

trated by specimens. Dr. F. J. Brockway, New York City.

11. 'Note on the Appearance of a Unilateral Tuberosity in Place of the Trochanteric Fossa.' Illustrated by specimen. Dr. D. S. Lamb, Washington, D. C.

12. 'A Case of Polyorchis.' Illustrated by specimen. Dr. D. S. Lamb.

13. 'The Cerebrum of *Phoca Vitulina*.' Illustrated by specimen. Dr. P. A. Fish, Washington, D. C.

The members of the Association were entertained by Dr. Horace Jayne, of Philadelphia, who gave a reception on the night of the 26th; were lunched on the 27th and 28th by the University authorities, and on the 28th by Mr. W. B. Saunders at the Art Club.

The courtesies of the American Philosophical Society were also extended. On the evening of the 26th they also listened to a lecture by Prof. W. B. Scott, of Princeton, N. J., on the 'History of the Lacustrine Formations of North America and their Mammalian Fossils.'

A banquet by members of the affiliated societies was given on the evening of the 27th at the Hotel Lafayette and was well attended.

D. S. LAMB,  
*Secretary.*

OUR CONTRIBUTION TO CIVILIZATION AND TO  
SCIENCE—PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS BY  
DR. THOMAS DWIGHT, HARVARD  
MEDICAL SCHOOL.

It had not been my intention to inflict upon the Association a Presidential address; but at a late moment, impressed with the gravity of the matters that are to come before us, far transcending as one of them does, the importance of purely scientific discussion, I felt it a duty I owe to the position I have the honor to hold, to introduce them to the Association with the best suggestions concerning them I can offer. It is not too much to call them our contribution

to civilization and to science. Easily first in importance is the report of the committee on procuring and using anatomical material. Though both branches of the question are of interest to anatomists, the first rises beyond the sphere of the specialist. It is a social question of the first importance. I shall not anticipate the report of the committee, of which I am a member. I wish merely to lay down briefly certain principles which, I conceive, should guide us. We know only too well that dissection is an abomination to the popular mind. The aversion to it is well nigh universal, confined to no class of society, nor to any creed. This horror seems to be founded chiefly on two points, one the deprivation of sepulchre, the other the idea that the remains are submitted to wanton insult. The idea that respect is due to the dead body is so deeply rooted in the human mind as to be almost instinctive. I am far from calling these feelings superstitious. We know, indeed, that no violence can harm the dead, but, though reason is convinced, the heart is not satisfied. We anatomists, no less than others, shudder at the thought of the desecration of the remains of those who have been near and dear to us. The mad wrath caused by the feeling that graves are not safe is a well justified one. It is a disgrace to our civilization that in some parts of the Union body-snatching is still practised, and that in others there exists an illicit trade in human bodies. Should any of my colleagues think me indiscreet in alluding to these matters, I must remind them that I am saying nothing which has not been made notorious through the public press.

It is idle to hope, while human nature remains what it is, that aversion to dissection will ever disappear. Our wisest course is to recognize it, and to soften it by removing all just cause of complaint. It should be made clear to the public that dissection can and should be followed by

decent burial. I, myself, would go so far as to have the bodies of Protestants and Catholics buried in their respective cemeteries, when the creed of the deceased is known. It also should be understood that no wanton insult is permitted in reputable schools.

From careful observation I am convinced that the policy which will lead to the most satisfactory results is one of complete openness, that above all, we should avoid a timidity which shirks discussion of this topic. When we shall show so clearly as to carry conviction, that we have nothing to conceal, a great step will have been taken. I like to boast that the anatomical department of the Harvard Medical School is ready to give an account of every body it receives. If there be aught in the management of dissecting rooms that calls for criticism, I would not have reform forced upon us from without. Let us be the first to anticipate every reasonable demand.

It seems to me that this is making every possible concession to the sentimental side of the question; but another complaint is often made in all honesty, by well-meaning persons, who object that the bodies of the poor should be treated otherwise than those of the rich. I reply that no one would reprobate more strongly than I any law that would allow the taking of the bodies of the poor from their near relatives; but we must distinguish between the respect due to the feelings of the living and any admission that dissection is in itself an injury to the dead. The former is humanity; the latter is superstition, and to my mind a very contemptible one.

