SAMUEL THOMSON AND THE POETRY OF BOTANIC MEDICINE,
1810-1860

by

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To

Jonathan

May his muse run true.
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Acknowledgments

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Introduction

In the decades prior to the Civil War, Americans from all walks of life enjoyed the products of the publishing world. From the penny newspaper to the sentimental novel and books on etiquette, history, law, poetry, and theology, people eagerly sought to increase their understanding of the world around them. Publishing houses in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, Cincinnati, and Charleston flourished as changes in technical production, advertising rates, methods of news-gathering, and even the selling of subscriptions revolutionized the printing industry and ushered in the age of mass print media. The New York Sun, the first successful penny paper in the United States, began in 1833, followed by the New York Morning Herald (1835), the Philadelphia Public Ledger (1836), the Boston Daily Times (1836), and the Baltimore Sun (1837). In 1800 there were 200 newspapers in the United States including 17 dailies, 146 weeklies, 30 bi-weeklies, and 7 tri-weeklies. By 1840, there were 138 dailies, 125 publishing two or three times a week, 1,141 weeklies, and 217 periodicals.

In 1830, book sales totaled $3.5 million. Schoolbooks accounted for roughly one-third; another third was divided among classical, legal, theological, and medical topics. By 1840, sales had reached $12 million. Of this, $5 million went toward schoolbooks and $1.6 million for medical, theological, legal, and miscellaneous topics. Boston and Philadelphia were the publishing centers for the country, with Cincinnati not far behind, with $1.3 million in sales annually. Orville Roorbach's Bibliotheca Americana (1852) provides a revealing look at the books in print in the United States during the period 1820 through 1852. A high number of how-to handbooks and manuals were published. From Jacob Abbott's Rollo Code of Morals and George Ackerly On the Management of Children in Sickness and in Health to T. S. Arthur's Advice to Young Men, Henry Ward Beecher's Lectures to Young Men, William A. Alcott's Young
Man's Guide and R. L. Allen's Farmer's Muck-Book, Americans were a curious people whose interest in practical things abounded. How Americans formulated their culture amid the competing forces of materialism, optimism, restlessness, aggressiveness, and religiosity comes to life in the written works of the age.

Not surprisingly, regular doctors, along with botanics, eclectics, homeopaths, hydropaths, Mesmerists, phrenologists, and all measure of medical pretenders took to print in making their claims and counter-claims. As their writings attest, the richness, color, and spirit of American culture are very much alive in the medical literature of these decades. "The literature of a young and free people," wrote the long-winded physician Daniel Drake, "will of course be declamatory, and as such, so far as it is yet developed, in the character of our own. Deeper learning will, no doubt, abate its verbosity and intumescence; but our natural scenery, and our liberal political and social institutions, must long continue to maintain its character of floridness."

Along with the sentimental novel, poetry was read by all classes of people and strongly appealed to the gentler and more melancholy side of American culture. With notable exceptions, such as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, women authored a disproportionate amount of the poetry published in the popular magazines. Although topics ranged from a crushed flower and a bride's farewell, to the death of a child or household pet, the elements of pathos, sorrow, passion, ennoblement, and pious reflection were singularly focused on some moral purpose.

This particular collection of poetry concerns the development of the botanical medical sect known as Thomsonism, and its founder, Samuel Thomson (1769-1843). Beginning his professional career as an itinerant healer traveling a circuit among the small towns and villages of Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts, Thomson transformed his medical practice into a successful business enterprise whose agents and subagents sold several hundred thousand patent-rights to his system of practice, along with an even greater number of books, and tons of botanical medicines. His popular New Guide to Health (1822) went through thirteen editions, including one in German, and countless thousands were reprinted without permission.
Over a period of several decades, Thomson melded his followers into a militant corps of dedicated believers, using them to successfully lobby state legislatures to pass medical acts favorable to their cause. He authorized agencies, infirmaries, and medicine depots in every state and territory; organized the first national convention of botanic healers fifteen years before the American Medical Association could muster its own corps of regular doctors; and popularized a distinctive "course" of medicine that became the regimen of choice for families in every part of the country. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Thomsonism became a household word for several millions of people.

Unlike the more standard poetry of the day, the poetry of Thomson's botanic reformers was written predominantly by men and intended mainly for medical purposes rather than for any moral, ethical, or pious objectives. In many instances, it even served as a vehicle for medical instruction, teaching families in mnemonic fashion how to monitor sickness and proceed with a course of medicine. Thomson's own poetry avoided the easy sentimentality of the day, substituting a more didactic idiom that stressed the evils of privileged rank, the pretensions of bookish learning, defiance against unfair laws, and the importance of popular sovereignty. His poems carried anti-elitist messages against lawyers, priests, and doctors; attacks against agents who betrayed him; recollections of past humiliations; and simplified explanations of his system of medicine.

By contrast, the poetry of Thomson's disciples was more reasoned, although not altogether moderate, and sometimes even quotable. Stretching from the epic and patriotic to the romantic, satirical, and pontifical, it encompassed a full range of emotion. At times, the poetry ranted pompously and predictably as it challenged orthodoxy; on other occasions, it was more didactic and calculated to reason with those who had not closed their minds to change. Overall, Thomsonian poetry was a well of good-tempered ridicule aimed at orthodoxy, using the collective wit of its reform-minded botanics to effectively gain friends and disciples. Thomson and his reformers were a force to be reckoned with in the first half of the nineteenth century, capturing the minds and hearts of American families.
Chapter 1

The American Hippocrates

Samuel Thomson was born February 9, 1769 in the town of Alsted, in the county of Cheshier, New Hampshire. During his youth, the region was mostly wilderness, with few houses within view of each other and many unconnected by either roads or bridle paths. During his early youth, a widow named Benton attended to the family's medical needs, there being no doctor within ten miles. "The whole of her practice was with roots and herbs," recalled Thomson, which she applied in the form of a poultice or gave as hot drinks to produce sweating. In either instance, they "always answered the purpose." From the good medicine she practiced, Benton became much loved by the Thomson household and she took an early liking to young Samuel, inviting him on many of her botanical excursions, and instructing him as to local names and uses of plants as they traveled the region.

From the seventeenth into the early nineteenth centuries, domestic or part-time practitioners like Benton were an integral part of the American landscape. Ministers, wise women, midwives, individuals with local medical reputations, and itinerant healers shared the practice of healing with apprenticed and university educated physicians. Their reputation and authority lay not in their educational pedigree but in the fact that medicine, not so much a science as an art, claimed no single source of truth. Both rationalists and empiricists plied their trade with no clear line separating them. Both were just as liable to treat patients' maladies with dangerous regimens as they were to use more benign forms of treatment. The result was a pattern of therapeutics that defied any clear-cut definition. Healers were whomever the people trusted with their lives and souls--. As historian Joseph F. Kett explained, medicine was a "cunning" that defied formal qualifications or distinguishing scientific standards. Anyone who by example or
word of mouth had succeeded in gaining the public's confidence was honored with the title "doctor." The business of sustaining the nation's health was shared by many, who either through self-selection or by invitation assumed the function of healer. Such was the role and function of the widow Benton.

During one of many excursions through the countryside, either in the company of Benton or by himself, Thomson recalled having discovered a plant (*Lobelia inflata*) that he had not seen before. He chewed its pods, and quickly learned of its emetic influence. For the next twenty years, he used his "emetic herb" in sport, to see his friends vomit after chewing it.

When Samuel turned sixteen, his parents agreed that he should learn medicine from a root doctor named Fuller who practiced in Westmoreland. Shortly thereafter, they changed their minds, giving his lack of formal schooling and the demands of the farm as reasons for their decision. For his twenty-first birthday, Samuel received the deed to one-half of the farm, consisting of one hundred and twenty-five acres. That same spring, his mother died of "galloping consumption," following an ordeal during which Samuel developed a singular dislike for regular doctors, having witnessed the effects of mercury, opium, vitriol, and other medicines on her weakened system. After her death, Samuel renounced regular medicine and pledged to rely only on vegetable syrups and herbs to maintain his own health. He continued to work the farm, but "being without women's help [and] obliged to hire such as [he] could get," he resolved "to find some person who would take an interest in saving [his] property." Not one to dally once he set his mind to action, he married Susan Allen on July 7, 1790, and a year later, she gave birth to the first of their eight children.

Impressed with the abilities of botanic doctors and realizing that his wife and family would require continued attention, Thomson arranged for a young medical apprentice named Bliss, to live on his farm. In return for lodgings, Bliss attended the needs of the family while Thomson, in turn, gained added knowledge of vegetable medicines and botanical practice. "Finding that I had a natural turn for medical practice," recalled Thomson, "he [Bliss] spared no pains to give me all the information in his power."
When his second daughter was about two years old and sick with canker-rash (scarlet fever) that extended to her mouth, nose, ears, and one of her eyes, Thomson took matters into his own hands. Intent on inducing perspiration through steaming, he sat on a chair, placed his daughter on his lap, and wrapped a blanket around them. He then ordered a pan of hot coals in water and vinegar placed beneath the chair. As the coals raised steam, they also raised his daughter's temperature and encouraged perspiration. Thomson repeated the steaming every few hours until she "threw off" the canker and recovered.

When Bliss moved away, Thomson provided for his family's medical needs from his own supply of roots and herbs. "Whenever any of my family were sick," he recalled, "I had no difficulty in restoring them to health by such means as were within my knowledge." He was certain that sufficient medicine grew in the fields and countryside within the reach of every individual. Still, Thomson had not come to any conclusions about medical theory or practice. This would change with the outbreak of measles in his family and his desire to find an agent to relieve the stomach of its offensive matter and reduce the irritability of the lungs and larynx. Recalling the effects of the emetic herb on his childhood friends, and recollecting its more recent action on the laborer who had felt relieved by its emetic properties, he decided to test its results. To his surprise, the milder after-effects of his emetic herb far surpassed the harshness of tartar emetic, ipecacuanha, and other standbys of regular medicine.

By 1805, increased requests for his medical advice and assistance led Thomson to question whether he should continue to farm or turn fully to medical practice. After consulting his wife and friends, and reading Paul's epistle to the Corinthians, he concluded that "every man is made and capacitated for some particular pursuit in life . . . . I am convinced . . . that I possess a gift in healing the sick, because of the extraordinary success I have met with, and the protection and support Providence has afforded me against the attacks of all my enemies." His decision made, he leased the farm, moved his family to Surry, south of Alstead, and took to the road to establish his medical practice. Eventually, he would set up offices in Eastport, Maine;
Portsmouth, New Hampshire; Beverly, Salisbury, and Newburyport, Massachusetts; and later in Boston.

That Samuel Thomson should become an itinerant healer during these early years of America's growth came as no surprise to family and neighbors. He was just one more example of the new American who, contemptuous of old-world prejudices, acknowledged no sense of social inferiority in his endeavor to succeed. Thomson resolved to make his fortune and combined a strong work ethic with perseverance, opportunity, and entrepreneurship. This itinerant people's doctor promised to release patients from the tyranny of regular physicians (and the heroics of their bleeding and purging regimens) by offering cheap and kindly medicines from their own fields and gardens. Thomson covered thousands of miles in his work and the strength of his system came from speaking the language of the common man and breaking the swaggering pride of the mineral doctors with the simplicity of his method.

His travels from town to town did not go unnoticed by the medical community which watched with curiosity, and then with animosity, as he reputedly cured many given up as hopeless by local doctors. The diseases and illnesses treated by Thomson in these early years included nettle rash (St. Anthony's Fire), mercury poisoning, rheumatism, burns, cuts, bruises, consumption, and dropsies. He was known to be particularly successful with cases of dysentery in areas where epidemics of fever had broken out. His growing reputation only infuriated regulars who treated him with contempt and sometimes even malice.

As a traveling healer, Thomson crossed paths with any number of occultists, cancer curers, surgeon-dentists, apparatus healers, aurists, medical electricians, bonesetters, pharmaceutical peddlers, botanics, and Indian healers. Many made circuits of the inns and public houses in the towns of New York and New England, relying on word of mouth, advertising, and various forms of self-promotion. Some, like Dr. Peter Davidson of Albany, obtained copyright protection from the New York legislature for proprietary cancer plasters and proceeded to sell franchises or "rights" to their use. Working on the fringe of the regular medical profession, Davidson, Thomson, and other itinerant healers managed practices that extended over several hundred
miles and encompassed dozens of small towns and farming communities. Their circuits took many weeks or even months to complete. Historian Peter Benes identified eighty traveling healers active in regions of New England and New York between 1800 and 1830. Although styles and practices differed, their presence was a very real aspect of the American scene. To the extent that these itinerants stole potential patients, they increased both the competition and the rancor existing between themselves and regulars.

Samuel Thomson wrote this poem to express his feelings toward the three crafts: priests, lawyers, and doctors. Similar to what he later wrote in his _New Guide to Health_ (1822), the poem reflects his strong opposition to the credentialed professional classes.

**THREE CRAFTS**

_Described in Long Metre_  
_(Sung to "False are the Men of High Degree")_

Attend good people and draw near,  
Till you this fact are brought to hear;  
How nat'ral rights of human kind,  
By crafts, for money kept you blind.

How selfish are the crafts combined,  
Engaged 't oppress the human mind;  
Physic, Divinity, and Law,  
They chief of all our labors draw.

The nests of college birds are three,  
_Law, Physic and Divinity;_  
And while these three remain combined,  
They keep the world oppressed and blind.

On lab'ers' money Lawyers feast,  
Also the Doctor and the Priest;  
Although their offices are three,  
They will oppress where'er they be.

Men do consent like Balaam's ass,  
To bear their burdens when they pass;  
They ride men hard, and sometimes beat,  
And drink their wine and eat their meat.
We greatly do ourselves misuse,
   Our rights and liberty abuse;
While they do eat our meat and bread,
   And give us poison in their stead.

They strive to keep the people blind,
With whims like these fill up their mind;
That they have power and full control,
   Over the body, will, and soul.

The Priest pretends to save the soul--
   Doctors to make the body whole;
For money Lawyers make their plea;
   We'll save it, and dismiss the three.

This is the way the craft has gained;
When sick, we for the doctor send;
He says, "there is no chance to live,
   Unless I deadly poison give."

When this is done, the sick grow worse,
Which takes the money from their purse;
He says, "I've great regard for you,"
   But money is the most in view.

When'er the sick are like to die,
Call in the Priest, the doctors cry;
The Priest will come, and with them pray,
   And clear the doctor every way.

He then doth say "don't trust in man,
   There is a great and wiser plan;"
The one who freely by his will,
   Doth doctors authorize to kill.

He says that man should not complain,
What way God sends death in his name,
   If by the doctors, two or one,
They always say, "his will be done."

They also say, he has done well,
   No man of skill could him excel;
His time is come, the Lord hath sent,
   No doctor could his death prevent.

But nature's doctors have no chance,
No diploma can they advance;  
The doctors cry out, quack and kill!  
They don't allow such do God's will.

No quack can have a right to kill,  
Unless he's passed the college-mill;  
Should he the butcher then excel;  
The people say 'tis very well.

Craft tell the doctor, make your bill,  
And let the lawyer write the will;  
And then to execute the same,  
The lawyer takes it in his name.

Soon as the man is dead and gone,  
The will is read--the work goes on,  
The doctor brings a shocking charge;  
The lawyer says it's none too large.

Because we three have all agreed  
To charge the people as we need;  
We claim the power and full control,  
Over the body, will, and soul.

All three of us as one agree,  
To take away true liberty,  
And keep it from such people's hands,  
As dare dispute our high demands.

Should any nat'ralist arise,  
To clear the veil from off your eyes;  
With all their power they'll run them down,  
By crying quackery and clown.

If you would find where quackery lies,  
You'll find the quack is he that cries;  
And he must be a knavish clown,  
Who would cry useful knowledge down.

We shall no longer disagree;  
We know where quackery must be;  
They must be quacks who do profess,  
To cure with ratsbane, in distress.

Come freemen all unveil your eyes,  
If you this slavish yoke despise;
Now is the time to be set free,
From Priests' and Doctors' slavery.

The craft is three in every stage,
On tory limbs these monarch's rage;
Their power is lost, we've spoil'd the tree,
Of Hartford tory monarchy.

Did twenty lawyers there agree,
To form a great conspiracy?
The clergy met at their own place,
To bind us freemen in disgrace.

The doctors with the same intent,
Petitioned to the government,
To make a law to stop the plan,
Of equal rights in every man.

What could the doctors' object be,
Except a general massacre;
When chiefly poison they applied,
And most all their patients died.

What must have been the people's fate,
If the three crafts had gained of late;
Had lost our right to make the law,
We should like beasts their burdens draw.

In every town the college-mill,
The people by the law must fill;
They must attend each month at least,
The public chest must pay the Priest.

The doctors with the priests combined,
For to oppress the human kind;
And make their charges as they will,
The lawyer he collects their bill.

(Dr. Samuel Thomson)

Written by Samuel Thomson while in Newburyport jail in 1809 on the charge of murdering one of his patients, this poem circulated in a hand-bill and was used to explain the
difference between regular medicine and the doctor's own botanic treatment.

SECUNDUM ARTEM: THE POOR MAN'S LAMENTATION

My wife is sick and like to die,
"Go for the doctor!" is the cry;
"Hast quick away, return with speed,
"She ne'er did more a doctor need."

The doctor comes with great perfume,
Like summer's rose in height of bloom;
His skill is spread on the outside,
And thus he gains on women's pride.

Near the bed-side, where madam lies,
He seats himself--"You're sick," he cries;
"O yes, so very sick am I,
If you can't help me, I shall die!

"A dangerous fever has seiz'd thee,
"And 'tis the raging pleurisy:
"I know it by your lab'ring breast,
"The load with which your stomach's prest.

"Stagnation of the purple tide,
"The tort'ring pain that racks your side:
"And higher still, I fear't will rise,
("I find it by your pulse, your eyes.)

"Lest the disorder I rebuke"--
So takes her blood, and gives a puke;
Thus make the foe his hat to doff,
Then takes his leave and pushes off.

At length the doctor comes again;
"Oh! what!" says he, "Not free of pain?
No, you've destroy'd for life all chance,
By physic, puking and your lance.

The doctor feels her pulse again,
And says, "the fever makes her pain!
"And quickly that I must subdue,
"I must kill that, or that will you."

To kill the heat, he nitre deals,
Opium to quell the pain she feels;
And when their office work is o'er,
Death knocks aloud at the heart's door.

The spirits muster up their force,
T' oppose the fell destroyer's course;
But with one touch, he ends the strife,
By putting out the fire of life.

The doctor says, "I did my best;
"I hope your wife has gone to rest;
"Your part you now must soon fulfill,
"That is, to pay my mod'rate bill.

"My bill is rendered in this way--
"Your wife's attendance night and day;
"To Physic, bleeding, drops, and stuff--
"Its FIFTY DOLLARS--cheap enough!"

Where is the pity they should feel?
They charge the same to kill as heal!
And crave withal the people's thanks,
And seize the prize, and leave the blanks.

In case of fever, see them come,
And the whole system down they run;
And lest the man should rise at last,
With med'cine's cords, they bind him fast.

The doctor says, "how still he lies!
"How fine the med'cine is!" he cries:
His blood is took, the fever gone,
And thus the killing job is done.

The fever rises, nature gains,
The sick man feels again his pains;
And soon about, this man would be,
Were he from such cold doctors free.

Should pain increase, the fever rise,
He nitre and the laud'num plies;
Thus to subdue and ease the pain,
He lowly lays his strength again.

This is what makes the fever run--
They nature fight, till she's most done;
Then her recover to work out,
They leave her, and the man's about.

They take their nature all away,
They bleed, and physic, night and day;
And the more poison they can give,
Conceive they've better chance to live.

*Ratsbane* and *zinc* and *vitriol* too,
And *mercury* to physic through;
And this at times, is what they give--
Tough must the patient be, to live.

Thus I have shown the death, in part,
Of doctors practicing by art;
Two thousand years they boast of light,
Yet deadly scales obstruct their sight.

Our blood and heat does cause our breath,
In losing these we suffer death;
And all the use in modern skill,
Of taking blood, but attends to kill.

From these dark scenes let us withdraw,
And view unerring Nature's law;
And this remark, that through our days,
*Heat's life* and *health*, in different ways.

It animates our frame complete;
The sun is life, and full of heat;
With the glad influence of his beams,
He cheers the earth, warms the chill'd streams.

Makes all creation joy and sing,
To vegetation gives its spring;
Corn, wine, and oil, herb, fruit and flower,
Are ripen'd by his kindly power.

Fish, fowl, and beast, in different ways,
Feel life and health in his blest rays;
But man, creation's noblest boast,
Feels, and should own his blessings most.

When fire 'bove water bears the sway,
It through the pores wastes it away;
When this is general throughout,
The man is healthy, firm, and stout.

But when the water overpowers,
The stomach's chill'd, and shut the pores,
The elements then temper well,
And health with you shall ever dwell.

Our Father, whom all goodness fills,
Provides the means, to cure all ills;
The simple herbs, beneath our feet,
Well us'd, relieve our pains complete.

While doctors rove in foreign parts,
And rack their powers, and skill, and arts;
Health's med'cines grow upon our land,
They're ours, by stretching forth our hand.

This art I studied from my youth,
And now assert it as a truth;
I can them use in different ways,
And turn a fever in two days.

How oft we hear the doctors say,
"The fever, it must have its way!"
If that's the case, I would ask you,
What good, they or their med'cines do?

Man is perplexed, and much to do,
That has a talent forth to shew;
Much opposition he will find,
If 'tis against the common kind.

Must man be silent, while he's breath.
And hide his talent in the earth?
When nature urges him to move,
He not the gift of heaven improve?

Like Absalom, I'd sooner bear,
To be suspended by the hair,
Than silent lie, devoid of good,
And not improve the gift of God.

(Dr. Samuel Thomson)
The next poem, written several years after the trial, explains the hardship it had caused for his wife and family, reaffirms the vengeance of regular doctors and of his own innocence, and reflects finally on the sweetness of revenge when his accuser, Dr. French of Salisbury, New Hampshire, was brought before the same court a year later and convicted of grave-robbing.

UNTITLED

This world to me doth sorrow bring,
Though time is swiftly on the wing;
I hope the day may shortly come,
When I shall see my native home.
This prison filled with black and white,
And through the grates they yield their light;
Those deadly walls to me appear,
Like tombs of death or dark despair.
I've done no crime for which I'm here,
My conscience tells me I am clear
Of murder, malice, or of spite,
Which gives me comfort and delight.
My wife and children, dear to me,
This news to them must heavy be;
Will God of nature be their friend,
Till my imprisonment shall end.
I pity all both small and great,
Who are compelled to share my fate,
Unless 'tis those who sent me here:
For they are cruel and severe.
Vengeance is mine, all nature says,
And will repay it in his ways;
If this be so, then why should I
Attempt his laws to satisfy.
They've had their punishment or more,
My enemies have felt it sore:
Some had the palsy night and day,
Others compelled to run away.
At the bar where I was cleared,
My adversary soon appeared;
To his indictment guilty plead,
Who stole and carried off the dead.
He paid the fine the court did lay,
Soon after this he ran away;
His money lost and friends beside,
Returned poor, and soon he died.
Now Dr. French your rage is o'er,
You here will trouble me no more;
I shall for damage no more call,
Death pays your debts, that's due to all.
Old Haman's gallows has been try'd,
And the old maxim not denied;
Is measured back to you again.
Through all my years, about two score,
Was to acknowledge to my store,
And keep this precept fair in view,
Do as you'd have others do to you.

(Dr. Samuel Thomson)\textsuperscript{V}

In the following verses, Samuel Thomson expresses his concern for a merchant's ingratitude in denying his cure, and a priest who swears that a certain man would be living had it not been for Thomson's medicines.

\textit{TO SLANDERERS AND PEOPLE OF IGNORANCE}

I understand some in this place,
That are in human form,
So Judas like a deep disgrace,
Better they'd ne'er been born.

There's some, oh shame! that have confess'd,
When finding they must die,
No other means to gain relief,
To THOMSON they'd apply.

Saved from the grasp of sudden death,
They would his cure deny—
With their last scandalizing breath,
Attest it was a lie.

Can noble souls of real worth,
Their value so despise,
To pay respect to worthless shapes,
Who own their words are lies?

When craft's in danger, priests can swear,
Oaths seem like chaff or smoke,
Life's length in people they declare,
To give a deadly stroke.

You may find one as bad as this,
With A.M. to his name,
Who, to kill right, and help craft spite,
Now is exposed to shame.

People of such ingratitude,
Who willful crimes commit,
The devil is useless, so is hell,
If they don't find the pit.

(Dr. Samuel Thomson)vi

The "Lady" author of this next poem tried regular medicine but was informed by doctors that she was beyond help. Encouraged to make her remaining days comfortable with the use of opium, she determined instead to live and sought out Thomson who restored her health.

TO DOCTOR SAMUEL THOMSON

THOMSON, great master of the healing art,
'Tis thine to turn aside death's pointed dart;
'Tis thine to keep the victim from the tomb,
And on the cheeks, cause rosy health to bloom.
The nauseous weeds can unto thee impart
Some power conducive to the healing art;
While many a shrub, and plant, and flow'r, and tree,
Thy knowledge makes subservient unto thee.

'Tis thine to smooth the rugged brow of care,
And charm to hope the ravings of despair;
'Tis thine to bid life's ebbing tide to flow,
And light new smiles upon the cheek of woe.
And can it be, that e'en the grave Divine!
Has slander'd thee with falsehood most malign?
Yes it is true, while envy, spite, and pride,
To injure thee their baneful powers have tried.

But thou shalt triumph, rise superior still,
While future ages shall proclaim thy skill.
To thee, dear friend, more gratitude I owe,
Than feeble language hath the power to show;
But yet accept this tribute from the heart,
More than my pen or words can e'er impart:
In vain I strive in these unpolished lays,
To speak thy worth, thy matchless skill to praise.

For thou, a guardian angel, came to save
A struggling victim from the silent grave!
The power of medicine I sought in vain,
Till thou by skill did mitigate my pain.
Still to thy labors may success be given,
With peace on earth and endless joy in heaven.
May faith and hope with gath'ring years increase,
And life's last sun glide gently down in peace.

(A Lady)

Written by unknown authors, the next two poems reflect the praise and flattery Thomson received from grateful followers of his system.

**JUPITER'S DECREE**

On high Olympus Jove inclined
And bade the gods attend,
And in their counsels, sage and wise,
To things of earth descend.

