

Addresses.**NORFOLK DISTRICT RECORDS AND REMINISCENCES, 1850-1900.¹**

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I HAVE been asked by the authorities who rule our destinies to write for its jubilee a history of the Norfolk District Medical Society, from the earliest times to the present day. In looking over the records for this purpose, it seems that such a dissertation would furnish forth rather a dreary half hour to you who listen, however much it might profit the future analyst. I have preferred therefore to cull from the minutes some of the principal events, and to recall a few sayings and doings of the chief actors on this stage. In these fifty years there has been a goodly share of strong men in word and deed, who have had their part in attack of abuses, in defence of rights, in imparting of their wisdom to their fellows. They brought to the meetings a whiff of salt air from the South Shore, of hayfields from the country, and the dust and mud of the suburbs of Boston; all hard workers by day and by night, with definite notions, and not to be fooled by new practices and ideas till time had ripened them. They proved all things and held fast that which was good. Most of the founders went to their graves having done good work for their town, for the State, for the country and for their neighbors, and each one, I believe, was laid to his rest carrying some one bit of knowledge, or one bit of method, which, perhaps without his knowing it, was wholly his own and could not be transmitted. Few rose to honor, fewer to wealth, but they left memories which still keep green, and we, their successors, are wiser and better for their lives.

Before we quote the records, it is well to know something of the men who made them. A few of them I present you, I fear, in rather a dim perspective. Especially I recollect old Dr. Alden, whose class at Harvard was 1808, with Dr. Walter Channing and the first Richard H. Dana, and who had his M.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in 1812. He died in 1870, and the resolutions offered to the society on that occasion truthfully speak of the dignity, courteous bearing and felicity of expression with which he participated in the proceedings of the society, and his faithful service in its behalf during many years of his life. His Johnsonian manner was deeply impressive to us younger men. One day in the train, speaking of the government of the Massachusetts Medical Society, "Sir," said he, "it is an OLIGARCHY." I knew little and cared less about it, but it was many years before I had any other notion of the society than that it was an OLIGARCHY. What sense of humor he possessed was subordinated to duty and business. A young man who was appointed secretary could not keep his freshness out of the records. After noting that the president called for the appointed papers from Drs. A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and no one was present and prepared but Dr. Edes and Dr. Edwards, the secretary went on to say that the other gentlemen called on were lucratively engaged in the practice of their profession, and were consequently unable to attend. When the records

were read at the next meeting, Dr. Alden suggested that, as the secretary could not know that these gentlemen were prevented from attending a meeting on account of their being lucratively engaged in the practice of their profession, it was hardly admissible to record such a statement. Dr. Jarvis thought it well to allow the secretary to record the proceedings in his own fashion, as the society had so courteously permitted him to do for twenty years. I know no other than Dr. Alden who in a session devoted to hygiene could have enthralled us as he did with details of his study and his marvellous air-tight stove, its construction and performances, by which his blessed old body was kept warm, while superfluous heat was turned into the room above, and perfect ventilation reigned throughout; so that the gentleman who just before had bewailed the closing of old fireplaces with sheet iron and brick must have gone home himself to install an air-tight stove in his study after Dr. Alden's plans and specifications.

There were many stories told about good old Dr. Edward Jarvis, but they all illustrated his quaint manner and speech, his benevolence, and his attention to business. A specimen of his accuracy of method may be, I hope, not tediously exhibited by an entry in the record of the first meeting: "Dr. P., of W., forgot to bring his diploma, but was admitted so far as to join the society socially, sit with them, hear the address, pay his assessment, partake of the public dinner, with the promise on his part to show his degree to the president or secretary, sign the bylaws and be admitted a member of the society." This same gentleman from W., it is remembered, was absent minded, and being bored in a meeting at Dedham, went out to the stable and asked for his horse. It was a full meeting, and there were many horses. He was unable to select his own, resignedly returned to the hall, ate (and presumably paid for) his dinner, waited till all had departed and humbly took the last horse. Showing Dr. Miller his stable one day, he stopped short and asked, "Patrick, what horse is that?" "Sure," replied Patrick, "it's the mare you bought last month."

