Abstract from the Transactions of the Maine Medical Association, June, 1867

Maine Medical Association

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistory

Part of the History Commons

This Monograph is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Maine History Documents by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.
ABSTRACT

FROM THE TRANSACTIONS

OF THE

MAINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION,

JUNE, 1867.

Stephen Berry, Printer, 1721-2 Fore St., Portland.
APPEAL.

The Committee on Publication have had the matter of publishing the Transactions under consideration, and feel the importance of having the valuable papers and discussions before each member of the Association in book form. Still, just at this time, they see the greater necessity of bringing to the notice of every physician in the State the suggestions so strongly and truthfully urged by the President in his Inaugural Address; and therefore, we place before you everything pertaining to the fulfilment of those suggestions, in this present form, and would make our appeal in their behalf, reserving the full transactions to some later period, or until we may be placed in a situation in which our published transactions shall be worthy of their valuable contents.

The importance of those suggestions will commend them to every physician as he reads the Address, nor do they need from us any urging. But we feel that in order to arouse the Profession in the State, we must make the appeal personal, so that each physician will constitute himself a separate committee, to aid in consummating these objects. This is to be attained only in one way, namely, through the members of the Legislature; so that when our committees present—as they will—their various petitions, the Legislature will be ready to hear them, having
had their minds prepared for the appeal, by the physicians throughout the State.

The wants of the profession; as will be stated to the Legislature, are patent to every medical man; but to the physicians we particularly urge this subject, that they may instruct and advise with their Representatives; that they also may see what our wants are, and as we hope give us what we ask and so much need.

The good physician as he makes his quiet unostentatious rounds feels more than he utters, sees more than he expresses. The judicious management of those individuals whose life has not been in sunny places, watered by affluence and ease, requires when sickness overtakes them, something more than a mere prescription from the Doctor. They want warm apartments, good and healthful nourishment, and kind intelligent nursing. These, their scanty means cannot obtain; and the world, if not always cold, is sometimes indifferent. Then must they, whose means are ample, lend of their substance, and make glad the lonely heart, and warm the cheerless hearth-stone. Who better than the physician sees all this? Who better than the physician to make the appeal?

Therefore, when we ask for the establishment of a State Hospital, are we seeking to ameliorate the sufferings of the unfortunate, and make to rejoice those enfeebled by disease. What nobler monument could be raised to perpetuate the virtue of a people, than an institution like this? Where could the legislator's right of suffrage be more gloriously manifest, than in giving his vote for the erection of such an edifice?

The conscientious physician knows full well the requirements necessary to make him skilled among the skilful. The study of disease, the knowledge of surgery, and the properly using such knowledge and skill, must be obtained from the study of anatomy, and upon the dead subject. Our means in this direc-
tion now are wholly without the spirit and letter of the law; all material that we obtain, subjects us to penalties. This is wholly wrong; and in order that those coming after us may be fitted to take the responsibility of caring for the sick, without being trammeled in their studies and investigations, we again make our appeal through the physicians to the Representatives, that they, seeing our wants, may place us in a position similar to those in other States; that is, legalize dissections. We are amenable to the law if we err in our treatment in practice; and if we use the means requisite to make us adepts in our profession we are likewise amenable to law, and must suffer the penalty. That portion of the Address we commend to your consideration, and believe that the exertions you may make with the Representatives in your section of the State will not be without its influence when the subject comes before them.

It is now fifteen years since a few of the Profession met together and formed the Maine Medical Association. Since that time it has advanced in numbers and influence, until now it ranks with similar Societies in other States, and is an honor to the Profession. The suggestions relative to our Transactions made in the address, are timely and correct; that is, the expense attending their publication should be borne by the State. The transactions are contributions from its members, of cases which they have had in their practice. Meeting together each year for discussion, they are anxious that those of their brethren unable to attend may have the benefit of these gatherings; they can do so only by receiving a copy of said transactions. We desire that our reports shall be published as heretofore, but at the expense of the State. This is the custom in other States; it should be so in ours.

