

THE COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY.

The first effort to organize a medical society in Indiana county, was in the year 1848, but on account of the small number of medical men in the county, that were eligible to membership in the auxiliary society to The Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania, and the lack of good professional feeling, the efforts were suspended. It was not until the year 1858, that the members of the profession renewed its efforts. The first meeting was called June 23d, 1858, for the purpose of forming a county medical society, and responded to by the most influential physicians in the county at the time.

The meeting was organized by calling Dr. James M. Stewart, to the chair, and appointed Dr. William Anderson, Secretary. The usual preliminary business necessary for the purpose of effecting a permanent organization were promptly carried through. Drs. Thos. St. Clair, Thom. Mabon and Christopher McEwen, were appointed a committee to prepare a constitution and by-laws.

Drs. William Anthony, William Reed and Thomas McMullen were appointed a committee on fee-bills. The meeting adjourned to meet July 21st, 1858.

At the next meeting, the committees reported, and both reports were adopted with a few modifications. The name and title of the society shall be "The Indiana County Medical Society."

OBJECTS.

"The objects of this society shall be the advancement of medical knowledge; the promotion of the harmony, union and friendly intercourse amongst its members; the protection of the interests, honor and usefulness of the profession, and to preserve the health and to protect the lives of the community."

A number of by-laws were adopted. The code of medical ethics, adopted by the American Medical Association in 1847, was established as the code of the society, and its acceptance a requisite of membership. The constitution and by-laws were signed by all the members present, and the following persons elected officers of the ensuing year:

President, Dr. James M. Stewart; Vice-President, Thomas McMullen; Secretary, William Anderson; Treasurer, Thomas Mabon.

Drs. Thomas Mabon and William Anderson were delegates to represent "The Indiana County Medical Society," in "The Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania," at its next meeting in Philadelphia, June, 1859.

Two copies of the constitution and by-laws were forwarded to the censors of the districts. They were approved, and one copy returned and the other forwarded to the Corresponding Secretary of the State Society.

Drs. James M. Stewart, Thomas St. Clair and William Anderson were appointed a committee to address the members of the profession throughout the county, calling their attention to the importance of the society.

The committee published the following address:

To the Members of the Medical Profession in Indiana County:

At the last meeting of the "Indiana County Medical Society," the undersigned were appointed a committee to address the members of the profession throughout the county, calling their attention to the importance of the society.

In performing this duty, we feel that we cannot too strongly urge upon your notice a subject that appeals at once to your best interests, your professional pride, and a proper sense of what is due, both to the profession and the public.

Every individual on entering the profession, as he becomes thereby entitled to its privileges and immunities, incurs an obligation to exert his best abilities to maintain its dignity and honors; to exalt its standing, and extend the bounds of its usefulness. He is bound to use unwearied diligence in enriching the sciences and elevating the conditions of its members.

We now put the question to every physician in the county – have you the honor and welfare of your profession at heart? Are you willing to do your part in sustaining its honor and promoting its welfare? Shall not the profession be organized for the protection of its own interests?

Shall this society, so long desired and contended for, be allowed to fail from your neglect? Shall the foundation, laid under such auspicious circumstances, crumble into ruins without an effort to raise upon it a superstructure befitting the magnitude of the cause?

The importance of an organization of the medical profession is manifestly required at present. Nothing but this will preserve the character of the profession, and improve its education. Nothing but this will draw the line of demarcation between the *physician* and the *quack*, and save us from being confounded in the popular estimation, with ignorant pretenders, whom no *law* prevents from assuming the titles of the profession as a cloak for the basest charlatanism. The remedy is in ourselves.

We have but to unite the profession to labor for its advancement in learning and skill, to cheer and encourage by friendly association every honorable physician, and utterly exclude from professional intercourse all empirical and irregular practitioners. When we respect ourselves and our common art, as enlightened public will respect us for it.

The members of every profession are calling; the advocates of every form of opinion, are forming associations for the advancement of their particular interests. Shall it be said that the members of our profession are too indifferent to their interests, and the cause of humanity, to follow this worthy example? We know to well the liberty of our profession to doubt the result of an appeal to the better feelings of its members. It is well known that there is not a body of men in the world who sacrifice more on the altar of benevolence. There are none more ready to yield their immediate interests to the general good, and the ultimate promotion of the cause of science and philanthropy. All that is wanted is determined and united effort. Let it be made, and the result will be success.

We would most earnestly urge every regular physician in the county to join the medical society without delay. You may rest assured that the beneficial consequences resulting from the society, will not be a tardy elevation of the profession. They will be felt by all of us at home, and that immediately. The society will supply many of the want of medical men, by giving them opportunities of extending professional intercourse, and of cultivating friendly relations. They will get to understand each other better, and free them from ungenerous rivalry and jealousies, which often bring scandal on the profession. It will also afford opportunities of increasing our medical knowledge, by frequent interchange of opinion, of comparison, of observation, as well as new strength for its individual members, and which will result in the public good. Why stand back longer? You are alike responsibilities is sustaining and elevating our knowledge and usefulness, The next meeting of the society will be held in the borough of Indiana, on Tuesday, September 28th.

There is no reason why every regularly educated physician in the county, who in now a member, should not join in with those who have thus far labored in the society, with an earnest desire to advance the most useful and profound of human pursuits.

INDIANA, August 18, 1858.

The names of the signers of the constitution are as follows, and in the following order:

“William Anderson, George M. Gamble, Robert McChesney, William Reed, Christopher McEwen, Thomas McMullen, James McMullen, William Anthony, Thomas St. Clair, William A. Piatt, George Irvin, Thomas Mabon, Robert Barr, James T. Adair, Robert J. Tomb. Joseph F. Stewart, Herman Row, Samuel M. Elder, Wallace B. Stewart, William Jack, A. F. Purington, Benjamin F. Tomb, Samuel W. Virtue, John McFarland, George J. McHenry. W. C. Parker, James L. Crawford, John W. Hughes, J. W. Torrence, S. R. Rutledge, Emanuel Brallier, Chalmers S. McCrea, William Hosack, William N. Cunningham, Samuel L. Wiggins, G. F. Arney, J. Wilson Morrow, Thomas Carson, W. L. Larimer.”

A number of members of the Indiana County Medical Society became members of other medical Organizations since the organization of the county society. Dr. Robert Barr became a permanent member of the Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania in 1867; Dr. E. Brallier a permanent member of the State Medical Society in 1876, and a permanent member of the American Medical Association in 1876; Dr. L. Clagget a permanent member of the State Medical Society in 1878; Dr. James L. Crawford a permanent member of the State Medical Society in 1878; Dr. John W. Hughes a permanent member of the State Medical Society in 1879; Dr. James McMullen a permanent member of the State Medical Society in 1867; Dr. Thomas McMullen a permanent member of the State Medical Society in 1865; Dr William Anderson a permanent member of the State Medical Society in 1862, and a permanent member of the American Medical Association in 1868, and was a member of the International Medical Congress in 1876; Dr. S. R. Rutledge a permanent member of the State Medical Society in 1879, and a permanent member of the American Medical Association in 1876; Dr. Robert McChesney a permanent member of the State Medical Society in 1868; Dr. Herman Row a permanent member of the State Medical Society in 1868.

