knee
Where thrift may follow fawning."

You remember the little fellow, who got up in his little way, and with his little voice spoke his little speech, but with little relevancy, for the proceedings took a direction which he had little dreamed! You remember with what little sense he supported what was little probable, that a student of Dr. Armsby was the author of the advertisement, and that the great professor copied it!

You remember how Dr. Barent P. Staats, whom Dr. Armsby had recently made a consulting member of his hospital staff, defended his patron, insisting that in the article under consideration, there was no violation of medical ethics; and yet this same gentleman then and there admitted, that he was the author of an anonymous newspaper-squib ridiculing physicians and surgeons whose names were published in connection with "every trifling surgical case," and "their practice announced through the press." He wrote that he was "disgusted with the practice," and "that the whole practice is forbidden by the code of medical ethics, and is truly and properly called quackery." Certainly, Janus, if a fiction* himself, was significant of a reality among us!

In your memory still reposes, I question not, the muddled consistency of Dr. James McNaughton's conduct. He had charged Dr. Robertson with being the "ostensible author" of a review, which he said was a gross breach of medical ethics, and he amended Dr. James S. Bailey's resolution respecting the newspaper article, by assigning to the committee the duty of ascertaining who was the real author of the review. The committee charged the authorship of the newspaper advertisement against

Dr. Armsby, and reported that Dr. Robertson was the author of the review. When the question on the adoption of the committee's report came up, Dr. McNaughton did not know whether he was a-foot or a-horseback, and asked whether a vote in favor of the adoption implied that the report was correct or whether it implied censure. Dr. Lansing said "it *implied censure*, for the resolution of Dr. Bailey was based on a preamble that charged the article written by Dr. Armsby with being a violation of medical ethics." Thereupon Dr. McNaughton voted *no!* He had already announced his belief in its correctness, for by it, he said, he was "glad to be relieved from the suspicion of having written the advertisements." He had previously spoken of the "advertisements" to the students in the Medical College in reprehensive terms, but now he thought "there was nothing specially wrong in them!" According to the *language* of Dr. McNaughton it stood, too, that Dr. Robertson had done a heinous sin against ethics; according to the *vote* of Dr. McNaughton, Dr. Robertson either had not offended at all, or if he had, he was not censurable! In this effort to save Dr. Armsby from censure, he had unavoidably protected Dr. Robertson from the wrathful censure he had expressed, unless he saw, as every one of the majority favorable to the adoption of the report did, that no censure of Dr. Robertson was implied, or meant to be implied.

But, Mr. President, I will not weary you, for your own memory will recall to mind the anxious expression of the man on trial, his nervous agitation and inability to maintain composure, his plaintive assurance to Dr. Devo that to vote *aye* was to vote censure of him, *his voting on his own trial!** thus playing the parts of criminal and juror at once, his pitiful efforts to hinder, by motions to lay the matter on the table, by calling for the *ayes* and

* It being contrary, not only to the laws of decency, but to the fundamental principle of the social compact, that a man should sit and act as a judge in his own case. [See Cushing's Manual of Parliamentary Practice.]

nays, by urging the unfairness of thus calling him to summary account! He was loth to drink from the chalice, which he meant for another!

By reading in the records the able and full report of the meeting, prepared by Dr. Porter, the secretary, all will be freshly remembered.

But to return to the charge made by Dr. McNaughton, can any one say of what breach of ethics I was guilty, in reviewing the *report* of the manner in which Dr. March was treated! When published it became public property, and any living man had a right to say, by mouth or pen, what he thought of it. I had the same right to review that report that my venerable, *quondam* friend had to criticise *me*. Now, Dr. James McNaughton did nothing against medical ethics in his reply, or did I in my review. He scolded me pretty severely, 'tis true; but, "*English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*" in mind, I rated the good doctor's tirades at their true value, and now salute him as the "illustrious conqueror of common sense!" But careful investigation with a microscope would not enable me to find a spot where I was hurt by the noisy fulminations of his shotless gun. It may have seemed unethical to the sensitive old gentleman's apprehension that I should have ordered twice the number of his "Reply" to be printed that he did, and so "rush to blaze before the public!" how impossible it was to assault my position successfully, and that the "old man's ire" was

"Full of sound and fury signifying nothing."

This sentence, however, which I quote from Dr. McNaughton is most astounding and most shocking: "Had the case been as badly treated as the reviewer would have his readers believe, is it agreeable to medical ethics that he should unnecessarily rush to blaze it before the public?" "Now, by all the gods at once," what does this mean? A weak, wicked, and distorted report is made concerning a case which has terminated fatally, because somebody dared not, could not, or would not

resort to the necessary means of safety. Dr. McNaughton says, if all this be true, it is coarse usage to bring the avower of ignorance, or worse than ignorance, to account. He would throttle honest and indignant criticism with drivel, and choke plain-spoken judgment with his mush of medical ethics. What man, who cares for his own welfare, or would guard the lives of those he holds dear, will assent to such not inane nonsense, such *shocking* notions? If a man has obtained simply a newspaper reputation (“*des triumphs des gazettes*”), and has forgotten or never known his profession, shall he scatter his “fire-brands, arrows and death,” and then excuse himself by publicly pleading a sophism or a falsehood, and no one presume to question him? Human judgment is fallible, and it would be unjust to visit with public invective or severity supposed errors of diagnosis or treatment, concerning which no data have publicly appeared; but the design of medical ethics is not to veil ignorance. Obscurity is the best shelter of incompetency; but when, in fancied safety, it rears its presumptuous head into the light, no one need be surprised that an arrow, straight and true, wings its way from the critic’s bow through the fair target. Who is hurt by the unerring shot; the public, for whom physicians profess to burn the midnight oil and store their minds with knowledge; the profession, that has one less incubus to carry; or the pitiful man who knows that his falsity and worthlessness are made manifest, as by the touch of Ithuriel’s spear?

The medical profession has sunk to a very abject and pitiful condition, if Dr. McNaughton is correct, and if criticism, however severe, is deprecable and intolerable. What code of medical ethics, of morals, of decency, is that, which dares assert that *avowed* malpractice, resulting even in death, shall be winked at, and not discussed? What horrible doctrine is that, which proclaims that the exposure of ignorance and charlatanism and wrong-doing in science, though cloaked in specious habiliments, is

censurable? That it is worse to detect and condemn ignorance and erroneous practice than it is to be ignorant and to do wrong practice? Dr. McNaughton is too old a man to declare such shocking opinions, and, for his own sake, should amend his words.

Having, as I believe, established my right to criticise the report of Dr. Armsby and others, if any questioned it before, I wish now to set forth, if you will bear with me, why I did not repress the vigor of my pen, which, glowing with a sense of wrong, burnt so deeply into the sensibilities of some. It is proper that you should know *why* I had no forbearance in criticising Dr. Armsby severely, and even contemptuously. I might say, "it is my humor," my taste; and, if I kept within the bounds of ethical propriety in language, none had right to blame, if they chose to differ. But I propose to show this society, that I had received provocation, which vindicated my indignation with the man, while I tore in shreds the weak and insulting paper which he had offered the profession. I singled out Dr. James H. Armsby because he deserved to be shown in his true capacity as the principal actor in the lamentable tragedy. I was contemptuous regarding him, because, in my opinion, he was not what I believe each of the other signers of his report to be—a gentleman. I accept, fully, Emerson's definition of a gentleman: he "*is a man of truth*, lord of his own actions, and expressing that lordship in his behavior; not in manner dependent and servile on persons or opinions or possessions." He must be a man of kind heart, too. But nothing "can dignify skulking or dissimulation, and the first point of courtesy must always be truth." We shall see how Dr. Armsby comes up to this standard, or, rather, how he does not.

Again, I am frank to say that I am somewhat *human*, that I love my friends and do not love my foes. When a wrong is done me, I do not volunteer to pardon it, until it ceases to be manliness to resent, and only ask "a fair

field and no favor." It is blood flowing in my veins, and not that cold fluid which might circulate in a *ghoul*, and which prompted a certain one, whom you all know and none like, to say that he *did not believe in friendship*, but, in a remarkably learned essay, to avow his sympathies and assert that he "*loved frogs.*"

I had become convinced, in various ways, that Dr. Armsby was covertly hostile to me, and *that* from a very early period; and I was certainly no lover of him, spite of his fair-faced seeming, and his dissembled friendship. I early found him a busybody and mischief-maker. I knew that he was insidiously trying to damage me by plying questions that were intended to inspire distrust, by "the kind mendacity of hints," and, when no word was spoken, by the shrugging shoulder, and "the silent smile of slow disparagement." Yet all this time he would meet me with a countenance as sweet as Iago's, and occasionally send me, as a "tub to a whale," a patient (always impetunious!) and sometimes manifest an importunate interest in my affairs. On account of these tricks he had the insolence to call me "ungrateful," when I criticised him! Sops for Cerberus—a manly man never requires subserviency for favors, and no manly man sells his birthright for pottage or "patronage."

But "blindly the wicked work the righteous will of Heaven." I was in training to tear off the lion's skin, and adjudge the wearer his proper place, a service to him and others well needed. From one side and another came warnings to be on my guard against Dr. Armsby as a moral assassin. A lady in another county, whose little boy was under my care, narrated the particulars of a somewhat prolonged conversation, which he took special pains to introduce and continue. She said the unmistakable drift of his talk was to injure me. Another person, a clergyman, spoke in a similar way. A gentleman from Montgomery county, sent to me by a physician, and who had first seen Dr. Armsby at the request of a friend, said

“Doctor, I wish to put you on your guard against Dr. Armsby ; he is no friend of yours, and is trying to do you all the harm he can ; I have found you a very different kind of a man from what I heard you were at his office.”

These are a few only, of numerous instances of this kind. At another time he requested me to give a lecture to the students on “Present Condition of Ophthalmology.” Regarding his invitation as merely a passing compliment, I did nothing in the way of preparation, until he made a second and more urgent request. I then prepared a lecture, and informed him that I was ready. Another member of the faculty desired Dr. Armsby to appoint an evening for the lecture, and he replied that it was his intention to do so. He *did* appoint an evening ! He waited until the term was nearly closed, and almost all the students had gone home, and then upon a most inclement day, when the pitiless winds drove the cutting sleet through one’s very skin, this *gentleman* sent a verbal message from his office proposing that I should lecture to the students in the *evening* ! Indignant as I felt at this gratuitous and ungentlemanly affront, I refrained from any expression of resentment. I told the messenger that it would not suit me to lecture at that time, and after he had quit my office, I addressed a quiet letter to Dr. Armsby, thanking him for his courtesy in remembering me at all, and suggesting that the lecture be postponed indefinitely, since the students had well-nigh disappeared. I never received an explanation or apology from this strange man. This unpardonable rudeness was simply in conformity with other conduct. I knew that the long lane would have a turn, eventually. I was well aware of the nature of the soil that he was harrowing, and fully was I satisfied that he would reap a crop of gigantic retribution in due time, if he did not forbear sowing dragon’s teeth.

The following winter I was politely invited by Dr. Quackenbush to address the students during an hour of his time.

I accepted the invitation, and read the lecture prepared the year before. Think you there was not a lurking malevolent, ready with subtle and devilish artifice to convert the courtesy offered me into a mischievous entanglement for my feet? Let me unweave the cunning stratagem before you. When I came to Albany, you will remember that no Eye and Ear Infirmary existed here. Having devoted much time to the special study of diseases of the eye and ear, both at home and in Europe, under the most distinguished teachers, and coming with experience in the practice, and bringing my credentials, if you will permit me to say it, from one of the first, if not the first, literary institutions of the country, and from one of the most prominent medical colleges, I trusted I was to be received kindly, as a co-worker in the great field of medicine, and in harmony with all, to labor in the special department which I had chosen. I am happy to say that as respects the highest-toned men in the profession, I have only gratification to express for the pleasant relations that have always existed and continue still between them and me. I soon tried to establish a Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary; but prior to soliciting aid from citizens, I sought recommendation of the project on the part of the profession. Among the earliest on whom I called was Dr. March. He declined to give me his signature, and assigned as one reason, that it would attract students away from the hospital clinics. I called on Dr. Armsby immediately, who, facile as ever, signed the paper, and then remarked the absence of Dr. March's signature. I told him several objections made by Dr. March. He said these were not his real reasons for refusing, and then asked me if I had not said something obnoxious, in my lecture, regarding Dr. March's method of operation for cataract. I disclaimed any allusion, whatever, to Dr. March, or knowing what was his operation for cataract, as his son told me, just before I wrote the lecture, that he had not operated in five years. Then, with *exceeding*

kindness, he requested that I would bring him a copy of what I had said about cataract, and he promised that he would show it to Dr. March; for "it was a pity," he said, "to have his feelings hurt through a misunderstanding." I thanked this mild-mannered pacificator for his kindness, but I didn't fall into his trap. At my convenience I called on Dr. March, and repeated what had been said to me, and showed him in the manuscript, what I had read to the class. The mischief was brewed from the statement that to-day the *couching* or *depressing* of cataract was held to be an obsolete and unjustifiable operation, which I would not unsay to please any one. The doctor was satisfied, and we parted in a friendly way. Before I left, however, it transpired who was the sly whisperer, the covert mischief-maker. Why, it was, of course, he whose presence one may feel and say, though not with hellish glee, as said the witch in Macbeth :

"By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes."

Gentlemen, had I yet no good reason for the severity of my style in criticising this person's malpractice?—then listen further. It is in no spirit of unmanly complaint, but simply as history, that I note this man's contemptible conduct. So far as these are matters of individual interest, they are trivial, but as involving principles, they are of great moment. I still kept quiet; but "while I mused, the fire burned." Have you not heard the proverb, "Beware of the anger of a patient man."

Soon after this, I was requested by Dr. Sabin, of West Troy, then vice-president of the Albany County Medical Society, to prepare the semi-annual address, which is expected from the vice-president. Dr. Sabin, being greatly occupied, asked me to act as his substitute. I did not accede to the request until a formal invitation was sent to me by the president of the society, Dr. Pomfret; and then I wrote and delivered the address. Some time afterward, Dr. Sabin desired Dr. Armsby's influence in

order to secure some object he wished. Then Dr. Armsby severely rated the gentleman for paying me so great a compliment, and making me so "conspicuous!" Whether, owing to this, or for some similar frivolous pretext, Dr. Armsby made himself insolently busy to prevent Dr. Sabin from securing the position of post-surgeon to the Water-vliet arsenal; of the vacancy in which he knew nothing, until Dr. Sabin asked his favorable influence, if he had any.

You already know the story of the Eye and Ear Infirmary on South Pearl street, (see appendix) which I opened. You know of my being asked by the hospital governors to join the medical staff of the City Hospital as Ophthalmic and Aural Surgeon, and to suspend operations elsewhere, and of my serving there for more than a year.

You remember the too early death of our friend and brother, Pomfret; but, as sung the poet's rivulet, so may sing the stream of the race's life,

" ——— men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever;"

and as individuals disappear like wavelets from the surface, others come glistening or darkling to take their places.

The staff of the Albany Hospital had lost one of its members, and the survivors were requested to meet at the hospital, and recommend a suitable person to be appointed by the Board of Governors to fill the vacancy. In apparently good faith the members of the staff met together: Dr. James McNaughton occupying the president's chair. The ballots were thrown, and five were for one candidate and four for another. Dr. E. R. Hun was the successful candidate, and was sustained as far better qualified than any one named for the place. A motion was made to declare the nomination unanimous, but objections were raised, and it was announced that personal influence with the governors would be used to set aside the nominee of the meeting. This may have

been in accordance with some *oblique* notions of medical ethics, but it must appear *pitiful* to fair-minded judges, that high-toned physicians should take part in a meeting and, by doing so, imply tacitly, that they recognized the fair proceedings of the meeting as valid, and then dishonorably resort to measures offensive to their fellows, because defeated. From this moment Dr. Armsby was more openly insulting to me than before. There were five independent members of the staff, who understood him and would not be influenced by him against their honest convictions. He chafed to find himself in a minority.

En passant, I will mention, in this connection, a characteristic incident regarding the gentleman, who is so reckless of the collocation of articulate parts of speech as to create sad misgiving that he does injustice to the *honest* part of his nature, if such remains. On the evening prior to the meeting of the staff, Dr. Armsby called at my office. He stated that he had called in behalf of a Mrs. B., who had desired him to speak to me with reference to my fees for the operation for cataract, with which her father was afflicted, since she did not like to personally request any abatement from a full fee, although the expense would be borne by herself. I told him that I never let any person go away unaided, and that I always deducted from my fee, to meet necessitous cases, even though I received no pecuniary remuneration, whatsoever; but I said "this is strange, Doctor, for Mrs. B. has been to see me and had no delicacy in speaking of terms!" The following day, I called on the lady (a patient of my friend, Dr. Vanderpool, to whom I mentioned the occurrence), and she told me the whole story was a fabrication, and that she had never said a word to Dr. Armsby about her father!

But unabashed, this adept in the practice of mendacity as a fine art, said: "By the way, *although I did not call to speak about it,*" (which made me think he did!) "Doctor, have you made up your mind for whom to vote

at the meeting to-morrow?" I answered "yes;" and told him my choice, and he, too, expressed his; but, said he, "it makes little difference, any way, for the governors will do *as they please* about making the appointment!" Think of this, gentlemen, for a moment. This was the key-note of the performance on the next day. A number of men called governors, utterly ignorant of the rudiments even, of any of the branches of knowledge, which form the complex whole, that we call the medical science, and whose practical importance in the medical affairs of a hospital is simply a superfluity, not to respect and confirm the formal recommendation by the staff of a candidate to fill a vacancy in the staff! Why? Forsooth, because of their caprice or favoritism! Hospitals are institutions whose sanitary affairs should be absolutely dictated by the medical staff, and the governors transgress common civility, much more respect for the indispensable officers of the place, when they do not treat their formally expressed wishes as simply submitted to them *pro forma*, and, besides, they are sure to damage the institution, and ferment bitterness among the medical officers, as happened in this case. Is the medical profession so contemptible that it will suffer tamely such gross insult, such manifest indignity? Who are the men, that do these things, and for what consideration are we called to defer to them?

I cannot but think we are somewhat responsible ourselves for the contumely we, at times, receive, and the cheapness in which we are held by ornamental, but useless governors and directors of hospitals, as well as by unofficial but supercilious persons who are worth money, and worth nothing else, for I occasionally hear some speak of patients as their "*patrons*." I know it is often said thoughtlessly, but it is significant of erroneous apprehension, at least, unless the avocation of the speaker is simply a business, and not, as well, a liberal profession—a scholarship. A patient my patron? Not at all, I am

his! He is a sufferer, wanting relief, and comes to me for it, not because he likes me, but because he thinks I can help him. Does the reverend preacher urge his soul-sick hearers to resort to the Great Physician for healing balm, and so become his *patrons*? No, it may be answered, but we receive *money* from "our patrons." Do you mean *pay*, that is, *wages*, or equivalent for value received? If you are a skilled doctor in medicine, then it is nothing of the kind.

How much gold is an eye worth that you have saved from loss of sight? When total eclipse of vision has made the sun dark and the moon to wander rayless in the sky, has expunged the works of nature and the faces of friend and fellow, tell me, what *pay* is commensurate with the benefit derived from exercise of skill, which shall bid the blind man look up and see the light again?

