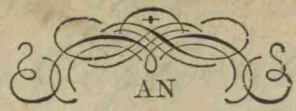


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INAUGURAL DISSERTATION

ON  
*The passions and their  
effects  
upon the physical system.*

SUBMITTED TO THE  
PRESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES, AND MEDICAL FACULTY  
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# The Passions, and Their effects upon the Physical System.

The various passions of the human family, seem to have been conferred on them, by an all wise Creator, for wise and beneficent purposes. This being their object, it is certainly the prudence of human wisdom, to keep them duly regulated.

In a moral point of view, when the Passions run counter to reason and Religion, nationally and individually, they produce consequences truly injurious. Among nations, if suffered to transcend the bounds of Political justice, they lead to anarchy, war, and oppression; and amongst individuals we can trace the same dreadful consequences. As it is not my intention to enter into a dissertation on the Passions further than they relate to man, as an individual and, to their influences on his physical system, I will observe first, that it is of the highest importance to the healthy action of



the human system that they should be held in proper subjection. If we give way to the Passions we destroy digestion and assimilation, we weaken the strength and energy of the heart and likewise the whole nervous system. The Stomach is the connecting organ of the of the human frame, and all its derangements are felt in the extremities. To prove its influence over other organs, and the connection that exists between it and the heart, it is only necessary to remark that the latter immediately ceases to beat when the powers of the former are destroyed.

Disorder of mind is always a predisposing cause of disease, while on the other hand a calm and contented disposition and the proper command of our passions and affections are certain to produce consequences, which operate <sup>against</sup> all the predisposing causes of disease. Any complaint arising from great agitation of the mind, is certainly more obstinate than one occasioned by violent corporal agitation. For example, in all diseases arising either

From eating or drinking may be combatted by  
rest, sleep and temperance; but neither temper-  
ance, sleep nor rest, as every Physician knows, can  
much affect those diseases that have their seat in  
the minds. As it is not my intention to enter  
into the passions at full length, I propose to  
treat of them separately, as they may present  
themselves.

The first I wish to notice is Fear. This is a  
base passion, in one sense and beneath the dig-  
nity of man. It takes from him reflection, power  
resolution and judgment, in short all that dig-  
nity and greatness of soul, which properly belong  
to humanity. It has great influence in occasion-  
ing and producing disease. It is a matter of  
some speculation with me, whether any man  
was born a coward. My opinion is, that cow-  
ardice and courage are generally the effects  
of habit and moral influence. I have frequently  
seen men who were considered brave, that tremble  
at the near approach of danger, and acknowl-  
-edged their want of firmness. And is it not  
strange yet not less true, that a man will



one day be brave and the next day cowardly.  
 That there is a close affinity, between the con-  
 dition of the physical system, and the passions,  
 can be but little doubted. For example, ~~As~~ the  
 same man who, under the influence of a narcotic  
 would be brave, is seen to shrink like the sensi-  
 tive plant when deprived of its influence. There  
 seems to be a reciprocal influence, between the body  
 and the mind, which is absolutely inexplicable;  
 but of this we are sure, that cowardiced disorder  
 and impedes the circulation of the blood; hinders  
 breathing with freedom; puts the stomach out of  
 order, and likewise the bowels. It deranges the  
 functions of the kidneys and integuments, in  
 short, it produces injurious effects upon the  
 whole body. Many persons have fallen dead  
 from the effects of fear: then can it be doubted  
 that this passion is powerful in producing and  
 modifying disease. I feel assured from  
 the little experience I have had, that the timid  
 and the cowardly are much more susceptible  
 to epidemical diseases, than those, who are  
 remarkable for their fortitude and courage; —

"omnes passus exsultatus", so far as other causes  
 to ~~are~~ other causes are concerned

It is an established truth, that fear, weakens the  
 energies of the heart, and nervous system, and then  
 the infectious matter has greater powers on the  
 vitals. The system being deranged, loses its heal-  
 thy action and cannot throw off the infectious  
 virus or miasm. Wishing to bring before you for  
 consideration some other Passions with which man  
 is endowed, it is necessary, that I limit my  
 remarks to them individually. The next I  
 shall introduce is Joy. This is a benevolent  
 passion. It produces extraordinary effects  
 and is of infinite benefit to the Constitution  
 when it is indulged in moderation, but  
 when it is sudden it frequently produces ser-  
 vious injuries to persons in good health, and  
 frequently terminates fatally, in those who are  
 either weak or afflicted by disease. The fol-  
 lowing instance of <sup>the</sup> sudden influence of joy  
 mentioned by Dr. Cowell will fully exemplify  
 the power of this passion on the physical sys-  
 tem even in health. There was a gentleman



