

**THE ANNUAL MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT,
BENJAMIN JAMES BALDWIN, M. D.,
DELIVERED BEFORE THE COUNSELLORS AND
MEMBERS OF THE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
OF THE STATE OF THE ALABAMA.
MONTGOMERY, APRIL 12TH, 1892**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649309061

The Annual message of the president, Benjamin James Baldwin, M. D., delivered before the counsellors and members of the medical association of the State of the Alabama. Montgomery, april 12th, 1892 by Benjamin James Baldwin

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

BENJAMIN JAMES BALDWIN

**THE ANNUAL MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT,
BENJAMIN JAMES BALDWIN, M. D.,
DELIVERED BEFORE THE COUNSELLORS AND
MEMBERS OF THE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
OF THE STATE OF THE ALABAMA.
MONTGOMERY, APRIL 12TH, 1892**

H
13

LANE LIBRARY

THE ANNUAL MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT,
BENJAMIN JAMES BALDWIN, M. D.,
DELIVERED BEFORE THE
COUNSELLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION OF
THE STATE OF ALABAMA.
MONTGOMERY, APRIL 12th, 1892.
LTS



LANE LIBRARY

47084
B 18
1892

THE ANNUAL MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT.

BENJAMIN JAMES BALDWIN, M. D., MONTGOMERY.

Senior Counsellor and member of the Board of Censors and Committee of Public Health of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama.

[REPRINTED FROM THE PROCEEDINGS.]

*To the Counsellors and Members of the
Medical Association of the State of Alabama:*

It is proper that we should be impressed with feelings of gratitude to Him who "ruleth all things" that we are permitted to meet again under such favorable auspices, for the purpose of scientific communion. It is proper, also, that I should express to you my profound gratification for the honor you have conferred upon me in selecting me as your presiding officer. I regard it as the greatest distinction of my life to have been considered worthy to occupy this position. Some of my predecessors have attained the highest professional eminence, and their fame is the property of the nation. In every instance, they have been men of honor and usefulness, and it is with due appreciation of this fact, that I approach the duties that devolve upon me, and engage in discussing the problems of the hour with no little embarrassment.

The domain of medicine is replete with important themes for discussion, and the advancement in our science has been so great that volume upon volume could be written upon it; but in this connection, I will only claim for its labors, results equal to those of any other department of scientific and practical research. At no time in the history of medicine has the professional mind been more active in delving in the mysteries of nature, or more successful in bringing to light gems of scientific truth from the regions of physiology,

pathology, chemistry and practical medicine. But I think, that every candid and philosophic mind that has studied the history and observed the progress of medical science in the last twenty-five years will be satisfied, without argument on my part, that we have in a remarkable degree combined "earnestness of research into the value of new theories and novel remedies with a wise and cautious reserve as to their adoption and application." We have illustrated the possibility of the union of progress and conservatism, and as students of nature, we stand ready to put under contribution every part of her wide domain and draw from her ample store-house, whatever can add to the happiness, or contribute to the health of mankind. That our profession has been true to its high and noble calling, that it has deeply felt and wisely pondered its responsibilities to itself and its obligations to society, can not be controverted. In looking back over the past quarter of a century and tracing the progress of science, the march of intellect and the triumph of mind over matter, we are lost in amazement and bewildered by the very splendor of the view that meets us on every hand. And in all this progress, in all these splendid triumphs, in all that tends to enoble human nature, to elevate human character, to correct physical evils, and lessen human suffering, our profession has always borne a prominent and leading part.

If the next quarter of a century shall witness in the science of medicine a progress as rapid, discoveries as important, and improvements as striking, as have marked that which we have just left behind us, we shall richly deserve the thanks of the world and the gratitude of posterity.

But I do not care to transgress the rules of the Association; and our Constitution and By-Laws provide, that the annual message of the "President shall be strictly devoted to the discussion of the interests, objects and business of the Association and not to the scientific discussion of some sub-

ject belonging properly to practical medicine or public hygiene considered as departments of human knowledge."

