

JOHN MORGAN: PIONEER IN AMERICAN MEDICAL EDUCATION

APPROVED:

Hugh M. Ayer
Major Professor

H W Kampa
Minor Professor

Jack B. Savage
Director of the Department of History

Robert B. Touloucy
Dean of the Graduate School

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Mickey Max Sparkman, B. S.

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PREFACE

Most histories of American medicine include the name of John Morgan; they fail, however, to assess the quality of his achievements, or to include information on the man's character. He is written of more as a "milestone" than as a person. There is agreement that Morgan was a pioneer in American medical education and that he is worthy of study, but few studies of his life have been made. The few studies about Morgan are limited to brief biographies intended for encyclopedic works or short articles about a particular phase of his life.

Biographers who have attempted to assert or to record Morgan's importance have been hindered by several factors. Of primary importance, the materials available for a study of the man are not voluminous; there is no great body of Morgan papers. Those available are widely scattered. The letters, papers, and books Morgan collected before the American Revolution were destroyed when the British burned his house at Bordertown. Few post-Revolutionary papers were found after his death; he may have destroyed them in his last few years when he was in a despondent state. The relatively few Morgan papers that did survive were held by other people.

Even if sufficient materials were available for a biographical study, Morgan is not an appealing subject. He was a brilliant, industrious, and thoroughly conscientious person,

but he was also formal, stiff, and somewhat snobbish. He appears to have had little warmth. Even the few examples of his humor that exist are dry and unappealing. He was sensitive about his social life, always demanding the respect due a gentleman. Morgan could never relax; he felt a constant drive to conduct himself properly. For biographers there is no heroic or dramatic appeal in his character.

Finally, Morgan's outstanding achievements came early in life; the remainder of his life was anticlimactic. Before he was thirty years of age he had probably won more honors in Europe than any other contemporary American colonial doctor. Upon his return from Europe, Philadelphia gave him a welcome exceeding any ever given a native son. He founded the first medical school in North America, and held the first chair of medicine in the new institution. He initiated a reform of colonial medical practice, attempting to separate pharmacy and surgery from medicine. Though Morgan began these projects enthusiastically, he did not finish them. He was never really the leader of the medical school, and at the end of his life he was selling drugs like the other physicians.

Morgan was not a failure. During his years of study and early years of practice he was an innovator; he had an active mind full of sound ideas for improving the state of medicine in the colonies. Had his ideas been followed, America could possibly have reached the higher standards of Europe in a few years.

Morgan's position as a leader in colonial medicine caused his involvement in a controversy with Dr. William Shippen, Jr. Although the controversy included the Continental Congress and the Continental Army, its purpose was concerned with an attempt on the part of a group of individuals to obtain medical supremacy for themselves in Philadelphia. The coveted post of director-general of the army medical service was incidental to the main objective -- dictatorship of the most powerful colonial medical center.

Morgan's appointment to this post led to his ultimate downfall. His summary dismissal from the position of director-general, the denial of an opportunity to defend himself, the appointment of his enemy, Shippen, to his former position as director, and the extended fight to vindicate his character left Morgan a broken man.

This study is an attempt to evaluate Morgan's contributions to American medicine in his time and place. An assessment of his role as a liberally educated, eighteenth-century philosopher will be ventured. Further, his appointment and subsequent dismissal as director-general of the Continental Army's medical department will be examined. The study will attempt to show Morgan as a product of the Enlightenment, as demonstrated by his desire to be physician, natural philosopher, and patriotic citizen.

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CHAPTER I

THE EARLY YEARS

John Morgan's parental grandfather came to the English colonies from Wales in 1700. George Morgan, John's younger brother, wrote in the family Bible: "George Morgan, the son of Evan and grandson of David Morgan, gentlemen of Wales, whose ancestors retired to the mountains rather than be enslaved by William of Normandy...." Evan Morgan, John's father, lived in Chester, Pennsylvania, for a time, but later moved to Philadelphia, where he attained his wealth and position. The father was a man of affairs, being a warden of Christ Church for many years, a member of the Board of Managers of Pennsylvania Hospital for two separate terms, and for several years a member of the Pennsylvania Legislature. Benjamin Franklin was a neighbor and personal friend of Evan Morgan, who was characterized as virtuous, sober, sensible, and good.¹

Evan Morgan's wife, the former Joanna Biles, was descended from a prominent Pennsylvania Quaker family. Her father, William Biles, settled in Bucks County in 1679, and earned for himself wealth and considerable power. He was a leading Quaker; his home, near the Falls of Neshaminy, was

¹William S. Middleton, "John Morgan, Father of Medical Education in North America," Annals of Medical History, IX (March, 1927), 13.

the site of the first recorded meeting, on May 2, 1683, of the Friends in the colonies. The mother of Joanna Morgan was of the Blackshaws, another prominent Quaker family. Randall Blackshaw, her grandfather, came with William Penn to America and was present when Penn signed the historic treaty with the Indians at Shackamaxon.²

John Morgan, born in Philadelphia in 1735, was the eldest child of Evan and Joanna Morgan. The Second and Market Street location of the Morgan residence was at that time in the finest residential section of the city. The home life of the large Morgan family was that of the quiet Quaker charm of colonial days. Economic affluence, church affiliation, and family connections assured them of a prominent social position.³

Morgan's education began at an early age when he entered Nottingham School, Chester County, Pennsylvania. He distinguished himself as a serious student, intelligent and obedient. The school, under the direction of Samuel Finley, stressed the classics and good manners.⁴

While Morgan was in school, Benjamin Franklin founded the College of Philadelphia. Unlike Harvard and Yale, which

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴N. Chapman, editor, "An Account of the Late Dr. John Morgan. Delivered before the Trustees and Students of Medicine in the College of Philadelphia on the Second of November 1789, by Benjamin Rush, M. D., "The Philadelphia Journal of the Medical and Physical Sciences, I (November, 1820), 439.

specialized in seminary training for ministers, emphasizing the study of Latin, Greek, and theology, Franklin's new institution offered courses in mathematics, physics, chemistry, history, and modern languages. Because of his unusual ability and application Morgan entered the first class of the College of Philadelphia with advanced standing. At the first commencement of the College, May 1757, the degree of Bachelor of Arts was conferred on him.⁵

Concurrent with his attendance at the College of Philadelphia, Morgan served as apprentice to Dr. John Redman, distinguished colonial physician. " [Morgan's] conduct . . . was such that it gained him the esteem and confidence of his master, and the affection of all his patients."⁶ Redman, a commanding figure in the medical world at that time, was well suited to inspire the brilliant apprentice and to give to him a lofty conception of the opportunities of his profession.⁷

While Morgan was studying with Redman, Franklin and Dr. Thomas Bond founded the Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia. During the last year of his apprenticeship Morgan served as apothecary at the hospital, a position which enabled him to

⁵Middleton, "John Morgan, Father of Medical Education in North America," Annals of Medical History, IX (March, 1927), 14.

⁶Chapman, "An Account of the Late Dr. John Morgan," The Philadelphia Journal of the Medical and Physical Sciences, I (November, 1820), 439.

⁷Ibid.

study the practice of all Philadelphia's leading doctors. In May 1756, he resigned, explaining that he had "a prospect of business more advantageous than his present employment."⁸

This prospect proved to be army service during the French and Indian War. He gained additional medical experience during the years he served as a surgeon with the provincial troops of Pennsylvania in the expedition against Fort Duquesne.⁹ He entered the service primarily to improve his skill as a physician; this he achieved by studying the various diseases present among the troops of the army and working with the trained British physicians who accompanied the expedition.¹⁰ General John Forbes, commander of the successful drive against the French fort, issued a dispatch praising Morgan's skill as a doctor.¹¹ He was greatly respected by his fellow officers, and beloved by the soldiers of the army. He exhibited great diligence and humanity in attending the sick and wounded under his care. In brief, he proved himself a very conscientious

⁸Middleton, "John Morgan, Father of Medical Education in North America," Annals of Medical History, IX (March, 1927), 14.

⁹Chapman, "An Account of the Late Dr. John Morgan," The Philadelphia Journal of the Medical and Physical Sciences, I (November, 1820), 439.

¹⁰John Morgan, A Discourse Upon the Institution of Medical Schools in America (Baltimore, 1937), p. 13. Reprinted from the first edition, Philadelphia, 1765.

¹¹James Thomas Flexner, Doctors on Horseback (New York, 1939), p. 12.

young doctor. Rush reported having heard this high praise of him: "That if it were possible for any man to merit Heaven by his good works, Dr. Morgan would deserve it for his faithful attendance upon his patients."¹²

Not satisfied with his exceptional reputation as an army surgeon, Morgan decided to continue his medical education in Europe. After his apprenticeship with Redman, Morgan was as well trained as any colonial doctor could be. There were no facilities for formal medical training in the colonies, except the apprentice system. Ambitious individuals continued their study in Europe.¹³

The Enlightenment--the dynamic movement that emancipated Europe from religious and political domination and allowed science, politics, and philosophy to flourish--greatly affected the practice of medicine in the eighteenth century. During this period were laid the foundations of modern scientific medicine. It was Morgan's good fortune to go to Europe during this period and to study with some of the outstanding physicians who had been influenced by the new movement.

The most influential physician of the eighteenth century was Hermann Boerhaave. His teachings dominated the first half of the century, and under his leadership the Institute of

¹²Chapman, "An Account of the Late Dr. John Morgan," The Philadelphia Journal of the Medical and Physical Sciences, I (November, 1820), 439-440.

¹³Ibid., p. 440.

Medicine at Leiden gained international fame. His greatness rested on his teaching in physiology and clinical medicine. He was the first physician to use clinical lectures. Boerhaave revived the Hippocratic belief that the principal aim of medicine was to cure the patient. Formerly, theories had been constructed first, observations adapted to the theories, and the patient treated accordingly. He taught examination of the patient first, and later, consideration of the disease in the construction of theories.

Through his pupil, Alexander Monro of Scotland, Boerhaave influenced the character of Edinburgh as a medical center. Upon his return to Edinburgh from Leiden, Monro began a course of lectures that reflected Boerhaave's teachings in clinical medicine. Monro's brilliant lectures caused the center for anatomical study to shift from Holland to the Edinburgh Medical School, thus earning for Edinburgh the reputation as one of the outstanding medical centers in Europe.

William Cullen, a pupil of Monro, continued the tradition of Boerhaave in Scotland. He was the chief founder of the medical school of Glasgow in 1744, and held the chairs of medicine and chemistry at Glasgow and later at Edinburgh. He was one of the first to give clinical or infirmary lectures in Britain and was the first to lecture in English rather than Latin. His fame rested chiefly on his ability as an inspiring teacher and his kindness in helping needy students.¹⁴

¹⁴Fielding H. Garrison, An Introduction to the History of Medicine (Philadelphia, 1924), pp. 314-423.

To this distinguished circle of Boerhaave's disciples, both in Scotland and England, came John Morgan in 1761.¹⁵ Residing in London at that time as agent for the Province of Pennsylvania was the old family friend, Franklin, whose friendship with the great scientific and political leaders of Europe opened the best doors for Morgan.¹⁶

Morgan began his European study with William Hunter,¹⁷ who was the leading obstetrician of London and physician to the Queen. In 1747, Hunter had visited the University of Leiden,¹⁸ where Bernhard S. Albinus, the great anatomical illustrator and pupil of Boerhaave, taught.¹⁹ He was so impressed with Albinus's excellent work with injected anatomical preparations that he was led to become an expert in the method.²⁰ The technique of preparing tissues by the method of injection and corrosion Morgan subsequently learned from

¹⁵Chapman, "An Account of the Late Dr. John Morgan," The Philadelphia Journal of the Medical and Physical Sciences, I (November, 1820), 439.

¹⁶Albert Henry Smyth, editor, The Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin (London, 1906), pp. 117, 122-123.

¹⁷Chapman, "An Account of the Late Dr. John Morgan," The Philadelphia Journal of the Medical and Physical Sciences, I (November, 1820), 440.

¹⁸Garrison, An Introduction to the History of Medicine, p. 347.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 342-343.

²⁰Middleton, "John Morgan, Father of Medical Education in North America," Annals of Medical History, IX (March, 1927), 14. The method, termed "corrosion," consisted of filling the vessels of an organ with a warm liquid, which hardened as it cooled; the organ was then placed in an acid bath which ate away the tissues, leaving only a cast of the vessels.

Hunter and his younger brother, John Hunter. The Philadelphian acquired additional experience in anatomy as a practical dissector for doctors Charles Colignon and William Smith, professors of anatomy at Cambridge and Oxford. The knowledge of anatomical preparations later enabled Morgan to enter the circle of eminent French surgeons.²¹

Late in 1761, Morgan left London for the Edinburgh Medical school, then the leading medical school of Great Britain and alma mater of his teacher, William Hunter. Franklin wrote letters of recommendation to William Cullen and Alexander Dick. He praised Morgan's industry, good morals, natural genius, and prudent behavior. He further asked the men to advise, guide and instruct his young friend. Franklin felt that in the future the young doctor would prove useful to his country.²²

Morgan did not disappoint Franklin; he diligently immersed himself in his studies and proved to be one of the most brilliant students ever enrolled at Edinburgh.²³ After two years of study he presented his graduation thesis, De Puris Confectione (The Formation of Pus), which proved to be a

²¹John Morgan, "The Art of Making Anatomical Preparations by Corrosion," Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, II, 366-383.

²²Smyth, The Life and Writings of Benjamin Franklin, pp. 117, 122-123.

²³Samuel Powel to George Roberts, December 5, 1761, cited in the "Powel-Roberts Correspondence," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XVIII (April, 1894), 35.

scientific milestone. Since antisepsis had not been discovered, pus from infections was expected at every wound; what caused pus, however, was a controversial question. After considering other theories concerning the formation of pus and the results of his own experiments, Morgan concluded that none of the theories was adequate. The point of his theory was that pus is formed neither in the blood nor outside the vessels, but within the inflamed vessels themselves. A century later, Cohnheim, a Prussian doctor, corroborated Morgan's theory by proving with the aid of a microscope that pus is composed of white blood corpuscles which have migrated through the vessel walls.²⁴ Morgan's brilliant scholastic record and exceptional thesis caused him to be graduated Doctor of Medicine in 1763, "with an éclat almost unknown before."²⁵

After completing his formal studies at Edinburgh in the spring of 1763, the highly honored graduate traveled to the continent. After a journey to the Netherlands,²⁶ he went to Paris, where he spent the winter attending anatomical lectures and dissections by Jean-Joseph Sue, chief surgeon of La Charité, the almshouse. At the time, Sue was preparing

²⁴Middleton, "John Morgan, Father of Medical Education in North America," Annals of Medical History, IX (March, 1927), 15.

²⁵Samuel Powel to George Roberts, September 1, 1763, cited in "Powel-Robert Correspondence," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XVIII (April, 1894), 37.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 36-37.

the second edition of his Anthropotomie, a book on the art of injecting, dissecting, embalming, and conserving the parts of cadavers. Morgan demonstrated to Sue how to prepare tissues by the method of injection and corrosion which he had learned from the Hunters in London; the French doctor in turn taught Morgan his knowledge of the art of injecting parts of the human body.²⁷ Sue took a liking to the young American doctor, introduced him to his family and professional colleagues, and became his sponsor before the Royal Academy of Surgery.²⁸

In late January, 1764, Sue arranged for Morgan to be presented to the Academy and submit his Edinburgh thesis on the formation of pus. The Academy honored him by beginning to read it in his presence. During the next eight months Morgan waged a campaign for election to membership in the Academy.²⁹

In February he made his first move to gain admission to the organization by presenting formally a copy of his thesis to the Academy's library. With the copy went a French translation and the hopeful request that by virtue of this work the organization would make him a foreign associate member and would print his dissertation in the next number of its memoirs.

²⁷Morgan, "The Art of Making Anatomical Preparations by Corrosion," Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, II, 368-369.

²⁸Whitfield J. Bell, "John Morgan," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XXII (September, 1948), 546.

²⁹Ibid.

