

## Original Articles.

## THE HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL IN 1788-89.

TRANSLATED BY MR. DAVID HEALD, HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

THE following account of a student's life and experiences at the Harvard Medical School a few years after its foundation is translated from the "Mémoires de Pierre de Sales La Terrière et de ses traverses." Written in 1812, three years before La Terrière's death, the "Mémoires" remained in manuscript in the possession of his descendants for more than half a century. At length, in 1870, they came to the notice of the Abbé Casgrain, the Canadian historian, who recommended their publication; they were thereupon edited by Alfred Garneau and, in 1873, were printed at Quebec in a small volume of 271 pages. Owing to the intimate details which La Terrière gave of his family affairs, his descendants were unwilling that the work should be published; an edition of one hundred copies only was printed for distribution among relatives and friends. The copy from which the present translation was made formerly belonged to Francis Parkman and was bequeathed by him to the Harvard College Library.

Pierre de Sales La Terrière was born at Alby, in Languedoc, on Sept. 23, 1743. His family was of the lesser nobility of the region and he was a younger son. He pursued his elementary studies at the royal college at Toulouse, studied mathematics and navigation for a year or more at La Rochelle and finally had himself entered as an applicant for a commission in the king's service. He was assigned to a ship of war, *Le Brisson*, which was to sail for the Indies in a few months, but, before the date of sailing arrived, the ship was condemned as unfit for service and La Terrière gave up his plan of becoming a sailor. Instead he turned his attention to medicine and for a year and a half studied with M. de la Rochambeau, physician to the queen. These studies were brought to an abrupt end by Rochambeau's sudden death. Shortly afterwards La Terrière accompanied a fellow student, an Englishman, on a trip to England. From England he went to Canada, arriving at Quebec on Sept. 5, 1766. For the next few years he supported himself partly by trade and partly by the practice of medicine. In 1771 he became the Quebec representative of a company which operated a forge at St. Maurice; four years later he removed to St. Maurice with the title of inspector of the forges. Here he remained as inspector and later as superintendent for several years. In 1779 he was arrested by order of General Halimand, on the charge of treason. He was accused of having furnished bullets to Montgomery's army, of encouraging troops to desert and thereby sending information to the American authorities and of abetting in one way or another the projected invasion of Canada. La Terrière protested his innocence and his loyalty, but whether he was innocent or not, the French population was undeniably disaffected and he was a person of

considerable prominence in his part of the country, and excellent as an example. He was accordingly imprisoned at Quebec with three other Frenchmen who had been active in stirring up sedition. In August, 1782, he was released on the condition that he would voluntarily leave the province, and he removed to Newfoundland. After the peace of Versailles he returned once more to Canada and took up the practice of medicine at Gentilly, a settlement on the St. Lawrence not far from Three Rivers. For several years his life was uneventful, but in April, 1788, an ordinance was passed restricting the practice of medicine to such persons as held diplomas from recognized institutions or as should pass an examination. La Terrière had no diploma and failed in his examination; thereupon, protesting against his harsh treatment, he journeyed to Cambridge and studied for a year at the Medical School. On his return to Canada he was licensed to practice and from this time until 1810 he devoted himself chiefly to his profession. In 1807 he went abroad for the purpose of claiming the family estates to which, through the death of his brother, he had become heir, but Lord Castlereagh, then minister of war, refused to grant him a passport to go to France; during his stay in England he was elected a member of the Society of the Adelphi of London. In 1810 he retired to the seigneurie of Eboulements, which he had purchased, and here he lived until his death on June 8, 1815.

With regard to the character of the "Mémoires," little need be said. Written in La Terrière's old age and doubtless with nothing at hand with which to check up his statements, they are not unnaturally often wrong concerning dates and figures. Thus we read that the college commons seated six hundred, when probably it did not accommodate one half of that number. Allowance should be made also for the fact that La Terrière was writing for his children and grandchildren and wished to appear a person of considerable importance in their eyes. So, for example, he dwells upon the eagerness with which the best families of Cambridge and later those of Plymouth received him. Still, even though the work contains many errors of fact and is full of exaggeration, and in places the author's adventures recall those of D'Artagnan, it gives us what is probably a substantially trustworthy picture of a student's life at the Medical School at that time; and it is by some years the earliest picture of this kind which we have.

The Medical School, it may be well to remark here, was authorized by a vote of the Corporation on Nov. 22, 1782. The first professors were inducted into office on Oct. 7, 1783, and began their labors shortly afterwards. Until 1788, however, no degrees were conferred upon their students. In that year the degree of Bachelor of Medicine was awarded to two candidates, and in 1789 it was given to two more — La Terrière and William Pearson.

With this introduction we can take up Terrière's own account:

"It is from memory, twenty-three years after

wards, that I am writing the history of my journey to the United States, in case the exact account, forgotten in 1788 and left with Dr. John Warren in Boston, should be lost. It would be worth while for my children to reclaim it, in order to compare it with the present narrative and to correct any errors which may slip from my pen."

