

Medical Department of Union University.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF THE

ALBANY MEDICAL COLLEGE.

From Munsell's Historical Collections of Albany, 1867.

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J. MUNSELL, 82 STATE STREET.
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The following sketch is reprinted from Munsell's *Historical Collections of Albany*. Some additional statistics are included in it and it is brought up to the present time.

The history of this Institution illustrates the force of individual effort and enterprise, when encouraged and fostered by an enlightened and liberal community.

The ALBANY MEDICAL COLLEGE was founded by Drs. March and Armsby, with the encouragement and assistance of the citizens of Albany. Dr. Alden March removed to this city from Massachusetts, in 1820. He was the first person who suggested, and took an active part in the enterprise. In 1821 he commenced a course of dissections, and lectures on anatomy, to a class of 14 students. He occupied a small wooden building in Montgomery street, above Columbia, near the Bethel, formerly occupied by the Albany Female Academy. Albany at that time, had a population of 15,000. The prejudice against the dissection of the human body was so strong, that Dr. March was obliged to transport all of his material for demonstration, across the country by land, from Boston. This was attended with great trouble and expense, as he was sometimes obliged to make the journey himself, with a private carriage, to accomplish the object with safety. In 1825 Dr. March was appointed professor of Anatomy and Physiology, in the Vermont Academy of Medicine, at Castleton, which office he held ten years, and was succeeded by Dr. Armsby. Dr. March's private courses were continued during the same time in Albany, where he resided, and was engaged in practice. In 1830 Dr. March delivered a public lecture on the "Propriety of establishing a Medical College and Hospital in Albany." This lecture was published by the class, and excited much interest.

Frequent petitions, numerously signed, were presented to the legislature for an act of incorporation, which met with a determined opposition from persons connected with other medical institutions.

In 1831 Dr. Armsby came to this city, as a student of Dr. March, and became his assistant in the medical school as dissector and demonstrator. Dr. March's reputation as a surgeon and teacher had become eminent and attracted students from all parts of the country. In 1835 Dr. Armsby was associated with Dr. March in his private school, as teacher of Anatomy, while Dr. March confined his instructions to the department of Surgery, giving a very thorough and practical course on Operative Surgery, and Surgical Pathology.

Dr. Armsby continued his connection with the Vermont Academy of Medicine until 1838, at the same time lecturing in Albany, in connection with Dr. March. He then relinquished his connection with Castleton, and devoted his whole time for three years, to aid Dr. March in the permanent establishment of the Albany Medical College.

Dr. Armsby delivered several courses of public lectures, illustrated by dissections of human subjects, in this city, in Troy, and other places which were numerously attended. One course of his lectures delivered in this city in 1837, is worthy of record, as having contributed to awaken an interest in behalf of the College, and to have aided largely in the collection of funds for the establishment of the Institution. It was delivered in Morange's Building, corner of Broadway and Maiden lane, and attended by about 300 persons, including many of our most prominent citizens. At the close of the lectures, complimentary resolutions were passed, and a letter addressed to Dr. Armsby, signed by the following gentlemen, who had attended the course: Greene C. Bronson, Daniel D. Barnard, Gideon Hawley, Erastus Corning, Gerrit Y. Lansing, Friend Humphrey, James Stevenson, John I. Wendell, Israel Williams, John Meads, Robert Boyd, Henry Rector, Amos Dean and many others.

On the 14th of April, 1838, a meeting of citizens was called at the Mansion House, to take steps for the organization of the College. This meeting was attended by Ira

Harris, Robert H. Pruyn, Bradford R. Wood, George Dexter, James Goold, John O. Cole, Thomas McElroy, Drs. March and Armsby, and the late James McKown, Conrad A. Ten Eyck, Samuel Stevens and John Davis. Dr. March stated the object of the meeting. The following resolution was adopted :

Resolved, That this meeting deem it expedient to establish a Medical College in this city, and to endeavor hereafter to obtain an act of incorporation from the legislature.