At the same meeting Morgan demonstrated the anatomical preparation of a vein by corrosion, following Hunter's method, and read a paper on the subject.³⁰

Morgan's paper on corrosion was given to Sue for examination and evaluation. Sue's report on the paper at the March meeting of the Academy was favorable. Additionally, Sue read a letter from Morgan in which he informed the Academy that he wished to publish his paper with a dedicatory letter to the Academy itself, and he asked to be elected a foreign member. After some deliberation on these points, the Academy directed its secretary to inform Morgan that it would accept the dedication on the condition that it be approved by the Academy before actual publication. Nothing was said about Morgan's election to the society.³¹

Meanwhile, Morgan left Paris for a trip to southern France and Italy. His campaign for admission to the Academy, however, did not cease; letters continued to arrive for the officers of the Society and for Sue. In April, Morgan's correspondence was urgent and anxious; in May, his letters to Sue reflected uncertainty regarding his admission.³²

The arrival of a letter from the Academy's secretary somewhat relieved Morgan's anxiety. The paper on corrosion was accepted with the condition that the Academy approve the dedication; the letter, however, left unresolved the matter of his

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

election. He sent off the dedication at once, begging the Academy's indulgence for its having been written in English. He explained that he was without assistance in French, and thought it more respectful to write properly in English rather than incorrectly in French. Concerning his election, he confessed it was "an honour which I have entertained some hopes of and which my ambition has eagerly aspired after," but he assured the Academy he would "submit to their decision."³³

After a few corrections the dedicatory letter was termed acceptable by the Academy, but for some unexplained reason Morgan's paper on corrosion was never published. In regard to his request for election, the Academy decided that the title of "correspondent" was sufficient for what he had presented to the Academy. The director proposed his name for that title, and it was approved unanimously. Though he had been acknowledged by the French society, Morgan was not admitted to the select company of foreign associate members. The diploma conferring the title and rights of "correspondent" upon him was signed on July 5, 1764.³⁴

In late September, Morgan returned to Paris from his trip to Italy and learned that during his absence he had been voted a correspondent of the Royal Academy of Surgery at Paris. He took his seat in the Academy on October 4 and presented a formal letter of thanks for the honor.³⁵ The letter of thanks

³³Ibid., p. 547.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵John Morgan, "Journal of 1764, Tour from Rome to London," unpublished journal, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, p. 130.

reflects either a gross ignorance of the language, or a final attempt by Morgan and Sue to obtain his acceptance as a foreign member. In the letter Morgan consistently used the words "associé" and "academicien," instead of "correspondant." If this was deliberate, the Academy was not thus to be trapped into accepting Morgan as a member on his own terms. The secretary was instructed to amend, carefully, each objectionable phrase in Morgan's letter; the substitution for the title of "academicien," which he had assumed, was to be "correspondant," which was properly his. Thus, where Morgan expressed gratitude for the honor done him, "de m'associer dans votre illustre Academie," the secretary altered it to read: "de m'admettre au nombres des correspondans de votre illustre Academie." Morgan's relations with the Academy reveal little of him as a physician but much of his persistence, ambition, and lack of humility.³⁶

Additional insight into the character of the persistent young American can be obtained from an investigation of his European tour of 1764. In the spring of that year, Morgan left Paris and continued his tour of Europe; he was accompanied by Samuel Powel, a friend from Philadelphia and fellow medical student at Edinburgh. They went first to southern France and then to Switzerland; from Switzerland they went on to Genoa, Leghorn, Pisa, Florence, and Rome. Their return

³⁶Bell, "John Morgan," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XXII (September, 1948), 547-548.

from Italy took them along the Adriatic coast of Italy, through the cities of Loreto, Bologna, Venice, Milan, and Turin, thence to Geneva, Paris, and back to London. Little remains of the record Morgan kept of the journey except a fragmentary journal written in Rome in May and a journal of his return from Rome to London, July to October, 1764.³⁷

Thanks to Morgan's keen scientific interests, these journals reveal much about eighteenth century Italy. His probing and enthusiastic nature carried his contacts beyond the usual superficial artistic and social encounters of the average traveler. He engaged in fruitful intellectual exchanges with some of the great Italian men and women of science, as well as moving in the company of Italian nobility and traveling with visiting British royalty.³⁸ His familiarity with the French and Latin languages facilitated these meetings.

In the spring of 1764, he was in Naples and apparently saw much of Domenico Cirillo, eminent physician and botanist of that city. Cirillo was a former pupil of Hunter in London, and Morgan may have known him there.³⁹

Practically nothing is known of Morgan's visits to Rome, which he saw on two occasions--on his way to Naples and on

³⁷Morgan, "Journal of 1764," pp. 1-134.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Antonio Pace, "Notes on Dr. John Morgan and His Relations with Italian Men and Women of Science," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XVIII (November, 1945), 445-446.

his return. The fragmentary Roman journal consists entirely of notes on objects of art.⁴⁰ Morgan did write to Cullen, upon his return to London, that he and Powel traveled with the royal party of the Duke of York from Leghorn to Florence and then to Rome; also, while in this company in Rome he and Powel had access to all the lavish entertainment provided for the Duke.⁴¹ Morgan's traveling companion, Powel, offers an additional glimpse into their activities in Rome. He reported they were presented to "His Holiness," [Pope Clement XIII] and that he "conversed familiarly with us."⁴²

In June of 1764, while still in Rome, Morgan wrote Sir Alexander Dick in Edinburgh, that he had "been made a member of the Arcadian Society of Rome, of which the Duke of York condescended to be made a member lately."⁴³ On the title page of Morgan's A Discourse upon the Institution of Medical Schools in America, a publication of his speech made in Philadelphia in 1765 regarding the establishment of medical

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 446.

⁴¹John Morgan to William Cullen, November 10, 1764, cited in W. S. W. Ruschenberger, An Account of the Institution and Progress of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia from January 1787 (Philadelphia, 1887), pp. 32-34.

⁴²Samuel Powel to George Roberts, November 24, 1764, cited in "Powel-Roberts Correspondence," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XVIII (April, 1894), 40.

⁴³John Morgan to Alexander Dick, June 16, 1764, cited in Antonio Pace, "Postscriptum on John Morgan and Giovanni Battista Morgagni," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XXXIII (January, 1959), 77.

training in that city, he lists membership in the Arcadian belles lettres Society of Rome.⁴⁴

The Arcadian Society (Accademia degli Arcadi) was much maligned. It counted among its members a substantial number of physicians and naturalists who dabbled in poetry, but whose professional activities are not necessarily to be considered as mediocre as their literary efforts. Morgan's admission was doubtlessly gained by the action of friends in the organization, and it can be assumed he took advantage of this opportunity to broaden his acquaintance with the scientific circle of the Academy. He was probably the first and last American accorded the dubious honor of membership in the Society.⁴⁵

Though information of Morgan's activities in Rome is scant, that pertaining to his trip from Rome to London is not. On his return journey to London he kept an almost daily record of his activities. Morgan devoted much space in his journal to a recording of the visits he made to various Italian scientists. He was particularly interested in exchanging with them knowledge in medicine, anatomy and "philosophical subjects." At Accademia Clementina in Bologna, he

⁴⁴Morgan, A Discourse, p. 1.

⁴⁵Space, "Notes on Dr. John Morgan and His Relations with Italian Men and Women of Science," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XVIII (November, 1945), 447, citing Vernon Lee, Studies of Eighteenth Century Italy (London, 1887), pp. 1-64.

met the celebrated female anatomist, Anna Manzolini, and discussed with her the fashioning of anatomical models from wax.⁴⁶ At the University of Bologna Morgan visited with Giuseppe Veratti and his wife, Laura Bassi; they were ardent exponents of Franklin's theory of electricity and were two of the few to precede Franklin in demonstrating with a metallic conductor the identity of electricity and lightning.⁴⁷

At Padua on two occasions Morgan visited Giovanni Morgagni, the founder of pathology. Morgan found the Italian unacquainted with anatomical preparations by corrosion and showed him a piece of kidney prepared by this process. Morgagni indicated great interest and admiration in the process, and they discussed it at length. Too, they talked of Morgagni's method of tracing vessels during inflammation, while the vessels were dilated.⁴⁸

At Parma, Powel and Morgan visited the ducal surgeon, Flaminio Torrigiani, professor of theoretical medicine and experimental physics. When Morgan admired a skeleton in the possession of Torrigiani, "one of the finest and whitest . . . I ever saw," the Italian gave Morgan the exact formula for its preparation. This manner of preparation was recorded in

⁴⁶Morgan, "Journal of 1764," pp. 25-26.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 27-30.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 32-35.

detail in the journal, with the notation: "This leaf to be copied into my medical notes."⁴⁹

Even when away from scientists, Morgan continued to be true to his inquisitive nature. The entries in his journal are never those of the casual traveler; rather, they reflect his constant scientific observation and evaluation. There was a methodical keeping of mileage between points during most of the journey, even an attempt to record the distance from Rome at each stop. His description of Venetian gondolas includes a drawing of bow construction, and there is a page describing the construction of "venetian floors" (terrazzo). After an electrical storm, Morgan recorded in his journal the observation that Venetian buildings should have electrical rods as did the buildings in Philadelphia. He recorded with fascination a visit to a glass manufacturing plant and a visit to the Venetian arsenal. Between Verona and Parma he crossed the Po River on a pontoon bridge, and the manner of construction was faithfully recorded. In the area about Turin he observed that large numbers of people had goiter; the entry for that day contains descriptions of several goiters seen on people and the explanation that they were caused by drinking snow water. The water wheel used at Geneva to pump water for the city was praised as an intriguing piece of machinery. He was a ceaseless observer, with seemingly boundless curiosity and a vast range of interests.⁵⁰

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 60-61.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 1-128, 39-53, 55-56, 83, 115-116.

Like all proper eighteenth century gentlemen, Morgan had interests other than science; his systematic nature, however, colored these interests. The journal contains an exhaustive list of works of art. He visited the galleries conscientiously and recorded faithfully the works viewed. His knowledge of art was extensive, and he did not hesitate to praise and condemn. While in Bologna Morgan used ten pages in his journal to describe and evaluate the architecture and artistic contents of fifteen churches, five palaces, and two convents. In architecture, the engineering and construction factors were of more interest to him than the beauty.⁵¹

Morgan was conscious at all times of his station or class as an English gentleman. He and Powel traveled by private coach, complete with courier and lackeys. In the Alps, when the terrain would permit, they traveled by sedan chair; otherwise they rode mules. Morgan held a condescending opinion of Italian inns, which he rated "tolerable." He very much disapproved of the carnival season during his visit to Venice, noting that "the mixing of all kinds of people during this time was disagreeable." In Turin the English minister, Dutins, did not respond to Morgan's request for an appointment. After waiting in vain several days for a response, he wrote Dutins a letter, rather bluntly informing the minister just who he was, indicating his past

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 1-115.

audience with "his Brittanic majesty," and his acquaintance with the Duke of York and other princes. Morgan wanted to visit the Alpine fortifications of the Kingdom of Sardinia, but permission was granted only after a personal audience with the King. The audience had to be arranged through Dutins--thus Morgan's irritation with the minister. Dutins came to call at once upon receipt of the letter and apologized profusely for his tardiness. A few days later Dutins presented Morgan and Powel to the King, who gave them permission to visit the fortifications at Brunetta.

While in Turin, Morgan and Powel made regular, planned visits to the royal park and chapel to view members of the royal family. The journal contains details of the family's activities, dress, and history. Royalty seemed to hold some aura of fascination, or curiosity, for Morgan; or perhaps he felt it socially proper to include such activities in a gentleman's grand tour.⁵²

Two incidents on the journey reflect Morgan's dry sense of humor. At Casa Saneta in Loreto is an image of Mary with Jesus, reputed to have been done by St. Luke. Of Luke's artistic talents, Morgan commented in his diary: "He was but a clumsy artist." At a wine cellar in Loreto a miracle of the Virgin supposedly enabled three wines to flow from the same cock. Morgan was skeptical; he felt the feat was

⁵²Ibid., 1-134.

accomplished by expertly turning the cock to three positions, thus tapping the three "hidden" containers inside. After tasting the three wines he wrote this appraisal in the journal: "In the color they were so, but all agreed in one quality, . . . sour; which made me think the Madonna not so much anxious of commending the goodness of the wine as the nature of the miracle."⁵³

Small paragraphs of commentary regarding the cities and towns visited are entered throughout the journal. Morgan was faithful to record his impressions of important places. Of Bologna he writes: "[It] was cleaner than Rome. Industry was carried on here with more vigor, and even the lowest class appeared richer. The place abounded in good art, [but] had few monuments of antiquity." He described Milan as a large, "walled city, clean, with straight wide streets." It contained many "fine buildings, especially palaces," and reflected "a general appearance of great business and riches."⁵⁴

Morgan considered the state of medicine in Italy as deplorable, "not being in high repute, or cultivated with that spirit it ought to be." The medical school at the University of Bologna was the only one he rated as good.⁵⁵ He visited

⁵³Ibid., pp. 7-9.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 29-31.

⁵⁵John Morgan to William Cullen, November 10, 1764, cited in Ruschenberger, An Account of the Institution and Progress of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, p. 33.

the hospitals in Bologna, Padua, and Milan, and found them satisfactory--"the patients seemed clean and did not want for attention." He judged the hospital at Milan a "large and fine establishment."⁵⁶

William Huet, an Englishman whom Morgan and Powel met in Rome, had given them a letter of introduction to Voltaire. Their visit with him at Chateau de Ferney elicited the most animated entry in Morgan's journal.

Voltaire received them cordially on the steps of his chateau and after reading Huet's letter of recommendation ushered them into the salon, where they were introduced to a company of ladies and gentlemen. There was an extended discussion of mutual acquaintances, the Americans' trip through Italy, and scientific discoveries in Italy. This was followed by a tour of the chateau and gardens.

"By this time," wrote Morgan, "I became quite familiar with him, [and] asked him questions with as much assurance as if I had been long acquainted with him." They discussed the writings of Franklin, whom Voltaire regarded as "a man of genius, of merit, and a great natural philosopher." They also talked of Newton, Locke, and Robinson.

When they arose to go, Voltaire addressed the company:

Behold two amiable young men, lovers of truth and inquirers into nature. They are not satisfied with mere appearances; they love investigation and truth and despise superstition. I commend you gentlemen. Go on;

⁵⁶Morgan, "Journal of 1764," pp. 24-25, 39, 71.

love truth and search diligently after it. Hate hypocrisy, hate masses; above all hate priests.⁵⁷

After leaving Voltaire at Geneva, the two Americans traveled on to London by way of Paris. Morgan's planned passage from England to the colonies was postponed until spring because of high seas on the Atlantic during the winter. While waiting for favorable weather, he rejoined his circle of friends and acquaintances and occupied himself with plans for his new medical career in the colonies.⁵⁸

While in London that winter, Morgan was elected to the Royal Society. Franklin had been a member since 1756; his influence, not to mention that of his friends the Hunters, doubtlessly assisted the young Philadelphian in gaining admission. Morgan's distinguished scholastic record at Edinburgh and successful apprenticeship in London qualified him to be licensed for medical practice by the Royal College of Physicians of London and Edinburgh.⁵⁹

Morgan sailed for Philadelphia in the spring of 1765, obviously leaving behind him the prospects for a brilliant future in Europe. Powel, his friend of long standing, admonished Morgan's friends and acquaintances in Philadelphia:

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 108-126.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 126-134; John Morgan to William Cullen, November 10, 1764, cited in Ruschenberger, An Account of the Institution and Progress of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, p. 33.

⁵⁹Morgan, A Discourse, p. 1.

"Pray use him as his merits deserve and don't force him from you. For the honor of our country make his residence with you agreeable." He further explained that Morgan was making a great sacrifice in returning to the colonies, "as fine prospects open up for him here if he would stay. . . ." ⁶⁰

Morgan's decision to return to America had been made in Edinburgh. During the years there, the winter in Paris, and on the trip through Italy, he had formulated plans for the establishment of the first medical school in the colonies. These plans were refined in London during the winter of 1765; now he was eager to get to Philadelphia and put them into action. His plans visualized a daring departure from the accepted method of medical practice in the colonies. Colonial doctors combined surgical, medical, and apothecary duties; Morgan would separate these and practice medicine exclusively. His reforms, if implemented, would bring colonial medicine nearer to European standards. ⁶¹

⁶⁰Samuel Powel to George Roberts, November 24, 1764, cited in "Powel-Roberts Correspondence," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XVIII (November, 1820), 40.

⁶¹Morgan, A Discourse, pp. 1-63; Chapman, "An Account of the Late Dr. John Morgan," Philadelphia Journal of the Medical and Physical Sciences, I, (November, 1820), 440-441.

