

and oppressed with the conviction that each assault of disease is a new summons, bidding him prepare to obey the inevitable law of his being. While the truth is not to be withheld where the issue is evident, in all doubtful cases, and especially where the aspect is favorable, powerful auxiliaries will be found in all those encouragements and assurances, calculated not only to produce calmness and cheerfulness, but also to inspire hope and confidence. I need not say that all our professional intercourse with the aged should eminently be governed by the laws of human kindness; a proper deference should be shown to their wishes— forbearance with their weaknesses—patience with their waywardness and petulance—and a cheerful attention be given to all their wants and complaints. The same precept which bids us “rise up before the hoary head,” inculcates in its spirit all the offices of sympathy and kindness; and I am persuaded the older we grow the more forcible appears the reasonableness of the duty enjoined.

As in restoring health, so in preserving it in this class of persons, regard must be had to those causes which affect our mental constitution. Our therapeutics include the mind as well as the body: so also our prophylactic measures must embrace both. While we employ means designed to keep in healthful play the vital functions, without exhausting them, we must also have recourse to those means which respect man's higher nature, and which tend to preserve the integrity of his intellectual and moral powers. The means appropriate to preserve this soundness of condition in the mind are those which secure the cheerful and harmonious exercise of all its faculties, such as agreeable intellectual employment—variety in recreations and amusements—occasionally the excitement of new pursuits without suddenly abandoning those long familiar—social intercourse with the young, and a participation in their plans and innocent amusements. Lastly, to this end may be mentioned such an arrangement relating to business, as shall rid the mind of apprehension and disquietude—exemption from those cares and vexations which are depressing in their influence, and that proper cultivation of the moral and religious affections which, in the evening of life, cheers the present state with contentment and peace, and throws over the future the radiance of hope.

## QUACKERY AND ABORTION.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

THE medical profession takes rank with the other learned professions; and is justly regarded by all enlightened nations as one of the most useful, liberal and noble of the sciences. Our profession, for centuries, has been advancing. It has, indeed, accomplished that which its most ardent admirers could not reasonably have expected, and *now* it is no way inferior to law or theology. This was not so once; for in by-gone days, *physic* ranked lowest in the scale of the learned professions. Rome had her orators, poets and generals; England her statesmen, bishops and barristers. They had their physicians also; but how comparatively small is the

space these disciples of Hippocrates and Sydenham occupy on the page of their country's history, compared with the volumes which contain the writings, discoveries and transactions of the distinguished men of other professions. But when the history of our times shall be recorded, the names of those who distinguish themselves in medicine and surgery will shine as brightly as those of the jurist, the divine, the military chieftain, and others, who have also been useful to their race, and shed lustre and renown upon the nations of their birth place or adoption.

For the last half century the progress of medicine has been, in all civilized countries, remarkable; but nowhere more marked than in the United States. The indomitable and enterprising energies of our countrymen have been manifest in this department. The condition of our colleges has improved; our medical societies have taken, and continue to take, higher grounds. The American Medical Association is annually adding rich and ripe sheaves to the great store-house of science; *these* are constantly taking the place of tares, which have hitherto occupied too much space. This Association has not only for its object the *expurging* of worthless material and the supplying of sound doctrines, but it also aims at the establishment of good regulations and *ethics*, with a view that justice, honorable conduct, and moral integrity, shall govern and preserve the medical men of this country (thus indirectly but really benefiting the sick and all others throughout the land), and if possible, eradicate every vestige of quackery with which our country has been scourged.

While the Association, through its committees, has made excellent suggestions, pointed out valuable improvements, and discountenanced quackery in most of its forms and devices, it has not yet struck any decided blow on that most diabolical kind of quackery, that high-handed villany, which characterizes the *abortionist*. That this kind of charlatanism is rife, and is practised by regular members of the profession, that is, men who have *diplomas*, there can be no doubt; and I believe that some who are promoted to *office in our medical societies* are of this order of quacks. That such men are *quacks*, no one will question—the *epithet* belongs to the *unprincipled* as well as to the *ignorant*.