Great Juno first essayed to speak,
And of her wrongs complain;--
And Venus that her many charms
Were rendered void and vain.

Apollo then his harp remained
In many a cause unstrung,
And that his medic art divine
To quack'ry's hands was flung.

'The couch,' he cried, for rest and ease,
Is now a bed of pain;--
My art divine, which once availed,
Is now employed in vain.

The mangled forms of thousands rise,
And cry for vengeance dire,
While victims still are offered up,
At quack'ry's altar fire.

The human race, that homage pay
To thee, thou God of truth,
No more attain their usual age,
But die in early youth.

The fairest forms that grace the earth,
The young, the proud, the gay,
Just meet our eyes, then fade and die,
Like blossoms of a day.

The tender ties that bind the fair
To brave and manly hearts,
Are scarcely formed e'er severed are,
As cherished life departs.

Must this be so, Imperial Jove,
Must thy dominions fair,
Be ravaged by the hands of those
Who naught for justice care?'

He ceased. The ruler of the gods
Surveyed the forms around:--
'Give justice,' was the cry of all,
And long the words resound.

'The hand of man must work reform,'
Imperial Jove replied,
'Give thou the means, to Thomson's hands,
Thy healing art confide.'

(A Botanic Advocate)

LINES ON THE THOMSONIAN SYSTEM

Deep in the dark and somber shades of night,
Veiled from the searching rays of truth and light,
Wrapped up in books, immured in learned schools;
Affording ample scope to rogues and fools.
Medicine, once pure as heaven's untainted breath,
   Seems clothed in robes of misery and death.
But soon this scene of darkness shall be o'er,
   And men be duped by "learned quacks" no more.
E'en now we had the dawn of that eventful day,
When these thick clouds that darken truth's pure ray,
   Shall melt away before the living light,
Or sink in regions of eternal night.
The spark is struck that shall illumine the world,
The sacred banner of Truth's unfurled;
THOMSON appears--upreared by Nature's hand,
   A second Luther--sent by God's command;
   Poor and unlearned, untutored from the farm,
   To pluck from trampled herbs a healing balm.
Though all the "powers of darkness," storm and rage,
   A ruthless war against the 'system' wage,
'Tis vain--the day is past--Truth's sacred light
   Shall banish error to the shades of night.

(Anonymous) ix

The Georgian woman who wrote the following ode was reared as a Thomsonian. Her poem, which is sung to "Auld Lang Syne," celebrates Samuel Thomson's birthday.

AN ODE FOR THE 9TH OF FEBRUARY

Come, come my friends, and let us twine
   Around the festal board;
But nothing stronger than the wine
   Must in the cup be poured:

For tho' we're Thomson's steamersx warm,
   Our stimulus is pure;
It ne'er has passed the still worm's form;
   'T will not make drunk, I'm sure.

Then, come and listen to my song;
   Yes, every foe and friend;
I'll promise not to be too long,
   If you an ear will lend.
I'll sing you of a noble man--
   He was no learned son
Of Aesculapius ancient clan;
   Yet laurels bright he won.

He gleaned a balm for every pain,
   From humble earth obscure;
He broke the Allopathic\textsuperscript{xi} chain.
   And found a medicine pure.

Behold! he gives a powerful drug--
   LOBELIA is its name--
We've often proved it no "humbug:"
   'Tis this that won him fame;

And we, his followers true, to-night
   Will proudly chant his fame;
We seek no other day-star light
   Than SAMUEL THOMSON'S name.

\textit{(C. E. S.)xii}

Dr. D. L. Terry, author of the next poem, graduated from Worthington Medical Department in Worthington, Ohio, the first chartered sectarian medical school (1830) in the United States. Upon receiving his degree, he joined the faculty of his alma mater and taught as a devoted follower of Wooster Beach (1794-1868), the founder of eclectic medicine. The eclectics believed that since most truths had probably been discovered, it was only necessary to pick and choose from that which already existed. These reformers were botanics at heart and rejected poisonous minerals in the belief that the vegetable kingdom was safer and more efficacious in the cure of disease. Critics, including the Thomsonians, condemned them for having no particular system of practice and holding no set of principles.

Terry soon found himself opposed to the school's philosophy and changed his allegiance to the more tangible principles and practices of the Thomsonians. After resigning his faculty position, he proceeded to conduct his own school in Columbus, Ohio. When the school closed,
Terry moved to Cincinnati where he taught briefly at the second chartered sectarian school in the United States, the Botanico-Medical College (1839), owned and operated by Alva Curtis (1797-1881), a professed Independent Thomsonian. Terry taught briefly at the college, but weakened by consumption, returned to his home in Xenia, Ohio, where he died. The following "Botanic Song of Liberty" is a modification of the tune, "The Tyrolese Song of Liberty" which Terry dedicated to Samuel Thomson.

THE BOTANIC'S SONG OF LIBERTY

Merrily every bosom boundeth, merrily oh! merrily oh!
Where the name of Thomson soundeth, merrily oh! merrily oh!
  There the bloom of health sheds more splendor,
  There the maidens' charms shine more tender;
  Every joy the land surroundeth, merrily oh! merrily oh!

Wearily every bosom pineth, wearily oh! wearily oh!
Where the poison system twineth, wearily oh! wearily oh!
  There the dart of death hath more fleetness,
  There the maidens' heart hath no sweetness,
  Every joy of life declineth, wearily oh! wearily oh!

Cheerily then from hill and valley, cheerily oh! cheerily oh!
Round the name of Thomson rally, cheerily oh! cheerily oh!
  If the joys of health, won by bravery
  Sweeter be than pain, sighs and slavery.
  Round the name of Thomson rally, cheerily oh! cheerily oh!

(D. L. Terry)

The following author praises Thomson for his ability to correct the errors of past medical practices.
NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS

To ward of ill, to mitigate our pain,
Of sickness shorten the long, tedious reign,
Back from the shades to charm our wand'ring breath,
And save us from the icy grasp of death,
Mankind has toiled from the remotest age;
And all have toiled, from simpleton to sage.
Commencing in the dark, and forced to guess
At Nature's mysteries without success;
To trace a Cretan labyrinth of ways
To cure disease, with no sure, guiding rays
Of Principle, mild beaming from afar,
To Truth's bright opening the conducting star,
What wonder, if conjectures strangely wild,
And erring far from Nature's treatment mild--
A cruel course, the lancet and blue pill,
And poisons active, suited well to kill,
Should credence gain; and suffering nature yield,
And, finally, exhausted quit the field?
But see! at last, amid our snow-crowned hills,
Where purest fountains gush in countless rills--
Health's favored region through revolving time--
New-Hampshire's celebrated, happy clime,
Where smiles the rosy goddess, wondrous fair,
And with her breath perfumes the vital air,
A light arise, dispel the clouds and mists
The night born dreams of ancient errorists--
A light to cheer--a light to guide, and save
From the cold death-damp of the silent grave--
Which fills, once more, the sunken, faded eye
With Joy's own brightness for deliverance nigh,
A light from Truth's heaven-kindled, quenchless flame,
That flings a glory round our THOMSON's name,
More pure, more blessed, than the sickly rays
From conquerors' crowns, with dire portent that blaze.
The Year that now has wing'd its rapid flight,
To the long past retreating from our sight,
Has seen the triumph of this glorious cause;
Proved the supremacy of Nature's laws;
Seen tear-dimmed eyes their former luster gain,
While friends rose rapidly from beds of pain;
Seen fevers fierce sore baffle learned skill,
And dreaded Dysentery rage at will;
While the oft heard, the slowly tolling bell
Proclaims of Death's dark list the frightful swell.
Here is a ground for action, great, sublime,
Which men shall bless through every age of time:
   To undo evil, teach the rising youth
   To know and value our health-giving truth;
   To feel that bounteous, wise, impartial Heaven
   In every field and grove our life has given;
   To struggle on for MAN and JUSTICE too,
   And legislation giving all their due:

For this, our MESSENGER shall reach your doors,
While Thomson's fame careers to distant shores,
   A messenger of knowledge, truth, and love;
   That speaks of health below, and bliss above.
Kind patrons all, your good assistance lend
   If you regard us as the sick man's friend;
   And may the future be supremely blest,
   And smooth the passage to our final rest;
Each coming year seem better than the past,
   Till we all meet in perfect bliss at last;
Where sin's disease the Great Physician cures,
   And moral health remains, while God himself endures.

(J. H. G.)

Thomas Hooker of Hookerton, in Green County, North Carolina, first heard of Thomsonism in 1835. Until then, he had only taken mineral medicines and had been salivated with mercurial pills until he could routinely "wash a tea-spoonful of rotten flesh" out of his mouth. In desperation, he purchased a patent-right to Thomson's medical system and instructed his wife to mix and administer the prescribed six-step "course" of medicine. Following his instructions, she proceeded to steam her husband twenty times and successfully carried him through several courses of medicine. Both Hooker and his wife then practiced on their family, and after several successful treatments, received requests from neighbors for treatment. In tribute to Thomson's medicines, Hooker penned the following poem that Alva Curtis published in the Botanico-Medical Recorder in 1839.

UNTITLED

From Newton we have knowledge of the skies;
From Locke, the rules which regulate the wise;
From Shakespeare portraits of the human mind;
From Byron, all that's glowing, vast, refined;
And so we might rehearse their varied claims,
Through the bright volumes of a thousand names:
But there is one from whom a boon more blest
We have received, than those from all the rest.
A greater boon than knowledge song or wit,
That's far more dear; and all acknowledge it.
What that boon is, ask your enfeebled brain,
Which late so strove with misery and pain.
Ask yonder man, so rosy and so trim,
Just saved from fever, headache, wasting limb.
Ask what you choose, one answer will you hear:
"The remedies botanic," greet your ear.

(Thomas Hooker) xvii

Outside of the few who knew him well, Thomson was portrayed as a highly religious
man. In reality, Thomson was a free thinker who fought established religion his entire life and
saw the clergy in the same light that he viewed doctors and lawyers. All three had, through
pretence of a credential, forced themselves on the public, sponging from their labor and hard-
earned money. Thomson's religiosity, which he expounded in his poetry, was secular in nature
and mostly private.

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF

Who is my Neighbor?
Thy neighbor? It is he whom thou
Has power to aid and bless:
Whose aching heart, or burning brow,
Thy soothing hand may press.
Thy neighbor? 'Tis the fainting poor,
Whose eye with want is dim;
Whom hunger sends from door to door--
Go thou, and succor him.
Thy Neighbor? 'Tis that weary man,
Whose years are at their brim;
Bent low with sickness, cares, and pain,
Go thou, and comfort him.
Thy neighbor? 'Tis the heart bereft
Of every earthly gem;
Widow and orphan, helpless left;
Go thou, and shelter them.
Thy neighbor? Yonder toiling slave,
Fettered in thought and limb,
Whose hopes are all beyond the grave;
Go thou, and ransom him.
Whene'er thou meet'st a human form
Less favored than thine own,
Remember there's a neighbor born,
Thy brother, or thy son.
O! pass not, pass not heedless by;
Perhaps thou can'st redeem
The breaking heart from misery,
Go, share thy lot with him.

(Dr. Samuel Thomson)xviii

In explaining Thomson's epitaph, written by the doctor himself, the editor of the *Thomsonian Manual* wrote that Samuel Thomson "was a religious and pious man; not in profession, bravura, display, but in his closet and the inner chambers of his soul." The various persecutions he experienced from the three aforementioned professions "kept him aloof" from being a church member. Nevertheless, wrote the editor, Thomson was "among saints and the redeemed." Unable and unwilling to play the hypocrite, he avoided established religions and received his faith in the same manner as he received his system of medical practice--"from God."

**EPITAPH OF THE LATE DR. SAMUEL THOMSON**

My body now rests in the dust,
My form from whence it came,
My *spirit* has returned to God,
Who only lent the same.
Chapter 2

The Thomsonian System

Along with Thomson's decision to make a successful business of his medical practice, he knew that it was just as important for him to fix upon a plan or course of treatment. Taking nature as his guide, experience as his instructor, and whatever knowledge he had gleaned from texts, he concluded, along with the Greeks in the fifth century B.C., that animal bodies consisted of the basic elements of earth and water, kept in motion by fire and air. Earth and water constituted the solids while fire and air were the cause of life and motion. Where heat was extinct, the body was dead; but when heat and air combined, and modified in the living animal, they constituted the living state. A vital principle different from all chemical causation gave the human body its living fiber. Having deduced that the loss of heat constituted the immediate cause of disease, Thomson reasoned there should be a few simple remedies administered as a "course" of medicine. In the beginning, he relied almost entirely on two vegetable medicines: lobelia and capsicum. Over the years, he expanded his most frequently used medicines to six and his total armamentarium to seventy. During the early years, he kept the actual names of his vegetable medicines secret, using only the Numbers One through Six to designate their function; these six numbers represented the centerpiece of his method of cure.

Thomson's Number One medicine was the emetic herb lobelia (Lobelia inflata) that he administered in three dosage forms: as a powder made from the leaves and pods (green lobelia), as a tincture made from the green herb, or as a powder made from the seeds (brown lobelia). In later decades, preparations of lobelia were offered in expanded dosage forms: fluidextracts; acetous tinctures; acetous syrups; oxymel, honey of lobelia; oils; lozenges; compound tinctures of lobelia and capsicum; balsam of honey; pills and compound pills; and suppositories.
The purpose of Thomson's Number One was to cleanse the stomach, promote perspiration, and relax the muscular system. Its singular advantage was that it acted "in harmony with the principles of life," leaving no taint of disruption on the body. Professor William Tully of Yale College described it as more efficient than ipecac and "on the whole . . . one of the very best agents of this class in the whole materia medica." He preferred the tincture form that worked in about fifteen minutes. "I am confident," Tully observed, "that lobelia inflata is a valuable, a safe, and a sufficiently gentle article of medicine; and I think the time will come, when it will be much better appreciated."

But Thomson's emetic herb could not restore heat altogether. By itself, it was "like a fire made of shavings; a strong heat for a short time, and then all go out." To augment his emetic herb, Thomson turned to his Number Two remedy, a stimulant, which held heat in the stomach until the system cleared of obstructions; it generated heat by rousing the organism, giving energy to all other medicines, and causing free perspiration. Thomson's Number Two was cayenne pepper (Capsicum annum) made from the dried seeds or pods of the pepper plant. Although pepper was principally used for culinary purposes, Thomson considered it a safe and salutary stimulant to the exhausted body. The best pepper came from the town of Cayenne in French Guinea where the pods were gathered when still green, preserved in salt and water, and shipped to the United States. American manufacturers added vinegar and sold it as a pepper-sauce. Both the ripe red pod and the green pod were effective medicines; however, Thomson preferred the green pod believing that it kept its power longer.

When cayenne was difficult to obtain, Thomson substituted common red peppers, ginger, or black pepper (Piper nigrum). Ginger also made a good poultice, mixed with pounded cracker, or red slippery or sweet elm bark (Ulmas fulva). He also recommended chewing these substitutes like tobacco, but swallowing the juice, for cough and consumption. In their absence, Thomson turned to prickly ash (Zanthoxylon fraxineum) as yet another substitute.

At this stage of disease, particularly in cases of fever, Thomson also relied on steaming, or the vapor bath, followed by medicines to clear the stomach and bowels of canker. For this
latter task, he turned to astringents, his *Number Three* remedy, which gathered all noxious substances made by the morbid action of the disease and removed them by way of injection or clyster (enema), leaving the body free to perform its natural functions with vigor. Number Three consisted of bayberry or candleberry root bark (*Myrica cerifera*) combined with the root of white pond lily (*Nymphia odorata*). When pond lily was unobtainable, he turned to the inner bark of hemlock (*Abies or *Penies* canadensis); the root of marsh rosemary (*Statice caroliniana*); the bark, leaves and berries of sumac (*Rhus glabrum*); the leaves of witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginica*); the leaves of red raspberry (*Rubus strigosus*); or the roots and tops of squaw weed or black cohosh (*Erigeron purpureum*). Thomson discovered the use of the hemlock bark in 1814 and was particularly pleased with the effects of tea made from the bark. Along with bayberry bark and lily root, it formed the mixture commonly called "coffee" among the Thomsonians and was taken by mouth or by injection. Thomson had discovered the medicinal effects of sumac in 1807 while attending a patient with dysentery. Desiring something to clear the stomach and bowels, he found that the bark, leaves, and even the berries answered the purpose. Similarly, the leaves of witch hazel became an effective enema when made into a tea. Thomson also claimed to have first used the leaves of red raspberry, discovering their particular power when at Eastport after having depleted his supply of medicines. Left to his own devices, he resorted to tasting various leaves until he found one that would work.

Thomson used clysters (enemas) to remove fecal matter in the intestines and lower bowels, support the strength of the patient, and soothe and allay irritation. He and his followers administered enemas with the same certainty they gave their emetics. Thus, when the stomach was too irritable and an emetic could not be retained long enough to take hold of the morbid matter, they administered injections, repeating them as often as necessary. An infusion of "coffee" made from bitterroot and bayberry guaranteed a good evacuation; the same was true of slippery elm and nerve powder. Thomson discovered each of these herbs by chewing them; if they caused saliva to flow freely and leave the mouth clean and moist, he knew they would work as an enema. These he used to purify the blood, scour the stomach and bowels, remove the
canker caused by cold, and cleanse the internal system. The degree of canker depended on the excess of cold over the inward heat.

After successfully removing the canker, Thomson then gave his Number Four remedy, a choice of bitters to restore the debilitated organs to their proper functions by correcting the bile and digestion, thereby encouraging the natural secretion of the fluids. These included bitter herb, or balmony (Chelone glabra); poplar bark (Populas tripida, or tremuloides); the bark of barberry (Berberis vulgaris); bitter-root, or wandering milk-weed (Apocynum and rosemifolium); and the root of goldenseal or Ohio kercuma (Frasera verticillata) sometimes called orange root, tumeric root, yellow puccoon, eye balm, and Indian paint. Made into tea and used singly or together, these herbs were calculated to stimulate an appetite and restore the digestive powers.

Thomson's Number Five restorative tonic remedies included the bark of poplar and bayberry, peach-meats (Amygdalus persica), or meats of cherrystones (Prunus virginiana), mixed with sugar and brandy. The resulting syrup worked well for dysentery since it strengthened the stomach and bowels. Similarly, a tea made of the same ingredients addressed bowel complaints in children. When neither peach-meats nor cherry-stones were available, Thomson substituted bitter almonds.

Finally, there was Thomson's Compound Tincture of Myrrh and Capsicum, known popularly as his Number Six, consisting of gum myrrh (Myrrha) and cayenne prepared with wine or brandy. Also called Rheumatic Drops, the tincture was intended to remove pain, prevent mortification, and promote natural heat. Number Six possessed all the qualities of Numbers Two, Three, and Four, and served as a powerful antiseptic to pacify the nerves. The capsicum-myrrh tincture even found its way into the United States Pharmacopoeia. For external applications, Thomson added turpentine and gum camphor. His first knowledge of gum myrrh occurred as a youth while working with his father at Onion River. An old Canadian who was passing through the area recommended some of the tincture to treat his injured foot. Following that experience, Thomson began carrying it around with him, and used it successfully to restore his wife after difficult labor. On mixing it with cayenne, he discovered that the combination was even more
effective than using gum myrrh alone.

An additional favorite of Thomson was nerve powder, better known as American valerian, ladies' slipper, or simply umbil. The roots of the plant were pounded into a powder that Thomson used for nervous affections, including hysteria and spasmodic affections. He considered it much safer than opium and prescribed half a teaspoonful in hot, sweetened water; alternatively, it worked safely and effectively when administered as an injection or clyster.

The following short verse became a popular signature statement used by the Thomsonians through the first half of the nineteenth century.

UNTITLED

And let us all go hand in hand,
In social, strong Botanic band,
Till all our enemies shall say,
Sam. Thomson's teas have won the day.

(Robert Story)xix

Written by Thomson, the next several poems explain the basic elements forming life and the importance of heat and cold on health and disease.

AN EXAMINATION OF MAN

(As formed from the four elements, and the cause why life is not prolonged to age, sect, or denomination.)

Attend my friends and lend an ear,
It is of consequence to hear,
How th' elements compose man's breath,
And heat and cold are life and death.
I shall at first my reason give,
Why sects or ages cannot live,
The fire that did uphold the life,
Is quench'd by water in the strife.
Soon as the heat or fire is lost,
The active part that rules the whole,
You find the line of life is crost,
The water has the full control.
From th' extract of elements we rose,
Which earth and water doth compose,
Fire must above the water sway,
If not we turn again to clay.
Disorders take their rise from hence,
The water has pre-eminence,
Then keep the fire to bear the sway,
And make the water waste away.
And when the water gains the day,
Or cold upon the heat doth play,
Then cold and heat do held their strife,
The battle is for death or life.
And if the heat shall gain the day,
Then life and health shall bear the sway,
But if the cold the victory gain,
Then death and silence hold their reign.
And this we have for our defense,
To temper well the elements,
Always have before our eyes,
The fever never to despise.
When e'er the fever struggles hard,
As your best friend do that regard,
Assist to overcome the cold,
Then nature will the vict'ry hold.

(Dr. Samuel Thomson)xx

ON THE BOTANIC SYSTEM OF PRACTICE

Attend, my friends, and lend an ear;
It is of consequence to hear.
And this remark, that through our days,
Heat's life and health, in different ways.

It animates our frame complete,
The sun is life, and full of heat;
With the glad influence of its beams,
He cheers the earth, warms the chill'd streams.

Makes all creation joy and sing,
To vegetation gives its spring;
Corn, wine and oil, herb, fruit, and flower,
Are ripen'd by his kindly power.

Fish, fowl, and beast, in diff'rent ways,
Feel life and health in his blest rays;
But man, creation's noblest boast,
Feels, and should own his blessings most.

I think you all will yield assent,
Whom nature's laws approve,
That heat's the only element,
That makes creation move.

Look at the earth in winter time,
Fields, trees, plants, flow'rs decay'd.
Then view again when spring returns,
Them rising from the dead.

By this we find that coldness kills,
That heat makes all things rife;
And that the influence of the sun,
Gives all creation life.

When fire 'bove water bears the sway,
It through the pores wastes its away;
When this is general throughout,
The man is healthy, firm, and stout.

But when the water overpowers,
The stomach's chill'd and shut the pores;
The elements then temper well,
And health with you shall ever dwell.

Our Father, whom all goodness fills,
Provides the means, to cure all ills;
The simple herbs, beneath our feet,
Well us'd, relieve our pains complete.

While doctors rove in foreign parts,
And rack their powers and skill, and arts;
Health's medicines grow upon our land,
They're ours, by stretching forth our hand.

This art I studied from my youth,
And now assert it as a truth;
I can them use in different ways,
And turn a fever in two days.

If any one should be much bruis'd,
Where bleeding frequently is us'd;
A lively sweat upon that day,
Will start the blood a better way.

Let names of all disorders be,
Like to the limbs join'd on a tree;
Work on the root, and that subdue,
Then all the limbs will bow to you;
So as the body is the tree.

My system's founded on this truth,
Man's Air and Water, Fire and Earth;
And death is cold, and life is heat.
These temper'd well, your health's complete.

How oft we hear the doctors say,
"The Fever, it must have its way!"
If that's the case, I would ask you,
What good, they or their medicines do?

Man is perplex't, and much to do,
Than has a talent forth to show;
Much opposition he will find,
If 'tis against the common kind.

Must man be silent, while he's breath,
And hide his talent in the earth;
When nature urges him to move,
And not the gift of heaven improve?

Like Absalom, I'd sooner bear,
To be suspended by the hair;
Than silent lie, devoid of good,
And not improve the gift of God.

(Dr. Samuel Thomson)

UNTITLED

I think you all will yield assent,
Whom Nature's laws approve,
That heat's the only element
That makes creation move.

Look at the earth in winter time,
Fields, trees, plants, flowers decayed;
Then view again when spring returns,
Them, rising from the dead.

By this we find that coldness kills;
That heat makes all things rife,
And that the influence of the sun,
Gives all creation life.

(Dr. Samuel Thomson)xxii

Calvin Morrill of Ohio prepared this next verse which captured Thomson's hatred of the professions as well as his theory of heat and cold.

MEDICAL POEM

Out of the earth the Lord did man create,
And from her dreary bowels separate;
To occupy a more exalted sphere,
And be supported by the vital air.

Now, if the separation was complete,
From deathly cold to vivifying heat,
What sluggish matter could remain behind,
From which his vitals could sustenance find?

Or how did heaven's wisdom first contrive
To keep the living animal alive?
Did nature then his wasted flesh restore
With silver, copper, lead, or iron ore?

Were such the means that wisdom did prepare,
The wastes of perspiration to repair?
Nay, nay, the herb and vegetated fruit,
Man's constitution did much better suit.

But whence the fruit, the herb and healing weed,
Did they not also from the earth proceed?
Created by the lord upon a plan,
Congenial to the properties of man.

If wisdom, then, knew just what man would want,
And did provide the herb, and healing plant;
What must they get, who wisdom's path will shun
And after wicked men's inventions run?

Misguided men, called doctors and divines,
Bring their restoratives from hidden mines
Of silver, copper, iron, zinc, or lead,
Or systems of divinity as dead.

And to support this hellish two fold cause,
The learned lawyer forms his mistic laws;
These three professions working hand to hand,
Bring unremitting curses on the land.

The priest and doctor claiming the control,
One of the flesh, the other of the soul!
Hell and the pit, from whence they dig their stuff,
Are never filled, they never cry enough.

And as capacious is the thirst for fee,
From the estate divided by the three;
But dropping their divinity and law,
Some strictures on the doctor we will draw.

By pointing out a few of wisdom's rules,
Confounding to their college learned fools,
That wisdom's children, though they are but few,
Her simple paths may venture to pursue.

The life of man is hidden in his veins,
'Tis by the blood he senses all his pains;
Extract the blood, the sense of pain is lost,
But vital matter surely pays the cost.

The blood, which hath its motion from the air,
No damp or chilling medicine can bear;
For let the frigid matter touch the heat,
And from its opposite it must retreat.

(At least it must obstruct its course,
Till animated by superior force.)
Thus fever may be checked beyond a doubt,
Until the very life is checked quite out.

But by the truth I'm authorized to say,
Whoever checks a fever in this way,
Must bring the perspiration to a close,
and might as well stop up the mouth and nose.