The detailed account of this journey is here omitted. In the autumn of 1788, La Terrière left Baie du Febyre, now La Baie, a small town on the southern shore of the St. Lawrence, half way between Montreal and Quebec, and traveled by canoe up the St. Francis River, across Lake Memphremagog, and some fifteen leagues up the Black River. Near what is now Craftsbury, Vt., he left his canoe and followed the route known as Hazen's Road to Haverhill, N. H.; from there his route led through Plymouth and Concord, N. H. He was probably a considerable time on the road, even for those days, for we are told that before reaching Haverhill he stopped for nine days at a place which he calls Abraham's Plains and successfully treated a miller who was suffering from a "true pleurisy, with all the symptoms of inflammation." Again, at Plymouth, he treated a young man whom he found in an "inflammatory delirium" and whose life was despaired of; here he tarried five days, until his patient was out of danger. We take up the narrative once more as he comes near Boston.

"As we<sup>1</sup> approached the large town of Boston the buildings become more elegant.

"A curious thing which I have forgotten to mention happened to us between Plymouth and Concord. On Sunday morning we were stopped on the road and hailed before a *squire* or magistrate, who asked why we were traveling on the *Sabbath day*. We replied that we were strangers, Canadians; that we were on our way to Boston and that the condition of our purse forced us to make haste. 'In honor of what prejudice is it,' we exclaimed, 'that such a despotism makes itself felt in a republican country, when nowhere else in the entire world is a person subject to such restraint?' The squire, having only puerile reasons to give, concluded by saying, 'You are welcome at my house. I prefer to entertain you rather than let you go and see you stopped at any minute. It is one of our weaknesses in this district and it has acquired the force of a law.' We stayed with him, well fed and well lodged, and he himself conducted us back to the highway and wished us a pleasant journey. A good man, but attached to the Methodist fanaticism!

"In sight of Cambridge and of Boston we halted, to decide where we should go first; after reflecting, we took our way toward Cambridge, where we at length entered an inn. We asked for information; there happened to be present a student of Harvard College who said to us, 'The only person who can tell you what you must do is Mr. Willard, the president, to whom I will introduce you if you wish.' 'I shall be infinitely obliged to you,' I replied. This obliging young man then went and told the president that one of two strangers, just arrived from Canada, desired

very much to speak with him. 'Tell him to come and see me when he wishes,' he answered. 'This is just the time that I am at home.' The student ran back to the inn and we departed together. He accompanied me to the door, where he knocked and I was introduced. 'Sir,' said I to the president of the college, 'I am an old practitioner in medicine, a Frenchman by birth, and educated in the medical schools of Paris. Having removed to Canada in 1766, I have remained there ever since and have practiced there. The fatality of the war between the United States and Great Britain has engendered many animosities, and the favorites, or the protected party, delight in monopolizing everything that is able to give them any advantage. The ordinance concerning medicine, or the law which has just been passed touching this profession, as you will be able to judge from the extract I submit to you, will leave you in no doubt on this point. All those who have not served in the army and who have not diplomas have been obliged to undergo an examination. Not having foreseen the necessity of exhibiting these documents, and having lost mine long ago, I had to go empty handed before hard and strict examiners. Although my examination before a numerous company lasted eight hours, since I bore the stain of having been for four years a prisoner of state because I had been suspected of being a friend to the Americans, I was refused and here is the examiners' certificate. I have been unwilling to give up, however, because I believe myself capable of practicing as honorably as any of those physicians, and as it is necessary only to earn a diploma, listening to the interests of my family and feeling sufficient blood in my veins, I have formed the plan of beginning at the nearest place a new course following the English system. A Mr. Coffin,<sup>2</sup> born and educated at Cambridge, who was present at my examination as a spectator, was grieved to see me treated so rigorously and could not refrain from saying aloud that the candidate had a good opportunity, that the university of Cambridge was near and that there he would soon earn and surely obtain what he lacked. A general cry arose and the examiners were obliged to give me this certificate. When you shall have made out their intentions in this document, I flatter myself, sir, that you will have regard for my situation and for my desire of being admitted as a pupil to this college for such time as it is strictly necessary for me to remain here. My family, my friends and I myself will be profoundly grateful to you.' 'Leave your papers with me,' he answered. 'I will send to you at your inn a letter addressed to the professor of anatomy, Dr. Warren, of Boston, whom you will go to see. In the meantime I will inform the Corporation and on Tuesday you will be advised what you will have to do. Dr. Warren is the friend of all men and, as for me, you may be assured of my protection. I see that you have been harshly dealt with, but here you will find friends.'

"Accordingly my brother-in-law and I de-

parted immediately for Boston, where we took lodgings at the north side of the splendid bridge with one David Bradley, at the sign of the White Horse.<sup>3</sup> The afternoon of the same day I had myself conducted to Dr. Warren's and had the good fortune of finding him at home; I gave him the letter from the president of the college, and when he had read it he asked me to repeat to him all the details of my affair. I did so. He appeared to be extremely interested in my situation and encouraged me by saying, 'You will be admitted and you will see that strangers will treat you as a friend. Where are you staying?' 'At the sign of the White Horse, Bradley's.' 'Very well, you will receive notice there of whatever shall be decided with regard to you.' I thanked him and returned to my lodging.