Dr. Munroe, of Medway, must not be forgotten, one of our strong and sagacious men, of wide experience and sound judgment. He could not, however, away with the doctrines propounded by Dr. Jacob Bigelow and so ably set forth by Dr. Cotting. He believed deeply in the curative power of drugs, and defended his position with close argument and tenacity. On one occasion, hearing that Dr. Cotting was to hold forth on the subject of disease as part of the plan of creation, he rose from a sick bed, and lay on a sofa in the hall of a meeting that he might lift up his voice in defence of his cherished convictions. With all this he was polite and kind, and would never consciously offend, however much he might differ from his adversary.

Then there was Major-General Appleton Howe, M.D., whose burly presence and strong personality remain in remembrance, as does the perfect luncheon he gave us in his dooryard in Weymouth, under the spreading trees, one hot, overcast day in summer.

Give me leave to speak of Dr. Erasmus Miller, of Dorchester, and his vast obstetric experience, his early practice in gynecology, his uterine scarifier, his intense shrewdness, his horse Stargazer and his cranberry bog in Franklin. He used to say that whatever

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his ability might have been on his first coming to Dorchester, his real and speedy success was due to a superb gray horse with flowing white switch tail, so handsome as to make every one turn to look and inquire who was the owner. But a more efficient factor was his own early acquisition of snowy hair and sweeping beard, which made him a conspicuous figure in any landscape or company.

Naturally his best friend, Dr. Holmes, of Milton, must next be named. There are yet many of us who love to recollect his round, rosy face, his martial bearing, his cheerful presence, his ready sympathy, his talent in practice, which rendered him beloved equally by factory hand and dowager of Milton Hill. No amount of work tired him either on the road, in the sick room or at the head of the Cadets. Dr. Miller used to say that Holmes had rather be driving round the country all night than be in his bed. Music and his beloved Cadets were his recreations, for he hardly ever left Milton for a holiday. Rest his soul! Every one of us in Dorchester and Milton lost a friend when Christopher Columbus Holmes was laid to rest in 1882.

No more brilliant character shone on this stage than William Cranch Bond Fifield. After finishing his studies in London and Paris he came to Dorchester in 1860, where he died in 1896. He was a man of prodigious memory, who appeared never to have forgotten anything. He could tell you on what part of any shelf in the Athenaeum you could find the book you wanted, and very nearly the page which recorded the fact, phrase or case you were in search of. Indeed his mind was so stored with authors, precedents, operations, that he could not always find the pigeonhole in which the subject in view was packed. He made some marvellous diagnoses, but often would not see into an ordinary case, because his gaze was fixed on a visionary possibility far beyond. It was a treat to hear him detail a case or tell a story about one of his European teachers. The graphic touches with which he embroidered his subject fixed its details in your mind, while wit and humor played around it, so as sometimes indeed, it must be owned, to obscure the judgment and make you wonder how much was fancy and how much was fact. Besides he was an omnivorous reader; a new book of fiction, history, poetry, travel had not been long published but he could give you its scope, with apt quotations, and his opinion about it. Withal he was a musician of no mean ability and of fastidious taste. Many afflictions overtook him and cardiac disease obscured his last days.

Those of us who were honored with the friendship of Benjamin Cushing will call to mind no physician whose example they would sooner wish to follow. The gaunt frame carried a great heart and through the large spectacles beamed a steady and confident gaze. No more upright man ever stood in our society. He seemed silent and reserved. You had to know him. When he could not praise or offer comfort he was silent. Once he told me of a family who had lost a child, and the parents thought him hardhearted. As he spoke his eyes filled with tears. No young doctor who was in trouble ever left his presence without wise counsel and just sympathy. His charities were wide and unnamed. To many of us his judgment seemed unerring. He spoke well of every one when he possibly could, but meanness, underhand methods, harshness, he could not abide; and he was not slow to let