CHAPTER II

MEDICAL REFORM: SUCCESS AND FAILURE

The establishment of a medical school in the colonies was a topic frequently discussed by American students at the Edinburgh Medical School. William Shippen, Jr., a fellow Philadelphian, long-time friend, and fellow student at Edinburgh, had the same ideas on this topic as did Morgan. Together they discussed the need for establishing a medical school in the colonies. They both saw in the Edinburgh and London Medical Schools the essential features of sound medical education and recognized the shortcomings of the apprentice system of medical training in the colonies.¹

Individually and together they discussed their ideas with John Fothergill, an influential English Quaker doctor. He counseled them in the refinement of their plans to establish formal medical training in Philadelphia and wrote of the scheme to James Pemberton, manager of the Pennsylvania Hospital. Fothergill noted that "Shippen was scheduled to

¹N. Chapman, editor, "An Account of the Late Dr. John Morgan. Delivered before the Trustees and Students of Medicine in the College of Philadelphia on the second of November, 1789, by Benjamin Rush, M.D.," The Philadelphia Journal of the Medical and Physical Sciences, I (November, 1820), 440-441.

give lectures in anatomy in Philadelphia and would soon be followed by an able assistant, Dr. Morgan."²

Fothergill apparently regarded Shippen the leader of the two; logically he should have been. He graduated from the Edinburgh school before Morgan, and in November, 1762, he began giving lectures in anatomy and obstetrics in Philadelphia. Thus, in effect, Shippen opened the proposed medical school with his initial series of lectures.³

Shippen's pioneering lectures in obstetrics brought jeers from those who thought "male midwives" comical; pious individuals believed he was undermining the modesty of American womanhood. When he insisted that his anatomy students dissect human bodies, he was accused of stealing cadavers. Shippen persisted by continuing his lectures. With the passage of time, the novelty of his teaching faded away, and the public accepted his work.⁴

While Shippen may have been in 1762 the logical leader of the scheme to start medical lectures, Morgan did not regard himself as merely "an able assistant." After Shippen left Edinburgh and returned to Philadelphia in 1762, Morgan, independently of Shippen, set about on a new course. Shippen

²Thomas G. Morton and Frank Woodbury, History of the Pennsylvania Hospital (Philadelphia, 1897), p. 357.

³Pennsylvania Gazette, November 11, 1762.

⁴James Thomas Flexner, Doctors on Horseback (New York, 1939), pp. 18-19.

apparently favored the establishment of a new institution in Philadelphia--a medical school with the power to grant degrees. Morgan now wanted his and Shippen's future series of medical lectures to form a department of the College of Philadelphia. Morgan believed the scientific training and interests of the medical faculty would add a new dimension to the college and that the medical curriculum would be strengthened by its association with the arts.⁵

In the spring of 1763, Morgan presented his plan to Thomas Penn. The Proprietor wrote the trustees of the College of Philadelphia expressing his approval of Morgan's plan. Penn felt the medical school would "give reputation and strength to the institution," and that the system of lectures suggested by Morgan "had brought fame and benefit to every place it had been used." He asked the trustees to receive Morgan kindly and "to execute his plan if practical."⁶

Encouraged by Penn's endorsement, Morgan developed his plans more fully. While in Paris during the winter of 1763-64, he drafted an "address on the institution of medical schools in America." While traveling to and from Italy in 1764, he discussed the proposal with Powel and made the revisions Powel suggested. When he returned to London in the fall of 1764,

⁵John Morgan, A Discourse Upon the Institution of Medical Schools in America (Baltimore, 1937), p. 34.

⁶Thomas Penn to Trustees of the College of Philadelphia, February 15, 1765, cited in Hugh L. Hodge, editor, "Medical Literature: Retrospective Review," The North American Medical and Surgical Journal, 1827, IV, 374.

Morgan again consulted Fothergill about the proposed scheme. He also discussed it with his former teachers--doctors Hunter, Cullen, and Watson--who expressed their support of his plan. Joining in this consensus were two former trustees of the College of Philadelphia, James Hamilton and William Peters, who were residing in England at the time. They sent letters to the trustees of the college in agreement with Penn's and the letters from Morgan's other supporters.⁷ Thus, when Morgan left England in 1765 his plan was well supported by the testimonials of influential people.

When Morgan arrived in his native Philadelphia in April, 1765, he was regarded as a celebrity. News of his brilliant scholastic achievement at Edinburgh and the honors paid him by foreign societies preceded his arrival, and he was received with open arms by his fellow citizens. His fame was so great that it was deemed a privilege to say, "I have seen him."⁸ George Roberts reported to his friend, Samuel Powel, concerning Morgan's return:

Morgan comes home flushed with honors and is treated by his friends with all due respect to his merit. He appears to be the same social, friendly man, not assuming the solemn badge so accustomed to a son of Aesculapius.⁹

⁷Morgan, A Discourse, p. 34.

⁸Chapman, "An Account of the Late Dr. John Morgan," The Philadelphia Journal of the Medical and Physical Sciences, I (November, 1820), 439.

⁹Samuel Powel to George Roberts, May 21, 1765, cited in "Powel-Roberts Correspondence," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XVIII (April, 1894), 35.

Some people concluded that his learning and experience made him the best medical man in Pennsylvania.¹⁰

Morgan's impact upon the provincial city of Philadelphia is illustrated by a well-established tradition that he carried the first silk umbrella in America. Eyewitnesses remembered the excitement the act created; a silk umbrella was a novelty and a mark of effeminacy unheard of in Quaker Philadelphia. For some time crowds followed him on the streets, and people went to their windows to view the novel spectacle. The uniqueness of the umbrella did not last, for Morgan soon was joined in its use by Parson Duche, Dr. Chancellor, and other prominent citizens.¹¹

Immediately upon his return to Philadelphia Morgan set out to consummate his plans for the medical school. His reputation and the backing of such influential people as Penn and Fothergill secured for him an early audience with the trustees of the College of Philadelphia. On May 3, 1765, they met in a special session to hear his plan for a medical school. Morgan's presentation was somewhat facilitated by the fact that four of the twenty-four trustees were outstanding men in American medicine--doctors Thomas and Phineas Bond, Thomas Cadwalader, and John Redman. Because of the backing of these

¹⁰William S. Middleton, "John Morgan, Father of Medical Education in North America," Annals of Medical History, IX (March, 1927), 13.

¹¹Hodge, "Medical Literature: Retrospective Review," The North American Medical and Surgical Journal, 1827, IV, 364-365.

colonial physicians, the support of Thomas Penn and others in England, and the high regard of the board for Morgan's abilities, his plan was adopted. Further impressed by the many honors paid him by the various learned societies of Europe and the outstanding record which he had compiled at Edinburgh, they unanimously elected him Professor of Theory and Practice of Physic.¹²

In the Pennsylvania Gazette of May 9, 1765, the formal announcement of Morgan's election mentioned that in his plan for "instituting a medical school in the college there will be room for receiving professors duly qualified to read lectures in the other branches of medicine, who may be desirous of uniting to carry this laudable design into execution."¹³ Nowhere had Morgan or the trustees of the college mentioned William Shippen, Jr., or the course of lectures that he had delivered for three consecutive years. Shippen's father, a trustee, had been absent from the meeting on the day Morgan's plan was approved, but Shippen and his son were fully informed of Morgan's proposals. When they realized that Morgan had ignored the younger Shippen's work and held himself up as the original author of the plan to open a medical department

¹²Pennsylvania Gazette, May 9, 1765; Minutes of the Meeting of the Trustees of the College of Philadelphia, May 3, 1765, cited in Hodge, "Medical Literature: Retrospective Review," The North American Medical and Surgical Journal, 1827, IV, 375.

¹³Pennsylvania Gazette, May 9, 1765

in the college and had been publicly recognized as such, they were both surprised and resentful.¹⁴

At its September 23, 1765, meeting the Trustees of the College appointed William Shippen, Jr., Professor of Anatomy. In his letter of application for the position, Shippen had stated that a medical school for the colonies had been his objective for seven years, and that he had communicated his plan to Morgan in England. He emphasized that he would long ago have sought the patronage of the Trustees of the College, but that he had felt it only fair to await Morgan's return.¹⁵

Morgan's failure to include Shippen in his planning for the new school and his ignoring Shippen's pioneering lectures in Philadelphia opened a breach between the two. As time passed jealousy and ill-will grew, and their quarrel descended into pettiness, as illustrated by the following incident. In an exchange of letters between Morgan and Benjamin Rush, Morgan threatened to withdraw his support of Rush for a professorship of chemistry at the Philadelphia Medical School because Rush had put Shippen's name before Morgan's in the dedication of an Edinburgh thesis. Only after Rush

¹⁴Morgan, A Discourse, pp. 34-35; William Shippen, Jr., to the Trustees of the College of Philadelphia, cited in Hodge, "Medical Literature: Retrospective Review," The North American Medical and Surgical Journal, 1827, IV, 376.

¹⁵Ibid.

reiterated that the placing of the name was an error did Morgan continue patronage of Rush.¹⁶

During the Revolution, the leadership of the Continental Army's medical department became the prize for which Morgan and Shippen competed. When Morgan was appointed to the post of director-general of the medical department, a jealous Shippen plotted the removal of his former friend. Morgan was ousted, and Shippen was appointed. The transferral of their personal feud to the main arena of the war affected the lives of hundreds of soldiers.

At the time the announcement was made in the Pennsylvania Gazette of May 9 that the Trustees had approved Morgan's plan for a medical school, it was noted that he would deliver an address at the ensuing commencement of the College in which he would "shew the expediency of instituting [a medical school in the College] and, containing the plan proposed for the same."¹⁷

Morgan's address, which was later published, was entitled A Discourse Upon the Institution of Medical Schools in America. He had initially framed the Discourse in Paris, discussed it with Powel on the trip to Italy, and showed it to

¹⁶ Benjamin Rush to John Morgan, January 20, 1768, and July 27, 1768, L. H. Butterfield, editor, Letters of Benjamin Rush (2 vols., Princeton, 1951), I, 50-52, 62; John Morgan to Benjamin Rush, May 10, 1769, cited in James E. Gibson, Dr. Bodo Otto and the Medical Background of the American Revolution (Springfield, 1937), pp. 186-90.

¹⁷ Pennsylvania Gazette, May 9, 1765.

Fothergill and others in England. The lengthy and detailed discourse was delivered in two sessions; Morgan read part of it on May 30 and the remainder on May 31. A graduate who participated in this particular commencement reported that:

The discourse was given in great form and ceremony, the speaker appearing in flowing robes, so as to give to the oration as much of the ex cathedra tone as possible, and with a great concourge of respectable citizens to witness the performance.¹⁸

Morgan and his project had been the general topic of conversation in Philadelphia for a month; therefore, the audience was eager to hear what he had to say.¹⁹

The Discourse contained Morgan's detailed and revolutionary plan for the reformation of colonial medical practice and education. It was clear to him that the standard of practice would not rise until education was reformed, and that if professional education were improved the quality of practice would inevitably improve as well.²⁰

Morgan asked his audience to consider the state of colonial medical training, namely the apprenticeship system. Philadelphia, he noted, was fortunate to have "a number of

¹⁸Hodge, "Medical Literature: Retrospective Review," The North American Medical and Surgical Journal, 1827, IV, 366.

¹⁹Butterfield, Letters of Benjamin Rush, I, 14; Pennsylvania Gazette, June 6, 1765; George Roberts to Samuel Powel, May 21, 1765, cited in the "Powel-Roberts Correspondence," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XVIII (April, 1894), 40-41.

²⁰Morgan, A Discourse, pp. 1-63.

skillful physicians and expert surgeons, qualified by genius, education, and experience, to take charge of the health of their fellow creatures" and to direct the training of apprentices.²¹

This it must be allowed is a great advantage; but if we add to it, a casual conversation sometimes with the most able master whom [the apprentice] can have access to consult, an intercourse with one another, and a reciprocal communication of sentiment and observation, together with reading what authors they can procure on the various subject of which [medicine] treats; these make the sum total of the best medical education in America.²²

The best master could not teach his apprentices all that they should know. Therefore, the young men began practice "with unfavorable prospects" and were troubled throughout their careers by "continual perplexities."²³ They had performed no experiments and made no observations in science. Their view of medicine was too narrow; they believed they were ready to practice when, in fact, they knew nothing. However intelligent and industrious they might be, they were simply unqualified to attend the sick.²⁴

In Morgan's view, only a handful of physicians in America were competent. "Wretched is the case of [the patients] whom by chance, or misinformed judgment, shall be thrown into [the physician's] hands, to fall victims of his temerity."²⁵

²¹Ibid., pp. 18-19.

²²Ibid., p. 19.

²³Ibid., p. 20

²⁴Ibid., pp. 20-23.

²⁵Ibid., p. 24.

He continued:

Great is the havock which the physician's ignorance spreads on every side, robbing the affectionate husband of his darling spouse, or rendering the tender wife a helpless widow; increasing the number of orphans; mercilessly depriving them of their parent's support; bereaving the afflicted parents of their only comfort and hope, by the untimely death of their beloved infants, and laying whole families desolate. Remorseless foe to mankind! actuated by more than savage cruelty! hold, hold thy exterminating hand.²⁶

Philadelphia possessed several advantages for a medical school, Morgan pointed out. Its best practitioners were already drawing medical students to the city; once a school was opened, more would come. There was also a hospital in Philadelphia. Morgan thought it "a most favorable circumstance" that five of the hospital's six attending physicians were also trustees of the college.²⁷

Another advantage was the college's literary reputation, which would induce young men to get their training there in the classical languages, mathematics, and natural philosophy before entering medical school. Finally, Philadelphia's location at the center of the colonies made it easily accessible from every colony. Only one thing was lacking: a medical library. Morgan expressed his confidence that one would soon be provided by students' fees and the generosity of Philadelphia's physicians.²⁸

After some general remarks on the importance of medical studies, Morgan defined briefly the purpose and scope of the

²⁶Ibid., p. 24.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 30-31.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 32-33.

several departments of medical knowledge--anatomy, materia medica, botany, chemistry, and the theory and practice of physic. Each of these, he explained, was but a part of the whole body of medical science, and each was closely related to the others.²⁹ These several branches of medicine, Morgan continued, should be studied in orderly progression; otherwise, "all our ideas are but crude conceptions, a rope of sand, without any firm connection. For want of method, all our knowledge would be superficial."³⁰

The scientific curriculum, he noted, should rest upon a previous general education. Young men should begin their studies with "minds enriched with all the aids they can receive from the languages, and the liberal arts."³¹ Greek and Latin were essential, the former because so much of the ancient learning was in its literature, the latter because it contained "all the wealth of more modern literature and was the principal language of the learned world."³² Knowledge of mathematics and natural philosophy was indispensable, and French would be "very valuable." "There is no art yet known which may not contribute somewhat to the improvement of Medicine; nor is there any one which requires more assistance than that of physic from every other science."³³

²⁹Ibid., pp. 5-14.

³⁰Ibid., p. 15.

³¹Ibid., pp. 16-17.

³²Ibid., p. 17.

³³Ibid., p. 18.

The trustees of the college, he reminded the audience, had taken the first step toward establishing a medical department and reforming medical education by naming him a professor of the theory and practice of physic. Other steps would follow until at last, by "a concourse of learned physicians," a school would arise in the same way in which that at Edinburgh had been formed less than fifty years before.³⁴

Morgan did not attempt to spell out the medical education program in great detail. It was "sometimes prejudicial to attempt a scheme entirely out of reach."³⁵ However, he reminded the sponsors of the medical department, lay and professional alike, they should not work on "a too contracted plan."³⁶

As for himself, Morgan announced that in the fall he would deliver "a course of lectures on the materia medica, in which the pharmaceutic treatments of medicine, as well as their virtues," would be described and "the doctrines of the chymical properties of bodies" would be considered as far as was necessary to give students "a general idea of chymistry." The year afterward he would lecture on the institutes or theory of medicine, which would be "illustrated with practical observations."³⁷ Perhaps, he suggested, in a few more years other professors would be appointed to teach the other branches,

³⁴Ibid., pp. 35-36.

³⁵Ibid., p. 36.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 35-36.

and following the example of Edinburgh, the college could adopt a plan of study leading to the degree of Doctor of Medicine.³⁸

Then, turning to the reform of American medical practice, Morgan declared that no physician should attempt to practice all the different branches of medicine, including surgery and the compounding of drugs. The first was a manual art like weaving, the second was akin to selling groceries, and neither was a profession at all.³⁹

If physic, surgery, and pharmacy were in different hands, practitioners would then enjoy much more satisfaction in practice. They would commonly be less burdened with an overhurry of business, and have an opportunity of studying the cases of the sick at more leisure. Would not this tend to the more speedy relief of diseases and the perfection of medical science, as every physician would have more time by studying, observation, and experience united, to cultivate that knowledge which is the only foundation of practice.⁴⁰

Each of the three branches, he observed, required unremitting study and practice for mastery. The physician who divided his time and energy among them would never be expert in any.⁴¹

The advantages of specialization, Morgan thought, should be obvious to anyone. Students would be instructed by professors who employed their leisure in study and correspondence with learned Europeans, not in performing surgical operations and selling drugs. The college would benefit because such

³⁸Ibid., p. 36.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 40.