"The next day, in the afternoon, Dr. Warren, on his way from Cambridge, came to see me and told me to go to his house at nine o'clock the next morning; the whole Corporation was to meet there to have me pass the admission examination, and he would introduce me into their presence. I was on time. When I appeared before the assemblage every one greeted me very cordially. The president then opened the meeting: 'We are gathered here,' said he, 'to render justice to a foreign candidate who presents himself to take his course in medicine at our university. Shall we ask him the usual questions in order to find out if he is worthy?' All answered, 'Yes.' 'Who are you? Where did you receive your education?' 'I am a Frenchman by birth. I pursued my elementary studies at Alby, a town of Languedoc, and my humanities at Toulouse; in addition I have taken a course of mathematics at La Rochelle.' 'Are you a practitioner in medicine? Where have you studied medicine?' 'At Paris, with Dr. De la Rochambeau, physician to the queen, in 1765 and 1766; I have taken the course at Saint-Côme, under Dionis, and have assisted at the Hôtel Dieu.' 'Take oath of these things.'

"They were unanimously of the opinion that I might and should be admitted as a candidate for a diploma in my profession and that I should enjoy the same privileges as all the other students. I thanked them and withdrew with Dr. Warren, who promised to lodge me with Mr. Ebenezer Sewall, professor of Oriental languages and doctor of theology, who lived near the college.<sup>4</sup> 'Tomorrow,' he added, 'on my way from Cambridge, I will tell you his answer. To-day you will come and dine with me.' I was received with the greatest politeness by Mrs. Warren and all the family; the conversation turned on Canada and France. Dr. Warren thought highly of the French; a surgeon of that nation (whose anatomical work was in the museum at Cambridge) had rendered him great services and he wished to do as much for me. I was touched at these words; I thanked him and promised to cherish an eternal gratitude for his kindness.

"He informed me that the lectures and demonstrations of accouchement were held at his house, and showed me his preparation room. I

returned to my inn well pleased with my day. As he had promised he came himself on the next day to acquaint me with the answer of Mr. Sewall. 'You will have lodging and board with Mr. Sewall,' said he, 'for ten shillings a week, and you may start in there whenever you please. I will see you there.' I went there that afternoon. As my means did not permit me to entertain my brother-in-law any longer, I gave him some money and advised him to go and join his brother at West Point; he undertook to do so. Poor young man! I have never seen him since. He found his brother and spent a considerable time with him; that is everything that I know about him. Mr. Sewall, a learned and most honored man, kept house with two nieces; I received from them all the hearty welcome and the care which my excellent protector, Dr. Warren, had said I should receive.

"Dr. Waterhouse, professor of medicine, came to pay me a visit, and I returned his call on the next day. From his house he accompanied me to the president's, conducted me about the entire college and introduced me to the librarian, the Rev. Mr. Smith.<sup>5</sup> It was from the latter that I then received the books and instruments necessary for my studies; he delivered them to me upon my signing a receipt.

"Without loss of time I began on the next day to attend the demonstrations; they were held at different hours, in order that one student might attend them all. These are the names of my professors: Mr. Benjamin Waterhouse in medicine; he followed the Colinian system in all his nosology and applied it for or against all the other authors. John Warren, professor of surgery and of anatomy, followed the system of Hallet [Haller], and of Winslow and Bell in surgery. Aaron Dexter taught chemistry and materia medica, following the system of Foureroy.

"I was directed to take notes of each professor's lectures on theory and to make use of the authors in the library to help me in this work. I had thus plenty of work laid out for me without counting the dressing of wounds at the almshouse<sup>6</sup>; I took my turn there every Wednesday and Thursday. And in addition I took a course in experimental physics with Cleber,<sup>7</sup> who was very learned in this science.

"As I had crossed the mountains that separate Canada from the United States solely for the purpose of obtaining a diploma, I was firmly resolved to profit by every moment, so that I should not fail in the examination when my period of study should be finished. For in this situation it is not as in many others; here there are no favors. One must know how to cure diseases in accordance with recognized principles, in order to pass the examination before an assemblage of scholars, by whom the slightest hesitation is set down as ignorance and who, in such a case, put the candidate back a year—a year to be added to the two years absolutely necessary. So my motto was *Reussir ou . . . mourir*.

"Nevertheless, I am going to relax ever so little by taking a survey of Boston, its environs,

Cambridge, etc., and telling what impressed me.

"Boston is a fine maritime town, the population of which, as I was informed, amounted to about twenty-two thousand souls. The harbor, with its long wharf, is very commodious; on this wharf there is a row of houses or storehouses. The slaughter houses and the exchange are also commodious. The promenades on the side of Beacon Hill are very pretty. But the most remarkable thing is the North Bridge, ornamented with lamps. The fair sex here surpasses in beauty any that I have seen in America. A very pure English is spoken. All the roads that approach the town are excellent and are well kept up. There are many beautiful churches of every sect, but the Methodists are in the majority.

"I saw with astonishment the resin barrel on a tall mast on Beacon Hill, designed as an alarm, and the tar barrel which had been used in tarring and feathering the first British commissioner who had brought stamps.<sup>8</sup> I saw some beautiful gardens, skillfully conducted ropewalks, a glass factory on the south side of the town and, on the great causeway, grist mills run by the tide—from the direction of the Charles River when the tide rose and from the opposite direction when it ebbed. The meadows and the fields between Boston and Cambridge are all bordered with hedges of barberry.