the offender know it. He had a well-developed New England conscience. One nasty night he sent a poor patient to a young neighbor. After the messenger had gone, he could not sleep, and, as he said, pictured to himself that when he next drove by the house he might see a string of carriages before the door. So he rose, dressed, took his instruments under his arm, plodded to the place through the rain, heard the voice of the youthful accoucheur inside, returned home and slept the sleep of the just. His practice was large and wide. A relative looking over his books found one day's work, where he had made twenty visits, no great number to be sure, but one patient lived near Pine-tree Brook in Milton, another in Beacon Street, both of whom had to be seen twice that day. And his driving was like the driving of Jehu, the son of Nimshi. A lady once asked him, "Why, Dr. Cushing, do you drive so fast?" He replied, "I never drive fast, but I will admit that I like to ride behind a horse that wants to go fast." Upon a call for surgeons after one of the murderous battles of the Civil War, he did some service. He was deeply grieved that his name was not mentioned by the authorities, the only reward he would have accepted, but he would take no steps to publish his claim to recognition. With this right judgment and skilful, conscientious work went a delightfully dry humor, and he enjoyed a good joke in every nerve. Once a young doctor related a case with fatal issue where every remedy known to modern science had been faithfully employed. When he finished Dr. Cushing quietly remarked that he once signed a death certificate on the wrong line, "Cause of death, B. Cushing." At an annual meeting he had been appointed to read the address. It proved to be a very lively meeting indeed, with alterations and personalities which prolonged the session beyond the hour set for the address. When at last he was called on, he remarked that as the society had chosen to turn the meeting into a bear garden he considered it small honor to address them. It was never ascertained that he had any paper beyond notes scrawled on the backs of envelopes, and it was conjectured that foreseeing the possibility of disturbance, he had never got any further in his preparations. He was nicely exact—almost finically so—in his relations with other practitioners. Often has he said to the writer, "While you were away I saw your patients, Mr. A and Mrs. B. I didn't waste any politeness on them." He had no opinion at all of a physician who would do otherwise. Therefore he had disappointments. He died in 1895, aged seventy-three, leaving deep regrets and a shining example.

How pleasant sounds the name of Dr. Maynard, of Dedham! Into how many chambers did his alert step, his blithe and debonaire countenance bring solace and cheer. How, when seated in the president's chair, did he beam upon us—like a benevolent monarch on the throne, encouraging his devoted subjects. His invention of collodion made him widely known and reflected honor on the society. It was charming to listen to his story of the process of his discovery, and of his journey to New York to demonstrate it in the presence of the great surgeons of that metropolis, who bestowed due praise on the young doctor's science and ingenuity. As modest as he was expert, his memory will not soon die in the hearts of those who knew him.

No notice of the Norfolk District Society is complete without reference to Dr. Cotting and Dr. Martin, who filled the eye of the society for many years. Most of us knew Dr. Cotting, and the young men who did not should lose no time in making themselves acquainted with his "Reminiscences," which were read to the society and afterwards published in a pamphlet. He began his professional life in 1838 as a poor boy, although he could have had the same help that carried him through college, but he had determined to be independent till he reached the head of the profession in the district by the hardest work, joined to ability and good judgment. It is no disparagement to other distinguished men to say that no president of this association and of the Massachusetts Medical Society ever accomplished so much as he did for both, in raising them to the high position they now hold. He was the first to visit all the district societies and to stimulate them to careful observation, and the recording and collecting of their experiences. The extent of his early indefatigable labors, when communication was so difficult, may be appreciated when we read that in the third year of his life in Roxbury he attended 115 cases of obstetrics, "and so on, till he had a very large fraction of the whole number in town." And in one summer day he made 43 visits. For many years he did most of the surgery in Roxbury, refusing no case among rich or poor. He had very small belief in the efficacy of drugs, in antiseptics, in the contagiousness of puerperal fever, and in other doctrines now received, and the contradiction he met with before the practice was relinquished of writing a new recipe at each visit, and filling up the sick chamber with eight-ounce phials, may hardly be estimated. I have already mentioned Dr. Munroe, who left his sick bed to protest against such unsoundness in doctrine, but there was other outspoken and violent opposition. It was seldom that one of us could detail a case and its treatment that Dr. Cotting did not cap it with a similar one of his own that had recovered with little or no help from drugs, all which made the meetings interesting and entertaining. Dr. Cotting was most good and helpful to young men, never forgetting his own youthful hard experiences. He used to say in later life that he had given away so many patients that he had hardly any left. He did expect that those whom he knew well would stand by him and help him carry his measures through; and those who enlisted under his banner were called "loyal." His hospitality was lavish and proceeded from a generous heart. I have known few men who conferred more benefit on the profession than Benjamin Eddy Cotting.