³⁹Ibid., pp. 40-45.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 44-45.

professors would promote the grand design of all colleges-- the advancement of learning.⁴² And because instructors of such quality would draw students from great distances, Philadelphia would receive "a tribute of riches as well as affection from all quarters."⁴³ Finally, Pennsylvania and America generally would benefit from the reform of practice through specialization.⁴⁴

It required not only intelligence but equally much courage for Morgan to return to the American colonies and boldly advocate a plan for the complete reform of colonial medical practice. The Pennsylvania Gazette reported the general response to Morgan's speech:

We would not wish to anticipate the judgement of the public; and shall only say, the perspicuity with which the speech was written and spoken, drew the close attention of the audience, and particularly [the physicians].⁴⁵

Rush, who was in the audience, acclaimed both the speaker and the Discourse.⁴⁶

Not every response to Morgan's Discourse was as favorable as was Rush's. While endorsing the plan in principle, some physicians considered it impracticable or premature. America, they maintained, was not able to support such a system of

⁴²Ibid., pp. 46-52.

⁴³Ibid., p. 43.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 52-53.

⁴⁵Pennsylvania Gazette, June 6, 1765.

⁴⁶Benjamin Rush to Ebenezer Hazard, November 18, 1765, Butterfield, Letters of Benjamin Rush, I, 20-21.

medical education. Some doctors felt the course of study was too long, costly, and difficult; it would discourage young men from entering the profession at a time when the colonies desperately needed more doctors.⁴⁷

The strongest objection was directed against the proposal to separate the functions of physician from those of surgeon and apothecary. Even before outlining in the Discourse his intention to practice only medicine and charge a fee, Morgan had informed his Philadelphia preceptor, John Redman, that upon returning to America he would take no surgical cases and fill no prescriptions, but would confine himself to medicine.⁴⁸ Morgan thought it more honest and economical for the physician to charge a fee for his attendance than to hide the fee in the price of the prescribed medicine. As he conceived his program of medical lectures at the college, Morgan saw that only by limiting his practice would he have time for the study and reflection necessary to his teaching.⁴⁹ It was not unlikely that Morgan, though a skilled surgeon, was influenced by a preference for the higher social position accorded to physicians over surgeons in England.⁵⁰

⁴⁷Morgan, A Discourse, pp. xv-xxvi.

⁴⁸John Morgan to William Cullen, November 10, 1764, cited in W. S. W. Ruschenberger, An Account of the Institution and Progress of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia from January 1787 (Philadelphia, 1887), pp. 33-34.

⁴⁹Morgan, A Discourse, pp. iv-ix.

⁵⁰Whitfield J. Bell, "John Morgan," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XXII (September, 1948), 548.

Redman predicted that such a mode of practice would lead to Morgan's ruin, and that he would not make enough profit to supply himself with food and clothing.⁵¹ Rush warned that this type of practice "will, notwithstanding his reputation, prevent his getting much business, . . . in the city."⁵² Roberts wished Morgan success on his new venture, but feared "the mode of giving fees on attendance to the sick will be too refined for this paper monied country."⁵³

These warnings did not dissuade Morgan from his plan. He declared his intention to accept only medical cases, for which he would charge a fee adapted to the circumstances of the patient's finances and the amount of attention required by the patient's illness. Moreover, he would not compound drugs. When he returned from London in 1765, he had brought David Leighton, a trained pharmacist, to whom he planned to send his prescriptions for compounding.⁵⁴

His friend's predictions that his system of practice would be unprofitable came true. Patients preferred doctors who practiced in familiar ways. Morgan had expected everyone

⁵¹John Redman to John Morgan, March 13, 1764, Gilbert Collection, College of Physicians, Philadelphia.

⁵²Benjamin Rush to Ebenezer Hazard, May 21, 1765, Butterfield, Letters of Benjamin Rush, I, 14.

⁵³George Roberts to Samuel Powel, May 21, 1765, cited in "Powel-Roberts Correspondence," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XVIII (April, 1894), 40-41.

⁵⁴Pennsylvania Gazette, September 5, 1765; Morgan, A Discourse, i-iii.

to see the superiority of his system, but by the fall of 1765, it was evident that the public was not flocking to his door. He blamed the public for its prejudices and hinted that his professional colleagues advised patients against consulting him.⁵⁵

In an attempt to offset the public's rejection of his new system of practice, Morgan again explained his ideas in a twenty-six page "Apology," which appeared as the preface to the published version of his Discourse upon the Institution of Medical Schools. He informed the public that he did not expect to be paid for every visit in a prolonged illness, and that he would not ask a retaining fee of the poor.⁵⁶ In spite of this clarification of his intentions, the public's unfavorable impression of Morgan's methods persisted. How long he continued to confine himself to medicine is not known, but it is known that by 1781 he had modified his plan. Although he appears not to have engaged in surgery, barring the two exceptions he had originally made in the Discourse, (venesection and inoculation) he did sell drugs. A book of his medical accounts from 1781 to 1789 reveals that throughout this period Morgan's medical practice included the sale of drugs. The high ideals with which he had begun the

⁵⁵Bell, "John Morgan," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XXII (September, 1948), 549.

⁵⁶Morgan, A Discourse, pp. iv-ix.

practice of medicine fifteen years earlier fell before the actual demands of making a living.⁵⁷

Though Morgan failed in his plan to separate pharmacy from medical-surgical practice, he performed the pioneering work for the reform. His contemporaries--Bond, Redman, Cadwalladen, and Shippen--were following his plan to some degree at the beginning of the Revolution; they were charging a cash fee for calls.⁵⁸

The second phase of Morgan's scheme to reform American medical practice, the establishment of the Philadelphia medical school, was more successful than his attempt to separate pharmacy from medical-surgical practice. The first session of the new school opened on Monday November 18, 1765, with Morgan lecturing on materia medica, pharmaceutical chemistry, and, "time permitting, practical observations on disease, diet, and medicines."⁵⁹ Shippen gave lectures on anatomy and surgery. During the first year classes met three days each week for three or four months and were an introductory course to the subjects to be taught the succeeding year.⁶⁰

Each session of the school saw an expansion of its activities. During the second session Morgan realized that the curriculum still lacked formal clinical instruction.

⁵⁷Bell, "John Morgan," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XXII (September, 1948), 549.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Pennsylvania Gazette, September 26, 1765.

⁶⁰Ibid.

The twenty pupils who arrived to attend the third session of the school in 1767 found that Thomas Bond, a Philadelphia doctor, had joined the faculty to give clinical lectures at the Pennsylvania Hospital. On June 21, 1768, the school conferred on ten graduates the first Bachelor of Medicine degrees granted in North America.⁶¹ The fifth session of the school, 1769-70, opened with an expanded faculty, notable for its youth. Morgan, age thirty-four, lectured on the theory and practice of medicine. Shippen, also thirty-four, taught anatomy, surgery, and midwifery. Adam Kuhn, a Philadelphia doctor, age twenty-eight, joined the faculty as professor of materia medica and botany. Benjamin Rush, age twenty-eight, held the chair of chemistry. Thomas Bond, who lectured on clinical medicine, was at fifty the oldest member of the faculty. The announcement for the fifth session noted that with the election of Rush all professorships were filled, and that a complete course of lectures in all the different branches of medicine would be offered that year.⁶² At the sixth session, ending in June, 1771, the school granted its first doctorate degrees to four members of the class of 1768.⁶³

⁶¹John Morgan to William Hewson, November 20, 1767, cited in Hodge, "Medical Literature: Retrospective Review," The North American Medical and Surgical Journal, 1827, IV, 379.

⁶²Pennsylvania Gazette, June 30, 1769.

⁶³Middleton, "John Morgan, Father of Medical Education in North America," Annals of Medical History, IX (March, 1927), 21.

Though the young school was well attended, the need for funds constituted a hindrance to its progress. To meet the problem, Morgan, at his own expense and bearing the sanction of the proprietor, Richard Penn, went to the British West Indies on a fund raising campaign in 1772. At that time the West Indies was the richest part of the British Empire. The fertile sugar estates of Jamaica had produced a wealthy planter class, and Morgan hoped they would contribute generously to the school's campaign. On his trip he was successful in obtaining two thousand pounds for the Philadelphia school.⁶⁴

In spite of several serious blows to its organization, the school continued to function, though somewhat feebly, during the Revolution. Morgan continued to serve at the school until he was elected director-general of the Continental Army's medical department in 1775. His subsequent absence, and the absences of Rush and Shippen, who resigned to join the army for periods of varying length, left the school understaffed. Kuhn, who had fallen under suspicion as a Loyalist, left the country. The medical school was further crippled when the College of Philadelphia was suspected by the radical Assembly as being a center of Loyalist influence. In November, 1779, the Assembly removed the trustees of the college, vested its property in a board created by the Assembly, and renamed the institution the University of the State of Pennsylvania.

⁶⁴Chapman, "An Account of the late Dr. John Morgan," The Philadelphia Journal of the Medical and Physical Sciences, I (November, 1820), 439.

The Assembly now felt that it had destroyed this Tory infection and had placed higher education in the safe hands of the friends of liberty.⁶⁵

In the spring of 1780 the board of the new university invited all the former professors of the old medical school to return. Morgan, who was preoccupied with his prosecution of Shippen, did not respond. At the board's insistence, Shippen returned to the school and began lecturing in January, 1781. Morgan, joined by Rush, asserted that Shippen's tarnished reputation would have a bad influence on the university and declared that they would not teach if Shippen were retained. The board, however, re-elected Shippen professor of anatomy over Morgan's and Rush's objections. In 1783, the board again attempted to complete the medical faculty by re-electing Rush and Morgan. Morgan was in Virginia petitioning the state government for bounty lands and ignored the re-election. Though he did not teach, the board was unwilling to replace him. The omission of lectures on theory and practice, Morgan's old chair, weakened the curriculum of the medical department. In 1788, the medical faculty asked the board to make some provision for the professorship of theory and practice. When the board asked Morgan whether he intended to teach or resign, he did neither.⁶⁶

⁶⁵Joseph Carson, History of the Medical Department of the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1869), pp. 89-91.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 92; Flexner, Doctors on Horseback, pp. 50-53.

In 1789, the Pennsylvania Assembly, now controlled by conservatives, revoked the act of 1779 regarding the College of Philadelphia. The old trustees were restored and the college reappeared in its old name and location. The former professors were asked by the trustees if they would resume their lectures. Morgan was traveling in the southern states for his health, and the trustees voted to wait for his answer until he returned. There is no record that Morgan gave them any reply when he returned.⁶⁷

Ironically, Shippen took the lead in reorganizing the medical school that Morgan had begun in 1765. Shippen, who had been ignored by Morgan when the school was originally founded, was responsible for the school's rebirth. From this second beginning the school has continued to exist and is today part of the University of Pennsylvania.⁶⁸

⁶⁷Carson, History of the Medical Department of the University of Pennsylvania, pp. 92-93.

⁶⁸Flexner, Doctors on Horseback, pp.52-52.

CHAPTER III

NATURAL PHILOSOPHER AND CITIZEN

John Morgan's active years were the embodiment of the beau-ideal of physician, philosopher, and citizen. Half a generation of young America's medical students patterned their lives after his. He was perhaps America's finest exemplification, before the Revolution, of the liberally educated eighteenth-century physician.

Morgan's work as a philosopher often reveals him at his creative best. In addition to his membership in several European societies, he was a leader in promoting scientific inquiry in America. Through the efforts of Morgan and others, the "American Philosophical Society held at Philadelphia for Promoting Useful Knowledge" was founded. He was for many years an active, valuable, and respected member of the Society.¹

The American Philosophical Society, the oldest of America's learned societies, was organized in 1743 by Benjamin Franklin, who envisioned an American society similar to the Royal Society of London. Through meetings and correspondence the members hoped to promote scientific inquiry and

¹Whitfield J. Bell, "John Morgan," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XXII (September, 1948), 543.

improvement in the practical arts of agriculture, engineering, trades, and manufacture. In spite of the great pains Franklin took to keep it alive, interest soon flagged, and by 1745, for all practical purposes, the Society was dead.

In 1750, a group of younger Philadelphians formed another society based on Franklin's Junto of 1727. Franklin had formed the Junto among his friends for mutual improvement. They met for weekly discussions and read papers every three months. But support for the "young Junto," as Franklin and others called it, also waned, and by 1765 it had become virtually inactive.²

In February, 1766, Morgan was the leading figure in the organization of the Philadelphia Medical Society. As the leader of America's foremost medical center, he invited all the distinguished doctors except the Shippens to join, thus aggravating his feud with William Shippen, Jr. Late in 1766, Morgan requested the Pennsylvania Proprietor, Thomas Penn, to charter the Medical Society as a college of physicians. The organization was intended to be comparable to the college of physicians of London and Edinburgh--promoting an exchange of medical knowledge, encouraging experimentation, and establishing and enforcing standards of professional conduct. Although the charter for the college would be granted for Philadelphia,

²Edwin G. Conklin, "A Brief History of the American Philosophical Society," American Philosophical Society Year Book, 1963, pp. 36-38.

Morgan hoped that its scope would be intercolonial, and that the license it conferred would carry authority in all the British North American colonies. After cautious consideration, Penn, feeling that the premature state of medical education in the colonies made such an organization unsound, refused to grant the charter.³

Unable to obtain a charter for his medical society, Morgan used his newly acquired membership in the "young Junto" as a device to "save" his Society. Through his and Charles Thomas's efforts the "young Junto" was revived. By a series of changes in the by-laws, December 13, 1766, it enlarged its purpose and membership by absorbing Morgan's Medical Society, changed its name to "The American Society for Promoting and Propagating Useful Knowledge held at Philadelphia," and embarked on a period of vigorous activity. Franklin was elected president. The Society's members were predominately Anti-proprietary,⁴ and they were interested in any improvement in

³William Frederick Norwood, "The Early History of American Medical Societies," Ciba Symposia, IX (December, 1947), 769-770.

⁴The Anti-Proprietary party, composed primarily of the Quakers and Germans of Pennsylvania and led by Benjamin Franklin and Joseph Galloway, favored the abolition of the proprietorship. This faction maintained that the proprietors had restricted liberty, had retarded settlement by reserving large tracts of the best lands for future markets, and had resisted taxation of their estates. The Proprietary party, led by William Smith, Richard Peters, Benjamin Chew, and William Allen and formed of Anglicans, Presbyterians, and the Scotch-Irish of western Pennsylvania, while admitting that there was some truth in the charges made by the opposition, maintained that to change the government from proprietary

agriculture, manufacturing, and commerce that might help the American colonies.⁵

The evident success of the American Society effected the resurrection of the defunct American Philosophical Society started by Franklin in 1743. The new American Society had pointedly failed to elect to membership several distinguished philosophers and citizens who were active in the Proprietary party, or who were personally obnoxious to the leaders of the American Society. The Proprietary faction, led by Thomas Bond, revived the old American Philosophical Society in 1767-68 and secured the patronage of John Penn, Lieutenant-governor of the Province and grandson of William Penn. The Governor of Pennsylvania, James Hamilton, was elected president, and doctors William Shippen, Sr., and Thomas Bond were chosen vice-presidents.⁶

It soon became obvious that Philadelphia was too small to support two learned societies, and it is to Morgan's credit that he reversed his position and took a leading role in uniting the two. In February, 1768, when the American Society decided to propose union with the Philosophical Society, Morgan

to royal would expose the people to worse evils, such as a possible church establishment and a standing army. The agitation caused by the Stamp Act overshadowed this issue of governmental change in Pennsylvania, and Franklin's faction rediscovered the merits of Penn's charter. Wayland F. Dunaway, A History of Pennsylvania (Englewood Cliffs, 1948), pp. 118-126.

⁵Conklin, "A Brief History of the American Philosophical Society," American Philosophical Society Year Book, 1963, p. 39.

⁶Ibid.

was in the chair. The Philosophical Society answered the proposal by electing to membership the entire roll of the American Society. The American Society felt this was not union but absorption, and the offer was refused. Morgan was a member of one of the committees of conference then appointed to draft a treaty of union "on terms of perfect equality." Again, he was presiding when the union of the two societies was finally effected at the end of 1768.⁷

As a leader in American medicine and a European traveler, Morgan was able to propose many of his friends' names to membership in the Philosophical Society. His correspondence with them and their responses reveal his wide range of interests. The minutes of the American Philosophical Society of January 16, 1769, record the receipt of a letter by Morgan from D. Cirillo of Naples, whom Morgan had met in Italy in 1764. Cirillo thanked Morgan for proposing him to membership in the Society and promised to do anything in his power to assist in the promotion of the ends of the Society.⁸

At various times Morgan read letters to the Society from Dr. William Wright of Jamaica, on "The Antiseptic Virtues of Vegetable Acid (lime or lemon juice) and Marine Salt

⁷Ibid., pp. 39-40.

⁸Antonio Pace, "The American Philosophical Society and Italy," Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, XC (December, 1946), 388-389.

