

CHAPTER VI

HAHNEMANN MEDICAL COLLEGE OF THE PACIFIC.

By James William Ward, M. D.

The Hahnemann Medical College of the Pacific was the outgrowth of urgent needs in the west, understood best by those pioneers of homœopathy who located here in 1850. The geographical isolation and distance from local centers demanded the establishment of a special school for the teaching of homœopathy on this Pacific coast. Notwithstanding grave difficulties incident to all new ventures in our limited territory, the college started and has kept on with gratifying success, meanwhile graduating each year well trained representatives of the new school in medical practice.

On Jan. 12, 1881, the first meeting directed toward the creation of this college was held in the office of Dr. J. A. Albertson. The article states "for the purpose of founding and establishing a homœopathic college in San Francisco and incorporating under the law as made and provided in the state of California." To forward this object nine trustees were elected with Dr. H. H. Ingerson, president, Dr. W. E. Ledyard, secretary, and Dr. Sidney Worth, treasurer. This institution chose the name of the Hahnemann Medical College of San Francisco and the corporation was to exist for fifty years. At the next meeting the capital stock was fixed at \$5,000, with shares of \$25 each. The date for beginning the first course of lectures was June, 1882.

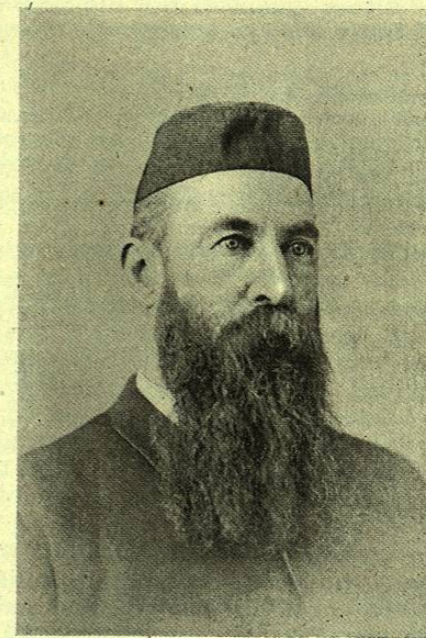
Monthly meetings were held until July 6, 1881. Because of the discouraging financial and professional interest exhibited, we find the minutes of the last meeting to read "adjourned to meet at the call of the president and secretary at the same time and place." The adjournment proved a *sine die*, for it was not until two years thereafter, March 27, 1883, that five of the directors—Drs. Ingerson, Palmer, French, Canney and Ledyard—again assembled. An urgent invitation to every homœopathic physician interested to meet the directors called out at the next meeting besides those just mentioned, Drs. Eckel, Bradley, Davis, Max Werder, Boericke and Wilson, all of San Francisco, Wilcox of Woodland, and McMahan of Oakland, California.

At this stage of the college history there are four names that should be written in letters of gold in expression of indefatigable labor, keen initiative and untiring energy—Drs. F. E. J. Canney, J. N. Eckel, C. B. Currier and William Boericke. Year after year they labored unselfishly for the cause, and special mention should here be made of their services. Their interest began in 1881 and never has ended. In April, 1883, Dr. Sidney Worth resigned as trustee and Dr. J. N. Eckel was elected to take his place. About this time Dr. Ingerson died, a most active spirit in the enterprise, and his loss was keenly felt. Dr. Eckel was wisely elected at the following meeting to the presidency, and Dr. Boericke became a director. Dr. Currier was chosen to fill the vacancy made by the resignation of Dr. W. A. Ely.