Dr. Henry Austin Martin was as different a man as could be imagined. His enemies said that he had facility and not ability. But he had both in marked degree. He was a deep student, not only in medical but in general literature. His knowledge, skill and resource in surgery were great. The inventions of his rubber bandage and his adhesive plaster were known in the whole medical world, but his distinction lay in the introduction of animal vaccine, which he popularized, and by which he became the recognized authority on vaccination. His mastery of the English language was exceptional, and his speech in public and in conversation was most fluent. He was afraid of nobody, and was a born fighter. He fully believed in the efficiency of drugs in the hands

of an experienced therapist. Therefore we may hazard the statement that he could not be said to agree with Dr. Cotting. When he did not like anybody he was not skilful in hiding his sentiments. To those who were congenial he was most delightful, entertaining and instructive, pouring forth a stream of wit, humor and information. When the followers of two such men clashed, it may be fancied that there was music in the air. And many of the sessions were too stormy to more than refer to. But they have left lively recollections with many of us oldsters. In the list of names of those present at the first meeting—the only one whom I know to be now living—is Dr. George Faulkner, of Jamaica Plain. Nothing would more disturb his quiet and happy retirement than to be spoken of as he deserves. But we may assure him of the respect and affection which his long and useful service and his high character demand.

There is temptation to go on indefinitely with reminiscences of those delightful characters which loom up in the mist of departed years, but they must be phantoms to you. We shall all be phantoms by and by—some of us at no distant day—and I trust the centennial orator of 1950 may have a good word to say of our wisdom, or our characteristics, or, as a student of my day used to say, "some one of our principal fortes." To relieve these obituaries of the wise and learned, and kind and good, let me acknowledge that there were others. Dr. Miller used to tell with glee of one valued colleague, who consulted him one day to glean some hints concerning a case of prostatic disease. "How old is the man?" asked Dr. Miller. "Bless you," was the reply, "it isn't a man, it's a woman." It was a neat and skilful pathologist in the society who having, with what difficulty we may imagine, secured a post-mortem in his village, having finished his task, left portions of his patient in corners of the room, and desired the womankind to sweep them up with dust pan and brush. There is no date of the second autopsy in that hamlet. And I had deep sympathy with the polished and self-reliant rural practitioner who told, at great length, of a case of tedious labor, the only interest of which was the fact that the patient was the wife of a distinguished man, whom he did not omit to name. There was silence when he concluded, and a kind-hearted member, to let the speaker down easily, inquired, "Pray, doctor, why did you not apply the forceps—shorten the patient's suffering, and save your own time?" "Well," returned the doctor, "I suppose I might have, but my time's wuth about as much as a settin' hen's."

The convention of physicians of Norfolk County, being invited by the councillors of the State Medical Society resident in this county, assembled in Temperance Hall (happy omen), Dedham, on the 18th of April, 1849. The first meeting of the new society was held at the Phenix House, in Dedham, the 19th of November, 1850. Dr. Jeremy Stimson, of Dedham, was the first president, and Dr. Edward Jarvis the first secretary, a post which he held for twenty years. As is proper, there are pages and pages of constitution, bylaws, signatures, agreements, elections, committees, motions, amendments, reconsiderations, propositions, resolutions, recommendations, and such precautions as should surround the launching of a craft of such burden and promise. Dr. Jarvis was invited to prepare a paper for the next meeting.