It may be thought that the nature of this subject is such as to render it best to be silent. But I take no such view of the matter; and if I possess no ability in the way of putting it down, I wish to warn the young practitioner, who is about to make his *debut* in his profession, as he values his future usefulness, as he values principle, as he values reputation and a good name, to abstain from the infernal performance under *every* circumstance, let the inducement be what it may. No honorable man of experience will for a moment *think* of such an immoral act; the unprincipled man will do it—will do *anything*, however mean or vile—for *money*. The young man, while he is waiting for more laudable employment, may be *tempted*. Such are often applied to, to procure abortions, especially if thought to be in need of money. The applicants should be spurned, and their offers treated with disdain—let their money perish with them. I insist upon it, that this is a dangerous situation for many young men, and if they fall here, just as

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they are to be introduced into legitimate practice, they fall forever; their sins will surely find them out.

These abortionists seem not aware that the testimony of their dying victims is generally elicited by the attending physician and friends; or that the throes of parturition, the fear of death, or some other circumstance, will draw out all the facts in the case; and that they themselves will henceforth be considered quacks and murderers by many whose respect and esteem they would gladly enjoy.

Need I allude to the moral and physical evils this practice produces? Are they not manifest, *fearfully* manifest, in this community, even within the puritan borders of New England? It increases prostitution and infanticides, and breaks down the constitutions of those who are naturally healthy. Look at the bills of mortality as returned from our large cities; see what numbers die of peritoneal inflammation; mark the increase of *stillborn* children and *premature births*!—(*Vid. New York Medical Gazette, Vol. I., No. 1, page 6.*)

Besides these bills of mortality, the records of criminal courts will furnish sufficient proof that this crime is every day becoming more prevalent. It is humiliating to admit that there are a class of physicians who, Herod-like, have waged a war of destruction upon the innocent. Though their motives are not the same as those which instigated that cruel king, they are no less murderers for that. If there is any difference, they are worse than Herod. He was influenced by popular clamor and bigotry; these quacks do all for money, and such could be hired to burn out the eyes of infant princes.

These men are better known than they would like to be. It is said that a woman cannot keep a secret. Whether this is so or not, the man who procures abortions is generally well known. He needs no hand-bills, placards, or other advertisement; he is soon notorious. Inglorious fame! Who would have such a disgraceful notoriety? Who would thus disgrace his profession; who would sell his claim to honor and principle; who would shed innocent blood for a few pieces of silver? After a man has thus degraded himself, after he has sunk so low, can he expect to retrieve his character? Who ever knew such a man to reform? If he is susceptible to feelings of remorse, like Judas he will go out and hang himself to hide his own shame.

I consider this species of quackery the most abominable and wicked of all. Anything is charlatanism which is morally dishonest, though it may be practised under cover of a diploma; and therefore that man is a charlatan, to all intents and purposes, who, like the notorious Restell, becomes the executioner of babes in utero. Such a man is the *vilest* of quacks, and the *meanest* of men.

I shall not stop to give the history of those lamentable cases which have come under my observation, and terminated fatally as the consequence of procured abortion—those fatal cases of puerperal peritonitis, caused by the bloody hands of *doctors* and *M.D.'s*; but if the confessions of the dying are to be relied upon, I know men who have carried on this shameful and iniquitous business, and have not only been the murderers of infants, but the instruments also of consigning their

guilty mothers to premature graves, "unhouselled, unanointed, unan-nealed."

I have heard some of the older members of the profession say that abortions are of more frequent occurrence now than formerly; and they have rightly suspected the increase is owing to criminal hands. I need not remark on the evil consequences of this mischief upon health—the health of American women. I need not attempt to portray its blighting and destroying effects upon the strength of the fair daughters of New England, for their withering results are well understood by the majority of your readers. Various instruments are employed for destroying the integrity of the ovum, and I have been informed that these quacks conceal their weapons from their patrons as if they were something strange or curious. I was told, not long since, by a woman who was operated upon recently in a neighboring city, that the wretch who performed the operation obliged her to take solemn oath not to expose him. She kept her word, for she would not give me his name, but left me to *guess* who he was! Being a true Yankee myself, I suppose I can guess with ordinary exactness. This woman said that at the same time there were several other women apparently waiting for the "slaughter" in an ante-room of the building.

