sent, by mistake, *sulphate of strychnine*. His daughter brought a dose on the point of a knife to his bed-side, when he told her that it was not a sufficient dose. She brought the bottle to him to help himself to such quantity as he wished, when, lo! the words *sulphate of strychnine* stared him in the face. But for a trifling contingency, this gentleman would have taken probably a fatal dose of this fearful poison—a reflection that would have been anything but pleasant to his son and daughter in after years.

These are not a tithe of the accidents that have taken place within a few years, and I think it high time that some efficient means were adopted by druggists, manufacturers, physicians, &c., to remedy the evil. I propose that strychnine be put up in bottles of a peculiar shape, or color, or labelled in a different manner, in such way as to be generally known at a glance—or with some pictorial conspicuous sign, which would preclude the possibility of such accidents in future. The physical properties of strychnine are so similar to those of morphine, that such mistakes are quite liable to occur, even among medical men. Hydrocyanic acid used to be put up in bottles of a dark color, with the death's head and cross-bones, and labelled "poison." There is no danger of mistaking this for any other medicine, and its taste and smell are sufficient to point out its true qualities to a physician. A physician of this city informed me of a trick which some of his students played off upon an opium eater some years since, which from its nature was extremely hazardous to the delinquent. He was in the habit of taking morphine, and when he could steal it from the doctor's office, it was so much clear profit. The students put strychnine into a morphine bottle, and after taking a dose he would be thrown into spasms, greatly to his terror, and much to the amusement of the wicked wags who were so uncharitable and heartless in their experiments.

Respectfully yours,

Syracuse, N. Y., Aug. 29, 1849.

A. B. SHIPMAN.

SKETCHES OF EMINENT LIVING PHYSICIANS.—NQ. XI.

WILLIAM E. HORNER, M.D., PROF. OF ANATOMY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

"The man who consecrates his hours
By vigorous efforts and an honest aim,
At once he draws the sting of life and death;
He walks with Nature, and her paths are peace.—Young.

"Integer vitæ, sclerisque purus."—Horace, Od. xxii.

THE fable of the hare and the tortoise is one which has made many great men. The glare of what is generally termed genius, which term, by the by, means merely the excessive activity of a few of the mental faculties, not unfrequently to the detriment of the rest—this glare, in modern times, is shorn of much of its captivating splendor. Science, which is the poetry of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and which in fact realises what the poetry of the ancients never dreamed of, demands a continued and patient application of our faculties, totally incompatible

with the rapid flights of fancy or the corruscations of uneducated imagination. In fact, any man who desires to compose poetry in modern times, has but to collect the facts of science and group them into order as they really exist. Who, for instance, writes more splendid or magnificent poetry, prose though it be, than Humboldt, even in his old days? He merely collects, from the vast storehouse of his mind, some of the facts which he has gathered in a life of toil; and deals out, in common prose, most uncommon poetry. Vide "*Cosmos*," by Alexander Von Humboldt. The acquirements of Darwin in natural science, gave him all his images for the Botanic Garden. Even Akenside, from the paucity of graphic description, is not relished as he formerly was. When he wrote his immortal "*Pleasures of the Imagination*," he was but a young man, and had not collected largely from Nature's stores, to fill his granary. Thompson wrote his "*Seasons*" at a more mature age; hence his scenery is far more striking.

But why, the reader may ask, all this prelude to a sketch of Dr. Horner? We answer, that Dr. W. E. Horner, to look upon, is the last man we should select as having the *outward* bearing of a poet. And yet, with wonderful perseverance, he has successfully won for himself laurels as enduring as many poets who sing of immortality. To fancy Dr. Horner's eyes "in a fine frenzy rolling from heaven to earth," would astonish his friends, and the public; yet any poet of modern times might well envy him his fame.

About five feet seven inches high, remarkably *spare*, flat breasted, sharp shouldered; with high cheek bones, much like our Indians; eyes wide set apart, almost without *any* expression, in fact like glass; a thin chin, a mouth merely split across the face, a wide and not high forehead, a large head, covered by a first-rate black wig, a gait studiously slow and thoughtful, a voice like the sound of a *cracked pot*, dressed neatly, with a well-polished boot—his whole appearance that of an automaton, moved carefully by some judicious master—and we have Dr. Horner.

