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Why the Action of the American Medical Association should be Endorsed.

PHILADELPHIA, August 17, 1885.

DEAR DOCTOR: We think it would be well for you to examine the following editorials from the Journal of the American Medical Association. They present the facts of the case so clearly that there can be no doubt of the duty of the friends of the Association, or of the animus of its enemies. We feel assured that you will endorse the action of the Association, and stand firm in support of the Code of Ethics.

Yours truly,

WM. H. PANCOAST, ADDINELL HEWSON,
WM. B. ATKINSON, HENRY LEFFMANN.
P. D. KEYSER,

(EDITORIAL FROM THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, JULY 11, 1885.)

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CONGRESS OF 1887—AND THE RECENT MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS IN CHICAGO.

If things done in haste are liable to be repented of at leisure, we are inclined to think this liability will apply with much force to the recent acts and expressions of certain members of the profession in Philadelphia, and perhaps in one or two other cities, concerning the measures for the organization of the Ninth International Medical Congress. The Committee of Arrangements in session in Chicago did not adjourn until the afternoon of the 25th of June; and the meeting alluded to in Philadelphia was held on the evening of the 29th, before there had been time for the Secretary of the Committee of Organization to prepare the revised rules and appointments for the press, and consequently before they could possibly have anything more than a partial verbal report from some members of the committee, on which to base their action. But notwithstanding this they proceeded with all due gravity to adopt *unanimously* the following Preamble and Resolution:

"WHEREAS, Certain serious changes have been recently effected in the preliminary organization and rules for the International Medical Congress of 1887, it has seemed desirable for the members of the General Committee and of the officers of the Sections resident in Philadelphia to meet for consultation; and

"WHEREAS, It has appeared that these changes are inconsistent with the original plan, and detrimental to the interests of the medical profession in America, and of the International Medical Congress, therefore be it

"Resolved, That we, the undersigned, consider that our duty to the profession and to ourselves requires us to decline to hold any office whatsoever in connection with the said Congress as now proposed to be organized."

That the reasons given in the Preamble for the course of action announced in the Resolution are disingenuous, to say the least, and entirely deceptive, we shall show more fully when we have for publication the full copy of the revised rules and plan of organization as adopted by the committee during its recent session in this city. It will then be shown that the only change in the proposed "preliminary organization" of the Congress was the dropping of *one* vice-president and the adding of four or five others. The only changes in the sectional organizations were the reducing of the number to sixteen by merging three with others, and the changing of four of the chairmen, leaving twelve unchanged; and not a single rule relating to the working or modes of action of either of the general sessions or of the sections was materially changed. Where, then, are the alleged changes so "inconsistent with the original plan" as to be "detrimental to the interests of the medical profession in America"?

Do they consist in the simple fact that the present Committee on Organization, instead of ostentatiously making its own committee officers *the officers of the Congress*, simply adopted the ordinary organization of a committee of arrangements to make suitable preparations for a Congress?

When the full proceedings come to be published in a connected and correct form, and it is seen that such proceedings have made no essential change in the general plan of organization of the Congress, or in the rules adopted for its government; that of the four chairmen of sections previously appointed in Philadelphia three were retained in their places, and the fourth was disturbed only by transferring him to the vice-presidency of the section with which his own section had been united; and instead of confining the membership of the Congress to the membership of the American Medical Association, as is alleged, nearly or quite one-half of the sixteen chairmen of sections reappointed are not members of that organization, the medical world will not fail to see that the only foundation for the hasty movement of our honored *confrères* in Philadelphia is the simple change in the *personnel* of the Committee of Arrangements, and the practical denial of the assumption that the "various eminent specialists" of three or four cities and the medical profession of the United States are synonymous.

And if those who have been in such haste to condemn the action of the National Association and the present Committee of Arrangements for the Congress, do not wish to occupy the unenviable position, before the world, of men determined to rule or ruin, they will take much more time to think before they make their next move.

(EDITORIAL FROM THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, JULY 25, 1885.)

ORGANIZATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF 1887: THE TWO RADICAL MISTAKES, AND WHO MADE THEM.

