

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

SAMUEL THOMSON. In presenting this Bulletin of the Lloyd Library, the editor finds it necessary to deviate from the methods adopted in the publications heretofore offered in our Reproduction Series. In the preceding issues, the aim has been to present *fac similes* of each work, even to the copying of gross errors, and the imitation, as far as possible, of both the type and the manuscript form of the publication. In the present Bulletin such a method is impossible, owing both to the extent and cosmopolitan nature of the publication we are presenting, and to the fact that our aim is to portray the MAN, and picture conditions of that period, rather than to present in full any one or more of his works. In our opinion, a comprehension of this remarkable man can be accomplished only by bringing the reader into touch with conspicuous phases of his life and examples of his methods, as well as by a realization of his ideals, as shown by the efforts and the sacrifices he made, in the face of the most pronounced resistance to his processes. This we aim to do in the pages that follow.

In our opinion, this Bulletin will give to the reader a fair picture not only of the man before us, but also of the conditions that, at the time mentioned, dominated the disciples of the healing art in America. To this we may add that one can not now easily enter into the problems of that day concerning medicine and the practice of medicine. The passion, the dogmatism, the vituperation of the period, the suppression of free thought and investigation outside authority, is a something that can not now be expressed or readily appreciated. But a touch of it all can be grasped and partly comprehended by noting the evolution that has taken place in the fields of American pharmacy and medicine since the beginning of the last century; by contrasting present conditions with the period typified in the record of Samuel Thomson.

The *New Guide to Health*, whose title-page is given in *fac simile*, was first issued by Samuel Thomson in 1822. It passed rapidly through many editions, some of them exceedingly large, but with few changes other than supplements, as shown in the Additions, reproduced by us, pages 50-54.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

That 1835, one-volume edition, in small type set solid, comprised both the *Narrative*, 228 pages, and the *Guide to Health*, the latter consisting of a description of diseases and their treatment, 168 pages. The latter section, which was in the outset Thomson's *Materia Medica* and methods of practice, was afterwards issued in more pretentious form as *Thomson's Materia Medica or Botanic Family Physician*. It carried a discursive introduction, a work on anatomy, a section on materia medica, and one on botany, as well as one on the theory and practice of medicine according to the Thomsonian methods. A number of editions of this work were issued by Thomson and his agents, until in 1841 appeared the unabridged *Thirteenth Edition*, issued by his son, John Thomson, the elaboration of which, however, did not altogether meet the approval of the original author. Hence we find, page 831 of the 1841 edition, an editorial note by John Thomson, illustrating the manner in which his father insists upon the work being accompanied by the following qualified statement, in order to show his disapproval of the innovations named.

"IMPORTANT NOTICE."

"The following objections to the different articles and compounds in this book, were made by Dr. Samuel Thomson, after the work was printed. And in justice to him, and out of respect to his opinion, we insert them here, that every one may know that his opinion is not changed in relation to cathartics, and that what is said upon that subject is done on our own responsibility, and for which Dr. Thomson is not to be held responsible. The following are the objections, viz.

All cathartic medicine, of every kind; also, the compounding of the black salve, on page 734 (for which we have inserted a substitute on page 823); borax for sore mouth, page 738; maple charcoal to prevent mortification, on page 727; a paper saturated with salt petre, and burned, to relieve asthma, page 742; Peruvian bark to clean the teeth, page 740; poke root made into ointment for the piles, page 741; sulphate of zinc compounded into poultices for syphilitic ulcers, page 733; burnt alum for dysentery, page 726; tobacco emetic pills, page 700; asafetida for hysteria, page 634; blood root for emetic, page 684; black cohosh to cure rheumatism, and to regulate the monthly turns with females, page 643; and, page 695, the injection should be given before steaming.

It is to be understood, that he objects to the use of those articles, in every form or shape whatever, except the enemas."

JOHN THOMSON.

(*Thomson's Materia Medica or Botanic Family Physician*, 1841.)

