

AN

# INAUGURAL DISSERTATION

ON

*The Medical man*

SUBMITTED TO THE

PRESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, AND MEDICAL FACULTY

OF THE

## UNIVERSITY OF NASHVILLE,



FOR THE DEGREE OF

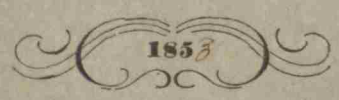
## DOCTOR OF MEDICINE.

BY

*Albert G. Handley*

OF

*Tennessee*



1853

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The Medical Means.

One prominent peculiarity in the genius of republican institutions is honor - is not attained, by office - pretensions, the sentiment of the Scottish bard that Rank is but the quinea's stamp, is now found to be exploded by the light of free and liberal views which the enlarging spirit of the present age leads to the minds and motives of men -

In the ordinary concerns of life we are becoming apt to look below the surface of objects in our investigations of their quality and the aphorisms {perhaps the truest ism of the age}

That all is not gold that glitters is  
 as generally believed, as that whitened  
 Sepulchers contain dead Men's putrid  
 bones. These facts are now mere tru-  
 -isms although a certain Poet has  
 said he would not for the sake  
 of his comfort forego the pleasure  
 of believing all things to be what  
 they seemed. It now requires uncom-  
 -monly artful, deceptive faculties to  
 evade the scrutiny of suspicion, which  
 regards with much circumspection  
 the manner and intentions of the  
 man of the world. Society has  
 established conventional rules by  
 which we are all to be estimated  
 as well as governed and are so well  
 known, and recognised by all polite

and correct gentlemen, that they are  
 soon become a part of every young  
 man's education and being trained  
 under their views, infancy we all  
 seem naturally to know the relation  
 which we bear to each other which  
 knowledge supersedes the necessity  
 of a place for Chesterfield in  
 our libraries. Yet there are peculiar  
 spheres in Society in which certain  
 classes of men move that exempt  
 them from ordinary scrutiny and  
 with a decorous exterior often win  
 for them the plaudits and praise  
 of the less privileged masses. I  
 mean professional men and on this  
 subject I will confine my remarks  
 to the medical profession. It does

not fall to the lot of one Man to  
 see all grades of Society even in Comm-  
 on affairs so with the profession of  
 Medicine one extreme is but the as-  
 -wishment of the other and should  
 they chauce to meet there would be  
 as much seeming difference as exists  
 between the Mammalia and reptile  
 and for the one to recognize the  
 other would be indeed a humiliating  
 lesson to his professional pride he  
 would feel the force of the lines  
 of the poet Darwin,

"Strip selfish pride and own thy Kinred from  
 Thy Mother Emmet and thy Sister worms,"  
 Such shapeless monstruities do deform  
 the lineage that many of us find  
 would make that stupendous chain

which, connects the whole, and perhaps  
 lengthens their ears and nose them,  
 under new genera. Some of these  
 deformities are so apparent that  
 the common eye may see or they  
 blind feel - but often an external  
 drapery is made to conceal them,  
 and only a technical test can betray  
 their spuriousness - In this state a  
 much mistaken liberality prevails  
 which, permits any person to prac-  
 -tise medicine, and experiment upon  
 human life, and indeed so successfully  
 does artful empiricism, insinuate  
 itself into the confidence of the  
 credulous that any attempt to dis-  
 entangle it even as one of the most  
 self - interested offices of physicians

often elicits the blindest assent. Their confidence has been gained, by a studied system of deception. The only trait which the Charlatan employs as his passport into the good opinions of society and is also a safe asylum of refuge when circumstances require it. Medicine is the most complete mystery of all sciences to those who have never studied it and still almost every man of forty years and woman of the same age, believes him or herself a pretty fair physician. The Mountebank, therefore has only to find out their views and prejudices to render himself acceptable to their prejudices. Under such a condition of circumstances

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I propose to treat of the character  
and department of the Medical  
Man. We have seen from the  
peculiar position of a Physician  
that he has in his power and con-  
-trol a most favorable opportunity  
of employing to his present advan-  
-tages the weaker qualities of hum-  
-an nature and hence when the  
current of circumstances flows  
adversely to his interest and the tide  
in his affairs seems to ebb; the  
temptations to these resources which  
especially belongs to empiricism, is  
often, <sup>we find</sup> the control of many men of  
weak virtues and is the attribute  
only of high moral honor which  
characterizes the subject of this essay.