We now submit our appeal, and ask your attention to the wants of our profession, alluded to here, and fully set forth in
the accompanying Address. We trust that no exertion of your own will be neglected, in order fully to inform the Representatives of what we need; and hope the influence you will exert will bring to us the ultimate success, which by perseverance must be obtained.

GEO. H. CHADWICK,
I. T. DANA,
GILMAN DAVEIS,
GEO. L. GOODALE,

Committee.
INAUGURAL ADDRESS

By S. H. Tewksbury, M. D., President.

Gentlemen of the Association:

This meeting constitutes the fifteenth annual session in the history of our Association; and as we are assembled once more to commemorate and make another year's history of our Society, amid congratulations and words of cheer for our mutual social and professional benefit, we cannot but lift up our hearts in gratitude, that we are thus permitted to meet again, and re-dedicate ourselves to the service of the medical profession.

During the past year we have been signally blessed, that so few of our number have been disqualified from their useful labors by sickness, and have felt so lightly the fell destroyer's hand. With grateful hearts for the blessings we have received, we start upon the duties of another year, refreshed and strengthened by this review.

We meet to-day, not merely for the renewal of congratulations, but to subserve, in the best and purest manner we can, the good of our Society, for the cause of professional truth. I therefore welcome, and invite you all to participate in its duties and pleasures in that appropriate, becoming manner, that we may proudly bear them as offerings upon the common altar of our beloved profession.
During the few moments that I shall occupy your attention this morning, I propose to offer for your consideration some suggestions of a practical nature—calling for definite action on the part of the Association—to promote the usefulness of the Medical Profession in this State.

The condition of our Society at the present time, in its relation to the progress and welfare of the medical profession, is evidently more favorable than at any former period since its organization; and the early founders could hardly have anticipated that it would have met with the success that it now so deservedly enjoys, emanating as it did from so small and doubtful a beginning. It had the good fortune, however, to be started by good earnest men, and to annually receive that support, by the addition of members in whom the community and the profession at large had the greatest confidence—who have watched over it and cared for its welfare with increasing solicitude.

Witnesses then, as we are now permitted to be, to the steady, solid growth of our Society—that has worked its way onward, gaining a favorable recognition among other Societies, and is admitted to be one of the established, organized Institutions of the State—who of us does not remember with gratitude its early founders, or dwells upon the first meeting of our Society with other than the happiest recollections? Who of us does not feel that when he became a member to fulfil a noble and worthy purpose, it was an honored period in his professional career?

As the principle of professional contact and association has been so thoroughly tested, in its power to elevate and develop the character of our profession, in all ages in the history of the world, it is deeply to be regretted that so large a proportion as two-thirds of all of the members of the medical profession that are now practising medicine and surgery in this State have no voice in this representative body. There are now practising in this State over six hundred physicians, that are regular
graduates of medicine, in a population of more than six hundred thousand inhabitants, scattered over a territory of over thirty thousand square miles, and where they necessarily, from their isolated locations, have but little or no intercourse with each other—yet only a little over two hundred of this number are members of this Association. I hold it to be, with a medical man who has the opportunity, not a matter of choice, but of duty to himself and his profession, and especially to those under his care, that he be a member of a medical association. Intercourse with those engaged in the same pursuit, whose objects are alike, and whose training and education have been similar, cannot but tend to maintain active in us that interest which otherwise would flag, and keep alive that spirit of investigation which ought always to animate us. It has now come to be a general rule, as well in the eyes of the discriminating public as in our own, that he and he only is the respectable physician, who not only acknowledges allegiance and fidelity to some form of professional association, but who takes an active part and interest in the proceedings of such organizations. The man who now holds a diploma from some Medical College merely for the purpose of the name of an M. D. or some professional protection or endorsement, is a marked man, not only in the profession, but in the eye of the public. It is known in the community, who are present at our meetings, and what part they take in them, and how they are regarded by their professional brethren. The time has gone by, when a man can attain eminence in any profession, or command the respect of any community, without hard study and close application; and he who by his attainments is entitled to respect, is as irresistibly drawn into association with men of kindred tastes, as are particles of matter by the laws of attraction.