A committee was appointed to prepare a petition to the legislature, and to obtain the signatures of our citizens. It was prepared and signed by the gentlemen present.

Judge Harris offered the following resolution :

Resolved, That a stock of \$5,000 be created, and a committee appointed to solicit subscriptions to aid in the establishment of the Institution.

Samuel Stevens and George Dexter were appointed a committee to prepare articles of association, and a proper instrument to be signed by those who should subscribe to the fund. A committee was also appointed to apply to the Common Council for the use of the unoccupied Lancaster School Building for the term of five years, for the purposes of the College. The late Teunis Van Vechten was mayor of the city, and James McKown, recorder. Both of these gentlemen were firm friends of the Institution. Mr. Van Vechten was the first president of the Board of Trustees, and held that office until 1851, when he was succeeded by Jared L. Rathbone. Mr. Dexter, who was for several years alderman, gave much time and efficient effort to the enterprise. Professor Amos Dean, who was influential in forming our Young Men's Association, and its first president, was one of the most earnest friends of the College, and Robert H. Pruyn, late U. S. Minister to Japan, then attorney to the Common Council, was one of the most active and energetic collaborators for the Institution.

The second meeting was called May, 1838, and was more numerously attended. A communication from the Common Council granting the free use of the building for five years, was received, and Mr. Stevens was authorized to execute the lease on the part of the College. Mr. Stevens and Mr. Dexter reported articles of association, and the names of the following gentlemen to compose the first Board of Trustees: Daniel D. Barnard (late U. S. Minister at Berlin), Samuel Stevens, John Taylor, Ira Harris, Robert H. Pruyn, Friend Humphrey, Bradford R. Wood (late U. S. Minister to Denmark), James Goold, George Dexter, Thomas McElroy, Wm. Seymour, John O. Cole, John I. Wendell, Conrad A. Ten Eyck, John Davis, Israel Williams, Charles D. Gonld, John Trotter, Arnold Nelson, John Groesbeck, Oliver Steele, and Philip S. Van Rensselaer. A building committee, a committee to prepare by-laws, to solicit subscriptions, and a committee to report the names of suitable persons to compose the faculty, were appointed at this meeting. At the next meeting in May, 1838, Judge Harris reported the names of the following persons to compose the faculty of this College. Alden March, professor of Surgery; James H. Armsby, professor of Anatomy and Physiology; Amos Dean, professor of Medical Jurisprudence; Ebenezer Emmons, professor of Chemistry and Pharmacy; Henry Greene, professor of Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children; David M. McLachlan, professor of Materia Medica. At a subsequent meeting, David M. Reese, of New York, was appointed professor of the Theory and Practice of Medicine. At the next meeting, George Dexter was elected treasurer of the Board of Trustees. Mr. Dexter has held this office thirty-eight years, and attended every meeting of the Board of Trustees to the present time. The improvements on the College building were immediately commenced by Mr. William Boardman.

ORIGINAL EXPENDITURES.

The first expenditures on the building amounted to over \$6,000, and were increased during the next two years to about \$10,000, all of which was cheerfully contributed by our citizens. The late General Stephen Van Rensselaer, then about seventy years of age, contributed \$500, most of the trustees \$100, each; but a large portion was raised in sums of \$10, chiefly through the personal efforts of Dr. Armsby. The names of the donors are inscribed on a tablet in the museum.

In May, 1841, the legislature made an appropriation of \$15,000 for the building, museum, apparatus and library. This was secured mainly through the personal efforts of Dr. Armsby. In July, Dr. Armsby was elected by the trustees curator of the museum, which office he held, in charge of the museum, until his resignation and the appointment of Dr. Henry March in 1869. In 1844, the College received further aid from the state to the extent of \$5,000 to be spent also for the building, museum apparatus and library, and in 1849, the state made a further grant of \$1,000 for the Albany Medical College, making in all \$31,000 raised for the establishment of the College, by the citizens of Albany and state appropriation.

MUSEUM.