Chazmonnity has within itself resou-  
 -ces independent of the mutable,  
 phases which the scenes of life  
 present - It is that element in our  
 nature which, as stimulates us to the  
 images of Heims who made us; it is  
 that quality which, creates the  
 true distinctions, and, casts in  
 society and like a sovereign prin-  
 ciple, in human nature every other  
 faculty pays its homage.

Professional bickering has become  
 a general remark and many persons  
 are curious to know why these sho-  
 -uld exist such jealousy and unfin-  
 -dy feeling among physicians, and  
 really there is but one true answer  
 at least one principal cause, and

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That is the degenerate tendency of  
them - (I don't know what to call it)

Medicine was once practiced as an  
honorable science, but now it has  
become the humblest of trades.

Many have sought the titles of M.D.  
, D. to elevate them, but the number  
has been too weighty and have neces-  
sarily drawn the degree down to their own  
standards - So true is this, that, D<sup>r</sup>  
prefixed to a name <sup>now</sup> excites  
suspicion, instead of its wonted mea-  
sure of respect. To remedy these evils  
a National Medical Association  
was established a few years ago  
in the United States but failed  
in the attempt, and this is now  
one of the most portentous

omens of "dark ages," in medicine it argues much of evil yet to come.

The truth is that many have abandoned, and are still abandoning the profession dog, in disgust sur-  
-rendering the avocation to Quacks

Under all these, unfavorable, circumstances a medical student is but little encouraged to prepare himself for the practice of his profession, unless there exists within him, some inherent devo-  
-tion, to the science, - and, when he commences the practice it is but to "take up arms against a sea of troubles," - which to oppose requires an extraordinary energy as well as a magnanimous devotion

to truth and honor - Yet all these  
unpropitious circumstances offer an  
opportunity for true, persevering  
virtue to develop itself.

A junior member of the medi-  
cal profession is almost always in  
the power of older Physicians who  
have preceded him, and gained  
the confidence of the neighbor-  
-hood, in which he has located.

There are also independent of this  
a great many persons who look  
upon their family Physician as  
a household God, and consider it  
blasphemy to question his author-  
-ity, or, doubt the validity of his  
assertions. Such an influence there  
is dangerous to whatever conflicts

with the interest of its Professor, and  
 I envy not the young votary of  
 Science who offers or unsuspecting  
 trusts his fame and fortunes to  
 his treacherous powers. Power and  
 place afford peculiar advantages  
 to men, in all positions in Society—  
 and I imagine nothing nobler in the  
 character of a Physician surrounded  
 with these advantages, than to see  
 him lending them to the advance-  
 -ment of the junior Assistant who  
 is ordinarily engaged in the pursuit  
 of Knowledge, or the relief of hu-  
 -man suffering. By taking him as  
 it were by the hand and leading  
 him through the intricate avenues  
 that make the temple of Science

or Guilds, bring them clear to the end  
 its winding labyrinth. Physicians  
 are from their occupations often thrown  
 into close relationships with each other;  
 a patient often feels that in the mul-  
 -titudes of courses there is greater safety;  
 in such cases each should frankly a-  
 -vow his views to the other and without  
 selfish illiberality respect each other's  
 counsel: this should be done not only  
 for their own self regard and profes-  
 -sional dignity, but also for the security  
 of their patient who confides to their  
 hands his most important trust.

