

The physician and the public.

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THE PHYSICIAN

AND

THE PUBLIC.

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THE object of this small treatise is to disseminate information on subjects, in which all must feel interested. Others have written with similar intent, but in a form and style adapted to the professional rather than the general reader. To attain the the ends proposed—to set forth truth and expose mischievous error and villanous imposition—candour, freedom, and occasional severity were unavoidable. It is earnestly hoped, that it will in some degree answer its purpose, and be productive of good both to the public and the deserving portion of physicians.

READING, FEB. 18, 1850.

HEALTH is a blessing above all price, and no other can compensate for the want of it. This truth is so self-evident and universally admitted, that no arguments are needed to sustain it. There are few individuals, if any such exist, who would not rather lose all besides, than be deprived of health, or being invalids would not give all they possessed in exchange, provided it could be obtained on no other condition. And yet there are no subjects on which mankind, even the educated portion, are so lamentably ignorant and reckless, as on preserving and, if lost, obtaining this inestimable boon. Moreover, on other subjects of interest all are eager to learn, all are willing to listen to those capable of imparting correct information, all are on guard against deception, whilst on the subjects of health and disease the majority would seem to prefer error to truth, presumptuous ignorance to knowledge, and imposture to honesty—the uninstructed pretender, the charlatan, and quack take precedence of the man of ability, learning, skill, candour, and sincerity.

Why is it thus? Whence this anomaly? Eagerness to know the truth on comparatively unimportant subjects—a careless disregard on the most important of all. Enquiring for the most skilful artisan to repair a watch—entrusting the far more delicate and intricate machinery of the body to a person totally ignorant of its arrangement, operations, and requirements. Often a willingness liberally to reward him, who has practised imposition and inflicted injury—a reluctant doling out of a mere pittance to another, who has anxiously, faithfully, and ably performed the difficult duties of physician.

The explanation is comprised in the difficulty of the subject; the apathy, professional pride, and reluctance of well-educated physicians to defend their interests, and define their position in regard to the public; and in the United States, in the very genius of our political and civil institutions—all being at liberty to engage in whatever calling they choose;—as well as in the deficiency formerly of men properly qualified to practise the Healing Art. The successful practitioner has not considered it worth while, or felt too proud to notice the quackery and imposition practised under his eye. Or, if he has noticed it at all,

it has been in a spirit and manner not calculated to make a favorable impression. Another has been prevented by feelings of delicacy, fearing that his motives might be suspected, and himself accused of selfishness, instead of being regarded a defender of truth and sound principles. The law of the land permits all—the unqualified as well as the qualified—to assume the title of Doctor, a name which the ostentation of by-gone ages and the custom of the world have fixed upon physicians, and which it were a thousand times preferable to be obsolete, because it confers upon the individual certain advantages, and upon the dishonest and dishonorable the power of imposing upon the ignorant. Medical colleges also frequently abuse their privileges, and rather than diminish the number of graduates, confer the title of *Doctor of Medicine* upon those, whose limited natural abilities and acquirements render them unworthy of it. The time has passed away, however, when the employment of shallow, uneducated, improperly styled physicians could be excused by the scarcity of men, who had carefully and thoroughly studied their profession.

From this cursory view of the causes of the infatuation, folly, and erroneous notions of the public, in regard to Health and Disease, Medicine and Physicians, it will be seen, that it deserves less censure than at first sight seemed its due. On a subject, which in the minds of the ablest and most learned is surrounded with doubt and uncertainty, it is natural that ignorance should beget error, and lead to foolish and not unfrequently mischievous conduct.

In the following pages it is proposed, in as brief, simple, and fair a manner as possible: to show what relations should exist between the Physician and the public; what should be his qualifications to merit confidence; to define his position, and defend his rights and interests; to show also the paramount importance and necessity of discriminating between the shallow empiric, and the well-educated and experienced practitioner, between talents, knowledge, and skill, on the one hand, and low cunning, ignorance, and presumption, on the other; and how this discrimination can be effected; to show wherein the public err in their judgments regarding medical men; and lastly, what the public owe to the conscientious, faithful, and skilful ministrant in the preservation and obtainment of health.

