

TO MEDICAL COLLEGES:

AT the Convention of Delegates from Medical Colleges, called for the purpose of revising the system of Medical College instruction in this country, and which convened in Cincinnati, May 3d, 1867, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That a committee of five be appointed by the President, whose duty it shall be to present the several propositions adopted by this Convention, to the Trustees and Faculties of all the Medical Colleges in this country, and solicit their definite action thereon, *with a view to the early and simultaneous practical adoption* of the same throughout the whole country. And that the same committee be authorized to call another convention whenever deemed advisable."

THE undersigned Committee, appointed for the purpose of carrying into effect the instructions contained in the foregoing resolution, respectfully invite the attention of the Trustees and Faculty of _____ to the five following propositions, which after mature deliberation, were adopted by the said Convention with entire unanimity:—

Resolved, 1st. That every student applying for matriculation in a Medical College shall be required to show, either by satisfactory certificate, or by direct examination by a committee of the Faculty, that he possesses a knowledge of the common English branches of education, including the first series of mathematics, the elements of the natural sciences, and a sufficient knowledge of Latin and Greek to understand the technical terms of the profession; and that the certificate presented, or the result of the examination thus required, be regularly filed as a part of the records of each Medical College.

2d. That every medical student shall be required to study four full years, including three regular annual courses of medical college instruction, before being admitted to an examination for the degree of Doctor of Medicine.

3d. That the minimum duration of a regular annual lecture term, or course of medical college instruction, shall be six calendar months.

4th. That every Medical College shall embrace in its Curriculum the following branches, to be taught by not less than nine Professors, viz.:— Descriptive Anatomy, including dissections; Physiology and Histology; Inorganic Chemistry; Materia Medica; Organic Chemistry and Toxicology; General Pathology, Therapeutics, Pathological Anatomy, and Public Hygiene; Surgical Anatomy and operations of Surgery; Medical Jurisprudence and Medical Ethics; Practice of Medicine; Practice of Surgery; Obstetrics, and Diseases of Women and Children; Clinical Medicine, and Clinical Surgery; and that these several branches shall be divided into three groups or series, corresponding with the three courses of Medical College instruction required.

The first, or *Freshmen series*, shall embrace Descriptive Anatomy and Practical Dissections; Physiology and Histology; Inorganic Chemistry, and Materia Medica. To these the attention of the student shall be mainly restricted during his first course of Medical College instruction, and in these he shall submit to a thorough examination by the proper members of the Faculty, at its close, and receive a certificate indicating the degree of his progress.

The second, or *Junior series*, shall embrace Organic Chemistry and Toxicology; General Pathology, Pathological Anatomy, Therapeutics, and Public Hygiene; Surgical Anatomy and operations of Surgery; Medical Jurisprudence and Medical Ethics. To these the attention of the medical student shall be directed during his second course of Medical College instruction, and in them he shall be examined at the close of his second course, in the same manner as after the first.

The third, or *Senior series*, shall embrace Practical Medicine; Practical Surgery; Obstetrics and Diseases peculiar to Women and Children; with Clinical Medicine and Clinical Surgery in a hospital. These shall occupy the attention of the student during his third course of college instruction, and at its close he shall be eligible to a general examination for the degree of Doctor of Medicine.

The instruction in the three series is to be given simultaneously, and to continue throughout the whole of each annual college term; each student attending the lectures on such branches as belong to his period of progress in study, in the same manner as the sophomore, junior, and senior classes, each pursue their studies simultaneously throughout the Collegiate year in all our Literary Colleges.

5th. That every Medical College should immediately adopt some effectual method of ascertaining the actual attendance of students, upon its lectures and other exercises, and at the close of each session, or of the attendance of the student, a certificate specifying the time and the courses of instruction actually attended, should be given, and such certificate *only* should be received by other colleges as evidence of such attendance."

IT will be seen that these propositions are designed to introduce into the system of Medical College instruction in this country, *four changes* of great practical importance, namely:—1st. A positive standard of preliminary education. 2d. A longer time in which to acquire a knowledge of the various branches of Medical Science and practice. 3d. A systematic and successive order of studies for the student. 4th. A certain amount of direct clinical instruction in a public Hospital as a part of the senior course. The desirableness of these changes is too apparent to require either argument or illustration. The plan for accomplishing them, adopted by the convention, as expressed in the foregoing propositions, is simple and easy of execution, provided the several colleges will act in concert.