"Cambridge is built on a level plain. It contains some good buildings, but the finest edifice is the college, formed of three separate buildings disposed on three sides of a rectangle.<sup>9</sup> It is surrounded by walls, except in front, where it faces the village square (*la grande place de la ville*), which is provided with a fence with gates. The halls of study are large, commodious and numerous; the library is beautiful, as is also the cabinet of physics and the museum; the hall of experimental physics cannot be surpassed. The great dining-hall is built for six hundred [!] students, and the cellars, which serve as kitchen and laboratories, are spacious in proportion; so are the amphitheaters of dissection and of the other sciences. Above are the studies and chambers of the students, who live two only to each apartment! Then there is the garden and the park for the amusement of the students, with two sutlers' establishments having everything the students can desire, according to their means. The price of board is fixed at ten shillings a week.

"As Cambridge is in a plain, the beautiful meadows, filled with gardens and fruit trees, which border and surround it, are its chief ornament, together with the stone bridge over its little river.<sup>10</sup> I have eaten there in June excellent cherries, and my ordinary beverage was a very good cider. The soil, however, is somewhat gravelly.

"A few weeks sufficed for me to make the acquaintance of all my fellow students and of all the best people in the little town; the latter in a most affable manner sought my further acquaintance. I was already intimate with several Frenchmen who lived in Boston, particularly

with M. Joseph de Nancred, professor of French at the college,<sup>11</sup> whom I frequently invited to dine with me at my boarding house; he reciprocated every Thursday in Boston. I came to have a close friendship with him, as he was a most estimable person. He rendered me great services and wherever I or any of my sons may be, let us be mindful of them. He was married to a very pretty woman. I also became intimate with a priest, M. de la Poterie, a man of high education. It is he who has established the French Catholic church of Boston on the site—on the foundations, even—of a French Calvinistic church, of which the title (that is, the deed of gift of the land) read that it should never fall into the hands of any but Frenchmen, but without specifying of what faith.<sup>12</sup> Our church was erected, dedicated to the Holy Cross, and I am one of the subscribers. As I subscribed on my arrival in Boston, I owe to this benefaction the saving of what little money I possessed. This was truly a miracle. I have said that on arriving I went to lodge at Bradley's. Believing my bit of money in safety with my other effects in the chamber that had been given me, and fatigued, moreover, at having, ever since my departure from Canada, worn all my specie next my skin (which was excoriated from its harsh contact) I entrusted it all to a little cashbox; so thoroughly did I think it in a safe place in a house of which the occupants seemed to me to be honest. The household consisted only of husband, wife and a maid, and no one except the latter went into my room. When I returned with M. de la Poterie to pay him my subscription I found my box open and two portugues gone. I heartily thanked God that my leather belt with all my resources was still there. I said nothing of the matter in the house, fearing worse, and M. de la Poterie, to whom alone I told my loss, advised me to make the sacrifice; I did so. Perhaps if I had not thus had occasion to participate in such a good work I should not have visited my box for several days and my little treasure would have been filched away. I should have found myself ruined, without friends, and unable to carry on my studies; I should have been obliged to depart. This little adventure showed me that wherever one is it is necessary to be on one's guard night and day. Some time after this the servant said to me with a smile, 'So you have supplied Mrs. Bradley with a new dress?' From that I was no longer in doubt that it was she who had robbed me. De Nancred knew her for a ne'er-do-well; he had me put my money in the bank, which paid me a little interest on it.

"The climate of Boston, of Cambridge and of the surrounding country is very healthful; the winds from the ocean, the west and the north-west winds, which are felt almost continuously, keep off fevers and other maladies. The salubrity in winter, as well as in summer, allows the existence of only inflammatory, nervous and bilious indispositions and, as elsewhere, those caused by intemperance. With regard to this subject I will recount a flattering fact which was told me by

some former professors of the university; it is an observation that the public had made. When their towns were in the possession of the British army, there was not a single night that the police did not pick up soldiers, and officers even, dead drunk in the streets; while, during the winter that the French troops were quartered there, not a single one of them was found in a state of drunkenness.

"How one is able everywhere to do both evil and good! Among the Frenchmen with whom I was intimate there was one from Martinique, very rich and a fop to his fingertips. He had been recommended to one of the leading merchants of Boston, with whom he lived as a son of the house, and one of whose daughters came to be with child by him. He dined with me every Sunday and he made me a hundred offers to induce me to establish myself with him in Martinique; by so doing he thought to hold me. One day, with tears in his eyes, he confessed the whole secret to me and besought me, with promises of making my fortune, to compound remedies to produce a miscarriage for the girl; otherwise he was going to depart and he would be the unhappiest man in the world. 'I believe it,' said I. 'I think a great deal of you, but you must know that I was born a gentleman and that I am incapable of committing a crime. It would be a fine thing for me to have gone from France to England, and from England to Canada, to come from Canada to get myself hanged in Boston! For every other service, be it honorable and proper, I am ready. Since the fault is committed, this is my counsel: either marry the girl at once or depart secretly by the first ship that sails.' 'And I am going to take the latter course,' he exclaimed. 'Never would her father or mine, for reasons of religion, consent to our marriage.' A week later I learned that he had gone. And, however, though he was no longer there, ten days or a fortnight after that a newly born baby was found one morning in the middle of the street opposite the house of the merchant. I had no doubts concerning the mystery, but it was not for me to speak.