When the patient lies in delicate balance between life and death, and the friends, with eyes reddened and moist, speak low, as the dreadful possibility presents itself, who can *pay* that wise, cool man, whose judicious action directs and sustains the efforts of nature, until a valuable life and a loved one of the family is no longer in jeopardy. *Patron* and *pay*! what a mocking sound they have here!

When the perils of labor are no longer a chance, but an unmistakably assured and terrible certainty, owing to some serious existing abnormality, say what rate *per diem* shall the "patron" pay for the knowledge and dexterous tact that are to determine whether a new-born babe shall

• "—— the rosy dreams of life,
In the first slumber's arms begin,"

while couched over the heart of mother-love; or whether the worshiped wife, the faithful mother, shall be torn from all her offspring and the dear arm, "where oft she hung delighted," and

“Rent the sweet home’s union bond,”
“From the steeple
Tolls the bell,
Deep and heavy,
The death knell.”

When the surgeon comes with his instrument-case, the unwonted eye is appalled, as imagination depicts the fearful suffering that those strange glittering instruments have inflicted. But, after all, some will say ordinary surgery is only a trade, a sort of human carpentry ; and certainly this might be requited, like other mechanical toil. Is it so? Let us look at a case, of which I was an eye-witness, and say then who was patron, and whether money could offset the benefit rendered. For several years a tumor of apparently malignant nature, originating in the submaxillary gland, had been growing, and had finally become so large as to press severely on the pharynx and trachea. The danger was becoming very serious to the sufferer, a lady, of perishing before long from inability to swallow, or from difficulty in respiration. It was excised by a gentleman of great skill. It extended from below the mastoid region of the cranium inwardly, so as to press the side of the trachea beyond the median line ; from an inch above the lower edge of the maxillary bone, to which it was adherent, it extended downward nearly or quite four inches. The tumor occupied the most hazardous region of surgical anatomy. Ether was administered, and for an hour and a half the patient was under its influence. With steadiness and precision, the unerring blade, instinct with the intelligence and skill of the guiding hand, severed the delicate and scarcely recognizable connection between the remorseless and malignant fungus and the healthy tissue about it. In a room near by, were her three mature children, waiting, in agony of suspense, to learn the result of the operation. They knew their mother must surely die if the operation was not done, and the surgeon had told them frankly, before engaging in the work, that the chances of her surviving the operation, or

of succumbing while it was going on, were equal. Think of the anguish which wrung those hearts during the slow moving of that long procession of ninety terror-burdened minutes. Think of the joy, so akin to suffering, which expressed itself in loud sobs, when it was announced that the skill of the talented operator had triumphed, that the immediate object was accomplished, and the tumor which threatened death was removed. Rapidly the wound healed, and now the third year has begun since the operation. The patient is in good although not vigorous health, loving her children and loved by them. Where to-day would have been that mother, but for that master of his art? Had he been timid, or ignorant of his anatomy, easily the point of his knife might have severed the internal carotid artery or internal jugular vein with fatal result, for the tumor was in direct apposition with these most important vessels, which were fully exposed after its removal. Tell me, was that saved woman a "*patron*" of this surgeon? Could she or her children *pay* for that rescued life?

By our code of ethics, we are informed of the duties we owe the public; but let not the public be deceived by dreaming that we allow the concession that they are our *patrons*. "*Neque enim ullâ aliâ re homines propius ad Deos accedunt quam salutem hominibus dando.*" Let them know that our services transcend the idea of any equivalent in silver or gold. It is not *pay* we accept, it is a fee, an *honorarium*. What we demand that we may live, is some *arbitrary* amount, which may be fixed on, but cannot compensate the knowledge and skill, which saves life, or one of the senses, or a member of the body, unless a money-value may be assessed on what has been saved.

But to continue: After the consummation of the insult to the medical staff by the appointment of the candidate of the minority, Dr. Armsby sought how to secure greater strength in the medical staff. If two more members were added whom he could control, he thought his game would

be sure. In order to accomplish this, he circulated a *clandestine* petition that an associate be appointed to act with Professor Quackenbush in the obstetrical department, and with Dr. Robertson in the ophthalmic department. This petition was read at the earliest meeting of the governors by the president, who said (probably he had been misinformed), that it was a paper "originating in the medical staff," or to that effect. One gentleman among the governors requested to look at the paper or hear the names read. He remarked not only the fewness of names, but the entire absence of those of Drs. Quackenbush and Robertson, who were personally interested in the subject-matter of the paper, and of Drs. Vanderpoel, Boulware and Mosher; in fact, of all those who had not voted for Dr. Armsby's candidate, Dr. Vanderveer: of course, this young man's name was there!

"How happens it that the names of Drs. Quackenbush and Robertson are not affixed to this paper?" inquired this gentleman. "Has there been a meeting of the staff? Are not Drs. Vanderpoel, Boulware and Mosher members of the staff; where are their names? Do Drs. Quackenbush and Robertson ask for associates; do they need them; are the persons named in the petition *competent*, in their estimation, for the places, and would they be agreeable associates. In fine, do Drs. Quackenbush and Robertson know anything at all about this petition?" The president replied that he did not know that they did! "If they do not know it, then I pronounce the whole affair an insult to both those gentlemen, and for one I say *no* to that petition, and I do not believe there is a gentleman here, who is willing to insult either Dr. Quackenbush or Dr. Robertson by favoring it." The contemptible creation apparently died in child-birth, as its more contemptible author, alas! for the harmony of the profession in Albany, did not!

The baffled Armsby soon had other cares to occupy his mind, and for a time he ceased to act like troubled water,

casting up mire and dirt on the writer, but after his last underhanded act I condescended no longer to recognize him. I felt that I understood him as well, as if he were a beetle in a dry cabinet, with a pin stuck through him and labeled "*Scarabæus*," and I believed that what an inscrutable Providence had doomed him to be, he would hopelessly remain.

Dr. McNaughton's name was signed to the offensive petition; and, feeling sure that he had not meant wrong, I asked him, as a friend, why he had signed it. He said Dr. Armsby had brought it to him early, and he supposed it would be carried to all, and that it was stated that the object was only to have some appointed person in case of the absence or illness of the present incumbents. I accepted his explanation as satisfactory. I asked him, however, if he ever knew Dr. Armsby to do a fair, honest and clean thing, and how it was possible, after the experience of him which he had heretofore narrated to me, that he did not feel sure that he had some evil ulterior purpose.

It is well known that Dr. Armsby had been effective in causing Dr. McNaughton to be thrust, *nolens volens*, from his place as an active member of the Hospital Staff, and laid on the shelf as a "Consulting Surgeon!" It is also not unknown, that, at one time he was active in trying to have him deposed from the College as a professor. You remember this *card* of Dr. Davidson, published in the city newspapers, February 10th, 1870, viz. :

"I am informed that Dr. James H. Armsby is circulating an anonymous* letter, which is very derogatory to the character of Dr. James McNaughton as a teacher of medicine, and announcing that I am the author. I pronounce the assertion a willful and malicious falsehood, and caution the profession to discourage the circulation of the paper, as its only tendency is to injure the president of the college."

J. REID DAVIDSON, M. D.

* *Anonyms* seem to hover, as vile and ready harpies, in the murky *nimbus* that atmospheres Dr. Armsby. When Dr. John P. Gray, Superintendent of the State Lunatic Asylum, asked the Legislature to appoint a pathologist to the asylum, the inevitable meddler busied himself in trying to stir up influences to defeat the measure, for he was aware that Dr. Edward R. Hun would probably receive the appointment, should the office be

I do not know what dastard wrote that cowardly and base letter, saying, substantially, that the venerable professor was "an old fool, and a drag on the college, and ought to resign." It may be that none, but the author himself knows who wrote it, yet, gentlemen, it requires little sagacity to make a shrewd guess. At all events some of you know, as do some of the former professors and some of the college trustees, that *Dr. James H. Armsby* has used language, repeatedly, concerning *Dr. McNaughton* similar to that contained in the letter.

Had it not been that *Dr. Armsby*, subsequently to his insidious efforts put forth against *Dr. McNaughton*, required the latter to share, if possible, the awful responsibility, which the unaccountable treatment of *Dr. March* imposed, it is very doubtful if *Dr. McNaughton* would have been permitted to round off the half century of teaching, which he was so ambitious to do.

I proceeded, in unstinted terms, to express to *Dr. McNaughton* my opinion of the man who had insulted him, as well as myself, and declared my determination that henceforth I should have it understood that we were open foes. The slaver of his faint praise, which was only a vehicle for commingled detraction, should not by his false tongue be licked over me any longer: what he said in future should be uttered as the words of a posted enemy, and pass for its worth. I said that I had never given him cause, but he had followed me like a sleuth-hound because I could not confederate with him; that I despised such a nature; that I had no respect for his thin

created. Then flitted from out the dark an anonymous telegram, winging its way to Utica, and croaking to *Dr. Gray*, "*the appointment of a State pathologist will jeopardize your position.*" Down came the incensed doctor, and demanded the name of the person who sent the dispatch, and upon the refusal of the telegraph operator to divulge, an order was asked and received from authority at New York, that *Dr. Gray's* demand be complied with. Thereupon, it turned out, to the satisfaction of the inquirer, that the telegram was sent by one of the youths studying medicine, *etc.* (particularly the latter!) at *Dr. Armsby's* office! *Dr. Gray* understands managing lunatics, and it will be long before *Dr. Armsby* will recover from the smarting, which he received at the Delavan House from the lash of invective publicly administered to him there by *Dr. Gray* for losing his wits and interfering with affairs that did not concern him.

scientific coat, or the cheap veneer of the literary wares he sometimes peddled. I am afraid that my summing up ended with more emphasis than elegance! "Tut, tut," said my venerable friend, "don't talk so; Dr. Armsby can do you a great deal of harm!" Ah, Doctor, I returned, that is the key of this man's power. He has made men afraid of him, because of his well-known talent for scurrilous aspersion, and his unscrupulous, unrelenting, yet insidious hostility, and so they have tried to propitiate the bad man, or have shunned him as far as practicable, and thus he has secured opportunity to worm and crawl, through plausibility, subtlety and chicanery into position and power. I said, I was aware that he would do me all the harm in his power by detraction* and defamation, both with personal effort and with the combined aid of his tools and emissaries, but, I declared, that, however others might treat him, I would have no intercourse with him; that I desired no friendship with a man, "*whose dispraise were no faint praise,*" that I sought no favor or forbearance from an unprovoked persecutor, whom I should henceforth defy, and to whom I should give blow for blow, until he let me alone, overtly and covertly, directly and indirectly, be the cost or the result what it might. I had learned the sentiment of the great dramatist and believed in it:

* I am told that Dr. Armsby has collected together several desperate cases which were not benefited by my efforts, and uses them in his insinuating way for the purpose of detracting, if he can, from my reputation! Well, the creature must be permitted to act out his nature; for "the Everlasting" hath "fixed his canon 'gainst self-slaughter," but the worth of his criticism is measured by his professional ability, which is just commensurate with the stupidity that let a piece of iron measuring eight-tenths of an inch in length by one-quarter of an inch in width, and weighing fourteen grains, apothecary's weight, remain in his patient's eye four weeks and two days, while the *diluent* and *anodyne* treatment (of which Dr. March died) was pursued!

(This was the case of Patrick Harrison, 160 Canal street, a boiler-maker, who was wounded in the eye by this formidable chip of iron, struck by a hammer from the head of a steam-boiler rivet. It was removed by the writer, when the patient came to him. Fortunately the sight was preserved. The foreign body lay imbedded between the sclera and the capsule.)

“——— Beware

“Of entrance to a quarrel; but being in,

“Bear it that the opposer may beware of thee!”

It has been said, as a theory, that the disposition of a man may be affected by transfusing into his veins the blood of brute or reptile. This may do for a curious theory, and it would sometimes appear as if the experiment had been tried and the theory demonstrated, when we observe unmistakable faces in which are seen the characteristics of the gliding serpent, the silent footed panther or other loathsome creature; but, Mr. President, I never had the cold blood of a reptile or the timid blood of a pullet forced into my circulation, and I was aroused by this man following me, and therefore I resented his provocations by unsparing severity of manner, when I took fair issue with him professionally, both for his exhibition of culpable ignorance and for his attempt to screen himself by publishing a deception and a falsehood. The circumstances were such, as to demand indignant reprehension from any member of the profession who chose to express his censure, but when in my mind was superadded contempt for the individual, coming from other considerations, I felt no disposition to mingle *diluents* or *anodynes* with my scorn. What code of *medical ethics* commands me to submit to persistent annoyance from any man's arrogance or enmity? Shall I not slap the gnat that stings me?

Some may call me revengeful. That depends! I acknowledge that I am human, and I wish not to lose the cordiality of my warmth *for* or *against*. I did not *intend* that my review should be mild and my manner propitiatory. I confess that I lack the meekness to turn the other cheek, when one has been smitten. I fear I shall need a complete metamorphosis before learning that lesson! Probably there are few capable of practicing according to the teaching; but many are ready to blame others for neglecting to do so. Hypocrites abound to-day,

as they have always done. I excuse myself from swelling their ranks, and playing the "religious dodge," to gain the favor of good old ladies of either sex. This "religious dodge," as it is termed, practiced by some for the purpose of getting business, this sacrilegiously treating the semblance of the Almighty as a trump-card in a game of fraud, seems to me to involve a terrible profanation of one's self, as well as the commission of a pardonless enormity. As a matter of artfulness, that sort of thing may seem to those who resort to it, to be very shrewd; but, as a matter of *ethics*, both moral and professional, it is no less unmanly than it is wicked. Religion, "pure and undefiled," enriches any heart, but a canting, hypocritical doctor is only fit for medical students to practice surgical experiments on. "Knowledge is power," and what the sick, the halt, the blind seek, is the possessor of knowledge and skill that may relieve them, and not moral or religious quality, although genuine, still less the semblance. These qualities cannot remove pain or cure disease, however they may adorn the possessor and worthy as they are of all commendation, and all aspiration.

About this time, Dr. March unfortunately fell into the hands of his brother-in-law. During his illness, I collated and recorded all the reports of his condition, as I received them, day by day, from sources which seemed to me authentic. When he passed "quietly" out of the hands of his brother-in-law, I combined in narrative form what I had gleaned from those who had seen Dr. March during his sufferings, or had just talked with his medical advisers or attendants. This I read over to his son, Dr. Henry March, who, after making one or two additional communications and supplying a few dates, said, "that is correct, if I know anything about it." "I hope," said Dr. Henry March, "you will publish that, and let me have a copy of it, for I should like everything written about father." I read it to another gentleman, who said

it was substantially correct. This paper, it would have been contrary to "ethics" and propriety to publish; but there appeared, after several months, a published report of the case, of which it was proper for me to take notice, as I saw fit.

One of the statements of Dr. Henry March, was, that his father had said, just before his illness, that he was "good for ten years of active life, yet;" again, that he "never was better in his life:" and I believe it was *he*, that told me, (if not, it was another physician, who heard it) that Dr. March said while sick, that there was no need of his dying, if his physicians understood his case — *and there was no need!*

A summing up of the whole matter of the controversy respecting the illness and medical treatment of Dr. March has never been made. It is convenient to do so here, and consistent with a consideration of the ethical features of the matter. I shall be as concise as possible; but incidentally, I shall take occasion to meet a few fresh points that have arisen. In doing so, allow me to speak in the third person.

A report of the last illness of Dr. March appeared in pamphlet form, in Albany, and subsequently in the New York Medical Journal, having the signatures of Drs. James McNaughton, James P. Boyd and James H. Armsby. This report, Dr. C. A. Robertson saw fit to review very critically and severely. Dr. James McNaughton replied to Dr. Robertson, in the pages of the New York Journal, and by reprints of the article in pamphlet form, as Dr. Robertson had done. Dr. Robertson rested his case here, so far as Dr. McNaughton was concerned, but he called attention, in a pamphlet entitled "Strange Defense of Dr. Armsby," to the persecutions to which he had been subjected, for writing his critique, and also to the tricky manner in which Dr. James H. Armsby had sought to damage his veracity. Never did an attempt to murder so end in suicide as that.

The published report of the last illness of Dr. March commences with an apparent intention to refer the origin of Dr. March's trouble in the bladder to a fall, fifteen years ago, when he struck his abdomen, and it also states that a subsequent fall hurt him severely in the lower abdomen. It would also, *according to the report*, seem that his health had deteriorated from the effect of a journey to New Orleans and back. The exciting cause of the disease from which he died is said, by implication, to have been a "fatiguing ride in the country, exposed to rain and cold." He had been working on his farm, a few miles from the city, and was drenched with perspiration, not rain, as Dr. Henry March stated.

A review of the statements concerning his illness and treatment, and also the production of a report of the autopsy, made immediately after the operation, by Dr. Edward R. Hun, and the correctness of which was confirmed by the signatures of Drs. J. R. Boulware, Francis Burdick and Charles H. Porter, constituted the subject-matter of Dr. Robertson's paper. He took issue with the report of the case, by insisting that the essential feature of Dr. March's malady was simply retention of water in the bladder, caused by exacerbation of a chronic disorder of the urinary organs, which exacerbation occurred as the direct and natural result of exposure to cold and moisture, and that this fact could not be hidden by the attempts made by the medical attendants to improperly gloss over and conceal the simple truth, by trying to make it appear that a horde of diseases equally destructive, had invaded the system of the patient. He inveighed in positive terms against persistence in a method of treatment which could not possibly benefit the patient under existing conditions, but, on the contrary, must inevitably do harm, and uttered unsparing censure, because Dr. March, like any one in similar peril, was not provided with the only assistance, the only remedy that could save him from death, viz.: relief by means of instrumental

procedures at the hands of a competent surgeon. He asserts that Dr. Armsby, the only person claiming to be a surgeon, who was allowed, so far as appears, to see Dr. March, did not manifest the skill, or the will, to act as a competent surgeon in treating his patient, and therefore Dr. March, poisoned by urea, the excretory product of his own system, and poisoned still more by the baneful opiates injudiciously administered to him, fell, at length, into a stupor, and, in the too, too fitting words of the report of his case, "his spirit *quietly* departed!"

Then comes the reply of Dr. McNaughton. No arrogant Goliath could treat with loftier superciliousness a despised David, with his simple sling, than Dr. McNaughton evinces for the author of the critique of Mr. March's case. He suggested that unworthy motives must have impelled Dr. Robertson to write his critique at all; that whether Dr. March was killed positively or killed negatively, it was not "agreeable to *medical ethics* that he should unnecessarily rush to blaze it before the public;" that is, to tear away the veil which, it was supposed, had so completely concealed the sad affair; or, in other words, criticise the published report of the case! He does not attempt to meet Dr. Robertson's argument, but thinks it sufficient to slur him as an oculist and aurist, as if he were not a regularly trained physician and surgeon, as well as himself, who chose, for purposes of his own, to confine his practice to a specialty. Dr. McNaughton, doubtless, thought if he could smash the barometer there would be fair weather.