The improvements on the building were completed in September, 1838, and the museum thrown open to the public, in November following. Drs. March and Armsby contributed all their anatomical collections to the museum, many of which remain to-day as fresh and perfect as when first displayed to the public. Dr. March's collections commenced with his professional career, and formed quite an extensive museum when the college opened. He added to it from year to year, until it became the most extensive private collection ever made in this country.

When the specimens had all been arranged for exhibition, the museum was thrown open to the public and for several months was crowded with curious and interested visitors. It has been kept open to the public ever since, without harm to the specimens, or injury to the building, and has done much to dispel the prejudice, which has so long existed against the dissection and preservation of the human body for purposes of medical instruction. By constant and unremitting efforts of the faculty, this museum has become the most extensive and valuable in the United States, and is excelled by few in Europe. Dr. March during a surgical practice of almost half a century, more extensive and varied than that of any other surgeon in the country, accumulated an immense collection of the most rare and valuable specimens of disease, which were prepared and preserved at his own expense for the benefit of the College, and which, with his museum, was bequeathed to the Institution.

Dr. Armsby resided in the College during the first three years, and devoted his whole time industriously to the increase and arrangement of the specimens. Drs. March and Armsby made repeated visits to Europe, each time bringing home numerous additions to the museum. Professor McNaughton's valuable collection, made during twenty years of teaching in the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Western New York, are all deposited in this museum. The collections of Professors March, Armsby and McNaughton have been left permanently in the Institution, as invaluable legacies to science and posterity.

The first course of public lectures in the College commenced on the 3d of January, 1839, to a class of fifty-seven students. The College had no charter, and no power to confer degrees, and found determined opposition from other colleges in the state, and from most of the physicians of this city. But the citizens of Albany sustained the enterprise, and united heartily with the trustees and faculty, in securing an act of incorporation from the legislature. The first Saturday of the term, Dr. March inaugurated his new and admirable plan of holding surgical clinics in the College, and presented to the class a large number of cases requiring surgical operations and treatment. This new feature in medical education, introduced by Dr. March, has been universally adopted by medical institutions throughout the country and is still continued. Many thousand important cases have been presented and treated at these clinics, which are still

continued at the College, although both medical and surgical clinics are held regularly at the City Hospital. All indigent persons who present themselves for surgical treatment are attended free of charge.

During the first few years of the College, Dr. Armsby, and Mr. Dean delivered evening lectures to the public in the anatomical theatre, which were numerous attended, and created a lively interest in behalf of the Institution. These lectures were attended by our leading citizens, by members of the legislature, and by strangers sojourning in Albany. They aided much in securing the charter and the subsequent appropriations from the legislature. After the act of incorporation was obtained, the trustees confirmed the election of the faculty, and, on their recommendation, appointed the following medical gentlemen curators, to attend the annual examination of the candidates for the degree of Doctor of Medicine: Peter Wendell, Platt Williams, Barent P. Staats, Thomas C. Brinsmade, of Troy, and Samuel White, of Hudson.

The first annual commencement of the Albany Medical College was held on the 24th of April, 1839, and the degree of Doctor of Medicine was conferred on thirteen young gentlemen, students of the College. In June following, Professor Greene resigned the office of professor of Obstetrics, and Gunning S. Bedford, of New York city, was appointed in his place, and Thomas Hun of this city, was appointed professor of the Institutes of Medicine.

In March, 1840, Professors Reese and Bedford resigned their professorships, and were succeeded by Professor James McNaughton, in the department of the Theory and Practice of Medicine, and Professor Emmons, transferred from the chair of Chemistry to that of Obstetrics, and Lewis C. Beck was appointed to the chair of Chemistry. At the same meeting Andrew Kirk and John I. Wendell resigned the office of trustee, and Archibald McIntyre and Ezra P. Prentice were appointed. Mr. Prentice declined the office, and Isaiah Townsend was appointed.