whose pecuniary circumstances had become des-  
 perate by some mishap. He gave the last cent he  
 could command for a Lottery Ticket. His whole es-  
 tate was under execution. The day of sale arrived.  
 When a gentleman rode up, without using any  
 precaution, he announced the pleasing in-  
 telligence that his ticket, had drawn the  
 large sum of One Hundred Thousand Dol-  
 lars. The effect was such as might have been  
 anticipated; Overpowered by Joy he fell to the  
 earth insensible, and it was with the greatest  
 difficulty, that he was restored to life and  
 health. From these remarks, the influence of  
 this Passion will be easily understood, and  
 we may readily infer that excess of joy, is  
 as dangerous to health, as the influence  
 of fear or Grief, when the subject of that Joy  
 has it communicated to him incautiously.  
 Anger, (This is the most dreadful of the  
 human passions incidental to man. Its in-  
 dulgence leads to many, and alarming con-  
 sequences. I have before remarked, that all  
 our passions were intended by the God of Na-

— sure, if kept in due subjection, by reason, to be beneficial to the happiness of man. It is not the application of our passions, to their reasonable and legitimate objects, that constitute crime and endless misery— No, it is the abuse of those passions by the unrestrained and intemperate indulgence of them to ignominious and disgraceful purposes.

Was a noble spirit of resentment for unprovoked injuries ever intended by the Almighty to degenerate into senseless anger and brutal rage? No; a noble spirit of resentment upon the strictest moral principle was intended to punish wanton and unprovoked aggression, and, by preventing the repetition of the deed to reform the offender. Those who, blindly, decree the legitimate gratifications of the human passions (although they may do so, from what to them seems the best of motives) ought to beware, that they do not arraign the wisdom of Providence, for implanting them in the human bosom; and, they ought in all cases to avoid confounding the natural and legitimate uses of the



passions, with the abuses of their lofty and powerful energies. The passions, when confined within their proper limits, are essential to the enjoyment, preservation and happiness of mankind. They only become dangerous and criminal, when permitted to produce insurrection in the heart and when they are placed beyond the control of that moral virtue which is the true science of wisdom. There is no passion so fatal in its consequences to the peace of society and to the felicity of man as anger. I might be asked if there is no remedy for this raging passion. With other Physicians I might tell you to "deluge your head with water as cold as the snow of the icy mountain; I might advise you to open every vein in your body to calm the raging and ungovernable impulse of anger; I might tell you that an Emetic would curb tumultuous fever and rage and restore you to yourself: but these remedies would only be chopping the buds from the summit of the trees and leaving the roots untouched: The only sovereign power, or remedy if you please, which can be found efficient, in correcting the evils of anger

must be sought for in early education, and in moral and religious principles instilled into the mind at an early period of life. The next passion I shall notice, is Love.

This is the master passion of the Soul, and when it is experienced in the plenitude of its power, its devotions embrace with despotic energy and uncontrolled dominion all the complicated and powerful faculties of man. It was implanted in man for the noblest, and most beneficent purposes, and if restricted to its legitimate objects and restrained within due bounds, it may be called the "great fountain of human happiness." No passion incidental to humanity embraces so vast a space and such an infinite multiplicity of objects. It commences in the cradle, with tender emotions of filial attachment and veneration for our parents. It animates and accompanies us through all the chequer'd vicissitudes of life, attaching itself to every object which can afford us enjoyment and happiness and finally



~~accompanied~~

accompanies us to the tomb. It concentrates  
 all its pure and sublime powers at the throne  
 of the living God. Like all other elementary  
 principles of human nature, its essence baffles  
 the keenest researches of Philosophy and  
 science, and its existence can only be recog-  
 nized by a consciousness of its presence &  
 the effects which are manifested in every de-  
 partment of life by multiplied exhibitions  
 of its energies. In conclusion I will give  
 my views of the remedies or prophylaxis to a-  
 void and counteract the effects of disappoin-  
 ted love. All Medicinal remedies or agents  
 known to science, are but miserable and  
 insufficient palliatives. Religion, change of  
 scenery, and interesting company, in some  
 cases, have considerable influence in distract-  
 ing the mind, and from concentrating the af-  
 fections on an object of deep and vital love  
 but in numerous instances they have all failed  
 and it has baffled the efforts of friendship and  
 parental care. In my limited attention to  
 the subject, the only prophylaxis is, judicious

education and a highly cultivated mind.  
 Grief. This passion is one which I feel inadequate to investigate with satisfaction to myself or with much advantage to others, although its effects are extensively diffused. Now I disposed to notice it further my limited experience and time would not justify the attempt, I will therefore proceed to treat of another of not less importance. Grief. This dreadful, depressing affection of the mind, when experienced in the extreme, sometimes degenerates into confirmed melancholy, despair and fatal insanity. It is sometimes caused by cheerless and gloomy presentiments of distant evils, at other times by present calamities, and not infrequently by strong and vivid recollections of losses which can never be retrieved against its inveterate and fatal effects on the health of the physical system, neither the internal nor external exhibition of medicinal drugs can avail much. The force and effect which grief exercises and produces in deranging the functions of the physical sys.