The pressure of the air upon the heart,  
Forces the fluid into every part;  
Check it with some refrigerating damp,  
You might as well pour water on a lamp.

'Tis from obstructions of the vital air,  
That maladies are seated here or there;  
The air then presses with redoubled force,  
Which makes the blood muck quicker in its course.

Then if the blood is roused up to go  
With such velocity against a foe,  
Not mineral damps, but vegetable fire,  
Must be the aid that nature doth require.

The more external air that's taken in,  
The more must seek its exit through the skin;  
And as the air is an elastic thing,  
Heat in the stomach, gives it vital spring;  
The heat will rarify it, and expand,  
Until its power no demon can withstand.

Now, to prepare for the effects of heat,  
And drive the foul obstruction from its seat,  
The pores must all be opened, and stand clear,  
To give free circulation to the air.

And if this moisture nature don't beget,  
Produce it by an artificial sweat;  
When this is done by means that's safe and mild,  
Release the stomach from the surplus bile.

Then in it you may start a living blaze;  
This in the air will vital action raise;  
Which smites the heart with unexpected vim,  
And drives the flowing blood through every limb.

The nurse's cry is now, good patient live,  
For now the foul obstruction has to give;
The ghostly demon makes a quick retreat,  
Completely vanquished by the force of heat.

The system now released from alloy,  
And every part resuming its employ,  
The patient must have something now to eat,  
Which soon will teach him how to use his feet.  
Such is the process of pure wisdom's plan,  
to check a fever and restore the man.

(Calvin Morrill) xxiii

Like others before it, this verse by P. Standish of Vermont explains the significance of heat in Thomson's system of medicine.

**HEAT**

Of all the principles yet known,  
There’s none that is so great as heat--  
That selfsame principle alone,  
Indeed doth all the rest complete.

Heat doth in motion all things keep,  
The mighty universe around,  
Where that goes out, all life doth cease--  
All’s dreary, silent, and profound;--

The forest’s verdure doth decay,  
Its lifeless leaves drop to the ground,  
The warbling songster soars away,  
There’s naught delightful to be found;--

The liquid streams forbear to flow,  
The sportive fish forgets his mirth--  
The morning rose no more doth blow,  
All nature dies a partial death.

But when the heat of sun draws near,  
Oh, how quickly’s changed the scene!  
The grassy-blade now soon appears--  
Creation greets the coming spring.
Earth shouts aloud the happy change,
And every object’s crown’d with love;
The bleating-herds and hills now range--
All shout the praise of nature’s God.

And as in nature, so in man,
The laws that rule are all the same--
All formed by one Great Author’s hand--
All linked in one stupendous chain.

When heat on which depends our life
Is lowered, and nature’s lost its power,
Then life and death create a strife,
To obtain the vict’ry of the hour.

Then medicines you should apply,
Which is composed of nature’s friend;
In these you safely may rely--
In these have faith, in these depend.

Now all the art in this contained,
Is simple, plain, with ease to learn--
Remove obstructions from the man--
Unclog the stove, the fire will burn.

The surface warm with pure steam,
Cayenne doth raise the inward heat,
Lobelia makes the system clean--
When this is done the cure’s complete.

But if such skill is taught of old,
For relief you e’er apply,
’T destroys the heat, assists the cold;
You favor that which makes you die.

The doctor comes with hasteful skill,
Which does consist in learning great;
That he obtained at the’ college-mill,
That fills his heart with self conceit.

He draws your blood, and blisters too,
He gives you opium, ars’nic, nitre;
He salivates and purges you--
Oh! to kill, what could be better?

Ah! blind man, thou art a dupe
To fools and quacks, and knaves besides;
In doubt and ignorance you grope,
While death goes on in mystic strides.

But t’is Thomsonians alone,
Who do the blindness comprehend--
To whom are health and peace e’er known--
Who do when sick use nature’s friend.

And may the founder of the cause;
With joy and comfort e’er be blest--
And reach the land above the skies,
That will ensure eternal rest.

(P. Standish)xxiv

Written in 1840, this short verse captures Thomson's crafty doctors, the significance of heat, and the set of six numbers in his system.

ODE ON HEALTH

If you desire a length of days,
Then follow Wisdom's pleasant ways:
Beware you shun the tempting lures
Of poisonous bait and death.

Health is a blessing all must prize,
True wealth in it, tho' hidden lies,
We must beware of quack'ry's cries,
Or else resign our breath.

Our nature's may be understood,--
The wise, the blest, the truly good,
Have all combined to ease life's load
Of poisons, kin to earth.

Shall laws make inroads on our peace?
Shall crafty Doctors never cease?
Shall stern oppression mar our ease?
Oh, no! we've rights by birth.
Is heat the friend of life in man?--
Then Thomson's is the wisest plan
To lengthen out life's feeble span,
And walk in nature's truth.

If numbers, one to six be used,
Nor natural sent'nels be abused;
Then health with you shall ne'er be loos'd,
While heat you hold enough.

(S.)xxv

The following poems continue with the focus on the importance of heat as it applies to Thomson's theory of health and disease.

ODE TO HEAT

O wond'rous HEAT,
Grand agent of the great Creator,
Whose universal power pervades
All space, and penetrates all matter;
Expanding, rarifying every part;
Liquid from solid, and from liquid
Æriform producing. These states of
Being owe to thee, thou delegated
Power, their origin. 'Tis thou that
Makes creation's garden vegetate.
The seeds of life spring up in form of
Fish, fowl, insect, serpent, reptile, beast;
Or tree, shrub, plant, herb, grass and flower,
With intermediate links, to bind
Each kingdom to the other; causing
Variety unnumbered, and innumerable.
Thy genial influence causes all growth;
Matures and ripens all:--thus crowning
Earth with plenty, happiness, and peace.

But should the great Creator revoke thy
Agency entire, and thy expansive
Power withdraw from this our blooming
Earth for one short year;--Almighty Power!
What desolation, stern, and wild, would
Reign supreme, profound, o'er Earth's domain!
A gen'r'al condensation of each part
Would supervene. All gaseous, into
Fluid; all fluid into solid--
Even the very atmosphere of which
We breathe, fixed like a crystal rock
Congealing, would stratify the earth,
And universal death ensue.
A cold, so cold, as ne'er before had been,
Would bind with chains of frost immovable,
Each element; while a universe of
Worlds were singing the requiem of
A sister world, in solid ice entombed!

(Anonymous)xxvi

**UNTITLED**

Disorder comes by losing inward heat,
That motion stops which renders health complete;
The system clogs, the juices petrify,
For want of motion only, people die.

That medicine which will the motion give,
Is near at hand, and by it we relieve;
Let no one suffer then, while nature lasts,
But application make, before 'tis past.

Let no tradition lead your mind astray,
Nor fashion keep you from the better way;
The God of nature has our wants supplied,
Would we submit, and in ourselves confide;
Obtain that information which we need,
Dismiss all learned *quacks* with *care and speed.*

(Anonymous)xxvii

**UNTITLED**

Go forth, little herald, with the speed of the dart,
To the sick and the dying consolation impart;
Make haste, delay not your counsels to give,
Aid the sick to recover, the dying to live.
For such is the power invested in steam,
That cures are effected much more like a dream;
No poisons are given to relieve them from pains,
And the pure natal blood flows free in their veins.

The Thomsonian system of practice is good,
For the sick by its rules are allowed genial food;
Such favors to man sure no one denies,
Advanced in old age, from their use, ere he dies.

In the Scripture (by reading) we oft times are told,
That man used to live till some hundred years old;
Why was it so, had they doctors think you,
Who oft dosed them with physic, their age to renew?

Admit it was so, and the practice was good,
The art has been lost long since by the flood;
If the art had descended for the good of mankind,
Cures would be more frequent and disease would decline.

But the facts are far different, for seldom we see,
The sick so recovered as from pain to be free;
For if death they escape, there awaits yet a curse,
For the afflictions of poisons in their limbs are far worse.

(Anonymous)xxviii

The next several poems are classified as mnemonics. Once taken to memory, they aided the purchaser of Thomson's patent-right to remember the instructions and know how to administer a course of medicine. In an age when family members took to memory and entertained each other with whole stands of poetry, Thomson's verses were an important source of instruction. The first of these, written as early as 1812, included rules and regulations for sailors and for right-holders in Eastport and Portsmouth. The remainder were written by followers of Thomson and intended as an aid to others.

SEAMEN'S DIRECTIONS

Th' Emetic number ONE's design'd
A gen'ral med'cine for mankind,
Of every country, clime, or place,
Wide as a circle of our race.

In every case, and state, and stage,
Whatever malady may rage;
For male or female, young or old,
Nor can its value half be told.

To use this med'cine do not cease,
Till you are helped of your disease;
For NATURE'S FRIEND, this sure will be,
When you are taken sick at sea.

Let number TWO be used as bold,
To clear the stomach of the cold;
Next steep the coffee, number THREE,
And keep as warm as you can be.

A hot stone at the feet now keep,
As well as inward warmth repeat,
The fountain 'bove the stream keep clear,
And perspiration will appear.

When sweat enough, as you suppose,
In spirit wash, and change your clothes;
Again to bed, both clean and white,
And sleep in comfort all the night.

Should the disorder reinforce,
Then follow up the former course;
The second time I think will do,
The third to fail I seldom knew.

Now take your bitters by the way,
Two, three, or four times in a day;
Your appetite, if it be good,
You may eat any kind of food.

Physic, I would by no means choose
To have you first or last to use;
For if you take it much in course,
It will disorder reinforce.

If any one should be much bruis'd,
Where bleeding frequently is used,
A lively sweat upon that day,
Will start the blood a better way.

Let names of all disorders be
Like to the limbs, join'd on a tree;
Work on the root, and that subdue,
Then all the limbs will bow to you.

So as the body is the tree,
The limbs are colic, pleurisy,
Worms and gravel, gout and stone,
Remove the cause, and they are gone.

My system's founded on this truth,
Man's Air and Water, Fire and Earth,
And death is cold, and life is heat,
These temper'd well, your health's complete.xxix

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**BOTANIC DIRECTIONS**

Disorder comes by loosing inward heat:
That motion stop which render health complete;
The system clogs, the juices putrify;
For want of motion only, people die.
Th' Emetic proves itself designed,
A gen'ral medicine for mankind,
Of ev'ry country, clime, or place,
Wide as the circle of our race;
In ev'ry cause, and state, and stage,
Whatever malady may rage;
For male, or female, young or old,
Nor can its value half be told.
To use this med'cine do not cease,
Till you are helped of your disease;
For nature's friend this sure will be,
When taken sick on land or sea.
Let comp'sition be used bold,
To clear the stomach of a cold;
Next take the compound strong and free,
And keep as warm as you can be;
A hot stone at the feet now keep,
As well as inward warmth repeat,
The fountain 'bove the stream keep clear,
And perspiration will appear:
When sweat enough as you suppose,
In spirits wash and change your clothes,
And then set up if you should choose,
   Or else in bed in calm repose,
          Should the disorder reinforce,
Then follow up the former course,
The second time I think will do,
The third to fail I seldom knew.
Now take your bitters by the way,
Two, three, or four times in a day,
   And if your appetite be good,
Then you may eat most kinds of food,
Physic I'd have you seldom use;
Injections in its stead would choose,
   For if you physic much in course,
          It will disorder reinforce.
If any one should be much bruis'd,
Where bleeding frequently is us'd,
   A lively sweat upon that day,
Will start the blood a better way.
   Let names of all disorders be,
Like to the limbs joined on a tree,
Work on the root and that subdue,
Then all the limbs will bow to you,
   So as the body is the tree,
The limbs are cholic, pleurisy,
Worms and gravel go, and stone,
Relieve the fountain and they're gone.
My system's founded on the truth,
Man's Air and Water, Fire and Earth,
   And death is cold, and life is heat,
These tempered well, your health's complete.

(Dr. Samuel Thomson)\text{xxx}

\textit{DR. THOMSON'S MATERIA MEDICA}

The coffee first steep, the pure number three,
With warm number two, then use them both free;
To clear off the cold and raise up the heat,
Now place a \textit{freestone}^{xxxi} quite warm at the feet;
The inward warmth raising, now often repeat,
And change the first stone when losing its heat.
The fountain above all obstructions keep clear,
And free perspiration will surely appear.

Then take the emetic, the pure number one,
Until its full duty is faithfully done;
The stomach quite cleansed, and head just as free
From filth, pain and torment you'll equally be;
Then lying awhile in the sweetest repose,
You'll now wash all over and change all your clothes;
Again to your bed, both pure, clean and white,
And sleep in good comfort the rest of the night.

Now take the wine bitters, remember, I say,
Two, three, or four times in the course of the day;
Your appetite then, will surely prove good,
And you must appease it by sweet, wholesome food;
But vile sickening physic, I never would choose
To have you at first or at last to make use;
For, if you do take it, you may reckon in course,
The same vile disorder it will reinforce.

But should the disorder still not lose its force,
Pursue as directed, the former full course;
In nine often cases, I think it will do,
The third as to fail, I seldom have knew;
The Thomsonia Emetica was surely designed,
A general specific for all human kind;
For every kingdom, country and place.
As wide as the circle that man does embrace.

In every case, and station and stage,
Whatever malady may be known to rage;
For male or for female, for young and for old,
Nor can its great value half ever be told;
To use this sure medicine, then never do cease,
'Til you are completely relieved of disease;
For nature's true friend it ever will be,
Its virtue and excellence you surely may see.

If any one's mangled, or very much bruised,
When taking of blood is so frequently used,
A good lively sweat on the very same day,
Will start circulation a much better way;
Let names of disorders, as they certainly be
Like limbs that are joined to the trunk of the tree,
Work on the root, the first cause to subdue,
Then sure all the branches will bow unto you.

Just so is your body, like the tree you may see,
The limbs are the chronics, and vile pleurisy.
Consumptions and dropsies, the gout and the stone,
Remove the first cause and they're perfectly gone.
The Thomsonian system is founded in truth;
Man's air, and he's water, he's fire, and he's earth;
And death is from cold, and life is from heat,
Then temper them well and your health is complete.

If fire from the elements abstracted should be,
Stillness and silence would reign you may see;
All life would then cease, you surely do know
Not a vestige of breathing would man ever show;
The earth, the sea, and all that remained,
As solid as marble would ever be chained;
The air that is fluid, to rock would be turned,
And all that now breathes in death would be turn'd.

Creation, a blank would ever remain,
Vitality gone from the earth and the main;
The whole would remain an immovable mass,
And death universal all kingdoms would blast,
Now think of these things, ye men of the schools,
Before you pronounce us illiterate fools;
The wisdom of ages are supporting this cause,
This system must stand, and here I will pause.

(A. A. Clark)xxxvi

UNTITLED

My worthy friend--dear E.E.F.
Health and long life to your dear self;
And, when life ends, be yours the story,
Your soul needs not a purgatory;
But, if good health be not your blessing,
I’ll tell how patients get their dressing;
And, how, from them disease we force,
By giving a Thomsonian Course.
(When pen is bad, what plagues attend it,
If one has not a knife to mend it.)
Such is my case--my double blader, 
I purchased from an English trader; 
I think it then, a dollar cost; 
Alas! is to my sorrow lost.
[Not all the muses in the state 
Instead of cash, would traders sate; 
They’re such a leech like craving set, 
Cash, and not verses they must get: 
And, the last cent I dare not take, 
From ouch that’s near dry-belly-ache. 
And, so I’m forced to blur and stretch 
The words my humble muse can catch.] 
But, lest I should your patience tire, 
Let introduction here expire.)

First, steep in water, boiling hot, 
The comp. (1) or three (2) that you have got. 
(If three,) when cool enough for you, 
Add fourth of tea spoonful of two.(3) 
In fifteen minutes do the same, 
Or lack of heat may cause you shame. 
This is the strength each dose may be; 
Let patient drink it speedily. 
Give then, injection, you should do-- 
One pine of three, teaspoon of two, 
Two of hot Drops--one of nerve (4) too, 
And just enough of number one (5) 
To do the work you would have done-- 
(Nor e’en forget th’ injections use 
Whether or not the patient chooses)-- 
To equalize the heat throughout 
As well as cleanse the bowels out.]

Now give the steam--his body be 
Enclos’d, till face is sweating free; 
And give cold show’r, (high heat his stood 
If not, cold show’r will not be good.) 
And wipe him dry, and put to bed, 
And do not bundle up his head; 
But, if it aches, in every troth, 
You’ll ease it with a cold wet cloth; 
And you may change it oft, indeed, 
Until his head from ache is freed. 
You need not fear to do much harm 
So long as body’s sweaty--warm.
Great weakness, or a too cold place,
Steaming may hurt, and you disgrace--
Raise heat within--around him get
Hot stones enough to make him sweat;
And, ne’er omit to do the same
As often as the heat be tame.

Then give th’ emetic--three, two, one,
Three times, in hour let it be done,
(Or composition for three, two;
Just as it pleases you to do.)
Change portions, times, as you may please,
To do him good--the least him tease;
But be thou careful, all the while
To treat in true Thomsonian style.
Keep all your thinking pow’r in use
Lest you good medicine should mis-use.
If when two portions (one) you’ve giv’n,
The filthy mass not forth is driv’n;
To make your patient heave and spew,
Give comp. and seal and number two,
Or salaeratus in warm water,
And soon round the bowl ‘twill spatter.
After full vomit does take place,
Porridge or gruel shows its face;
For it should not be giv’n until
Th’ emetic works in right good will;
Else porridge chokes the mucous coat;
The useless medicine round will float;
And much of heavy mass will stay,
Which you would fain have got away.
An’t please you, give herb tea enough,
Not to exclude the “hot and rough.”
Herb tea will do to wash about,
And help to rinse the stomach out.

If now, the cleaning work will do,
Raise well the heat, with number two--
Two doses give--and when you clean
The patient fit, you’ll try the steam.
If right to do, give two quarts show’r,
To guard from atmospheric pow’r.
Yet, here, if right you still would do
Let reason good admonish you,
For, if its wrong to give, refrain,
Or all his ails may come again.
Much useless trouble you may save,
If reason’s friend—not say so’s slave.

If shower give the patient pain,
Just steam him till he sweats again;
Then wipe, to bed, and cover good
And give four tea and wholesome food;
But if not relished, let it be
Gruel and bitters, frequently;
Also, let not the heat subside--
Keep three and two close to bedside;
For while the canker doth remain,
These give, and give, and give again.

From poison, lancet, leech and devil
And all upon satanic level,
May Heav’n in loving mercy spare
You, and all others is my prayer.

And now, dear sir, my random racket
Ends with this scrawling wordy packet,
Hoping you’ll beat my words, in work--
May Heav’n bless you, and

(Francis Burke)xxxvii

After selling a sufficient number of books and patents in a region, Thomson encouraged right-holders to form a Friendly Botanic Society and to meet regularly to exchange information. His network of societies, begun around 1811, extended through northwestern Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and parts of New York. Members of these societies adopted a constitution, rules and regulations, including instructions for securing, using, and protecting Thomson's system of practice. Each society was limited to fifty members, with each member paying $20 for the right to use Thomson's information. Thomson turned one-half of the amount over to the society for its own use and benefit; the other half he kept. As these societies grew, he encouraged their members to appoint representatives or agents, who once authorized by Thomson, could sell additional rights and prepare medicines for the use and benefit of the association. Since the agents shared in the profits, the arrangement spawned jealousy among
members who preferred to see the societies--and themselves as shareholders--benefit from any profits. Eventually Thomson stopped the practice but not before serious differences arose between him and both the agents and the societies, whereupon he chose his agents independent of the societies. Eventually Thomson disestablished the individual societies and organized them into a single United States Friendly Botanic Society in which all right-holders held membership. Rather than members viewing themselves as potential stockholders in a business enterprise, they were entitled only to communicate with other members for purposes of instruction and assistance. This poem, written by Thomson for his society members, makes yet another comparison between his system and that of regular medicine.

_A NEW SONG COMPOSED FOR THE FRIENDLY BOTANIC SOCIETY_

Here we, brethren, this day meet,
United in the plan,
To separate ourselves in part,
From speculative man.

The greatest speculation,
We all well understand,
Is that which skillful doctors make,
When they take us in hand.

I think this is the greatest day,
We, brethren, ever saw--
The separation of ourselves
From their oppressive law!

Their taxes were exceeding hard!
We thought our comforts dear,
To pay them such enormous bills,
Laid on us every year.

To overthrow their selfish plan,
We met in order bright,
The twenty-ninth of last July,
And 'stablished firm our right.

And what is in that right contained?
We hold our right in truth,
To use the med'cine if we please,
   Of our own country's growth.

Now we'll defend each privilege,
   Our liberty we'll hold,
The medicine of our country prize
   Above the finest gold.

In spite of slander, we'll attend;
   No monarchy is here;
Some information we shall gain,
   While others stand in fear.

And great will be our blest reward,
   When sickness sweeps around;
By keeping to our general rules,
   Quick will relief be found.

While death stalks round in seaport towns,
   And there rage pain and grief,
We have the balm to heal each wound,
   And give a quick relief.

Attend, my friends, with honest zeal,
   Still further knowledge gain;
Learn how great nature's God provides
   The means to ease each pain.

To racking colic we'll attend,
   While foes stand and admire,
To see our med'cine ease the pain,
   As water quenches fire.

Our patients they are soon abroad,
   With joy they meet their friends,
With gratitude praise nature's God,
   Who vegetation sends.

Upon our system we'll attend,
   And always keep in sight,
That fire, man's body purifies,
   Tempers and keeps it right.

Tis now my object to unfold,
   In a brief way to you,
My system, or the gen'ral rule,
Which you must keep in view.

See when the patient's taken sick,
The coldness gained the day,
And fever comes as nature's friend,
To drive the cold away.

And when the battle is severe,
For cold or heat to gain,
The patient in the engagement feels,
Cold chills and heavy pain.

And when the fever struggles hard,
The vict'ry to obtain,
Soon as you overpower the cold,
The patient's free of pain.

If heat is really not a friend,
Which doctors all deny,
They have been dying all their days,
And so have you and I.

But heat, if 'tis a faithful friend,
Which stands in truth so fair,
Cold med'cine has its thousands killed,
I solemnly declare.

I think you all will yield assent,
Whom nature's laws approve,
That heat's the only element,
That makes creation move.

Look at the earth in winter time,
Fields, trees, plants, flowers decayed,
Then view, again, when spring returns,
Them rising from the dead.

By this we find that coldness kills,
That heat makes all things rife;
And that the influence of the sun,
Gives all creation life.

But one thing further I'll relate,
To which I'll now attend;
'Tis fire upholds the human life,
The water makes it end.
In drowned people we perceive,
Water has quenched the fire;
To see the doctors them attend,
Is what I can't admire.

The dead man holds three elements,
He never held but four;
Instead of kindling life with fire,
Fresh air he blows in more.

Take any man that now is well,
And place him in his stead;
Blow with a bellows in his mouth,
How quick he would be dead.

Treatment like this I don't believe,
With letters I could spell;
The mode to cure a man when sick,
Would kill him when he's well.

It is a very trying scene,
To see our friends near dead;
Then by sure means to give relief,
We instantly are led.

And for the good will of my friends,
A method I will show,
That may be safely practic'd on,
When I am far from you.

If any cases of this kind,
Should happen e'er to be,
Then see what element's o'erpowered,
And strive to set it free.

The body now has lost its fire,
The water bears the sway;
Quick must the air be rarified,
Or it will turn to clay.

Then place a patient in a room,
A lively fire prepare;
And give him Nos. one and two,
As warm as he can bear.
And place hiser a steam,
With hot stones from the fire,
And keep a blanket round him wrapped,
To shield him from the air.

the body now receives the heat,
To overpower the cold;
If there be inward fire,
Life will the vic'try hold.

But if there is no inward heat,
For you to kindle to,
Then all your labor is in vain,
You must bid him adieu.

(Dr. Samuel Thomson)
Chapter 3
The Botanic's Materia Medica

During his travels, Samuel Thomson searched for and tested on himself the roots and herbs found in the countryside, including cleavers as a diuretic, capsicum or pepper as a stimulant and antiseptic, lady's slipper or umbil as an antispasmodic, and snake's head (Chelone glabra) to correct the action of the liver. The seventy medicines that eventually became his materia medica included a combination of Native Indian, immigrant, folk, and domestic remedies whose origins were blurred but which stood the test of his own practice and experimentation. As J. Worth Estes has noted, however, 75% of his plant remedies had already been listed in the Edinburgh New Dispensatory (1791), 62% were found in Jacob Bigelow's American Medical Botany (1817-20), and surprisingly, only one-third were indigenous to the United States. Estes concluded that Thomson's remedies "were neither unique to his own system nor were they uniquely American."

The fact was that botanic medicine always had a place in medical orthodoxy. During the age of discovery in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, physicians took an interest in New World flora, collecting and cataloging botanicals, and seizing upon them as a source of new medical knowledge. Theologians and naturalists reinforced this activity by teaching that God had provided each region of the world with its own medicines. This belief, along with reports on the medicines used by indigenous peoples, suggested the efficacy of a local plant materia medica to replace the more expensive mineral and plant drugs of the Old World. Although sixteenth-century medicine relied heavily on mineral drugs, the introduction of new substances--such as guaiacum, sarsaparilla, balsam of Peru, lobelia, cascara sagrada, cocaine, curare, capsicum, arrowroot, cocillana, jalap, and tobacco--turned the attention of many to the identification of less
expensive alternatives, and even to the concept of drug specifics.

Not surprisingly, the British Crown ordered the Virginia colony to cultivate native plants to determine their medicinal value. Indeed, herbs indigenous to North America were investigated and employed by some of the earliest colonists. Before long, settlers were using sassafras for skin diseases, gout, rheumatism, and syphilis; snakeroot as a tonic, diuretic, diaphoretic, and stimulant in typhoid and digestive disorders; dittany as a purge for worms; jimsonweed as a sedative and antispasmodic; and wild cherry bark as a specific in wounds and sores. In time, native plants became an inexpensive source for the emetic, purging, and sweating regimens of regulars, and in rural areas especially, replaced the more expensive chemical and galenical preparations of the day.