In February, 1841, John O. Cole resigned, and was succeeded by Jared L. Rathbone; Israel Williams resigned and was succeeded by J. V. L. Pruyn. In 1841 Professor McLachlan resigned, and was succeeded by Professor T. Romeyn Beck, in the department of *Materia Medica*.

In February, 1842, Peter Wendell and Samuel White, having resigned the office of curator, Peter McNaughton and James P. Boyd were appointed in their places. June, 1845, James Taylor was elected trustee in the place of Jared L. Rathbone, deceased, and Daniel Fry and Orlando Meads in place of J. V. L. Pruyn and Archibald McIntyre,

resigned. July, 1845, Daniel D. Barnard was elected president of the Board of Trustees, in place of Jared L. Rathbone, deceased. December, 1846, Joel A. Wing was appointed curator in place of Platt Williams, resigned. October, 1847, Amasa J. Parker was elected trustee in place of John Davis, deceased. On the 12th of October, 1850, Daniel D. Barnard, having been appointed Minister of the United States to Prussia, resigned the office of president, and Greene C. Bronson was elected in his place. At the same meeting Henry H. Martin and W. W. Forsyth were elected trustees, in place of Daniel Fry and Arnold Nelson, deceased. Judge Bronson declined the office of president, as he was about leaving the city, and Judge Ira Harris, late United States Senator, was appointed president of the Board of Trustees, which he remained till his death in 1874, when he was succeeded by Amasa J. Parker. At the same meeting John F. Rathbone and Watts Sherman were elected trustees, in place of Greene C. Bronson and William P. Van Rensselaer, resigned.

In September, 1852, Professor Emmons resigned the chair of Obstetrics, and Howard Townsend was elected in his place. Professor Townsend was a graduate of the College, and had enjoyed the advantages of European hospital practice and study. He was unwearied in his duties to the College. In 1852, Isaiah Townsend resigned as trustee, and Franklin Townsend was elected in his place.

In 1852, the College suffered a great loss in the death of Lewis C. Beck. Ezra S. Carr was appointed in his place. In November, 1853, T. Romeyn Beck resigned the chair of professor of Materia Medica, and Professor Townsend was appointed to this chair also continuing in the chair of Obstetrics. June, 1854, Professors March and Beck were elected trustees in place of James Taylor and Friend Humphrey, deceased. Thomas W. Olcott was elected in place of Watts Sherman, resigned, and E. E. Kendrick in place of John Groesbeck.

In December, 1854, Robert H. Pruyn was elected secretary of the Board of Trustees. June, 1855, Howard Town-

send resigned as professor of Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children, and J. V. P. Quackenbush was elected to that chair. Professor Quackenbush was a graduate of the College, and was a popular and efficient teacher, and practitioner. Dr. Townsend remained as professor of *Materia Medica*. June, 1856, U. G. Bigelow was elected curator. June, 1857, Charles H. Porter was elected professor of Chemistry, in place of Professor Carr, resigned. In 1859, Professor Dean, who had been connected with the Institution since its organization, resigned his professorship in the College, and was elected trustee. When the war commenced Professor Porter entered the United States service, his place was temporarily supplied by George H. Barker, who delivered two very acceptable courses of lectures. In 1864, Jacob S. Mosher, a graduate of the College, was appointed professor of Chemistry and Medical Jurisprudence.

In 1859 Dr. Hun resigned and Dr. Townsend was appointed to the chair of Physiology, in connection with his other professorship of *Materia Medica*. He remained in charge of these departments until his death in January, 1867. His death was a great loss to the College and was felt as such for a long time. After his death Dr. John V. Lansing was elected professor of *Materia Medica*. Dr. James E. Pomfret, a graduate of the College and at the time surgeon general of the state, was elected professor of Physiology, and Dr. S. O. Vanderpoel was elected professor of General Pathology and Clinical Medicine.

In 1868, Dr. Thomas Hun was elected emeritus professor of Institutes of Medicine and Amos Dean emeritus professor of Medical Jurisprudence. Professor Dean died the next year.