It is hardly possible to exaggerate or over-estimate the importance of a society like the one with which we are associated. Apart from the great advantages resulting from the frequent
meetings of medical men, it has other and perhaps higher claims for our consideration and support. We meet here for the promotion of one common object,—the noble and exalted pursuit of truth, to advance our knowledge of the most efficient means for arresting the march of disease, to alleviate suffering, and promote the duration of human life. This is the ostensible, the great, the exclusive object of all our meetings and discussions. It is the spirit of our fraternity, the sole bond of our union. In consideration then, of the beneficial influence resulting to the Medical Profession and the Public by our associated labors, it is the duty of this society, by all of the means in its power, to bring the physicians of our State, that are now destitute of its advantages, more largely under its influence. I would therefore advise that some plan may be adopted to accomplish this most desirable object. I would also advocate as one of the means and inducements to bring more of the profession into the Association, the formation of a Pathological Museum; at least lay the foundation for such a collection, and let there be appointed a curator, who is responsible, to receive and take the proper care of all of the specimens he can collect and that may be sent him. I believe that such a collection could be made at a very trifling expense if heartily engaged in by the members of our society, and that it would steadily grow and be of permanent value to the profession and the State. Every contributor to the collection would have a personal interest in it, and thus our meetings would be visited with new attractions every year. They would call forth communications and essays that would give our annual transactions an interest which would attract the attention of physicians that were not members in the State, and the profession everywhere.

I desire now to call the attention of the Association, very briefly, to a duty we owe the public through the medium of the Legislature. I believe the time has now arrived that the efficiency and usefulness of our Society can be greatly advanced by a more inti-
mate connection, in some semi-official manner, with the Legislature of our State, at least in an advisory sense, as far as possible, to be exercised in the selection of health officers, and in all of those matters pertaining to sanitary regulations and public hygiene. Knowledge on these subjects can only be had from medical men, from their observation, and from their testimony. The age in which we live demands that this knowledge should be gathered from scientific men and scientific bodies, and not from charlatans. And when thus obtained, it should govern all legislative and legal action. And I further declare that it is the bounden duty of all legislators to accept as final our decisions on all hygienic matters, and abide and act upon such decisions. In return it is important for us, and our duty, that we should, individually and collectively, express our wishes and convictions on all sanitary matters, and also our own necessary public wants, and take those initiative measures that are for the health and welfare of the community, and impress them both upon the people and the representatives of their will; for in no other way can we have those wants and demands enforced by authoritative action. We should, however, exercise great care to exclude all action on measures that are designed, directly or indirectly, to advance merely personal or local interests, or to favor any political purposes. Neither should we give an expression of opinion with a purpose to influence legislation in regard to questions on which the scientific world is yet unsettled. The vote of a majority does not settle a scientific question; a minority may be in the right.

In consideration of these facts, and for the purpose of effecting this important mission,—due from our profession to the State,—and at the same time to secure to ourselves those privileges to which we are entitled, I would suggest the propriety of an extra session of our Association, to be held at Augusta sometime during the meeting of the next legislature, that we may there be enabled, through the combined influence of the
profession and the committees that may be selected by this Association to represent us, to plead for those reforms that we deem are essential for our well being and the good of the public. I commend this subject for your consideration and action.

At the thirteenth Annual Session of our Association it was voted that the President and Secretary be authorized to petition to the legislature in behalf of the Association that vaccination be made compulsory. A petition was accordingly presented, but no action was taken upon it that resulted in any benefit.