He introduces the testimony of four witnesses, all of whom have had a *bonus* from Dr. Armsby, and they pit their recollections and opinions against the recorded facts of Dr. Hun's report. He introduces, with fatal effect to his own cause, the testimony of the distinguished Philadelphia surgeon, Professor Gross, who is seen to be at issue both with Dr. Armsby's four facile witnesses, and also with the venerable doctor himself, who insists

on his "usual treatment" of diluents, *etc.*, although Professor Gross says, "the *only reasonable hope* of relief would have been perforation of the middle lobe of the prostate gland, which *might have been done*," and also that "the bladder might have been *easily* reached through the rectum." Dr. Robertson has simply insisted that, in some way, the interior of the bladder should have been reached, and Professor Gross says the same thing, and, moreover, that it was practicable. Yet Dr. Armsby let Dr. March die without making the slightest efficient effort to relieve the expiring surgeon!

Dr. McNaughton utters the despicable, the wicked statement, that Dr. Robertson "bore no good will to Dr. March during his life," in order to concentrate local prejudice against Dr. Robertson; but whether Dr. Armsby put him up to it, or whether he fabricated it himself, which seems hardly possible, the statement is utterly and meanly false. Even were it true, it has no relevancy, and whether Dr. Robertson liked or disliked the patient, does not affect the manner of Dr. March's death.

But to proceed: Professor Gross evidently regarded the fatal disease to have been simply retention of the urine, since he alludes to no other trouble to be relieved. For this, he says, surgical measures promised "the *only reasonable hope of relief*," and yet Dr. McNaughton coolly insists that the *water* and *opium* practice was proper, and "usual in such cases!" Dr. McNaughton says the catheter was passed through the enlarged prostate gland for two and a half inches or more; Professor Gross takes issue with him, and limits the measurement of the prostate gland to two inches and a quarter. The difference is only *ten per cent.*, but in loaning money, the astute doctor would think one very *uncanny* not to consider it, however slightly he regards it professionally.

Dr. McNaughton says, "it is probable that for months, Dr. March's bladder never contained *less* than a *pint* of urine. Professor Gross says, "from *three* to *five*

ounces of urine must, I should suppose, have been habitually retained!" That is, Professor Gross thinks Dr. McNaughton only from *sixty-nine to eighty per cent* wrong in his opinions! In other words, if *sound judgment* be represented by the integer *one*, then Dr. McNaughton's judgment may be stated as from $\frac{2}{100}$ to $\frac{31}{100}$ part of *one*, that is, of a *sound judgment*! If Dr. McNaughton brings Professor Gross, as representing the integer *one* for *sound judgment*, then he has only himself to blame, that by disagreeing to such an extent in opinion, he does it at the expense of being represented, relatively, by a *vulgar fraction*!

It is hardly necessary to allude to the numerous contradictions, by Professor Gross, of the four swift witnesses—a single specimen of their testimony is enough to vitiate the whole. They say "this (the left) kidney was atrophied, being *less than half* the size of the other." Professor Gross says "the weight of the left kidney is *four ounces and two drachms*," while too, "a very small portion of the organ is missing; that of the right is *five ounces and four drachms*!" *Sat satis! Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus!*

The venerable Doctor attacks Dr. Robertson's quotation marks with much captiousness. Dr. Robertson's point was to show that blood was drawn by the efforts to introduce a catheter, and that the *post mortem* revealed a false passage as having been made by *somebody*, and he seems to have shown the probability of the former, when he quotes that *blood was brought away* coagulated in the catheter. The rest of the talk about urine following is unimportant, and the mere verbiage of a sentence, quoted from memory is trivial. The fact that the point of the instrument was thrust into the bodily substance, wounded the parts and that hemorrhage followed, is substantially proved by the report itself, and Dr. Hun's paper respecting the autopsy dispelled all question. In fact, the very sentence, regarding which Dr. McNaughton is so severe, in denouncing

Dr. Robertson for making an important omission, contains conclusive evidence that a false passage had been made by the catheter. The first clause reads: "The instrument passed without difficulty *its whole length*, without entering the bladder." If it did not enter the *bladder*, where, in the name of a one-year-student's knowledge of anatomy, did it go? Why, of course, it was thrust through a *false passage* into the substance of the patient's body,—it could not be otherwise, after making all allowance for existing conditions of the parts, for an ordinary catheter is long enough for any case, and moreover in *this* instance an ordinary catheter *was passed* after death! Dr. Robertson's object was not so much to blame Dr. Armsby for an accident, it might be, but for the unpardonably wicked attempt to *conceal* it, as much as if it were intentional. An ordinary catheter pass its entire length and not enter the bladder, yet make no false passage! That may happen, when a quart of water will not fill a pint cup!

Dr. McNaughton still insists that the kidneys were diseased, and Professor Gross says that the left kidney, (seen by him) is *atrophied* and distorted. Dr. Hun, supported by reliable witnesses, says *both* kidneys were somewhat enlarged. Professor Gross says of the left kidney, "its proper structure is much changed;" Dr. Hun says "the renal tissue appeared somewhat congested, but was otherwise normal!" How is the discrepancy to be explained? Dr. Hun knows an atrophied (wasted) kidney from an enlarged one, and both he and Professor Gross are honest witnesses. The explanation is simple: *this left kidney seen by Gross could not have come from Dr. March's body!* It was unquestionably *bogus!* Professor Gross says "a piece of the left kidney was cut away accidentally." It must have been cut away *intentionally*, to imitate the genuine left kidney, which was so cut for microscopical examination, and found *healthy!* After Dr. Armsby's "desperately wicked

ingenuity, (to borrow Dr. McNaughton's language) that would weaken faith in all photographic representation," which is sworn to by the artist, Haines, of Albany (whom, by the way, Dr. Armsby is now, in revenge, striving hard to injure in reputation), why should any one believe, for an instant, that this left kidney was not a suppositious one, employed for the purpose of making it appear that serious renal disease existed? It is not for one moment supposed that Dr. McNaughton was a party to any deception; the game was prepared before the organs came into his hands, and he was duped!

Dr. Robertson had made some very damaging allegations against Dr. Armsby's manner of misrepresenting the correct appearance of Dr. March's bladder, or, to use the pertinent language of Dr. McNaughton, "cunning manipulation to photograph a lie." Dr. Armsby employed a boy, during the session of the State Medical Society, to stand in the passage way and hand to every member a copy of Dr. McNaughton's reply. In each pamphlet was pasted a slip of paper, which attracted attention at once, and it appeared to place Dr. Robertson in an awkward position. The slip was worded as follows:

"Dr. Armsby never, to my knowledge, desired or expressed a wish to buy or suppress a negative of the picture of Dr. Marsh's (*sic*) disease. He always purchased an equal number of copies of both pictures to send or give away.

"E. S. M. HAINES,

"*Photograph Rooms, 478 Broadway.*

"ALBANY, Jan. 29, 1870."

Dr. Robertson very soon applied to Haines for an explanation, and he received from him the following sworn statement:

"On the 18th of June, the day after the death of Dr. March, Dr. Henry R. Haskins, demonstrator of anatomy in the Albany Medical School, brought to me a bladder and prostate gland, said to be from the body of Dr. March, and desired a photograph. Dr. Haskins called afterwards and stated that Dr. Armsby, who was out of town when the photograph was ordered, *was not pleased, for the appearances* did not present themselves *to suit him*, and

wished no more copies of this photograph to be sold. A few days after, he confidentially asked me what I would take for the negative. I asked him whom he wanted it for, but he would not tell me; said no matter, and he wished no more to be said about it. I presumed that Dr. Armsby wanted it, but I refused to sell it.

"On the 25th day of July, the same specimen, which had been preserved in some fluid, was brought to me again, for the purpose of having me take another photograph. After the specimen had been GOTTEN READY (IN A MANNER SO UNUSUAL as to occasion my subsequent comments), by Dr. ARMSBY, having molded it, as I have said, LIKE PUTTY, and TRIMMED IT TO HIS SATISFACTION, I took the negative picture. Copies of this negative, only, Dr. Armsby wished to be sold, as Dr. Haskins stated.

"I did state to both Dr. Edward R. Hun and to Dr. Robertson, what I believed to be the fact, that Dr. ARMSBY WAS CHIEFLY INTERESTED in this matter, and that I regarded Dr. Haskins as HIS AGENT. Since Dr. Armsby did not, PERSONALLY, express a wish to buy or suppress a negative of the picture of Dr. March's disease, I did not refuse to sign the paper which he brought to me; for it was technically true; BUT I DID NOT SIGN IT WITH ANY INTENTION OF CONTRADICTING DR. ROBERTSON.

"E. S. M. HAINES."

"Sworn to before me, this }
7th day of February, 1870. }

"J. M. BAILEY, *Notary Public.*"

Such were the wretched tactics of the person, who performed in the following characteristic rôle, also. A citizen, much interested in the success of Dr. Edward R. Hun, when a candidate to fill the vacancy in the City Hospital, was about entering Mr. Olcott's bank to urge Dr. Hun's claims on the president of the board of governors, when he saw Dr. Armsby drive up and stop. "Glad to see you Doctor," said the gentleman, "I was just going in to see Mr. Olcott about Dr. Hun, and am pleased to have you along." "Well go on," said the veracious Doctor, "I'll follow you." He proceeded, and as he reached the door, turned around to look for Dr. Armsby, and saw his vehicle driving off rapidly in another direction! He went into the bank and said to Mr. Olcott, "I believe that that Dr. Armsby is the greatest liar, I ever did see!"

"Alas, 'tis true, 'tis pity; and pity 'tis, 'tis true!"

As soon as Dr. Robertson's pamphlet was sent forth broadcast, there was the same effect produced as Profes-

sor Oliver Wendell Holmes says results from disturbing the established order of things by kicking over a long embedded flat stone, when bugs and squirming worms and crawling creatures are seen, scattering and butting against each other in every direction, dismayed by the wholesome light of day let in upon the compressed and blinded community. Dr. Armsby, for one, was now driving frantically about, crying that he was a persecuted man, protesting that he had loved the poor departed surgeon, and did not intentionally kill him, and trying to make it falsely appear that Dr. Robertson had charged some motive or *animus* for what he had so badly done. The gentleman who has suicidally acted as his scribe, doubtless, tried to comfort him by his avowed doctrine, that professional wrong-doing was venal, but censorious criticism of the publication of malpractice was a heinous offense, which he would make clear, in a pamphlet full of words and phrases, and that such audacious showing-up what was hidden under this published report was contrary to *medical ethics*, which he would prove by an ill mannered and illogical *reply*.^{*} Then, too, Dr. March was a great surgeon, and it must be maintained that malpractice could not be performed on him without his sanction. Besides, it "lacerated the feelings of his friends" to have it divulged, if true, that the distinguished surgeon was the victim of malpractice. If it had been the case of some *obscure* person that was made the subject of criticism, the

* "POUGHKEEPSIE, March 29, 1870.

"DEAR DOCTOR ROBERTSON.—McNaughton's "reply" to your paper concerning Dr. March's case has just been received and read by me. I cannot say that I am *surprised* at it, but its whole tone and spirit *shocked* me. Before now, however, I have seen men of some position in the profession attempting to use their supposed influence to throw dust into people's eyes. What course you will pursue I, of course, cannot judge, but if I did not know some of the other surgeons in Albany to be men of ability, I should advise the profession in that city to try to persuade some one to take up his residence there who is competent to pass a catheter in a difficult case, and to judge correctly whether or no a bladder is distended when the symptoms are not perfectly simple. "*Detention of urine*," is good.

"Yours truly,

"E. H. PARKER."

"Dr. C. A. ROBERTSON."

feelings of the friends would have been a matter of little moment, and reports and reviews might clash with impunity ; but it was a very different matter to contend about the professional or unprofessional treatment of Dr. March ; and it was eminently proper to make the attempt to stir up prejudice and hostility and defamation against Dr. Robertson, on account of a misdeed worse than that of maltreating a patient, viz. : the wickedness of censuring the maltreatment !

But none of these considerations could give much comfort to wretched Dr. Armsby. The "*Cranes of Ibycus*" had been seen by intelligent men. The whole medical profession had detected the state of things at a glance. A stream of oxy-hydrogen light had been suddenly and ruthlessly poured in where he was hidden, and there he cowered in the blazing glare, caught, recognized and condemned in a flash ! He could screen himself with no palliation ; he could vindicate himself by no explanation. Ignorance could not extenuate the deed ; nature is merciless against that. Timidity could not offer a justification, for duty requires an incompetent in times of exigency to give place to some one who is qualified, and who possesses courage to assume responsibility.

The old man had suddenly fallen into the rapids. His friends stood in consternation on the brink. All hands were paralyzed with apprehension. The hopes of friends and admirers of the great man's genius were centered on one individual. He had come to Albany an obscure and poorly schooled young man, and had grown into notice under the reflected light of another's merit. By uniformly appropriating *éclat* from the fame of his skillful master's work, in which he always contrived to exhibit a copartnership, he had come to be regarded by many as possessing skill and not factitious reputation merely. But the ordeal, which comes to all, had come to him. He now holds the rope to save the old man floating helplessly down the stream, before he plunges into the dark, silent,

unseen waters of death. All eyes are on him! The "only reasonable hope" of safety is in his hands. Why does he not throw the rope? Ah! he is afraid he may hit him and hurt him! Again, why does he not throw the rope? Oh! he wants to, but he fears to try, for he may not be able to reach him! Again, again, why does he not throw that rope—the only means of saving him—to that man in his extremity, or pass it to some one else to throw; why does he reel it up, toss the drowning man more water and a soothing anodyne, and then sit down to watch the result? God only knows!

The community was surprised, shocked. What! the great surgeon dead? And dead, it was charged, because there was no one to aid him in his extremity. Horrible, if true; if untrue, then had Dr. Armsby been cruelly libeled. The courts were open, the charge was unmistakable, the author was at hand, meeting him face to face almost daily. Sober second-thought assured him, however, that truth is not libelous, that severity is not libelous. Besides, Dr. Armsby has no *penchant* for courts of justice, for he might be called on the witness stand, an unpleasant place for men of a certain *genus*. He talked of libel, of persecution, but finally concluded to run about and try to talk down the whole affair; the man who couldn't get into Noah's ark did that—declared it was only a small shower! He "pitied" Dr. Robertson, he did! He circulated his story, that little respect was entertained by physicians for his pamphlet, and that he had ruined his business practice, and would have to leave town! Ah! the "wish was father to that thought." He tried to hunt up persons hostile to Dr. Robertson, in order to procure, if possible, material for slander, and vainly tried to paint his face the color of his own.

Then came the following entertaining letter from a brother-in-law of Dr. Armsby. The fact that *Dr. Robertson had not sent* a pamphlet to the author of the letter, or to any one else, then, in Erie county, converts the

writer's tragedy into a farce. Of course, any person can guess who sent one, and for what purpose. This was the only letter of the kind received. It reads, *verbatim et literatim*, as follows :

"BUFFALO, Jan. 5th, 1870.

"DR. CHARLES A. ROBERTSON :

"When the murderer of Ibycus exclaimed 'Behold the cranes of Ibycus,' his fate was fulfilled by the avenging deities. You have reiterated the foreboding cry, and let the future determine, if it be as prophetic of evil to yourself as was the utterance of your chosen motto to the destroyer of the poet of Samos.

"The offensive liberty which you have taken in transmitting to me a copy of your libel upon gentlemen whom I have known nearly forty years, gives me the privilege of expressing to you my sentiments of condemnation of the course you have taken as unbecoming either as a man or a member of a liberal, enlightened and courteous profession

"CHARLES WINNE, M. D." *

On the other hand Dr. Robertson was repeatedly stopped on the street by citizens, and thanked for having spoken openly and fearlessly in an issue with a man whose dark and devious ways had made him shunned by some and loathed by all. Men occupying distinguished positions at the bar and on the bench made no concealment of their commendation. Leading physicians expressed their concurrence and satisfaction with earnestness and warmth. Numerous letters were received by Dr. Robertson, and the following extracts from some are specimens of their sentiments.

The first is dated Buffalo, and is from one of Dr. Winne's fellow citizens.

"BUFFALO, Jan. 19, 1870.

"DR. CHARLES A. ROBERTSON :

"DEAR SIR.—I am very much obliged to you for your pamphlet, 'Last Illness of Dr. Alden March.' When such is the management of teachers, what must we expect of the doctors they graduate? The profession owes you a debt of gratitude for your courage in exposing such gross ignorance and stupid mismanagement.

* "The judgment a man utters
Does but himself reveal,
The flint to lead refuses
The spark it yields to steel!"

"We are cursed in this country with a class of medical schools, sustained as advertisements of the professors, which ought to be indicted as public nuisances. I guess your Albany school is one of them. Certainly it is, if the treatment in the case of Dr. March is a fair example of the knowledge and skill of its professors.

"Your obt. servant."

* * *

"CHICAGO, ILL., Jan. 6, 1870.

"C. A. ROBERTSON, M. D. :

"MY DEAR SIR.—The undersigned, mindful of the great value of truth to scientific investigation, desire to express to you their unfeigned congratulations for your able review of the case of our late, lamented friend, Alden March, M. D. We were greatly pained on reading in the October number of the New York Medical Journal, the very singular report therein of his case. We did hope, for the cause of humanity, truth and science, some one near at hand, who could arrive at the facts of the case, would review it and give publicity thereto.

"Reports like the one alluded to, *emanating from teachers* in the medical schools of our land are a reproach to our profession. Indeed, so many fill the places of teachers who, to say the least, have little diagnostic power, that it is not strange that the medical profession is not held more in honor.

"Accept, in behalf of science and truth, our gratitude for your well-timed review.

"Faithfully, your friends."

* * *
* * *

"OMAHA, NEB., Feb. 1, 1870.

"C. A. ROBERTSON, M. D. :

"MY DEAR SIR.—* * * I am much inclined to think you had just cause for your criticism, from all the circumstances of the case.

"From a description of the post-mortem appearances contained in the pamphlet (Dr. Armsby's), I confess I am unable to find sufficient cause of death, in the bladder; nothing is clearly made out to my mind.

* * * "It seems to me there is a great mistake somewhere.

"Yours, truly."

* * *

"SYRACUSE, Feb. 8, 1870.

"DEAR DOCTOR.—* * * A copy of your paper on the treatment of Professor March. * * * My sympathies are all with you in this matter, as are, I think, the sympathies of most of the graduates of Albany.

"Yours, most respectfully."

* * *

"CHARLES A. ROBERTSON, M. D., Albany."

“NEW YORK, Dec. 20, 1869.

“DEAR DOCTOR.—I have heard pretty sharp comments on the treatment of Dr. March's case as laid down in the paper of Dr. Armsby.

“Sincerely, yours.”

* * *

“QUARANTINE, Dec. 15, 1869.

“DEAR DOCTOR.—I most freely congratulate you on the manner in which you handled the subject.

“Yours, truly.”

* * *

“NEW YORK, Dec. 31, 1869.

* * * “But ignorance in our profession is none the less criminal. * * * Again, thanking you for this honest and timely rebuke of charlantry and pretense, I remain.

Yours, truly.”

* * *

“NEW YORK, Jan. 5, 1870.

“DEAR DOCTOR.—I agree with you fully in your criticism on the errors of diagnosis and treatment. It is a matter of utter amazement that old men, especially old physicians and surgeons, should be allowed to die from the effects of enlargement of the prostate gland and the consequent retention of urine, when the timely evacuation by the catheter, or, in extreme cases, the trocar, affords such certain relief.

