

## *A Note on Sources for the History of Therapeutics*

The particular primary sources I have cited in this study by and large have no singular virtue to recommend them to the attention of the historian interested in exploring deeper into medical therapeutics in nineteenth-century America. In some instances I have selected the most forceful example I know of to make my point, as in using Elisha Bartlett's *Philosophy of Medical Science* (1844) to illustrate the American commitment to Parisian empiricism. With some exceptions this study could have argued the same points drawing upon a substantially different evidential foundation; more often than not, the examples I cite could readily be replicated on the basis of research in other archives or publications. I have generally kept supporting references in the notes to a minimum, and the reader who cares will find fuller documentation in my "The Therapeutic Perspective: Medical Knowledge, Practice, and Professional Identity in America, 1820–1885" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1984). In any event, it is difficult indeed to identify primary records of nineteenth-century medicine that do not in some way inform the history of therapeutics as I have approached it. Therefore although the historian interested in therapeutics will find something useful in the sources I happen to cite in the notes, he or she will gain more by considering the types of sources I have exploited and their peculiar values and limitations.

Published nineteenth-century medical literature is at its most useful and most reliable when used as a source of knowledge about therapeutic theory and principle, about assumptions on the nature of therapeutic knowledge, and about professional programs for proper behavior and change. Formal addresses, including the oratory that opened and closed each session at medical schools, introduced each professor's course of lectures, and annually gave the presidents of medical societies the opportunity of displaying their classical learning, are especially