The attention of the legislature should be again drawn to this subject, and be furnished with such an array of facts that will convince them that stringent legislation was necessary to prevent the spread of this loathsome and dangerous disease. Small-pox is almost constantly in existence in some portion of our State, more so than any other of the New England or Middle States, and the present law gives no adequate power to prevent its spreading over the land. It must also be remembered by those engaged in preparing legislative measures concerning vaccination, that it is as necessary for the extinction of small pox, that re-vaccination should be compulsory as that vaccination should be required in the first instance; for it is a well recognized fact that a first vaccination is ineffectual in warding off small pox, after a certain period. Here is an evident blot in our sanitary legislation. It will therefore be a good and useful work to fill the void by a simple and sensible enactment.

There is another movement in the progress of the times, which challenges our deepest interest, both on account of its professional bearings, and the singular blessings that will flow to humanity from its success. It therefore gives me the highest pleasure to call your attention to this new and important undertaking, whether considered in its relation to science or the benefits that will be extended to suffering humanity. Since the
Christian religion has swayed the movements of civilized man, provision for the afflicted and suffering has always been regarded as the first social duty, and no form of public beneficence has been more generously acknowledged, as a humane and religious obligation, than the establishment and endowment of hospitals. And the humanity of a people has always been estimated by the number and character of these charities. I need not remind you of the honor and utility other States have derived from establishments of this nature in our own wide spread Republic. The profession are all aware that a General Hospital is needed in this State, and that there are hundreds within its borders that go out of the State for surgical operations and hospital relief that have the means to make this expenditure, while there are very many more that are passing weary days and nights of agony, debarred by poverty from receiving medical and surgical aid, and for whom no shelter is provided. It not only claims our utmost efforts, but it claims encouragement from all wise and good men, on grounds of positive and practical advantage and necessity. There is no object where the man of wealth can more judiciously bequeath his surplus fortune. When he aids in building these structures in his own time, he becomes the witness of his own monumental structure, that will carry the name of its munificent founder down from century to century, keeping it ever fresh in the minds of men. And night or day as he walks the streets, in the midst of pleasure or duty, he enjoys the proud consciousness that that living monument is laboring for the good of man. And while we are projecting this enterprise for our own immediate use, to subserve all of the purposes of the present generation, we must not be unmindful of the claims posterity has upon us. A hospital intended for all classes of disease, must not be regarded as only a refuge for the sick and afflicted, but a store-house for the accumulation of knowledge, and that kind of knowledge on which we are all dependent, and which is so indispensable to
make our sympathies available for the relief of human suffering. Let this Association then, at this meeting, foreshadow the policy that is to guide our future action. Let us take the preliminary steps with the endorsement of the whole profession, under the direction of a special committee, to plead the cause of this noble enterprise and lay the subject before the legislature of the State and invoke their aid in its behalf. Were our object a sectional or a contracted one, this movement might seem to us appalling and impracticable, but our appeal is addressed to every society and every man and woman in the State. For the good to humanity and for the honor to science let there radiate from this assembled body such an influence as shall move the legislature, and the hearts of wealthy and liberal men, to contribute what lies in their power to aid in the establishment of this noble and benevolent enterprise.

There is one other subject to which it is proper your attention should be called; and it is one, the importance of which, in its connection with the material prosperity of our profession, is a matter of surprise, that it does not enlist more earnestly the efforts of its members. I refer to the oppressive situation in which the Medical Profession of this State are placed by our laws, relative to the means that are afforded for procuring material for the study of anatomy and surgery—laws that repress and put a barrier in the way that is almost ruinous to the pursuit of anatomical investigation, and continually threaten and expose us to the most disgraceful impositions and punishments. At the Medical College of our State where anatomy and surgery are required to be taught,—and the public demands that it should furnish good and accomplished physicians and surgeons—yet the latter sets its face against the only means of obtaining them. Not a single subject can be procured for the use of this institution, without violating law. Our State Statute barely permits the use of them, and says, "Any physician, surgeon or medical student may have in his possession or use human
bodies or parts thereof, lawfully obtained, for anatomical investigation, &c." Now we know and these law-makers know, that subjects cannot be lawfully obtained in this State from another State of this Union; for in those States where subjects are furnished by law, for dissection, a provision is made, which declares "that whoever shall remove such remains beyond the limits of the State, shall on conviction be adjudged guilty of criminal offence, and shall be imprisoned in one of the State prisons for a term not less than one year."