It is always unpleasant to differ from those whom we have regarded with respect, if not actual deference, and yet there are times when stern duty demands that simple facts should be stated in plain language, whether they prove palatable or unpalatable to friends or foes. The arrogance with which a few members of the profession in the cities of Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, and Boston assume to constitute not only the profession of those cities, but also *the* representatives of all the respectability and science of the profession in the United States, the bitterness with which they assail the American Medical Association, and the odium they attempt to cast upon the representatives from each State, chosen by the Association to constitute a part of the com-

mittee on organization of the Congress, through their chosen organs, the *Medical News* of Philadelphia, the *Medical Record* of New York, and the *New York Medical Journal*, of the same city, make it necessary to analyze this seemingly heterogeneous mixture of arrogance, bitterness, and misrepresentation, to lay bare its true animus, that, if any important mistakes have been made, the medical world may see clearly what the mistakes were, and *who made them*.

What, then, are the essential facts underlying all this tempest of words? At the Annual Meeting of the American Medical Association, in May, 1884, the president, Dr. Austin Flint, in his Annual Address, called attention to the desirability of having the Triennial International Medical Congress hold its meeting for 1887 in this country, and after stating the fact that the Association was the only organized representative of the whole profession in the United States, distinctly recommended the appointment of a committee to report upon the propriety of extending an invitation at the meeting of the Congress which was to assemble in a few months in Copenhagen.

This part of the President's address was referred to a Special Committee, which, at a subsequent part of the same meeting of the Association, reported a series of resolutions endorsing the recommendation of the President, and providing for the appointment of a committee of seven (which was subsequently made eight) to proceed to the meeting in Copenhagen, and present the invitation in behalf of the profession of the United States; and if the invitation was accepted, the same committee was authorized to continue its existence, add to its numbers, and make all necessary arrangements for the meeting and organization of the Congress. Here are clearly presented three important facts; namely, (a.) That the American Medical Association is the only organized representative of all departments of the profession in the United States; (b.) that the Committee of Invitation, with all its powers and duties, was simply the instrument or agent appointed by the Association to perform certain acts or duties; and (c.) having appointed such agent, and invested it with certain important powers, the Association was, by the fundamental principles of parliamentary law, as well as by the dictates of common sense, itself responsible to the medical world, both for the character of the agent or committee, and the manner in which it should discharge its duties. The truth of these statements is too obvious to require comment or illustration. The committee was appointed, attended the Congress in Copenhagen, presented the invitation in accordance with the instructions of the Association, and it was accepted. Thus far all was right. Soon after the return of the members of the committee of eight to this country, they began their work of organization; and one of their first duties was to enlarge their number, by selecting a suitable number of representative members of the profession, to give their committee, as enlarged, a more nationally representative character.

It was here, directly upon the threshold of the most important part of their work, that a majority of the original committee practically ignored all allegiance to the national association, and, assuming an entirely independent attitude, at once placed in the front of their ranks not only one who was well known to have repudiated the national code of ethics, and to occupy a position directly hostile to the national association and the state associations throughout the country, but urged the addition of another still more obnoxious, until their chairman, Dr. Austin Flint, whose well-earned reputation had contributed more to give character to the committee than that of any other two members, felt compelled to tender his resignation as a member of the committee, and was only induced to recall it by an agreement that the objectionable additions should not be further urged. Having enlarged their committee by the addition of fifteen or twenty prominent members of the profession, chiefly from the three cities of Philadelphia, New York, and Washington, with two from Boston, two from Chicago, one from Cincinnati, one from St. Louis, and perhaps one or two from other cities, the next step was a meeting of the committee, as enlarged, in the city of Washington, November 29, 1884, at which there were present fifteen of the twenty-five members then constituting the committee. The deliberations were confined to a single day. A sub-committee of three members of the original eight had prepared a series of rules, by which a large number of sections were provided, the working of each and of the general sessions of the Congress was to be regulated, and by which the committee itself was to be officered and governed. Under the guidance of a temporary chairman and secretary, the report of this sub-committee was taken under consideration, and, so far as related to the simple rules regulating the practical working of the Congress, they were adopted with unanimity.