On the death of Dr. March, in 1869, Dr. Armsby was elected to the chair of Principles and Practice of Surgery : Dr. Henry R. Haskins to the chair of Surgical and De-

scriptive Anatomy and Dr. Albert Vanderveer to that of General and Special Anatomy.

Professor Pomfret died in 1868, and Dr. Lansing was appointed to the chair of Physiology.

In 1870, Dr. Mosher resigned and Dr. Maurice Perkins was elected professor of Chemistry and Toxicology. The same year Dr. Vanderpoel resigned and Dr. Lansing was elected to the chair of Clinical Medicine in connection with Physiology. On the resignation of Dr. Quackenbush, Dr. Edmund R. Peaslee was elected professor of the Diseases of Women, and Dr. William P. Seymour professor of Obstetrics and Diseases of Children.

The same year were elected Dr. John M. Bigelow, professor of Materia Medica and Dr. George T. Stevens, Ophthalmic and Orthopedic Surgery, and Dr. Meredith Clymer, professor of Diseases of the Nervous System and of the Mind, and in 1871 President Ira Harris was announced as professor of Medical Jurisprudence.

In 1874, on the death of Dr. McNaughton the following was the arrangement of faculty :

Dr. Armsby, president of faculty and professor of Principles and Practice of Surgery and Clinical Surgery ; John V. Lansing, Prof. of Theory and Practice of Medicine and Clinical Medicine ; William P. Seymour, professor of Obstetrics and Diseases of Women ; Henry R. Haskins, professor of Anatomy ; George T. Stevens, professor of Physiology and Ophthalmology ; Maurice Perkins, professor of Chemistry and Toxicology ; Willis G. Tucker, lecturer on Materia Medica and assistant professor of Chemistry ; William Hailes, lecturer on Pathological Anatomy ; Henry March, curator of the Museum.

In 1875 Dr. Armsby died, and a re-arrangement of the faculty was made. Dr. John V. P. Quackenbush was elected to the professorship of Obstetrics, in which he had for many years previously served the College well.

He died June 8th, 1876, and since then the chairs of Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children have been united. Drs. Lansing and Stevens declined to serve after their election to the faculty by the trustees, and since their resignations the following is the present faculty :

Eliphalet Nott Potter, D.D., President of the University; Amasa J. Parker, LL.D., President of the Board of Trustees; Thomas Hun, M.D., Dean of the Faculty, and emeritus professor of the Institutes of Medicine; S. O. Vanderpoel, professor of Theory and Practice, and Clinical Medicine; John Swinburne, professor of Fractures and Dislocations and Clinical Surgery; Albert Vanderveer, professor of the Principles and Practice of Surgery; Jacob S. Mosher, registrar, and professor of Medical Jurisprudence and Hygiene; Maurice Perkins, professor of Chemical Philosophy and Organic Chemistry; John M. Bigelow, professor of Materia Medica and Therapeutics; Lewis Balch, professor of Anatomy; Samuel B. Ward, professor of Surgical Pathology and Operative Surgery; John P. Gray, professor of Psychological Medicine; Edward R. Hun, professor of Diseases of the Nervous System; James P. Boyd, Jr., professor of Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children; Willis G. Tucker, professor of Inorganic and Analytical Chemistry; William Hailes, professor of Histology and Pathological Anatomy; Cyrus S. Merrill, professor of Ophthalmology; Harrison E. Webster, lecturer on Physiology; Henry March, curator of the Museum; Eugene Van Slyke, demonstrator of Anatomy.

Trustees : president, Amasa J. Parker; vice-president, Robert H. Pruyn; treasurer and secretary, George Dexter; Thomas W. Olcott, Bradford R. Wood, Henry H. Martin, Samuel H. Ransom, Isaac W. Vosburgh, Erastus D. Palmer, Charles B. Lansing, Joseph H. Ramsey, Thomas McElroy, E. N. Potter, Orlando Meads, John F. Rathbone,

George B. Steele, C. Van Benthuyzen, A. Van Santvoord, Albion Ransom, Clarence Rathbone, S. O. Shepard, J. M. Crapo, W. F. Allen, S. O. Vanderpoel, Mayor and Recorder, *Ex-officio*.