IT requires each college to obtain and place on record sufficient evidence that every student admitted to matriculation possesses a certain amount of preliminary education. It requires *attendance* and *pay* for three annual courses of college instruction, as a condition for graduation; and arranges the whole curriculum of the college into three corresponding series of branches, so that each student can limit his attention to one series each year, thereby laying a foundation and building on it a superstructure in their natural order.

IT contemplates such an increase in the number of members of each college Faculty, that four lectures per day can be given to each of the three classes in attendance, throughout the whole college term of six months. This would afford a very full course of instruction in each of the three series of branches, and yet give to the members of each class time fully to digest the instruction received. This would make it necessary during a part of each day that lectures should be given at the same hours to different classes. But as all Medical Colleges contain two and some of them three Lecture rooms, this would be attended by no inconvenience to the Faculty or students. The only valid objection which has been suggested by those connected with the Medical Colleges, is, that the increase in the number of each College Faculty required by the proposed plan, would necessitate a corresponding greater division of the income of each college, and thereby seriously reduce the amount received by any one member. If it is remembered, however, that while the plan requires a moderate addition to the number of members in the Faculties of most of the colleges, it also requires each student to attend and pay full fees for three courses of instruction instead of two, it will be seen that the revenues of each college derived from Lecture fees, will be increased in full proportion to the increase of the Faculty. As most of the colleges have allowed each member of the Faculty to sell his ticket to the class and retain the proceeds as his individual compensation, it has been thought, that the proposed division of the students, attending any given college, into three distinct classes, and assigning to each a distinct series of branches, would limit the sale of the tickets of any one professor to the special class receiving instruction in his department; and consequently would restrict his income in proportion to the restricted number of tickets sold.

THIS is simply a misapprehension. The Convention took no action regarding the rate of lecture fees in any of the colleges; but the plan proposed, was founded on the expectation that each student would pay the same aggregate fees annually, as under the old plan. For instance, a student attending his first course and taking out the four tickets of the Freshmen series, would pay the same amount for the four that he now pays for the seven or eight that cover the curriculum in most of the colleges at this time. Hence, although each member of the Faculty would sell a smaller number of tickets, the income from them would be nearly the same. Or each college could have all lecture fees, from the several divisions of the class, paid to a common treasurer, and each member of the Faculty allowed to draw on such treasurer for his proportion of the same.

THE 4th section or proposition adopted by the Convention, was not designed to fix the titles to professorships in the colleges, but simply to designate what was deemed necessary to constitute a proper Medical College Curriculum, and to determine what part of that Curriculum should be included in each of the three series of studies. Uniformity among the colleges in regard to this division into series, is very desirable in order to enable students, if they choose, to attend one series of studies in one college and another series in another without confusion.

TO obviate embarrassment in making the change from the present system of college instruction to the one proposed, we would suggest that all students who should have so nearly completed their period of study at the time fixed for making the change, that an attendance on a single additional course of Lectures would render them eligible to graduation, should be allowed to complete their course by attending the senior department under the new arrangement; while all who are in the first half of their period of study, should be subject to the new arrangement in full.

WHAT the interests of medical science, the honor of the profession, and the welfare of the people, urgently require important improvements in our system of medical education and medical college instruction, is apparent to all. The public sentiment of the profession as expressed through the National, State, and local Societies, and through the leading medical periodicals, cordially sanctions the plan here proposed. We therefore respectfully ask you to give it a full consideration, and return to the Chairman of the undersigned Committee answers to the following questions:

1st. Do your Faculty, together with the governing authority of your College approve of the several propositions as a whole?

2d. If you do not approve of the plan of revision as a whole, what changes would you suggest?

3d. If you approve of the plan as a whole, or of all its essential features, will your College be ready to adopt it practically, and issue your Annual Announcement for the College term of 1868-9, in accordance therewith; provided all the principal Medical Colleges in this country (or at least those in the cities of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Richmond, Charleston, New Orleans, Louisville, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Chicago, Buffalo, and Albany,) will agree to do the same at the same time?

THE great desideratum is to secure both harmony and concert of action on the part of the Medical Colleges, in the adoption of such measures as will at once place the system of medical education in this country on such a basis as the extent of the science and the responsibilities of its practical application in the prevention and treatment of diseases, require.

N. S. Davis,
S. D. Gross,
Geo. C. Blackman,
F. Donaldson. } **Committee.**

Chicago, Aug. 1st, 1867.