Combined;"⁹ from Archibald Gloster of Antigua, on the use of opium in treating tetanus;¹⁰ from George Davidson of St. Lucia, on the medicinal values of Cinchona bark; and from Thomas S. Duche of London, on the using of cortex rubber, or red bark, in the treatment of remittent and bilious fevers.¹¹ Morgan also inserted in the minutes an account received from an "English gentleman" in Naples of the eruption of Vesuvius;¹² and a letter from Dr. John Perkins of Boston regarding wind, waterspouts, tornadoes, and hurricanes.¹³

Morgan's contributions to the Society were not limited to those involving correspondence. Perhaps the most valuable of his original papers submitted to the organization was his essay on "The Art of Making Anatomical Preparations by Corrosion." In this paper he pointed out the critical need for studying the vascular system as a means of achieving a more thorough understanding of the anatomy. As corrosion revealed even the small vessels of the body, Morgan felt it superior to dissection for studying the vascular system. He continued

⁹William Wright to John Morgan (no date), Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, II, 284-389.

¹⁰Archibald Gloster to John Morgan (no date), Transactions, I, 379-384.

¹¹George Davidson to John Morgan, August 29, 1783, Thomas S. Duche to John Morgan, August 9, 1783, Transactions, II, 289-293.

¹²"An Account of the Eruption of Mount Vesuvius," Transactions, II, 335-347.

¹³John Perkins to John Morgan (no date), Transactions, II, 366-383.

by commenting on the success of corrosion in Europe and concluded the article by giving specific directions for the preparation of specimens by this method.¹⁴

The other contributions of Morgan are perhaps more picturesque than valuable. One of these, entitled "Of a Living Snake in a Living Horse's Eye," described a horse in whose left eye a worm was visible. This curiosity prompted Morgan to speculate on spontaneous generation.¹⁵ The other contribution concerned a piebald Negro girl with splotches over her entire body, and a mulatto boy with a white spot on his forehead. Morgan's conjectures on the possible causes of these conditions involved experiences of the children's mothers during pregnancy and events in their grandparents' lives.¹⁶

While not an avid paleontologist, Morgan, as a philosopher, exhibited a casual interest in the subject and possessed a bone collection that attracted some attention. His brother, George Morgan, visited the Big Bone Lick in what is now Boone County, Kentucky, and while there collected some mastodon bones. John added these to his collection of "natural curiosities" acquired in Europe.¹⁷

¹⁴John Morgan, "The Art of Making Anatomical Preparations by Corrosion," Transactions, II, 366-383.

¹⁵John Morgan, "Of a Living Snake in a Living Horse's Eye," Transactions, II, 383-391.

¹⁶John Morgan, "Some Accounts of a Motley Coloured or Pye Negro Girl and Mulatto Boy," Transactions, II, 392-395.

¹⁷Bell, "John Morgan," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XXII (September, 1948), 553.

Morgan's collection of prehistoric American bones attracted the inquisitive. John Adams, while attending the Continental Congress in Philadelphia in 1774, dined with Morgan one evening and remembered being shown "some bones of an animal of enormous size found upon the banks of the river Ohio."¹⁸ Dr. Frederick Michaelis, physician-general to the Hessian troops in America and later a foreign member of the American Philosophical Society, became interested in Morgan's collection and examined it while visiting in Philadelphia. After returning to Germany, Michaelis attempted to buy Morgan's specimens, but the offer was rejected. Morgan wrote the German that he might one day get around to studying the bones carefully for his own satisfaction, and that it would be "a pity to remove such rare and surprising curiosities of nature from the country where they were found."¹⁹ However, Morgan did allow Charles Wilson Peale to be engaged to make drawings of the collection for Michaelis.²⁰

Morgan never became sufficiently interested in paleontology to enlarge his collection, to study the bones carefully, or to write about them. Even when Peter Collinson and William Hunter proved the remains to be a totally different

¹⁸Charles Francis Adams, editor, The Works of John Adams, (Boston, 1854), IX, 397.

¹⁹Bell, "John Morgan," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XXII (September, 1948), 554.

²⁰Frederick Michaelis to John Morgan, August 7, 1783, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

species from the mastodon, as had been assumed by anatomists, Morgan either rejected their conclusion, or did not know of it. In 1787 he agreed with the Dutch anatomist, Peter Camper, that "the tusks belong to the elephant and not to the mammoth."²¹ In the same year Camper wrote Morgan an offer to buy his entire collection of bones. Morgan had refused Camper once before, but in the summer of 1788 Morgan changed his mind and shipped the collection to Holland. After Morgan's wife died in January, 1785, he tentatively planned to live with his brother George at Princeton. When he made definite plans to move, he began to sell some of his possessions, and the collection of mastodon bones was the first to go. Since Camper had the reputation of being one of the most eminent anatomists in Europe, Morgan felt that he would utilize the bones properly for research in comparative anatomy.²²

As an eighteenth century philosopher-physician, Morgan was one of the first Americans to become interested in aerostats (balloons). As in paleontology, Morgan made no original contribution to the new interest, but he did assist materially in publicizing the subject. From its birth in the summer of 1783, at Annonay near Lyons, ballooning spread from France across the Alps to Italy and the Channel to England. By the winter of 1783-84, many Americans knew much of the new scientific

²¹Bell, "John Morgan," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XXII (September, 1948), 554-555.

²²Ibid.

rage. Franklin, then United States minister to France, witnessed one of the pioneering balloon ascents in Paris and wrote of it to many of his friends, one being Francis Hopkinson, Morgan's brother-in-law in Philadelphia. Franklin later wrote Rush, enclosing a pamphlet describing a proposed passenger balloon; Rush presented these at a meeting of the American Philosophical Society on March 19, 1784.

Morgan, Hopkinson, Foulk, Morris, and other Philadelphians experimented with small balloons, but the balloonists soon decided they wanted to construct a balloon large enough to lift a living person. In the early summer of 1784, plans were made for a public subscription to finance construction. Morgan was selected to solicit the support of the American Philosophical Society; he made his appeal to the Society at its June 11 meeting. At the next meeting Morgan withdrew his motion for support when it was indicated that the Society's rules prohibited its giving its opinion as a body on matters presented to it. He did, however, read to the Society a paper on the construction and use of air balloons. The subscription campaign continued. Eighty-five notable citizens, including clergymen, doctors, lawyers, professors, and printers motivated by "a love of science and honor of their country," consented to accept donations. Morgan was responsible for soliciting funds on Fourth Street. An unsuccessful ascent in Philadelphia on July 17, 1784, by Peter Carnes, a Maryland lawyer, appears to have ended the

solicitation campaign. No large balloon, as envisioned by the schemers, was ever constructed in the city.²³

In spite of the Philadelphia fiasco in ballooning, Morgan and others continued their experiments with lighter than air vehicles. Mrs. Charles Thomson, writing from New York in 1786, regarding a surprise visit from a friend in Philadelphia, jokingly suggested that her Philadelphia correspondent must have engaged "Dr. Morgan's balloon" for his trip.²⁴

In addition to his activities as a philosopher, both inside and outside the American Philosophical Society, Morgan participated in certain civil activities. In 1774, he was elected the spokesman of a group of French and Indian War officers who sought bounty land for their war service. In this capacity he traveled to Virginia to consult with governmental officials regarding the matter but was unable to complete the arrangements for the men to receive the land.²⁵

During "The Critical Period" of American history, Americans were treated as a foreign people by Great Britain as well as other European countries, and denied participation of their ships in the trade of the West Indies, so important

²³Ibid., pp. 556-559.

²⁴Hannah Thompson to John Mifflin, September 17, 1786, Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XIV (April, 1890), 36.

²⁵John Morgan to William Wilson, February 22, 1774; John Morgan to Joseph Shippen, Jr., March 4, 1774; John Morgan to James Burd, March 14, 1774, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

in their economy before the Revolution. George Hofner of Guadeloupe complained through James Oillers, a merchant of Philadelphia, that only American vessels with French colors could land in Guadeloupe. Morgan, at the request of Oillers, wrote Congress regarding American trade with the French colonies. Morgan asked Congress to pass regulations so as to "render the advantages of commerce between French and American subjects equal and reciprocal."²⁶

Morgan demonstrated his interest in colonial politics and economics as well as his literary ability by winning over a field of notable competitors the Sargent Prize Medal. In an attempt to stimulate discussion on the relationship of the American colonies to the mother country, John Sargent, a London merchant, sponsored a contest open to any person connected with the College of Philadelphia. In this, the first literary contest at the institution, Sargent presented four awards to the authors of the best essays on "The Reciprocal Advantages of a Perpetual Union between Great Britain and her American Colonies." Morgan, along with the other winners, read his dissertation at the commencement of the

²⁶ John Morgan to President of Congress, August 23, 1783, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 63, no. 177, The National Archives, Washington. Beyond his interest in the economic health of the young nation, the reason for Morgan's writing this letter is not clear. It might have been written as a personal favor to Oillers; the nature of the merchant's request is not revealed. However, since Morgan was a person of some note, Oillers may have felt that an appeal from Morgan would attract more notice in Congress.

College on May 20, 1766. His paper received favorable notice both in the colonies and Europe. The reading of the essay came at a delicate time: the account of the repeal of the Stamp Act was received in Philadelphia on May 19, 1766.²⁷

In his pro-British essay Morgan based his argument for a perpetual union of the colonies and Great Britain on commercial considerations. He noted the mutual dependence of the two parties and the mutual advantages of this relationship. Great Britain was dependent upon the colonies for raw materials, and only by purchasing them in the colonies was she assured a market for her manufactured products. Neither party should breach this prosperous relationship.

Morgan advanced religion as a secondary argument for a continuation of the perpetual union. Through the union of Britain and her American colonies the Protestant religion might be spread in the regions of the western world. Morgan did not dwell on the religious argument but devoted most of his attention to the economic aspect of the union.

Morgan insisted that colonial trade was important to England. America produced every kind of raw material, which Britain purchased, thereby saving money for the latter which would otherwise be spent in foreign nations. By their mere

²⁷John Morgan and others, Four Dissertations on the Reciprocal Advantages of a Perpetual Union between Great Britain and her American Colonies, (Philadelphia, 1766), pp. 1-ix.

existence the plantations encouraged navigation, and navigation was the "nursery of seamen." "This renders England considerable by her fleets, respected by her allies, and the scourge of her enemies." But Americans profited too. They received the blessings of English liberty, the provision of English manufactured goods, and the protection England would give in wartime.

In his conclusion Morgan warned that Great Britain could preserve the union by encouraging the obedience of a dutiful and loyal people through the passage of equal laws and the maintenance of free and open commerce, rather than by attempting to force unequal laws and severe restrictions upon unwilling subjects. The balance of trade, he observed, would return far more money than armies, taxes, and tribute. Should selfish or unfair politicians pass unjust laws that would injure the liberty and property of the colonists, the colonists would have a tendency to cut their ties with the mother country and look upon her as a foreign power. The colonists considered themselves Englishmen; thus the rights of Americans could not be violated without violating and undermining the English Constitution. The best way to perpetuate the union was to allow the colonies their customary liberties and privileges with respect to trade and taxes, while the Americans would demonstrate their loyalty by supporting the Crown and Parliament.²⁸

²⁸Ibid., pp. 1-45.

In line with his economic interests, Morgan was concerned with the development of the domestic economy. He was always eager to promote some new product or process. While in Rotterdam in 1763, Morgan met Peter Hasenclever, an ambitious German with a grandiose scheme for establishing iron manufacturing in the colonies. Hasenclever was looking for capital to support a company to work the iron deposits in Pennsylvania. Morgan became interested in the project and gave Hasenclever a letter of introduction to Thomas Penn in London as the person whose advice would be most helpful in starting such a project in Pennsylvania.²⁹

The domestic textile industry did not escape Morgan's attention. Two letters of 1775-74 indicate that he was interested in the infant American silk industry. He received letters from Hare and Skinner, silk merchants of London, describing the complete process of producing silk yarn, advising him on the assorting of classes of silk, and warning him to produce only quality silk. Through the American Philosophical Society this information was made available to a larger audience.³⁰ At one meeting of the American Society he exhibited some fine hemp, a single thread spun of hemp intended for use as linen in shirts and sheeting, and a three-corded

²⁹Bell, "John Morgan," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XXII (September, 1948), 550.

³⁰Hare and Skinner to John Morgan, July 27, 1774, and February 24, 1775, Transactions, II, 347-366.

thread of the same, "deemed suitable to make stockings of excellent and durable quality."³¹

Morgan devoted particular attention to the development of domestic agriculture. He presented to the American Philosophical Society an article on sunflower seed oil, giving the history of the seed's introduction to the colonies, the procedures for planting and harvesting it, and uses for its oil.³² From the society, Morgan and other members received Chinese vetch seed to plant, and in 1785 Morgan was one of the first members of the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture.³³

The following incident reveals the convictions that Morgan held on the subject of promoting domestic agriculture. Morgan left Philadelphia in the late summer of 1788 and went south for his health. In March of 1789, on the return journey to Philadelphia, he stopped at New Bern, North Carolina, where he was invited to address a gentlemen's literary society. The topic he chose was "Whether It Be Most Beneficial to the United States to Promote Agriculture or to Encourage the Mechanical Arts and Manufacturing."³⁴

³¹Bell, "John Morgan," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XXII (September, 1948), 550.

³²John Morgan, "On the Expressing of Oil from the Sunflower-seed," Transactions, II, 347-366.

³³Bell, "John Morgan," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XXII (September, 1948), 550.

³⁴Ibid., p. 551.

In the years succeeding the Revolution, the question of a national economic policy was often under discussion. Some said that only through the strength of an agricultural life could America retain its republican simplicity and innocence. Others felt the country should develop manufacturing, thus becoming economically as well as politically free of Europe. Morgan accepted the actual conditions of American life as good and desirable and urged that it should be the national policy to preserve them. The encouragement of agriculture should be the principal object, for the land could easily support fifty million Americans. Thus supplied with necessities cheaply, Americans would live more easily, they would marry earlier, and the population would increase. In addition, agriculture would furnish the country "with the most effectual means of procuring, in the way of barter and commerce, all those things, which we cannot expect or hope to obtain by our own labour." Any hands that could be spared from agriculture might be employed in house- and ship-building and in the manufacture of textiles. Cotton grown in the southern states could be manufactured into cloth and clothes in the North at a great savings to the country. Morgan spoke approvingly of projects for American viticulture and wine-making for domestic consumption. In brief, he believed in the goodness of an agrarian society.³⁵

³⁵Ibid.

Morgan's actions tie him closely to the pattern of life in his time and place. His interests as a citizen, his activities as a natural philosopher, and the ideas he contributed to his profession place him in the mainstream of the eighteenth century Enlightenment. The efforts of Morgan and his contemporaries are evaluated by Bell in these words:

For it was not the great men only, but the men of second rank whose ambitions far outran their achievements, who served laboriously on committees, prepared articles for publication, collected curiosities which they tried to explain, shared their knowledge and speculations with others like themselves--and did all this in the conviction that they thereby advanced learning and the happiness of mankind.³⁶

³⁶Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

When John Morgan accepted the post of director-general of the Continental army's medical department, he inherited from his predecessor, Dr. Benjamin Church of Boston, a department filled with problems. Charged with the ultimate responsibility for solving these problems was the Continental Congress. Throughout the Revolution, Congress found the medical department a continual source of trouble. During Morgan's tenure as director-general Congress was faced with the bulk of its troubles in the medical department. Congress's real distress in this department began after the Battle of Bunker Hill.

The Battle of Bunker Hill, June 19, 1775, forced the Continental Congress to realize that the medical department of the Continental army was inadequate. The high casualty rate of this conflict demonstrated the need for a centralized medical facility. In late July, 1775, Congress passed an act establishing a hospital (medical) department to be administered by a Chief Physician and Director-General of the Army Hospital.¹ The act was vague and failed to provide

¹Chauncy Ford, and others, editor, Journals of the Continental Congress (34 vols., Washington, 1904-1937), II, 191-211.

for a true centralized medical agency. The legislation failed to take into account further expansion of the army, and the resulting necessary enlargement of medical service.²

In April, 1777, Congress, in an attempt to provide for expansion and the necessary centralization in the medical department, abolished the "Hospital of 1775," and authorized the formation of a new hospital to be managed by a director-general.³ The director-general was to examine all applicants for medical positions, appoint minor department officers, and establish and regulate most hospitals. He was to enforce all department rules and regulations, supervise the methods and techniques of the department surgeons, inspect all installations under his command, control the purchase and distribution of department supplies, and prepare the medical budget and vouchers for Congressional examination. As the director-general assumed his responsibility, other duties were added to the position by a process of natural growth, and the post became one of the most powerful offices in the military establishment.⁴

²Howard Lewis Applegate, "The Medical Administration of the American Revolutionary Army," Military Affairs, XXV (May, 1961), 1.