"My studies advanced and in excellent fashion. Night and day I stored my memory with the fruit of my lessons at the school and of my experience at the hospital. Several times in the dressing of wounds I took the place of others, in whose minds pleasures predominated. This made these tasks more familiar to me and rendered me the more commendable in the eyes of our professors, even to the extent that when some operation was performed in one town or the other the patient was left in my care. Reader, consider the good effect! My reputation gained so much that, when our professor was one day called to Plymouth to operate for the stone upon the fourteen-year-old son of a ropemaker, he took me with him and had me make the incision in the presence of several practitioners of the place. I succeeded wonderfully well in extracting a stone that weighed three quarters of an ounce. The professor departed for Boston after directing me

to remain nine days with the patient. At the end of this period I gave him over to the care of his family physician.

"I can say with truth that during all this time I was well entertained by my brother physicians and by all the good citizens of this little American seaport. I had the pleasure of going with the former to visit their patients. One of them I knew well enough to invite him to come to my examination; he came, indeed, and I rendered him every courtesy of which I was capable. He was so astonished at my responses at the *Exhibition* that he offered and gave me a most favorable letter to Dr. Nooth, the foremost English physician of Quebec, with whom he had served in the capacity of surgeon at Halifax and New York during the American war. This letter, as I shall show later, was very useful to me on my return.

"On my return to the University I made my report to our professor, who was well satisfied with it, and took up once more the thread of my exercises.

"Four criminals who had been hanged furnished us ample material for dissection; I did not lose a single hair of them, but analyzed every part at the amphitheater and then took it home to depict on paper. The course of Colinian nosology by Dr. Waterhouse, and that of materia medica in the laboratories of Dr. Dexter, occupied me quite as much. I kept an exact copy of all my notes in order that I might have recourse to them at need; this I might have done even while walking up and down my room, for its walls were covered with these writings.

"There happened to die suddenly in Boston an aged spinster, large and fat. On receipt of the news, which was given us immediately by the beadle of Christ Church, we secretly purchased the body from him; he put very little earth upon it and left an iron shovel for us. On the following night — a black night — thirty of us carried the body away in a large sack. Some one had seen us, but before the police were able to approach near enough to find out what was going on, we gained the causeway by the flour mills; the first five or six watchmen who presented themselves were so clearly given to understand that they would have to let us pass that, seeing our superior numbers and fearing for their skins, they were not incredulous. We then proceeded in safety. The next morning the news of the theft of the body spread through the two towns; the relatives demanded a search warrant of the governor, but he, being a member of the Corporation of the college, refused it and the excitement gradually died down.<sup>13</sup> We dissected the old woman secretly and at our ease; she was a superb subject! A comrade who later graduated at my side and I secured permission to work at night in the anatomical theater. We did not lose a moment in completing our study of the physiology, and the myological work that we offered to the Corporation on the day of the *Exhibition*, and which was placed in the museum, will forever remain an honor to Pierre de Sales La Terrière and William Pearson. This is

the fruit of the work and demonstration of the autumn only, and I hope those of the spring will be as profitable to us. The study of theory and practice and the writing-up of our notes continued to occupy us to the extent of leaving only time for us to attend the course in experimental physics given by Professor Webster, who had just arrived from London, St. Petersburg and Paris, where he had taken courses following the new system."<sup>14</sup>

A lengthy synopsis of his first three lectures is then given; they dealt with astronomy.

"The rest of the course was upon the encyclopedic sciences; positive and negative electricity, at least that which has relation to the different fluids; and hydraulics. The demonstrator finished his lectures with a glance at aerostation and expressed a hope that new discoveries would render the atmosphere a navigable sea and thus make possible to the inhabitants of the different spheres a social and profitable intercourse.

"With the spring the time of examination rapidly approached. Each candidate received orders to write a thesis on a subject which was chosen for him by the members of the examining committee of the college and to prepare to defend it at his examination. I had for a subject puerperal fever, which I discussed and publicly defended in such a way as to do myself honor and to win the approbation of this learned body; I had printed at my own expense five hundred copies of my thesis<sup>15</sup> and distributed them gratis to the students on the day of the conferring of degrees and diplomas.

"This examination took place on May 1 [1789]<sup>16</sup>; of twenty-six candidates in medicine, only my good friend Pearson and I passed. The other twenty-four were put off to the next year. The examination by the professors was exceedingly severe, for it was held before the Corporation and all the practitioners of the town of Boston, each of whom had the right to put two questions to the candidate, in addition to some fifteen hundred asked by the professors. One physician in particular, thinking to embarrass me, asked with a pompous air what a sudorific was, and what was the most efficacious. 'A sudorific,' I answered, 'is anything that induces perspiration; and the best sudorific is to appear before such a large and honorable assemblage as this to answer their questions scientifically and properly.' The audience clapped their hands and exclaimed, 'Well answered! Our candidate deserves his diploma,' etc. When my friend Pearson's turn came — he was at my side, because we were examined in twos — he answered very accurately and wittily. He also was applauded and the examiners said, 'The candidate deserves his diploma.'