On such consultations the utmost  
 honesty and candor is exercised by  
 the true Medical Man, here he feels  
 the responsibility of his association,

and allows no means consideration to  
 influences him, than the trust re-  
 -posed in him: and for the sake  
 of the honor of his profession will  
 charitably hide, they forget to see,  
 or pardon, a trifling error in the  
 judgement of his coadvisor. No man

however learned, <sup>or skilful</sup> he may be in the heal-  
 -ing art is at all times free from  
 error, for the knowledge of disease is  
 not to be derived from intuition, ~~altho~~  
 ough the patient lies before us many  
 inferences are to be drawn, and a mul-  
 -titude of circumstances to be considered.

A correct diagnosis is often diffi-  
 cult to be arrived at; medicine is most-  
 -ly a system of deductive philosophy  
 and the truth is, much is to be guessed at.

Authorities differ as widely as the poles;  
 and it is not in the power of but  
 few who can, at all times harmon-  
 ize the conflict of opinions by  
 which we are to be governed in our  
 judgement and treatment of disease;  
 Under all these circumstances there  
 a difference of opinion on Medical  
 subjects is nothing more than might  
 be expected; and much of the ma-  
 levolence and jealousy that dishonors  
 the profession could easily be waived  
 and friendly reconciliations heal  
 all those unquiet assensions.

The sentiment of fraternality is  
 especially should belong to the fratern-  
 ity, and of all the learned profess-  
 ions. *Amicitias sublatas omnis est e vita*



Subtata, perennitas, should be esteem-  
ed, a Matro most necessary to that  
of Physic.

Industry and self-denial are  
the prerequisites of a Medical stu-  
dent else he may find that he  
traces the wheel of Ixion, instead  
of Fortune. The occupation will be an  
eternal task of labor and toil in-  
stead of a recreation in the sunny  
fields of Science and literatures, that  
blossoms in the wild domain of Nature;  
and to climb the steps that arise  
upon the landscape around will  
be but a relief and variety to the  
otherwise flowery Monotony, like the  
mountain waves that deform the sea,  
they give a picture of its grandeur

and heighten the interest of the boy  
-age. A physician should never  
make medicine his employment solely  
for the abused purpose of gain  
I care not if his purpose be self aggr  
-avancement, but not mere pecuniary  
aggravancement; let it be for the  
enlargement of his views, or let his  
eye fix its earnest gaze upon the can  
-dels that hang about the summit  
of Parnis <sup>mons</sup> temples; or let choic<sup>a</sup> the  
greatest of these, be his object; Such  
objects are a safe security against  
that professional prostitution which  
is becoming descriptive of many of  
the present race of Esculapian's  
degenerate sons. The motives which  
prompt a man to practice medicine

will often be a good criterion, by which  
 his merit may be measured. No man  
 who has the improvement of his mind  
 in view will be satisfied with a  
 superficial empirical knowledge of  
 his business. He whose emulation  
 sustains his lofty spirit in its  
 eagle gaze upon the shining gal-  
 -axy of the great, is impelled by  
 a force that will elevate him  
 far above the hazy artifices of  
 the disgusting pretender. Neither  
 of these characters will powder with  
 fawning obsequy to the appeten-  
 -ces and prejudices of the ignorant  
 for favor or applause; they aim high-  
 -er than the price of the Many Mob;  
 whose ties of feeling is unnotable

as they wave that twin with the  
 changing winds. The feelings of  
 the ignorant rabble are not govern-  
 ed by any fixed principles; I do  
 not speak of their views or opinions  
 for they have not enough re-  
 flections and thought to form  
 them, and are only driven by  
 incidental impulses; that versatile  
 principle of the ignorant  
 which to day would dethrone a  
 Louis Philip, and curse Monar-  
 -chies, and tomorrow establish a  
 Republic then crown their president.