³Ford, Journals, VII, 231-237.

⁴Ibid., VII, 231-237, XVIII, 878-886, XXI, 1093-1094, XXII, 4-7.

During the war period the director-general had many problems in the department's management. The treatment of the sick and wounded suffered from the lack of competent surgeons and the petty competition between hospital districts. Patients were unruly and it was necessary to assign special detachments of soldiers to the hospitals to keep order. Many hospitals were in isolated locations, and the lack of transportation made it difficult to get the wounded to the hospitals. A scarcity of food, drugs, and supplies accentuated the medical department's meager budget.⁵

After Washington took command of Massachusetts' force, Congress ordered the unit's medical department reorganized so as to make it more effective in the event of a large-scale war. The Massachusetts regimental surgeons opposed this action, since they were no longer allowed free use of medical supplies and were required to prepare weekly reports. A majority of the sick were transferred from regimental to general hospitals, thereby reducing the work and importance of the regimental hospitals.⁶

In late April, 1775, Dr. Benjamin Church was chosen by Congress as the first director-general of the medical department. The conflict between Washington and the regimental

⁵Applegate, "The Medical Administration of the American Revolutionary Army," Military Affairs, XXV (May, 1961), 2.

⁶General Orders, July 7, 22, 24, and September 7, 1775, John C. Fitzpatrick, editor, The Writings of George Washington (39 vols., Washington, 1931-1944), III, 317, 354, 363, 480-481.

surgeons was the first problem facing the new director-general.⁷ Church attempted to continue Washington's reorganization, using the British medical department as a model. Church examined all hospital personnel for competence, and advanced the idea that regimental surgeons should treat only minor cases in regimental hospitals and send severe cases to the general hospitals. The regimental surgeons were determined to prevent the success of Church's plans and constantly hindered his efforts by various devious means. They sometimes kept all the sick in the regimental hospitals and refused to send the serious cases to the general hospital; at other times they sent all the sick, including minor cases. Further, the surgeons demanded drugs, but refused to account for their use.⁸

The regimental surgeons opposed the reorganization of the medical department for several reasons. The first was based on the conflicting interests between those upholding Continental authority and those who paid allegiance to local authority. Second, the surgeons complained that they were not allowed medicine for the sick and wounded. Last, there was a debate on the importance of the regimental hospitals. The regimental surgeons were supported by their officers, who

⁷Ford, Journals, II, 211.

⁸Benjamin Church to Samuel Adams, August 22, 23, 1775, cited in James E. Gibson, Dr. Bodo Otto and the Medical Background of the American Revolution (Springfield, 1937), pp. 115-116.

feared an invasion of central (Continental) authority into locally elected units.⁹ Church maintained that the regimental hospitals cost more than they were worth and that the care provided by the surgeons was less than satisfactory. He also noted that most of the waste of drugs and supplies could be traced to the regimental medical installations.¹⁰ Washington was in agreement with Church's stand, but ordered a court of inquiry to conduct a full investigation of the conflict between the surgeons and Church.¹¹ Before the inquiry was completed, Church was discovered in treasonable correspondence with the enemy, and was summarily dismissed and imprisoned.¹²

Four candidates were advanced in Congress to replace Church as director-general of the medical department: Isaac Foster, Edward Hand, and Jonathan Potts, all of whom were military surgeons, and John Morgan. Morgan's brilliant success in Europe, his past experience as a surgeon with the British forces in America, and his leadership of the most eminent medical center in America made him the natural choice for the vacant post. Congress officially elected him to the position on October 17, 1775.¹³

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹General Orders, September 18, 1775, Fitzpatrick, Writings of Washington, III, 499.

¹²Ford, Journals, III, 295.

¹³Ibid., p. 297.

In a letter to Richard Henry Lee, Washington privately expressed his regret that Lee's brother-in-law, William Shippen, Jr., had not been selected.¹⁴ Nevertheless, to most persons Morgan appeared eminently suited to his task. John Adams, impressed by Morgan's qualifications and experience, assured his fellow New Englanders that the post was well filled and urged them to show the new director-general all the "honor and respect" he deserved.¹⁵

To the position of director-general Morgan brought the personal feud that existed between him and Shippen. After Morgan had eclipsed Shippen's pioneering efforts as a medical teacher in Philadelphia--by founding the medical school in that city--he had gone on to become the leader of Philadelphia, if not American, medicine. As director of the school he had exerted considerable influence over his colleagues and students. His power in the American Philosophical Society and College of Physicians of Philadelphia was substantial, and his social and financial position was secure.

Shippen's position was only slightly less prominent, insofar as the public was concerned. His social and family positions were secure, and his father and uncle exercised political and financial influence. His medical prestige was

¹⁴Gibson, Bodo Otto, p. 117.

¹⁵John Adams to Abigail Adams, October 28, 1775, L. H. Butterfield, editor, Adams Family Correspondence (2 vols., Cambridge, 1963), I, 315.

founded on an accumulation of the accomplishments of both himself and his father. Shippen represented the Philadelphia "establishment," which regarded people from the "newer" families, such as Morgan's, as upstarts.

Thus a local quarrel over the control of America's most important medical center was injected into the main arena of the Revolution, where it involved thousands of lives and seriously interfered with the efficiency of the Continental army.¹⁶

Late in 1775, Morgan joined Washington and the Continental army at Cambridge, where he immediately became involved in the controversy with the regimental surgeons. Morgan insisted, as had Church, that the general hospital staff was superior to the regimental staffs. The regimental surgeons rejected Morgan's claim.¹⁷ Morgan's original commission was vague and did not define his powers and responsibilities; this condition hampered his attempt to assert his authority. His pleas for advice were frequently ignored by Congress; yet that body repeatedly interfered with his subsequent actions.¹⁸

¹⁶John E. Kieffer, "Philadelphia Controversy," Bulletin of the History of Medicine, XI (February, 1942), 148-152.

¹⁷John Morgan, A Vindication of His Public Character (Boston, 1777), pp. 33, 49-58; George Washington to President of Congress, September 24, 1776, George Washington to John Morgan, January 6, 1779, Fitzpatrick, Writings of Washington VI, 113, VIII, 481-482.

¹⁸John Morgan to President of Congress, August 13, 1776, cited in Gibson, Bodo Otto, p. 113; Morgan, Vindication, pp. 47-48; Peter Force, editor, American Archives, 4th series, (6 vols., Washington, 1837-46), VI, 1714-1715.

Congress, having decided that the constant faultfinding and backbiting were causing the medical staff to neglect patients, intervened in the struggle in July, 1776. Congressional investigations revealed that the regimental hospitals, as compared with the general hospital at Cambridge, were grossly inadequate in physical conditions. In an attempt to correct the deplorable conditions of the regimental hospitals, Congress empowered the general hospital staff to inspect and regulate the regimental hospitals.¹⁹

The nature of Morgan's office was subject to differing interpretations. He assumed that he was "Director-General and Physician in Chief." On September 14, 1776, however, Samuel Stringer was appointed "Director of the Northern Department²⁰ Hospital at Albany," giving him one month's seniority over Morgan. Jonathan Potts was named "Chief Physician of the Northern District" on May 10, 1776.²¹ Washington warned Congress that it was unwise to have three prominent leaders in the Northern District and advised having only one administrator.²² Fearing that Stringer and Potts were slowly eroding his power, Morgan requested that Congress reaffirm his

¹⁹Ford, Journals, V, 568-571; Morgan, Vindication, pp. 64-66.

²⁰The Northern Department included the area from the Hudson River to Quebec to Crown Point. Ford, Journals, VII 162.

²¹Ford, Journals, II, 249, IV, 344, V, 424.

²²George Washington to President of Congress, April 26, 1776, Fitzpatrick, Writings of Washington, IV, 520-521.

superiority.²³ Congress responded on August 20, 1776, by declaring that Morgan was "Chief Physician and Director-General of the American Hospital." At the same time, Stringer was made "Director and Physician of the Hospital in the Northern Department." Each director had an "exclusive right" to appoint surgeons and hospital officers within his own department.²⁴ Though Stringer was still required to transmit his monthly report to Congress through Morgan, he was privately assured by several Congressmen that this did not mean Morgan was his superior. Morgan, however, assumed himself to be the head of the "Hospital Department."²⁵

On July 15, 1776, William Shippen, Jr., was appointed "Chief Physician of the Flying Camp," a body of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland militia hurriedly called up for short terms to repel the British attack on New York.²⁶ Almost immediately he and Morgan became involved in a jurisdictional dispute. Because of the running feud already existing

²³John Morgan to Samuel Adams, June 25, 1776, Force, American Archives, 4th Series, VI, 1069-1070; John Morgan to President of Congress, August 12, 1776, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 63, 105, The National Archives, Washington.

²⁴Ford, Journals, V, 673.

²⁵Thomas Heyward to John Morgan, September 4, 1776, Edmund C. Burnett, editor, Letters of Members of the Continental Congress (8 vols., Washington, 1936), II, 69; Samuel Stringer to Jonathan Potts, August 17, 1776, cited in Gibson, Bodo Otto, pp. 108-109.

²⁶Ford, Journals, V. 562.

between the two rivals, what might have been an ordinary battlefield command dispute became a bitter contest for power.

On October 9, 1776, Congress made Morgan responsible for the hospitals east of the Hudson River, and Shippen was made responsible for those west of the River, in effect reducing Morgan's jurisdiction.²⁷ The resolution defining their commands was interpreted by Morgan and Washington as making a distinction only between armies, for which separate hospitals were to be established.²⁸ On the other hand, Shippen claimed that he had exclusive jurisdiction over all medical facilities west of the Hudson River.²⁹

During the American evacuation of New York in December, 1776, Morgan was ordered by Washington to establish hospitals in the suburbs of the city. Shippen demanded control of the two that were located in New Jersey, but Morgan refused to relinquish control. Shippen was particularly interested in the hospital's supplies, maintaining

²⁷Ibid., V, 857-858.

²⁸Morgan, Vindication, pp. xxii, xxv; George Washington to William Shippen, Jr., November 3, 1776, Fitzpatrick, Writings of Washington, VI, 239.

²⁹William Shippen, Jr. to President of Congress, November 9, 1776, William Shippen, Jr. to George Washington, December 8, 1776, Peter Force, American Archives, 5th series (3 vols., Washington, 1837-1846), III, 618, 1119.

that they were urgently needed at that time. Morgan, however, said they were being reserved for future use.³⁰

Shippen's goal was to become director-general of the Continental medical department, and he felt that a controversy could be employed to force Morgan out of office. Shippen conducted both secret and public campaigns against Morgan. As part of his secret campaign to eliminate Morgan, Shippen exploited the hostility between Morgan and the regimental surgeons. In the hope of getting supplies, some surgeons unintentionally cooperated with Shippen by spreading falsehoods about the director-general's negligence. Other surgeons, jealous of Morgan's power and hoping that he would be censored or dismissed, spread rumors of his supposed inefficiency and inhumanity.³¹ In his public campaign, Shippen charged Morgan with misappropriation of public funds, selling public property for personal profit, employing ignorant youths as hospital mates, and keeping

³⁰Ibid.; Morgan, Vindication, pp. xxxi-xxxvi; George Washington to William Shippen, Jr., December 12, 1776, George Washington to John Morgan, January 6, 1779, Fitzpatrick, Writings of Washington, VI, 361-362, XIII, 481-482.

³¹John Hancock to Philip Schuyler, December 30, 1776, Force, American Archives, 5th series, III, 1478; George Washington to Isaac Foster, January 22, 1777, Fitzpatrick, Writings of Washington, VII, 86; Burnett, Letters of Members, II, 158, 188, 211-212, 271.

public supplies for personal use. These public charges were essentially the same charges that were spread secretly.³²

Shippen continued agitating for official approval of his command of the medical forces west of the Hudson. Unable to obtain agreement from Washington that he had the exclusive power to superintend hospitals on the west side of the Hudson River, Shippen moved to obtain confirmation of such a command from Congress.³³ He procured from General Hugh Mercer, Commander of the Flying Camp, an opinion that the Congressional resolution of October 9 charged Shippen to care for all the sick west of the Hudson and all the medical stores as well.³⁴ Shippen forwarded both Washington's letter of November 3 and Mercer's of November 4, 1776, to Congress, noting their interpretations of the October 9 resolution.³⁵ On November 28, 1776, Congress responded by passing the resolution Shippen wanted. Morgan was to care for the sick and wounded of the army on the east side of the Hudson River, and

³²Morgan, Vindication, pp. xxi, xxvi; Richard Henry Lee to William Shippen, Jr., January and May 7, 1780, James Curtis Ballagh, editor, The Letters of Richard Henry Lee (2 vols., New York, 1911), I, 166-167, II, 178-179; William Shippen, Jr., to Richard Henry Lee, December--, 1776 and January 17, 1777, cited in Gibson, Bodo Otto, pp. 202-203.

³³George Washington to William Shippen, Jr., November 3, 1776, Fitzpatrick, Writings of Washington, VI, 239.

³⁴Hugh Mercer to William Shippen, Jr., November 4, 1776, Force, American Archives, 5th series, III, 509.

³⁵William Shippen, Jr., to President of Congress, November 9, 1776, American Archives, 5th Series, III, 618.

Shippen was to do the same on the west side of the River.³⁶ Since Washington's force was now in New Jersey, Shippen was in effect the principal medical officer for the army. Shippen lost no time in acting as such. He had his surgeons prepare a general hospital in Bethlehem, requested that Washington order Morgan's stores opened, and reported to Washington that most of the sick had been removed to Bethlehem, Allentown, and Easton.³⁷

In December, Morgan withdrew through New Jersey and hurried on to Philadelphia to search for supplies and to get Congress to assert his authority over Shippen. Congress, anxiously watching the advancing British army and planning its own flight from the city, had no time for him. Washington was busy and did not help either; he ordered Morgan back to the east side of the Hudson.³⁸

Shippen was now effectively in control of the medical department. Morgan had reached the end of his power and usefulness. Shippen's campaign to discredit Morgan's performance as director-general obviously had been successful, for on January 9, 1777, Congress voted to discharge Morgan.³⁹

³⁶Ford, Journals, VI, 983, 989; John Hancock to George Washington, December 1, 1776; Force, American Archives, 5th series, III, 1026.

³⁷William Shippen Jr., to George Washington, December 8, 1776, Washington Papers, Library of Congress, Washington.

³⁸Morgan, Vindication, xi, xxxviii-xi, 19-20, 148-149.

³⁹Ford, Journals, VII, 24-25.

Shippen expected to become the new director-general after Morgan's dismissal. In anticipation, Shippen earlier had drafted and submitted to Congress a plan for the re-organization of the medical department he expected soon to direct. After some debate and modification, Shippen's plan was adopted by Congress on April 7, 1777.⁴⁰ Congress next turned its attention to the problem of selecting a new director-general to head the reorganized medical department. Three medical department physicians' names were placed in nomination: John Cochran, Philip Turner, and William Shippen, Jr. Turner was elected on the first ballot. A minority of Congress, however, felt that the author of the new hospital act should logically be elected to the office. Consequently, Congress invalidated the first election and Shippen obtained the position for which he had campaigned.⁴¹

⁴⁰Ibid., VII, 231-237.

⁴¹Ibid., 253-254; Harvey E. Brown, The Medical Department of the United States Army from 1775-1873 (Washington, 1873), p. 39.

CHAPTER V

EXONERATION

Morgan was stunned by his unexpected discharge, and in a formal protest to Washington expressed a desire for a court of inquiry. Washington forwarded Morgan's manuscript to Congress, commenting that he knew nothing of the alleged charges against the former director-general. Washington also noted that Morgan's plan for improved regulation of the hospital, included in the packet of papers to Congress, was similar in some respects to a plan previously advanced by Shippen.¹

Necessary business prevented Congress from giving serious consideration to Morgan's personal grievances and his request for an official investigation. When his appeals to Washington and Congress went unheeded, Morgan felt justified in making a public defense. In March, 1777, he prepared and had published A Vindication of His Public Character in the Station of Director-General. This document of 158 pages presented most of the relevant communications between him and Congress, Washington, and the regimental surgeons.²

¹George Washington to President of Congress, February 14, 1777, John C. Fitzpatrick, editor, The Writings of George Washington (39 vols., Washington, 1931-44), VII, 149-151.

²John Morgan, A Vindication of His Public Character (Boston, 1777), pp. 1-148.