It took little convincing for Americans to turn inward to their fields and forests for medical stock. Given the cost of transportation, and the assumption that God provided his creatures with local vegetable simples to cure their maladies, botanicism was more than just a poor man's medicine. No less revered leaders than religious liberal Anne Hutchinson (1591-1643) and clergyman and author Cotton Mather (1663-1728) drew from native lore and folklore for their herbal cures. Dr. Christopher Witt (1675-1765), botanist and mystic, was famous for his botanical gardens at Germantown, Pennsylvania. John Bartram (1699-1777), a self-educated American botanist, spent a lifetime studying medicinally active plants unknown in Europe. Bartram wrote the preface and appendix to Thomas Short's *Medicina Britanica* (1751) which described medicinal plants native to America. Another pioneer American botanist was Benjamin Smith Barton (1766-1815), a lecturer in materia medica at the University of Pennsylvania. Barton's *Collections for an Essay Towards a Materia Medica of the United States* (1798) surveyed the therapeutic value of numerous indigenous American plants. According to historian Alex Berman, nineteenth-century regulars "already possessed an impressive plant materia medica when the Botanics appeared on the scene, early in the nineteenth century." So much so, in fact, that "regulars had an overwhelming superiority of output in scientific medical botany in comparison with the Botanic practitioners."
Lobelia, the herb discovered by Thomson in his youth, became the source of his fame and the basis for his system. The next several poems celebrate that discovery and its significance in botanical medicine.

**LOBELIA SPEAKS FOR ITSELF**

My Hearers of a gentle mind,
Look unto me; I'm pure and kind,
I help the poor in their distress,
When sickness does them much oppress.
The great Creator formed me so,
That I on every land might grow;
My seeds he strewed on roads and plains,
To ease mankind of groans and pains.

Beneath the feet of learned men,
Who knew not how to use me then,
I've long been trodden to the ground,
But now am rising to renown,
My roots are set in every land,
My leaves are plucked by every hand
That owns a head of common sense,
And stand's upright in life's defense.

Lobel first spoke to me in Dutch,
But of my virtues knew not much;
Though complimented me by way,
And called my name Lobelia,
Then Linnaeus next took up my cause
And said I kept some wholesome laws;
But all were then too deaf and blind
My worth to know--my powers to find.

The great, the learned, and the wise,
Have clothed my name with countless lies;
But after all they've said and done,
My glorious reign has just begun.
Some pull me up and throw me down;
Some scoff and jeer and hand me round,
And some by chance my leaves do eat,
And soon their pains do all retreat.

And so they drive me here and there,
Some full of hope and some despair;
Some say I'm good; some say I'm bad;
While some are raging, some are glad;
Some say I'm poison branch and root,
    While others highly prize my fruit;
And by-the-bye, through hope and fear,
They've found me out most every where.

When Samuel Thomson was a youth,  
    He spoke to me in simple truth,
My leaves he tasted where I stood   
    Among the cattle's summer food.
    He also tasted many a weed,  
But found that I did all exceed;
And what he learned he never lost,  
    Though for his zeal he paid the cost.

    But I to him was ever true;  
In hopeless cases bore him through,  
    'Till he my real worth did find,  
Then sweet composure filled his mind.  
Then to the world he gave my name,  
And I am yet the very same,  
Lobelia then, Lobelia now;  
To me disease must gently bow.

    My enemies, I'm well aware  
Are struck with panic far and near,  
They fear that I will soon dispel  
    Their boasted hero Calomel;  
But to my friends I still can say  
    Heed not the clamors of the day,  
But use me just on wisdom's plan,  
And health will reign throughout your land.

(Dr. Samuel Thomson)xxxix

A DIALOGUE OF A RECENT MEETING OF DEATH AND DISEASE

Death
How comes it, friend, in every shape,  
    You let so many folks escape!
A few years back, you know full well  
    The sick you killed with calomel.
Dyspepsia then had power to kill;  
Asthma defied the Doctors' skill;  
The lancet, too, as well you knew,  
   Its hetacomb of victims slew.

Then, costiveness could fatal prove,  
And rheumatism no power remove;  
A simple cold--and lo! they went  
   A subject to my kingdom sent.

How comes it then, that, now-a-days,  
Folks slip your gripe and go their ways!  
Asthma besides, dyspepsia cured;  
   The lancet is no more endured.

The sick, to-day, forget all sorrow,  
And laugh at both of us to-morrow.  
Something is wrong--of this I'm sure,  
   Nor can I longer this endure.

Disease  
   Dear sire, I sue all means I can  
   To much abridge the life of man;  
   I chase his footsteps from his birth,  
   Till he returns to mother earth.

And though 'tis true that my success  
   Is daily growing less and less,  
   This satisfaction I can feel,  
   I have not slackened in my zeal.

   I use all means I used of old;  
   Changes of weather, hot and cold:  
   I gave them colds, I give them pains,  
   I rack their bones, I fire their veins.

   I clog with canker, some say bile,  
   In place of the nutritious chyle;  
   Yet all is useless--none are killed;  
   The world with Thomson's system's filled.

   The stomach sick, the head will ache;  
   The fever high, will make it shake;  
   The voice is feeble, pulse runs high,  
   Yet none but Thomson, will they try.
Lobelia!--Ah; the sick man's friend,
Will cleanse the stomach's filth and phlegm;
And now the nervines put to sleep,
And when they wake, they bawl for meat.

(A Listener)xl

REGULAR TOASTS

No. 1.--LOBELIA is like the power that pulls the bow-string. It strains the bow quickly, and as suddenly lets it go; Thus allowing it to recover its condition, Without injury to its elasticity.

No.2.--The next in order, CAPSICUM so called, Its stimulating powers with living heat, Doth support and comfort bring, Diffusive and lasting it its effects on the human frame.

No.3.--A friend in need. Though Rough, is always Ready; Assists the first, and aids the next, And puts the patient in good fix.

No.4.--When nature's bitters fail, the sick It aids, and regulates the balance power-- Strength, health and energy imparts, Until nature is restored to perform her part.

No.5--When further aid the sick demand, As a pendulum of proper length, Regulating and strengthening to the digestive organs, Will be its effect when timely employed.

No.6.--May be used first and last, or mixed. Healing, both in its inward and outward use; Bruises, cuts, or inflammations of the most dangerous kind, May be arrested and cured by its embalming qualities.

(Anonymous)xli
DEATH'S VISIT

One day as I roamed the street along,
Musing on earth and earthly ills,
I heard Death singing a funeral song,
And Beating time on a box of pills.

I knew him not, so I asked his name,
And returned the press of his bony hand;
He said it was Death, and the place whence he came,
Was called by mortals the "Spirit Land."

He had come to visit his patients here,
And to view their works with his practiced eye,
For business was dull and great his fear,
That they had stopped the use of mercury.

He had brought a supply which he wished to sell,
But the sales were small and light his purse,
He had scarcely heard a funeral knell,
And was sure that affairs were getting worse.

He could scarce purchase victuals from day to day,
Had no place to rest his head at night,
Folks would not take his physic in pay,
Which placed him in rather a sorry plight.

His face was all haggard with doubt and care,
But he stopped at a house when I caught his arm,
And told him Thomsonians resided there,
But he thought he would call, "there could be no harm."

On a stalk of Lobelia he placed his eye,
And shaking with dread that plant to view,
He uttered a long and piercing cry,
And cursing Thomsonians away he flew.

(Anonymous)xlii

ODE TO LOBELIA; WRITTEN DURING A BILIOUS ATTACK

Oh bile! thou tyrant of the inner man,
Thou who can't stupify the brain,
And brutalize the heart,
My coated tongue shall dare complain.
   All-powerful as thou art;
And though I writhe within thy chain,
I'll lift my head and howl, albeit I howl in vain.

I think thou art the blood of some arch fiend,
   Thou steal'st the brightness from the eye,
   The beauty from the cheek;
   Thou bid'st the best affections fly,
   The strongest mind be weak--
   Earth is a hell while thou art by,
And the dull yellow veils the azure of the sky.

Then LOBELIA, thou great Deliverer, come!
   Purge from my eye this ochre hue,
   And clear my head again;
   Make me benevolent and true,
   And just to other men;
   And the first worthy deed I do,
I'll own, O LOBELIA! my virtue is from you.

(Anonymous)xlili

LOBELIA

Take away the lute and sing,
   Lobelia's wondrous fame;
Its hidden virtues we must bring
   To light. Its glorious name
   Invoke the muses fire,
   To assist us with this theme.
But while we used this tuneful lire,
   We still the truth esteem.
   Yet what a nauseous thing
   Is this most famous plant,
   To which our botanists do cling,
   And on so much discant.
   If what they say be true,
   A power it doth possess,
   That is indeed surpassed by few
   In healing of distress.
   This herb, they do declare,
   Removes all nauseous things,
   But leaves the good and wholesome fare
From which our vigour springs.
   A sickness first pervades,
We then discharge the bile,
Or any other nauseous seeds
   That get among the chyle.
'Tis felt in every nerve,
   No place that it don't pry;
It follows every turn and curve,
   And death seems to be nigh.
But this is not the case,
Lobelia works not death:
   It hath a purifying grace,
And leaves a healthful breath.
Some doubt the cleansing power
   Of this most useful plant.
But He who formed the better flower,
   We call Omnipotent.
Could He not virtue give
   To any plant He'd choose;
And bid the suffering patient live,
   If they this means would use.
The son of David spake
   Of all the trees and plants,
And we the freedom take
   To follow his comments.

(Anonymous)xliv

LOBELIA

Lobelia! Lobelia! sounds throughout the earth,
   In private and public they speak of her worth;
Some style her a princess and make her their pride,
   While others abuse and her virtue deride.

They term her a poison and wonder to see
   That people enlightened should use her so free;
The great ones do mostly defame and despise,
   But still our Lobelia in honor doth rise.

She meets her opposers so firmly and bold,
   They cannot withstand nor remove the deep hold
That now she has taken thro'out the great world,
   And poison from practice we trust will be hurled.
The learned do tell us she's hurtful and bad,
With dangerous virtues Lobelia is clad,
'Tis strange that her poison should never be known
But unto her foes and accusers alone.

There's thousands who use her and praise her effect
In spite of her foes who so warmly reject;
Her friends are most willing to let her be tried
By competent judges--so strong they confide.

But custom and pride when they once get the sway,
Too soon we may see how the world falls a prey;
To sweeping delusions the worshippers bend,
Regardless of sorrow or pain in the end.

But those who love Mercury and poison so much,
We'll leave them to tamper and not fear to touch;
Until sad experience has opened their eyes,
And sorrow and suffer'ring has made them more wise.

(Anonymous)

BOTANIC LANGUAGE

A balm have physicians found out;
Its emblem botanic, I give--
"Away with your quackery!" Shout!
LOBELIA'S language is--live!

Then physic in all its base forms,
"To the dogs" we will cast out awhile,
And rob fell disease of alarms--
So "Away with your quackery" vile!

The lancet or phleme when you see,
"Away with your quackery," say--
"The Blood is the life!" and for me
Lobelia's a welcome bouquet.

When quacks praise their calomel high,
All multiform ailments to cure,
"Away with your quackery!" aye,
Lobelia, life's emblem, secure!
"Away with your quackery!" away
All nostrums! Let quacks disappear!
A catholicon true I display:
Man's best friend, Lobelia, is here!

Yes, "Away with your quackery" vile;
The medicine I offer will cure;
Lobelia holds truth in its style;
'Twill ever prove safe, mild, and sure.

(L. S., Hartford)

LOBELIA

Lobelia, an herb--that grows all o'er the land,
A gentle emetic, and always at hand:
In marshes or meadows, among the green wood,
There grows this Lobelia, this herb that's so good.

The plant is biennial, wherever it grows,
And needs no description as every one knows;
The blossoms are blue, and I hope you'll remember,
It blossoms in June and is ripe in September.

The Botanic Doctors make use of this weed,
Of the leaves they make tincture; they grind up the seed;
They simmer or scald it, or press out the juice,
And then it is ready and fit for their use.

They use it in tincture, in powders and pills,
The patient it cures, but it never him kills;
It is first rate to cure in all cases of fevers,
But is hated and feared by the regular deceivers.

It is good for diseases too tedious to mention,
But the theory by some is called mere quack pretension;
I only will say that the truth will gain ground,
So lift up your voices and let the truth sound.

Truth surely will triumph and error will fly,
Like the shades of the night 'fore the orb of the sky,
It will rise in full splendor, its banner unfurled
To cheer and enlighten a perishing world.
E. E. Helm, of Mason County, Kentucky, wrote this untitled poem as a caution to young women who were about to marry, urging them to be staunch in their botanic cause.

UNTITLED

If e'er I consent to marry,
(And I certainly think I shall soon,)
The lad I will give my fair hand to
Shall not be a mineral loon.

Though his looks may be bright as the morning,
His countenance fair as the moon,
His wealth, be it e're so enticing,
Do you think I would marry a loon?

He must toil in the great undertaking,
Be firm in the Botanic cause,
Discard every species of poison,
And obey all the natural laws.

Look to it well you young gallants,
The time will admit no delay,
The great monster poison Goliah,
You must help the young Davids to slay.

I will tender my hand at the altar,
To one that is able to save,
The blooming young damsels that sicken,
And prevent an untimely cold grave.

(E. E. Helm)

The following poem references the use of may apple, mandrake, or wild lemon (Podophyllum pelatatum), indigenous to the United States and Canada, for stomach disorders. Mandrake promoted expectoration, augmented the glandular functions and cleansed the intestinal canal. It was useful in scrofulous and syphilitic diseases, affections of the liver, painful
menstruation, rheumatism. Its range of application was more extensive than most other cathartic medicines and used by botanics as a substitute for mercury.

LOVE'S COMPLAINT

Oh, Mother dear, the sun shines bright,
But, ah! for me its light is shrouded;
The moon with radiance fills the night,
From me her radiant face is shrouded.

Around me flowers quick bloom,
Birds fill the air with notes of gladness;
But ah! all--all partake the gloom
Of my too sore prevailing sadness.

I sit me down, and try to rouse
Gay dreams of pleasures fondly cherished--
The hawthorn tree, the whister'd vows,
That with the evening zephyrs perished;
And hours come back, when hope and love
Made life one long and glorious vision;
When all was calm and fair above,
And all below was bliss Elysian.

A numbness and a sense of pain--
A drowsy, unimpassioned feeling--
A fire that smolders in the brain,
Through all the listless pulses stealing,
Preys on me through the livelong day,
Like a grim phantom haunts me nightly,
Takes feeling, thought and power away,
Till all looks ghastly--all unsightly!

Life is a leafless, blighted bough--
This stifling pang, how may I smother?
What can I love, or live for now?
Oh, comfort me my own dear mother!
Say, say what mean these fancies drear,
That on despair and frenzy border?
"Pshaw! take this dose of Mandrake, dear,
'Tis just your stomach's out of order!"

(Anonymous)
The author of the next few verses was a seventy-four year old gentleman in 1841 and claimed that botanic medicine was used exclusively by more than half of the population of Marion County, Kentucky. He reported in an accompanying letter that botanic science had gained ground against the mineral doctors who were beginning to use less of the lance and of poison as a result of the public's change in doctors. He noted that he had turned to Thomsonism in 1824 and attributed his good health to a liberal use of capsicum every day.

**UNTITLED**

I have assum'd the scarlet dress,  
An emblem of my doing good;  
I change the sallad skin to fresh  
By purifying of the blood.  
I raise the pulse, I fill the veins,  
I cause the stomach to crave food,  
I ease the head and back of pains  
By purifying of the blood.  

All your aches, and all your ills,  
By me, if I'm well understood,  
I'll cure your aches, and shakes, and chills  
By purifying of your blood.  
The reason I make blood my theme  
Is, 'tis your life, we're taught of old;  
My doctrine is no idle dream,  
'Tis consciousness that makes me bold  
CAPSICUM.

(Travis Coppedge)†

Rhody Ann Ellis of Waterville, Maine, wrote this poem in praise of the biweekly *Botanico-Medical Recorder* that, to her, amply substituted for "a prescribing physician." "Had I not been permitted to peruse its pages," she wrote editor Alva Curtis, "I think I should not now have been numbered with the living." By perseverance with botanic remedies, and reading the
pages of the *Botanico-Medical Recorder*, she and the members of her family had overcome the evils of regular medicine.

**BOTANIC REMEDIES**

Botanic remedies were designed,
To heal the body and soothe the mind.
Let every tongue and every pen,
Proclaim the virtues of cayenne.
Nor will we fear to use it freely;
Nor value less the good lobelia.
But let us bear in mind with reason,
To take those remedies in season,
If them our God is pleased to bless,
They will relieve us in distress.
This truth we find, and even more,
'Twill oft to perfect health restore--
But that false science--Oh how vain!
That doth life's crimson current drain!
Reduce the patient to the grave,
In expectation life to save!
And poisons too, no hope can give,
Nor bid the dying sufferer live.
Tongues and pens may they never cease,
Till the world in knowledge shall increase.
Till error and prejudice shall find,
They are un congenial to the mind;
Till truth and science hold their reign,
Throughout this wide--this vast domain.
I greet you with a warm applause,
And hail you in the happy cause;
And may we live to see the day,
When mineral poison's done away.

(Rhody Ann Ellis)
Chapter 4

Regular Medicine

As Charles E. Rosenberg has so well explained, between the physician and the patient in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries, there existed a texture of belief and behavior, of ideas and relationships, and of cause and metaphor, that explained both health and disease. Drawing upon a cosmology and a rationalistic system founded on the Hippocratic and Galenic understanding of the humors, physicians believed the body to be a "kind of stewpot, or chemico-vital reaction, proceeding calmly only if all its elements remained appropriately balanced." Not surprisingly, physicians and patients turned to the regulation of the body's secretions in an effort to ensure this balance. Thus bleeding, purging, vomiting (puking), and perspiring represented the mainstays of medical practice and of patient expectations. In this context, physicians prescribed drugs as a means of affecting the body's secretions and not as specifics for particular diseases; drugs advertised as disease specific were condemned as the work of quacks and empirics.

Samuel Thomson wrote these next several verses early in his career; they represent his unmistakable opinion of the learned physician's craft and choice of regimens.

RECEIPT TO CURE A CRAZY MAN

Soon as the man is growing mad,
Send for the doctor--have him bled;
Take from his arm two quarts at least,
Nearly as much as kills a beast.

But if bad symptoms yet remain,
He then must tap another vein;
Soon as the doctor has him bled,
Then draw a blister on his head.
Next time he comes as it is said,
The blister'd skin takes from his head,
Then laud'num gives to ease his pain,
Till he can visit him again.

The doctor says he's so insane,
It must be dropsy on the brain;
To lay the heat while yet in bed,
A cap of ice lays on his head.

And lest the fever should take hold,
Then nitre gives to keep him cold,
And if distraction should remain,
He surely must be bled again.

The bowels now have silent grown,
The *choledocus* lost its tone,
He then bad humors to expel,
The jalap gives with calomel.

The physic works you well must know,
Till he can neither stand nor go;
If any heat should still remain,
The lancet must be used again.

The man begins to pant for breath--
The doctor says he's struck with death;
All healing medicine is denied,
The bowels I fear are mortified.

Before he dies his senses come,
He bids them call his children home,
And tells his children and his wife,
That by a fool he'd lost his life.

They weep and mourn to see him go,
He bids adieu to all below;
Like martyr Stephen yields his breath,
Forgiving them who caused his death.

Soon as the man is dead and gone,
The doctor's charges then comes on;
For forty pounds the bill is made,
And by the executor is paid.
What sickness, sorrow, pain and woe,
   The human family undergo,
By learned quacks who sickness make,
   I fear for filthy lucre's sake.

(Dr. Samuel Thomson)lii

INGRATITUDE

TEN miles from Boston is a town,liii
   Where tyrants bear the sway;
   Law, Physic and Divinity,
   Blind subjects must obey.

A neighbor in this town was sick,
   And helped without delay;
He then took cold, by which he died,
   No Pope had he to pray.

Murder! the crafty doctor cry'd,
   Manslaughter cried the Priest;
The lawyer published wide the news,
   To hide the truth at least.

A brother of the dead was sick,
   And brought near to death's door;
His wife the patent Med'cine used,
   His health it did restore.

While he was sick, his neighbors raged,
   And threatened up and down,
To mob his med'cine and his wife,
   And drive them out of town.

You're a disgrace to every kind,
   No savage can compare:
To mob the sick was never known,
   By lion or the bear.

Those people like the hunter's dog,
   The craft did not annoy,
As savages come like a mob,
   Because they cried "stubby."
How much like good Samaritans,
These boasted freemen sound;
Raise mobs instead of oil and wine,
To heal their neighbor's wound.

Like puppies, these blind dupes must wait,
For the ninth day to come;
When truth's fair light shall break the veil,
And lead those captives home.

What use are scientific men,
In this enlightened day?
They are like foolish virgins' lamps,
To lead by night the way.

In all their conduct is displayed,
The three crafts close combined,
To take the people's rights away,
And not improve the mind.

Bell, Dagon, and the Dragon too,
These three crafts represent;
We must put down these idol gods,
For they're on mischief bent.

You're wicked craft, we have thus proved,
View your unhappy fate;
Pray God's forgiveness on your knees,
Before it is too late.

(Dr. Samuel Thomson)⁵⁴⁶

MODERN PRACTICE

Much horrid torture every day,
Among our neighbors we survey;
If done by Indians it would kill--
By learned doctors, it is skill.

The lancet's used to take the blood,
The poisonous merc'ry for our good;
They nitre give to kill the heat,
They tell the patient not to eat.
They opium give to ease the pain,
This kills in part, then live again,
To take the life which doth remain,
They then the lancet use again.

The blister's us'd to help distress,
And break the patient of his rest;
With setons they will tear the skin,
With physic clear what is within.

The tortured victim now must die,
The worms have killed him, is their cry,
Or else the time the Lord hath sent,
Our healing power can't death prevent.

This is the place some moderns fill,
Where one is cured there's ten they kill
We now presume to tell those tales,
That death's a cure that never fails.

MERCURY--ARS'NIC--OPIUM too;
PHYSIC--BLISTERS--LANCE--
And all who use them we deny,
Excepting when we wish to die.

We know that bleeding causes death:
We bleed a beast to stop its breath;
The same is used to save man's life,
To ease his pain they take the knife.

Much as these moderns take man's blood,
So much his life goes in the flood!
If any life should yet remain,
They then the LANCET use again.

With ign'rant practices like these,
We may find many as we please;
And if all were at their command,
Men would be slain through the land.

We do distain their poisoning trade,
For better purposes we were made,
Thus to be bled, like beasts, to death,
Or poisoned rats to stop our breath.

(Dr. Samuel Thomson)
The next two poems were written in similar tone to those of Thomson. They condemn the book-based education of regular doctors and decry the mineral poisons given instead of herbs.

RECIPE TO MAKE AN M.D.

To a small share of common sense you'll add
Enough of pride to make him almost mad;
Then fill his head with antique, useless lore,
Until with learned nonsense it runs o'er.
Show him where muscles both begin and end,
How veins and arteries their courses wend;
Explain the bones, their number, situation,
How each to each bear intimate relation.
The nervous system, infinitely spread
Through every part of man, from toe to head;
Teach him well, with noisy tongue to clatter
'Tis nothing more than organized, dead matter.
Steal from the grave a dead man to dissect,
And let the law the wicked theft protect;
Give him the knife and every instrument,
And let him hack and carve till he's content.
And when he's grown so wondrous skill'd and wise,
Begin to praise and laud him to the skies;
Tell him since he has gain'd grave wisdom's name,
To deal with herbs and simples would be shame;
He should most powerful poisons gather
To give his cred'lous patients; and the rather
'T would likely be more safe, excite men's wonder,
And save his credit, should he chance to blunder.
He should the mineral poisons concentrate,
To make grain doses answer for pound's weight,
And force it well into his learned head,
He's right, and only dealing with the dead;
Lest he espouse dame Nature's noble cause,
And leave dead lore for true and living laws,
Then let him learn how much 't will take to kill,
And know how much to give, and save his skill
Form being questioned: should his patient die,
He must look grave, and heave a deep drawn sigh,
And say with lying tongue, "Well, every thing was done,
But 't was no use, the sands of life had run."
And when the earth had covered o'er his skill,
Must laugh within his sleeve and send his bill:--
When this is all well learn'd, he'll do for proctor
To plead the cause of Death and be Death's doctor.

(F. B.)lvii

STANZAS

Away with the lancet, and away with the knife,
They are a curse like the rum from the still,
Away with the drugs that are with poison so rife,
Antimony, arsenic, and blue pill.

And mercury, too, it is the bane of our joy;
And opium, that narcotic most vile;
They will ruin our health, and our pleasure destroy,
And thus the hope of the physician beguile.

Away with your blisters, irritating they are,
Inflammation and pain they will produce,
And death oftentimes, and I am sure it is rare,
That to good health and long life they conduce.

Away with them all, and have nothing to do
With remedies so destructive to man;
It would be better, far better, to bid them adieu,
And let dame Nature restore if she can.

When afflicted we are, and tormented with pain,
We have a balm that will work like a charm;
That will drive out disease from our bodily frame,
And assuredly do us no harm.

God in his goodness hath spread o'er nature's broad face,
Plants in abundance, domestic and wild,
And has caused them to grow for the good of our race,
For their maladies, malignant and mild.

And water he has given, sweet water and clean,
In the streamlets unceasingly to flow,
And in fountains pent up clear and sparkling is seen,
To which the unclean and thirsty may go.
To the innocent plant ye invalids repair,
And of its sanative virtues partake,
For Jehovah has planted a remedy there,
By which your pains you may alleviate.

(P.)lviii

Botanist S. R. Jones of Utica, Mississippi, dedicated this next poem to allopaths, homeopaths, nostrum venders, and their dupes and victims.

AWAY WITH YOUR QUACKERY!

Away with your quack'ry! let freemen proclaim,
Too long have we borne its tyrannical sway,
We blush to reflect on its deeds and its name;
To oblivion drive it to rest in its shame:
Away with your quackery, away!

Away with your quackery! its blundering deeds,
The pen of a Curtislix would fail to portray:
For pity, in vain, dying nature oft pleads,
When the doctor comes in, blisters, poisons and bleeds.
Away with your quackery, away!

Away with it! then, in our long lov'd abodes,
Shall health her fair pinions in gladness display,
Mercurial ulcers no longer corrode
And eat off the cheek bones;--new strength is bestow'd:
Away with your quackery, away!

Away with your quack'ry! yes, drive it afar!
Though prostrate beneath it our energies lay,
Yet hope, like a bright and glittering star,
Bids us raise them again, spite of lancet and war:
Away with your quack'ry, away!

