

The entry in the Journal is as follows : —

"Information being given to the House by the Member from Worcester, that a certain Gentleman of the Town of Boston, [was] well disposed for the Encouragement and Support of a Professor of Physick within this Province, and for that good Purpose would chearfully contribute out of his own Estate a considerable Sum of Money, provided this Court will join therein in making a Grant of Lands, or otherwise establish a good Fund for the valuable Ends aforesaid ; and the same being considered ;

"*Ordered*, That the members of Boston, Charlestown, Roxbury, and Chelsea be a Committee to trent with the Gentleman, hear him on his Proposals, and report their Opinion of what may be proper to be done for the encouragement of so good a Scheme."

The member from Worcester who brought the subject before the House was Colonel John Chandler, and as Dr. Douglass was a large land-owner in Worcester County it is not unlikely that Colonel Chandler knew him personally. This fact, I am aware, has but little weight, but I mention it for what it is worth ; and in the absence of positive testimony it would seem as probable as not, that Dr. Douglass was the "certain gentleman of the town of Boston," who offered to endow a medical professorship at that time. The offer, however, does not seem to have been accepted, as no further trace of it is found in the proceedings of the House, or elsewhere. This attempt is by no means the earliest one in Massachusetts to promote medical education, as Mr. Moore supposes. Nearly a century before this time Giles Firmin, a man learned in medicine, had given instruction in this branch of science. The apostle Eliot, under date of Sept. 24, 1647, writes to Mr. Shepard, the minister of Cambridge, and expresses the desire that —

"Our young Students in Physick may be trained up better than yet they bee, who have onely theoreticall knowledge, and are forced to fall to practise before ever they saw an Anatomy made, or duely trained up in making experiments, for we never had but one Anatomy in the Countrey, which Mr. *Giles Firman* (now in England) did make and read upon very well, but no more of that now."*

An anatomy is the old name for a skeleton ; and Mr. Firmin may be considered, in point of time, the first medical lecturer in the country. His instruction, doubtless, was crude, and comprised little more than informal talks about the dry bones before him ; but even this was a great help to the learners. At any rate, it seems to have excited an interest in the subject ; for

* 3 Mass. Hist. Coll., vol. iv. p. 57