This gathering took place in Dedham, in May, 1851. Dr. Jarvis, being an expert in insanity, as well as in statistics and hygiene, naturally read an exhaustive treatise about the lunatic hospital. There was a grievance in that the judge of probate in Dedham, being a lawyer in Boston, took the first train for that capital and did not return till late in the afternoon; so that a doctor who wanted to have a patient committed had to get to Dedham before breakfast, or late in the evening. A minute in a later record witnesses that after a contest in the course of which the judge proved conclusively that no other method than that in practice could be employed, that functionary had to give in and appoint a convenient hour for such business, while victory perched on the banners of Dr. Jarvis, and the Norfolk District Society thus early proved that it had not been born in vain. It is also noticeable that the early records make little or no mention of professional matters, but are filled with the dry-as-dust formulæ of minutes, elections, motions, and the other necessary throes of a new birth. But when a subject connected with insanity or hygiene came up the good and venerable secretary let us have it in full.

At the November meeting of 1851, it is reported that Dr. Robert Thaxter, of Dorchester, died the 9th of February, aged seventy-five. He was one of the old school of country doctors, observant, diligent, unselfish, conscientious and skilful, and in his fifty years of practice is related never to have spent a night out of Dorchester, except in attendance on a patient. Also at this meeting we find the note that a communication from the Essex North District Society declares that unless the State Society disencumbers itself of empirics, the Essex North District Society withdraws from the parent association. After earnest discussion the memorial is agreed to unanimously.

At the meeting of May, 1854, seventeen queries about consumption were sent out, the fourteenth and fifteenth asking, "Is the disease communicable?" the first instance, so far as the reader knows, of the question of contagion being raised in this vicinity in a formal way.

In November, 1857, there is a pathetic inquiry about means to make the meetings more interesting and the attendance larger. At the next meeting certain rules are adopted requiring certain communications. This worked by the gentlemen appointed finding themselves too busy—as above intimated—to come at all. On July 16, 1858, Drs. Allen, Bartlett and Burgess read papers on "The Contagiousness of Puerperal Fever," but the statements and arguments are not reported. Dr. Cotting presents to each member a copy of Dr. Jacob Bigelow's work on "Rational Medicine."

In May, 1859, Dr. Miller first tells about his method of application to the os uteri of ethereal tincture of iodine for excessive vomiting of pregnancy—a practice which has helped out many of our patients more than once.

In January, 1861, Dr. Warren, of Neponset, reports a case of rupture of the uterus in labor. Dr. B. Cushing saw the patient in consultation and the reader recollects his story of the case. He was able to thrust his fingers through the rent and feel their tips against the interior abdominal wall, while his other hand grasped the fingers on the outside. Some time after, driving by the house, he saw a

woman standing at her door, and asked, "Can you tell me what became of a Mrs. McCarty who used to live here?" "Deed, then, I am Mrs. McCarty," was the reply, vindicating the recuperative powers of nature without surgical aid in a way which must have warmed the very cockles of Dr. Cotting's heart.

In May, 1861, the society petitions the legislature to establish a board of health. At this time we find names of members serving in the army and navy during the Civil War, and papers read about gunshot wounds and camp and ship diseases.

In November, 1862, we discover that patriotic ardor begins to be tempered with a wise discretion. For the record has it that it is "*Voted*, That the vote passed May, 1861, to attend officers and soldiers of the army gratuitously, be repealed." After discussion it was suggested that that vote was restricted in the letter or in intent to the President's *first* call for troops, and had accordingly expired by its own limitation. This sounds sophistical, but I don't believe that any soldier or sailor of that war was ever unduly pressed by his doctor in Norfolk County.