Dr. H. is well known in medicine as the pioneer in pathology in the United States. His preliminary essays in the *North American Medical Journal*, opened the way to his work on this subject, which latter has opened a field successfully cultivated by Gross and others since that time, 1829. "*Horner's Special Anatomy and Histology*" is in every body's hands, and has taught more physicians than almost any other American work. It was a great improvement on "*Wistar's Anatomy*," which in its day was of course the best. "*The United States Dissector*" is also used by thousands. The "*Practical Anatomy*," and other works of Dr. H., are marked by that practical adaptedness to the end in view which distinguishes Dr. Horner's character in all its phases. The following lines, taken from a review of Dr. H.'s work on pathology, in the *North American Medical and Surgical Journal*, for 1830, will be appropriate.

"Dr. Horner, in a short preface, tells us what readers have a right to expect from every medical writer who wishes to obtain credence for fidelity of observation, and narrates (in a short auto-biography) the opportunities enjoyed by him for enriching the department of which he

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pow treats. Successively army surgeon during a very active and sanguinary campaign ; attached to the anatomical department in the University of Pennsylvania, under the guidance of the celebrated Wistar ; associated in the labors and honors of teaching anatomy with Dr. Physick, the father of American surgery ; and finally a prescribing surgeon to the Philadelphia Almshouse Infirmary, Dr. Horner has been placed in the most eminently favorable situations for prosecuting the study of morbid anatomy. It is not sufficient, however, that opportunities be presented to an individual, if he be wanting in the necessary talent and industry to avail himself of them profitably. No very large additions can be made to the existing amount of human knowledge by sudden and irregular labors, however great the genius or ardent the zeal. It is by persevering and untiring effort that we alone hope for success in this particular : the progress is for the most part slow, often imperceptible, but under such auspices, always sure. The author of the treatise on Pathological Anatomy is a marked example of the correctness of this maxim. Without any preliminary trumpeting, or boastful promise, he marches on steadily to his purpose, overcoming in succession every obstacle opposed to his progress, and finally winning the highest honors of his profession, during the time that others are opening some new and royal road, or attempting to carry all by a *coup de main*. To the younger members of the profession, who have as yet hardly traced out with any distinctness their line of operations, such an example cannot be without great value, and in this belief we take the present occasion to press it on their notice."

Tasso, in the first book of his *Jerusalem Delivered*, says,

"Forgive me, if with truth I fiction join,
And grace the verse with other charms than thine.
Thou know'st the world with eager transport throng
Where sweet Parnassus breathes the tuneful song :
That truth can oft, in pleasing strains convey'd,
Allure the fancy, and the mind persuade.
Thus the sick infant's taste disguised to meat,
We tinge the vessel's brim with juices sweet ;
The bitter draught his willing lip receives ;
He drinks deceived, and so deceived he lives."

If poetry be truth, then is Dr. Horner a poet, for he is emphatically a matter-of-fact man. We well remember his preface to his *Anatomy*, in which he criticizes the Bells, and other writers, for their inflated descriptions in demonstrative science, particularly anatomy, in which we agree with Dr. H. there is no room for fiction. Truth is by far too precious and desirable to be sacrificed for the so called embellishments of the imagination.

As a lecturer on this subject, Dr. H. is the plainest of men ; and his simple truthfulness has stood the fiery ordeal of all the rivalry of more dashing demonstrators. The common sense of his classes has always sustained, and will always sustain him in his unaffected but really instructive teachings. His preparations appear wonderfully perfect, and money is not spared to obtain the best from abroad. He demonstrates each fact or set of facts at least three times to the class ; commencing always at the north side, and going east and south. . His long bony fingers, innocent of any other soft parts than some wrinkled skin to cover them, point unerringly to the part to be shown, and there appears but little difference

in the sensibility of the part pointing and that pointed at. He never intentionally commits a double entendre or bon-mot ; but should it so happen, which must of course be by mere accident, and he detects it (by its appreciation by the class), he looks up with all the simplicity of a child, and, if he understands it, will repeat it again to the next division of the class, and to the third. Dr. Horner in lecturing has but one object in view—to *demonstrate*. The most fastidious contemner of ornament, even Swift himself, could not more completely divest him of what Dr. H. considers useless material. His preparations of the muscles—slightly reddened like the meat of the butchers, with blood, to make them look fresh—are not made more cleanly or freer from adipose tissue, than are his words and sentences from foreign allusion or ad captandum flourishes. The clearness, however, of his demonstrations, the beauty of his preparations, and the uniform order with which his lectures are conducted, do not fail to make on the mind of the student a durable impression. His course begins with a general account of his subject, generally written, followed by a close and accurate description of the bones, ligaments and cartilages. These are followed by the muscles, and abdominal and thoracic viscera. The nerves close the course of lectures. It will be recollected, by the by, that he belongs to the old school of physiologists, who consider the brain, as the organ of mental phenomena, to act as a unit, repudiating the idea of a plurality of organs.