"The twenty-four others received compliments on the attainments which they had shown, but which were not deemed sufficient to win them diplomas. So they were *rusticated* for another year.

"I had now only to prepare and carefully to

compose a dissertation which could be defended in public on what is known as 'Commencement Day.'<sup>17</sup> As I have said, my subject was puerperal fever. When the manuscript was finished I submitted it to the examining professors, who found my work original and to their liking, so that I obtained their certificate to have it printed at the college press. On the day of the public *Exhibition*, so impatiently awaited, I dressed myself in my gown with its small hood, and the square cap with its silk tassel, and repaired to the theater, where I remained seated in the chair of honor, until an audience of some three thousand [!] persons had taken their places and the president had directed the candidates to advance with order and decorum to offer their dissertations to the public and to defend them. The doctors took precedence of the other faculties and, as I was a foreigner, I was given the honor of being told to begin. I saluted the president and the assemblage and prayed that they would be indulgent, in view of the fact that I was about to express myself in a language that was not my own; then I read my dissertation on puerperal fever with the greatest ease and composure; having finished, I remained standing, firm and respectful. Several of the practitioners of Boston, exercising their right, went into the gallery opposite and entered into controversy with me concerning certain practical points of my subject, but I had so familiar an acquaintance, both theoretical and practical, with this branch, which I had practiced in Canada for a long time before this academical essay, that I replied to them without difficulty, and in my turn asked some questions in regard to climates and habits which embarrassed them greatly. The *optime* of the Corporation and the applause of the audience disconcerted my opponents to the extent of obliging them to yield and to recognize the merit of which I had given proof. 'Another candidate,' announced the president, and it was the turn of my comrade, William Pearson, to defend his thesis, which treated of mixed fever. He acquitted himself of the task with like honor. Seated once more on our benches, we waited until the candidates of the other faculties had undergone their tests. Then the order of the day was to walk in procession, two by two, before the president and the Corporation and to receive from the registrar, on their order, the diploma, to swear to render equal justice to all men, without exception, who should submit their infirmities to our science; then, after taking this grave oath, in a loud voice to thank the president, the Corporation and the whole audience, and to go out with the same order and decorum. After this, persons stationed at the doors distributed the five hundred copies of our theses to every one who wished them, as a token of the gratitude of the candidates to their auditors. Thus ended this august ceremony.

"From the first of June until the fourteenth, when I left this town to return to Canada,<sup>18</sup> I employed my time in visiting and thanking my friends. I purchased a horse for my journey;

my friend, Dr. Warren, the professor of anatomy, speedily transacted this business for me, by addressing himself to a horse dealer, who at the end of three days procured me a large horse, some ten years old, neither too fat nor too thin, ill favored and with a body of rather peculiar appearance, but an excellent walker and a trotter without an equal; in recounting my travels in Canada, I shall have occasion to speak of him.

"After replying to the letters I had received from my relatives, the De Sales, members of the upper council of the island of Martinique, with whom I was in correspondence, and supplying myself with letters from my protectors of the Corporation, I bade adieu to President Willard and to Doctors Waterhouse, Warren and Dexter, expressing my sincerest gratitude for their favors and praying permission to correspond with them and to send them anything that seemed likely to interest them. Those whose signs of friendship touched me the most were old Mr. Sewall and his two nieces, with whom I had lived and by whom I had been treated with the greatest attention. Mr. Sewall was a member of the college and professor of foreign languages, learned and good, and a man who was extremely useful to me during the whole of my course of studies; his two nieces, without being either young or beautiful, were amiable, of great ability, and had shown me a rare kindness.

"On June 15, in the morning, with my Pegasus, that is to say, my new horse, carrying in addition to me a load of about two hundred pounds, I left this charming town of Cambridge and all these dear friends."

On his arrival in Quebec, La Terrière applied to the commissioners in medicine and was licensed to practice. Their certificate is dated Aug. 19, 1789. Together with this certificate he transcribes a certificate given by Doctors Warren, Waterhouse and Dexter and his diploma from Harvard. The last two may be of sufficient interest to be copied here.

Whereas M. La Terrière hath diligently attended our lectures on Anatomy and Surgery, Theory and Practise of Physic, Chemistry and Materia Medica, in this University, and whereas we the Medical Professors have strictly examined him in the above branches of our Art, and have read and approved his dissertation on the Puerperal Fever, we do hereby certify that we have found him so far qualified in his profession as to recommend him to the reverend and honorable Corporation and Overseers, as worthy of a degree of Bachelor in medicine.

University { In testimony whereof we have  
of { hereunto subscribed our names  
Cambridge { this 14th of July, 1789.

(Signed) J. WARREN, M.D., *Anat. Prof.*

W. B. WATERHOUSE, M.D., *Theor. and Prax. Profess.*

A. DEXTER, M.D., *Chem. and Mater. Med. Profess.*

In the diploma as printed in the "Mémoires" several words which apparently could not be

deciphered have been omitted and blanks left where they occurred. These omissions have been supplied and some slight corrections have been made from a draft of a diploma of somewhat later date now among the University Archives in the College Library. No corrections, however, have been made in the spelling of the names of the president and fellows.

Diploma with the great seal, *Ecclesia cum Christo* [sic].