The 9th of May, 1866, is rendered memorable by a record signed A. H. Nichols, secretary *pro tem*, giving the first full report of professional subjects treated at a meeting. It records a case of ovariectomy done by the secretary *pro tem* when the operation had hardly gained a foothold. The president, Dr. Cotting, as yet an unbeliever, remarked on the need of reporting such fatal cases, two of which had lately happened in Roxbury. Then Dr. Munroe, of Medway, read a case of opium poisoning cured by the continuous dropping of cold water from a height on the epigastrium. Next, Dr. Cotting announced his operation, now so well known and which he believed to have been first conceived by himself, for ingrowing toenail. After that Dr. Bullard showed portraits of French physicians. The president showed a copy of the Annual Dictionary of Garnier, of Paris, and read a critique upon it. Then came the annual address, by Dr. Salisbury, of Brookline, on "The Habits of Social and Domestic Life." Dr. Munroe criticised the school methods of Horace Mann, which had done harm from the continuous application required of young children. Dr. Alden, of Randolph, inveighed against long school sessions from 9 A. M. to 2 P. M. Dr. Arnold, of Roxbury, exhibited photographs of a case; Dr. Stedman, of Jamaica Plain, a case of neuralgia of stump of the forearm. Dr. Cotting read a letter from Dr. Wucherer, of Bahia, on "Obstetric Practice in Brazil," citing the injurious use of ergot and the cutting of the perineum by midwives, who carry a rude instrument for the purpose, to hasten labor. Dr. Miller described his uterine scarifier, which he detailed at length at a subsequent meeting. Dr. Cotting held forth on the uselessness of splints; that they had less power to prevent shortening and deformity than was supposed. Dr. Stone reported a case of compound fracture without splints—only extension having been used. Dr. Alden sought to prove that alcohol was not food. Dr. Cotting showed a large packet of papers published which had first been read before this society. He did not believe that quinine cured intermittent fever, or that mercury cured syphilis, and in the course of discussion this day mentioned that the surgeon of the *Dreadnought* used to show a bottle full of chancres which he had excised without preventing constitutional symptoms. This excellently reported

meeting, you see, was full of interest, and the talk was quite abreast if not in advance of the times. How much wisdom and science are buried forever by the silence of the records heretofore, about anything except the machinery of the society, we dare not conjecture.

In November, 1867, we find the first mention of the annexation of Roxbury to Boston, and it is resolved that the removal of the physicians of Roxbury to the Suffolk District would be disastrous to the Norfolk District Medical Society.

In July, 1869, Dr. Seaverns moved that the secretary be authorized to permit a full and impartial report of the proceedings of each meeting to be published in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*.

In May, 1870, Dr. Jarvis resigns, having been secretary twenty years and having been present at every meeting except two when in Europe, one when a witness in the Supreme Court and a fourth on account of his brother's funeral. Dr. Martin remarked that such clever and original men as Dr. Tully had always been snubbed by the mediocre majority. Progress has never been made in medicine without opposition from the rich and comfortable in the profession whose battle had been fought and whose position was attained, and who disliked being disturbed in mind or person, and from teachers and professors who abhorred altering the outlines and principles of their lectures. He applauded Dr. Amory for his paper (on inflammation) rejoicing that he was faithful among the faithless, and animadverted (in passing) on the practice, but too common, of the gentlemen who offered or agreed to subjects for the meeting absenting themselves from the session. Dr. Miller had had such success in his treatment of uterine diseases and his methods being generally unknown, it had been reported that he was using secret means. So he came to this meeting, on the suggestion of friends, and exhibited his scarifier. The record says, being questioned about endometritis, he replied that he knew less about that affection than he did four years ago, though he had had large opportunities for making it a special study. Dr. Martin had called him the originator of the treatment by scarification; he had adopted it as a common-sense method of depletion; certainly never having heard of it before, but questions of priority were not to his taste. He had certainly found the repeated incision of the uterine mucous membrane to be the only way of curing old inflammations of that organ. He quoted the case of a physician's wife—painful uterine symptoms; had lived on opium and stimulants for six months; no local disease discovered; immediately relieved by four incisions three times in ten or twelve days, and so on.

In November, 1870, it is recorded that Dr. Fifield showed a handsome cast made by his house surgeon, Dr. Bolles. Dr. Fifield had just returned from Europe and this was one of his field days. Among other things he said that 5-drop doses of Collis Brown's chlorodyne cured his seasickness and helped so many on board that the ship's surgeon borrowed his two bottles and never returned them.