“Yours, sincerely.”

* * *

“DR. C. A. ROBERTSON.”

“PORT BYRON, N. Y., Jan. 10, 1870.

“CHAS. A. ROBERTSON, M. D. :

“DEAR SIR.—I have received your “Review of the report concerning the last illness and death of Dr. Alden March,” for which please accept my most *heartly* thanks. Your criticisms meet my entire approval. 'Tis true they are pungent, but, proper and deserved.

“That such a paper should be published by a *teacher*, from whom we “demand teachings characterized by *proficiency, clearness and honesty* of purpose,” is both an insult and a disgrace to the profession! It is a fungoid excrescence on medical literature, and needed the potential caustic which you have applied to it. Your remedy has burned to the root of this, and will, I hope, prove prophylactic in the prevention of more issues of a like character.

“Again, I thank you for your *able* and interesting criticism.

“I am, sir, very respectfully, truly yours.”

* * *

“NEW YORK, *Jan.* 13, 1870.

“MY DEAR DOCTOR.—* * * I am much obliged for your *slashing* review of Dr. March's case. There is but one opinion among our surgeons in regard to your paper, which is, that although very severe, it is eminently just.
Yours, truly.”

* * *

“DR. C. A. ROBERTSON.”

“HARTFORD, *Jan.* 11, 1870.

“C. A. ROBERTSON, M. D.:

“DEAR SIR.—Your monograph on the death of Dr. March is received, for which accept thanks. You certainly make out a strong case.

* * * “Your report is valuable, and the profession will thank you for it.
* * * Very sincerely, yours.”

* * *

“ALBANY, *Dec.* 30, 1869.

“MY DEAR SIR.—I thank you for the pamphlet, but I am much more thankful for a knowledge of the manhood and courage which dare to expose ignorance, charlantry and deceit.

“I am, very sincerely, yours.”

“C. A. ROBERTSON, M. D.”

* * *

“POUGHKEEPSIE, *Dec.* 20, '69.

“DEAR DOCTOR.—* * * I do honor your manliness and noble boldness in the matter, and I thank you for sending me the criticism. * * * Dr. Armsby will not love you very intensely for the present, but he must admire your frankness and ability, no matter what he does or thinks. * * *

“Yours.”

* * *

“KANSAS CITY, MO., *Dec.* 10, 1870.

“DR. C. A. ROBERTSON:

“MY DEAR SIR.—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your circular, etc., setting forth the treatment administered to the late Prof. March. It has been read with much earnestness, and it certainly appears to be a genuine case of malpractice. * * *

“I remain your obt. serv't.”

* * *

There is no need to adduce further testimony as to the professionally ethical propriety of Dr. Robertson's course, when letters like these, some of them coming from sur-

geons of the highest eminence in the country, not only justify his conduct but compliment him for the thoroughness with which he executed his task.

But the story goes on. In the February (1870) number of the *New York Medical Journal* appeared the following announcements which were taken to the *Journal* office in New York city by Dr. James H. Armsby in person :

“ALBANY MEDICAL COLLEGE AND HOSPITAL.

“Dr. C. A. Robertson, the author of the criticism on “The last illness of Dr. Alden March,” which appeared in the January number of the *JOURNAL*, “has been removed from the position of Ophthalmic and Aural Surgeon in “the Albany City Hospital by a unanimous vote of the Board of Governors. “His name has also been stricken from the list of lecturers in the Albany “Medical College by the faculty of that institution.

“It is not stated whether this action has any connection with the publication by Dr. Robertson of the criticism* above referred to.”

It did have a connection, and in this historical detail, that connection justifies Dr. Robertson in further narrating the *logical* kind of action, with which his criticism was met ; the nature of his relations with the institutions named ; the anomalous, but possibly sane nature of the man who performs the part of chief manipulator of the peculiar institutions referred to, and the kind of consequences that resulted from the action of certain shortsighted men.

In the first place, Dr. Robertson never had official relation with the Medical College. There has been a sort

* [FROM THE BUFFALO MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.]

ALBANY CITY HOSPITAL.

It appears that Dr. Charles A. Robertson's review of the published report of the case of Prof. March has obtained his dismissal from the (so called) Eye and Ear Department of the Albany City Hospital. The action of the Governors, so far as can be known from the present statement of facts, appears quite *inconsistent with fairness* and a true *sense of their obligations to the public*. Again, the public *expose* of the manner in which the Hospital obtained \$4,000, appropriated by the State for the Eye and Ear Hospital, is not very complimentary to their own honesty. Dr. Robertson is too sharp and **TOO MUCH IN THE RIGHT to be treated unhandsoemly with safety**, and we believe his dismissal from the Hospital will return to torment his pursuers. Certainly if he has been treated, as now appears, unfairly, it will only advance his own name and standing, and work irreparable injury to the hospital and the men who have effected his removal.

of imitation of the summer course of lectures at respectable colleges, and invitations were pretty generally given to physicians in the city to lecture one or more times to a few students (a dozen would be a large number) who chose to drop in. In the event of a gentleman consenting to talk to the few students, his name was put on the cover of the college circular as "a lecturer" in the "Summer Course." This was well understood as an advertising dodge—looked well on the circular of the college! When Dr. Armsby learned that Dr. Robertson had written a critique on his report, he attempted to have the faculty drop Dr. Robertson's name. Dr. McNaughton opposed this as premature and unfair, for Dr. Robertson's review had not yet made its appearance. Dr. Armsby therefore rested, for the present, with some jeering remarks to the students concerning the review and the reviewer, which called out a sharp note to the students from Dr. Robertson. Very soon, however, the review appeared, and from jeering the *great* man fell to trembling. A meeting of the faculty was held and Dr. Robertson was deposed from his *honorable* position! As evidence how troubled Dr. Armsby felt, it may be stated that the fall edition of the College circular was printed, and to some extent issued, with Dr. Robertson's name as a summer lecturer on the cover. Dr. Armsby got out another edition—it is to be hoped not at the expense of the college!—suppressing the fearful name of Robertson! The resolution was ostensibly based on the following letter to the students, but it was well known that this was a small part of the offense. The resolution was adopted at a meeting of the faculty; Professors Quackenbush, Vanderpoel and Mosher opposing. The letter to the students is as follows:

To the Students of the Albany Medical School:

GENTLEMEN—If I am correctly informed, Dr. James H. Armsby made some comments to you on the morning of the 3d inst., respecting a critique, which will appear in a few days, and I am sorry to learn that he was capa-

ble of some innuendoes of a very unjust nature, which were intended to damage me, if possible, in your estimation. I have no disposition to retaliate by descending to the level which he took, and there avail myself of material, at my disposal, to do him harm. I have never permitted myself to become expert in throwing mud upon any person's character, nor do I desire to become a skillful moral poisoner of men's reputations. If Dr. Armsby has this pitiful ambition, I will not contest his superiority, and he is welcome to wear the upas leaves as a merited crown. He should look prudently and well to his own peculiar record, however, for he may assail those who will reveal what he would hardly wish to hear.

The critique of which Dr. Armsby has spoken, has relation to a paper which he published respecting the illness and treatment of the late Dr. March, to whom Dr. Armsby was brother-in-law, and whose chair he now holds, under circumstances so peculiar as naturally to occasion some comment. I have scrutinized that paper carefully, and in my review I have tried to show that, spite of itself, it indicates clearly the nature of the disease of which he died; and to point out how entirely improper was the treatment adopted, and how unnecessary and avoidable was the fatal result. If I have seemed to lay special stress on Dr. Armsby, it is because he is a surgeon, and it was emphatically a surgical case of which he had charge. The other gentlemen, present as counselors, were there only in the capacity of physicians, as one of them stated to me. It may seem strange that some able surgeon was not called in to assist in this trying time, when a man so useful and distinguished as Dr. March was, lay in extreme danger; but Dr. Armsby will, perhaps, explain that satisfactorily to you—I cannot.

In order to be perfectly fair in my criticism, I have directed that the article published by Dr. Armsby be printed as an appendix to my critique, so that every one into whose hands a copy may fall, may read both. It is my purpose to furnish each one of you with a copy, and submit the accuracy of my views and the severity of my strictures to your intelligent judgment.

I regret that Dr. Armsby should have tried to appear a little smart at my expense. It may comport with his notions of fairness and good taste to do so in the medical college, where I cannot meet him; but I am sure you felt differently. To anticipate my review with any remarks, looks a little like trepidation, and much like a disposition to furnish your minds with prejudice and bias. If he is so much concerned as he hears the shell singing through the air, I fear that his wonted blandness and serenity will be severely shocked by the explosion.

Gentlemen, examine the review carefully. Test on the cadaver, and determine where the end of an ordinary catheter must be when passed its "whole length," as Dr. Armsby says he passed it several times. It must then, whatever sized prostate gland existed, have gone either outside of the bladder or inside of it. If outside, then Dr. Armsby, or somebody else, must have made a wrong passage; if inside, then why did no water escape, for the *post-mortem* section showed the bladder to be greatly distended with urine? Answer this for yourselves, and then tell me how it was that your teacher of

surgery, lately your teacher of anatomy, could have made such a mistake; how he could let Dr. March die with his bladder distended with urine? Note carefully what is said about passing the catheter; that "blood coagulated" in it; that "some passed external to it and followed its withdrawal;" then note what the report of the autopsy says about the passing of the catheter, *after* death, from within the bladder outwards, about the existence of extravasated blood infiltrated into the tissue *above* the membranous urethra; compare the statements with the photographs alluded to, and then say whether *somebody* had not been ramming this instrument into the substance of Dr. March's body, instead of along the natural channel?

If Dr. Arnsby did not do this, perhaps he will say who did, for many are eager to know. If he did do it, perhaps it adds one more reason why he should not say, admitting that there is any reason why he should say it of himself, as he did in an article, which, if not in his own handwriting, he took to the press in person: "*Dr. Arnsby's ability as a surgeon and as a teacher is universally known and acknowledged!*" Proh Pudor! I allude to the article published in the *Argus* and *Express* newspapers of the 6th inst., the author of which your classes rebuked so indignantly and so well in the same journals on the following day. But, gentlemen, the subject is not a pleasing one, and I will not pursue it further.

Allow me to subscribe myself, with assurances of kind consideration,

Your obedient servant,

C. A. ROBERTSON, M. D.

ALBANY, 8th *December*, 1869.

On the following morning Dr. Robertson received from his esteemed friend, Prof. Mosher, College Registrar, the following official communication:

"Extract from the minutes of the meeting of the faculty of the Albany County Medical College, held Wednesday evening, 22d December, 1869:

"Dr. Lansing offered the following, which was accepted:

"*Whereas*, In the communication addressed to the students of the Albany Medical College, on the 8th inst., a copy of which is hereto annexed, its author, Dr. C. A. Robertson, utters words defamatory and libelous of the good name of one of our* most worthy colleagues; scandalous to professional character generally, and hostile in their tendency and spirit to the best interests of this institution, therefore,

"*Resolved*, That the name of Dr. C. A. Robertson be stricken from the list of lecturers in our next summer course, and he be notified by the Registrar that his services, in the capacity of such lecturer, cannot be accepted by the faculty of this College.

* Arnsby & Lansing! *Par nobile fratrum!* "most worthy" colleagues indeed, as events have since shown! See Report of Transactions of N. Y. State Medical Society, 1871.

“Dr. Armsby moved, and it was carried, that the preamble and resolution of Dr. Lansing be entered in full in the Minutes, together with Dr. Robertson's letter; and the Registrar is hereby directed to furnish a copy of the same to Dr. Robertson.”

In reply to this, Dr. Robertson addressed a communication to Professor Mosher, as registrar, a copy of which is here produced, viz. :

DR. JACOB S. MOSHER, *Registrar of the Albany Medical College:*

SIR.—Your communication of the 23d December instant, inclosing a resolution offered by Dr. J. V. Lansing, and adopted by the faculty of the Albany Medical College on the evening prior to your date, is duly received. This resolution expresses objections to my lecturing in the “Summer Course” of the college.

A request to give the students a few gratuitous lectures during the summer was communicated to me, and I did not feel at liberty to refuse the college this favor, in return for a request that seemed complimentary. When this fact is noted, you will readily see how absurd is the language of the resolution, that “my name be dropped from the list,” as if I were the favored party and not the college! Unquestionably, the same body that had the right to ask a favor of me, had the right also to reconsider its action and decline to accept the favor. Inasmuch as this preamble and resolution show a disposition to inflict severity on me, let me thank you and other leading professors of the college, for trying to interpose between me and the wrath of the remaining members. Trivial, however, as is this adverse action in its effect on me, I desire nevertheless to present this brief consideration of the matter.

Dr. Armsby was opposed to my name appearing in the list of summer lecturers before this meeting took place. It seems he had learned that I was the author of a review of his “Report of the Last Illness of Dr. Alden March;” and his animosity was so stirred, that he attempted to prejudice the class and some of your body against me, personally, and against the article, of which he yet knew nothing. It did not seem to occur to him, as it does to others, that any one has a right to criticise any paper on any subject, scientific, historical or literary, when submitted to the public, especially if done openly, over one's own signature.

To meet the issue presented by his report and that criticism directly, without resorting to issues distracting attention from the *real* issue, would have been, it seems to me, alike the course of wisdom and of duty. But “conscience makes cowards of us all,” and a “looking for of judgment” created frightful apprehensions.

A letter was sent to New York, threatening the house of Appleton & Co. with a suit at law for libel, if the article were published. The menace was founded on a guess and a fear. The publishers referred the article to able

surgeons in New York, and being assured that it was a "*timely and unanswerable vindication of an insulted profession,*" courteous permission was given by letter to the aggrieved party, either to reply to the criticism or commence legal proceedings if desirable! The inexorable types have uttered the irrevocable words, and the dreaded review has made its appearance, both in the *New York Medical Journal* and in pamphlet form. It arraigns Dr. James H. Armsby before the tribunal of the medical profession throughout the world, for not having afforded to his distinguished predecessor and patient those resources of surgical art in default of which the patient's death was inevitable; and also of administering to him medicinal agents that must have necessarily done the patient harm; and then for publishing a report of the case, which, whatever its motive, was an insult to the intelligence of the profession. It holds him specially responsible, as he was the sole person making any pretense of practicing surgery who acted in this essentially surgical case, that terminated, without reason apparently, in the terrible tragedy of death.

This review does not seem vulnerable; and defiant as is its criticism, no issue is made with it, but the resolution is based on a *letter* addressed to the medical students, in which I inform them that Dr. Armsby is the author of an article published in two of the city newspapers on the 6th inst., in which he says of himself: "Dr. Armsby's ability as a surgeon and as a teacher is universally known and acknowledged." Your president, Dr. McNaughton, disclaimed any participation in the publication of this article, and, by implication at least, if not in words, denounced it before the class; and in full meeting the *students* denounced it for various reasons, one of which was its apparent injustice in discriminating against three distinguished members of the faculty. The censure of the class was published notwithstanding that Dr. Armsby, upon hearing late at night of the action of the students, tried to prevent it by immediately furnishing the editor with the strange apology for his conduct that he had forgotten the names of Quackenbush, Vanderpoel and Mosher, or in other words, that the *omission* was *inadvertent!*

Now, Mr. Registrar, why was not your president, Dr. James McNaughton, condemned for reflecting upon the unprofessional conduct of one of your *most worthy colleagues*, Dr. James H. Armsby? Why was not the class expelled for the pointed and withering rebuke, publicly administered, to their professor, Dr. James H. Armsby? Is it not, until now, an unheard of thing for a class of medical students to censure a professor for gross injustice and unwarrantable interference? I honor their manliness and boldness when I remember that this intrepidity was shown on the very eve of the ordeal through which they were to pass when they appeared before this professor for examination as to their qualifications to practice surgery. It has transpired that he did try *black-balling* some of these students, but he dared not persist in his condemnation of them, and fear of consequences compelled him to abandon his hostile position.

The medical profession is properly a scholarship, and not a combination of men to secure preferment of individuals by means of managers and

stratagems and connivances ; and, if Dr. Armsby thinks to save the injured reputation of your college from the just but severe criticism of the profession by such efforts as this resolution puts forth, then you may rest assured that he makes a mistake, for the great public will, bye and bye, find out what is already well known in the city, that no harm follows from being associated with men like Drs. Quackenbush, Vanderpoel and Mosher, instead of being identified with a clique urged on by the personal malevolence and subservient to the official status of Dr. Armsby.

I am, sir, respectfully yours,

CHAS. A. ROBERTSON, M. D.

ALBANY, 24th December, 1869.

The disturbance spread among the students, and the class seemed to be nearly equally divided, although they were tea-ed and toasted most lovingly at the gracious board of the *great* professor, who sailed, at his country's expense, and spent a year as *consul* at Naples, but, neglecting while there to act the part of Empedocles at Vesuvius, that the medical profession might continue to enjoy the peace and concord which his absence furnished. Spite of all he could tell them of sunny Italy, that is, of Naples, spite of all the pretty things he could show them, and the great things he projected, yet

“ Foiled was perversion by that youthful mind,
Which flattery fooled not, baseness could not bind,
Deceit infect not, near contagion soil,
Indulgence weaken, nor example spoil,”

And, in a few days, he had the mortification to find that class of young men reprehending him in public meeting for unprofessional conduct and publishing their censorious opinions in the public, secular journals! When, in the history of medicine, has such a thing happened before? Read here what was uttered by that class, and say if there is not a significance in exonerating the President of the Faculty, Dr. J. McNaughton, and if the shaft was not clearly aimed at “the power behind the throne,” Dr. Armsby.

“ ALBANY MEDICAL COLLEGE, December 6, 1869.

EDITORS OF THE EXPRESS.—A meeting of the class of the Albany Medical College was called to-day for the purpose of taking into consideration an

article which appeared in the issue of the *Express* of this morning, conveying the impression that certain members of the faculty were entitled to especial commendation, and omitting to mention in any way three of our most worthy professors.

As a class, we deem it our duty to correct any such impression which may have been made, and at the same time to CENSURE THE PERSON or persons who originated the said article as arrogating to himself or themselves liberties which belong essentially to the class as such.

We would say, in public, that our respected president of the faculty, Dr. McNaughton, disclaims having any knowledge or intimation that any such was to appear. The following resolution was, therefore, adopted:

Resolved, That, *as a class*, we know nothing of the origin of said article, nor was any one authorized by the class to publish said article.

PHILIP J. ZEH,
Chairman.

J. MYERS BRIGGS,
Secretary."

The occasion of these measures was the publication by Dr. Armsby in the *city newspapers* of a laudatory article respecting himself and some others in the college, but omitting all reference to the existence, even, of Profs. Quackenbush, Vanderpoel and Mosher; the same piece of advertising for which he was censured by this society. When he learned through one of his office students, who rushed to communicate the tidings that the class had censured him, he speedily dispatched his messenger to the newspaper offices with the article below (clipped from the columns of the Albany Morning Express of Dec. 7th, 1869, with the editor's heading):

"The article of yesterday on the medical college was furnished us. From the same source we receive the following with a request to publish, viz:

"In the notice of the Albany Medical College, in yesterday's issue, the omission of the names of Drs. Quackenbush, Vanderpoel and Mosher from the list of its corps of instructors must not be construed to the damage of that institution. Such omission was inadvertent. No names add greater reputation or afford a better guarantee of the high character of the medical instruction given in it than theirs."

