

**GLOSSOLOGY: OR, THE  
ADDITIONAL MEANS OF  
DIAGNOSIS OF DISEASE TO BE  
DERIVED FROM INDICATIONS AND  
APPEARANCES OF THE TONGUE**

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Glossology: Or, the Additional Means of Diagnosis of Disease to Be Derived from Indications and Appearances of the Tongue by Benjamin Ridge

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**BENJAMIN RIDGE**

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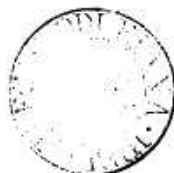
READ BEFORE  
THE SENIOR PHYSICAL SOCIETY OF GUY'S HOSPITAL,  
4th November, 1843.

BY  
BENJAMIN RIDGE, M.D., M.R.C.S.L.  
&c. &c.

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## PREFACE.

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A PREFACE to the following Paper seems necessary as an apology for so small a communication on a subject so extensive. I intended to have prepared for publication a System of Glossology, but was deterred by the labour of such an undertaking, and the dread a malady most incident to publishers, which those worthy bookmen exhibit at having anything to do with an extensive work, by an unknown author, on a subject hitherto uninvestigated. On reflection, it appeared to me that reading a communication of the *heads* of my subject before this long-established society would be the better plan, leaving all details for a future day, to be given or withheld according to the reception of the scheme itself. This will account for the brevity of the Paper now submitted to the Public, who are most interested in its disclosures—to whom its doctrines are either of vital or of no importance, just as truth, if there is truth in it, as I hope there is, or delusion, which I would not knowingly practise, is established as a fact, or set aside as a fiction.

The history of the rise and progress of the Medical Profession holds out no great encouragement to the innovator—

to the author of novel doctrines. Those who, in their day, have contributed most beneficially to the art, by upsetting old prejudices with the lever of new theories, have been at first losers, though finally gainers of the name and fame they sought: whilst their opponents, however high they stood in public estimation, have sunk into oblivion; and the truths they buffeted, and would, if they could, have beaten down and trampled under foot, have become the guides of future generations of men. I am too well aware of the opposition I shall have to meet when these novel disclosures become publicly known. The voice of the present day may pronounce against me and my doctrines, and men may feel it difficult to give up their prejudices: but it is satisfactory to think that a future generation will sit in judgment between them and me.

History, the chronicler of past events, unfolds her ample pages to the inquirer; and he who studies the progress of medicine from the earliest times will be astonished by its annals. He will see, that the doctrines which were orthodox one day were heterodox in the next, the opinions of reigning men upsetting those of the dead and gone authorities; and anon, the reigning opinions succumbing once more to antiquated dogmas, when put forth by eminent men, and meeting with disciples to uphold them.

So many persons, in every community, are accustomed to follow a leader, and take for granted what he propounds, without troubling themselves to ascertain if his views are sound, that this man's doctrine—this opinion of one—in time becomes the opinion of many. Few trouble them-

selves to examine the merits of the question, but use the weapons of their chief as they find them, and as they can ; and thus a *vox populi* is established, which time and habit strengthens till it is at last listened to, and believed in, as the oracle of God. A bold man may have power to turn the tide another way, and get his train of followers through the same means, as history will show.

But what do these vacillations show? Merely that present right of argument is temporary right of power. We not only see in each age that opinions change, but that they are always changing. The sound conclusions to be drawn from these facts are,—that truth to-day must be truth to-morrow, and for ever ; but where doctrines are founded, not in truth, but on the shifting quicksands of error, then opinion shifts and changes, and is unstable as shoals of sand, or as the winds. The doctrines of one man, or the doctrines of a generation of men, are but mere opinions, if they are not founded in truth.

Students are apt to imagine that research is exhausted, and that everything is known that can be known—that the zeal and industry of man has fathomed everything. How clear appear the arguments of the professors ; how sound their doctrines ; how skilful their treatment ! Yet no age is spared by the destroy inghand of Death, though so much wisdom and learning have been expended in the godlike act to save. The inspections how clear, after death ; the disease, no human power *could* stop—under it no human being *could* live. Their first aim accomplished, and their diplomas framed and glazed, the weight of