Away with it! aye, what a course it has led,
Spreading death in our land with its murd'rous array
Of blue pills, Dover's powders, precipitate red,
Cantharides, calomel, opium and lead:
Away with your quack'ry, away!
Away with your quackery! O, freemen! arise,
Regain the good health you should all have to-day;
On! on to the rescue! nor heed its false cries--
Its poisons we hate, its vile drugs we despise:
Away with your quack’ry, away!

Away with your quack’ry! what deed has it done,
Around which the love of the people should play
What cure has it made? or what victory won
Over death and disease? Simple truth answers, NONE:
Away with your quack’ry, away!

Away with your quack’ry! let Thomson, the brave
And true son of science, take part in the fray;
With his steam and lobelia, and pepper, he'll save
Our land from the quacks, and their dupes from the grave:
Away with your quack’ry, away!

(S. R. Jones)

The anonymous author of the following poem challenges the reputation of schooled doctors, claiming that their actual accomplishments were far less significant than their reputation. In fact, as the doctors continued to perfect their art and practice with more schooling, the mortality rate of their patients increased.

THE DOCTOR METAMORPHOSED

Who's the doctor? He that's often seen
Walking hasty o'er the village green;
Or through the town he on a fleet horse rides,
With medicines in post-bags by his side,
To visit sick--to epidemics, sorrows cure,
To conquer Death and make his sorrows fewer,
To cure all human ills that e'er were seen,
Coughs, colds, consumptions, and old women's spleen,
By pukes and purges, opiates and pills--
Thus through the country round he shows his skill;
He claims that by his art he thousands saves,
From all the gloomy horrors of the grave.
But there are some who seem to think this boast,
Is like one reckoning without his host;
For, though the doctor seems a present aid,
All men have died, e'er since the world was made.
The doctor's language when he drugs he gives,
'Take these, my patient, and they'll make you live!'
Is like what Satan spake to mother Eve,
Intended but to blind and to deceive:
For Satan said, 'Thou shalt not surely die!'
But time soon proved the serpent born to lie.
So never one, by all the doctors' aid,
Has an escape from life's destroyer made;
And life immortal here upon the earth,
Is but a name of what has ne'er had birth.
The ancient patriarchs led shepherds' lives,
In the wilderness, with flocks and wives;
Though no physicians were then in the earth,
Yet they were strong and hearty from their birth,
Without a sickness to excite their fears,
Till they had lived almost one thousand years.
Thus, Adam, Seth, Methuselah and Noah
Lived to see nine hundred years or more.
But love of life at such an age
Still made men loath to leave time's transient stage;
And gath'ring roots and herbs, they thought by these
To cause the ravages of death to cease.
They studied these, their nature to discern,
And so some men the art of physic learned.
But then how soon the age of men we see
Was shortened down from hundreds nine to three;
And as the doctors' art and practice grew,
Three hundred years were shortened down to two;
And when more perfect had become his skill,
Man's age decreasing was made shorter still;
So that now, scarce three score years and ten
Are viewed to be the common age of men.
'Tis thus, the worth of physic here is shown,
In freeing man from life's turmoil and groans;
For, when the doctor shall perfect his trade,
We see an end of human life is made.
We now foresee, but shall not see it then,
Because extinct will be the race of men;
And o'er the earth the savage beasts of prey,
Where man rules now, will hold a kingly sway.

(Anonymous)
The next several poems have calomel (mercurous chloride) as their theme. Long the mainstay of regular practice, calomel acted as a flash point between regular and reform medicine.

**CALOMEL**

Physicians of the highest rank
(To pay their fees we need a bank,)
Combine all wisdom, art and skill,
Science and sense, in Calomel.

Since Calomel's become their toast,
How many patients have they lost--
How many thousands do they kill,
Or poison with their Calomel.

Howe'er their patients may complain,
Of head, or heart, or nerve, or vein,
Of fever high, or parch, or swell,
The remedy is Calomel.

When Mr. A. or B. is sick--
"Go fetch the doctor, and be quick"--
The doctor comes, with much good will,
But ne'er forgets his Calomel.

He takes his patient by the hand,
And compliments him as a friend;
He sits a while his pulse to feel,
And then takes out his Calomel.

He then turns to the patient's wife,
Have you clean paper, spoon, and knife?
I think your husband might do well
To take a dose of Calomel.

He then deals out the fatal grains--
"This, Ma'am, I'm sure will ease his pains;
Once in three hours, at sound of bell,
Give him a dose of Calomel."

He leaves his patient in her care,
And bids good-bye, with graceful air:--
In hopes bad humors to expel,
She freely gives the Calomel.
The man grows worse, quite fast indeed--
"Go call for counsel--ride with speed"--
The counsel comes, like post with mail,
Doubling the dose of Calomel.

The man in death begins to groan--
The fatal job for him is done;
His soul is wing'd for heaven or hell--
A sacrifice to Calomel.

The funeral charges must be paid,
And under ground the body laid,
The lawyer executes the will,
And pays the charge for Calomel.

*Hydrarg.*, now plays its deadly game,
Since Calomel has lost its name;
And does the fatal work fulfill,
As faithfully as Calomel.

Physicians of my former choice,
Receive my counsel and advice;
Be not offended though I tell
The dire effects of Calomel.

And when I must resign my breath,
Pray let me die a natural death,
And bid you all a long farewell,
Without *hydrarg.* or Calomel.

(Dr. Samuel Thomson)

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**UNTITLED**

I'm an object of pity; come, hear me relate;
My hist'ry is mournful, and so is my fate!
I'm a dealer in *calomel*; this you know well;
But now I'm distracted like demons in hell!
I had a large practice, and that you all know;
Was called in an instant to see friend or foe;
Whate'er I prescribed, they all cried it was skill,
But now I'm rejected, my honor's to kill!
To remedy this, like a mad-man I went--
To slay the botanics, was all my intent--
But how I'm afflicted, no pen can describe:
Whatever I aimed at, was all set aside!
I called out my forces, and on did I go--
I appeared with the great, the high and the low;
My aim was destruction--I failed all at once;
The people concluded I was but a dunce.

Disgraced in this manner, I could not be still;
I must have been hurried by my own self will;
An inquest I called, then within a few miles,
To see what had caused the sad death of a child.
On commencing our business, it went very brave;
In spite of its parents, we tore open the grave,
The corpse bore to the house, with knives in our hands,
At dissecting to go, without leave or commands.

On the table we laid it, a block 'neath its head,
And said we had courage to cut up the dead;
But when we examined, we found with surprise,
The body quite natural appeared to our eyes.
My sorrows increased, we were all ordered down!
The Jury decided 'twas best for the town;
In spite of my efforts, they sent it away
To the place of internment in which it once lay.

I was by afflictions then quickly assailed;
In all my endeavors, I found I had failed;
But few would assist me, and those far away:
I mounted my pony, and southward did stray:
I called a new Jury, not those I had first;
My madness and fury filled all with disgust;
Determined I came, if it lay in my power,
To raise up the child that very same hour.

The proof we obtained was no more than the first;
Each witness was sworn and put to the test;
The child, it appeared by the proof that was given,
Died natural, and then was rejoicing in Heaven.
But this did not answer--I could not rest here;
'Twas further invested, to make it appear,
That the death of the child had been caused by him,
Whose dose was the size of the "head of a pin."

The Corner ordered the corpse to be brought,
In a moment before them, to see what they thought;
They went to the grave, where in peace it had laid,
And moved back the earth by the help of the spade.
The grave was quite empty, and nothing was found
Of the corpse that once laid there all cover'd with ground
Some person had watched it and borne it away,
Although but an infant, and nothing but clay.

For the sake of its mother, grieved almost to death,
Like Moses they hid it, to save it from theft:
The court then consulted what course they should take
To settle the business that happened of late,
And nothing was proved but what 'twas all right,
The Jury retired, although it was night;
So I was not easy, but baffled again;
It was feared my many, I'd crack my weak brain.

But still I resolved that I would have revenge,
If it cost me much money and time in the end;
I saw the effects my bad conduct had made,
Resolved on new measures, while trembling with rage;
I saw the Botanics in business all round;
The people employ them in every town,
And half my affliction I have not told here;
I've entered a combat with millions, I fear.

And if I'm defeated, I'm sure I shall fall,
Like a demon distracted, and that is not all;
Let me think a moment--it was a quick move,
I watched all their movements, although not in love.
They well understood, let me do what I would,
They saw my intentions, that they were not good;
I called them quite ignorant, for I didn't then know;
But I find my mistake now wherever I go.

When the Cholera was raging last summer in town,
The Botanics were called and obtained great renown;
To physic and bleed, I told them was right--
To give calomel and opium to lull them at night;
But O how mistaken I found I had been,
When I cut up a negro at Utica Inn;
I closely examined and published all around,
The disease must come up and not driv'n down.

[If the Cholera again should visit our land,
I shall then appear with my remedies in hand;
Such as bonset, opium and the blue pill,
The cramps to allay, and the spasms to quell;
The rectum I propose to close up with wax,
Considering this the arcana or great climax,
While the world shall proclaim my wonderful skill;
Thus I shall proceed my pockets to fill.]

So to sweating I went with my thorough-wort tea;
By the help of that practice, I saved two or three;
My patients had died in vast numbers before;
In spite of my skill they fell dead on the floor;
But when I insisted that sweating was good,--
My rivals had spoken the truth as they should--
The people believed me and choose whom they pleas'd
And found the botanics could cure the disease;

But still I persisted in blinding their eyes;
That the good mineral medicine none should despise;
It was brought from old Eng. where learning's great,
You must take our good medicine if death is your fate.
The medicine of our country you never could know,
As it grows on our hills and valleys below;
We had much better buy it, imported, so cheap,
Than to use our own medicine found at our feet;

But I could say, they would not believe,
That mineral medicine oft would relieve;
The botanics were called on by night and by day;
Wherever I went they were found in my way.
Now what shall I do for my business is dull;
To fight the botanics, 'twill crack my old skull;
I'm wholly discouraged, 'twill crush me at last,
I see I am going, and that very fast.

Can you my dear brothers, my folly forgive?
A wretch that has ruined you all I believe;
I have helped the botanics in all I have done,
I have seen their prosperity, O how do I groan.
Our system is rotten, 'twill tumble at last;
The petitions we sent were no help to our craft;
I've tried to be active in slandering their cause,
Resorted at last to our own civil laws.

Where'er I have met them, I've found a repulse,
Too dreadful to mention; I'm almost convulsed;
I thought I should conquer, the laurel should wear,
But the thought of my fortune I hardly can bear.
   [I found me afflicted with a sore disease,
Which took off my child, my wife did not please;
   She often distrusted my honor before;
She caught me to sleek by the meal on the floor.]

I've often regretted I'd not been more sly;
   It will almost kill me, I think I shall die;
I called on my neighbors to know what to do
   With all the botanics, the old elder too;
But I fear I have missed it, as many do say;
   I'd better repent and be learning to pray;
But repenting and praying, O how can I do:
   Let others repent now, and pray for me too.

It's but a small chance that I have to escape;
   I feel like a man that has committed a rape.
Young doctors take warning, who sit by my side;
   In spite of your learning, botanics will ride.
If you meet with botanics, remember poor me,
   And never oppose them, but with them agree;
If you can find friends, and prosper awhile,
   Treat well the botanics, and heaven will smile;

But if you continue the truth to despise,
   The Devil will have you, although in disguise;
   The subject is serious; I feel it of late;
If I'm not relieved soon, my heart will surely break.
My medicine don't sell, I've much upon hand;
   And most people think it's no better than bran,
My bleeding and blistering I fear is quite done;
   I hav'nt much practice--they spoil all my run.

If I find no more business, I'll hasten away,
   And never will stop till I arrive at Green Bay;
And if the steam doctors pursue me out there,
I'll hang up my pill bags--turn tanner by Gar.
If that won't support me, I'll again take a walk
   A little further west and unite with Black Hawk;
There in the wild desert, I'll ever remain;
   I'm sure the steam doctors won't trouble me again.

(Dr. Samuel Thomson)
"Hail the blest day that bids us rise
To value wealth, and health to prize;
And follow nature's noble son,
And all the mineral poisons shun:
That day, that bids us look and see,
The source, the cause of misery,
Which yet is held, and yet maintain'd,
Although it has its thousands slain.

"Hail it yet sons who well can test,
By pains, and aches, and life distress'd,
And looks far more than words can tell,
The horrid use of calomel;
Who now are taught your lands and fields,
For all your pains a blessing yields;
Who now are warn'd and now are shown,
To leave the poisons all alone.

"Hail it ye fathers, hail it mothers,
Hail it sisters, hail it brothers,
And all that's dear to you--O tell
To leave alone this calomel.
Free of charge the Almighty Hand
Hath sown in this our happy land,
The roots, and herbs, that stand so free,
A soothing balm--a remedy."

(Dr. Samuel Thomson)
Or Lava, bubbling hot and fast
Adown the mountain's side,--
Each rushing in impetuous force,
In less destructive in its course--
Is harmless, when compared with thee,
Foul source of half earth's misery.

The sparkling bowl, gay devotee,
Invokes a dreadful fate,--
On him who trusteth aught in thee
Far greater evils wait!
See! o'er all quarters of the earth
A tot'tring troop go stag'ring forth,
Composed of youth and grey-haired men
Who never can health know again!

Soldier, place thy sword in its sheath,
And leave the tented ground;
Another does the work of death--
Inflicts a deeper wound:--
Ay, deep is the wound he gives in strife,
And the victim feels the pain through life!
Oh! he is more effective far,
Than are embattled hosts at war!

Monster! forever from our sight,
Fleeing before Botanic light,
Descend to kindred shades of night!

(G. A. B.)

AN ODE
(Sung to "The Morning Light is Breaking.")

Rise up, rise up, Reformers,
And from our land expel,
That foe to human comfort,
That death drug, Calomel.
Send forth your declaration,
And to the conflict tend,
A suffering world's salvation
On your success depend.

Too long have doctors fed us
With nauseating pills,
And blistered us, and bled us,
To cure our many ills.
But oh! what woe and sorrow
And pain they've left behind,
A ruined constitution,
A weak, desponding mind.

Earth's sons and blooming daughters,
From time to time have fell,
And our grey-headed fathers,
Victims to Calomel.
And who can think unweeping,
On scenes with gloom so rife;
How doleful, how appalling,
Such sacrifice of life.

Firm be your hearts, resolving
To fight truth's battle well,
And cast from our dominions,
That moloch, Calomel.
On, onward! ne'er despairing,
For error, sure, will quail;
Your motto, loud declaring,
"Truth mighty shall prevail."

(Anonymous)\^lxvii

CALOMEL

Hear ye while I attempt to tell,
The wondrous works of Calomel,
Whate'er disease, has man befell,
The doctors deal out calomel.

A bully beat his friends pell mell,
The doctor gave him calomel,
It heated his wounds; O! hear me tell,
The wondrous cures of Calomel.

Jack dislocated his left heel,
The doctors dosed with calomel,
The heel was fixed, then hear me tell,
What things were done by calomel.
Jack broke his leg--what then befell,
Why he too swallowed calomel;
It set the bones in tune so well,
This wondrous working calomel.

The young, the old, the good the fell,
Cured in a trice by calomel,
Did all declare that every ill,
Might be removed by calomel.

A man is sick--the doctors tell
He comes and gives him calomel;
The man grows worse, is very ill,
The doctor gives more calomel.

The man is dead and some will tell,
The poor man died by calomel;
The man grows worse, is very ill,
The doctor gives more calomel.

'Tis slander foul, then hear me tell,
He died in spite of calomel.

But times have changed, it hath befell,
That all don't credit calomel;
As a cure all; and so they tell,
That many die by calomel.

And yet there is a final ill,
Which can't be cured by calomel;
All men must die, the scriptures tell,
When only fails this calomel.

It cannot save a soul from hell,
Nor death at last--e'ne Calomel.

(F. Morgan)\textsuperscript{lxviii}

\textbf{A REGULAR DOCTOR'S SOLILOQUY}

"Alas, alas, how blind I've been!"
How little of my error seen,  
My prejudice;--ah! few can tell  
How strong it's been for Calomel.

For opium, Spanish flies and blood,  
And advocate I've boldly stood;  
Have strove with all my might, to quell  
The hue and cry 'gainst calomel:

Called Doctors quacks of every grade,  
Save such as M.D.'s had been made,  
And so kept out the alluring spell--  
"The great cure-all is calomel."

Whene'er my patients I have lost,  
Thus have I counted well the cost--  
"The Lord is good--does all things well;"  
"He takes away--not calomel."

But when Thomsonian patients die,  
I then put forth the doleful cry;--  
"Steam and Lobelia life expel"--  
"A great specific calomel!"

Now this is wrong, for conscience stings,  
And inward struggles daily brings:  
I'm half resolved no more to dwell  
In faith and hope with Calomel.

With poisons all I glad would part,  
Use roots and herbs with all my heart,  
But bear my friends with rage will swell,  
If I abandon calomel.

Therefore both systems I'll befriend,  
To practice both will condescend,  
So, when I hear a funeral knell,  
The cause shall not be calomel.

(Anonymous)lxix

SOLILOQUIY OF AN M.D.

A doctor once was taken sick,
With fever high, his pulse was quick;
   And as he lay upon his bed,
With feeble, faltering voice he said--

   Lo I am here in feeble state,
My fever's high, my pains are great,
   Yet in my books I cannot find
A medicine that's to my mind.
   If calomel I dared to take,
My constitution it would break,
   If ipecac and jalap too,
'Twould be the worst think I could do.
   I've pills and powders by the peck,
But these my fever would not check--
   And blisters too, I might apply,
But 'twere no use--my blood they'd dry--
   Again, the lancet I might use,
But then I have no blood to lose.
   I always antimony keep,
And laudanum, to make me sleep,
And many nostrums I might mention,
To take which is not my intention.

What shall I do? what shall I do?
   The doctor then did cry;
I must have some relief, and soon,
   Or surely I must die.

And thus he lay from day to day,
   His fever raging still--
He knew not how to cure himself,
   Although he had the will.

At length his mind grew very weak,
   More terrible his ills,
He grew more feeble every day,
   For why? He took his Pills!

Days past. His eyes began to close,
   His friends were standing round--
He took another dose--and soon
   Was six feet under ground.

(Normus)
CALOMEL
Law--not science--the safeguard of Mineral Doctors.

Old Calomel the people hate
And soon they will decide his fate:
With aches and pains he fills their bones,
And causes many doleful moans.

His victims writhe beneath his pow'r,
And fondly court the dying hour,
To free them from the iron grasp
Of poison, fatal as the asp.

With indigestion--awful load--
They drag along a dreary road--
With stiffen'd limbs, and rotten teeth--
With foul and pestilential breath.

With minds imbecile as a child--
With mania running almost wild--
With ulcers foul as those of Job,
They wear the leper's scaly robe.

The Inquisition's pains they feel,
Without Samaria's son to heal;
They never get the oil and wine,
Unmix'd with baneful anodyne.

Their nervous systems rack'd with pain,
Are on old Moloch's altar lain;
The bloody lancet there is pli'd,
And vital forces stand aside.

If any fears do still remain,
That patient should revive again,
And on the fam'd Lobelia call,
And use a little steam withal;

The Doctors then the people love;
Their bowels with compassion move;
They say: "Dear neighbors do be wise;
For your relief we'll soon devise.

The steamers! they are naught but quacks,
An ingn'rant set of stupid jacks;
On their delusion you should frown,
And then we soon could put them down.

On law-legs we have always stood,
And by that means have gain'd our food;
Lobelia's pow'r has spoil'd our legs,
And now we stand on rotten pegs.

Our System, too, is on the wane,
And can't in triumph rise again,
Unless the statute is reviv'd,
Whereby we long securely liv'd.

Our Legislators you must pray,
To grant us hopes of lengthen'd day,
To make our law that we can ride--
Then won't we look GENTEEL? [aside.]

(Z. Huzzey)

UNTITLED

Oh! had I wit and words at will,
How I might exercise quill!
To treat of lotion, potion, pill,
Of drops and drachms, of dose and gill;
Of blister, glister, drench and swill,
For every patient well or ill--
Of mortar, crucible and mill,
Of lancet, pulican and drill,
Of mercury, tartar and squill;
And all the noxious drugs that fill
The items of an M.D.'s bill.
While faith and charms and myst'ry, still,
With little practice and less skill,
Cure all that poison fails to kill.
Their worst luck can't be so very ill,
Since misfortunes their purses fill.

(Dr. Isaac A. Parker)
Troubled by the harsh treatments given to Presidents Washington and Harrison by the old school doctors, Richard J. Duke of Virginia penned this poem in the hope that people would prevent their friends and loved ones from an early grave.

THE DEEDS OF ALLOPATHY

The Bible says, "Blood is the life,"  
Oh, use not then the dreadful knife  
To draw life's crimson flood away,  
But cause the murderous hand to stay.

Give not your children calomel,  
Or soon you'll toll their funeral knell;  
Of laud'num, too, be well aware,  
To children it's a deadly snare.

(Richard J. Duke)
Chapter 5

Regular Versus Thomsonian

With so many learned doctors practicing their own species of rationalism, it is not surprising that the medical profession failed to attract an abiding confidence within American culture. As Thomas Jefferson and others would attest, physicians were pitifully ignorant, drastic in their healing regimens, alarming in their pretense of understanding the keys to health and disease, and rapacious in their pecuniary interests. Medicine in the days of Jefferson failed to meet the demands of doctors and their patients. Based on erroneous philosophy, it tended to relieve patients more effectively of their pocketbooks than of their ailments. When physicians insisted upon treating patients with regimens that all but guaranteed failure, these ineffective treatments robbed physicians of their status in society, and more importantly, invited a host of reformers anxious to test their theories and skills among a desperate and willing population.

Regular, orthodox, or old school medicine, sometimes termed allopathy, faced strong opposition in the early years of the nineteenth century. Challenged by in-house critics as well as by those who chose to fight from the outside, medical orthodoxy struggled to find its bearings amid the changes and tensions of the age. Substantive opposition to the Galenic tradition had come by way of the political revolution of late eighteenth century France, the creation of new hospitals and medical schools, and the dominance of a new generation of empirically oriented teachers who chose to ignore the siren appeals of the older system-builders. Preferring less theory and more facts, and a healing art that rested on individual case histories built on observation at the bedside, medicine looked for guidance from a new breed of doctors exemplified in the work of Phillippe Pinel (1745-1826), Jean N. Corvisart des Marets (1755-1821), Pierre J. G. Cabanis (1757-1808), Pierre Louis (1787-1872), and other clinical teachers.
who stressed the importance of disease identification on the basis of extensive clinical examinations.

This so-called French Period in American medicine witnessed efforts in and outside established medical circles to bring about reform. Those who worked inside the medical establishment were genteel in their criticisms, preferring to work at the margins and contenting themselves with limited victories rather than frontal assaults. This effort brought with it a healthy skepticism of traditional remedies and therapeutics, a more focused interest on specific diseases, less concern for the body's overall state, and a desire to support nature's own healing processes. Here was a genuine effort to overthrow metaphysical concepts of disease that had reigned unchallenged for centuries. Those outside apostolic medicine--the botanics, Indian Doctors, eclectics, Thomsonians, physio-medicals, homeopaths, and hydropaths--were more pointed in their criticisms and depicted regulars in the narrowest and most contemptuous manner. Theirs was a true medical protestantism, believing it necessary to break completely from the medical establishment. The poetry of Samuel Thomson and his followers is representative of that protestantism and obvious in its vehemence.

As the Thomsonian movement spread south and into the trans-Appalachian west, it made friends and disciples along the way. But principal catalyst to its growth and acceptance was the fear that gripped the nation in 1832 as newspapers announced the outbreak of cholera in Europe and Asia. Papers tracked its progress by announcing the numbers of deaths in each of the major world capitals, printed the variations in atmospheric temperature in those same cities, and reported any new or unusual laws or statutes intended to control the spread of the disease. Cholera meetings were common events in schools, churches, and courthouses as worried families met with elected officials and religious leaders to plot the direction and speed of the disease. There, too, officials and families shared every rumor of effective cure; suggested ways to prevent its attack or moderate its violence; appointed committees of citizens to render assistance; gave directions for administering medicines; registered all cases; consulted on further measures; and corresponded with persons interested in testing the efficacy of novel treatments.
Regular doctors and town officials desperately tried to identify anything that might protect or cure victims of the disease. As matters stood, the integrity of the medical establishment seemed to hang in the balance as regulars resorted to an assortment of stimulants, cathartics, emetics, rubefacients, warm baths, frictions, bleeding, and cold applications. Although a few doctors confined themselves to the milder vegetable cathartics, most preferred a combination of opium and calomel. Lundsford P. Yandell's heroic treatment for fellow Kentuckians consisted of providing rest and warmth to the skin in the first stages through the use of 20, 60, and 120 grain doses of calomel; repeated doses using a third of an ounce of calomel in the second stage; and repeated doses of an ounce or more in the third stage.

**UNTITLED**

Come, Cholera doctors, spread the news,
Your poisons give men's lives abuse,
From boards of health, your powers extend,
To desolate our happy land!

These points attained, exert those powers,
We'll see the effect in a few hours;
Men die apace, where'er they go,
Their steps are marked with human woe!

When health prevailed throughout the land,
And drugs were plenty on their hand,
They took their stand and raised the cry,
"See the cholera clouds from Asia fly!"

Weak minds they thus did irritate,
And made them think the danger great!
To pacify and gain consent,
Their poison take, death to prevent.

O, what a hoax to speed their skill,
With lancet, calomel, and pill;
Camphor and opium they combine,
To carry on their bold design.

These are the facts, as we believe,
We have no wish aught to deceive;
Men to their graves by poisons hurled,  
The plague is spreading round the world.

Near all the earth has felt the bane  
Of Paracelsus' poisonous reign!  
The cholera cloud has spread its scenes,  
From Asia's shore to New Orleans.

The march of death will thus proceed,  
Till botanists shall take the lead;  
Their skill employ on nature's plan,  
Disease remove and save the man.

This they have done some thousand times,  
Tho' cures by them, are law-made crimes;  
But in so great and good a cause,  
They'll cures effect in spite of laws:

The mineral doctors can't succeed,  
In vain they blister, purge, and bleed,  
In vain their calomel they've tired,  
Most of their cholera patients died.

The facts are plain when foes confess,  
Botanic doctors had success;  
And saved the lives of many a score,  
By college doctors given o'er.