It is a remarkable circumstance that the student who acted as the Doctor's lackey, then, has recently received, at a public occasion, the present of a watch from an

unknown donor! But what is more remarkable is that Dr. Armsby has said within a few days past, to Dr. D. V. O'Leary, who was expostulating with him for such an intentional slight as the neglect to mention the names of the professors above alluded to, "How could I mention them after they had publicly approved of Dr. Robertson's pamphlet as a just criticism?" This is the man—shall the term man be so prostituted as to apply it to him?—this is the man, who had requested the newspapers to publish "*such omission was inadvertent.*" When shall this person be believed? Is it possible for him to be honest? Why, the crystal water of truth would be so defiled by filtering through such depravity as to lose its identity and trickle out a falsehood. Again and again, he

"has sinned

The sin which practice burns into the blood!"

And yet, *mirabile dictu*, this false man is sustained by some respectable persons who have, perhaps, yet to find him out, and one, 'tis said, even went so far as to term him a "*christian gentleman!*" That one must be either an incompetent judge of the article, or the fewer "*christian gentlemen*" the profession possesses, the more honesty and courtesy will be found in it.

Now turn to the hospital from which Dr. Robertson was removed by the worthy president and board of Trustees. At the risk of a little reputation, it must be stated how Dr. Robertson happened there. He came to Albany, for reasons of his own, to practice a speciality, and he labored hard to establish a *Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary* after being here a few years. He succeeded in organizing a corporation under the general law for organizing charitable corporations. Its title was the *Albany Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary*. Its certificate of incorporation may be seen at the office of the Secretary of State and in that of the county clerk of Albany county. It is still in existence, and still has its

board of trustees. Dr. Robertson was appointed a surgeon of that Infirmary and remains so to-day. Although not in active operation now, it is competent to commence anew at any time. That corporation has rights and liabilities and duties; it may sue and be sued, like an individual. To make its corporate actions valid, a vote of its trustees is essential, indispensable.

Dr. Robertson appeared before the committee of ways and means, of the New York Assembly, with a petition for aid from the State, and represented the nature of the charity, and urged its claims. An appropriation of four thousand dollars was made by the Legislature, conditional on ten thousand dollars being obtained from other sources. No official act was done by the corporation, the "Albany Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary," to merge itself with any other body or interest, whatsoever, or alienating its claim to the four thousand dollars.

An Eye and Ear Department of the City Hospital was subsequently organized, and Dr. Robertson appointed surgeon of it. He remained there a year; and through a trick, which was nothing short of a *swindle*, the City Hospital, by means of a false affidavit, prepared by the agency of Dr. Armsby, got possession of the four thousand dollars. The governors of the hospital, who are undoubted personally honest, will probably undo Dr. Armsby's trick, and return the money where it belongs, viz.: to the State treasury. Dr. Armsby stole and uses to-day the title of the "Albany Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary," the name of the institution which Dr. Robertson had succeeded in creating, and which never was "connected" with the City Hospital, as Dr. Armsby has falsely published, but which exists at this moment as an independent corporation. This is to cover the theft of the four thousand dollars. *If that is libel*—the courts are open, and Dr. Robertson is ready for the issue.

Soon after Dr. Robertson's pamphlet appeared his connection with the City Hospital ceased, and the profession

may determine whether the hospital was more injured by what it lost in Dr. Robertson, or by what it gained in another! The manner of Dr. Robertson's separation from the hospital has already been published in his letter to the hospital governors (appended to this paper).

Dr. Armsby was in high spirits now that Dr. Robertson was disconnected from his hospital. The weather-cock was cut down and he would be troubled by no more east winds! True, he had ruined the eye department of his hospital, but he had gratified his spite and cleared four thousand dollars besides! Shrewd fellow! He was so jubilant that Albany could not contain him, and he chuckled as he sped to New York city to publish the triumph in the New York Medical Journal. He gleefully related to one gentlemen of eminence in the profession there, the punishment Dr. Robertson had received for "swearing in the words of no master," for writing his critique; but he met with indignant reprehension for such treatment of the author of a review, however severe, and also had to hear a highly favorable opinion of the review itself. He then asked for a letter of introduction to the editor of the New York Medical Journal, whom he wished to see in order to tell, that all the profession in Albany were opposed to Dr. Robertson for his review. He obtained a note of introduction, but the writer took care to put the gentlemen to whom it was addressed on his guard—and yet the creature presented even this letter with such a *caveat!* He returned to Albany to disseminate his falsehoods about the opinion of the profession in New York, misrepresenting gentlemen there, as holding the pamphlet and its author in low esteem. He even had the brazen impudence to falsify the opinion of the gentleman, who gave him the note of introduction.

There had been a new hospital, St. Peter's, established in Albany, and Dr. Armsby made strong efforts, directly and indirectly, to become connected with it. Finding

this a hopeless endeavor, he became, when he dared, its secret foe. The board of governors of the City Hospital were induced to take a hostile attitude with reference to it, and at the same meeting where so many follies were enacted, their hostility took the form of a resolution that no medical officer of the City Hospital should be connected with any other hospital. Because the City Hospital, which is to a great degree a boarding-house for private patients of Dr. Armsby, might be hurt in its pocket by patients going to an institution founded on more liberal principles, the governors were unwise enough to attempt to damage its usefulness by unwarrantable interference and proscription. Their opposition, so far as it was to the hospital, because it was under the auspices of the Roman Catholic church, was unworthy conduct in men, who profess to cherish any sentiments of humanity. No such spirit of proscription exists in St. Peter's Hospital. Its medical officers happen to be all Protestants, and its patients are Protestant or Catholic indifferently, for religious opinion has nothing to do with their admission or the care of them in the hospital, and such attempts at persecution should be frowned upon by every citizen, who has a spark of humanity.

As a result of the action of the City Hospital governors, the following communications presented their appearance :

"ALBANY, N. Y., *January 31, 1870.*

" THOS. W. OLCOTT, Esq.,

President of Board of Governors of the City Hospital :

DEAR SIR.—I hereby resign the position of Physician at the Albany City Hospital. This act is induced by no want of interest in the welfare of the institution, nor any indisposition to perform the duties resulting from the position, but the peculiar action of the board of governors at their last meeting, establishing the precedents: first, that any member of the staff, no matter how faithfully and skillfully he may perform his duty, presuming to differ with another who can influence the board, shall be summarily dismissed; and, second, that it is inexpedient for a medical officer of the City Hospital to be attached in a similar capacity to another institution, leave no

alternative consistent with self-respect and the dignity of my profession, but to protest against such interference.

An attempt made in this covert manner to control the disposition of the charitable labors of the physician is, to say the least, very unjust. So long as the physician faithfully performs the duties of his allotted service at the City Hospital, wherein does it concern the governors of that institution, if he perform similar work elsewhere? Why not carry the spirit of dictation still further, and say what families he shall attend and what not?

For nearly eighteen years, I have been a physician at the Orphan Asylum, most of the time performing the principal duties of the institution. Your resolution would preclude my further service in that institution, while continuing my connection with the City Hospital.

Instead of being actuated with feelings of gratitude that another noble charity has been instituted, and another effort for the amelioration of human suffering is in successful operation, wishing it, and all similar enterprises, a hearty God-speed, your resolution betrays a spirit of envy and jealousy; instead of wishing that the channel of charity and good works should flow broad and free, such action would cramp it into petty rivulets and dry up the fountains of its growth. The field for charity and charitable labors is fortunately too large to be controlled by any narrow-minded efforts.

In resigning my position at the hospital, I carry with me the feeling that I have not used it as a means of emolument, nor prostituted the noble efforts of the donors of the institution to the accomplishment of selfish purposes.

Respectfully yours,

S. O. VANDERPOEL."

NOTE.—The following is the resolution alluded to:

"Resolved, That we deem it due to this institution and its patients that the members of our staff should not hold positions in another hospital, except as consulting surgeons or physicians, and that hereafter no appointment will be made of any person who holds position on the staff of another institution."

It has been asserted that it is unusual for a gentleman to be attached as attending physician to two hospitals. The following appear in the *Medical Register* for 1869-70:

Garidon Buck, Attending Surgeon at New York Hospital and St. Luke's Hospital.

Thos. M. Markoe, Attending Surgeon at New York Hospital and Bellevue Hospital.

Henry B. Sands, the same.

Ernest Krackowizer, Attending Surgeon at New York Hospital and Mount Sinai Hospital.

Isaac E. Taylor, Attending Physician at Bellevue and Charity.

Geo. S. Elliott, Attending Physician at Bellevue and Infants and New York Asylum for Lying-in Women.

Austin Flint, Sr., Attending Physician at Bellevue, Charity and Infants Hospitals.

Jas. R. Wood, Attending Surgeon at Bellevue and Charity Hospitals.

Lewis A. Sayre, the same.

Alex. B. Moth, the same.

Frank H. Hamilton, the same.

A. Jacobi, Physician at Charity, Nursery and Child's Hospitals, and Mt. Sinai Hospital

“ALBANY, N. Y., 27th January, 1870.

SIR.—As a member of the hospital staff it has always afforded me pleasure to bestow my services, professional and other, for its advantage. I have, however, always regretted that an institution so essentially medical in its character as a hospital is, should be conducted with so little regard to the expressed wishes of the medical men who have its care, and that their voice could not be heard in the arrangement of its medical staff. I have especially regretted this rule when it was so enforced as to give unusual influence to a single member of the staff. I regretted when a member of the staff, who, it is admitted, performed his duties faithfully and well, was dismissed summarily, at a late meeting, under circumstances warranting the common rumor, now circulated by friends of Dr. Armsby, that it was because of a difference with him.

I regret to know that at the June meeting a resolution was passed, confining to this hospital the charitable labor of those whose services are here received. I do not recognize the right of any person or board to regulate this matter for me.

I transmit herewith my resignation as a member of the hospital staff, and beg you to inform your board of the same at your convenience.

I am, sir, very respectfully yours,

JACOB MOSHER.*

THOMAS W. OLCOTT, *President*.”

In a very short time arose another apparition to torment the man, who had gotten himself into Dr. March's place; but a man no more like Dr. March than Hamlet's uncle to the royal Dane, his father. The following printed letter came to tell the tale, that the Medical College, just mourning the loss of its foremost teacher, was now abandoned by her three ablest remaining professors. The wind had been sown, and the whirlwind, ripe for the harvest, was to be reaped!

* For reasons of their own Drs. Quackenbush and Boulware, although in no accord with Dr. Armsby's conduct, chose to remain in the hospital. While these pages were in process for publication, their connection with that institution ceased. At the instigation of James H. Armsby, his friend, Thomas W. Olcott, had them ousted. It is rumored that one cause of the action was "to secure harmony in the staff of the hospital," and they, being gentlemen, could not be expected to harmonize with the other elements of the staff. It was charged that they divulged that at St. Peter's Hospital, the patients enjoyed good nursing, good food and cleanliness, which they did not at the City Hospital, and this was complained of at the meeting held at Mr. Olcott's *bank*, which seems to be a professional *abattoir* or slaughter-house for doctors, "spotted" by Armsby! During the star-chamber proceedings, when Drs. Quackenbush and Boulware, without the slightest intimation or chance to resign, were slaughtered by five unprofessional men, ignorant of their professional worth, Drs. J. H. Armsby and J. V. Lansing were present to influence the cowardly and secret act.

“ALBANY, February 7th, 1870.

“Trustees of the Albany Medical College:

“GENTLEMEN.—In offering to you our resignations as members of the Faculty of the College over which you exercise the supervision, we deem it a duty which we owe to ourselves and to you, to state the reasons which have prompted us to this course of action. The death of our late associate, Dr. Alden March, devolved upon us the duty of nominating his successor. Our choice, without any hesitation and with entire unanimity, fell upon Dr. Armsby. The appointment being tendered to and accepted by him, left the chair of anatomy vacant. In filling this chair, we had more difficulty, and the Faculty was equally divided in the choice of its incumbents. Three favored the appointment of Dr. Albert Vanderveer and Dr. H. R. Haskins, and three the appointment of Dr. E. R. Hun and Dr. Daniel M. Stimson. At this stage we might, and we now think we should have referred these appointments to your body, and thrown upon you the responsibility of making the selection. After a lengthy discussion and having had an interview with Dr. Armsby before the meeting, which warranted the hope we entertained, we supposed that one gentleman from each number proposed might be selected, and thus harmony secured, the wishes of each section being consulted. This, however, was not the case. The chair of anatomy instead of being divided between two new professors, was further subdivided so as to include three; and thus subdivided, Dr. E. R. Hun was offered a share. This being tendered to Dr. Hun was declined, and his letter of declension, which was all that any gentleman could give, and which we would be pleased to furnish you, has been retained by Dr. Armsby, though the registrar of the college has asked him for it to place on record. We cannot inform you as to the cause of Dr. Hun's declension; but we think that he was unwilling to accept a one-third fragment of a professorship which had been always sustained by one, and for which Dr. Lansing had been, by one of the undersigned, proposed. It will be here proper to mention, both for your information, and to show our interest in the College, that we had named a Faculty which we think every one of your number could well indorse:

- “For the chair of Surgery... Dr. James H. Armsby.
- “ “ Anatomy..... Dr. John V. Lansing.
- “ “ Theory and Practice..... Dr. James McNaughton.
- “ “ Obstetrics..... Dr. J. V. P. Quackenbush.
- “ “ Clinical Medicine..... Dr. S. O. Vanderpoel.
- “ “ Psychology..... Dr. John P. Gray.
- “ “ Materia Medica..... Dr. Albert Vanderveer.
- “ “ Physiology..... Dr. E. R. Hun.
- “ “ Chemistry..... Dr. Jacob S. Mosher.

“For Demonstrator of Anatomy, Dr. Haskins or Dr. Stimson, at the option of Professor of Anatomy.

“Dr. John P. Gray had previously made the offer through one of the undersigned, to give a number of lectures on Psychology gratuitously to the stu-

dents ; and thus we could, had we availed ourselves of this generous offer, have had the honor and the credit of initiating this chair in the American colleges. Our suggestions were unheeded, and our voice not heard, and from this evening forward through the term, harmony did not exist in the Faculty; and there was a restraint, nay, a silent opposition entertained toward the three who felt it to be their duty to introduce any names for Professorships, other than those which were eventually adopted. How united and relentless this opposition has been, another scene will show.

“ At the close of the session, the Faculty met for the purpose of balloting for candidates for the degree of Doctor of Medicine. By a rule of the Faculty two black balls caused the rejection of any candidate, unless said candidate elects to appear before the curators apart from his class, and there undergo a separate examination. This in itself involves a disgrace, and no member is ever subjected to this mortifying and humiliating ordeal, unless on account of a deficiency of those intellectual medical acquirements, which it is deemed necessary that every one should possess, or on account of not being possessed of the moral characteristics of a gentleman. It was well understood, and the report circulated through the class that certain members were to be rejected, not because they were deficient in either of these requirements, but because they dared to entertain and express independent opinions; because they dared think for themselves, and had thus incurred the ill-will of some, who thought the medical students should think only as their professors dictated. The candidates for graduation usually divide themselves into what are called quizzing classes, composed of five or six members each, for the purpose of examining each other on the subjects of the different lectures delivered during the day. These are called according to the time of their formation, first, second, third and fourth classes, and so on. Before the balloting began, Dr. Armsby proposed that we should commence with the last class instead of the first. This was objected to, and strongly combated on the ground that it was unusual, irregular, and had on its face the appearance of unfairness. The registrar had prepared his list commencing with the first class, and so continuing, according to the number of the class, and had thus arranged the names of the students with their time of study, their certificate of character, and their graduation fee attached to each name, and for this reason strenuously resisted the proposition. After a long discussion, in which the President agreed with the undersigned, the President, J. McNaughton, said: “ Well, we had better let the doctor (Dr. Armsby) have his own way, for if we do not, we will not commence balloting till midnight, though I see no reason for commencing with the foot instead of the head of the class.” Dr. Armsby did have his own way, and our President did see, not without feelings of mortification which he expressed, why this course was persisted in. The gentlemen intended for proscription, Messrs. Briggs and Davidson, who by the way belonged to the *first* class, but who by this arrangement were balloted for in the *last*, were black-balled, one receiving four and the other three; but in order to prevent their being singled out and disgraced, which subsequent events showed to be the intention to satisfy the vengeance or

malignity of any member of the Faculty, we had so distributed our ballots that the whole class, with one or two exceptions, would have been compelled to appear before the curators, or appealed to your honorable body, and we well knew that from either they would have received that justice which some of the Faculty were indisposed to give them. The plan succeeded; revenge for fancied wrongs was deprived of its victims; for the gentlemen of the Faculty who had entered into the plot, not wishing to meet the responsibility, and without giving their reasons for so doing, with the exception of Dr. Vanderveer, who did state his objections, withdrew their opposition, and thus the whole class received that justice which it was intended to be denied to two.

"It will be proper to mention in this place that two of the negative votes came from one chair, that of anatomy, which is filled by Drs. Haskins and Vanderveer. In a matter affecting so deeply the honor and the success in life of a young gentleman just wishing to graduate, these two gentlemen might have consulted together and agreed upon their one ballot, especially when the ballot was intended to mar and not to make the fortune of a young man just entering on professional life.

"Now gentlemen, Trustees, let us inquire why these two young men were thus treated. Let us ask whether there was any excuse for this intended insult. Dr. Briggs was a student from Dr. Armsby's office. Dr. Armsby well knowing his standard of scholarship and his qualifications for the position, had recommended him as House Physician for the Hospital, and after he had served in this capacity for one entire year, the Medical Staff, seven of whom belong to our Faculty, unanimously adopted the following resolution of thanks :

'ALBANY CITY HOSPITAL, *January 10, 1870.*

'J. MYERS BRIGGS, M. D. :

'DEAR SIR.—At a meeting of the Medical Staff of the Hospital, held to-day, the Secretary was directed to present the thanks of the physicians and surgeons of the hospital to you, for the faithful and intelligent discharge of the duties pertaining to the office of House Physician and Surgeon, during your twelve months' service in this institution.'

"Thus indorsing him as faithful and intelligent in the discharge of his duties. Does this show that he was deficient in those medical acquirements which are deemed necessary for graduation? He was in fact one of the best students of the class. The second qualification for graduation is good moral character. Did Mr. Briggs possess this? Read the following certificate furnished the registrar of the Faculty by Mr. Briggs, and answer for yourself :

'ALBANY MEDICAL COLLEGE, *November 29th, 1869.*

'This is to certify that J. Myers Briggs has pursued the studies of the medical profession under my direction, and is of good moral character.

(Signed)

'J. H. ARMSBY, M. D.'

"Gentlemen, should a young man, indorsed and approved by the entire medical staff of the hospital as "faithful and intelligent," in the capacity of house physician, and with a certificate of good moral character from his pre-

ceptor, Dr. Armsby, and fulfilling all the regular requirements of the Albany College, be denied its degree? We thought not, and we showed our appreciation of him by uniformly voting for his recommendation. The sequel proved we were in the right.