I have alluded to the scandal of body-snatching, but an equally great scandal is its cause; the want, in many places, of an anatomy act, or the existence of one which the framers and all others know to be inadequate. This state of affairs is in more respects than one an injury to the com-

munity. Like a prohibitory law meant to be boasted of on the platform and in the pulpit, but not meant to be enforced, it destroys respect for law. It is the bounden duty of authorities of States, without adequate provision for dissection, to see that it is not practiced. After all, such communities deserve to be treated by surgeons ignorant of anatomy.

A radical defect in the laws of many States, otherwise well drawn, is that the delivery to medical schools of unclaimed bodies is optional with superintendents, Boards of Trustees and municipal authorities. The result of this is that those in authority very naturally hesitate to do anything for the advancement of science, which not only can be of no possible advantage to themselves, but may involve them in serious difficulties. The cry of outrage on the poor is a sure card in the hand of the political demagogue, especially when it is raised against some honored institution. It may also be used as a means of annoyance against political opponents. It is far easier, therefore, for those in office to remain quiet and leave science to suffer. A mandatory law would free them from all responsibility. 'Thyself shalt see the act,' would be a sufficient answer to all complaints.

Details of law may and must differ with the locality, but a good anatomy act should have the following characteristics: First, it should be just, safeguarding the rights of the poor, and securing decency; next, that it should be mandatory; finally, it should be easy of execution. It is our duty in our several States to do our utmost for the passage of a law that shall advance science, protect the grave and do credit to the community. We have not the excuse of older times that the question is a new one. In view of our own shortcomings it behooves us to judge them lightly. For my part, I have far more respect for those who opposed

dissection on the ground, however mistaken, that it might be displeasing to God, than for those who make it illegal by pandering to the prejudices of the ignorant. Dr. Johnson's advice, 'free your mind from cant,' is here singularly *à propos*. We cannot boast of our civilization till this is remedied.

Another subject which comes before us for discussion is the important question of anatomical nomenclature. German anatomists have recently adopted a report prepared by some of their number, working in company with representatives of other European countries. It is for us to consider whether this one can be looked upon as accepted and whether it is acceptable; whether we can join hands with our foreign colleagues, or whether we can devise an American nomenclature which shall be so much better that we can disregard the inconvenience of a distinct standard. We have had for years a committee on anatomical nomenclature, with Professor Wilder for secretary, who has given so large a part of his busy life to this matter. We may expect an important contribution to the matter in the report of this committee.

We are to hear also from the committee appointed to consider the anatomical peculiarities of the negro. I am not informed what success has been reached in the difficult task of collecting statistics. It is a work of such anthropological importance that it would be doubly to be regretted should it come to naught. As has already been said at our meetings, it is most proper that this Society should collect all possible information as to the anatomy not only of the negro, but of such savage races as still survive in North America, and of the extinct ones, whose bones can still be procured in large numbers.

Thus, gentlemen, you see that this meeting, besides the attractive list of papers, has before it matters of no ordinary interest and importance. I will no longer detain

you from your work, firmly persuaded that the action of this Association will be in the interest of civilization and science.

#### REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE COLLECTION AND PRESERVATION OF ANATOMICAL MATERIAL.

*To the Association of American Anatomists:*

The committee appointed at the meeting of the Association to obtain information with regard to the collection and preservation of anatomical material, and report what in their opinion are the best means of accomplishing these objects, begs respectfully to submit the following report:

In order to make the work of the committee as comprehensive as possible and to obtain information which would be of service in arriving at definite conclusions as to the best methods of accomplishing the purposes in the resolution, the committee deemed it desirable to send to the teachers of anatomy, not only in this country, but abroad, a circular letter, with the following questions appended, and respectfully requested answers to be made thereto as fully as possible:

1. Is anatomical material obtained in accordance with legal enactment, wholly or in part?

2. Is there an Anatomical Law in your State or country? If so, please send a copy to the chairman of the committee. Please state whether the law is satisfactory in its provisions, whether it is readily obeyed by those upon whom duties are imposed by it, and mention any improvements you would suggest as to its requirements.

3. Is the material received in good condition?

4. What disposal is ultimately made of the remains?

5. Please state what means are employed to preserve anatomical material for the purposes of dissection or operative surgery. If injections of preservative fluids are used,