Senatus Universitatis Harvardianæ Cantabrigiensis, in Republica Massachusetensi. Omnibus, ad quos litteræ presentes pervenerint, salutem in Domino sempiternam.

Notum esto, quod Petrus de Sales La Terrière, Canadensis, vir ingenio bono, ac scientia utili [præditus], moribusque probis ornatus, postquam multum temporis medicinæ studio et praxi dedisset, prælectionibus omnium in medicina hujusce Universitatis professorum assidue interfuit, et examine publice habito, et dissertatione sua de febris puerperali coram enunciata, omnes professores supra nominati eum laudabilem in arte medendi progressum effecisse invenerunt; et testimonium scriptum dederunt idoneum esse, qui ad gradum in medicina Baccalaurealem admittatur.

Qua propter nos, Præses et Socii consentientibus honorandis ad modum ac reverendis Universitatis ante dictæ Inspectoribus, admissimus Petrum de Sales La Terrière ad gradum in medicina Baccalaurealem; eique dedimus et concessimus potestatem de medicina consultandi, praxim cæteraque exercendi quæ medicinæ Baccalaureali exercere solent; et omnia insignia, jura et privilegia, dignitates ac honores, quibus ad istiusmodi gradum [ispium] gentium ev[ecti] ornantur vel ornari debent.

In cujus rei testimonium, litteris hisce nostro communi sigillo munitis, die juli XV anno Salutis MDCCLXXXIX, Reipublicæ Americanæ XIV apposuimus chirographa.

(Signed) JOSEPHUS WILLARD, S.T.D., *Præses.*

EVER UNDELL.

JOANES LOVELL.

E. WIGLESWORTH, S.T.D. et S.P.T.H.

[Illegible]

JIM CONWARD, S.T.D.

JOANES LATHROP, S.T.D.

EBENEZER STORER, *Thesaurius.*

Besides the president and treasurer, who seem to have written a clearer hand than some of their colleagues of the Corporation, the signers of diploma were Oliver Wendell, John Lowell, Edward Wigglesworth, Simeon Howard and John Lathrop. What name was illegible cannot be made out; the entire Corporation is accounted for without it.

#### REFERENCES.

<sup>1</sup> La Terrière was traveling with a brother-in-law.

<sup>2</sup> Possibly Thomas Ashton Coffin, of the class of 1772. A Loyalist, like the rest of the family, he removed from Boston to Canada on the outbreak of the Revolution. During the war he acted as private secretary to Sir Guy Carleton; in 1804 he was secretary and comptroller of accounts for Lower Canada, and at another time was a commissary-general of the army.

<sup>3</sup> The White Horse Tavern was a well-known inn situated near



the corner of Washington and Boylston streets. This would seem rather too remote from the bridge—the Charlestown bridge, built in 1785–86—to conform to La Terrière's description of its locality. Moreover, the White Horse Tavern belonged to Israel Hatch in 1788. Perhaps La Terrière's memory may have played him false in the matter of the color; the Black Horse Tavern, which was on Prince Street, seems a more likely place for him to have stayed.

<sup>4</sup> La Terrière has forgotten the forename of his intended landlord and has given him a degree with which the Quinquennial Catalogue does not credit him. Stephen Sewall, of the class of 1761, was the first Hancock professor of Hebrew and other Oriental languages, serving from 1764 until 1785; his house was within what is now the College Yard, near the present Class of 1889 Gate.

<sup>5</sup> Isaac Smith, of the class of 1767. He was tutor in the college in 1774 and 1775, but removed to England on the outbreak of the Revolution and was for several years the minister of a dissenting church in Sidmouth, Devon. He was appointed librarian in August, 1787, and served until 1791.

<sup>6</sup> "A l'Hôpital Darnhouse," the original has it, and apparently refers to the Boston almshouse which stood on Park Street; the Cambridge institution would scarcely have afforded sufficient material. That the students were granted admission to the almshouse at this time is, however, surprising. The college authorities had tried to arrange for such clinical work in 1784, but had met with opposition from the Boston Medical Society; it was not until 1810 that the Overseers of the Poor of Boston formally voted to allow the medical students to visit the almshouse.

<sup>7</sup> No such name is to be found in the Quinquennial Catalogue. Samuel Webber, of the class of 1784, was tutor in mathematics and natural philosophy from 1787–1789 and is probably the person referred to.

<sup>8</sup> La Terrière is mistaken; the Stamp Riot did not go to such lengths.

<sup>9</sup> Probably Harvard, Hollis and Massachusetts halls are meant.

<sup>10</sup> Presumably the Boylston Street bridge, but it was never of stone.

<sup>11</sup> Joseph Nanerède, instructor in French, 1787–1800.

<sup>12</sup> The Abbé de la Poterie, an ex-chaplain of French navy, was the second Roman Catholic priest to be settled in Boston for any extended period. The facts regarding the French Protestant church mentioned are as follows: In January, 1704–05, the French Protestant church of Boston purchased a piece of land on School House Lane, now School Street, between the present site of the Parker House and Washington Street, for one hundred and ten pounds in the silver coin of the province. Some ten years later a small brick meeting-house was built on the property. By 1748 the church had dwindled to about seven male communicants and subscribers, and the meeting-house was sold to the trustees of a new Congregational church for three thousand pounds in the bills of public credit of the province, for the sole use of a Protestant church for ever. Later it came into the possession of a Mr. Perkins, who leased it to the Catholics for a few years. The first Mass celebrated in the building was read by the Abbé de la Poterie on Nov. 2, 1788.