"In regard to Mr. Davidson, a student in Dr. Vanderpoel's office, it was stated, by Dr. Armsby, that he opposed him because he had heard that he had been expelled from some literary college. This Dr. Davidson denies, and we propose to drop this point, as Dr. D. will settle it before another tribunal.

"The facts being thus stated, gentlemen, you can place your own estimate upon them and judge for yourselves of this most unusual and uncalled for persecution. In conclusion we would call your attention to this most singular article, which appeared in the morning papers of December 6, 1869 :

'ALBANY MEDICAL COLLEGE.

'This time-honored institution is now near the close of its thirty-sixth lecture term. The annual commencement will be held on Christmas Eve. The number of students in attendance and the number of candidates for graduation is as large as the average of many years, and the several courses of lectures have never been more satisfactory and popular.

'Dr. Armsby is the only surviving member of its original Faculty, and is one of the founders of the institution. He was associated with the late lamented Dr. March many years as a teacher before the college was established, and has had the sole charge of the department of anatomy and of the museum since the foundation of the institution until his promotion to the chair of surgery. Dr. Armsby's ability as a surgeon and as a teacher is universally known and acknowledged.

'Dr. McNaughton has filled the chair of medicine in this college more than thirty years, having lectured during twenty years previous at the Medical College in Fairfield. He is the oldest professor of medicine in this country, and has a world-wide reputation for skill and learning in his profession. His course of lectures during this term has been in the highest degree satisfactory and popular. Indeed the remark has often been made in the college, "Dr. McNaughton is renewing his age."

'Dr. Thomas Hun, though long retired from any participation in the active duties of the college, still holds an honorary position in the Faculty.

'The department of physiology, which was recently given to Dr. Lansing, in addition to his other branch, *materia medica*, has been well sustained. The style of his writings and the research evinced in his lectures are spoken of in terms of the highest praise.

'The college museum, now the largest and most valuable in this country, is under the charge of Dr. Henry March, who has been appointed "Curator of the Museum," and lecturer on the pathological collections of his late distinguished father.

'Drs. Haskins and Vanderveer having delivered highly satisfactory courses of lectures during this term, have been anxiously recommended by the faculty to the trustees for professorships in the institution.'

"We introduce the above, not that we object that our names are not mentioned, nor that we lament that we did not receive those complimentary notices, which others may have needed, and did receive, but as illustrating that low spirit of detraction which would hazard the interests of a public institution in order to gratify private duplicity and malice; and when it is remembered that this article was furnished the press the very day after a resolution was offered at a faculty meeting calling for the withdrawing of Dr. Robertson's name from the summer course on account of his forthcom-

ing criticism, which resolution was not carried on account of the opposition offered by the president, James McNaughton, and the undersigned; and when it is remembered that this article, five hours after its issue from the press, was brought to the attention of the medical class by Dr. McNaughton, who disclaimed any participation in it, and regretted its publication; and when it is remembered that, acting on this disclaimer, the class in the college, in public meeting, denounced the author in the following preamble and resolutions:

'ALBANY, December 6, 1869.

'At a meeting of the class of the Albany Medical College, called for the purpose of taking into consideration an article which appeared in the issue of the ARGUS of this morning, conveying the impression that certain members of the Faculty were entitled to special commendation, and omitting to mention in any connection the equally valuable services and popularity of three of our most worthy professors, as a class we deem it our duty to correct any such impression which may have been made; and at the same time to censure the person or persons who originated the said article as arrogating to himself or themselves liberties which belong essentially to the class as such. We would say in justice that our respected president of the Faculty disclaims having any knowledge or intimation that any such article was to appear; therefore

'Resolved, That, as a class, we know nothing of the origin of said article, nor was any one authorized to publish such article.

'PHILIP J. ZEH, *Chairman.*'

'J. MYERS BRIGGS, *Secretary.*'

"And when it is remembered that this article emanated not from an open enemy of the college, nor from the thoughtlessness or injudicious zeal of some young professor, but was, according to the report made to the County Medical Society by a committee constituted to make the investigation, the work of an individual who numbers threescore years, who should have been active in promoting harmony instead of sowing the seeds of discord, then it will be understood why we protest against such actions, and call your serious attention to them, not only as trustees of the medical college, but as citizens interested in the promotion and welfare of the public institutions of Albany.

"The occurrence of such scenes and the exhibition of such feelings plainly indicate to the undersigned that they cannot serve the old Albany Medical College as they would wish. With some of us the earliest associations and thoughts of professional life commence with the Albany Medical College. One of our number entered the institution as a student the very first day its doors were opened, and he has lingered around its portals till this hour. When the oldest of your number commenced his duties as trustee, he commenced his medical life, and inscribed his name in the first class that ever listened to the lectures in this institution. Another of our number looks to this time-honored college and calls it his *alma mater*; while a third holds her honorable diploma, which you have conferred. Under these circumstances, we deeply regret that we cannot continue a connection which in time past has afforded us so much pleasure and satisfaction, but the interests of the institution demand harmony and mutual exertion from all the members of the Faculty: and hoping other men may receive that consideration and

respect which by some of the Faculty has been denied to us, we hereby tender you our resignations of the respective chairs which we have hitherto occupied. From the president, Dr. McNaughton, with whom we have so long associated, we regret to part. Honesty of purpose ever has and ever will actuate him in the performance of his duties.

"Thanking you, gentlemen, for your general interest in the college, and hoping your counsels and actions may promote its highest interests, we are

"Yours respectfully,

"J. V. P. QUACKENBUSH,

"*Professor of Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children.*

"S. O. VANDERPOEL,

"*Professor of General Pathology and Clinical Medicine.*

"JACOB S. MOSHER,

"*Professor of Chemistry and Medical Jurisprudence.*"

Next, the physician, who for scholarship, calm, judicial-mindedness and dignity occupies the highest rank in the estimation of the profession here, once, an active professor in the college, which he quit from disgust of Dr. Armsby, but allowed his name to appear on the college catalogue as Professor Emeritus, for the favorable influence it was known to have, tendered his resignation of the position which he assumed he held, since the catalogues had so announced for some years, saying it was on account of the dissensions which have caused "the withdrawal of certain professors for whom he had great respect."

Next, Drs. James L. Babcock, E. R. Hun and Daniel M. Stimson declined to lecture during the "summer course."

Then came into print the following letter, bearing the signatures of four well known physicians :

"ALBANY, March 8, 1870.

"TO JAMES MCNAUGHTON, M. D.,

"*President of the Medical Staff of the Albany City Hospital :*

"DEAR SIR.—Because of the peculiarly unpleasant condition of affairs in the hospital, which seems to us the result of action and influences hostile to the dignity and independence of the profession to which we belong, we feel it due to our self-respect to discontinue our relations with the Albany City Hospital Dispensary.

“Therefore we, the undersigned, do resign our positions upon the medical and surgical staff of the Albany City Hospital Dispensary.

“JAMES S. BAILEY.

“JAMES L. BABCOCK.

“CORNELIUS D. MOSHER.

“WM. H. BAILEY.”

These commotions and resignations were not the result of Dr. Robertson's pamphlet. Things had long been tending to open rupture and needed only the least agitation for its occurrence.

At length, a meeting of the trustees of the Medical College was held, and on the 9th day of April, 1870, the following article appeared in the secular papers :

“ALBANY MEDICAL COLLEGE.—The following resolutions, at a meeting of the trustees held on the 7th inst., were offered by Jas. H. Ramsey, Esq. :

“*Resolved*, That the resignations of Drs. Quackenbush, Mosher and Vanderpoel be accepted, and the Faculty be authorized to fill the vacant chairs as in their judgment will best promote the usefulness and sustain the honor of the institution.

“*Resolved*, That as Dr. Hun's appointment of Emeritus Professor was not made by this board, it is not necessary to take any action upon his resignation.

“*Resolved*, That this board is satisfied, that the new Faculty as proposed to be organized will amply meet the requirements of those seeking a medical education, and will fully sustain the high reputation which the institution has so long enjoyed.

“G. DEXTER, *Secretary*.”

These resolutions were furnished by Dr. Armsby, and handed by him to a recent member of the board of trustee, for presentation to the board. This gentleman was not long a resident of Albany, and knew nothing of Dr. Hun's relation with the college. If not the author, as he undoubtedly was, Dr. Armsby became responsible for the resolutions by the act of requesting the member to propose them. To the first resolution there is no objection. The second one was grossly insulting in its intent, as well as grossly stupid in its essence. Because it was meant to be an indignity to one of the most learned and esteemed men of the medical profession,

this trickster trapped a stranger, and made him the unsuspecting agent of his spiteful resolution. The knave did not perceive that he was acting the part of an imbecile to propose such an absurd resolution, nor did these trustees who thoughtlessly sustained the resolution, perceive that they were fooled by Dr. Armsby and made to record themselves as very Dogberrys, who babbling, declared "to babble and talk is most tolerable and not to be endured!" Wise proceeding indeed, *to take action* by a formal resolution, and yet in the very action declare, "*it is not necessary to take any action!*"

But Dr. Armsby, as chief manager of college and trustees, did an inexcusable thing to permit the circulars of the Medical College to be sent out, year after year, for a long period, stating that Dr. Hun was a Professor Emeritus, if it was untrue. He either knew, or did not know, that such was the statement of the catalogue-circulars. If he did not know it, then he was guilty of unpardonable ignorance, while practicing an imposition; if he did know it, then he was unpardonably guilty of intentional and reiterated misrepresentation and falsehood.

The effect of this resolution was to force the trustees to assume the responsibility of declaring the catalogue of the college unreliable; and the position taken by Dr. Robertson, as Chairman of Board of Censors of this society, was entirely tenable, when he refused to recommend a candidate as qualified for admission into the society, who insisted that proof of his eligibility existed in the fact that his name was in the list of graduates in the college catalogue. The reply was valid, that as the trustees had publicly proclaimed the catalogue to contain falsehood, this operated to vitiate the credibility any statements contained in it; and the gentleman was properly compelled to produce his diploma before being admitted.

Dr. Armsby very cunningly contrives to keep himself hidden in much of his trickery. If his manœuvres work

to please him, and he facies that applause may be secured, his vanity prompts him to appear, otherwise, he lurks ensconced in concealment throughout, and leaves his agents and tools to bear all blame and shame. But, in this matter, he is so involved in toils of his own weaving, that he is caught alive for exhibition, as cleverly as ever rat in trap !

In his article, published in the city papers December 6th, 1869, Dr. Armsby says : "Dr. Thomas Hun, though long retired from any participation in the active duties of the college, *still holds an honorary position in the Faculty.*" Afterward, in the resolutions which he prepared for the trustees, he declares that an appointment to this "honorary position" never had been made by the only authority, *i. e.*, the trustees, competent to make it ; in other words, on the 6th of December, 1869, he said Dr. Hun held "an honorary position in the Medical Faculty," on the 7th day of March, following, he said he never held such position. A "christian gentleman," indeed ! The article published December 6th, 1869, was that for which he was reprimanded by the students, and censured by the County Medical Society ; an article which he was *proved to have written*, but which, by his action and his vote when on trial, he declared *he had not written* ; an article in which he omitted to mention the three leading professors in the college ; but which, when blamed by the students, he hurriedly amended, in a subsequent issue of the newspaper, by saying that the omission was "*inadvertent*," and yet, within a few weeks past, he has stated to Dr. D. V. O'Leary, that he omitted them, *because* they had approved Dr. Robertson's pamphlet as a just criticism ! That is, in order to punish three leading professors in the college, Dr. Armsby, with *malice prepense, intentionally* ignored their existence by *inadvertently* (as he said) omitting *to write* their names in his newspaper article, which article he contended that he did *not write*

at all! Could the very father of lies have surpassed the filial conduct of this "christian gentleman?"

But see further how this "christian gentleman," this supporter of medical ethics, behaved toward respectable members of this society. During Dr. March's life the names of Drs. Bailey, Babcock and Craig, were published as Curators of the Medical College. None but curators are permitted to examine the students for graduation, after they have passed the examination of the college professors. These gentlemen were notified that they were constituted as curators; their names were published as such; they were invited, as such, to appear and examine the students; thereupon they performed the duties, which they regarded to pertain to them, as such; and the next year, without any assigned reason, behold, their names are expunged from the list of curators! Was this another performance of the ring-master, done *inadvertently*, but yet for *revengeance*? The insult to these gentlemen, because they were incapable of striking hands with Dr. Armsby, was base enough; but it appears still more aggravated, when it is recognized to be an indignity offered to this society, in the person of its president. Now, gentlemen of the society, what consideration of self-respect, what consideration of medical ethics, or any other ethics, weighs with the society, that such misbehavior is practiced here with impunity? Why does it not purify itself of contamination from such association? Who is Dr. James H. Armsby, that he should display such insolence? What has he ever done to command respect in the profession? What matters it to you or me, whose brother-in-law he is or was? What is he himself? To-day, the leading physicians of Albany not only have no sympathy with him, but make no hesitation in expressing their *contempt* for him. If his conduct is tolerated, where will it end? "*Quem ad finem sese effrenata licentia jactabit?*"

But we have been told that he was deserving of some consideration. At the time attention was called to the

violation of the ethics of the profession, you will remember that a member of the society said, in extenuation of Dr. Armsby, that he had done something for certain projects. To be sure, he *has* passed the plate around, or a subscription paper about, somewhat. Perhaps he contributed occasionally, but is too modest to mention it! Yet, spite of all he has dreamed or done, transportation to Troy aerially by a stock company is not in existence! the falling of a big ball down a pole on Capitol hill, to mark astronomical time (which some one has said was determined by the college janitor's watch) has fallen into desuetude! and the wooden monument, with its commemorative glory, and an immortal epitaph *in grass-seed*, have gone, and Assistant Surgeon Armsby, of the "Soldiers' Home," has not a relic to show! What he has done, *and not damaged in the doing*, let the benevolent judgment of his similars and familiars dwell upon admiringly. Others are tired of hearing it. Mark Twain says that a pestiferous Roman guide bored him and his party to such a degree with the marvelous accomplishments of Michael Angelo, that one of them, in disgust, exclaimed: "Say no more! lump the whole thing; say that the Creator made Italy from designs by Michael Angelo." Substitute Albany for Italy, and it is with somewhat the same feeling that one may hear certain flunkies adulate him, who resembles Michael Angelo exactly, with the algebraic sign, *minus* (—), placed before any statement of the valuable qualities of the great Italian!

Is a doctor to be privileged to ignore honesty and honor in the profession, because he made himself conspicuous in solicitations for aid as to matters that do not concern him, until he has unfitted himself for those that do? If he has done any good, he will receive appropriate reward, but he does not, therefore, possess a privilege to conduct himself unworthily in other respects, or to corrupt the things which have come into existence either through his associated or individual effort; and still less, can we

recognize their existence, as having any relation to the propriety or impropriety of infractions of medical regulations concerning advertising. It might, with just as much pertinency, be urged, that because a doctor had solicited subscriptions for a better road to a cemetery lot, terminating at a "city of the dead," as beautiful as the Albany Rural Cemetery, therefore, as a physician, he deserved more honor in the profession, than if he had spent the time in studying medicine, and in fitting himself to stand ably between his patients and the cemetery.

Of things credited to Dr. Armsby, we, as medical men, are especially interested in the Medical College and Hospital. Other men, in other cities, have established colleges and hospitals, and Dr. Armsby might never have existed and Albany would doubtless have had a medical college and hospital, nevertheless. To be sure, their *quality* would have differed! and by the difference the length of human life not be abbreviated! We, Albanians, pay taxes to support these institutions and we are therefore interested, as citizens, to scrutinize them. In an article respecting this hospital, originating elsewhere with Dr. Armsby, and published in the *Sunday Press*, July 31, 1870, we are told that forty thousand dollars were raised through the influence of a "few noble-hearted physicians" and a distinguished citizen. Since then over sixty thousand dollars in money, "and nearly as much more in hospital material and supplies, have been subscribed, mainly through the personal efforts of Dr. Armsby." Setting aside the bad taste of self-vaunting in the matter, this, if true, does honor to the "noble-hearted physicians," of whom Dr. Armsby claims to be one, and does credit to the energy and activity of Dr. Armsby in the exercise of his talent for soliciting money. Here we must stop, for if every cent had come from his own pocket, instead of not one, that we have ever heard of, he would not, therefore, have properly possessed dominant rights over other members of the medical staff, his peers, in a public and chartered institution.

But he assumed these, and nobody took much pains to withstand him. The governors of the hospital allowed him to act just as he pleased, and he seemed to have proscriptive ownership and lordship. In fact, during the period in which the writer was connected with Dr. Armsby's hospital, a governor was scarcely ever seen within its walls, until complaints became so loud concerning its foulness, and the mismanagement of internal affairs, that considerations of prudence, if not of humanity, compelled, for a time, a greater vigilance. It was rumored that *charity patients* had only tin cups to drink their tea or coffee from, and that dire necessity compelled some of them, at times, to use the same vessels for other purposes, *nameless here!* It was said that some wild vagary had been adopted regarding ventilation, and the experiment having proved a failure, no substitute was employed, and that the sickening odors emanating from stifled wards and from commodes out of repair, mingled with the smoke of old tobacco-pipes, created an atmosphere not specially creditable to the chief manager and manipulator of the concern. It was a different atmosphere from that which the "noble-hearted physician" desires, when in summer he seeks salubrity, where the air floats pure among the mountains, or the medicated waters sparkle, as they bubble up from Nature's laboratory; or where, on the surf-trodden shore, he may dally with the billows, and fill his lungs with fresh breezes, rippling or dashing from the restless main. It was told that *poor men*, not "pay patients," who had suffered injury or undergone operations under the surgeon's knife, were placed on charity beds of straw, which had not been renewed since they were occupied, long before, by wounded soldiers, whose suppurating sores had soaked them with blood and pus! There, it was said, these poor fellows were stretched, whose accidents had furnished a newspaper item to advertise simultaneously a surgeon's name and his City Hospital; and when the night fell, which should bring balmy sleep to them

in comfortable, if not luxurious beds, then stole from their hiding-places numerous crawling vermin, and the sleepless wretches were tormented through the long vigil of the dark, and unrefreshed they welcomed the dawn of the tardy day, that promised relief from a needless and cruel suffering ! When all these things, *and more*, were said, and it seemed that the loud whisper would soon break into storm, then, some of the governors bestirred themselves ; for they learned that something of more importance was implied in the word *hospital*, than they had been dreaming, and that Dr. Armsby did not manage everything well from garret to cellar in this “*charity*” hospital, where, annually, hundreds of dollars, contributed by the humane or drawn from State and city treasuries for the benefit of the *poor*, are *diverted from their legitimate use*, for the benefit of his “pay patients.”