The necessity of such a personage as the physician in the community, first presents itself for consideration. If no physicians, nor druggists existed in the world, the condition of man-

kind in point of health would perhaps be no worse than it now is, with the promiscuous body of good and bad. This nevertheless is no argument against the necessity of the good physician. Flesh is heir to thousands of ills, both in the shape of accident, and disease. To treat these rationally is required a knowledge of the different parts and organs of which the human system is composed, and their different functions—of the nature and effects of the applications and remedies used in their treatment. To reduce a dislocated joint is required a knowledge of the anatomy of the joint and surrounding parts. To treat an inflammation of the lungs is required a knowledge of their form, position, and structure, of the different tissues composing them, of their functions and secretions, of the changes which have and may still be taking place within them; also the ability to judge correctly of the general state of the system, of its capabilities to bear the effects of the means of cure, and of the extent to which these means must be used to ensure a successful result;—it is required to know *how*, and *when*, and *how long* they are to be applied. And so for other accidents and diseases. Again, it is often of immense satisfaction and benefit to a person to know, that the complaint, with which he is, or with which he conceits he is afflicted, is either of a trifling nature, or entirely imaginary. Many a one has pined away years in misery, for want of having met with a physician sufficiently learned and honest to tell him, that nothing was the matter with him. Now, the knowledge here spoken of demands years of close application to study for its acquirement, besides an amount of preparatory knowledge greater than in any other human pursuit. It is evident therefore, that every one cannot be his own physician, that some must devote themselves exclusively to this calling, moreover that only a small number of men are by nature, habit, and education adapted thereto.

The relations existing between the Physician and Public are of the most sacred nature. He is, as it were, a member of every family, in which he attends; or rather, his patrons may be regarded as one large family, of which he is the medical guardian. Not only is health entrusted to his care, but he is often made the repository of secrets, which would be confided to no other person. He comes and goes whenever he thinks proper, he proceeds at his own discretion; is listened to, and has his injunctions obeyed, in matters of life and death; his knowledge, skill, and attention are the patient's last earthly hope; and he is looked to very frequently when dissolution is impending, to re-

commend a preparation for another state of existence. These relations are necessarily also the most friendly and mutually interested,—it could not be otherwise where the trust is so great. In moments of danger and trial, not the patient alone, but friends and relatives look to the physician for help and relief; where so much is at stake and so much expected, his zeal and anxiety must be commensurate. It is in fact impossible by words to convey an adequate idea of the nature of the relations and intimacy existing between the physician, and those by whom he is employed.

The qualities requisite to merit such relations with the public—such trust and confidence, must be of superior excellence. In body and mind the physician should by nature be fitted for his occupation; to him, if to any, a sound mind in a sound body is of the utmost necessity. In body he should be able to bear the watching, fatigue, and exposure coincident with his business. In mind he should be possessed of intellectual and moral qualities of the highest order. His education should be perfect, not only in his profession, but in all that conduces to a knowledge thereof. His habits should be such, as become the public servant having high trusts, and important duties to perform, and liable to be called upon at all times. He should be an acute and careful observer, otherwise much that is requisite to form an opinion in a given case of disease will escape his notice. His memory should be comprehensive and retentive, that he may compare different cases of disease with each other. He should be a good reasoner, and possess a sound judgment, for these qualities more than any other distinguish the able physician. He should be strictly moral, and regard with the utmost abhorrence dishonourable conduct in the betrayal of trust reposed in him by his patrons. He should be honest in advice, honest in treatment of disease, honest in his charges. A gentleman in the fullest sense—doing as he would be done to; kind, compassionate, but firm. Merciful to the poor and afflicted, and exacting of none beyond their ability to pay.

It cannot be denied, that some have become eminent as physicians, whose preparatory acquirements were limited. But these are exceptions—they were men of naturally sound and powerful intellects, and compensated by subsequent application to study for early deficiency of education. And even such are ever ready to deplore and regret the want of systematic mental training, before the commencement of their medical studies. At the present day, however, when a much larger number of youths are sent to college, with the view of preparation for a pro-

fessional career, than are fitted for such pursuits, the want of a regular and finished education in a medical student is inexcusable. Almost every kind of knowledge has a bearing upon Medicine, hence a physician should have at least a general acquaintance with all its different branches;—as much as would entitle him to be called *intelligent*, in the true sense of the word. His English education should be complete. He should have carefully studied Mathematics, and Natural and Experimental Science. Of Latin and Greek his knowledge cannot be too accurate, but it should at least enable him to know the meaning and derivation of medical terms. It will be of immense advantage to him, to be able to read besides his own, the French, German, and Italian languages, and thereby avail himself of the rich stores of medical literature contained therein.

In the Healing Art, to the extent the Physician can be expected to exercise it, the public have a right to demand full and thorough knowledge. Dentistry; and Major Surgery, comprising capital operations, such as for Calculus or Stone, on the Eye, and in vital and complicated parts of the body, all of which require constant practice for safe and skilful performance—these, namely, Dentistry and Major Surgery are distinct departments, and belong to persons, who prepare and devote themselves thereto exclusively. But in the practice of Medicine, Midwifery, and Minor Surgery, such as the treatment of fractured bones and dislocated joints, etc.; in these the highest degree of competency is indispensable to the physician.