In July, 1883, though not in compliance with the law until January,

1884, \$5,000 capital stock was increased to \$25,000, and the number of the directors was fixed at nine. At this time there appeared in the July, 1883, issue of the "California Homœopath" the following editorial written by its editor, Dr. Wm. Boericke, clearly reaching out for aid from a united profession:

"The Hahnemann Medical College of San Francisco is an accomplished fact—on paper and in the intention of earnest and live men. The last meeting of the directors gave assurance that the foundations of the new college will be broad and deep, and in sympathy with the best phases of our professional life, and will do honor to the cause. A committee was appointed to



C. B. Currier, M. D., First Dean of the College.

make an appeal to every homœopathic physician on this coast, and also to enlist the sympathetic co-operation of influential laymen. This latter will certainly follow if we first do our duty. Every homœopathic physician on this coast, and especially in this state, has a personal interest in this most important and far-reaching move. He ought to contribute his influence and money and mental endowments to this object: his influence to bring general recognition to this new centre of homœopathy; his money to make it independent and self-supporting; and his intellectual aid to keep it free from all narrowness and bigotry and professional axe-grinding. We all have a duty in this matter from which there is no escape; let us meet it enthusiastically and devotedly. Then the new college will be an honor to the cause; it will advance homœopathy, and thus be of untold advantage to the community at large; and it will take its stand among its sister colleges throughout the

land (their peer) and form another star in the galaxy of luminaries that spread the light and truth of the law of cure, *similia similibus*.

The following appeal is issued by the committee appointed by the directors of the Hahnemann Medical College of San Francisco, to which we gladly give space; hoping the response thereto will be prompt and worthy of it:

San Francisco, July 10th, 1883.

Dear Doctor:

In the interests of homœopathy on the Pacific coast, it has been finally decided to establish a medical college in this city, to be opened in June of the coming year, and which shall be known as the Hahnemann Medical College of San Francisco.

In order that the institution may be based upon a firm and substantial foundation, it has been deemed advisable by the undersigned directors that a stock combination shall be formed with a capital of \$25,000 in shares of \$100 each—with the understanding that until the whole amount of \$25,000 has been guaranteed by subscription, no claim shall be made upon subscribers.

In case that the whole amount asked for is subscribed, 10 or 20 per cent will be all that will be required on subscription for the first year.

Trusting that the course adopted by the directors will meet your approval, they earnestly appeal to you for your hearty co-operation, and substantial proof of your endorsement in a subscription worthy of a good cause and the medical profession on this coast.

Please return at your earliest opportunity to the secretary of the Hahnemann Medical College of San Francisco, Dr. W. E. Ledyard, 209 Powell street, San Francisco, the enclosed blank for the number of shares with which you desire to help on the good work.

Fraternally yours,

J. N. ECKEL, M. D.
W. E. LEDYARD, M. D.
G. H. PALMER, M. D.
C. B. CURRIER, M. D.
J. A. ALBERTSON, M. D.
H. C. FRENCH, M. D.
F. E. J. CANNEY, M. D.
WM. BOERICKE, M. D.
F. F. DE DERKY, M. D.

C. B. CURRIER,
WM. BOERICKE, *Committee.*

This letter and the consequent subscription to the stock was really the beginning of the college. In March, 1884, by resolution the unsold stock was taken up by the directors of the college, who again filled the breach. On September 25, 1883, the first faculty meeting was called at 209 Powell street. There were present at that meeting Drs. Albertson, professor emeritus of obstetrics; Eckel, professor of children's diseases; Palmer and Canney, professors of surgery; Currier, professor of diseases of the throat; Boericke, professor of materia medica; Pease, professor of gynæcology; Curtis, professor of anatomy; Worth, professor of theory and practice; Ledyard, professor of clinical medicine; Davis, professor of obstetrics; French, professor of ophthalmology and otology; and E. A. Schreck, professor of chemistry. By the unanimous vote of the faculty, Dr. C. B. Currier was elected dean, and with the exception of a couple of years, he served in that capacity for eleven years, in season and out of season, through thick and thin, working not for self, but entirely for the good of the institution.

It was to Dr. Currier's untiring energy and unflinching zeal during the early years of this college that its very existence was due. Through him the spirit of development rose and penetrated the profession from north to south. By him was conceived the idea for the erection of a new building

and by him plans were formed for the same, but for lack of help from professional friends it was not consummated during his service.