But the rule providing for the American membership of the Congress proposed no representatives or delegates from either national or State medical organizations; they were to consist simply of such members of the profession as the Committee on Organization might graciously invite. And it was not until after a pretty free discussion that a substitute offered by one of the members of the committee, from Chicago, was adopted, making the American membership of the Congress consist of delegates regularly elected by the American Medical Association, the several State and local societies, and the several national organizations of specialists. This, however, was the only important point gained in the direction of nationalizing, in opposition to centralizing, the work of the committee, although a few members present continued to exert all their influence in that direction throughout the session, and subsequently by correspondence with the executive part of the General Committee. The rule adopted regarding permanent officers of the committee provided that all the general officers of the committee should also be nominated (and of course elected) for the same official positions in the preliminary organization of the Congress; and that the Executive Committee of the Committee on Organization should also be the Executive Committee of the Congress. Under these rules, when the permanent officers of the committee had been elected, and the chairmen of the several sections named, it was found that eight of the twenty-five members of the committee had been placed in position for general officers of the Congress, four more for members of the Executive Committee, and still four others for chairmen of sections,—making sixteen of their own number appointed to as many of the chief official positions in the Congress. If a parallel to this can be found in the proceedings of any previous committee on the organization of a Medical Congress, we would like to know when it occurred, and to what nation the committee belonged. A few members of the committee earnestly protested against this wholesale self-appointment to office, and urged a wider distribution of the more important selections. But the uniform answer was that no one must be selected who was not well known both in Europe and America; and unfortunately, in their estimation, no one in the whole profession of the United States possessed these essential qualifications but themselves and a score or two of their personal friends in a few of the chief cities.

When the General Committee adjourned its meeting in Washington, the filling up of the details and the selections for minor positions in the councils of the sections was committed to an Executive Committee, with power to call another meeting of the General Committee to revise and complete its work at such time as it might deem proper, the general wish being expressed that another meeting might not be found necessary until the time for the National Association to meet in New Orleans, in the following May. It is sufficient to say that the Executive Committee prosecuted its work in the same spirit and under the same narrow impulses that had charac-

terized the beginning of the committee work; and just a few weeks before the meeting of the Association in New Orleans it assumed the responsibility of publishing the results, not only in contempt of the Association, but without calling a second meeting of the General Committee, and thereby cutting off all opportunity to have their work reviewed even by those who had been added to the original committee, and thereby made in a measure jointly responsible for the results.

We have given the foregoing detail of facts regarding the doings of the Committee on the Organization of the Congress as originally constituted, at the risk of being tedious, that all candid men, both in this country and in Europe, might see who was responsible for "injecting the Code controversy into the organization," by wantonly and unnecessarily thrusting men who had repudiated the Code, and openly condemned the National Organization, into the front rank of official positions at the very beginning of the work of organization. If the logic of events ever proved anything in human history, the events we have briefly detailed, taken in connection with the pompous attitude at present assumed by a handful of otherwise respectable members of the profession, in the cities of Philadelphia, Washington, Baltimore and Boston, prove two things with the utmost clearness. The first is, that the majority of the Committee on Organization as at first constituted, whether consciously to themselves or not, practically made a bold attempt to use the national character and prestige of the American Medical Association as a "decoy duck" to obtain, first, their own appointment as a committee, and, second, from the International Medical Congress in Copenhagen an acceptance of the invitation to hold its next meeting in this country, and having accomplished these, to coolly turn the Association into a "foot-ball" and contemptuously kick it out of their way, that they might organize the American part of the proposed Congress in the interests of themselves and a score or two of personal friends in three or four cities, entirely regardless of the interests or wishes of the general profession of the United States, in whose name the invitation had been given. Unfortunately for the final success of their scheme, the "foot-ball" proved too heavy, and their kicks only resulted in breaking their own toes.

Smarting under the injury done to their pedal extremities, they first vociferously denounce the Association and all connected with it. And yet, no sooner had the Association added a sufficient number of new men to the original part of the committee to dress their wounds, drop out the specially obnoxious ones, and make their places available for a wider distribution of the official positions, and kindly offer to continue all the rest as before, than they, by concerted action in three or four cities, throw themselves back on their supposed dignity, and in the exact spirit of the modern labor union strikers, refuse to accept any positions themselves or let any one else, if they can prevent them, until the American Medical Association shall with all due humility take itself and the new members out of their way, and allow them to join their old *Code*-repudiating comrades, and again fix all things up in their own way. Such is the exact position of a handful of very respectable members of our profession in four cities, who committed the two radical mistakes of supposing they could use the American Medical Association alternately as a *decoy duck* or *foot-ball* at their pleasure; and that in themselves and a few friends were concentrated all the science and representative capacity of the medical profession of the United States. In view of their present position they might with great propriety adopt the prayer of Scotland's favorite bard:

"O wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursel's as others see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us,
And foolish notion."