With all this he should have an extensive knowledge of the world and human nature.—He should understand man both corporeally and spiritually.

In his habits he should be regular, industrious, studious, and entirely devoted to his profession. His head should be clear, and his hand steady. The physician who does not advance recedes—with the most persevering industry, and devotion to study, he will find it difficult, along with the performance of practical duties, to keep pace with the progress of Medical Science. Hence he will have no time for pleasure, company, and other engrossing pursuits.

Unjustly and unfortunately it is too much the custom to estimate men according to their wealth and worldly influence. Men of inferior minds and qualities therefore, not unfrequently rank above others, who are in every respect their superiors. The effect of this mode of judging by a false standard is even more pernicious to the mass, than to the individuals underrated. It

renders the latter less useful by contracting their sphere of action, and limiting their power of doing good, and thus the majority suffer. Where is the individual who renders more important services, and who has higher duties to fulfil, than the teacher? What occupation is more noble, than that of forming and training the youthful mind? Yet is he rewarded as should be? Does he hold the position, to which, if he is able worthy and faithful to his trust, he is fairly and justly entitled? The injustice daily and everywhere practised is a sufficient answer to these queries.

So it is with the physician, the public expects him to be talented, learned, gentlemanly and refined in his feelings and deportment; to possess eminent qualities of every description; it confides to his care its most valuable possession, and exacts from him a devotedness and fidelity greater, than from any other individual; but because his services are quietly and unobtrusively rendered; because his observations, reasonings, and deductions, upon which the welfare of the patient depends, proceed noiselessly, unattended by aught that strikes the eye, or captivates the ear, his rights and claims are overlooked and undervalued with injustice almost equal with that of the teacher.

If individual estimation depends upon excellence of qualifications, and public and private usefulness, none should be held in higher esteem, than the physician. If self-forgetfulness, and self-sacrifice are the most exalted virtues attainable, those who exercise them honestly and benevolently, in behalf of their fellow-men, should be classed with the best benefactors of their race. If health is the richest of blessings, certainly the restorer of so inestimable a gift ought to be regarded with respectful gratitude. If reward should be proportionate to merit, those who have incurred the expense and undergone the toil of rendering themselves equal to the requirements of an exacting and censorious public, in so difficult and extensive a science as Medicine, should receive a fair and liberal remuneration for services.—As things go, physicians are not seldom viewed with feelings bordering on prejudice and dislike, and tolerated rather as a necessary evil, than respected as a useful and beneficent order of men; whilst their compensation is graduated by the standard of day labour, not according to importance of services, or ability and skill exhibited.

In the case of physicians, as in that of teachers, all are confounded; the unworthy and worthless have brought discredit on the whole body; and it is in the neglect of proper discrimin-

ation mainly, that the public do themselves and both these classes of men the greatest injury and injustice.

"The first duty of a patient is, to select as his medical adviser one, who has received a regular professional education. In no trade or occupation, do mankind rely in the skill of an untaught artist; and in Medicine, confessedly the most difficult and intricate of the Sciences, the world ought not to suppose that knowledge is intuitive."* The qualifications of a good physician have been stated. It comes next in order to show the necessity of selecting a medical adviser possessing these qualifications, and the danger of selecting one not possessed of them. The human system contemplated as a structure merely, is exceedingly intricate and difficult of comprehension in all its parts. Composed of numerous organs, all of which have distinct functions to perform, its workings moreover are complicated and multifarious, even in a state of health. Exposed to a thousand deleterious influences, and subjected to every kind of abuse, it is liable to injury in every part, and to derangement of every degree in all and each of its complex operations.

Remedies are the tools, with which a physician works. He must know how to use them, and have an accurate knowledge of their nature and action on the system. He must know *what remedies* are required, *in what doses*, and *when*, and *how long*, and *to what extent*, they are to be administered, and be able beforehand to calculate their power and effect. It must not be forgotten, that the mere prescription of a remedy in a disease is the smallest and lightest of the physician's duties. In the first place he must ascertain what the disease is, and to be worthy of confidence he must prescribe for things and symptoms, and not for names, as is unhappily too often the case. In the same disease, what will suit one constitution, will not suit another, what is adapted to one set of symptoms, is not adapted to another set; and in the same case, what may be applicable in one stage, must in the succeeding be changed for something else. Even when no complication exists, it is often a problem of the highest importance and extreme nicety, to calculate the force and intensity of the disease, the capabilities of the system in the tolerance of treatment, and the power and action of remedies, and to strike a just and exact balance between them. A course of treatment too timid and inefficient, as well as one too bold and active, may lead to a fatal result. Disease often becomes uncontrollable from hesitation and inac-

*Code of Medical Ethics.

tivity ; the strength that is needed during convalescence is often imprudently wasted in the beginning. Remedies are two-edged instruments, and should not be entrusted to the unskilful ; on the contrary, the most virulent poisons are safe and efficacious in prudent and skilful hands.