A wise man hears not in the  
 rabble shout the vocal triumphs  
 of Pain. I always admire pride and  
 ambition as the essential qualities

of greatness. Virtues is a property  
 common to mind as well as Matter  
 which requires a force to put  
 it in Motion, and when we consider  
 the courses of Motions in mind  
 we term them Motives, hence we  
 generally esteem the Manners and  
 deeds of Men, according to the  
 Motives which impel them. Thus  
 they are often the locomotives of  
 mind which direct and lead  
 the Machinery of Thought on the  
 wings of Genius, which elevate and  
 bear it high upon the Summit of  
 human greatness: Nobler Ambitions  
 than these cannot adorn the  
 Physicians - Not such ambition as  
 that of Napoleon, which raised him

above his contemporaries by treading  
 them beneath his feet, but like  
 the Eagle whose own inherent pow-  
 ers impel him, above the songsters  
 of the bush, and unwinking gazes  
 at the Sun as if to fix his eye there.

It is seldom that a man becom-  
 -es learned or skillful by accident,  
 and men more often fall below  
 than rise above their aim; hence,  
 if he desires to excel, he must  
 cultivate a fixed purpose, ~~and~~  
 effect what he undertakes, and  
 industriously guide the helm of  
 affairs. It is true that fortune  
 flatters a favorite few, but the  
 many who have courted her propitiously  
 smile here generally with disappointment

There is no royal road to learning  
 The some paths must be trodden  
 by the plebeian and the lord. It is her-  
 -er obtained, as a hereditary birthright,  
 and Genius often acknowledges the  
 peasant as a legitimate son, while  
 Golly is as often nursed by the court  
 of Kings. These facts should plume  
 the wings of ambition, and give or-  
 -dor to the humble aspirant, and  
 to professional pride a loftier de-  
 -partment. Eminence is not to be  
 ascribed to chance, it is very seldom  
 that it is attained by accidental  
 combinations of circumstances, but  
 by arduous toil. Though Genius  
 sides on Pedalium wings, yet sea-  
 -saw, sees sometimes whelms it in its

fall, and when, not attended by ever-  
 -gging and virtues, soon descends like the  
 blazing Meteor, glowing in its fall  
 until it disappears in the surron-  
 -ounding glooms, a rapid transient with-  
 -ingress, or like some tall ships with  
 unfurled sails and empty holds, un-  
 weighed by ballast becomes the sport  
 of winds, and soon a wreck upon  
 the deeps. This is sometimes the  
 fate of Genius, while perseverance  
 leads its weary <sup>way</sup> laboring up each  
 dizzy step, until from some al-  
 -lure height it looks from its thron-  
 -es of clouds over half the world,  
 and sees from afar over the doors  
 of Fame's temple, the encouraging  
 superscription "Labor vincit omnia,"



The physician, should acquaint himself pretty well with human nature, and cultivate, if possible that flexibility of Temperament which will adapt him to all climes and conditions. To warm the chilled heart of poverty is often his duty and not the least pleasure of his various offices which he is called upon to perform. ~~Charity~~ <sup>generous</sup> is much, in allowing to improve the heart of beneficence. Charity is perhaps the purest impulse of the human soul, and the man is unfortunate who is devoid of those sentiments which thrill the breast of sympathy, when they confer comfort and consolation to

the cheerless house of success  
 hovering. It is the duty of the  
 physician to attend every call  
 to human suffering which is in  
 his province to relieve, and as a pro-  
 -fidee, in addition to what is above  
 said I will say, that, I believe the  
 Medical profession commit as ma-  
 -ny errors in their judgement, as  
 that number in any other vocate  
 -on in life. This may be owing to  
 the intricacy and complexity of  
 the science. The engaging doubtless  
 has arisen who is meant by the  
 Quack. Well, I need only give a faint  
 idea, or outline of a quack and  
 every one will recognise him. He  
 is usually a man with bad countenance,

quite pisky in his manners, takes a great deal, and tries to look wise, particularly when talking about the science of medicine.