At the meeting mentioned above Dr. H. C. French was made registrar. To the above list of names constituting the faculty was later on added those of Dr. B. P. Wall, professor of physiology; Dr. A. C. Peterson, lecturer on anatomy and histology of the eye and ear; Dr. McMahon, lecturer on pathology; Dr. W. A. Dewey, lecturer on venereal and skin diseases; and Dr. W. E. Ledyard, demonstrator of anatomy.

These, then, with the names already mentioned, constituted the faculty with which the Hahnemann Medical College of San Francisco opened its doors. According to a resolution passed at that time, they were to serve without remuneration and, I am pleased to say, that resolution never was repealed. In the editorial for the concluding number of the first year of the "California Homœopath" the pen of its able writer and editor again pleads for an earnest upbuilding.

"The establishment of a homœopathic medical college in San Francisco is no longer a debatable question, but is rapidly assuming a shape of reality; and even those among us who a few months ago were inclined to declare the action premature, are now unanimously agreed that the time is ripe when the interests of homœopathy in California absolutely require a medical college.

"In the rapid march of railroad progress hundreds of new towns and villages are springing up like magic all over our own state and through the territories of the Pacific slope—and the growing demand for physicians is supplied almost entirely from the two old school colleges in this city—notwithstanding that from these new and flourishing places the cry constantly comes 'send us good homœopathic physicians,' but the call has been made in vain, there being no supply to meet the demand.

"Students in our eastern colleges, as a rule, find good locations among friends nearer home, and as a result homœopathy is more poorly represented in California than almost any other portion of the United States.

"Among the objections raised by some who have opposed our movement is the one that we have no experienced teachers at home, but the agitation of that question has proven the fact that we have among us a number of physicians who have been teachers in eastern colleges and others possessing splendid ability for teaching, and the professional chairs in our colleges can all be filled by men of ripe experience and good ability.

"Another objection offered has been that not enough students could be found to form a full class, but this objection has already been met and answered by the fact that several students have at this early day made application for admission to the first course of lectures in the proposed homœopathic college and the first session will undoubtedly not fail for want of students, and the necessity of relinquishing a medical education for want of means to go east to prosecute studies need no longer deter a young man from entering the profession.

"Among the advantages in favor of a medical college in San Francisco is foremost the particular adaptability of the climate to the study of anatomy, the cool summer months with their constant sea breezes giving a fine temperature for purposes of dissection. No other city in the world can offer so great advantages in summer for this study, and an advantage to be considered in a summer term of lectures is that it is the healthiest season of the

year in San Francisco and professors would consequently have ample time to devote to their college duties.

"It is earnestly hoped that every member of our profession will, each and every one, by moral support, money, students and in any other way, as much as in them lies, do all in his power to forward the cause of medical education in our midst, and make for this, the first institution of its kind on the Pacific coast having for its standard the grand law of *similia similibus curantur* a reputation that shall grow stronger and higher as years roll on, until its alumni shall be found in every portion of the civilized globe—ranking among the first in the healing art."

The college now chose for its home the building formerly occupied by the university college and built for a Baptist church, on the corner of Stockton and Geary streets. Here its first course of lectures were delivered as told in an editorial from the "California Homœopath," appearing at the time:

"The Hahnemann Medical College of San Francisco began its first course of lectures on Tuesday, June 3, 1884, to continue five months. A class of sixteen students, as bright and promising a set of medical students as we ever saw congregated in any college, matriculated, and there is promise of a few more who could not be here on time. The professors entered upon their duties enthusiastically; the clinics offer abundant material for instruction; the dissecting room is well provided with subjects and everything promises a brilliant and in every way successful future. We hope our colleagues in the country will come forward and support heartily this important institution—important for homœopathy on this coast, and indeed for the homœopathic school everywhere; for our isolation and distance from the medical centres demand a separate school, which we must develop and support in order to worthily represent the noble cause we have espoused.