That we do not err in representing them as a handful or limited number, is proved by the letter of our special correspondent in Philadelphia, on a subsequent page of this number of the *JOURNAL*. The writer of that letter is one of the most eminent and widely known teachers in the profession of Philadelphia, and his letter will be read with much interest.

Meanwhile, the real friends of the International Medical Congress may rest assured that the American Medical Association, through its present able and judicious Committee of Arrangements, will fulfill all the obligations it incurred, in extending the invitation at Copenhagen, in the most liberal and enlightened manner.

DOMESTIC CORRESPONDENCE.

THE PROFESSION IN PHILADELPHIA AND THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS.

DEAR SIR:—The *Journal* of July 11 contains a letter from your Philadelphia correspondent, in which he states that "there is no dissent to the determination in this city, that what has taken place at New Orleans and at Chicago, to the damage of the Congress, shall not be sanctioned even in appearance, or permitted to stand, as the work of Philadelphia at all, notwithstanding the fact that a Philadelphian is charged with having had a great deal to do with it."

Your correspondent is very much mistaken. There is dissent, and very great dissent, with the action of the twenty-eight or twenty-nine medical gentlemen. A prominent medical man told me to-day that he had refused to sign the resolutions of the twenty-nine. I did not sign them. I know many medical gentlemen in this city who, with myself, are fully in accord with the action of the American Medical Association at New Orleans. We are also earnest in our desire to aid the committee appointed at New Orleans, and to help, in every way we can, the arrangements for the International Congress. It is not generally thought here that the action at New Orleans has done damage to the Congress, but quite the contrary.

One of the twenty-nine had six positions given him by the committee of eight. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ!* The Philadelphian referred to is presumably the secretary of the committee, appointed at Chicago, Dr. J. V. Shoemaker. His manly action at New Orleans has been greatly appreciated here, and he has many warm and true friends. Twenty-eight or twenty-nine gentlemen do not represent the whole profession of this city. I feel assured that the profession of Philadelphia will support the International Congress and the Code of Ethics of the American Medical Association. I am very truly yours, etc.

PHILADELPHIA, July 18, 1885.

(EDITORIAL FROM THE *JOURNAL* OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, AUGUST 1, 1885.)

THE INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CONGRESS AND ITS ENEMIES.

The further the few members of the profession, in three or four cities, who made the mistake of supposing they constituted the embodiment of the medical profession in the United States, go in trying to justify their deliberate attempt to obstruct the necessary preparations for a proper organization of the Congress, the more they

involve themselves in gross inconsistencies and misrepresentations. Under the head of "Why the New Organization of the Congress should be Repudiated," the editor of the *Medical News* attempts to give the reasons why the action of the Committee of Arrangements at its meeting in Chicago should be rejected.

The editorial mentioned (see the *Medical News*, July 25, 1885, p. 96) contains five paragraphs, each of which contains one or more misrepresentations of fact, although the reasons given are only two, and are stated in the first paragraph as consisting in part of a "disapproval of the rules adopted by its managers, and in part of the fact that these managers are not men who should be endorsed to the world as the leaders of the medical profession of the United States." It is worthy of note that these two are the *only reasons* that have been given in any quarter for all the bluster and bravado of opposition thus far exhibited. And it would be a sufficient answer to both to say, as we have said substantially before, that there is *no* "New Organization" of the Congress in existence. Before the work done by the Committee of Arrangements in Chicago could be completed or made ready for publication, the preconcerted game of bluff was commenced, and a most industrious effort made to propagate the *strike* throughout the country. Yet after the lapse of a full month the whole number of those whose names have been announced as having refused to accept any position in the Congress under what they are pleased to call the "New Organization," is only about ninety of the nearly five hundred embraced in the proposed organization; and certainly only an infinitesimal fraction of the 40,000 members of the profession embraced in the American Medical Association and the several State and local societies in affiliation with it.