Asking your kind indulgence and patience, I will proceed to review the work of the Association for the past year, and will give you in as brief a way as possible an account of my stewardship.

DUTIES OF THE PRESIDENT.

Page 30 Book of Rules:

Sec. 1. Be it ordained "that in the appointment of the regular reporters authorized by the Constitution of this Association, the President shall in all cases expressly designate the subject upon which each and every reporter is appointed to write."

I consider the enforcement of this article extremely difficult. It does no harm for the president to make every effort in his power to secure papers on subjects designated by him, but, in my opinion, as a rule capable of being enforced, it is impracticable.

SESSIONS OF THE ASSOCIATION.

The By-Laws of the Association fix the hour of convening the session on the first day at 12 m. In some cities, owing to the time of arrival of the trains this hour is early enough; in others, though, I think we should meet as early as 11 a. m. My reasons are, that we do not generally finish the business of the first day before adjournment; that the sessions continue until about 3 p. m., or after, and then many withdraw from the meeting in order to get dinner, frequently leaving but a small attendance to transact important business. The hour for convening the session of the first day was placed at 12, in order to give plenty of time for registration, but if this part of the business was attended to outside of the hall, as I suggest, there would be no necessity for waiting on this account. I consider the gain of an hour, when circumstances will permit, an important gain. Each day has business of

its own, and I think we should make an effort to have the daily program followed in such a way as to secure the completion of the business for each given day. The second day of the session is devoted to the reading and discussion of the regular reports and such miscellaneous business as may arise. I consider that discussion of the regular papers should be the most interesting feature of the meetings, but discussions of the regular papers are rare, and I think in this way we compare most unfavorably with any other medical association I have attended. These papers should be discussed just after being read. The titles are published a year in advance for the sole purpose of giving the members an opportunity to think over them, and the discussions under the circumstances should be full, interesting and instructive. This is not the time, or place, for long or tedious talks, but a general, spirited, and terse discussion would add much to our meetings. In order that these discussions might be promptly started, it would possibly be well for the President to appoint a number of suitable leaders on the various subjects who would serve to stimulate and give movement to the debate. If these papers are not discussed immediately after they are read, they will not be discussed at all. I think that the time could be spent much more profitably discussing regular, than volunteer papers.

The evening session of the second day has hitherto been devoted to the discussion of the law for the collection of vital statistics. The "vital statistics" law is very important. "It is important in itself, in its immediate practical aim, and it is still more important in the influence it is destined to exercise in the future power, prosperity, influence and usefulness of all medical and health organizations."

While the law for the collection of vital statistics is poorly administered in some parts of the State, yet, upon the whole, I think we have cause for congratulation. This is confessedly the most difficult of all laws to administer.

Numerous obstacles stand in the way—notwithstanding we have made much progress, and this through the untiring perseverance of one man. Alabama was selected by Major Billings of the United States Army, and Superintendent of the section of vital statistics in the Eleventh Census, as the State on which he would base a part of his statistical report in the last United States Census, and on October 12th, 1891, Mr. T. L. Hoffman of Richmond, Virginia, who is engaged in the difficult task of obtaining reliable vital statistics of the Southern States for the use of life insurance companies, wrote: "No health reports from any State North or South that have come to my hand possesses as much valuable material as the report of the Alabama Board of Health." This is high praise and indicates what other people think of us.

The technical administration of the medical laws of Alabama has been wisely and systematically executed, and the foregoing testimony is only one among many evidences of their successful application. As I have said before, I repeat, that I have yet to see an organization of medical men whose laws are regulated with more system and order than our own.

It is important that we should exercise a governmental direction over the medical profession of the State, but that function has been so thoroughly established, I think we can now devote more time to the cultivation of the science and art of the practice of medicine. To be candid, I do not think the Medical Association of Alabama has done that amount of scientific work that the world has expected of her. She reigns supreme in the governmental department, but not in the scientific. It would avail nothing to discuss the reasons which have heretofore demanded so much time in the matter of business and routine. "To construct out of the scattered members of our profession a powerful organization, and through this organization to secure concert of action and the prevalence of wise and prudent counsels,"