<sup>13</sup> In this connection it should be pointed out that at this time the only bodies legally given to the school for dissection were those of executed criminals. For many years body-snatching flourished. In 1825 the Faculty voted to place annually at the disposition of the professor of anatomy \$300 for the purpose of encouraging the study of anatomy. It was not until 1831 that the Legislature passed an anatomy law.

<sup>14</sup> There was no one named Webster on the faculty at this time; probably Samuel Webber, already mentioned as tutor in mathematics and natural philosophy, is intended. On Nov. 13, 1788, the Corporation had "desired" him "to exhibit to the resident bachelors and the two senior classes a course of experimental lectures in philosophy, next spring."

<sup>15</sup> One of these five hundred copies, the gift of the author, is in the College Library. "A dissertation on the puerperal fever, delivered at a public examination for the degree of Bachelor in Medicine, before the Reverend Joseph Willard, S.T.D., president, the medical professors and the governors of the University at Cambridge in America. By Peter de Sales la Terrière from Canada. . . . Boston. Printed by Samuel Hall at No. 53 Cornhill, MDCCCLXXXIX." It is a small pamphlet of eighteen pages, of which twelve are given to the dissertation. The work is gratefully dedicated to Professors Warren, Waterhouse and Dexter; it contains also a brief introduction in which the author as a foreigner begs some leniency toward his language and, lest his auditors should wonder at seeing a person of his age taking the examination, recounts the reasons for his coming to Cambridge.

<sup>16</sup> La Terrière's dates cannot be relied on. The dissertation of his classmate Pearson states that the examination occurred on June 30.

<sup>17</sup> This statement appears to contradict the one made a few lines above to the effect that the dissertation was prepared for the examination. The former statement seems to be correct. According to a vote of the Corporation (Nov. 29, 1784) each candidate for a medical degree was required to pass "an examination made by the medical professors . . . in the presence of the Governor of the University and of such members of the Massachusetts Medical Society and of the physicians and gentlemen as shall choose to attend," and also "at such public examination [to] deliver and defend a dissertation in the Latin or English language on such diseases or other medical topic as shall be assigned him by those professors." Doubtless the candidate postponed final revision and printing of his dissertation, however, until after he had passed this examination.

<sup>18</sup> Here again there is an error in the dates; Commencement day in 1789 came on July 15.

CREMATION IN GREAT BRITAIN.—According to the London correspondent of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, cremation continues to make only slow progress in Great Britain. The number of cremations in 1909 was only 855, an advance of 60 on the previous year. The whole total since the opening of the first crematorium in 1885 to the end of 1909 is 8,121.

## THE TREATMENT OF CERVICAL RIGIDITY IN OBSTETRICS.\*

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RIGIDITY of the pregnant, or parturient cervix, may be present in any obstetric case, but it occurs most commonly in elderly primipara, in cases of eclampsia and after the operation of trachelorhaphy. This condition is likely to exist where there has been a premature rupture of the membranes or where there is a malposition of the fetus with failure of the presenting part to adapt itself to the cervix. A rigid cervix must usually be dealt with where artificial delivery is necessary before the advent of labor, and although the dilatation of the cervix of a primigravida presents ordinarily the greater difficulty, an almost equal obstacle is met with at times in dealing with the cicatricial cervix of a multigravida. Although the cervix, as well as the lower uterine segment, is generally softened in the condition of placenta previa and as a result presents an easily dilatable os, still it sometimes happens that there is extreme cervical rigidity.

We will consider the treatment of cervical rigidity in the three following classes:

I. Where the patient is not in labor, but ought to be delivered, great haste not being required. This indication occurs in heart lesions with broken compensation and in cases of toxemia of pregnancy, which include pernicious vomiting and the pre-eclamptic state. The patients who are delivered on account of pelvic deformity before they arrive at full term in order to secure a living baby should also be placed here. A similar class of cases exists in those women where there is an habitual death of the fetus at a certain stage of pregnancy, and delivery is carried out before this period is reached with the hope of obtaining a viable child. This treatment is advisable to save the life of the fetus in some instances of wasting organic disease, as diabetes and tuberculosis. Cases in this class include patients at all periods of pregnancy.

II. Where the patient is in labor and ought to be delivered, great haste not being required. In these cases the pains do not result in a softening of the cervix and a dilatation of the os, but the cervix remains rigid and the os undilated. The pains may be nagging and irregular, or they may be forcible and regular. Cases of ante-partum bleeding where there has been only a moderate loss of blood, as may occur in placenta previa and detachment of the placenta, should be included.

III. Where the patient is, or is not, in labor, but requires immediate delivery, as in cases of eclampsia, profuse ante-partum hemorrhage, collapse due to cardiac disease, respiratory embarrassment in pneumonia and prolapsed cord. Exhaustion, or approaching exhaustion, of either mother or child presents a similar indication for delivery.

We will deal first with the treatment of Class I,

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