Dr. Horner's moral character is peculiarly pure, and in his dealings he is just. He has gradually, by close attention and economy, amassed a competency, and lives in noble style on his own earnings. A well-known reviewer of our city, in speaking to Cato one day, and giving his impressions of Dr. H., characterized him as a man of the "almighty dollar;" and added, that "the pecuniary affairs of the University have never been managed so well as they are by the present Dean."

One act of Dr. H.'s life certainly redounds to his credit. It was the custom in times gone by, whenever the "Virginny students," meaning any southern students, got into a brawl or other difficulty, for the Professors to go their bail ; in this way offering a premium to wickedness. Dr. H. refused to do this, and became very unpopular, the class having resolved to hiss him out of the lecture room. He plead his cause well for two or three days, and the storm passed over ; since when, the general character of the classes of the University has much improved. In fact, the students last winter attended almost in a body, during the whole winter, a course of eloquent sermons, delivered by some of the ablest divines in our city. These sermons or lectures were secured by a committee appointed by the Medico-Chirurgical College.

Dr. H. is a member of the Philosophical Society (before which, a few years ago, he read a necrological notice of Dr. Physick, which bore his usual accuracy of description), of the College of Physicians, Medical Society, and of many foreign scientific associations. It is well known to the medical world that he is the discoverer of at least one muscle, which he has termed *tensor tarsi*, but which other anatomists very justly call "Musculus Horneri." By injecting the lungs with tallow and dissolving this out with oil of turpentine, he was also enabled to prove that the cells

of the lungs had lateral communications. The researches of Addison have extended still further our knowledge of this part of anatomy.

As a writer, Dr. H. is terse and clear. His historical sketches of his favorite science are instructive, and well worthy of being preserved. These histories have generally been delivered in the form of introductory-ries. A moment's examination of his other writings will show that every thing yields to clearness and perspicuity—"mere dry detail." His practice is large, and among the most respectable of our citizens. A good proportion of surgery falls to his lot. As an operator, he is quiet and judicious—has made several improvements in instruments. Always self-possessed, he never seems in a hurry, let the danger be what it may. He has a large and respectable family—chiefly, we believe, daughters, whose husbands, when they marry, find in him a kind father and firm friend; lending even his reputation and good name for their advancement.

Dr. Horner, like Drs. Mitchell, Chapman, Bell and others, belongs originally to the State of Virginia.

It cannot but happen that a corporation, which all the world knows has no soul, must have some things done, which no one man will willingly father, which in fact will ruin his character. In general, the dean of our medical corporations is made the pack-horse for many of these things. Dr. H. has so managed his *duties* in this respect, as to be remarkably free from blame, from those who suffer; and he is generally held in great esteem for his candor and liberality. We are not, however, impressed with the idea that the corporation, of which he is a member, is any too liberal in its notions, and feel constrained, with some of our eminent practitioners, to say, that she has exhibited, on some subjects, not exactly no soul, but one much too small for her body.

CATO.

QUACKERY IN THE WEST.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—The practice of medicine in the West is conducted by every kind of practitioner, from the truly scientific to the infamous quack. A man will here read medicine six months and assume the title of doctor; buy a pound of calomel, an ounce of quinine, a drachm of morphine, and he is then ready to locate. In 1847, I was called to see a patient over whom nine of these fellows had held a council. The case was one of interest. Mr. A. was out hunting, and on discharging his rifle a piece of the percussion cap, one eighth of an inch long and one fourth of a line broad, entered the right eye at the outer and lower edge of the cornea. The piece could be distinctly seen lying in the anterior chamber of the eye. Some of the wise ones advocated the doctrine of absorption—the foreign metallic substance, they said, would be absorbed and thrown off by the exhalants. One, however, a son of Vulcan, urged its removal, the doctrine of absorption being too preposterous for him to entertain. The "big gun of the crowd," who, by the way, flourished a very fine hickory cane, left his seat, looked wise—Come, Dr., let