What is the use of boasted skill  
In jalap, bolus, or in pill;  
When those whom they attempt to cure,  
By swallowing drugs their death is sure?

What is the use of all their skill,  
That will not cure but often kill!  
Our great Convention\textsuperscript{1xxv} we have called,  
The craft to check and spare the world.

Now let each father, brother, friend,  
Who in this council may attend,  
Stand like a soldier in his post,  
Nor fear to face that venal host.

They crowd around on every hand,  
Against the truth to make a stand;  
Their mercenary plans must fail,
Great is the truth and must prevail.

The time arrives, botanics meet.
Each patent doctor takes his seat;
And stands a champion in the cause
Of nature and her simple laws.

Kind nature speaks in language plain;
No magic here to give you pain;
Easy her words are understood,
"No poisons take, nor spill your blood!"

Come, friendly breth'ren, far and near,
All have a right to speak and hear;
Your vouchers show and prove you come,
To be a mouth for those at home.

We'll organize by joint consent,
A Clerk elect and President,
With Committees as we may need,
Arrange our work and so proceed.

The President now takes the chair
With dignity and solemn air;
Did the becoming grace proceed,
A message to our friends to read.

United in the common cause,
'Gainst deadly drugs and poison laws,
A seat was free to every man,
To help to execute their plan.

Thus in their work did they proceed,
Petitions hear and letters read:
Record the cures that steamers do,
With ways and means that they pursue.

How they reject the forms and rules,
As practiced by the mineral schools;
And how their enemies will tell,
Of patients killed, though 'live and well.

The time affords a pleasant chance,
In useful knowledge to advance;
Our founder is our common friend,
To his suggestions we'll attend.
His system, if you understand,
Will all improvements comprehend;
Unless you do reject it all,
And let the whole to ruin fall.

If you his system understand,
Auxiliaries prop, but do not mend;
The principle remains the same,
Whatever remedy you name.

Those remedies which don't agree
With strict, correct philosophy,
May some unknowing ones allure;
But yet disease they cannot cure.

Should they some transient good produce,
You'll find an evil in their use;
And what appears to do you good,
Will lurk a poison in your blood.

Let all improvements that remain,
And all pretensions to the same,
Be well examined at the first,
Lest some should take us all on trust.

We make no doubt you understand,
Numbers have risen in our land;
Your confidence they do abuse,
By urging you their drugs to use.

Smith's book,\textsuperscript{1xxvi} for trial first appears,
But has been sinking many years;
Has been before us and been tried,
Condemned in full and set aside.

Miles and Rogers,\textsuperscript{1xxvii} they come next,
Each have \textit{Improvement} for their text;
This is the gold with which they gild,
And thus conceal their want of skill.

In their contrivances so arch,
Did they attempt to steal a march;
But their improvements like the first,
Have tumbled to their native dust.
Now comes the great inflated book,\textsuperscript{lxxviii}
Which drowns the eye at every look;
O'erwhelms all nature with surprise,
Like John's great beast with seven eyes.

What is there in this book we find?
Try all the powers of earth and time,
To ope' the book and loose the seals,
And find the light that it reveals.

This much we learn with deep surprise,
That it abounds with foolish lies;
Culled from the book already tried,
And several other books beside.

Nothing original or new
Is here presented to our view,
But mandrakes, opium, drops, and stuff,
Gunpowder plaster--cancer puff.\textsuperscript{lxxix}

The cause of truth will still go on,
In spite of all this book has done;
In vain the dupe of Howard tries,
To use his hundred remedies.

We wish each family apart,
To understand the healing art;
Without so many forms and rules,
Both coined and practiced by the schools.

Our plan's intended for their good,
And easy to be understood;
As taught us in the school of nature,
Established by the great Creator.

But when we gaze at Howard's book,
Imposture meets us at a look;
Deception glares upon its face,
So we dismiss it in disgrace.

Most freely now let us impart,
With faithful lips and honest heart;
All that we know and can reveal,
The maladies of men to heal.

So many friends as here have met,
Does much substantial joy create,
Especially we are glad to find,
They're of one soul, and heart, and mind.

A Judas now and then may rise,
But this will give us no surprise;
Some real friends, we have conceived,
May turn away by foes deceived.

Our remedies have all been tried,
And stood the test, though oft belied;
So, never let it be forgot,
We'll buy the truth and sell it not.

Reformers may be multiplied,
Our faith and patience may be tried;
One truth remains firm and sure,
Our remedies, disease will cure.

(Dr. Samuel Thomson) lxxx

The following poems depict the struggle between medical regulars and the reformers, with the latter group steadily growing in strength and numbers.

PARAPHRASE, OF A PATRIOTIC HYMN, BY MRS. BARBAULD

Thomsonians rouse! lift up your eyes,
See poison foes against you rise;
Their country's foes, a recreant host,
With falsehood, trick and empty boast.

See how these fiends to man do rage,
And fierce for blood and gold engage,
See poisoned nets, of falsehood spread,
And honest people captive led.

There 'Celsus with his "monster" stands
Upheld by law's "voracious hands,"
There poison multiplied abound,
To grind the people to the ground.
Their ranks with servile army spreads,
There wealth, with unturned nasal, treads;
   There sycophantic flattery, smiles,
And base corruption tries her wiles.

   Then let us boldly field,
Secure in Thomson's helm and shield,
   The terrors and the charms repel,
And tricks of "doctors"--arts of hell.

The "patriot" Thomson, triumph'd here
Why should the "faithful followers" fear?
   We have been victors oft before,--
We shall be, when this conflict's o'er.

   (S.)lxxxi

MEDICAL REFORMERS

From mountain, valley, hill and glen,
They come, a valiant race of men;
   On truth omnipotent they stand,
With conquering weapons in their hand.

   No bloody instruments they wield--
   Theirs is a moral battle-field;
On this they stand, in numbers few,
With hearts undaunted, firm and true.

   They come to crush a dreadful foe
To human health and life below--
   More deadly than the Upas tree-
The lancet, knife, and mercury.

   Truth is the weapon which they hold
Against this enemy so bold;
Onward they move, determined all,
By truth and right to stand or fall.

   Great God! preserve them in the right,
Stand by them in their moral fight;
   Before them may all error flee,
And lead them on to victory.
BALLAD: REGULAR AND THOMSONIAN TREATMENT

Mr. Editor: Physicians, politicians and divines,
Divisions sore on earth doth cause in modern times;
Some war about Democracy, and some about their creeds;
The doctors war in theory, the people about their deeds.

In all the wars just named, each claim in their defense
Reason, Science, Philosophy, and Common Sense;
Each claim a reason for their course, a reason for their views;
In politics which side to take, and doctors which to choose.

The regular M.D. claims knowledge of the human frame,
The action and the office of muscle, nerve and vein;
And all theories extant, from Hippocrates' days,
Will quote, to Rush or Brown as proof, to Hunter or Broussais.

Of disease in various classes have learned their names to speak
Most fluently, in English, in Latin, and in Greek;
Anatomy and Chemistry are safely lodged in brain,
Physiology and Pharmacy, with all their mystic train:

Of symptoms, though perplexing, and difficult to find;
Of Febres Intermittens, and of all the Febrile kind;
Of Epilepsy, Palsy, of Rheumatism, Gout;
With cause remote and proximate, by us are cyphered out.

They have drank in new inventions, nor let the moment pass
Of knowledge to accumulate in Galvanism, Gas,
In the Electric Fluids, in Homoeopathic gains,
In Hygeine, and Diet, to alleviate our pains.
Essential to the healing art is this amount of lore;
In order to be qualified, should Cullen's works explore;
On Abercrombie and on Brown the student long should dwell;
On Gregory and Dewees too, on Hooper, Coxe, and Bell.

With this amount of knowledge, with saddle-bags in hand,
Diplomas in their pockets, respect for to command,
Profess the Art of Healing, on the long beaten track;
Should any dare to doubt their skill, 'tis ignoramus! quack!
When first they call to see the sick, (O! what a narrow chance)  
Begin by giving calomel, and then plunge in the lance;  
With Antimony follow up, with Nitre and Morphine;  
The inflammation to allay, on liver, lungs, or spleen.

Then if the pulse should quickly beat, next day they call again,  
The same course over will repeat ('twill surely ease your pain)  
Perhaps a Blister may advise, or some Mercurial Paste,  
To act as counter-irritant, and cure with greater haste.

Then if the patient and his pulse should both together sink,  
Next day the Dr. will advise some lemon juice or acid drink;  
Peruvian Bark would stimulate, I'll give you some Quinine,  
Some Ipecac.\textsuperscript{lv}, and Calomel, and Dover's Powders, fine.

Saying--Sir, your case is obstinate, the symptoms are obscure,  
Your case requires attention, the very best of care,  
A water-gruel regimen the symptoms sure must soften--  
Take care to wake him once an hour, give Dover's Powders often.

Next day the case being doubtful--A counsel quickly call,  
In order to approve my course and satisfy you all,  
And while we thus are waiting I think I would advise  
You to suspend the medicine, and give the patient ease.

Then comes the aged counsellor, with wrinkles on his brow,  
With looks imparting wisdom, he asks the doctor how  
The man was firstly taken, and if in the Sthenic stage\textsuperscript{lvii}  
The modus operandi, did not his pains assuage.

In giving Calomel, and Bleeding, you surely have done well,  
To reduce the arterial action, morbid virus to expel;  
The Antimony and Ipecac. I also recommend,  
Had you given'em more freely 'twould been better in the end.

He then tells o'er the num'rous cases that had fallen to his lot,  
But their names and place of residence he'd most of them forgot,  
How strangely they were handled, how soon they were restor'd  
By bleeding and blisters, and other means he did afford.

As it regards this patient, old D'Alamber\textsuperscript{lviii} I shall quote--  
Give Alum, Lead, Or Kino, for soreness of the throat;  
And for his schirrus liver try Corrosive Sublimate,  
Or the Nitrate of Silver, the part to irritate.
At night I would give Morphine, his nerves for to quiet;
At morning give the Blue Pill, with a vegetable diet;
Give Digitalis for the blood, for stupor give Cinchona;
Give Ether for the spasms, or the Spirits of Ammonia.

For extreme irritation, all our authors have directed
Many Leeches to apply, and cup the part affected;
Both Foxglove and Strammonium, are very much in use,
But both are quite narcotic, and delirium may produce.

Should stupefaction follow, or much vertigo ensue,
Then withhold the Strammonium, and Digitalis too,
His case would then be doubtful, 'tis obstinate at best,
And has been from the onset--such pressure on the chest.

I have business somewhat urgent that calls me away,
Should the sick man get worse, let me know without delay;
Just mark the directions--Keep him cool, dress the blister,
Shut the neighbors from the room, don't speak above a whisper.

The medicine being given as the counsel did prescribe,
He was next day delirious, and comatose beside;
The Alum being given, friends and neighbors flock around,
Each bringing in confusion, confusion to confound.

Some said he was a dying, others thought he had a fit;
Some said it was the medicine that caused the whole of it,
Some said it were their case, they knew what they should do
--They would call another doctor--and a steam doctor too.

Opinions selling very cheap, each one his mind did tell;
Some prais'd Lobelia up quite high, some worshipped Calomel;
Some said--Keep on your former course, the doctor's skilful sure;
And others thought his medicine would kill instead of cure.

While some were pulling this way, and some were pulling that,
The family being much alarmed, and quite confus'd with chat
Concluded (although much opposed) to let the steamer try,
And gratify their anxious friends, expecting he would die.

Friends' hopes began to brighten, opposers they did sneer,
Some took their hats and left the house, and some did volunteer;
One for the doctor was quite fast, one steep'd some catmint tea,
Another watched the patient's bed, to see if he breathed free.
While waiting thus in deep suspense, no help within their power,
Anxiety rais'd to such a pitch each moment seemed an hour,
Soon as the steamer had arrived, this anxious care had fled,
They ushered him into the house, then to the sick man's bed.

Saying--Doctor, I am glad you are come; can you the sick man save?
He's certain at the point of death, do keep him from the grave,
Since morning he has speechless been, and like a person froze,
With Camphor I have rubbed him once, held Hartshorn to his nose.

The steamer felt his pulse and said--He's surely in a fit,
Just take this medicine away, his case I chance may hit:
Then took a phial from his bags, of Preparation Third,
He gave him some between the teeth, the sick man groaned and stirred.

Distressed, he turned from side to side--no ease or comfort there;
His friends, astonished and amazed, did say--We may well despair.
The Hot Drops now were given free, but these increased the pain;
He next gave Composition Tea, but friends all said 'twas vain.

Hot bricks around him now were placed, the clothes in water wet,
With No.6 they rubbed him o'er, (no ease he got as yet,) The friends began to look quite wise, their fears began to show,
They said--Your hot stuff will never do, the sick man is so low.

The steamer mildly reasoned, and tried their minds to calm,
His medicines were safe and good, and never would do harm,
He had tried them o'er and o'er, he knew full well their power;
Be calm, (he says,) keep quiet, don't let your feelings sour.

But friends they could no longer bear, to witness such distress,
Retired into another room, their feelings to express;
One says--He pours Lobelia down, gives Hot Drops and Cayenne,
I always had most horrid fears about these ignorant men.

One says--I know not what to do, I have a mind to go
And ask our M.D. what he thinks--I'm sure he ought to know.
Another says--We'll wait and see, it may be for the best,
And give the man a trial fair, his medicines to test.

While this debate was going on, the steamer kept at work,
The man had vomited and sweat, was free from pain, & chirk;
The doctor then stept out, and ask'd if they were o'er their fright,
Who found they were more scared than hurt--the medicine was right.

Cayenne and Bitters then he gave, and Composition strained;
The sick man took them every day, and every day he gained;  
Opposers now began to flounce, they swore it was a shame  
To give the steamer any praise--the man was gaining when he came!

Great is Diana! was the shout, the Ephesians thus did cry,  
This Thomsonian must come down, or people sure must die;  
For in a paper once I read, (twas somewhere way out west,)  
A steamer called to see a man--and steamed the man to death.

But some with opposition mild, (who ne'ertheless felt sad,)  
Upon their lips would force a smile, saying--If he gains I'm glad,  
But charge all men, where'er you go, (lest he should be a winner,)  
To give the God of Heaven praise--for this man he's a sinner!

(Demas Hine)

THE CONTRAST

The iron rod and fata spear  
We wield for death throughout the year;  
We wield for death the iron rod,  
And thousands send to meet their God!  
(Esculapians)

We use such balms as have no strife  
With nature or the streams of life;  
With blood our hands we never stain,  
Nor poisons give, to ease man's pain.  
Good balm will harm no man or fly,  
While God shall rule in yonder sky;  
And we, in life, will never cease,  
By simple means to kill disease.

(Thomsonians)

THE REGULAR AND THE BOTANIC PRACTICE OF MEDICINE

What led man to the regulars' invention?  
Was it to cure the sick his intention?  
Or was it ignorance that led him astray,
Ostentatious, sophistical demons of day!

Yes, Experience has taught us a new school,
To detect the ignorant, and learn the quack fool;
For with their lance and plasters they take the skin
To make a big hole to put big quacks in.
Then with their calomel they take the rest,
Or substitute morphine, as suits the patient best,
Till death steals upon his pale-faced brow,
And asks, will you meet me in heaven or hell now?

But soon the Botanic sound was heard around,
To heal the sick, to clear the ground,
To dispel the ignorance, to wield the sway,
To show the demons they are in the wrong way.

Nature developed to Thomson alone,
For which he stands highest on the earthly throne;
He detected the ignorant, he learnt the quack fool,
How they might be instructed in his new school.

I laud his name, I love the cause,
It is swift advancing, it is fast gaining applause,
The combat is raging, soon will it be o'er,
The triumph will be ours, sounding from shore to shore.

(L. H. Paddock)

TO PHYSICIANS

Come, honest Physicians, lay by your suspicions;
There is no great secret in plain, simple truth.
Without boasted vainnes, we tell you in plainness,
True medical science is but in her youth.
We've long been deceived--past ages are grieved,
To find all their medical skill was so weak,
And many inventions, from honest intentions,
Have grown into errors too gross for to speak.

Behold ancient sages, through all the dark ages,
Confus'd and perplexed by mysteries of cure,
No system erected, that could be protected
By reason and truth, which will always endure.
Since good Hippocrates, lived good Cincinnatus,
And Galen, and Celsus, and Plato, and Stahl--
Sydenham and others--all high learned brothers--
But Cullen and Brown at last rivaled them all.

When Doctors we mention, we have no intention
Of casting reproach upon those in the rear:
For Cullen's Nosology, needs no apology--
The Medical Science he split like a hair.
Though many are named, all cannot be famed,
With Harvey and Brown, for the good they have done,
By rending tradition and dark superstition,
To clear out the way for the true light to come.

The true light of nature has now become greater
Than all the high learning the schools do possess;
And plain, common talking, either standing or walking,
Reveals the whole mystery of cure we confess.
The Greeks, while they reigned, their science maintained,
By plain, simple teaching, quite common to all:
Their good sense and reason, would have thought it treason,
To leave their own language the dead to recall.

Rush, in his discourses, the system divorces,
As very uncertain and fickle withal.
A temple uncovered, his genius discovered,
With cracks at the bottom and all through the wall.
He lectured and battered--all systems he scattered;
Like atoms, they flew from his voice through the air.
A final new building, without gloss or gilding,
He knew would be hard, yet confessed would be fair.

Now Thomson's foundation, in this mighty nation,
Is laid on a basis both firm and secure.
No useless appendage, can be of advantage,
To those who would learn the true science of cure.
No clinical lectures, or wholesale conjectures,
Are used by Thomson disease to dispel:
His eye never glances at blisters or lances,
Nor tea spoonful doses of raw Calomel.

He takes his position, with good Composition:
Some good Number Two will increase vital heat.
Numbers One, Two and Three, he then mixes with tea,
Which will scour the stomach and cleanse it complete--
Then steam in proportion revives life and motion:
A free perspiration must soon then begin:
Then makes the steam hotter--throws on some cold water,
And with a clean towel rubs off the old skin.

When washed and dressed, it must be confessed,
We feel so much better than we could have thought:
The fever abated, the sense reinstated:
How simple the process! How easily taught!
This truth we have tested, and when we have rested,
Some food that is wholesome the stomach doth crave.
We need not be fearful, but eat and be cheerful,
And thankful we're sav'd from an untimely grave.

(Anonymous)

UNTITLED

The regulars are much alarmed
To see the people so much charmed
With our new and wholesome way
To save our bodies from the clay.

"Its folly, ignorance, they say,
Which has sprung up within a day--
Only the ignorant of the land
Will this poor system recommend."

But, after all their foul abuse,
The people love lobelia juice.
Steam and powders is the cry,
Let us have them or we die.

Calomel they now conclude
On them no longer shall intrude,
Nor poisonous drugs of any form;
For they are all inclined to harm.

"Alas! alas! what shall we do,
Botanics, to get shut of you;
Ways and means, and all we say,
Have failed to get you out our way."
One of two you now must chose,  
Quit practice, or our med'cine use;  
Fall in the ranks, to steaming go,  
Or take the plow or take the hoe.

(William F. Hodgen)xcii

This next poem recounts the cure of a young woman's lover who, having caught a cold, is brought to the home of a Thomsonian doctor on New Year's Eve, after having been treated by regular doctors with bleeding and calomel.

AN EXTRAORDINARY CASE

On New Year's Eve a gentle rap was heard, and on opening the door a young gentleman of moderate size, seated in an armed chair, was presented by a lady, whose countenance bespoke sorrow and compassion, and the tear of sympathy bedewed her crimson cheek, as she placed the object of her affections in our charge; and after several ineffectual struggles for utterance, she seemed to say--'Doctor, do your best, as much depends upon the result!' at the close of which a mournful sigh escaped her lips, and she departed without further ceremony. When we proceeded to examine the little patient, and found to our surprise, that he could neither speak nor help himself. But a scroll was attached to his garments, which explained the doleful tale of misery and woe. It reads as follows:--

Here have I come, oh Doctor!  
To see if you can cure  
The horrid, racking pains  
I cannot long endure.

My head does ache most grievously,  
My sides are dreadful sore,  
My back is lame, my limbs are stiff,  
I'm chilly, too, all o'er.

Oh dear! a twinge has caught my toe,  
Another's in my side,  
Oh truly, I am doom'd to know  
The ills that flesh betide.

And, Doctor, but a week ago  
I was not wan and thin,  
But I did catch a frightful cold,
And call'd the M.Ds, in.

And *Calomel* they soon pour'd down,
   On *Senna* made me dine,
For tea I'd take a nauseous *Pill*,
   With *Antimonial Wine*--

For luncheon *Dover's Powders*,
   To make me sleep at night,
And *Bleeding* to reduce me,
   Till you find me in this plight.

All would not do--I'm wond'rous cold;
   Oh! save me, or I'll die;
Some *PEPPER TEA* pray give me,
   Some *COMPOSITION* try.

A STEAM BATH, too, would surely rouse
   Some action in my frame;
Oh Doctor, if you'll cure me,
   I'll sound your glorious name--

And bless the New Year's Evening
   When first for you I sought,
And home that many glad returns
   May to your door be brought.

The fair damsel who performed the Herculean task of bringing her lover to the Infirmary, must have possessed unusual strength of mind and purpose, besides no small share of muscular power--otherwise she could not have succeeded in so arduous an undertaking. Her anxiety for the recovery of the patient was so great, that she could not resist the temptation of calling to ascertain his condition, after he had been under treatment a few days. The object of her affections being comfortably seated in an easy chair, in a kind of musing attitude, at the time of her approach, he broke forth in the following singular strain of rhyming:--

   Thanks are due to thee, my dear;
      I can never feel too grateful
   For thy exertions to get me here,
      Although *Tea* is given by the pailful.

   A good hot *Steaming*, too, they gave me,
      While seated in a canvass fine,
Which did very much relieve me--
      Especially that sore toe of mine.

   *Lobelia* next stept down to learn
The state of things within me;  
*Cayenne* and *Composition* began to burn,  
I thought the duce was in the--

To bring me here, and leave me, too,  
With beings void of all compassion!  
I since have learned, with much ado,  
It is the prevailing fashion.

By this time I felt most dreadful sick,  
And the tea went down more freely;  
I then began to squirm and kick,  
All caused by the LOBELIA.

At length the pump began to work,  
And thee would be astonished dear,  
But I soon began to feel more chirk,  
Which banished nearly all my fear.

The *Sweating* now became profuse,  
With a *Hot Stone* at my trotters!  
I wondered why they did abuse!  
For Steam Doctors are not *'potters'*.

They are really scientific men,  
Although some will call them quacks;  
No M.D. can so well the human system ken  
As the steamer, with all his scientific lacks.

Next day the process was repeated,  
Which left me wond'rous clear,  
The work was thus completed  
Without *Calomel* or the fatal *Spear.*

Now, my love, let us hasten to fulfill  
The contract we long ago did make,  
Nothing, except some stealthy ill,  
Shall cause my sacred vow to break.

For now I am well and hearty,  
No symptoms now remain of gout,  
I could this night attend a party,  
See how I can hop and jump about!

May success attend the Steamer,  
Who snatches from the grave;
While naught is due the Regular,  
Who has not the skill to save.

(Anonymous)xciii

This unusual poem was written for the people of Edinburgh, Iowa, and used as an advertisement by botanic doctor R. Polk, formerly from Clinton County, Ohio. Polk promised to treat disease with only herbal remedies, never with the lancet or mineral poisons.

TO THE PEOPLE OF EDINBURGH, IOWA, AND VICINITY

A Buckeye lad has come of late  
From Clinton Co., Ohio State,  
To Edinburgh, and settled down  
To heal the ills prevailing round.

If your disease should be the gout,  
He'll chase it round and drive it out;  
Or, if the rheumatism reign,  
His liniments will ease your pain.

The truth of this, if any doubt,  
And feel as if you're going to die,  
Just call this youthful doctor out,  
And see what healing balms he'll ply.

One thing he wishes you to know,  
His remedies do mostly grow,  
And from the earth extract the juice  
Which he prepares for future use.

His maxims too, I know them well,  
He'll never give you calomel;  
Nor lancet, opium, nor blue pill--  
For those do'n cure but often kill.

(R. Polk)xciv
The following verse recounts a story which happened to the author and botanic physician, Francis Burke, in 1838. A member of the family of Mr. C. B. in Mill Town, Maine, was taken ill with what was diagnosed as scarlet fever. A local regular doctor was called in and the individual died within thirty-six hours. Burke was called to attend the next seven victims, all of whom got well. Nevertheless, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes accused the Thomsonian of having killed all eight patients when, in truth, he cured seven, and the eighth died at the hands of a regular physician.

DERRY DOWN

A person was sick, (as persons oft are,)  
His brain full of fancies--his heart full of care--  
His head ach'd--his body--his legs and his shins;  
He and pain had tack'd to, like the Siamese Twins.  
With a doleful drawl, he says, "wife I am sick,"  
Let a doctor be sent for, in haste--so be quick!  
If this turns to fever, I'll have a long run,  
And spend all my cash ere the half of its done.  
What doctor dost want, now, my love, says the wife,  
I wish much to please you, and save your dear life;  
There's mineral, mongrel, and steam, and of root  
With all my endeavor to serve you to boot.  
Lord, wife, pray be still, or of fear I shall die!  
Do you think I ought else than a mineral would try  
His lancet, pills, powders, and blisters I deem  
To be more efficacious than puking and steam.  
To H***** sXCV then the messenger send,--let him fly--  
Say--doctor be instant--perhaps he may die;  
Your porte feuille you'll bring, loaded with quantum suff  
To poison, and blister, and bleed him enough.  
In haste he arrives--both your servant, says he--  
You're sick, and ought sooner have sent, for me,  
Such complicate maladies need instant aid,  
And, are jumbled in so, that you'll die, I'm afraid.  
Let me see--you've some fever, cough, pain in each side  
That's pleurisy, and sir, lung fever beside  
You're rheumatic, brain fever'd, (and costive 'tis said,)  
On the broad of your back for some months you'll be laid.  
Two pints were first drawn of the ninmy's life--blood,  
And an ill fasten'd bandage increas'd much the flood,
Three emplastric canthasis on sides and the chest,  
three bole' by draget opi to digest!  
And balsam of life, life and cough to set free,  
Veri colehici-antimon.--digital leaf--  
From Pandoras' box he soon sought out the chief.  
Long and painful the strife was, by quacking and death,  
To quiet poor nature and stop the man's breath  
By puking or purging life tugg'd out the while,  
But fainter she grew by his murdering style.  
At length, saith the doctor, with a phiz a yard long,  
"You've taken more stuff than might kill many strong;  
And, yet, in despite of my poisoning strife,  
Disease still holds out, and still threatens your life."  
"I've strove to reduce you--to change your disease,  
Yes,--bled, blistered, poisoned, and brought you no ease.  
I've done, sir, my best, and--must now say, that I  
Must leave you, in quiet, sir, surely to die."  
The doctor made exit with gracious congee,  
Assur'd, that, from him, none could get one poor fee,  
But, madam had heard, a Thomsonian could cure,  
And, begg'd her dear consort his course to endure.  
"Why, love, I admit that I'm now doom'd to die,  
And just to please you, I am willing to try,  
But though I am dying, my dear, I'll maintain,  
If I die in his hands, he--has killed me again!"  
The Thomsonian came, and he cur'd him quite soon;  
Six more in his house, too, ere fill'd the next moon;  
But though he cur'd seven, (so hard was his fate,)  
The M.D. reported that he had kill'd eight!