In January, 1871, we find Dr. Campbell remarking that the term "skeptical" was too often applied in this society to those persons who ventured to swerve from the beaten path. At this meeting Dr. Alden mentioned a case of harikari which took place one hun-

dred years ago. A butcher ripped himself open from sternum to pubes, in a swamp, during a paroxysm of insanity. He rolled about in agony among the leaves, making also fruitless efforts to reach a neighboring spring, crawling on the ground and dragging his bowels after him; probably fainting, the bleeding was stanchied and he so remained during the night. In the morning he was found alive, and the town bier being furnished with a straw bed, he was conveyed on it to his house. Dr. Moses Baker was in attendance; bathed the protruding bowels in warm milk and water, carefully cleansing them from the dirt and leaves and replacing them within the abdomen, secured the opening with sutures, compress and bandage. Dr. Baker was most assiduous in his attendance. By his request, Dr. Joseph Warren, a distinguished surgeon, who afterwards fell in the service of his country at the memorable battle of Bunker Hill, saw the case, but made no change in the dressing, kindly saying that he could not have dressed the wound more skillfully himself. "On examining the account books of Dr. Baker, now in my possession," continues Dr. Alden, "I find the last charge for attendance and dressings was thirty-six days after the injury. The recovery was perfect and the patient was able to labor as before, living forty-three years, till 1811, when he died at the age of eighty-one." None of the bold and great surgeons of my acquaintance, or in my reading, have yet attempted autolaparotomy. It seemed to have been thought worthy of record that after this meeting the society proceeded to dinner, when the landlord was discovered in a condition of exasperation because his first notification of thirty or forty friends to dine with him was their appearance in the office. He was, however, soothed by having it pointed out to him that his dinners were better when constructed at short notice, and he was served with a copy of the bylaws to study the times of meeting. The repast, it was noted, was set forth with the profusion and costly elegance which marks the Everett House.

In May, 1875, there was a long wrangle about the methods of Dr. Heaton, who was at that time supposed to have a secret method of curing hernia. A member, however, reported the whole procedure and technique, which was published.

In January, 1877, Dr. D. D. Gilbert, of Dorchester, reported a remarkable case of interstitial pregnancy, with operation and recovery. I will not dwell on the particulars, but will say that the diagnosis having been made, and pains coming on, and no time given for consultation, Dr. Gilbert incised the membrane enclosing the head, through the os, with a Miller's scarifier, and the next day a child weighing four pounds was born, who lived four weeks, the mother recovering. When we consider the state of knowledge and practice in this most dangerous condition twenty-five years ago, I think you will agree with me that Dr. Gilbert's promptness, resource, decision and skill are worthy of high commendation.

January, 1877, also gives the first notice of Dr. Martin's adhesive plaster; in October of the same year of his rubber bandage, both of which have had such extensive use.

In March, 1878, appears the first reference to the aspiration of the bladder, which used to be so frequently done, but which now is seldom heard of.

November, 1879, in a discussion about puerperal convulsions, Dr. Fogg related several cases where

convulsions were controlled by atropia, which he preferred to morphia.

On the 4th of December, 1879, the secretary is instructed by the President of the Massachusetts Medical Society that reasonable doubts having been presented by one of the boards of censors as to legality of action of the councillors at their last meeting regarding the admission of women to the society until its confirmation by the society at large, the Board of Censors of the Norfolk District is hereby directed not to examine women for admission until further official notice regarding the matter shall have been received by the secretary. This is the first notice of the great woman question on record in our reports. It would be difficult to divine the nature of the sensations and exclamations of Dr. Jeremy Stimson, of Dedham, the first president, and of Dr. Alden, of Randolph, were they to join us in the flesh this day and see ladies seated in the conclave and cheering us by their presence. Dr. Martin spoke of the want of knowledge of diseases of parts about the pelvis, and told of a patient first treated in Philadelphia after the method now fashionable for increasing "blood and fat," and later failing to be relieved at a water cure of "plethora," when the case was really one of piles cured at once by a proper operation. Dr. Joseph Stedman mentioned a case of his that had fallen into the hands of a "specialist," who said the patient had a "tumor" and should have it excised. Some few months afterwards the patient was brought to bed of a healthy child, and the "tumor" was no longer to be found. The "specialist" received an invitation to the christening.

