

**OBSERVATIONS ON
CERTAIN OF THE DISEASES
OF YOUNG CHILDREN**

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Observations on certain of the diseases of young children by Charles D. Meigs

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OBSERVATIONS

ON

CERTAIN OF THE DISEASES

OF

YOUNG CHILDREN.

BY

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P R E F A C E .

THE courses of public lectures in the Jefferson College have for many years opened on the first Monday in November.

At the last session, held in 1849-50, the lectures commenced at the middle of October, on a plan which will probably be for the future adhered to in that institution.

In October, 1849, as a considerable number of students had already assembled, I engaged to address to them several preliminary Lectures on the subject of children's diseases. The following pages contain the substance of what I then said to the Class who honored me with their attendance.

Inasmuch as the regular business of my professorship was to commence on the first of November, and as the chief object of my appointment is to give instruction at that College on Obstetrics, I felt obliged to break off the series of remarks on disorders of children, in order to lay the foundations of such doctrine on Midwifery as I proposed to teach.

In the course of the winter session, there was no further opportunity for me to take up seriatim the subject which I had opened in the month of October. I desire not to be misunderstood, as saying that I did not address any further remarks to the Class on the management and sickness of young children. I have considered it as a part of my duty, in all the courses I have delivered at the College, to take frequent and all available occasions to treat both of children's disorders and those of women.

But inasmuch as the opportunity I enjoyed in October, 1848, enabled me to speak more especially without reference to Ob-

stetrics or Midwifery, I have supposed that I might do a service, not unacceptable to my students, by printing this small volume, which I beg leave to dedicate to them.

I hope that such of them as may meet with it, will remember the hours of their student-life passed with me in the consideration of these topics; and that, if they then took any real interest in the views I presented to them, they may be pleased to find those views more clearly expressed in these pages.

To the medical public, I beg to say that these observations on certain of the disorders of young children make no pretension as a systematic work. Indeed, I have not indulged any intention to make a systematic work on the subject, seeing that the place is already occupied with numerous valuable books, presenting a complete body of doctrines on children's diseases.

To that medical public, which has claim to my heartfelt gratitude for the kind reception of other works of mine, I humbly present these observations, hoping that some of my suggestions as to theory and practice in the cases, may not be destitute of both interest and usefulness.

CH. D. MEIGS,
324 Walnut street, Philad'a.
Aug. 23d, 1850.

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ON
CERTAIN DISEASES OF CHILDREN.

CHAPTER I.

It is incumbent on me, as a Professor in the Jefferson Medical College, to deliver Lectures on the diseases of children, which is considered an important department of the professorial chair. It is an important one, on account of the supposed difficulty of the subject; and still more so, on account of the vast number of patients, in the class of young children, that come under the care of a medical man in the course of his career. Moreover, it is important, as involving the interests and the feelings of families, as well as of the public in general. The disease of a young child, it seems to me, is by some looked upon as a matter of less moment than the disease of an adult; and yet the life of a young child is equal in value to that of a grown man. Children are the inheritors of the whole earth: men are mere present possessors and custodians, holding it for the use and in behalf of the children of the family, which may consist of six persons, a father, a mother, and four children. It is of the diseases of children that I am about to speak.

Those who would be physicians, must have more to do with children, than with men or women: there are probably at this moment, five hundred millions of children in the world; it is even probable that the number may amount to six hundred millions. Twenty-four millions are born every year, and far more than one-half the annual mortality in the world, is among children under six years of age; hence, the interest, the prosperity, the usefulness of the physician, are intimately connected with his knowledge of the diseases of children.