seem in a great degree to depend upon its  
 pregnancy and the acuteness of those sensibilities  
 which characterize the nervous system. Where  
 the nervous system is tumultuously sensitive, and  
 easily susceptible of external impressions, what  
 is generally the case with persons of distinguished  
 genius. With such there is invariably found, a con-  
 stitutional melancholy which delights in retro-  
 spection of the past and in serious if not cheer-  
 less anticipations of the future. At an early period  
 of life these persons are highly susceptible of the  
 charms of nature and also of her more sublime  
 and gloomy scenery, and being deeply alive to  
 the influence of their feelings. What, to other  
 men would produce unimportant effects, in  
 them causes their feelings to be exhibited in  
 the extremes of animation <sup>or</sup> depression for  
 which they are utterly unable to account.  
 In fact it is not unusual in the rambles  
 of these persons, and that too in a single day  
 for them to exhibit the reflective calmness of the  
 great Pacific, which may be followed by storms  
 of ungovernmental and unobscured passions, equal





ment <sup>is</sup> ~~from~~ society, and indulg'd in gloomy re-  
 flections, which becoming fixed and immovable  
 settle down into melancholy, and despair  
 Depression of spirits sometimes produces mental  
 derangement. The effects of grief which is an  
 extremely depressing passion, and its marked  
 influence on the physical system, are very  
 remarkable. It diminishes bodily strength generally  
 and also lessens the action of the heart; it im-  
 pedes the circulation of the fluids; stagnates  
 the Bile, and occasions induration of the liver  
 or by throwing the bile into the circulation of  
 the blood - It produces Jaundice, diminish-  
 es the perspiration, renders the skin sallow  
 It produces and aggravates putrid fever and  
 in fact I might say every form of disease  
 From Grief, blindness, gangrene and even death  
 itself may ensue. From the excessive cultivation  
 of this passion persons become fitful  
 and peevish, indeed so extremely sad that their  
 minds find new food for sorrow in every object  
 presented to them - Thus the imagination  
 becomes seriously injured <sup>even</sup> to despair and insanity

What are the remedies generally resorted to with cal-  
 culatory effects. According to my views they are but  
 few: though we may use quakers cautiously, exer-  
 cise on horseback, a change of scenery, the  
 swing; friction of the body which ought to  
 be resorted to frequently, and continued for  
 the purpose of giving impetus to the circulation  
 When the extremities become cold, mild wines  
 temperately administered may be beneficial. We  
 can also find some relief from change of place  
 climate and habit, and from the diversion  
 of the patients mind from its original imag-  
 inations. I have perhaps said sufficiently  
 on the passions, unless I could be more inter-  
 esting: yet I cannot close this essay without  
 a short notice of that consoling one Hope -  
 What a source of happiness rests in the plea-  
 sure of hope. Man cherishes it to the tomb  
 Take from him hope, and you deprive him  
 in disease of that balmy influence that in-  
 spires confidence in the Physician - Take from  
 him hope, and his fortitude is lulled -  
 Take from him hope and his patience be-



comes fitfulness, and life itself will become a burden if this Comforter shall have ceased to hover over the sick bed. How wisely has our Heavenly Father blended, in the cup of misery, the soft whispers of our future exemptions from its influence. Without hope how wretched, how miserable our existence - What a powerful effect it has when we are labouring under bodily disorder - It raises the spirits, increases the action of the heart and arteries, stimulates the nervous system, moderates the pulse and fever and quiets all the secretions. It is therefore advisable to inspire hope into the minds of the afflicted, if we wish to have a chance to effect their cure. Is there a being who lives without this balm of consolation, Hope of Heavenly birth which tells of happier days in bright anticipation. If such are its advantages in low ground of sorrow, what may we expect from that emotion when it embraces the certainty of enjoying felicity with God in Eternity. When we are in ordinary health and engaged in the pursuits of life, hope is attended by many favourable

effect - When clouds lower around, and when  
storms threaten us, like a star in the ~~dark~~ <sup>misty</sup> night  
it peeps out from its darkened canopy, and pours  
its cheering <sup>rays</sup> into the benighted mind producing  
a tranquillity that calmly provides the soul  
Edward E. Buchanan