

**MODERN MEDICINE: A
LECTURE DELIVERED
OCTOBER 7TH, 1872**

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Modern Medicine: A Lecture Delivered October 7th, 1872 by J. M. Da Costa

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J. M. DA COSTA

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MODERN MEDICINE:

A LECTURE

DELIVERED OCTOBER 7th, 1872.

INTRODUCTORY TO THE COURSE

AT THE

JEFFERSON MEDICAL COLLEGE.

BY

J. M. DA COSTA, M.D.,

PROFESSOR OF THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF MEDICINE.

PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.

1872.

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1872

At a meeting of the students in attendance at Jefferson Medical College, held Oct. 8th, 1872, the following resolution was adopted; that,—

A committee of the Class shall be appointed to wait upon Prof. Da Costa, and request the privilege of publishing the "Introductory Address" delivered by him Oct. 7th, 1872.

W. SCOTT WOLFORD, *President.*

FRANK WOODBURY, *Secretary.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

LETTER OF COMMITTEE.

PHILA., Oct. 9th, 1872.

PROF. DA COSTA:

DEAR SIR,—We, the undersigned, have been appointed by the Class at Jefferson Medical College a committee to secure a copy of your "Introductory Address" for publication. We echo the unanimous sentiment of our Class when we say that the pleasure and profit derived from its delivery were only equalled by our satisfaction on learning of the action of the Trustees of this College in selecting you as our Professor of the Theory and Practice of Medicine.

Very respectfully yours,

C. H. FISHER, *Chairman of Committee.*

D. GILMORE FOSTER, Pennsylvania.
E. W. McCANN, Ohio.
L. J. PICOT, North Carolina.
J. P. DUCKETT, South Carolina.
JAS. W. IRWIN, Indiana.
W. A. BURRIS, Louisiana.
CHARLIE LAURENCE, Texas.
ANTONIO GOICOURIA, Porto Rico.
FRANK TALIAFERRO, Virginia.
W. P. STUBBS, Georgia.
J. C. DAVIS, M.D., Mexico.
J. W. NORCROSS, M.D., Vermont.
ED. L. PARKS, Massachusetts.
JOHN ELIASON, Maryland.
GEO. M. MCHENRY, Illinois.
W. F. McCRORY, Canada.
J. W. FRASER, S. Wales.
J. I. URTECHO, Nicaragua.

J. B. RICH, Connecticut.
J. L. GASKINS, Florida.
H. J. ENGLISH, Arkansas.
J. E. HALBERT, Mississippi.
C. M. TRENCHARD, New Jersey.
A. A. AUSTIN, Missouri.
J. E. BRUNET, Cuba.
W. G. SPENCER, New York.
H. ENGEL, M.D., Prussia.
JOS. D. READ, Nova Scotia.
W. J. ROTHWELL, Idaho.
F. M. ROSS, Maine.
G. W. PRETTYMAN, Delaware.
SAML. HENDERSON, Tennessee.
J. A. CAMPBELL, West Virginia.
P. H. WARREN, JR., Iowa.
F. A. A. SMITH, M.R.C.S., England.
F. W. HATCH, JR., California.

JOHN B. ROBERTS, *Secretary of Committee.*

GENTLEMEN:

The lecture you ask for is at your disposal, and with it accept my sincere thanks for your very kind letter and the warm good feeling it evinces.

With much regard, faithfully yours,

J. M. DA COSTA.

Messrs. C. H. FISHER, D. GILMORE FOSTER, J. B. ROBERTS, and other gentlemen of the Committee.

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MODERN MEDICINE.

It is with feelings of a very curious character that I look up at the bright young faces before me. It is not so very long, and it seems a still shorter time, since I sat where you now sit, had the same feelings of curiosity to hear and of anxiety to learn as you now have, the same enthusiasm and wonder of a beginner at a science of which he knows not even the alphabet. It requires but little imagination—for it seems so vivid as to be almost real—to see this door open and one by one the members of the Faculty, from whom we were to obtain instruction, enter. Heading them is the dignified, scholarly Duglison, then steps the calm, judicious Huston, rounds of applause greet the popular, elegant Mütter, the upright, high-minded Bache, the handsome and talented Mitchell, the enthusiastic and gifted Meigs, and one who is still among us, the only one left of that brilliant band,—let him pardon the old pupil rather than the colleague in thus alluding to him,—our skilled anatomist and surgical artist, Pancoast.