Mr. President and Gentlemen, one sickens with the subject, but when a medical man aspires to rule his fellows by influences that are offensive, and frequently insulting, he cannot escape trials that shall determine his right to priority, and to superior consideration, here or with the public. In this hospital, Dr. Armsby ruled unchecked, after the death of Dr. March, and to a great extent before. The superintendent was promoted by him, from the office of janitor of the Medical College, and quitting the place of *a sercant in a dissection room*, he appears as the gentlemanly superintendent of a hospital, professedly charitable, but largely devoted to private “pay patients,” as they are aptly termed by Dr. Armsby. Dr. Armsby selected him for qualifications that he has not communicated to the public, and therefore they may only be guessed. Certainly it was not for cleanly propriety, for the writer had to complain on two successive days, of the stench arising from an amputated hand and arm, decomposing in the amphitheatre, where he was engaged in a surgical operation, and at last he rid himself of it by direct order. Windows above, command this apartment, and the air rising thence

diffuses itself to be inhaled by Dr. Armsby's "pay patients" and others. It may, in passing, be worth while to note the strange associations of this hospital: for while the atmosphere was wafting upward the foul exhalations of this putrid mass, an invalid piano in the room of one of the Doctor's "pay patients" sent the *sulphuretted* hydrogen palpitating back as music for the ears, but no less offensive to the nostrils! A fiddle might be fit for a funeral, for it would not jar "the dull, cold ear of death;" but the propriety of a piano-forte in a hospital patient's room, probably one physician only, could explain!

But, the Medical School is an affair that concerns us more than any other. The school must be judged on its own merits, regardless as to the founder being a philosopher or a fool. Its merit is not necessarily constant, whatever its reputation may be, for the latter may be affected by artifice and the misrepresentation of interested parties, but its real character at any time is the result of the richness or sterility of its teachings, the degree of thoroughness and extent of learning possessed by its professors, their qualification or inaptness for imparting knowledge, and their high or low purpose in exercising the functions of their places. If a college has won an estimable reputation, it is a sad thing that it should ever come to trail its honors in the dust, but nothing is gained by hiding the fact from a son of his *alma mater*, and to

"———never let him know how the brow

"He kissed at parting is dishonored now."

Rather, before it is too late, let the truth shine in, and her sons intelligently and lovingly rally around, to redeem, protect and preserve her, and then assert the virtue of her, whose very garment is,

"Like the stained web that whitens in the sun,

"Grown pure by being purely shone upon!"

A Medical School especially concerns us, as a society, because it is a spring, whence flow waters to invigorate or

to contaminate the society and the profession. Cicero proclaimed that the first duty of a citizen, was to see that the republic took no harm, and it is ours to see that the profession take none. Let us have *esprit de corps* enough to protest against a diploma, even, of any college, that is sending graduates to knock at our portals and demand admission by virtue of an instrument, which is scarcely more creditable than those mock credentials, that are furnished to pretenders by so-called "Collegiate Agencies."

Medical Schools concern physicians, because they are sometimes used to discriminate unfairly against men who have no connection with them as teachers. The teachers are called *professors*, and in some localities they are very tenacious of the title. They would have it appear to the public that they are, on that account, a grade somewhat more elevated and enlightened than their fellows. They would have it seem that they are not only great with the *a. b. c.* among medical students, but are held as great among doctors, even to the *x. y. z.* of medical learning. True it is, there are physicians, who give honor to the title of professor, and every sincere scholar is glad to see them filling, worthily and well, the place of teacher, and to point to them as the exponents of the profession, and as the great lights which display the possibilities of earnest and laborious scholarship. What is genuine pleases everybody; a sham gives no satisfaction to anybody. But everything has its counterfeit, and it is to professors, labeled as such, but who are really only second-rate men in knowledge and ability, that exception is taken. The writer would not imply that no teacher of ability has appeared before the students of the Albany Medical College. He remembers that some gentlemen of respectable mention gave a few lectures there last winter. But he asserts, most emphatically, that the losses by death, of Dr. March, and by resignation, of three other able professors, have so crippled the institution, as to make

it in the estimation of intelligent judges, an object rather of *sympathy* than of admiration, and this sympathy is deeper and sadder, because all attempts to fill their places have proved unavailing. The truth is deplorable for the college, that Dr. Armsby, with all his cunning and delegated power, has shown himself incompetent to act as the *factotum* of the institution. He has so conducted himself that men of the best qualifications in Albany are determined to hold aloof from the college, so long as he has control of its affairs. It is notorious in the profession, that since the death of Dr. March, consideration for his activity, not as a giver, but as a getter of material assistance for the college, and his qualities for cunning engineering, have secured him unrestrained direction of affairs. But he seems ever to have more confidence in the artifices of craft, than in the efforts that may be put forth by sagacity, learning and honesty. It does not presage well for the worth and stability of any institution of learning, that its nature and life are subject to an individual. Unfortunately, such is the condition of the Albany Medical College to-day. All criticism of Dr. Armsby is construed and represented by him, as hostility to the Medical College, and because the most independent and accomplished members of the profession are opposed to *him*, he would make it appear that they are in antagonism to the Medical College, as such. This is a convenient covert, under which he and his parasitic partisans dodge, whenever they are scrutinized, and, on the other hand, whenever it is deemed politic to make a display to help a professor or *professorling*, or to hurt, somewhat spitefully, somebody else, the college becomes an agent for the purpose. Indeed, at present, the institution appears to serve as an agency for advertising the names of Dr. James H. Armsby and his retinue of dependents. If a simple surgical operation is done by one of these, the newspapers are all requested to *cackle*. A gentleman, for certain considerations foreign to the cause of educa-

tion, yet well understood, furnishes some money to the college, and Dr. Armsby hastens to declare, in the newspapers, that a motive for the gift was the high estimation of the donor for the scheming doctor, although it is credibly said, that, until the time a certain antecedent railroad project, followed by the gift, was presented, the existence even of the successful money-getter hardly lay in the mind of the giver! Besides, it turns out that no special benefit is done the college; at all events, none for the present, for *Dr. Armsby* is appointed a professor with such a title as shall secure to him the *interest* of the money given!

But, a course of lectures was delivered, and the great self-seeker loomed up again, and his own words, in the newspapers, announced that his "ability as a surgeon and teacher are universally known." During the term of lectures, a project originated at his office, to bring into notice the unfamiliar names of the new men, whom his plastic hand had molded into professors. To each of the *lecturelings*, a present was to be made, and a glowing article was to follow in the newspapers, lauding the remarkable ability of the recipients, and recognizing the generous tribute of the students! The students, unfortunately for the plan, viewed the affair as ridiculous, and when the subscription paper passed around, 'tis said, another paper, burlesquing the thing as a "*grand gift enterprise*," circulated as well! However, the *newspaper* part was accomplished, spite of the fact, 'tis said, of only *six dollars* being subscribed by the class! It is hoped that the gifts were really made, for there is no doubt of their intrinsic usefulness, and it may be, that the young gentlemen, who received them, will learn to use them!

Mr. President, there is no end to the devices to which the manager of this college resorts, in order to parade *his* and other names, that *need* it, before the local public. Why is it done? Does it interest the profession at large? Is the community more eager to hear about these few wonderful gentlemen, than it is about the professors

in the law school, and the teachers in our academies? Do not the medical students in this locality know that such a medical school exists? or is there a consciousness that the merit of Dr. Armsby and his appointees is so light, that it must be constantly lauded, lest its influence be unperceived? But the gentlemen connected with that institution, apparently forget, that they are within the jurisdiction of this society. They forget, that they cannot be permitted to violate the ethics of the profession, because they are combined in a body, and are called professors; that they must not publish disgustingly adulatory comments on each other, as medical men, under the guise of professors, any more than individual members of the profession may announce their skill. No decent member of the profession could praise himself personally, so eulogistically, as is habitually done by these professors, and hold up his head in this body. (By the way, Mr. President, it is observed that these gentlemen no longer hold up their heads here! perhaps they are not aware that medical ethics require them to attend the meetings of this society, and to contribute to its interest and usefulness, and not act as seceders.)

Mr. President, we are not deceived as to the *animus* and purpose of this use of the local secular press. It is *advertising*, of the grossest and most offensive character. It is done nowhere else as it is done here, and it is time to protest against its continuance: no, sir, it is time to take decisive measures to stop it. This society has the power, and its self-respect demands that it be put forth. We are familiar with that old cry, that the Medical College is imperiled by opposing its professors; but, sir, when it becomes a question whether the dignity of the profession shall be sustained or the Medical College go down, we cannot for a moment hesitate. But there is no peril involving the Medical College, except the results from the incompetency of the man at the helm. There is no disposition in the elements about it to do it harm. On the

one hand, it would be most remarkable that physicians should be hostile to the Medical College, as such, and on the other, it would be still more remarkable that honorable physicians should view with favor and with commendation a school whose professors, setting aside all consideration of their ability, or lack of it, as teachers, are compelled to subserviency by an unscrupulous superior; whose names are flaunted in the faces of all, with, at times, the apparently set purpose of giving offense, and who maintain a hostile attitude to this society, because of its reprehension of the irregularity of their conduct.

Mr. President, this taunt of wishing harm to the college, is silly as well as false. The object of the cry is to create local prejudice against all who presume to say that it is improperly conducted, and that it does not possess an unquestioned character, for it is then proclaimed that a public institution is ruthlessly assailed, and that enemies of the public peace are assaulting a Diana of the Ephesians. To win popular favor, it is advertised in the newspapers, how much money the students have disbursed in Albany, or are conjectured to have spent. But what of it? Suppose they had spent ten times as much, is that a reason for sustaining a *second* or *third-rate* college, when Albany should have a *first-rate* one? Does any one presume to say that pecuniary profit, the jingling of the guineas, is all that Albany cares for in favoring its scientific institutions? If so, it is not true. Albany demands institutions, that court criticism instead of shrinking from it, and whining about it. The so-called *enemies* of the college are its friends, are those who would have its standard elevated, its course of study more thorough, its tests of proficiency more searching. They are not "content to dwell in decencies forever," they demand progress and development. Material profit, and the incidental circulation of money for the public benefit, are matters of proper consideration, and fortunately they follow in the

procession that science leads. Make the Albany Medical College an institution of sterling merit, let each professorship be filled by conscientious and accomplished teachers, each eager in the search for truth, and zealous in disseminating what he has learned, then the fame of the school will draw from far and from every direction. Where now pennies are spent, then dollars would be disbursed, for scores would throng, where otherwise only individuals can be enticed. Then might the Capital of this great State be proud of its college; and, looking back on the past, every intelligent citizen would smile at his remembered blame of physicians, who are to-day ashamed of a college, compelled by a sense of its own insecurity and short-comings to flaunt its shoddy for genuine fabric, to pipe its praises through favor of the secular press, to shudder at the coming of unbidden listeners into its lecture halls, and call them "spies" (as was done last winter!) to solicit students to appear at *any price or no price*, from the highways and byways, regardless of proficiency or propriety, so that a show of numbers might be exhibited, to indecorously appear in print defending its tottering reputation from the assault of some wag, and gravely urging the difference between a professor of medical jurisprudence being an "advocate" or a *supporter* of homœopathy, and, lest this should not be seen, insisting that, after all, it made no difference what he was!

Mr. President, how long, think you, it will take, with such shamming and jugglery as has been exhibited in the Albany Medical College the past year, before students, earnest in the quest of knowledge, will travel thousands of miles to reach here, as they now cross the ocean for the advantages Europe affords, or travel from the distance of New York, even, as students now do from Albany to New York? At the present time, it is urged, in every direction, that students should be better prepared with intellectual training, before commencing the study of medicine, that no branch of medical science should be

passed by, until well mastered, and that disease should be practically studied by the bed-side of the sick, under experienced teachers in diagnosis and remedies, and even that the time of study be prolonged. It is claimed "that no man can be a fit teacher to a Medical School, in any of the collateral branches of science, who has not received that special training which a medical education alone affords." What says the Albany Medical School in response? Read again the letter of the professors who resigned from it. Review the unworthy conduct of the controller of its destinies. Examine the list of recent appointments, and say wherein lies the propriety of flourishing such names in the newspapers, as though they were picked from the profession in Albany for any other quality than servility.

It has been said of Louis Napoleon "that all the unpurchasable intellect of France has been against him from the beginning of his monstrous usurpation. That *intellect* considered him a kind of Barnum turned statesman, adroitly mimicking the heroes of the French people." He managed to sham, until he secured military *prestige*, which he "wrecked in a series of catastrophies unexampled in history." This became possible, only because the adventurer and charlatan had to "job" his army. "It would not do to give high commands to the most deserving men, because such men had not assisted him in his plots, or doubted his right to dominate. The result was, that though naturally desirous to get good generals, he was restricted in his choice to such persons as would consent to be his partisans. It is to the honor of France, that he only gained unscrupulous Algerian captains and colonels to consent to his terms." Mr. President, it is not necessary, in this presence, to make the few eliminations and substitutions of terms, that would render this pertinent allusion, a distinct exposition of the "jobbing" done in the Albany Medical College, and of the attitude of the "unpurchasable intellect" of

the profession. It is becoming, however, if not necessary, to ask pardon of "*Louis, le petit*" for degrading him to comparison with such a *plus petit*!

But the name of the great surgeon, March, is filleted on the brow of the manager of the college. Dr. Armsby figured fifteen thousand dollars into the funds of the college, and a "*March Professorship of Surgery*" has been established, of which Dr. Armsby becomes the incumbent, and pockets the interest of the fifteen thousand dollars! The surgeon, who, as chief medical attendant, had withheld proper treatment from Dr. March, who had withheld that treatment which could afford the "*only reasonable hope of relief*;" who had withheld that treatment, which might have prevented the vacancy caused by the patient's death, which he hastened to occupy, is ornamented with the decorative title of "*March Professor of Surgery!*" What satire! Now, will this professor elevate the standard of surgery! Now, will he educate the students to imitate his method of treating such cases as that, whose fatal result has been followed by his promotion! Alas, for the Albany Medical College! Moore's "*Veiled Prophet of Khorassan*" mystified his visage behind a screen of silver tissue; but among his devotees, the young hearts, filled with dreams of the good and grand, awoke at last to find his spotless white banner a deceit, his fair words a delusion, and the silver veil a cruel mockery. May the genius, which, in times gone by, saved the Albany College from its present low estate, forefend that a cheat and imposition should long be screened behind the imposing title of *March Professor of Surgery*, to blast the expectations of ambitious youth!

That prerogative, the gratification of vanity, and not worth, is the ideal of the manager of the Medical College, is made to appear in every unfolding; for developments will take place, and qualities become manifest, spite of all cunningly contrived concealment, all dark disguise or deception. Timidity is shown by the wary precaution

this petty ruler always observes, to retain numerical influence. Read the following clause from the will of Dr. March, and say whether Dr. Armsby "rested peacefully," in quiet confidence that his self-announced "ability as a teacher and a surgeon" were so fully recognized, so highly valued, that no danger threatened his tenure of place! If *he* did, then clearly *Dr. March* did not, or it would not have seemed necessary to introduce the vicious conditions of such an unparalleled bargain into his will, that secure a life-long vote to Dr. Armsby and Dr. Armsby's nephew, both as to the affairs of the museum and all officers of the college. The clause in the will reads as follows :

"*Item first.* I hereby give and bequeath unto the Albany Medical College all my pathological specimens now in the museum of the said college, upon the following conditions, to wit: 1st. That my son, Henry March, and my brother-in-law, James H. Armsby, and the survivor of them, shall have charge and control of the same as trustees during their lives, and the life of the longest liver of them, for the benefit and use of the college. 2d. That the said college shall, within a reasonable time after this will shall be proved, or sooner, confer upon my said son, Henry March, the title of "Curator of the Museum," as it is now known; and the appointment of my said son curator, as aforesaid, shall be for during the term of the natural life of my son. 3d. That my said brother-in-law, James H. Armsby, and my said son, Henry March, and each of them, *so long as they or either of them shall live*, shall have a vote or voice with the Faculty in the recommendation of officers of the college!!"

Mr. President, we have greatly mistaken Dr. March, if he contemplated the specifications and conditions of the bequest voluntarily, and while his mind was clear. Some trembling trickster saw the shadowy form of Nemesis, hovering in the dimness of the uncertain future. He was well aware of the estimate in which he was held by his fellows, and that it was hazardous for him after Dr. March had gone, to stand on his individual merits. Therefore he clutched at the power, which seemed likely to slip from him, and, while the old surgeon's intellect was confused by uræmic poison and opiates, he secured the coveted signature for his own salvation, but disgraced

the college by effecting a complete forfeiture of its independence.

The newspapers this spring have told us how the "*time-honored college*" has flourished. It has been said that it was "never more prosperous than now." It has trumpeted the fame of two respectable gentlemen, who lectured there, as having accepted professorships. But it has not been published that one of them, hired to deliver a specific number of lectures, hurried through his task in double-quick time, and having given two lectures a day, was *done, paid and gone* in a fortnight; and that the other gentleman did his work, and *was off* in about a week! When and why they signed the diplomas of graduates has not transpired! If such teaching is adequate, then it is folly to talk about lengthening the period of preparatory medical study—better abbreviate it. These gentleman are men of conceded ability and of recognized culture; no fault is to be found with them for not giving lectures through a complete course, if they were only hired to deliver a few lectures; but what shall be thought of a medical college that holds out as inducements to students a false announcement, which implied that they were to fill chairs, as professor, for an entire term?

A proof of the prosperity of the college is asserted to exist in the increased number of students. The truth is, that the number had been diminishing for several years, but it was deemed by the college manager a necessity to exhibit a goodly show of names this year, and by dint of much importuning and many manœuvres and cheapening tuition and laxity in other respects, the show has been made, but even then not fairly made, it is charged. Whether a similar effort can succeed again is doubtful.

Mr. President, I have gone over this subject with sorrow, as well as scorn. I have never happened to meet with a person like Dr. Armsby before. Until he became aggressive, I always ignored his hypocritical ways, but then, I determined to withstand him. I could not do

otherwise and maintain self-respect ; and if, in striking him, I have unavoidably hit others, whom he had cunningly involved so as to become his accessories, I regret the unavoidable blow. The sod lies on the graves of those who have cursed him, and in the hearts of many before me, is only bitterness for his indignities or detestation for his malignity. I venture to say that there is not a physician in Albany, not feeding on his favor, who will declare that he is a kind-hearted man, a reliable friend and an *honest gentleman*. I will go still further, and assert my belief that no one will deny, that he is a vain and pretentious self-seeker, an oily-tongued and velvet-footed hypocrite, and an insidious, unscrupulous and unrelenting foe.

It is said, and truly, that there is dissension here in the medical profession, but it is no back-stairs quarrel in a tenement-house. What may be the judgment of the uninformed respecting it is not to be heeded, but, Mr. President, you and others know that it is a contest between honesty and falseness, between self-respect and trickery, between genuineness and pretentiousness, between manliness and servility. What shall be the final event, it requires no prescience to determine.

“The mills of the gods grind slow ; but they grind exceeding fine !”

APPENDIX.

The following letter was published in the Albany Argus, January 24th, 1869, and is referred to in the foregoing text:

To the Governors of the Albany City Hospital:

GENTLEMEN.—I have received official notice of my removal from the Albany City Hospital, and the fact having been published by the press in this city and in New York, I present publicly the following statement:

Five years ago, I came to Albany, after consultation as to the expediency of the movement with my friends, Drs. Agnew, Bumstead and Hinton, surgeons in the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary. I called on the leading members of the profession here, and stated to what branch of medicine I purposed confining my practice, and mentioned my credentials, both from home and abroad. I was courteously received by all, and my amicable feelings toward them were never disturbed, except in the case of one person, whose covert conduct early troubled me, and whose discourtesy and meddling offended me.