Our State policy, therefore, sanctions, upholds and even protects us in the commission of a crime in another State, that is in that State felony and punishable by imprisonment. Again, on one page of our Statute books, the practising physician is made liable for all damages to life or limb arising directly or indirectly from his want of knowledge or skill. On another page, if he seeks that knowledge and skill by the only means that the State affords him, he is made a felon. A man sues a physician for damages, under a suit of malpractice, and the Courts punish him for what the State has done. So the State first compels him to be a poor anatomist and a bungling surgeon—then compels him to be fined!

What kind of legislation do you call this? You may take all of the accumulated and ponderous volumes of your statute and common law, and you cannot find another so absurd and ridiculous a parallel! There is not a class of men in the community, in their calling, and in the pursuit of knowledge, that are encumbered and weighed down by the same kind of oppression and legal bondage. Why should there be this partiality—this legal distinction—and why should it longer continue? The fault is not all with the people. It is in a great measure with ourselves. The medical profession exercises a commanding influence over the masses of the people in matters of this kind; no autocrat exercises more absolute power than a good physician in the line of his profession, among those
with whom he lives and moves, and to him are we to look for the diffusion of correct views.

The benefits to be derived from some wise enactment, will not be denied; but the attempt to establish it will be assailed, and all means to embarrass its proper workings will be invented by political parties, who are always so scrupulous and timid on matters of this nature. It is therefore the duty of the medical man to be ready at all times to stand up manfully as the body-guard of this policy, and repel all of the unreasonable assaults and interferences that are made by demagogues, and roll back all of those reactionary feelings that are produced by motives so impure.

A responsibility rests upon us, as a class; and this subject should receive the serious consideration of every member of our fraternity throughout the State. The voice of reason, the claims of humanity, the dictates of wise legislation, all demand a reformation and the establishment of an enlightened policy; that we may be enabled to enjoy those privileges that are extended to the profession in other States.

I do therefore earnestly recommend that this Society adopt and put into operation some measure by which such a privilege and power shall be secured to us. There are other topics that should properly come before you, but I should encroach too much upon your time, should I detain you longer. I will however barely allude to one of them. I have reference to the adoption of some means whereby our Annual Transactions may be published at the expense of the State, as it is customary to be done in many other States. All of the Educational and Agricultural reports are published in this way, and there can be no good possible reason why ours should not be classed with them.

In conclusion then, Gentlemen, as as we love our profession and delight to honor the names of those that have contributed so much to enrich its history, let us all cordially unite as fellow
laborers in the great work that is before us, remembering that as our duties are mutual, they are alike binding, and cannot be neglected and we remain blameless.

If the few remarks that I have made upon the several subjects that have been presented should elicit any initiative thoughts or measures which would by future developments lead to results so glorious as the perfection of any of these enterprises or improvements that have been proposed, I shall feel myself in part released from the debt of obligation I owe, and the proud satisfaction that one more advanced step has been made in harmony with the spirit of the age, in that profession we so much delight to labor and to honor.
ABSTRACT.

After the close of the President’s Address, on motion of Dr. Dana, of Portland, it was

Voted, That a committee of three be appointed by the Chair, to consider and report upon the practical suggestions contained in the President’s Address; and said committee be empowered to nominate sub-committees upon the separate topics, if deemed advisable.

The Chair appointed Drs. Dana, of Portland, Snow, of Winthrop, and Weston, of Bangor, that committee.

Dr. Dana, Chairman of said committee, reported strongly in favor of carrying out those suggestions, and nominated the following sub-committees on the different subjects:—

COMPULSORY VACCINATIONS.

Drs. B. F. Buxton...............Warren,
   A. P. Snow...............Winthrop,
   A. H. Burbank...........Lewiston.