By "managers" the objectors must mean the members of the Committee of Arrangements, consisting of one from each State, and selected by the delegation of each State present at the meeting in New Orleans. This body of representative men, selected not by the presiding officer of the Association, nor by a committee that might possibly have been packed for the purpose, but by the representatives from each State acting by themselves and for the profession of their State, are sneeringly spoken of as "not men who should be endorsed," etc. *It is well known that nearly all this sneering is really aimed at the member of the committee representing the State of Pennsylvania, though the "News" has not the manliness to say so. But Pennsylvania was represented at the meeting of the Association in New Orleans by thirty-two delegates and permanent members who alone are responsible for the selection of the proper man to represent the State on the Committee of Arrangements. In selecting Dr. John V. Shoemaker they certainly secured an active, industrious, and efficient representative on the Committee. He had done good service as Chairman of the Section of Practice of Medicine, Materia Medica and Physiology at the meeting of the Association in Washington the year previous; and we suspect that the head and front of his offending consists in the fact that he has had sufficient courage, industry, and talent to push his way to position and influence in the profession without going through the hereditary ruts and mutual admiration circles, for which a part of the profession in the Quaker City is noted.*

Again says the editorial in the *Medical News*: "It is true that the New Orleans meeting by no means represented the Association, and was *specially packed* with delegates from two or three neighboring States, whose chief purpose in being present appeared to be to obtain control of the Congress," etc. It is a pity that the writer of that sentence had not examined a few figures before he ventured to record so manifest a misrepresentation. At the meeting in New Orleans there were present representatives from thirty-four States, two Territories, the Medical Corps of the Army, Navy, and Marine Hospital Service. The only States not represented were Connecticut, Delaware, New Mexico, and Oregon. The whole number of members present was 635. The five States most contiguous to the place of meeting, and from which the Association is represented as having been *specially packed* with delegates, are Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama; the first had 69 members present, the second 36, the third 49, the fourth 16, and the fifth 13, making an aggregate membership present of 183, to outvote a total of 635. They aggregated, indeed, twelve less than the five States of Pennsylvania with its 32 members present, Ohio with 37, Indiana 37, Illinois 55, and Iowa 34, making an aggregate of 195. The truth is, there has never been a meeting of the Association held, at which there was not a greater relative proportion of the membership present from the States contiguous to the place of meeting than in New Orleans. At that meeting the largest number of members present from any one State contiguous to the place of meeting was 69 from Texas, which was only about one-tenth of the whole number present, while at the preceding meeting in Washington in 1884, Pennsylvania alone had 213 members present, or more than one-sixth of the number; and at the meeting in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1883, the numbers present from the two most contiguous States, Ohio and Pennsylvania, numbered 302, or nearly one-third of the whole number in attendance. In the light of these statistical facts, the pretense that the meeting in New Orleans either did not represent the Association, or was "specially packed with delegates from two or three neighboring States," becomes too absurd to be entertained by any intelligent member of the profession.

But the editorial writer in the *News* reaches the climax of his recklessness and folly when he adds, in the same paragraph from which we have quoted, that the action of the Association at New Orleans was "the work of a comparatively small faction intensely desirous of office." When it is remembered that among the most prominent acts of the first Committee on the Organization of the Congress, in whose behalf the *News* is so clamorous, was the parcelling out of the chief offices of the Congress to themselves until not one of their number was left without an official position in the Congress, and some of them had three or four such positions, while the new committee, composed of men whom the *News* calls a faction "intensely desirous of office," have appointed not one of their number to a general office in the Congress, but have with a just sense of propriety limited themselves strictly to the work of a Committee of Arrangements, the reckless and desperate straits of those selfish leaders who are vainly endeavoring to maintain the little game of bluff by which they hoped to successfully obstruct the proper preparation for the Congress, become painfully apparent to the most superficial observer.

Before going further in this work of misrepresentation and purely factious opposition, we commend to their careful study the letter on a subsequent page of this number of the *Journal*, headed "Data for the History of the Ninth International Medical Congress," which is from the pen of one of the most eminent and most widely known members of the profession in America. As therein stated, the Ninth International Medical Congress will be held according to appointment. The Association by which it was invited will see that it is officered in all its departments by as eminent and honorable men as exist in the medical profession of our country. And if the obstructionists desire to have any part in the good work, they will lose no time in converting their opposition into an honest coöperation in enabling the Committee of Arrangements, at its special meeting on the 3d of September, to complete its work of organization in a satisfactory manner.