In our reproduction of the text of the *New Guide to Health*, as given in this Bulletin, pages 3 to 64, no change has been made in statement or in text, other than in editorially excising, in blocks, more or less material unnecessary to the presentation of Samuel Thomson's life, as written by himself. These excluded fragments are usually accounts of special cases illustrating his methods, or disconnected digressions which

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

may be omitted without in any wise affecting the continuity of the work. In some instances the excluded portions comprise not more than half a page, while in other cases several successive pages are excised. Had the entire text been reproduced, our Bulletin would have been fully twice its present size; but we take it, all the important features concerning the events in Thomson's life, as he has recorded them, are connectedly presented. To this we will add that the *headings of the paragraphs* are all our own.*

One feature in Thomson's life is absolutely ignored in his writings, nor is it, so far as we know, elsewhere recorded. On page 51 of this Bulletin is to be found an intimation by him that he was involved by Mr. Locke in the famous Morgan Masonic controversy, then raging in New York. This leads us to state that a share, and possibly no small proportion, of Thomson's troubles, came also from his pronounced political activity, at a time when in American politics no toleration whatever was exhibited by one party for an adherent of the opposite political faith. We have it in a letter from the late Alexander Wilder, M. D., to ourselves personally, that Thomson's allegiance to the minority party of that date led to much of his persecution, a fact that Thomson utterly ignores in any print that we have seen from his pen.

On page 50 and following, of this Bulletin, subsequent to the *Narrative and Guide*, we introduce the Additions made to that publication in the 1825 edition, and on page 51 the Additions made in 1831, both of which, in connection with the life history of Samuel Thomson, are of exceeding interest. On page 54 we reproduce a *Notice*, by which he authorized agents to sell his patented rights to the *Botanical System of Practice in Medicine*, and another from an authorized agent, announcing the right to practice by that authority. Following these are a couple of characteristic reproductions (pages 54, 55) showing the turn of Thomson's mind for philosophizing over incidents.

Pages 56 to 64 present the letters of Professor Benjamin Waterhouse, M. D., to whom the 1841 edition of Thomson's *Materia Medica* is dedicated, these being also published in the 1835 edition of Thomson's *Guide to Health*. The comments upon these letters, pages 63, 64, are written by the editor of this Bulletin.

Page 65 is a reproduction of the title-page of a pamphlet concerning the celebrated Trial of Dr. Frost, from which enough is taken, pages 67-74, to make a lucid account, illustrating the manner in which Thomson's disciples were handled at that time. The introduction to this section,

* "*Concentrated Principles*" (now in process) will, we hope, soon be issued as a companion Bulletin to this one. In this, the history of the evolution of Thomsonism and Eclecticism is continued and amplified.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

page 67, is also from our pen, as well as are the remarks concerning lobelia, page 73, and the closing paragraph, page 74.

Pages 75-77 give a list of the authorized Thomsonian remedies, together with an introduction to same (page 75) by ourselves. Following, on page 78, is to be found the advertisement of Dr. John Rose, Editor of the *Lobelia Advocate*, 1838, as well as an advertisement of the Botanico-Medical College, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1844. Following these, 79-85, come verbatim reproductions of directions for taking the Thomsonian Courses of Medicine. Here we offer a few editorial remarks, and have added (page 85) the remedies recognized under Thomson's famous numbers, 1 to 6.

In pages 86-89, Nathaniel S. Magoon, of Boston, in whose house Thomson spent his last days, describes the death of this remarkable man.

We have, in our opinion, made a collaborated record, presenting succinctly to the readers of this Bulletin the life of the man who, in one way or another, exerted a tremendous influence on the American practice of medicine. In this may be included the efforts of antagonists who but for Thomson would not have become conspicuous, or even known, as well as of reformers, to whom Thomson's aggressive methods and Thomson's suggestions proved a stimulus. Out of it all came the kindlier theories that have largely succeeded the heroic age, an era of barbarism, in American medicine. And, in our opinion, one and all at the present time can, in charity for all who were involved at that day, and without bitterness towards any one, review this story of the past, crediting those to whom credit is due.

JOHN URI LLOYD.