ANATOMICAL BILL.

Drs. S. H. Tewksbury.............Portland,
   T. A. Foster..............Portland,
S. C. Gordon .................. Portland,
A. C. Hamlin .................. Bangor,
E. F. Sanger .................. Bangor,
T. H. Brown .................. Paris,
T. H. Jewett .................. South Berwick,
I. Putnam ...................... Bath,
A. J. Billings ................ Freedom,
George E. Brickett .......... Augusta,
J. D. Lincoln ................. Brunswick.

PATHOLOGICAL MUSEUM.

Drs. G. H. Chadwick .......... Portland,
A. C. Hamlin .................. Bangor,
T. L. Estabrook ............... Rockland.

To this committee was also referred the subject of publishing the Transactions of the Association at the expense of the State.

GENERAL STATE HOSPITAL.

Drs. J. T. Gilman ............... Portland,
I. T. Dana ...................... Portland,
H. H. Hill ...................... Augusta,
N. P. Monroe ................... Belfast,
J. C. Weston ................... Bangor,
William Swasey ................. Limerick,
H. L. K. Wiggin ................. Auburn,
A. J. Fuller .................... Bath,
T. G. Stockbridge .............. Bath.

Remarks were made by Drs. Hill, Foster, Dana, Putnam, Tewksbury, Buxton and Snow; after which, on motion of Dr. Nourse, it was

Voted, That the nomination of these committees be confirmed.
Dr. Chadwick, from the committee on the establishment of a Pathological Museum, made the following report.

Your committee fully appreciate the desirableness of such an undertaking, and concur in the suggestions set forth in the address, that the establishment of such a museum should be one of our first endeavors. While remembering the growth of the Association in its numerical and influential strength—which but a few years ago was but a handful of earnest, determined men, now numbering its members by hundreds—we need not feel that any undertaking for its improvement should be too great, or beyond the bounds of possibility.

The establishment of a Pathological Museum would add fresh zeal to our already interesting meetings. Gathering new members from every section of the State, who would contribute to this proposed undertaking, results of their own observations in practice, thereby making every individual its almoner; and in a short time we would have a collection that will prove a delight to its founders and an honor to the State, affording an opportunity for the study of disease, not now accessible to the physician: and

Whereas, your Committee feel the importance of this movement, and the need of hearty co-operation from all the members of the Association for the successful inauguration of this undertaking; and

Whereas, its success depends upon the individual physician, to use his best endeavors to make the fulfilment of this
desire a certainty, rendering it necessary for all to obtain specimens of disease whenever it is possible, writing out its history and transmitting the same to such party and place as will hereafter be stated; therefore,

Resolved, That the immediate establishment of a Pathological Museum be undertaken.

Resolved, That medical men throughout the State be invited to contribute specimens which they may now have and which hereafter they may obtain, to the general collection.

Resolved, That a Curator be appointed in such way as the Association may deem best, whose duty it shall be to collect such specimens as he can by contribution from the members of the Society, and by solicitation, and shall have them properly prepared, and carefully kept.

Resolved, That physicians sending specimens to the museum are desired to transmit with each case a report as to its character, and that specimens be sent as soon after obtained as possible, by express or otherwise, to the Curator at the expense of the Association.

Resolved, That the expense necessary for the properly carrying out these plans, together with the funds required by the Curator for the properly mounting and preserving the same, be raised by the Association, in such way as they may deem best; either by assessment, or subscription.

Resolved, That this Museum be established in Portland.

G. H. CHADWICK, [Committee.
A. C. HAMLIN,
THEO. L. ESTABROOK,

It was voted to accept the report, and adopt the resolutions;
also, that this committee nominate a Curator: and accordingly Dr. B. F. Fogg, of Portland, was nominated and elected.

It was

Voted, That the President and Secretary be instructed to call an extra session, to meet at Augusta, during the time of session of the Legislature.

Attest,

E. HOWARD VOSE,  
Secretary.