In December, 1880, we find in spite of the excerpts which have been just read to you, an expression of want of interest in the society.

In the meeting of November, 1881, Dr. Martin gave glimpses of the International Medical Congress in London. He said the germ theory met with a cool reception in the congress, and, in the speaker's own mind, in less than twenty-five years that now popular theory would be one of the exploded fallacies. As to antiseptics Mr. Keith and several of his assistants had suffered from albuminuria from carbolic-acid poisoning. Mr. Lister was considerably disconcerted by Mr. Keith's remarks. Because the allotted time for speakers in the congress was limited by rule to ten minutes, and Dr. Martin found the rule inflexible toward himself, although frequent exceptions towards some others were not wanting, he preferred to accept the opportunity offered by the British Medical Association of an excursion to Ryde, Isle of Wight. The opinions about the germ theory and antiseptics were largely shared by leading surgeons of the period, and are only quoted as illustrating the fact that brilliant speakers and scholars are not exempt from the rule that it is safest to prophesy after the event.

In May, 1882, the election of councillors appears to have turned on the question of the admission of women, Dr. R. T. Edes being the champion of the sex.

The last date brings the history of the society within the memory of living man. I have already exhausted my time and your patience, otherwise material could be brought to light of increasing interest in the records of following years. I thank you for the forbearance with which the garrulity of age

has been listened to, and I know that you would all bear even greater hardships, if they would ensure the prosperity and duration of our Norfolk District Medical Society, and light it along for another half century.

THE PROGRESS OF MEDICINE.¹

BY HAROLD C. ERNST, M.D., BOSTON.

PROBABLY no period in the history of medicine has been so prolific of changes and, as we believe, of progress as the last fifty years, and it is my pleasant duty, at the request of your committee of arrangements, to place before you as clearly as may be an outline picture of how this progress has been accomplished.

The great period of medical advance beginning with the application of ether to the relief of pain in surgical procedures in 1846 at the Massachusetts General Hospital and almost co-existent with the life of this society has accomplished so much that a brief review of the changes is necessary to enable us to realize what has been done. These are changes, too, that are of the utmost practical value, and in medicine we are little liable to the reproach of the search after useless knowledge, for we should believe, and most of us do, that "The knowledge which a man can use is the only real knowledge, the only knowledge which has life and growth in it and converts itself into practical power. The rest hangs like dust about the brain or dries like raindrops off the streets."²

Now progress in medicine occurs by the increase in means for study; the growth of hospitals and dispensaries for the care of the sick and the study of disease on the one hand, and by the enlargement of the means for presenting the material thus brought together to the students of medicine, as well graduates as undergraduates, on the other.

How this has been accomplished in our own vicinity I shall endeavor to show you, and then to give you a very brief review of what similar changes all over the world have done for our knowledge and management of disease processes in the human race.

It is exceedingly interesting to find that of the 110 (approximate) institutions in Massachusetts devoted to the care and treatment of the sick, but 13 of them were in existence previous to 1850 (Massachusetts General Hospital, incorporated 1811, open for patients September 3, 1821; McLean Asylum for Insane [name changed by trustees in 1892 to McLean Hospital], Department for Insane authorized in charter 1811, opened for patients October 6, 1818; Boston Lying-in Hospital, organized 1832; Eye and Ear Infirmary, started by John Jeffries and Edward Reynolds, who hired a room November, 1824, in Scollay's Buildings; Boston Lunatic Hospital, 1839; Smallpox Hospital, 1817; State Lunatic Hospitals, — Worcester, authorized March 10, 1830; Taunton, authorized May, 1851, — Massachusetts School for Feeble Minded, organized 1848; Barre Institute for Feeble Minded Youth, organized 1848; Essex County Receptacle for Insane; Lowell Hospital, organized 1840; Salem Dispensary, organized 1824; Boston Dispen-

¹ Delivered at the Semi-centennial Meeting of the Norfolk District Medical Society, May 8, 1900.

² Osher's *After Twenty-Five Years*, p. 11, rep. from *Montreal Medical Journal*, November, 1899.