Following this well-remembered introduction to studies here, comes the collegiate course with its tasks and aspirations; then busy years of practice

and the toil of professional life; and now, by the flattering choice of the trustees of this institution, I am brought back to scenes which I have so vividly still in mind, brought back to take—it must remain an object of ambition to say to fill—the place of a most distinguished member of this Faculty, your late revered teacher of the Practice of Medicine. Not united by the ties of instruction, but by the ties of warm friendship ever since he came among us, I cannot, in fulfilling the duty assigned to me of paying on the part of the Faculty a tribute to his memory, do so without sorrowful and keen recollections of a bond that by time and the full opportunities I had of knowing him, in health as well as in many an hour of suffering, had personally become one of sincere attachment. Let this friendship be to you an additional guarantee that the deep interest in the class, and the sense of responsibility felt in its instruction, so characteristic of the late Professor, will continue; the memory of kindly relations will strengthen and keep fresh that true devotion to the duties of the office left as a legacy to the chair.

But I may not speak further for myself; I must speak for the Faculty. Dr. Dickson joined them in 1858, leaving the Professorship of Practice of Medicine in the Charleston Medical College, of which he had been one of the chief ornaments, and bringing with him the reputation of a brilliant lecturer. This reputation did not diminish during the years he labored here; and the man who came among us at the age of sixty retained to the last the grace of delivery and the flow of refined language which

had made him at forty the most distinguished lecturer in his branch at the South. Equally ready in addressing those assembled in the medical classroom, or on occasions of a purely literary or festive character, Dr. Dickson spoke always in a way that charmed his audience; and no matter what physical pain he was suffering,—and of late years he scarcely ever spoke without being in pain,—his animated manner and rapid flow of thought carried them and him along. To him, indeed, this exercise of mind was at times a remedy; it lulled the grovelings of the body, which, however, was prone afterwards to revenge itself on the hardy spirit that occupied it.

Both in his lectures and his numerous addresses the scholar and the man of culture was always visible; a more eager and miscellaneous reader it would, indeed, have been difficult to find. His was the cry of Horace, "Let me have books," and poetry, works of fiction, of travel, of history, treatises on the natural sciences, on law, were all laid under contribution, often carefully annotated, and thus instructing himself he was always able to instruct others. All this varied knowledge was well digested, and when given forth was rendered conspicuous and embellished by the early training of the scholar, kept up by subsequent study; for from the time he left Yale College he never relinquished his classical and literary pursuits, sometimes, during his busy years of practice, remitting them, but never wholly abandoning them. Though his reading, when not on professional subjects, was of late chiefly in the direction of the natural sciences, his love of literature, and especially

his classical studies, gave a tinge to many of his productions, and the spirit of most showed unconsciously the school in which the man of letters and the thinker had been trained.

*"Quo semel est imbuta recens, servabit odorem
Testa diu."*

I have spoken of Dr. Dickson as the professor and the scholar; I have yet to speak of him as the author and the man. It would be out of place here to give a detailed list of his systematic works or his numerous contributions to medical or literary journals, but I mention as prominent among them his "Elements of Medicine," his "Essays on Life, Sleep, Pain, and Death," and his more recent very interesting volume entitled "Studies in Pathology and Therapeutics." In all of these, and in many others, the professional verdict has recognized the acute philosophical thinker as well as the accomplished writer; and as a man, neither I nor those by whom I am surrounded can think of him without emotion. Cheerful, genial, of poetical temperament, the most delightful of companions, with a charm of conversation quite his own, friendly to all, of manners the most courteous, no wonder he was beloved and respected by every one, and that his native city gladly put him forward as a representative, as when they sent him as a delegate to the laying of the corner-stone of Bunker Hill Monument, or selected him to preside over the dinner given to Marshall Hall, or to publicly introduce Edward Everett to the people of Charleston. And during his latter years, when reverses of fortune and increasing suffering, caused by a most painful disease,