(Francis Burke) xcvi
Chapter 6

Thomson's Agents and Editors

In 1818, Dr. Samuel Thomson moved his office and depot to Devonshire Street in Boston in order to better manage his business affairs. Over the subsequent years, he faced the task of protecting his multi-state enterprise against bogus agents, the sale of unauthorized medicines, and the misuse of his name. First with John Locke, then Elias Smith, and later with Eleazer G. House, Charles Miles, David Rogers, Horton Howard, and Aaron Dow, to name only a few, he tried unsuccessfully to find suitable agents for his expanding enterprise. Thomson even became convinced that his agents had joined in a Masonry conspiracy against him. Thomson filed suit against many of his agents, former agents, and bogus agents to prevent their trespassing on his patent and what he believed to be protected by federal law. Many of his claims were successful, and over a period of several decades, tons of unauthorized medicines were confiscated and thousands of counterfeit books were seized for copyright violations. In some instances, however, his efforts proved fruitless and he could only content himself with printed announcements listing all authorized and unauthorized agents known to him.

Nathaniel S. Magoon was an unauthorized agent who, with his partner Hosea Winchester, owned a four-story medicine store and infirmary at 554 Washington Street in Boston advertising the sale of patent-rights and genuine Thomsonian medicines. The following poem, written by Thomson, attacks Magoon for setting up a gull-trap on the unwary public. Thomson eventually filed suit against Magoon. In settling their differences, however, Thomson recognized the strength that Magoon brought to the enterprise and agreed to terms that soon resulted in Magoon becoming his general agent. Magoon remained with Thomson, and with the latter's death in 1843, acquired control of what remained of Thomson's business interests, including the
Thomsonian Manual, the movement's official magazine.

A PORTRAIT OF THE CHARACTER OF
MISTER NATHANIEL S. MAGOON

Nat. S. Magoon,
Like to the Moon,
Doth sev'ral faces [phases] show;
But said Magoon,
Unlike the Moon,
A "Gull-Trap" sign,
So large and fine,—
His large and sightly place,—
Are by this wretch,
Design'd to catch,
The sick and honest face.

At fifty-four,—
Five hundred more,—
Washington-street he dwells;
Ground chips and bugs,
With filthy drugs,
And stinking myrrh he sells.

Electric shocks,
To feeble folks,
This old impostor gives;—
Daubs liniment,
Of stinking scent,
And by deception lives.

Physic and pills,
This old quack fills,
Into his patients' throats;—
Palavers loud,
And tells the crowd,
His brain in science floats.

Nat. in disgrace,
Show'd Thomson's face,
To Messrs. Sargent--Coombs;
This string did pull,
To catch a gull,
To take one of his rooms.
His own *mean* face,
    With a sad grace,
He afterwards did show;
    They did despise,
His low-bred lies,
    And from his "trap" did go.

Let *Doctor* Nat
    Come out--say that
He ne'er show'd Thomson's face;--
    Or like a snail,
Draw in his tail
    And head, in deep disgrace.

This old quack, he
    Would Agent be,
Since Thomson did expose,
    And on him fix,
Those knavish tricks,
    The truth of which he knows.

His daughters fair,
    And sons, too, are
Quite far from being bad;
    A pity quite,
Such children bright
    Have such an ugly dad.

Unto his wife,xcvii
    Of virtuous life,
Who doth from fraud dissent;
    He's cross--severe,
And quite austere,
    Since he her cash has spent.

His drugs, so rare,
    All mortgaged are,
His furniture the same;
    His wife--too bad,
Some thousands had,
    Which Nat. has spent in vain.

An honest man,
    *Squire* Nat. took in,
As partner in his shop;
    At two months' word,
From Mister Ward,
Agreed to cash his stock.

Six months have pass'd,
Since Ward has ask'd,
Fulfillment of his claim;
But Nat. his word,
Doth not regard,--
He falsifies the same.

Squire Nat. agreed,--
A contract made,
His "Gull-Trap" to let out;
Infirmary,
'T was then to be,
And gulling all left out.

A writing drawn,
Nat. said he'd sign--
The man moved in straightway;
But Nat. "funk'd out,"
And lied so stout,
The man soon moved away.

This gull-trap Nat.,
Did once tell that,
He'd been "a country squire";
A noted man,--
did Justice scan,--
From office did retire.

If Magistrate,
As he doth state,
He formerly had been;
There is no doubt,
He was kick'd out
Of office, for his sin.

Ye ladies fair,
Of Nat. beware,--
Repulse his foul embrace;
Let him not kiss,
But at him hiss,
And thus escape disgrace.

Like William Platt,xcviii
Squire, Doctor Nat.,
To justice should be brought;
And all his crimes,
Wrote down in rhymes,
Till Justice he is taught.

(OONE WHO HAS BEEN GULLED) xcix

This poem likewise refers to Nathaniel Magoon, his partner Hosea Winchester, and Samuel B. Emmons, whose 176-page *The Vegetable Family Physician* (1836) listed 112 different vegetable medicines supported by their depot in Boston. Emmons intended his publication to be a domestic handbook unaffiliated with any specific system or philosophy. He avoided theory altogether, except for the proposition that botanic medicines were superior and less harsh than mineral drugs, and provided useful and inexpensive recipes for common maladies. Published at the height of the Thomsonian movement, the book evidenced the continuation of the botanic tradition in the United States that had both preceded and paralleled Thomsonism.

THE TRIUMVIRATE

Come, lend an ear, and you shall hear
Events of wond'rous weight, sir;
If me you doubt--before I'm out--
The rest I'll not relate, sir.

A man did rise, for *brushing flies*,
To medicating *pukes*, sir;
And to proclaim his own great fame,
Forsooth, he must have books, sir.--

To gull public, requir'd "classic"
And learned gentlemen, sir;--
These, 'tis alleg'd, were quickly pledg'd
To wield with power the pen, sir.

The work began by this great man,
Did "natives" quite astound, sir;
The two did write, both day and night--
The third, medicines ground, sir.

One of the three--"Catch-penny" he--
A "Botany" would write, sir:
Though twice they say, he's receiv'd pay,
Yet brought forth naught to light, sir.

A second man, of this great clan,
Is full of learned lore, sir:
At any rate, so says his mate--
The one "what" keeps the store, sir.

Third in this late triumvirate--
Though first in order--ranks, sir,
The great man, who, months past but few,
Knew less of pukes than shanks, sir--

He does now boast "himself a host"
In making medicine, sir:
And defies all, "both great and small,"
To match him in this line, sir.

That all may know where's the "Depot,"
He's signs both red and large, sir;
And those who'd shun, 'may read and run'--
Or stomachs he'll discharge, sir.

Wherein there's blame--another's name
Is used, repute to gain, sir;--
And yet they say, from day to day,
"We're honest, fair, humane," sir.

I've sung my song, so "jim along"--
But think of these "small fry," sir--
The man of books, and he of pukes,
And likewise "Botany," sir.

(Sprig)³

Thomson wrote this next poem (including the footnotes) to explain his accusations against former agent Aaron Dow who opened an medicine store and infirmary on Brattle Street
in Boston. At the time of the store's opening, Dow signed a bond promising to purchase all of his medicines from Thomson or his legally authorized agent. Dow then proceeded to purchase non-authorized medicines, and according to critics, "milked" patients attending his infirmary. By the time Thomson uncovered the scheme, Dow had disappeared, leaving his partner and attorney with little more than empty promises and unpaid bills.

**DOGGEREL VERSES: A PARAPHRASE ON A CHAPTER IN HISTORY--OR, A COMPEND OF THE HISTORY OF MR. AARON DOW**

A few years since--O! shame--disgrace!  
A *petty Broker* kept a place,  
In Fed'ral-street, I vow;  
Young men and girls who sought employ,  
Into his place he did decoy;  
His *name* was Aaron Dow.

*Intelligence* he promis'd all,  
Who at his *office*, there, would call--  
A dollar pay--or more;  
When he their money had obtain'd,  
He has them sev'ral days detain'd  
To tramp the city 'oer.

But oftentimes they did obtain,  
Naught but their labor for their pain,--  
And then return to Dow  
And ask of him their cash again.  
But Dow would say, in language plain,  
"I'll keep the cash, I vow."

At length he found, unto his cost,  
Most of his business he had lost,--  
Young men did him despise;  
Young *ladies*, too, did pass him by,  
And, with young men, join in the cry--  
"The smooth-tongued scoundrel lies."

And when he could no longer live,--  
As few would him a dollar give,  
For being fool'd outright;
To play new tricks he did presume--
   A Doctor's name did then assume,
   And in these tricks delight.

At number ninety, Fed'ral-street,
A house he took the sick to greet,
   And show his famous skill;
His blunders soon his fame did damp,--
His former dupes, cried--"Flee the scamp,"
   Which did his business skill.

To Newburyport he soon did post--
Did puff himself, and loudly boast,
   "No Doctor great as I;
I am great Doctor Aaron Dow,--
I'll cure you all- I'll cure you now,
   If you'll to me apply."civ

With mighty zeal, he undertook,
To write down all the regular flock
   Of old physicians there;
But their retorts, and satire keen,
(as from his movements may be seen,)
   Made Doctor Aaron stare.

The odds against him were so strong,
He found he could not get along,--
   His patients him forsook;
When eighteen months were pass'd and gone,
He back to Boston, then did come,
   And a large house he took.

He still continued loud to boast--
   Himself the theme of ev'ry toast,
   Which did escape his pen;
His patients suffer'd from neglect--
When they good treatment did expect,
   They have insulted been.

His honest debts he will not pay,--
   Unto his creditors doth say,
   "I'm out of money quite;"
When in his pocket, then he had,
Enough to pay the debt--too bad;
   To cheat, is his delight.
A poor young girl, who work'd for him,  
And kept his household in good trim,  
Her wages could not get;  

*Ten dollars* due\(^{cvi}\)--away she went,--  
He swore he would not pay a cent,--  
She *sued* him for the debt.

As Doctor Thomson's Agent--he  
A *bond* had sign'd, to faithful be\(^{cvi}\)  
Unto the Doctor's views;  
His med'cines all, both wet and dry,  
Agreed of Thomson for to buy,  
And not his trust abuse.

Of Thomson he did oft make sport--  
He trespass'd much in Newb'ryport--  
Deception was his trade;  
In Brattle-street, he did the same--  
Sold med'cines in S. Thomson's name,  
Which he himself had made.

He Thomson owed, in point of right,  
A debt of seventy dollars quite--  
He swore he'd never pay;  
But wish'd the debt *five times as large*,  
And which he never would discharge;  
He'd sooner run away.

A lot of med'cine he'd on hand,  
On which was plac'd "Thomsonian" brand,  
(Prepar'd by 'Aaron Dow.')  
Of this he gave a 'Bill of Sale,'  
To cheat the Doctor without fail,  
Then bragg'd--"I've fix'd him now."\(^{cvii}\)

Stop, Mister Dow--not quite so fast--  
For Thomson has nabb'd you at last,--  
And well-secur'd his debt;  
The med'cine was in Lowell found,  
All snugly stor'd below the ground,--  
So don't your gizzard fret.

Now, to conclude, friend Aaron Dow,  
I would advise you after now,  
To be an *honest* man;  
With candor your past life review,
O! virtue seek, and truth pursue,
And justice ever scan.

(An Observer)cviii

The next two poems were written by the Rev. Dr. William Henry Fonerden of Philadelphia, one of Thomson's more stalwart agents during the heyday of the Thomsonian movement. Both poems celebrate Thomson's birthday. Fonerden eventually joined the faculty of the Southern Botanico-Medical School (founded 1839) situated first in Forsyth, and later in Macon, Georgia. Until its takeover in 1854 by those advocating a more eclectic (liberal) medical philosophy, the college remained a bastion of Thomsonian thinking. Unfortunately for Fonerden, he was fired for threatening to prevent students from graduating unless they took private instruction.

AN ANNIVERSARY ODE FOR DR. SAM'L THOMSON'S BIRTH-DAY

What flag is that floats on the Granite State's height,
Its folds in the breeze now so gracefully streaming,
While far' er the heavens, the silvery light,
Of a diamond-like star, insulated, is gleaming?
The tyrant, Disease, when its motto he sees,
Lets fall his barb'd arrow, and coward-like flees,
'Tis the banner of Thomson,—O long may it wave,
In triumph over death, and the gloom of the grave!

Say, whither so these,—the afflicted and wan,—
With hearts on which sorrow hath graven deep traces?
For them hath no son of relief ever shone?
Hath science no remedy sickness that chases?
Then whither go these worn down by disease,
Their eyes dim and lustreless, trembling their knees?
To the banner of Thomson,—O long may it wave,
In triumph o'er death and the gloom of the grave.

Behold where it flutters as the' eagle for flight
Just ready, and pluming his sky-cleaving pinions,
Its motto emblazon'd in letters of light,—
"Reform co-extensive with earth's wide dominions!"
That motto's in sooth, the war cry of truth,
And birth-note of freedom to age and to youth,
'Tis the banner of Thomson,--O long may it wave,
In triumph o'er death, and the gloom of the grave.

Then join we the 'larum, with trumpet's deep tongue
Against the fell evils of medical error;
Till he, from his throne of security flung,
Shall flee, as if flying the thunder peal's terror;
Our eye let us cast, while the struggle shall last,
And e'en when the loud burst of victory's past,
On the banner of Thomson,--O long may it wave,
In triumph o'er death, and the gloom of the grave.

Long, long as we hail the return of this day,
(Old Time of our progress e'er keeping strict tally,)
A tribute of gratitude yearly we'll pay,
While round the firm standard of Thomson we'll rally.
We'll bless the glad morn, on which he was born,
And medical science of mystery shorn.
By the banner of Thomson, O long may it wave,
In triumph o'er death, and the gloom of the grave.

(William H. Fonderden) cix

UNTITLED
(sung to "Hail Columbia")

Hail, New Hampshire! glory fills
All thy vallies, all thy hills!
Like Boreal flames reflected forth,
It sheds its light o'er wintry North,
And East and West, and Sunny South,
As with one mind, one heart, one mouth,
In chorus join'd, the welkin rend,
As high their lofty notes ascend.
In noble anthems all proclaim
Thy glory in thy THOMSON's fame;
For Columbia as her son,
Claims New Hampshire's honor'd one;
And in sweet, seraphic lay,
Celebrates his natal day.
Join we then the hallow'd strain!
'Tis Hygeia's blissful reign!
Her figure, dazzling as her throne,
Encircled with a golden zone,
Is faultless as Jove's queenly wife,
And redolent of health and life.
Her spreading kingdom boundless grows,
And is the tide of human woes;
And where a shade her sceptre flings,
Sweet music floats, and thus she sings:

Now Columbia &c.

Why that burst of melody?
'Tis to note the Jubilee
Of freedom from dark Error's chain,--
Its rust pains food, and pleasure's bane,--
From fell disease, from ghastly death,
And from the grave's malarious breath.
Another year hath sped afar,
Yet in its zenith, Thomson's star,
Although that year is past and gone,
Shines brightly as it ere hath done;

Still Columbia, &c.

Hail, IMMORTAL CHILD OF FAME!
Long we'll wear thy matchless name,
Secreted in our inmost heart,
Till of his keen, envenom'd dart,
The sacred, talismanic charm,
Shall every foe of life disarm;
Till age the only outlet be
From time to dread eternity;
And when Atropos cuts the thread,
That holds thee from thy kindred dead,
May Columbia as her son,
Claim New Hampshire's honor'd one,
And in sweet, seraphic lay,
Celebrate thy natal day.

(William H. Fonerden)
Thomas Hersey, of Columbus, Ohio, was one of the earliest settlers in Ohio, and practiced medicine as a regular for more than forty years, including surgery in the United States Army during the War of 1812. In 1826, at age sixty, he turned to Thomsonism and practiced botanic medicine until his death ten years later. Although Hersey eventually repudiated Thomsonism and advocated the union of all botanic reform groups, his most noteworthy service to Thomsonism was his work as senior editor of the *Thomsonian Recorder* which began publication in Columbus in September 1832 under the general proprietorship of Pike, Platt, and Company, general agents for Thomson in the West. Devoted exclusively to the diffusion of the Thomsonian system, the magazine was published with the approval and support of Samuel Thomson to counteract the influence of former agent and later rival, Horton Howard, and his "improved" system of botanic medicine.

**UNTITLED**

The grave, though silent, can instruction give!  
Disease has thousands slain; ten thousands Art,  
(Falsely so nam'd,) has hurried to the grave!  
Merc'ry, the bane of life, is crowded down  
the infant throat, as if 't were healing balm!  
Custom has led the way, and book-worms crawl  
Along the beaten track, nor once suspect  
The show of wisdom folly has contriv'd.  
Blind!--Leaders of the blind! lift up your eyes  
And seek for light, that leads from ruin's brink!  
Your Calomel, and all your deadly drugs, reject!  
The world is wakening round you! Botanic  
Doctors (sounding the majesty of truth)  
Gain ground: the mercurial craft declines!  
Thick darkness flies before Thomsonian light,  
Bursting in glory on a long benighted world!  

(Dr. Thomas Hersey)\textsuperscript{cxi}
Attributed to Alva Curtis, founder of the Botanico-Medical College of Cincinnati and editor of the *Physio-Medical Recorder* (formerly the *Thomsonian Recorder* and then the *Botanico-Medical Recorder*) this poem was actually penned by another. The editor, however, noted that the sentiments were so much like his own that he was willing to claim it.

**THE REFORMER**

CALM, and earnest, and unshrinking,  
In his study, lone and still.
Sat the great Reformer, thinking  
Of the past, and promise drinking  
of the future's good and ill.

Mild of mien, but strong of spirit,  
He had scorned deceptive arts;  
Fashion swayed him less than merit,  
And the fame he would inherit  
Was the love of honest hearts.

He had met the world's derision,  
But he yielded not to fear;  
For the soul-inspiring vision  
Of the future's bright elysian,  
Filled his noble heart with cheer.

What to him were idle praises  
At the sacrifice of right?  
What were fortune's ruddy blazes,  
Or the thrones which triumph raises,  
Coming with a ban and blight?

As imagination bore him  
Through the flight of future years,  
Doubt and error fled before him,  
And a halo circled o'er him,  
Bright as Heaven's arched bow appears.

Perfect freedom of opinion  
Blessed the glorious coming time;  
Virtue held supreme dominion,  
And fair Truth, on airy pinion,  
Traced in majesty sublime.
Thus, comparing past and present
   With the future's destiny,
Hope still made his pathway pleasant,
And he sheltered king and peasant
   With his broad philanthropy.

And at each successive viewing
   Of the shifting scenes of life,
He was ardently pursuing
Truth and goodness, and renewing
Strength to conquer in the strife.

(Alva Curtis)cxii

Written by the editor of the _Thomsonian Manual_, this poem hails the founder of the botanical medical system, singing his praises and claiming his victory over death.

**UNTITLED**

While others sing of strife and war
And hail the banner streaming high,
Urge on fierce horror's bloody car,
And shout as millions useless die--
Be mine to plead the cause of life,
And hail, with patriot's warmest breath,
The victor o'er diseases' strife,
Thomson triumphant over Death!
His hand has plucked, his skill prepared
The plants by which our lives are spared!

Herbs of the field! how Eden bright,
Compared with metals wrought by fire,
   Ye are the day--and they the night;
Ye angel's love--they demon's ire--
Hail! matchless system--"one disease,"
One means to help, support and cure,
With nature's simple, matchless ease
Thou heal'st, and ever must endure'
Eden shall lose her mystic tree
Ere Thomson's name shall cease to be.

I see health's banner streaming high,
I hear the shouts of youth afar,
Beneath a pure, and cloudless sky,
And lovely maidens sporting there;
Fathers, and mothers; children, friends;
Sisters, and brothers; lovers dear;
Gather where yon bright meteor bends,
Their joyful shouts the welkin cheer;
His hand the electric cloud prepares
And to the lips life's nectar bears.

They sing--"Come learn the healing art,
Of healing nature in distress,
To fill with joy the mother's heart;
To gardens turn a wilderness;
Come see the plastic hand of love,
Draw back the curtains of disease;
And pour as seraph from above,
A Pure and precious, heavenly breeze;
Disease, the monster, flies afar,
As night 'fore morning's rising star.
Eden shall lose her mystic tree,
Ere Thomson's name shall cease to be."

(Editor)cxiii

O. B. Lyman, editor and publisher of the Thomsonian Messenger in Norwich, Connecticut, explains the full measure of Thomson's contributions and fame in these next several poems.

RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE THOMSONIAN SYSTEM

Awake! my muse, aloud proclaim the birth
Of such a system, as gives joy on earth;
A system, which, perfects the healing art,
In spite of every Paracelcian dart.
In vain have toiled, past ages, to improve
A baseless fabric, and the dross remove;
From Hippocrates, to modern men,
Systems have flourished and forgotten been.
Three thousand years with learning, pow'r, and might
They groped in darkness, sought in vain for light,
Guess'd and conjectured, experimented bold,
Yet, after all, their practice evil told.
In spite of pop’lar, theoretic skill,
Their best of poisons, would incline to kill,
Till SAMUEL THOMSON, like a morning star,
Rose and proclaim’d that “break of day” was near;
Shed forth his beams--his glorious course begun--
Soon usher’d in a brightness, like the sun!
Mark how the infant system, small at birth,
Sprang, as a grain of mustard from the earth;
And spread its healing branches far and wide,
In spite of Envy, Malice, Fashion, Pride.
Behold the rankling in the breasts of those
Whose interests prompt them, fiercely to oppose;
With firey anger, coursing in their veins,
Behold them seize, and bind the man in chains,
Into a vile and loathsome dungeon cast
The object of their hot, vindictive wrath.
At length, kind Heaven saw fit to interpose,
And freed the captive from his hellish foes.
Now, boldly on his philanthropic course,
Behold, he marches with increasing force.
All mystery his open heart disdains,
And scorns the mind wherein deception reigns.
With giant strength, his remedies subdue
Raging disease, and renovate anew.
The glad news spread, swift, as on eagle’s wings,
His honest fame from Maine to Georgia rings;
Alarmed at this, the sheepskin order rise,
With wrath and vengeance sparkling in their eyes,
Like paupers, flock around the chair of state,
And beg for laws to make them only great.
Thus, were they made a privileged class indeed,
And so by law, could blister, cup and bleed;
The “loaves and fishes” made to them secure,
They thought that Thomson could not well endure.
Undaunted yet, his master spirit braves
The mighty storm o’er opposition’s waves.
To Washington, behold, he quickly flies,
And makes secure his new discoveries.
Once more protected by his country’s laws
He re-engages in the humane cause;
His patients, like “a certain man who fell
’Mong thieves,” were left “half dead” by calomel;
Samaritan like, he heals their poisonous wounds,
Restores their health on philosophic grounds;
The eye of envy, green with foul deceit,
Now lays in wait a chance to counterfeit.
False friends spring up with hypocritic face--
   Run well awhile, turn traitor with a grace,
And fain would rob him of his hard-earned fame--
   And in oblivion hide his cherished name.
Thank heaven, in spite of all these powers combined,
   His watchful eye and penetrating mind
Their base designs have thwarted, with success
   Yet lives his system, sorrow's sons to bless.
Long may it live, the cherished name to bear
Of him, whose skill has dried up many a tear;
   Let honest men false titles all forsake,
The term “Thomsonian” plainly let them speak;
   Pure to posterity be it handed down,
As in Columbia’s soil it first was sown;
And, then, will generations yet to come,
   Hold dear a Thomson as a Washington.

(O. B. Lyman)

MEDICAL POISON

   Medical poison!--scientific expression!
Coin'd by an ancient, ir-regular profession;
   How vague is the sense, how pregnant with evil,
As well the term Saint might we give to the devil.

   Medical poison!--it's a base imposition,
To feed to the sick to improve their condition.
No wonder frail Nature sinks under the curse,
   When than the disease the remedy's worse.

   Medical poison!--death lurks in the sentence--
Like Ignus-Fatus it's unworthy of credence;
   It flatters so charming from danger to save,
That seldom its victim escapes from the grave.

   Medical poison!--many graves does it open;
Could the tenants be heard, a tale would be spok'n
   More shocking by far than the annals of war,
More cruel and savage than cannibals are,

   Medical poison!--do the doctor's oft use it
When sickness o'ertakes them? No! seldom they choose it.
Its effects they well know, and fear the "good creature,"
Preferring to trust to the efforts of nature.

Medical poison!--would I use it? No, never;
I'd prefer my Cayenne and Lobelia forever.
Let the faculty rage, and spitefully winch,
But let them not poison, or kill by the inch.