He will tell you there is no such disease as fever, and that Doctors who talk about an affection of the Livers are ignorant and know nothing about the human system, that, that, particular organ never becomes diseased.

Let him tell the tale, and and the diseases of the country, which, have carried myriads of human beings down to their graves, in defiance of the skill learning, and experience of ages, are play things in his hands.

He will tell you that Flux  
 and Pneumonia, { these diseases that  
 have baffled the skill of the  
 most scientific men known to  
 the medical profession } are not  
 worthy to be considered in the  
 list of diseases, and as to fits  
 he can knock them into the  
 middle of next week. He thinks  
 it quite professional to visit the  
 sick, move couch, without being  
 invited, and wishes to the rela-  
 tions of the sick, the man  
will die unless the treatment  
is changed, the attending physi-  
 cian knowing nothing of his dis-  
 ease he has given too much str-  
 ong medicine; I don't want to in-

-interfere with the Doctor's practice,  
 but I will tell you what will cure  
 him if you will apply it, but don't  
 tell his physician. And then he  
 will make it convenient to hunt  
 up and visit the Hesperion  
 -aria, whose mind has been worn  
 down by chronic affections, and  
 then in the presence of the  
 poor creature - diseased from  
 head to foot - he spins out  
 his long yarns about the nu-  
 -merous cures he has effected,

details knowingly upon the dis-  
 -eases of the human system;  
 Says under his system of prac-  
 -tice, some cases of long standing  
 in consumption have been cured,

and that common Doctors know  
 nothing about these old diseases.  
 In this way he extinguishes the  
 little spark of hope that rema-  
 -ins in the human mind un-  
 -til death, extinguishing it, and  
 poor creature, delicate and  
 delicate without the shadow of  
 a hope, of being benefitted, em-  
 -phases him and in nine cases out  
 -ten — knowing the poor crea-  
 -ture will little to say when  
 truth is revealed, seeing that  
 a fraud has been practiced  
 — he manages to get his bag —  
 has the good lady, while her  
 hope is brought to have him  
 a suit of fine clothes made

buys a horse or watch at a given price, and swells his account to cover it. And now having described the quack, I have a plain word to speak about him, 1<sup>st</sup> he is neither a gentleman, nor a Man of Science; Without enumerating more he does two things, that no gentleman would do. No Man who has a heart and a soul would by misrepresentation and falsehood impose upon an unfortunate invalid, for the cool purpose of robbing him or her of a support while in this helpless condition. 2<sup>nd</sup> What I wish more particular to notice is that our Scientific professional Man, will ever speak unkindly of those of his profession, in other words a Man of education and

eminence in his profession is always con-  
 tious. This rule is universal. The high-  
 toned professional men would scorn the  
 very idea of making a practice for  
 himself by the universal condemnation  
 of the practice of his brethren in  
 the profession, and would abandon  
 his profession rather than do so. But  
 on the other hand the low bred vulgar  
 man who would be professional always  
 likes courtesy, and knowing that he  
 is unable to compete with men of  
 science upon equal and honorable  
 terms resorts to this low and un-  
 temptable device of going around  
 among the people and abusing his  
 own profession, — setting up and clai-  
 ming for himself new and important



discovers unknown to the Medical profession  
 generally, and in this way deceives hundreds  
 of people. The Quack always takes this course  
 and nobody but a Quack, does. And now what  
 are his merits. Remember that he always has a  
 new system, he says he is in advance of his  
 profession, knowing all that the old practitioners  
 know, and that they has learned much that they  
 do not know. Scientific Medical Men  
 watch the changes in disease, trace up  
 the cause, - apply the various remedies,  
 observe the effect, and report to the  
 Medical world. They read, criticise  
 and digest every discovery that has  
 any sort of plausibility in it. -  
 Such is not the case with the  
 Quacks.