"It may be asked, in view of the existing medical colleges in this city, what right we have for the establishment of another one devoted to the teachings of homœopathy. Plainly, the right that comes from the possession of a principle that is not recognized by these colleges. We believe that we have such a principle in the law of *similia*, and just so long as we are faithful to it and in our teachings uphold only the best and truest interpretations of that law—in short, just so long as we teach homœopathy as an inductive science in the spirit of Hahnemann, Hering and Dunham—just so long we have a right to our separate existence, and no longer; for if our college gives up in its teachings and practice the purity of the homœopathic method it becomes eclectic merely, and with it forfeits its right to a separate existence. In the words of Constantine Hering: 'If our school gives up the strict inductive method of Hahnemann we are lost and deserve only to be mentioned as a caricature in the history of medicine.'"

The college was soon removed to No. 115 Haight street, to a building formerly used by the medical department of the University of the Pacific. Here we have the home of the college passing from hydropathy to allopathy and from allopathy to homœopathy. For fifteen years the college made its home on Haight street, in a building ill-adapted for college work, cold, cheerless, dark and unsanitary. The class was composed of those who were entering college for the first year and by others who by necessity were compelled to go to other medical colleges in San Francisco, there being no homœopathic institutions. Having admitted such, it permitted a senior class

to be formed and a graduation to take place at the close of the year. Preliminary to the opening a dispensary, long in existence and known as the Pacific Homœopathic Dispensary, was affiliated with the college and thereby afforded clinical opportunity to the students which they could have received in no other way.

On March 17, 1884, a gift of twenty volumes of medical works by Dr. J. N. Eckel formed the nucleus of a library which now numbers several thousand volumes. Afterward Dr. Eckel supplemented his original gift, and material additions have been made through funds furnished by the faculty in 1887 and by gifts from Drs. Arndt, Simpson, Guy, Hiller and others who in these early days added these gifts year after year and so created a substantial basis for a library.

The first graduation of the Hahnemann Medical College occurred on the evening of the last Friday in October, 1884. The exercises were held in Red Men's hall on Post street. Some one present at the time described it "a home-like affair and most enjoyable." Addresses were made by Drs. S. P. Burdick, of New York, C. B. Currier and J. N. Eckel. Six students were graduated at this first commencement, namely; C. N. Bronson, F. C. Hood, J. L. McClelland, W. H. Roberts, J. Townsend and J. N. Young. The graduating exercises were followed by a banquet to the faculty and graduates at the home of that chief of hosts, the president, Prof. J. N. Eckel. At this period the earnestness of the profession is best expressed in the following editorial of the September, 1884, issue of the "California Homœopath."

"We hold it to be the duty of every homœopathic physician to encourage the efforts of the Hahnemann Medical College of San Francisco to teach pure homœopathy on this coast. The most feasible method of encouraging this effort is to send to this institution students who are intelligent, with good preliminary education, to receive their medical training. It is both unnecessary and unjust to our workers in this cause to send students desiring homœopathic instruction east, or to one of the old school colleges on this coast. The results will prove that we are as able to insure good work as our eastern and old school colleagues here, and we save our students the expense of a long journey on the one hand and the deleterious influences of a one-sided, exclusive, dogmatic medical training on the other—a training whose every phase is characterized by faithlessness in the efficiency of drugs chosen according to the homœopathic law of cure—the only method that is in harmony with physiology and all scientific researches.

"The policy of the college is one that ought to appeal to every homœopath throughout the land, and certainly gain for it the respect at least of all medical men of every school. It is to teach the principles of homœopathy as a science and to illustrate practically their application to the various branches of medicine. It is the desire of the faculty and directors of the Hahnemann college to abide by the literal interpretation of their announcement, and our ready acceptance of the programme of the inter-collegiate committee of the American institute shows our position in aiming at and maintaining a high standard of medical education, and thereby achieve the only desirable results. We do not care for great numbers and certainly do not want any unless they come to us in freedom and with the earnest desire to learn true homœopathy from a homœopathic institution. Have we not a right, therefore, to expect the sympathy and co-operation of every homœopathic physician on this coast?"