After I had been in Albany two years or more, having secured the confidence of the profession generally, as I had indubitable evidence in the fact, that prominent members of it not only recommended patients to me, but honored me by consulting me themselves, and by intrusting members of their families to my care, I began to make efforts tending to the establishment of an eye and ear infirmary of a charitable character. I spent a good deal of time in the unenviable labor of trying to enlist sympathy and co-operation. Occasionally I met with a reception characterized by a kind of civility that was not encouraging, but still I persevered in my self-imposed task, and in December, 1867, I had the satisfaction of having effected an organization, legally incorporated under the title of the Albany Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary. Gen. John F. Rathbone was elected President, and Peter Cagger, Esq., Vice-President.

It still remained necessary to obtain funds for putting in operation the newly created organization. By persevering efforts, and by argument before the committee of ways and means, strengthened with a petition bearing names of influential public men in different parts of the State, as well as citizens of Albany, I succeeded in getting an appropriation from the Legislature of four thousand dollars, payable on condition that ten thousand dollars be obtained from other sources. I received conditional pledges of

several thousand dollars from private citizens, and continued my efforts to procure the sum requisite for securing the four thousand dollars from the State treasury. In the meantime at my own expense, I hired two rooms at the corner of Hudson and South Pearl streets, and opened them for the free treatment of the poor, afflicted with disease of the eye or ear. I did this nominally under the auspices of the incorporated Infirmary. Patients repaired to this place, and the need of the charity was manifest. In order to provide hospital shelter for patients, requiring it in consequence of surgical operations, General Rathbone, the President of the infirmary, made application to the governors of the Albany City Hospital, for permission to use for this purpose some of the many unoccupied beds of the hospital. In a few days response was made, and truthfully, too, that there were no unoccupied beds. Suddenly as Clan Alpine's warriors sprang multitudinously up, "on right, on left, above, below," at the shrill whistle of Roderiek Dhu, so suddenly were these hospital beds peopled with patients. In a few more days the unrumpled coverlets bore quiet testimony of the rapid convalescence and departure of these patients!

The governors of the hospital, through their President, now made overtures that the Eye and Ear Infirmary merge itself in a department of the Hospital, which they proposed to create. The statement was, that a building next to the hospital, had been purchased at a cost of \$10,000, for such department; and, indeed, a statement went the round of the newspapers that Mr. Thomas W. Olcott had purchased and generously donated it to the Hospital for an Eye and Ear Infirmary.

Who originated such report in the newspapers is easily guessed. All know whose shoe fits in that track! Even while I was laboring to secure means to carry on the work of the infirmary just constituted, a short article appeared in the *Evening Journal* (February 10th, 1868), under the caption of "Eye and Ear Infirmary," stating that "the patrons of the Albany City Hospital" were about to establish an Eye Infirmary and "to occupy an adjoining building," and the institution be carried on in connection with the Hospital. The publication of such an article, at such time, was clearly not meant to facilitate my enterprise. Dr. Armsby volunteered to assure me that he did not know who wrote the article. It had been already intimated to me, at the proper quarter, who did write it, and Dr. Armsby's disavowal seemed peculiar. Nevertheless, whoever wrote or published that article, Dr. Armsby did take a paper-writing to Gen. Rathbone, for him to sign, after I had expressed my readiness to accept the overtures of the Hospital, and to contribute the results of my labors to that institution, for the purpose of effecting a "more economical and efficient conduct and management of the Eye and Ear Infirmary." This paper-writing contained an affidavit, "that the Hospital and Infirmary had formed a connection," that the building above alluded to "was purchased at a cost of ten thousand dollars;" that "said building is made necessary by reason of the connection," etc., etc., and, in fine, that the condition imposed by the State had been complied

with, and the appropriation of four thousand dollars, which I had obtained, might now be legitimately paid out by the State Treasurer. Relying on the statements of Dr. Armsby, that this affidavit was true, and being confirmed by my assurance, that I believed it true, and done in good faith, the President of the Infirmary signed the document. An order for the payment of the four thousand dollars to Mr. Thomas W. Olcott, President of the Board of Governors, was also signed by Gen. Rathbone, as President, and myself, as surgeon. The Comptroller paid the money to Mr. Olcott as ordered, and took Mr. Olcott's receipt in March, 1869.

Every reasonable person will naturally assume that good faith was kept on both sides; that the purchased building was occupied for the avowed purposes; that Gen. Rathbone was not deceived, or apparently compromised; that Dr. Robertson was treated with just consideration, and that the large sum of money which he had been the means of bringing to the Hospital, was not diverted from the object contemplated by the Legislature of the State.

By resolution of the Governors, Nov. 6, 1868, Dr. Robertson was constituted Ophthalmic and Aural Surgeon of the Hospital, and in a few days he began his professional work. The adjoining building was not to be vacated until spring. Accordingly a sort of crypt, under the Hospital, was furnished a little, and there the Eye and Ear Infirmary was placed, I may properly say, as the event has proved, interred. In May, 1869, "the building, made necessary by the connection," was, strangely enough, hired from the Hospital for a year by the occupant from whom it had been purchased! At a recent meeting of the Governors, a committee was appointed, as I am told, to let it for another year! So much for the building. Now, how have I been treated, personally, by the authorities of the Hospital, to which I have rendered unpaid services for more than a twelvemonth, and which has taken and appropriated the money, the result of my efforts to establish an Infirmary for an unfortunate class of the poor? This is the answer: At a meeting of the Governors of the Hospital, held at the Mechanics' and Farmers' Bank on the 13th of January inst., a resolution was passed, constituting a certain medical practitioner an associate to alternate with me. Last June, Dr. Armsby, unknown to me, and to other leading members of the Hospital staff, had the presumption to originate a petition, to which he secretly obtained a few signatures, for the accomplishment of this identical project. He procured the presentation of the petition to the Board of Governors. A member of the Board was struck with the remarkable omission of names. He inquired if Dr. Robertson desired an associate; if he regarded the person proposed as competent, or as agreeable; whether he knew anything about the petition, and pronounced it an insult to him, if gotten up without his knowledge, and said that he would not be a party to offering Dr. Robertson an indignity. The matter was thereupon dropped.

This gentleman was absent from town when the recent meeting took place, and had no knowledge that a meeting was contemplated, although he made inquiry before leaving home; and he has not changed the opinions

that he expressed in June. Just before the meeting on the 13th adjourned, Mr. Olcott proposed my removal from the hospital. The preamble to his resolution states that the interests of the hospital "made it expedient." The motion was put and carried, the negatives not called. No debate took place, as the result was a foregone conclusion. This appears from a remark made by one of the Governors to another, on entering the bank, that part of the business of the meeting was to remove Dr. Robertson.

After learning the fact of my removal, I called on some of the Governors. Several let me understand that the action of the meeting was not in accordance with their judgment. One gentleman, who sustained the action, assured me that there was no intention on the part of any one to insult me; that there was no dissatisfaction with the management of my department, or want of respect for my professional qualifications; but, as it was said that the usefulness of the hospital seemed imperiled by dissensions in the medical staff, the Governors felt it necessary to act as they did in order to secure harmony. I replied that I was glad to know that there was no intention to inflict an outrage on me, but, nevertheless, I could not but feel that a great injustice had been committed, both in depriving me of the fruit of my labors and in pronouncing judgment against me in a secret conclave, without giving me an opportunity to be heard.

It transpired that the dissension was one between Dr. Armsby and myself. The fact that I repudiated all relations with him, for what seemed to me good and sufficient reasons, never had created any trouble in the hospital, and never could so long as each of us faithfully discharged our duties to our patients in our own provinces, without meddling with affairs which do not pertain to the functions of the medical officers of the hospital. But the Governors thought differently, or else they regarded Dr. Armsby as entitled to dominant rights in the hospital, and themselves as merely the placemen to execute his will,* and sacrifice any gentleman on the medical staff who does not regard him and his nature with admiration, who does not confide in his mild and measured tones, and think that all his statements are free from guile and never require corroboration.

Why Dr. Armsby should possess prerogatives unheard of in any other hospital, is asserted to be for the reason that he has done a great deal for the Albany hospital. So he has, but the institution has done more for him. It is, in no inconsiderable degree, a valuable *placer*, where he picks up many a

* He has influenced the Governors of the hospital into action which does honor neither to their heads nor their hearts. St. Peter's Hospital, under the benign auspices of the Sisters of Mercy, has just been inaugurated, and the Governors of the Albany City Hospital vote to prohibit the medical officers of the latter from *giving* their services to the former hospital! Gentlemen who rarely see the outside even of the hospital in which they profess to be concerned, forbidding humane doctors from visiting the sick and the poor without reward, in whatever place they may be! What means this? Surely *religious intolerance* is not cropping out in this fungous prosercription, is it? "The quality of mercy is not strained" in St. Peter's Hospital. The sick, of every religious belief, are cared for there alike, and its medical officers are not restrained by any illiberal rule or insolent dictation from doing good, wherever they have opportunity.

nice little nugget. It is, also, an engine of power, like the college, which he has been able, again and again, to wield against men who certainly were as well informed in medicine as he, and whose maintenance of professional honor could not be impeached. With these engines, and by his unrestrained assumption and license, he has bred discord in the profession repeatedly, until at last the abused patience of men can tolerate the annoyance no longer. He has become generally obnoxious to the profession, and the Governors of the Hospital will soon discover that besides doing me injustice they have made a mistake in expecting harmony in the medical staff to result from their action.

The charitable character of the Hospital, it would, perhaps, be out of place to portray now; another occasion will be better; enough, that no one who knows it as I have known it would think of conceding to any man peculiar honor or privilege in grateful recognition of it. The "new part" of the hospital, the great work of Dr. Armsby's genius, is simply a boarding-house for private patients, and, occasionally, for other persons, if it pleases the proper authority.

Those citizens who subscribed, recently, in sums ranging from five dollars upward, thinking in their honesty that they were aiding the poor, parted with their money to build this boarding-house for patients who require no charity, and it remains to be shown that a dime of the money obtained by Dr. Armsby was ever expended for the needy sick.† Nevertheless, this efficient getter of contributions claims distinction, lordship, privilege, and the Governors back him, not because of his superiority as a scholar, a practitioner or a man, but, forsooth, because he has done so much for the Hospital, that is, so much for a boarding-house for his patients! I am confident that while money may be got for such an institution from the treasuries of the State and city, whose donors do not know its nature, the Governors of the Hospital, who do know it, if dying, would hardly yearn to demise a bequest to the institution, as a pious act that might make their coffins easier.

Conversation with the Governors let out other causes of displeasure. I had dared to use the diamond point of my recording pen, where others might have preferred a castigation, in heeding on offense unbecoming a gentlemen. But a greater blame than that existed. The head and front of all my offending was a pamphlet. I had opened the box of Pandora, and evils flew thick around. I had exercised my right of criticism. A thunderbolt was launched from a serene sky, charged to repletion with truth and sternest logic. Then there appeared a seathed and blasted man, with pretense hanging in shreds about him, trying to hide himself away from the light, blazing wherever a pamphlet had fallen, and in banks, and counting-rooms, and parlors he sought shelter, bemoaning "the ingratitude" of his race, and appealing piteously for protection from the terrible "persecution," as he wailed the

† It is said that not one bed has been added to the number intended for the poor, although some \$60,000 has been obtained for the hospital as a charity.

word, of a man who fearlessly proclaimed that, sometimes, *ignorance in a physician is no less culpable than crime.*

Gentlemen who have not read my criticism of a scientific subject or who do not appreciate it, may attempt, in behalf of another, to punish me for exercising the right of judgment and of speaking professionally, but it will not seem judicious to the community to make the attempt in a manner that is unwarranted and unjust, and so compromising to themselves as the recent act of your Board. I am confident that the personal fairness of the individuals composing your Board, who favored this act, must sooner or later cause them regret for the inconsiderateness and precipitancy of their official conduct. But, whether this be so or not, the treatment of me becomes, in my estimation, of little moment, when I find myself sustained professionally, as I do, by medical gentlemen of distinction in different parts of the State, and in language stronger, too, than this, which I quote (using it with permission) from a letter received from Prof. Lewis A. Sayre, M. D., an eminent surgeon of New York city. He writes: "Although an entire stranger, permit me, in the name of an insulted profession, to thank you for your masterly review of the reported case of the late lamented Prof March. * *"

When I read the first report in the presence of several medical gentlemen, all of us expressed our astonishment that there was no one in Albany who could diagnosticate so simple a case. * * Therefore, the necessity for your paper, for you all would certainly suffer in professional reputation without the explanation which your most valuable paper so ably sets forth. Again thanking you for this timely and masterly defense of professional honor and capacity, and proper exposure of professional ignorance, I remain, etc."

All of which is respectfully submitted.

CHARLES A. ROBERTSON, M. D

ERRATA.

Page 18, line 10, for	<i>triumphs</i>	read	<i>trionphes.</i>
" 23, " 28, "	man.	"	man?
" 25, " 30, "	Vanderpool	"	Vanderpoel.
" 38, " 15, "	Mr.	"	Dr.
" 57, " 24, "	bind	"	blind.
" 58, " 24, "	though	"	through.
" 72, " 32, "	any	"	of any.
" 73, " 1, "	facies	"	fancies.
" 78, " 34, "	amputed	"	amputated.

COMMENTS.

FROM THE JOURNAL OF THE GYNÆCOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF BOSTON, FOR MARCH, 1870.

"We had been much interested in comparing Dr. Robertson's criticism at the time it appeared with a certain semi-official MS. in our possession, from another hand, purporting to describe Dr. March's last illness, decease and autopsy. The discrepancies were so obvious that we had anticipated the result that has now taken place. As Dr. R. was formerly a practicing physician in this city, and has many friends among us, we do not hesitate to say a few words concerning his case.

Five years ago, Dr. Robertson, a skilled Ophthalmologist, settled in Albany, with a view to special practice. Having secured the confidence of the profession and the community, he succeeded in effecting the organization of the Albany Eye and Ear Infirmary and in obtaining funds for its maintenance, and, very properly, was elected its Surgeon.

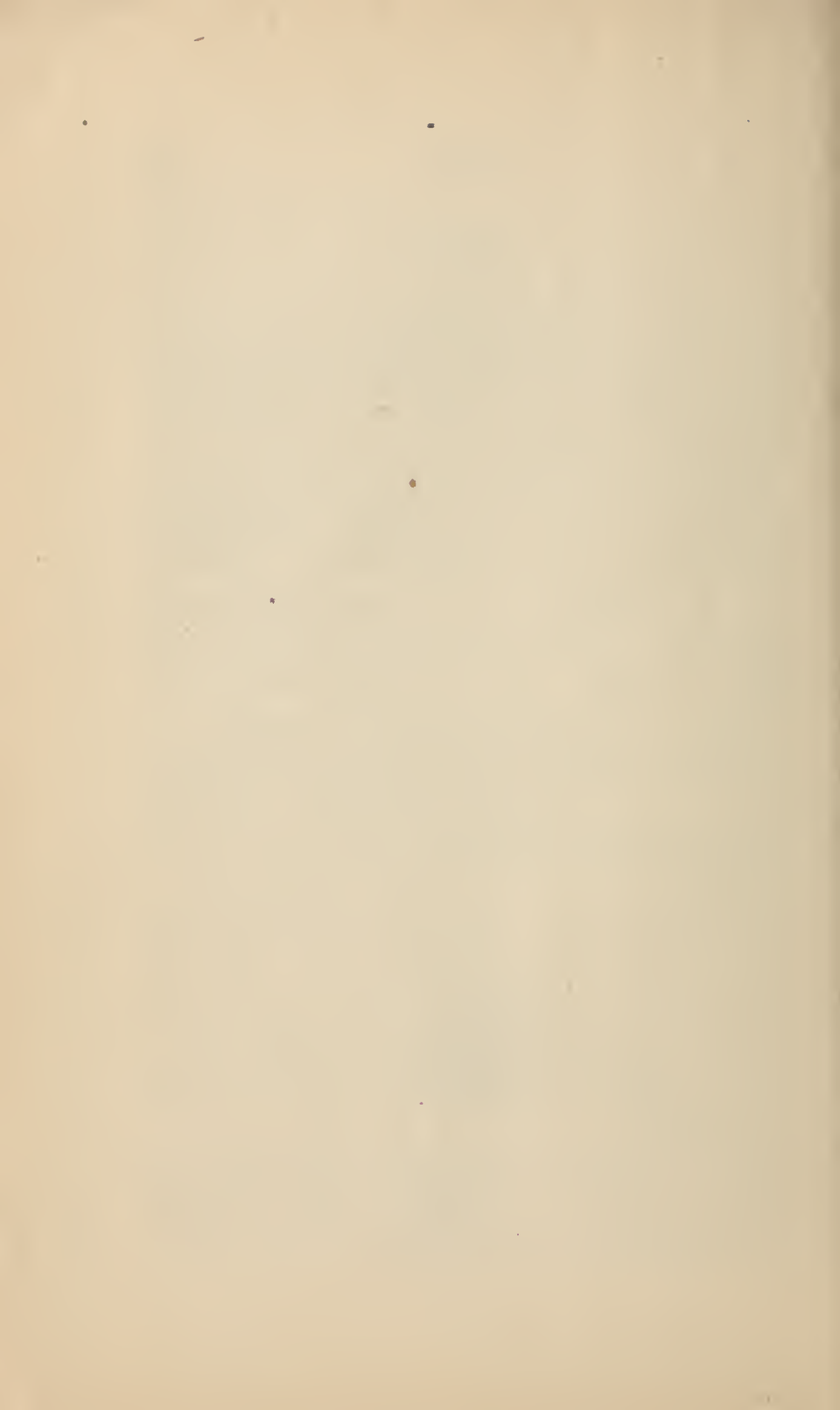
The Albany City Hospital, * * * disliking to see a professional charity existing in its vicinity independent of the sway of its masters, overtures were made for the juncture of the hospital and infirmary, upon certain conditions in favor of the latter, which it is alleged were never honorably carried out.

A member of the College Faculty, who was also one of the hospital attendants, *Dr. Armsby*, took occasion, it is said, to force a quarrel upon *Dr. Robertson*, and to lessen, so far as he might be able, his professional influence. It is charged that *this was done in an underhanded and cowardly way*. Meanwhile *Dr. Alden March*, the great surgeon, died, being attended by *Dr. Armsby*, who immediately took pains to send by print and by letter to those more prominent in the profession, his version of the circumstances of the decease.

Dr. Robertson, in the exercise of what he supposed a right, and on the ground of its scientific character, sharply criticised, in the *New York Medical Journal*, *Dr. Armsby's* report, charging that *Dr. March died from simple unrelieved retention of urine*, and that stereographs of the late surgeon's bladder, copies of which, sent by *Dr. Armsby*, are in the possession of the Gynæcological Society of which *Dr. March* was an honorary member, were got up, so to speak, *for the purpose of covering a fatal error of judgment or neglect*.

For this unpardonable offense his opponent, a member of the College Faculty, while *Dr. Robertson* was simply a subordinate lecturer, has secured his temporary disgrace.

The final result is not yet. An Albany medical friend, uncommitted to either side of the deplorable controversy, writes us that penance "of this kind seems poorly calculated to do *Dr. Robertson* any harm. He has many powerful friends, whom his review seems to have called up. The result of it all will probably be a reconstruction of the College Faculty, or a total break up, and then a second school."



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