Dr. March was president of the faculty and professor of Surgery from the establishment of the Institution, to the time of his death in 1869, and Dr. Armsby was professor of Anatomy and curator of the museum, till same date. After Dr. March's death Dr. McNaughton succeeded him as president and when the office became vacant by his death in 1875 Dr. Armsby was elected president until his death in 1875. In the re-arrangement in 1876, Dr. Thomas Hun was elected president and the title changed to dean of the faculty, owing to the permanent consolidation of the Albany Medical College and Union College of Schenectady with the other institutions that make up Union University, Dr. Potter being president of the University.

Dr. Armsby was the first registrar of the faculty, and held the office until July, 1842, when he was succeeded by Dr. Hun. Dr. Hun held the office of registrar until 1853, and was succeeded by Dr. Townsend. Dr. Townsend resigned the office of registrar in 1856, on account of a contemplated tour to Europe, and Dr. Quackenbush was appointed in his place. Dr. Quackenbush resigned in 1865, and Dr. Mosher was appointed, who resigned in 1870 when Dr. Lansing was appointed and he was succeeded in 1876 by Dr. Mosher, the present registrar.

About eighty public courses of lectures have been delivered in the College; including spring courses. Two hundred and forty-three graduates of this College were in the United States service as volunteer surgeons, or as commissioned officers, during the late war. About 4,000 students have attended lectures in the College and about 1500 have been graduated, who are in every part of the world, and whose active interest in the institution keeps up its regular attendance of students.

UNION UNIVERSITY.

In 1873, by suitable legislation, the College became a part of the Union University, thus more effectually accomplishing the object of its founders by combining the advanced grades of educational institutions which are in this vicinity, including the Law School, the Dudley Observatory, the School of Civil Engineering at Schenectady and Union College, in one extensive, and if successful in the future while acting together, as they have been in the past acting

separately, the most powerful and valuable educational interest in this country.

The curators of the College, medical gentlemen who are present and take part in the annual examinations of candidates for the degree of Doctor of Medicine the last day of the session, are: J. P. Boyd, S. H. Freeman, A. M. Vedder, of Schenectady, H. B. Whiton, of Troy, J. D. Featherstonhaugh, Cohoes.

The College building has recently been painted and improved; the museum is one of the most extensive and valuable in the country. It was much enlarged by a great variety of casts, models, specimens and photographs, illustrating the results of military surgery — the collections of Dr. Armsby, while in charge of the late United States Army General Hospital in this city. The library numbers about five thousand volumes of rare and valuable medical books. The working laboratory is well supplied with apparatus for the use of students, many of whom avail themselves of opportunities to pursue practical chemistry, by a regular course of experiments and manipulations. Chemistry is here taught as practical anatomy is, in the dissecting room. The student takes a laboratory ticket and devotes a portion of his time to the preparation of medical compounds, and to testing the purity of medicines; to the analysis of blood, urine, and the detection of poisons, and to all the numerous applications of chemistry to medicine and jurisprudence.

Surgical and medical clinics are given regularly in the College and Hospital during the term, and a large number of surgical operations are performed, and interesting cases presented.

Most of the faculty of the College have made repeated visits to Europe and enjoyed the opportunities afforded in European schools and hospitals.

Two other noble and flourishing institutions of Albany, the Law School, and the Observatory, owe their existence to the enterprise and personal effort of those who founded

this College. Professor Amos Dean, for twenty years professor of Medical Jurisprudence in this College, was the principal manager of the Law School, until his death in 1868, supported ably by his eminent colleagues, Hon. Ira Harris, and Hon. Amasa J. Parker, all three of whom were trustees of this College. The College is one of the oldest, and most honored institutions in our city. It is only surpassed in age by our Female, and our Boys' Academy, both of which have celebrated their semi-centennial anniversaries.