In the Vindication, Morgan emphasized his tireless work to reorganize the medical department on a sound basis, his relative success in assembling supplies, and his strict adherence to orders. His principal problem, he noted, had been the regimental surgeons. They had refused to make returns and had falsified them when they did. The surgeons made fraudulent drafts on the General Hospital and encouraged malingerers. But the surgeons' most ungrateful act, in Morgan's view, occurred when Congress forbade them to draw supplies from the General Hospital, thereby turning them against him, the man who had championed their cause before Congress and Washington. Morgan placed some of the blame for the medical department's failures on Washington. He noted, however, that the commander-in-chief was overworked and had seemed to have little interest in the medical problems of his army, and for these reasons had not always been able to attend promptly to the problems of the medical department. Morgan closed the Vindication by reminding Congress that it could have respected his position as a prominent person and "let me down gently." He attacked his dismissal without trial and charged that Shippen had engaged in underhanded attempts to interfere with Morgan's administration of the General Hospital, thereby bringing it into disrepute and opening the way to Shippen's appointment in Morgan's place. Congress took no notice of this published Vindication.³

³Ibid.

Morgan's impatience continued, and on July 31, 1777, he submitted to Congress a voluminous memorial, which was referred to the Medical Committee.⁴ Nine days later the committee reported to Congress that Morgan had been dismissed without any specific cause. The Medical Committee's report stated that "the general clamor of all ranks of the army and the critical state of military affairs at the time, rendered his dismissal necessary for the public good and the safety of the country."⁵ Even though the Medical Committee considered Morgan's memorial "a hasty and intemperate production," it recommended that Congress accede to his request and appoint a special committee to investigate his dismissal.⁶

On September 18, 1778, thirteen months after he had been promised a hearing, Morgan filed another memorial.⁷ At that time Congress appointed a special committee to look into Morgan's dismissal, but before it could hold hearings, one of its members left Congress and another was called out of town.⁸

⁴Chauncy Ford, and others, editor, Journals of the Continental Congress (34 vols., Washington, 1904-37), VIII, 593; John Morgan to Congress, July 30, 1777, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 41, 19, Item 63, 113, The National Archives, Washington.

⁵Ford, Journals, VIII, 626.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., XII, 925; John Morgan to Congress, September 17, 1778, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 41, 51-65.

⁸John Morgan to Henry Laurens, September 17, 1778, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 63, 117.

In December, 1778, Morgan again renewed his appeal to Congress for a hearing.⁹

In anticipation of a hearing by the special committee appointed by Congress, Morgan published a long appeal To the Citizens and Freemen of the United States of America, calling on all persons who had anything to allege against his conduct as director-general to present their evidence.¹⁰

Morgan sent requests for testimonials to Washington, Gates, Greene, Knox, Putnam and some other general officers, and to some of the hospital surgeons and mates. He asked them to testify to "the integrity and uprightness of his conduct, his diligence and fidelity" as director-general. Washington and Green responded to the request, as did many of the lesser general officers and several of the hospital surgeons. All these testimonials Morgan organized and summarized in a long memorial to Congress that ran to 117 pages of foolscap. In general it presented the same material as the Vindication of 1777; however, it attacked Shippen with increased virulence.¹¹

Since no specific charges had been made against him by Congress, Morgan had to refute criticism he had heard. In the memorial he based his defense on eight points.

⁹John Morgan to John Jay, December 29, 1778, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 63, 121.

¹⁰John Morgan, To the Citizens and Freemen of the United States of America (Baltimore, 1778).

¹¹"Vindication," February 1, 1779, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 63, 185.

1. "That upon my entrance into office, I found dissensions subsisting, between the officers of the General Hospital and the regimental surgeons, very destructive to the service." Morgan produced letters from Washington, Elbridge Gerry, and two hospital surgeons to establish the fact that dissensions had existed between the officers of the General Hospital and the regimental surgeons. Letters of Morgan to Samuel Adams and the Medical Committee indicated that tensions and antagonisms had continued through no fault of Morgan's.¹²

2. "That I found the Hospital and the Army, without medicines and necessary stores; and that by my personal industry an ample collection of both was made." The inventory ordered by Morgan when he reached Cambridge in 1775 showed how ill-equipped the hospital was. Through buying and begging Morgan was able to obtain "10,000 blankets, rugs, bed-cases, pillows and sheets, and several hundred new shirts, as well as large quantities of splints, lint, tow and other materials for dressings." When the Continental army moved to New York, it required fifty waggons to haul these supplies. From these and other supplies Morgan was able to outfit completely seventy regimental medicine chests.¹³

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

3. "That the Army during my time was greater than it has been since; yet that my expenditures were beyond comparison less than the expenditures, for an equal space of time, under my successor in office." Morgan noted that the War Office Treasury Book showed his expenditures from October, 1775, to April, 1777, eighteen months, to be \$33,879. Shippen's expenditures from April, 1777, to November, 1778, twenty months, was \$1,947,000, exclusive of the hospital's accounts in the commissary-general and quartermaster departments. Allowing for inflation, Morgan estimated that Shippen's expenditures were twelve times his expenditures.¹⁴

4. "That my accounts were rendered in faithfully vouched and settled to my honour." Morgan quoted John Delemater, clerk and paymaster of the General Hospital at Danbury, who heard Mr. Downe, Chairman of the Commissioners of Accounts, say that "Dr. Morgan's accounts were the best set of accounts that had been presented to the Board, and the Commissioners were surprised to see so small a sum drawn for the hospital department."¹⁵

5. "That my hospital system was economically and prudently arranged." The evidence exhibited in point three was presented to support this assertion. Letters from Washington, Joseph Reed, Washington's adjutant general, Jeremiah Wadsworth, commissary-general, and the letters of several

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

surgeons and surgeons's mates were produced. Each testified to Morgan's industry, integrity, and prudence.¹⁶

6. "That my attention to the sick was never wanting and that no contagious disorders existed in the hospitals under my direction." Morgan selected statements from surgeons and surgeons' mates testifying that the director general had ordered the hospitals to receive all who were sent to them; that he had answered every call by hospital surgeons for medicine and supplies; that when the hospitals became full, Morgan found quarters and provisions in private homes for those the hospitals could not hold; that Morgan visited the hospitals frequently and often performed operations; that the sufferings of the sick were caused by conditions out of Morgan's control; that "no malignant, infectious, pestilential disease, or any uncommon mortality ever prevailed" in the hospitals under Morgan though they "swept" through medical establishments where he had no authority.¹⁷

Morgan's first six points could be accepted by most reasonable persons; points seven and eight, an undisguised attack on Shippen, were colored by Morgan's feeling of persecution.

7. That the fatal contagion which appeared in a part of the Army broke out and prevailed among the troops in a district under the particular care of Dr. William Shippen, after he had by a secret application to Congress through some of the members earnestly

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

solicited that he might have a new commission, and have the extraordinary charge entrusted to him, to my exclusion, and after he had accordingly obtained it.¹⁸

Morgan noted that the patients who remained in his charge east of the Hudson River after October, 1776, had been comfortably provided for and that they had recovered. In New Jersey, where Shippen was director, sickness and death had ravaged the troops. Between November, 1776, and March, 1777, over 1000 soldiers, most of them from the Flying Camp under Shippen's command, had been buried in Philadelphia's Potter's Field alone.¹⁹

8. That the new arrangements in consequence of Shippen's application, appointing him to the sole care of the sick and the hospitals in the Jerseys and limiting me to the east side of Hudson's River, clashed with my exertions in aid of the sick, and was a great cause of the spreading of the contagion and of all the calamities that attended.²⁰

Morgan, on orders from Washington, had established hospitals in Newark and Hackensack, staffed and supplied them, so that he believed "at no time in the whole Campaign of 1776 were the sick better taken care of." When Shippen demanded that these hospitals be surrendered to him, Morgan and his staff had refused, and Morgan was of the opinion that this conflict caused uncertainty and disorder in the hospitals.²¹

Morgan closed the memorial by charging Shippen with scheming to obtain the post of director-general for himself.

¹⁸Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

He felt that Shippen's malevolent conduct was motivated by Shippen's continuation of the effort made in 1765-67 to oust Morgan from his position as senior medical professor at the Philadelphia Medical School. It was clear to Morgan that Shippen was continuing this ten-year-old struggle for precedence.²²

The special Congressional committee selected to report on Morgan's dismissal considered Morgan's voluminous eight point memorial, and submitted its report concerning the memorial to Congress on March 13, 1779.²³ After the report was read to Congress, the members ordered it tabled so that they might peruse it. In the interim, before Congress took final action on the tabled report, Morgan with the special committee's permission, struck out parts of the memorial which were considered "too severe a reflection against particular persons."²⁴

The tabled report was not taken up for discussion by Congress until June, and this was after Morgan had written the body on June 5, calling on it to "apply an effectual remedy to the evils I have endured in performing my trust

²²Ibid.

²³Ford, Journals, XIII, 313.

²⁴Statement of Henry Laurens, June 3, 1779, Edmund C. Burnett, editor, Letters of Members of the Continental Congress (8 vols., Washington, 1936), IV, 248-249.

with unshaken firmness and integrity."²⁵ Congress, on June 12, 1779, reviewed the tabled report dealing with Morgan's memorial, and resolved that Morgan had "in the most satisfactory manner vindicated his conduct in every respect," and that they were "satisfied with the conduct of Dr. John Morgan while acting as Director-General and Physician in Chief in the Hospitals of the United States."²⁶

²⁵John Morgan to John Jay, June 5, 1779, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 152, 157.

²⁶Ford, Journals, XIV, 724.

CHAPTER VI

ACCUSATION

While Morgan was having his problems in obtaining a vindication of his character from Congress, Shippen, his successor as director-general, was having troubles with Congress too. Congress had begun to curtail Shippen's authority as they had crippled Morgan's. They rejected a proposal of their own committee that Shippen and his directors should have authority to draw on the commissary for supplies for the sick. When Shippen's deputy in Virginia had protested against his sending physicians, surgeons, and mates into that region, Congress had supported the deputy against the director.¹

Despite the new plan of reorganization of the medical department that Congress had adopted in April, 1777, the number of sick remained high throughout the summer of 1777. A Congressional committee visiting Washington's army in July reported there were 3745 sick, and the campaign had not yet opened.² In September and October the battles at Brandywine and Germantown had produced hundreds of casualties; with the approach of winter the numbers of sick had increased.

¹Chauncy Ford, and others, editor, Journals of the Continental Congress (34 vols., Washington, 1904-37), VIII, 609, 626-627.

²Ibid., 609.

The deplorable state of the medical department became notorious.³ Washington ascribed it to the scarcity of proper supplies and the "continual jealousies and altercations, subsisting between the hospital and regimental surgeons."⁴

One of those who had brought conditions in the medical department to public attention was Benjamin Rush, physician general of the Middle District, an office subordinate to that of director-general.⁵ Since his appointment in April, 1777, Rush had observed the medical service in action; and had been convinced that the American army hospitals were tragically in need of reform.⁶

Rush began to express his conviction in October, 1777, when he was stationed at the hospital at Reading. "Our hospital affairs grow worse and worse," he wrote John Adams. "The fault is both in the establishment and in the director-general. He is both ignorant and negligent of his duty.

³Henry Laurens to Nicholas Cooke, January 3, 1778, Henry Laurens to George Clinton, January 14, 1778, Abraham Clark to Lord Stirling, January 15, 1778, Edmund C. Burnett, editor, Letters of Members of the Continental Congress (8 vols., Washington, 1936), III, 11, 35, 39.

⁴George Washington to the Congressional Committee of Conference, January 29, 1778, George Washington to the Officers Visiting Hospitals, January 30, 1779, George Washington to Officers of the Hospitals, February 28, 1778, John C. Fitzpatrick, editor, The Writings of George Washington, (39 vols., Washington, 1931-44), X, 394-395, 405-407, 526-527.

⁵Ford, Journals, VII, 253-254. The Middle District included the area between the Hudson and Potomac Rivers. Journals, VII, 162.

⁶George W. Corner, editor, The Autobiography of Benjamin Rush (Princeton, 1948), p. 131.

There is but one right system for a military hospital, and that is the one made use of by the British army."⁷ To another Congressman he appealed, "For God's sake, do not forget to take the medical system under your consideration. It is a mass of corruption and tyranny. . . ."⁸

Rush had first called on Shippen to take steps to relieve overcrowding and promote the health of the men, but the director-general had rebuffed him with the reminder that he was the sole judge of what was best and that Rush's business was to look after all those sent to his care. Turning next to the commander-in-chief, Rush presented his demands for a public Congressional hearing about the hospital conditions.⁹ Washington was not convinced of the necessity of an inquiry.¹⁰ But Congress, after some delay, ordered a hearing held.¹¹ When Rush and Shippen were ordered to testify before a special Congressional committee, Shippen was reluctant to attend. He tried to evade the hearings by stating publicly that he did

⁷Benjamin Rush to John Adams, October 21, 1777, L. H. Butterfield, editor, Letters of Benjamin Rush, (2 vols., Princeton, 1951), I, 161.

⁸Benjamin Rush to William Duer, December 13, 1777, Butterfield, Letters of Rush, I, 175-176.

⁹Benjamin Rush to George Washington, December 26, 1777, Benjamin Rush to William Drayton, April 20, 1777, Benjamin Rush to Jonathan Bayard Smith, April 20, 1778, Butterfield, Letters of Rush, I, 180-182, 210-211, 213.

¹⁰George Washington to Benjamin Rush, January 12, 1778, Fitzpatrick, Writings of Washington, X, 296-297.

¹¹Ford, Journals, X, 23.

not want to neglect his medical duties.¹² On January 28, 1778, however, he finally testified.¹³

The committee made it clear that they would not recommend a complete reorganization as Rush had called for, and that in their opinion the troubles in the medical department were caused by a personal feud between Shippen and Rush. Seeing that any further appeal to Congress was futile, Rush resigned in disgust.¹⁴

The temporary failure of Rush to effect reforms in the medical department did not stop him from attacking the conditions he felt needed attention. Where once Rush had directed his criticism principally against the hospital system, now he attacked Shippen as well. He formally charged the director-general with peculation and negligence. Congress requested proof of Rush's charges, but he refused to present evidence

¹²William Shippen, Jr., to President of Congress, January 18, 1778, cited in James E. Gibson, Dr. Bodo Otto and the Medical Background of the American Revolution (Springfield, 1937, p. 213.

¹³Ford, Journals, X, 23.

¹⁴Benjamin Rush to John Adams, January 22, 1778, Benjamin Rush to Nathanael Greene, February 1, 1778, Butterfield, Letters of Rush, I, 191, 195-197; Ford, Journals, X, 193.

¹⁵George Washington to Henry Laurens, March 21, 1778, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 169, IV, f. 240, The National Archives, Washington.

¹⁶Ford, Journals, X, 303.

except to a court-martial.¹⁷ This impasse discouraged Rush from any further attempts to have Shippen discharged.¹⁸

As Rush's interest in Shippen's conduct abated, Morgan's attention to his successor's actions intensified. Just three days after his Congressional vindication, June 12, 1779, Morgan wrote a letter to John Jay, President of Congress, by which he replaced Rush as Shippen's chief accuser. He expressed his appreciation to Congress for restoring his "unsullied reputation" and expressed the belief that it was the duty of all good citizens to bring to public attention dereliction of public officers and to furnish proof of their guilt. He charged Shippen with malpractice and misconduct in office and expressed his readiness to testify and furnish evidence to support his charges.¹⁹

Rush's accusations against Shippen had had their effect upon Congress; it became, as did the public, more sensitive to criticism of the medical department.²⁰ Consequently, when Congress received Morgan's letter of June 15, 1779, it sent

¹⁷Benjamin Rush to William Henry Drayton, April 20, 1778, Benjamin Rush to Jonathan Baynard Smith, April 20, 1778, Butterfield, Letters of Rush, I, 210-211, 213.

¹⁸James Lovell to John Langdon, February 8, 1778, Committee of Congress to Benjamin Rush, April 7, 1778, Burnett, Letters of Members, III, 77, 157.

¹⁹John Morgan to President of Congress, June 15, 1779, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 63, 129.

²⁰John Fell Diary, April 16, 17, 1779, Richard Henry Lee to William Shippen, Jr., April 18, 1779, Burnett, Letters of Members IV, 159, 163.

a copy of the letter to Washington and directed "that the charges alluded to in it be speedily inquired into and justice done."²¹ A copy of the letter was also sent to Shippen.²² Meanwhile, Morgan appealed to Rush for information about Shippen's activities. Rush responded by offering his full cooperation and listing the several matters on which he would be willing to testify, under oath, about Shippen's conduct as director-general.²³

Impatient with Congress, but encouraged by their prompt attention to his June 15 accusations, Morgan again wrote Jay repeating the charges against Shippen and offering to testify to support them. Morgan, noting that current movements of the enemy made it impractical to hold a trial for Shippen at that time, requested that his rival be arrested and suspended from office pending his trial.²⁴

Hearing of Morgan's request, Shippen wrote Congress and stated his desire for an immediate trial, so as to acquit himself and "bring his accuser to shame and disgrace."²⁵ A board

²¹Ford, Journals, XIV, 733-734.