(O. B. Lyman)cxvi

UNTITLED

Stern winter is pass'd, its scenes are now o'er,
Mild spring a visit has paid us once more,
All nature is smiling most lovely and sweet,
And seems, with a kiss, kind summer to greet.
The showers oft falling refreshing and warm,
We have in exchange for the driving snowstorm,
Yea, Sol in his glory sheds down his bless'd beams,
With vigor and life creation now teems.
The buds have expanded with fragrance full press'd,
And caused in rich fragrance the groves to be dress'd;
The earth in her robes of green herbage we view,
All crowned with fresh garlands of every hue.
The flocks and the herds, o'er valley and hill,
Now ramble as free as the murmuring rill,
While the warblers of air in unison raise
To their Author, sweet notes of heaven-born praise.
Come, then, let us go to the wood-lands and fields,
And glean from the foliage and herbage each yields,
Such balms as will truly our maladies heal,
And leave not a taint, such as poisons conceal.
The roots and the barks, the herbs and the flowers,
Are fragrant with true medicinal powers;
Then why so indifferent, come let us explore
The kingdom of plants--examine their power,
Select and procure the safest and best
For the aid of frail nature when sick and oppress'd.
Alas! for vain man, how prone to invent
Such schemes as will cause him at length to repent;
To the mineral kingdom behold him repair,
And search for the deadliest articles there.
For what?--when he's sick to poison him well?
Or, weary of life, to the vis vitae quell?
Strange logic indeed, if to heal with true skill,
We must deal in those things most certain to kill!
Yet strange as it is, its fashion to bleed,
On Calomel, Opium, and Blue-pill to feed;
Yea, to scarify, blister, cup, and to physic
For fevers and chills, consumptions and phthisic.
A question with candor now let me propose--
Prevent a disorder will agents like those?
Let reason and judgment sincerely decide,
Unbiased by prejudice, fashion, or pride.

(O. B. Lyman)cxvii

THE HEALING REMEDIES

Hark! o’er Hampshire’s granite hills
Echo brings the joyful sound,
For mankind’s distress and ills,
Lo, a certain balm is found.

THOMSON, Nature’s noble son,
Now proclaims before the world--
“The work is o’er--the victor’s won,
Health’s true banners are unfurl’d.”

On his head Lobelia blooms,
Nature’s true, unchanging friend;
In his hands Cayenne assumes
Powers designed with life to blend.

Bayberry, next in rank, will scour
Canker from its lurking place,
Steam relaxes every pore,
Form her disease will flee apace.

Bitters now the work completes,
Strength returns to every part--
The invalid now comes forth to greet
Friends anew with grateful heart.

Mark his brow with gladness crown’d,
Since he ‘scape[d] from “learned fools;”
Hear him say to all around,

“Try Dr. Thomson’s code of rules;--

Fear ye not, no poison’s there
To corrupt the stream of life;
No, nor lance, nor blood to spare--
Purify without the knife.”

Glorious system! let it spread
Far and wide, thro’ every clime--
May its brave and honor’d head
Live to see that blessed time;--

Live to see the monster driven
Into dark oblivion’s shade--
When his chains will not be riven--
When his work of death is staid.

(O. B. Lyman)cxviii

CALOMEL

What a hydra-headed monster!
Language fails to paint or tell
Half the ills that daily cumber
Man, from use of *Calomel.*
Health destroyer--happiness spoiler--
Dropsy maker--sick man's bane;
Stomach retcher--misery fetcher--
Blood corrupter--source of pain.
Eruption breeder--pimple feeder--
Skin defacer--beauty's foe--
Nerve unstringer--vital stinger--
Muscle waster--source of woe.
Bone upsetter--palsy getter--
Ulcer causer--corruption's friend--
Bowell trotter--liver rotter--
Pain producer, without end.
Tooth decayer--gum diseaser--
Palate eater--canker's source--
Tongue enlarger--saliva pois'ner--
Brain inflamer--*death by force!*
Whilst they with envy sneer at all we do,
Truth still protects and safely bears us thro--
Truth, like a rock, withstands o'erwhelming waves,
And brighter shines, in spite of hungry knaves;
What though they boast, and publicly declare,
That we poor quacks cannot with them compare,
That they much time in colleges have spent,
To gain their sheepskin and be competent
To Blister, bleed, mercuralize, and starve
Scores of their patients to an early grave;
What though they fein would make the world believe
That o'er our quackery they greatly grieve.
That in their hearts, for the dear people dwell,
Cares for their safety, which no tongue can tell;
That for their sakes unto the law they've flown,
Implored protection, till it had favor shown:
Go ask of invalids--they've not a few--
Who to good health have long since bid adieu;
With palsied limbs, and toothless gums they groan,
And curse the day that Calomel was known,
Detest the use of mineral poisons all,
And long to see the Paracelcians fall.

(O. B. Lyman)
Chapter 7

Acrostics

The acrostic, popular in the ante-bellum period, was a verse or arrangement of words in which certain letters in each line, such as the first or last, spelled out a word or phrase. The following were dedicated to Samuel Thomson and Alva Curtis.

ACROSTIC ON SAMUEL THOMSON

S ince I have studied nature's laws,
A nd firmly followed up my plan--
M adly have raged my enemies,
U njust and cruel have they been.
E ach one and all, how prejudiced--
L ike Ogg of Bashan, all are bent--
T hey'd make me to their size conform,
H ow much their malice thus they vent.
O , what a selfish set they are--
M y life, it seems, they e'en would take;
S harp sythes they did for me prepare--
O n me the instrument they dare,
N or did they bad aim take.

(Dr. Samuel Thomson)cxxi

TO DR. SAMUEL THOMSON

S AMUEL THOMSON, Nature's son,
A noble vict'ry thou hast won;
M idst all the threats from min'ral hives,
U nletter'd Thomson's system thrives:--
E 'en spite of lies, which quacks do vend.
L obelia stands as man's best friend.
Though quacks do bleed and poison men,
How you restore, with good Cayenne:--
O! how sublime, your native theme:--
Much fame surrounds Thomsonian steam.
Science, as taught by learned fools,
On human lives doth sharp its tools;--
Nor or doth abate its cruel course,

But with the advance of Thomson's force,
Of ft have learn'd quacks and foes oppress'd
Their forces join'd, your rights to wrest;
And laws obtain'd quite plain--direct--
No Botanist shall debts collect,"
In vain have they their malice tried--
Samuel still lives--a healthy guide;--
Theomsonian System's spreading wide.

(Stephen F. Fowler)cxvii

AN ACROSTIC

Mankind have tried a thousand various arts,
Intent on warding off death's fatal darts;
Nor have they yielded to fair reason's force,
Experience, fact, the sure, inductive course.
Research untired thro' nature's kingdoms went,
And deathful agents from Earth's bosom rent.
Lo, brought from thence, our maladies to heal,
Potent and fierce, the ores whose curse we feel!
Of which we see th' inestimable gains,
In fever, useless limbs, and racking pains.
Shall we much longer the foul sight endure,
Of things so fit to kill, displayed to cure?
No: let the sick try nature's gentler ways:
So shall their joyous health speak THOMSON's praise.

(J. H. G.)cxviii
SAMUEL THOMSON, AND LOBELIA, CAYENNE

S ternly arose new England's star,
A nd cast its radiance far and near;
M yriads saw it from the afar,
U rivalled in its bless'd career.
E urope does not its beauties scorn,
L ands far and near will spread its fame:--

T housands and millions, yet unborn,
H igh raise their voice to bless thy name.
O h! bless'd has been New England's soil!
M uch in thy bounds, has freedom done,
S orley did she the tyrant foil,
O n Bunker's heights and Lexington.
N o land but ours, upon this earth.

A Franklin, Adams, Hancock, boast.
N eed I more name? --our Thomson's worth
D oes equal any of that host.

L oud were the cries, and dark, yet weak
C ontrived their waning power to win,
O f those who'd but self-interest seek,
A nd poisons gave as medicine.
B ut Thomson answered this their cries,
Y our system's wrong, your cries are vain,
E xperience false of centuries flies,
E ven dies, to ease mankind of pain.
L o! I have found an herb whose power
N o man of wit or learning knew:--
I ts worth to save from painful hour,
N ot half could e'er be told to you;
A nd with it link'd some hundreds more:--
E ternal source of good to man.

And hard 'twill be to triumph o'er
Thomson, Lobelia, and Cayenne.

(A Yankee)ccxiv
ACROSTIC ON LOBELIA

L et learned quacks their skill display,
O r strive to drive this friend away;
B e well assured of what I say;
E xperience for a term of years,
L ets light and truth to eyes and ears;
I t has done wonders and must find,
A welcome to the honest mind.

(H. N. W.)

UNTITLED

D rive back with proud distain,
R emove from nature's son,
S uch slander as would stain
A ught of his glory won.
M ankind should own him dear,
U nlearned though he was,
E ngage for him to rear
L ife's glowing monuments;
T ake marble, strong and white,
H igh in the open air,
O n some tall mountain height,
M ake there a statue fair;
P ut on your sackcloth now,
S it in your mourning too,
O r make a solemn vow
N o calomel you'll chew.

(Jesse Green)

ACROSTIC ON ALVA CURTIS

A man of Persevering mind,
L obelia's friend you will him find,
V irtue and courage mark his way
A gainst old Mercury's death-like sway.
Cannot to poison's armies yield,
Until he drives them from the field.
Rush forward then, and tumble down,
The poison factories all around;
In ruin let them always stay,
Since you do show a better way.

(J. B. S.)cxxvii
Chapter 8

Miscellaneous

The anonymous author of this poem captures the pride of the students and faculty of the Botanico-Medical College in Cincinnati. Alva Curtis started his medical career as one of Thomson's more successful agents, but broke with him in 1838. Having acquired a following of his own, Curtis saw himself as a leader rather than a follower of the botanic movement. Thomson's anti-intellectualism and authoritarianism had become an embarrassment to the rising expectations of agents like Curtis. In 1836, Curtis began instructing students at his home under the name of the Botanico-Medical School of Columbus. On March 9, 1839, Curtis obtained a charter for the Literary and Botanico-Medical Institute of Ohio as a means of encouraging a more liberal botanic medicine than found in Thomson's strict patented system. His efforts were in direct opposition to Thomson and led to a schism among the Thomsonians, with Curtis among the leaders of the so-called Independent Thomsonians.

OUR INSTITUTION

The Botanico-Medical College--
The centre of medical truth;
May it prosper, forever unsullied,
As now in its primitive youth.

The Botanico-Medical College--
The beacon of medical light,
Grows brighter, and brighter, with knowledge
Of medical truth, in its might.

May it prosper, and flourish forever,
And carry all truth in its wake.
Itself, it from error did sever:
And used up old doctor D. Drake

May its students reflect, and remember,
The truth all their life long to cherish.
Contend for the right, now and ever;
And error (not truth) then shall perish.

Long live our much honored Professors;
Our thanks for what they have now done;
May they ever continue to foster
What they have so nobly begun.

And may a wise public still aid them,
Till truth, ever radiant and bright,
Dispel like the beams of the morning,
The darkness of medical night.

(Anonymous)
Of all the writers on hygiene and diet, Curtis credited Sylvester Graham as demonstrating the soundest principles and practices. "We found more to approve and less to condemn, than in any other class of writings," observed the editor. Although Curtis did not support the bran bread and saw-dust puddings recommended by the Grahamites, he did recommend bread made from ground and unbolted wheat as more wholesome than the hot buttered lard cakes, fat meats, and gravies popular in the day. As for phrenology, or the new science of the brain, Curtis believed that its claims should be "severely tested." If it professed to teach error, then let it be rejected, but "not before, but after trial." Grantham wrote Alva Curtis that the following poem had been suggested to him by a "tramping lecturer on mesmerism."

UNTITLED

--Physicians' eyes are opened too,
And marvelous things are brought to view,
      Since rosy health is realized
      By simply being mesmerized.

      The tailor's goose is laid aside,
      He steps around in conscious pride,
      Declares the fact with some surprise,
      That he himself can mesmerize.

      The Merchant too, is on tiptoe,
      Since mesmerism's all the go,
      From place to place he quickly flies,
      Asserting he can mesmerize.

      In short, you scarcely meet a man,
      But what asserts and thinks he can,
      And if you'll let him, quickly tries
      To show you he can mesmerize.

      In fact, you've but to look o'er town,
      To think the world's turned up side down,
      Since every split and jar and schism,
      Is fully merged in mesmerism.

(John P. Grantham)cxxx
This next poem, written by Reverend Ralph Erskine, of the Church of Scotland in Glasgow, was also printed in Washington Irving's *Analectic Magazine* and in the *European Magazine* in 1812.

**SMOKING SPIRITUALIZED**

Part I.

This Indian weed, now withered quite,  
Though green at noon, cut down at night,  
Shows thy decay;  
All flesh is hay,  
Thus think and smoke tobacco.

The pipe, so lilly-like and weak,  
Does thus thy mortal state bespeak,  
Thou art e'en such,  
Gone with a touch.  
Thus think, and smoke tobacco.

And when the smoke ascends on high,  
Then thou behold'st the vanity  
Of worldly stuff,  
Gone with a puff.  
Thus think, and smoke tobacco.

And when the pipe grows foul within,  
Think on thy soul defiled with sin,  
For then the fire  
It does require,  
Thus think, and smoke tobacco.

And sees the ashes cast away--  
Then to thyself thou mayest say,  
That to the dust  
Return thou must.  
Thus think, and smoke tobacco.

Part II.
Was this small plant for thee cut down?
So was the plant of Great Renown, Which mercy sends
   For nobler ends.
Thus think, and smoke tobacco.

Doth juice medicinal proceed
From such a naughty foreign weed,
   Then what's the power
Of Jesse's flower?
Thus think, and smoke tobacco.

In vain the unlighted pipe you blow;
Your pains in outward means are so;
   Till heavenly fire
Your hearts inspire.
Thus think, and smoke tobacco.

The smoke, like burning incense towers,
So should a praying heart of yours,
   With ardent cries,
Surmount the skies.
Thus think, and smoke tobacco.

(Rev. Ralph Erskine)

This final poem, published in the Poughkeepsie Thomsonian in 1841, captures the feelings of the botanics against tobacco, alcohol, and other poisons, including the regular doctor's mineral drugs.

TEETOTALERS'S SONG
(sung to 'Auld Lang Sine')

The man who doth Tobacco use
   Sends out a horrid breath,
His constitution, thus abused,
   Will sink ere long in death.

Is he the man who also drinks
Strong Tea, and Coffee too?
To him I'd say, 'Oh, stop and think,
What good are these to you?'

That they're injurious to health,
Experience clearly shows,
They also clog the way to wealth,
As any one well knows.

While all agree that Rum is bad,
And hath its thousands slain,
Ten thousands by it have run mad--
Millions been fill'd with pain.

Yet tens of millions more have fell
By mineral doctors' skill;
A sacrifice to Calomel,
Their Lancet and their Pills.

Let us reject all poisons, then,
In any shape they come,
Whether in food or medicine,
Tobacco or in Rum.

At the same time, invite those men
Who've dealt them out so long,
To come with us, our cause sustain,
And help us sing our song.

(Dr. J. Gates)
Endnotes

i. Refers to the Hartford Convention of December 15-January 5, 1815, attended by delegates from Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont calling for a revision to the Constitution. The report issued by the Convention included a statement of states' rights similar to the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions of 1798-99.

ii. Samuel Thomson, "Three Crafts," in Cyrus Thomson (comp.), Learned Quackery Exposed; Or, Theory According to Art, as Exemplified in the Practice of the Honorable Doctors of the Present Day (Syracuse: Lathrop and Dean, Printers, 1843), 12-15.

iii. Take the money and leave the dead body.

iv. Samuel Thomson, "The Poor Man's Lamantation," in Samuel Thomson, An Earnest Appeal to the Public, Showing the Misery Caused by the Fashionable Mode of Practice of the Doctors at the Present Day; With the Fatal Effects of Using Poisons as Medicine, and the Advantages of Following the Course Pointed Out by Nature; Using Such Things Only as are the Vegetable Productions of Our Own Country (Boston: Printed for the Author by E.G. House, 1824), 28-32.

v. Samuel Thomson, "Untitled," in Cyrus Thomson (comp.), Learned Quackery Exposed; Or, Theory According to Art, as Exemplified in the Practice of the Honorable Doctors of the Present Day (Syracuse: Lathrop and Dean, Printers, 1843), 53-54.


x. Refers to the Thomsonian use of the steam bath to encourage perspiration and "throwing off" of the canker.

xi. From the Greek word allion, different, meaning the use of remedies whose effects differed from but were not directly opposite the disease. The word was coined by Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843), the founder of homoeopathy, as a way of categorizing regular or old-school doctors.

xii. C.E.S., "An Ode for the 9th February," Southern Medical Reformer, I (February, 1845), 32.
xiii. According to Terry, it took moral courage to leave the fashionable system of medical practice and adopt the system of Thomson.

xiv. Terry meant slavery to the regular faculty and their mineral materia medica.


xviii. Samuel Thomson, "Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself," in Cyrus Thomson (comp.), *Learned Quackery Exposed; Or, Theory According to Art, as Exemplified in the Practice of the Honorable Doctors of the Present Day* (Syracuse: Lathrop and Dean, Printers, 1843), 55.


xx. Samuel Thomson, "An Examination of Man," in Samuel Thomson, *An Earnest Appeal to the Public, Showing the Misery Caused by the Fashionable Mode of Practice of the Doctors at the Present Day; With the Fatal Effects of Using Poisons as Medicine, and the Advantages of Following the Course Pointed Out by Nature; Using Such Things Only as are the Vegetable Productions of Our Own Country* (Boston: Printed for the Author by E.G. House, 1824), 32-33.


xxiii. Calvin Morrill, "Medical Poem," in Cyrus Thomson (comp.), *Learned Quackery Exposed; Or, Theory According to Art, as Exemplified in the Practice of the Honorable Doctors of the Present Day* (Syracuse: Lathrop and Dean, Printers, 1843), 41-44.


xxx. Samuel Thomson, "Botanic Directions," in Cyrus Thomson (comp.), *Learned Quackery Exposed; Or, Theory According to Art, as Exemplified in the Practice of the Honorable Doctors of the Present Day* (Syracuse: Lathrop and Dean, Printers, 1843), 50-52.

xxxi. Limestone will sicken the patient.

xxxii. Wrap the stone in two, three, or four thicknesses of wet cloths.

xxxiii. "I had rather be without that very nauseous powder Ipecac, which makes me spit while I write, than to be deprived of the more agreeable and efficacious Lobelia." (Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse).

xxxiv. "In honor and gratitude to Dr. Samuel Thomson, the Lobelia Inflata should be called the Thomsonia Emetica." (Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse)

xxxv. "With due submission to that privileged body of physicians, denominated through courtesy, The Faculty, I should place Samuel Thomson among the reformers of the healing art." (Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse)


xxxviii. Samuel Thomson, "A New Song, Composed for the Friendly Botanic Society," in Cyrus Thomson (comp.), *Learned Quackery Exposed; Or, Theory According to Art, as Exemplified in the Practice of the Honorable Doctors of the Present Day* (Syracuse: Lathrop and Dean, Printers, 1843), 45-49.


l. Travis Coppedge, "Untitled," *Botanic Medical Reformer*, II (January, 1842), 131.


lii. Samuel Thomson, "Receipt to Cure a Crazy Man," in Samuel Thomson, *An Earnest Appeal to the Public, Showing the Misery Caused by the Fashionable Mode of Practice of the Doctors at the Present Day; With the Fatal Effects of Using Poisons as Medicine, and the Advantages of Following the Course Pointed Out by Nature; Using Such Things Only as are the Vegetable Productions of Our Own Country* (Boston: Printed for the Author by E.G. House, 1824), 33-34.


liv. Samuel Thomson, "Ingratitude," in Cyrus Thomson (comp.), *Learned Quackery Exposed; Or, Theory According to Art, as Exemplified in the Practice of the Honorable Doctors of the Present Day* (Syracuse: Lathrop and Dean, Printers, 1843), 10-11.

lv. From the Latin *seta, bristle*, and formed by means of a portion of a skein of silk passed under the skin in order to excite suppuration.
lvi. Samuel Thomson, "Modern Practice," in Cyrus Thomson (comp.), *Learned Quackery Exposed; Or, Theory According to Art, as Exemplified in the Practice of the Honorable Doctors of the Present Day* (Syracuse: Lathrop and Dean, Printers, 1843), 16-17.


lix. Refers to Alva Curtis of Cincinnati, one of the leaders of the Independent Thomsonians.

lx. S.R. Jones, "Away with your Quackery," *Botanico-Medical Recorder*, XIV (September 12, 1846), 310.


lxii. Hydrargyrum, better known as mercury or quicksilver was one of the seven metals known to the ancients and furnished one of the most important agents used in medical practice, among which were the blue pill, grey powder, calomel, red precipitate, blue ointment, and corrosive sublimate.

lxiii. (Samuel Thomson), "Calomel," in Samuel Thomson, *An Earnest Appeal to the Public, Showing the Misery Caused by the Fashionable Mode of Practice of the Doctors at the Present Day; With the Fatal Effects of Using Poisons as Medicine, and the Advantages of Following the Course Pointed Out by Nature; Using Such Things Only as are the Vegetable Productions of Our Own Country* (Boston: Printed for the Author by E.G. House, 1824), 34-36.

lxiv. Samuel Thomson, "Untitled," in Cyrus Thomson (comp.), *Learned Quackery Exposed; Or, Theory According to Art, as Exemplified in the Practice of the Honorable Doctors of the Present Day* (Syracuse: Lathrop and Dean, 1843), 2-6.

lxv. Samuel Thomson, "Ode to Health," in Cyrus Thomson (comp.), *Learned Quackery Exposed; Or, Theory According to Art, as Exemplified in the Practice of the Honorable Doctors of the Present Day* (Syracuse: Lathrop and Dean, Printers, 1843), 55-56.


lxviii. F. Morgan, "Calomel," *Botanico-Medical Recorder*, XIII (June 21, 1845), 249.
lxxv. Refers to the first United States Thomsonian Botanic Convention called by Samuel Thomson in September 1832 and intended to bring together his many agents and to display the knowledge and talents of right-holders. His call for a national convention predated the organization of the American Medical Association by fifteen years. The convention assembled in December 1832 in Columbus, Ohio.

lxxvi. Refers to Elias Smith (1769-1846), a controversial clergyman and early advocate and agent of Thomson's patented system. He broke with Thomson in May 1820 by establishing a competing society for the purchase of medicines and the exchange of information. In 1822, he published *Medical Pocket-Book, Family Physician and Sick Man's Guide to Health*, followed by his *American Physician and Family Assistant* in 1825, both of which were intended to replace Thomson with Smith as the spokesman for botanic medicine.

lxxvii. Thomson appointed Charles Miles as his agent for Ohio in 1825 and provided him with books and family-rights to sell. Miles set up business in Columbus, but to Thomson's dismay, purchased an additional counterfeit copies from David Rogers of Geneva. Thomson revoked Miles's agency status and transferred his agency to Horton Howard.

lxxviii. Refers to Horton Howard (1769-1833), a Columbus printer, publisher, and early agent of Thomson in Ohio and the Middle West. Authored *Improved System of Botanic Medicines Founded Upon Current Physiological Principles; Comprising a Complete Treatise on the Practice of Medicine* (1832). Howard formed a dissident group called "Improved Botanics," but the movement was cut short with his death by cholera.

lxxix. Horton Howard's recipe for treating cancer consisted of the juice of the leaves and roots of poke-weed simmered over fire and then mixed with a pound of butter. This mixture was then burned in a frying pan with pulverized gunpowder and allowed to flash. The product was then placed in an earthen pot and mixed with alcohol to prevent spoilage. He applied the ointment
twice a day to the cancer to kill its roots. Critics called it Howard's "gunpowder balsam" and warned users to guard against explosion.


lxxxiii. Benjamin Rush (1745-1813); John Brown (1735-1788); John Hunter (1728-1793); and François-Joseph-Victor Broussais 1772-1838).

lxxxiv. Scottish physician and pathologist John Abercrombie (1780-1844); William Potts Dewees; John Redman Coxe; and John Bell (1763-1820).

lxxxv. Ipecacuanha, a tropical South American plant used to induce vomiting.

lxxxvi. Refers to an inflammatory condition requiring depletion as the preferred method of cure.

lxxxvii. French mathematician and philosopher Jean Le Rond d'Alembert (1717-1783)


xc. L.H. Paddock, "The Regular and the Botanic Practice of Medicine," Poughkeepsie Thomsonian, VI (September 1, 1841),45. Paddock is from South Durham. He was urged by the editor to persevere in the study of Thomsonian practice.

xci. Anonymous, "To Physicians," Thomsonian Recorder, III (May 9, 1835), 240.


xcv. Refers to Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894).

xcvi. F. Burke, "Derry Down," *Maine Thomsonian Recorder*, I (February 20, 1839), 97-98.

xcvii. Rumors at the time suggested that Samuel Thomson was carrying on a liaison with Magoon's wife.

xcviii. William Platt, Esq., the notorious land-pirate, of Barnegat, New Jersey, was sentenced to the State Prison.


ci. Girls were charged fifty cents.

cii. This was not always the case; but that it was many times the case, is a notorious fact.

ciii. This though not always, was many times the fact.

civ. I do not pretend to say, that he used precisely these words, as they here stand; but he did use words to about the same effect.

cv. She had earned more, which he had paid to her--but this is the amount due when she left him.

cvi. Fearful that agents would cheat by selling unauthorized medicines, Thomson required his agents to purchase a $5,000 bond as assurance of their loyalty.

cvii. His furniture and fixtures he had previously put out of his hands, to prevent not only Dr. Thomson, but other creditors, from attaching. Soon after he gave a "Bill of Sale" of the medicine, he carried it to Lowell and stored it in a cellar, where it was found by the person who was sent by Dr. Thomson in search of it, and was immediately attached; consequently the debt was secured.

cviii. An Observer [Samuel Thomson], "Doggerel Verses; A Paraphrase on a Chapter in the History--Or, a Compend of the History of Mr. Aaron Dow," *Thomsonian Manual*, II (September 15, 1837), 175.


cxiii. [editor], "untitled," *Thomsonian Manual*, VIII (October 15, 1842), 361.

cxiv. Refers to Thomson's trip to Washington in 1813 to secure patent protection for his medical system.


cxxi. Samuel Thomson, "Acrostic on Samuel Thomson," in Cyrus Thomson (comp.), *Learned Quackery Exposed; Or, Theory According to Art, as Exemplified in the Practice of the Honorable Doctors of the Present Day* (Syracuse: Lathrop and Dean, Printers, 1843), 54.


cxxviii. Dr. Daniel Drake (1785-1852) practiced medicine in Cincinnati and was founder and editor of *Western Journal of the Medical and Physical Sciences*.


cxxxi. Refers to Lobelia which Elias Smith called his "plant of great renown."


cxxxi. Dr. J. Gates, "Teetotalers' Song," *Poughkeepsie Thomsonian*, IV (December 1, 1841), 168. Republished from the *Rochester Democrat*. 