Irregular practitioners, and the women themselves, are addicted to this kind of criminality; but, as a general thing, they have learned their art of some unprincipled doctor, who either purposely or accidentally let slip the secret to the vulgar. The implements which I have heard of as being used by these irregular quacks, are sharpened sticks, goose-quills, wires, &c.; *not* those beautifully-polished, tonsil-lancet instruments, which some of the *regular quacks* wield with so much dexterity and freedom, as "if the assassination could trammel up the consequence, and catch, with his surcease, success." I once found a wire (then bent at nearly a right angle) in the vagina of a young girl who had been in the hands of a regular abortionist. At each extremity of the wire was a leaden ball, about the size of a marble, one end of which had probably been introduced into the *os uteri*, and there left to remain till contractions of that organ should be established. For the information of the villain who was guilty of this double massacre (should his eye fall upon this page), I will state that the operation succeeded—succeeded in destroying a fœtus of five months, and in impairing the health of the girl so that she continued to suffer from uterine disorder, and finally died in about three years afterwards.

Now in view of honoring and improving the condition of our praiseworthy and liberal calling, as well as that of society at large, I ask the co-operation of every respectable physician to aid in putting down everything and everybody that shall appear to be cognizant to the offence—the crime of procuring abortions—the *massacre of infants*. I do not think that we should in *any case* expose our patients, those who place their lives and reputations in our hands. This would be a breach of confidence—a violation of good faith; a principle which physicians have held inviolable both in ancient and modern times. The *perpetrator*, and not the *subject* of the crime, should be made responsible. I leave it for

others to prescribe the *method* and manner of checking and rebuking these quacks in their criminal progress. Public opinion, the indignation of the populace, will not be sufficient to meet the exigency which the importance of this matter demands. Public justice is slow, and the people who employ these quacks will not be shocked by any outrage, or be disgusted by any measures, however revolting they may be to ordinary minds, and moral men; for they are in truth nothing better than *accessories*, and without their aid and support this class of practitioners could not live. I would suggest, however, as a starting point towards reform, that medical societies and associations expel these "assassina-tors," and that each physician take the responsibility of informing against them whenever opportunity may offer. For one I am willing to join such a crusade, however unpleasant the war may be, and do all that I can in the way *sequari vestigia rerum*. The medical profession is bound to take action in this matter; if it is not done, if proper measures are not resorted to, injustice and disgrace will be charged upon us for affording protection and fellowship to these charlatans. This evil is not confined to any particular region or section of country; it has at length become general, and is a *national curse*.

Every State should render the offence of inducing premature labor or abortion a *penal* one (unless it shall be done for the safety of the mother, where there is a deformed or contracted pelvis, or where some other cause renders the operation absolutely necessary); it should be a State-prison offence, at least.

The evil is one of such magnitude that I have felt it my duty to make this communication. If by it any one shall be persuaded from falling into criminal quackery, certainly good will come out of it. Or if those who make laws and regulations for medical men shall be induced to render the crime punishable, and this action be taken any sooner because the medical public have thus had their attention directed to the subject, I shall have no cause to regret that I have incurred the displeasure of those practitioners who have been styled *abortionists*, or that I have made the admission, through the medium of your Journal, that there is *criminal quackery in the medical ranks*.

Yours respectfully,

Greenville, R. I., Dec. 27th, 1850.

J. P. LEONARD.

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### EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

*Grand Cairo, Nov. 10.*—This day, a longing desire of my boyhood—brought into intense activity by reading a history of ancient Egypt, during the long winter evenings, in a little country village—has been abundantly gratified, for I have not only seen all the Pyramids worthy of examination in Lower Egypt, but have actually been to the summit of Cheops! Of course it would be ridiculous to attempt a description of them. They are