²²Ibid.

²³Benjamin Rush to John Morgan, June __, 1779, Butterfield, Letters of Rush, I, 225-228.

²⁴John Morgan to President of Congress, July 19, 1779, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 63, 133.

²⁵William Shippen, Jr. to President of Congress, July 28, 1779, cited in Louis C. Duncan, Medical Men in the American Revolution, 1775-1783 (Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 1931), p. 293.

of general officers, however, advised Washington that the director-general could not be tried and should not be suspended before the end of the military campaign that was just opening.²⁶

Morgan was convinced that if he could prove without a doubt that the director-general was guilty of malpractice and misconduct, Shippen could be brought to trial. As Morgan collected more evidence, he found that many people were unwilling to testify. Some surgeons felt that an investigation would undermine the confidence of Congress in the hospital department and cause a reduction in future appropriations. Other medical officers simply wanted to conceal their own corrupt activities, while some doubtlessly feared Shippen's political connections in Congress.²⁷

Faced with the prospect of a probable delay of months before a court-martial could be convened to hear the charges against Shippen, Morgan realized that material witnesses would leave the army and that Shippen might suborn others. In an effort to counteract these possibilities, Morgan secured from Congress a recommendation that states require their citizens

²⁶Ford, Journals, XIV, 845; George Washington to John Morgan, June 24, 1779, George Washington to the Council of General Officers, July 26, 1779, George Washington to President of Congress, July 29, 1779, Fitzpatrick, Writings of Washington, XV, 309-310, 448, XVI, 5-6.

²⁷John Morgan to President of Congress, July 20, 1779, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 63, 134.

to give testimony before courts-martial when properly summoned. New Jersey was the only state that responded to this request. Congress also resolved that in trials by courts-martial depositions might be given in cases, not capital, provided both the prosecutor and accused were present when the testimony was taken.²⁸ Claiming that his presence was necessary in the hospitals, Shippen refused to participate.²⁹ At this apparent defiance of its authority, Congress resolved that if the accused failed to appear at a previously scheduled taking of depositions the testimony would be legally valid. Shippen's refusal to cooperate forced Morgan to obtain the depositions alone.³⁰

Following the final military campaign of 1779, the court-martial for hearing Shippen's case was finally convened on March 14, 1780.³¹ Morgan opened the prosecution. Five specific charges were made against Shippen: (1) selling hospital stores fraudulently and transporting them at public expense; (2) speculating in hospital supplies at personal profit; (3) falsifying hospital records and account books and

²⁸Ibid., Item 63, 137; Ford, Journals, XV, 1208, 1277-1278.

²⁹William Shippen, Jr., to Richard Henry Lee, April 16, 1780, cited in Gibson, Bodo Otto, pp. 253-254.

³⁰Ford, Journals, XV, 1409.

³¹George Washington to John Lawrence, December 2, 1779, George Washington to John Morgan, December 17, 1779, Fitzpatrick, Writings of Washington, XVII, 214, 282.

refusing to pay honest debts; (4) neglecting his duties in the hospital; and (5) behaving in a manner unbecoming a gentleman and officer.³²

On the second day of the trial, Shippen moved that the court strike from the record the depositions Morgan had submitted and that the tribunal accept no more depositions. Shippen argued that he had not been present when they were taken and that Congress had not designated Morgan as prosecutor. Shippen maintained he had not been under arrest or served with a copy of the charges at the time the witnesses were examined. Over Morgan's objections, the court granted Shippen's motion.³³

Unable to use written testimony, Morgan hopefully turned to Rush, his principal oral witness. Rush reinforced Morgan's charges by presenting his own information about Shippen's negligence. Surgeons and other hospital personnel backed Rush's testimony by offering examples of Shippen's negligence. They cited instances in which Shippen refused to provide more space and fresh air in the hospitals, adequate medicine, that the means for cleaning and sanitation. One surgeon told how when a group of wounded men was sent to a hospital too full to hold more, he asked Shippen what he should do with them,

³²Ford, *Journals*, XVI, 1-2; John Morgan to President of Congress, December 30, 1779, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 63, 161-164.

³³John Morgan to Samuel Huntington, March 28, 1780, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 63, 169.

and the director-general replied they could be left at the door. When the surgeon protested that the weather was so severe that the men would die if they were not properly housed, Shippen answered, "That would be an end of them."³⁴

Now that the depositions collected during the winter had been thrown out, it was necessary to take new ones. The court appointed Morgan a deputy judge-advocate and recessed on April 5. Morgan quickly planned a trip through Pennsylvania to take depositions. Shippen reluctantly accompanied him to satisfy the legal requirement that both be present.³⁵

The court-martial reconvened on May 15, and Morgan concluded his presentation on May 30. After several days of recess Shippen opened his defense. Morgan's two principal charges against Shippen were that he had dealt in wine and sugar on his private account at a time when these articles were needed by the patients in the hospitals where they were stored, and that his incompetence and negligence in administration had caused the deaths of thousands of Continental soldiers. Several witnesses testified that they had purchased wine sold to innkeepers by Shippen. Other witnesses testified that the care of patients under Shippen's charge was inhuman. Patients were exposed to severe weather and

³⁴Pennsylvania Packet, October 7, 1780.

³⁵William Shippen, Jr., to Richard Henry Lee, April 16, 1780, "Selections and Excerpts from the Lee Papers," Southern Literary Messenger, XXX (1860), 344.

kept in unheated buildings without proper clothing or cover. Some were covered with vermin, and their wounds went undressed. Many were without medicine, water, and food. Witnesses declared they had never seen Shippen dress a wound or visit the sick. Neither Shippen nor his friends claimed he exerted himself personally for the men.³⁶

In late June, the court-martial voted on each of Morgan's five charges separately; on each Shippen was acquitted. However, on the second charge--that Shippen had speculated in hospital stores--the court felt constrained to qualify their judgement by a declaration that they were "clearly of the opinion that Dr. Shippen did speculate in and sell hospital stores, . . . which conduct they consider highly improper and justly reprehensible."³⁷ Morgan regarded the qualified judgement as tantamount to a conviction; Shippen pointed to the formal acquittals.³⁸

Washington received the verdict in early July; he sent the proceedings to Congress, with the request that a decision be reached quickly as the Medical Department was "in much disorder already."³⁹ After taking several days to read

³⁶Pennsylvania Packet, September 2, 1780, to November 25, 1780.

³⁷Ibid., November 25, 1780. As military needs arose, members of the court were called away and replaced by others, so that the tribunal which rendered the verdict included men who had not heard all the evidence.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹George Washington to President of Congress, July 15, 1780, Fitzpatrick, Writings of Washington, XIX, 182.

the large volume of testimony, Congress rendered its decision on August 18. Timothy Matlock of Pennsylvania moved "that the court martial having acquitted the said Doctor W. Shippen, the said acquittal be confirmed." Samuel Adams moved to strike out the second clause and substitute "ordered, that he be discharged from arrest," so that no Congressional approval of the verdict could be inferred. The Adams substitute passed; ten states voted for it, two opposed, and one was divided.⁴⁰

Morgan regarded the verdict of the court-martial as an affront to justice. When Congress failed to reverse the court's decision, and added insult to injury by reappointing Shippen as director-general in October, 1780, Morgan decided to appeal the decision to the American people in the hope of at least obtaining a moral confiction. He wanted Shippen to feel the disgrace of public condemnation.⁴¹

The Pennsylvania Packet was the vehicle selected for his "Appeal to the Free Citizens of the United States of America."⁴² Morgan began his campaign on September 2, and week after week presented testimony supporting his charges. He commented on evidence and summarized it occasionally for the reader's benefit. Shippen ignored Morgan's "Appeal" until the issue of November 11, when he entered the fray. He said that Morgan

⁴⁰Ford, Journals, XVIII, 638, 646, 648, 654, 676-677, 680, 684, 737-742, 744-746.

⁴¹Gibson, Bodo Otto, p. 268.

⁴²Pennsylvania Packet, September 2, 1780.

was driven by malice, and derided Morgan's witnesses. He minimized the selling of sugar and wine and introduced witnesses to prove he had been attentive to the sick and wounded.

Before the quarrel was brought to a halt, Rush entered in November on the side of Morgan and presented evidence to support Morgan's charges. Rush's participation was short, as the public soon became weary of the diatribe. In the edition of December 23 appeared an essay suggesting that the controversy, "which had so long abused the liberty of the press and dishonored the city," be stopped. Following this, the Packet ceased to publish any articles by the feuding trio.⁴³

While the Packet ceased to be the soundingboard for the controversy, the power struggle continued. During the Revolution the College of Philadelphia had been suspected of Tory sympathies, and its assets had been given to the new University of Pennsylvania. When the Board of Directors of the University began consideration of the reappointment of the old medical school faculty, Morgan, aided by Rush, attempted to block the reappointment of Shippen. In the hope of restoring harmony, the board re-elected all three, but in 1781, Morgan and Rush refused to serve on the same faculty with Shippen. Morgan never returned to the faculty of the University, even though the position was held open until 1788, one year before his death.⁴⁴

⁴³Ibid., September 2, to December 23, 1780.

⁴⁴William S. Middleton, "John Morgan, Father of Medical Education in North America," Annals of Medical History, IX (March, 1927), 24.

The extended campaign to vindicate his performance as director-general and the protracted controversy with Shippen left Morgan an exhausted man. Added to these events were others that probably caused his premature death. The Revolution had taken not only his honor and spirit, but his material possessions as well. During the war the British had burned his house at Bordertown, and his library and records had been completely destroyed.⁴⁵ On New Year's Day 1785, Morgan's childless wife, Molly, died. Alone and despondent, he wrote his brother: "Wearied with this world, I have for some time past turned my mind more than ordinarily to the thoughts of a better where I wish to go."⁴⁶

In late summer, 1788, Morgan's failing health forced him to travel south. While he was away, Shippen inflicted his final insult on Morgan. When the legislature of Pennsylvania restored the charter of the College of Pennsylvania, Shippen led in the reorganization of the school. To meet the competition of the newer and less demanding schools, he cast aside Morgan's pioneering work. The Bachelor of Medicine degree was abolished and doctor's degrees were granted to inadequately trained people. As Morgan neared death he saw

⁴⁵James Thomas Flexner, Doctors on Horseback (New York, 1939), p. 50.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 52.

his program of progressive medical education wrecked by his enemy, Shippen.⁴⁷

The tragic death of Morgan is recorded by Rush in his Commonplace Book:

This afternoon I was called to visit Dr. Morgan, but found him dead in a small hovel, surrounded with books and papers, and on a light dirty bed. He was attended only by a washerwoman, one of his tenants. His niece, Polly Gordon, came in time enough to see him draw his last breath. His disorder was the influenza, but he had been previously debilitated by many other disorders. What a change from his former rank and prospects in life! The man who once filled half the world with his name, had now scarcely friends enough left to bury him.⁴⁸

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 52-53.

⁴⁸Corner, Autobiography of Rush, p. 180.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

John Morgan's outstanding achievements came early in life; at thirty he was probably the most honored doctor in America. The day he delivered his famous Discourse upon the Institution of Medical Schools in America, in May, 1765, was the climax of his life; at no other time was he so famous. At his death, twenty-four years later, he had slipped into obscurity and had few friends.

As a youth Morgan showed brilliance and ambition. His teachers loved and respected him and had nothing but praise for his ability. His academic record was outstanding; he entered the College of Philadelphia with advanced standing and graduated with honors in its first class. As an apprentice to Dr. John Redman and as a surgeon with the Provincial forces in western Pennsylvania, he acquired both knowledge and reputation. Driven by a desire to improve his ability, Morgan decided to study abroad, first in London, then in Edinburgh, and later in Paris. He was judged one of the most brilliant students ever to graduate from the Edinburgh medical school; his thesis was a scientific milestone. So great were his accomplishments in Europe that when he returned to his native Philadelphia in 1765, he was regarded as a celebrity.

To this greatly honored young doctor must go the credit for elevating medical practice in America; his pioneering efforts resulted in medicine being taught and studied in this country as a science. As a student in Europe, Morgan developed a plan for systematic medical education in the colonies; and while others talked of the need for formal medical training, Morgan contacted influential people in Europe and obtained the necessary backing for such a venture. Upon his return to America, Morgan, in his Discourse upon Medical Schools, boldly set forth a plan for a complete reform of colonial medical practice. The basic step in his plan of reform called for establishing a medical department at the College of Philadelphia; until formal medical education was established, the profession would remain chained to the apprentice system. The second phase of his reform plan called for specialization in medical practice; unless medicine was separated from surgery and pharmacy, the quality of medical service could not reach a higher level of proficiency. The third phase of his plan aimed at raising the status of the medical profession in America by establishing a medical society whose license would be a guarantee of professional competence throughout the colonies.

Morgan's plan of reform for medical practice was sound. Its innovations, had they been followed, would have vastly improved the state of colonial medicine. The idea of a medical society was apparently premature. The concept of

specialization in medical practice was not popular with the public and was not readily accepted. The charging of fees at the end of calls, however, made some headway. Morgan was never the real leader of the medical school he created; the medical department seemed to function without any definite guidance from Morgan. His obsession and preoccupation with vindicating his character and seeking revenge on Shippen so dominated his life from the Revolution to his death that he gradually lost interest in the institution he had founded. During these later years the few instances in which Morgan manifested any interest in the school were not genuine reflections of concern, but rather attempts to block the actions of his enemy Shippen.

Before bitterness and disillusion took possession of Morgan in his later years, he was perhaps America's finest pre-Revolutionary example of the liberally educated eighteenth-century physician. His inquisitive nature engaged him in many philosophical pursuits. As an eighteenth-century philosopher he was interested in promoting scientific inquiry; this interest led him to take an active role in the founding of the American Philosophical Society. His diverse scientific interests included such things as investigating medicines, observing the weather, speculating on genetics, collecting fossils, and dabbling in ballooning. He even considered himself something of a connoisseur of painting.

As a citizen he was interested in developing the American economy. He promoted such things as silk culture, sunflower cultivation, utilizing hemp for cloth, and the manufacture of iron in Pennsylvania. In his prize-winning essay on the perpetual union of the colonies and Great Britain Morgan noted the advantages of the relationship between the colonies and the mother country. He felt that a continuation of this relationship was essential to the health of the colonial economy. After the Revolution he formulated his own economic plan for the new country; he felt that in the interest of the nation's economic stability more attention should be devoted to the development of agriculture than to that of industry.

When Morgan accepted the post of director-general of the Continental army's medical department in 1775, he did not realize that the act would lead to the tragic end of his career. Morgan threw himself into his new job with his usual enthusiasm. He applied his experience, intelligence, and vision to the many and recurrent problems in the medical department. All his efforts went for naught, however, as the problems were unsolvable under the existing conditions. When Congress dismissed him as director-general without prior warning, his efforts ended prematurely in frustration and failure.

In many respects his experiences as director-general were a repetition of the problems he had encountered in

founding the medical school, attempting a separation of medical practice, and founding a medical society. There was tension between idealism and reality, and a conflict between what he thought ought to be and what in actual circumstances could be. Just as Morgan's opposition in Philadelphia seemed always to involve William Shippen, Jr., so in the army Shippen became his rival.

Morgan was deeply injured by his abrupt dismissal by Congress; he was profoundly shocked by the fact that Congress and the public were so unappreciative of his devoted public service to the country. To clear his name he plunged into a bitter wrangle with Congress and his colleagues and won from Congress a grudging vindication. Shippen then became the symbol of all that Morgan regarded as apathetic and corrupt, and Morgan pressured Congress into ordering his successor to trial.

For more than five years Morgan spent the major part of his energies in military service, the long battle to win vindication, and the relentless pursuit of Shippen. These campaigns took much of Morgan's physical and emotional strength and left the marks of fatigue and bitterness. Though he resumed his medical practice and scientific interests after the Revolution, he did not return to teaching. Morgan continued to hold a grudge against Shippen and refused to serve on the same faculty with him. The hatred Morgan held for

Shippen, the conviction that his country had treated him unjustly, and the death of his wife clouded Morgan's last years. He had periods of depression and melancholia. He gave up his medical practice and after 1786 rarely saw a patient. He withdrew from the public eye and passed his time in study and writing.

One can ponder in Morgan's life the complexities of character, the inconstancy of fame, and the loss of power. His life stands out clearly as a career brilliant in promise and early accomplishment that was sacrificed to vanity and jealousy. The controversy surrounding his dismissal as director-general prematurely aged him and deprived posterity of much of his genius. The envy and intrigue encircling his feud with Shippen marred the records of the colonies' struggle for independence. Above all this remains Morgan's one lasting contribution to American society--the establishment of its first medical school. It was there that medicine was first taught and studied as a science in North America.

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