Considering, therefore, the complexity of the human body, the multiplicity of its organs and functions, the influences to which it is exposed, the numerous accidents injuries and diseases to which it is liable, together with the variety of remedial agents to be employed, the caution prudence and judgment to be exercised, it is plain, that "medicine is the most difficult and intricate of the sciences," and fully demands all the qualifications, which it has been asserted the physician ought to possess, and that the utmost care and discrimination should be used in his selection.

Even in matters of much lighter import, mankind proceed on the principles here inculcated ; "in no trade or occupation, do they rely in the skill of an untaught artist." Does a clock or watch need repairing or regulating, inquiry is at once made for a skilful clock or watch-maker, one is selected who has served a regular apprenticeship, and has thoroughly learned his business, one who has experience and is in the habit of repairing and regulating time-pieces. No master-machinist would for a moment think of employing common labourers in refitting a steam-engine, he would on the contrary choose such as were well-instructed and skilful in the manufacture and erection of machinery. The tailor, the shoemaker, the brick-layer, in fact every species of mechanics, have to serve years of apprenticeship to their trades, and afterwards work a long time as journeymen, before they are considered capable of becoming master-workmen, and plan and direct the execution of jobs in their respective occupations ; how preposterous and foolish, therefore, would it be to suppose, that in medicine knowledge is intuitive, or that the physician can be capable of practising his art, without long and attentive devotion to study.

● In regard to Medicine, the public may be compared to a man wandering, on a dark night, over an unknown plain containing a great number of pits. He may advance boldly and confidently, because he knows not nor sees the danger before him, but disaster or ruin is so much the more certain. None but a medical man, or one who has given the subject proper reflection, can have an idea of the many risks to health and life, which persons incur by entrusting their constitutions to incompetent

men and women, or tinkering upon them themselves. None but a physician knows, how many are the opportunities for practising fraud and imposition in the treatment of disease. This is the secret of the success of quacks and charlatans, and of the prevalence and temporary popularity of absurd and hurtful systems of practice. The incompetent pretender may be honest, and the competent practitioner dishonest; hence, the necessity of competency and honesty combined in a medical adviser. As a rule, however, it may be assumed, that the greater number of those who ignorantly undertake to cure disease, are deceitful imposters. The statements just made are best illustrated by the relation of facts and cases, the authenticity of which can be avouched.

A hysterical lady imagined she had disease of the throat. She sent for an irregular practitioner, who examined it, and finding there what most probably he had never seen before, namely, the epiglottis, a small fibro-cartilaginous prominence situated at the base of the tongue, whose office it is to cover the glottis or opening into the windpipe—vulgarly called “the wrong throat”—during the act of swallowing and prevent the food passing therein, he pronounced it a cancerous growth. She accordingly permitted him to cut away as much of it as he was able. On his next visit, she represented to him that she had great difficulty in swallowing, the barrier at the opening of the windpipe having, as stated, been partly cut away, the food constantly got into the “wrong throat;”—he declared it was owing to the rapid growth of the cancer since the operation, and made another attempt to remove it, which of course only increased the evil, from which she never recovered. Some time after a regular physician, being in the neighborhood, was requested to examine the case, and found the epiglottis in the mutilated state described.

A healthy young man had his arm dislocated at the shoulder joint. He applied to a physician who attempted to reduce the dislocation, but did not succeed. He called in two others as ignorant and unskilful as himself. With the aid of several strong men, having placed a round piece of wood in the arm-pit, by united strength they fractured the neck of the shoulder bone, breaking off the part containing the socket in which the arm bone moves, while the latter remained in the arm-pit; as much unreduced as at first. In this condition the patient was found by two other physicians, who were subsequently called in. Nothing could be done for the young man under the circumstances, and he remained a cripple for life.

A physician was called to a child not two months old, beyond the hope of recovery. The disease had commenced in the bowels; subsequently the head became affected and it had convulsions. At this time a notorious female quack was administering a powerful narcotic mixture, the chief ingredient of which seemed to be Stramonium, commonly called Thorn-apple, or Jamestown Weed, an extremely poisonous and dangerous herb, of which the dose for a grown person is only one grain of the seeds, or two or three of the leaves, twice a day. Another physician saw a case of convulsions, which terminated in death, produced in another child by a large dose of Lobelia.

A male quack, equally notorious, brought a patient convalescent from fever to the brink of the grave, by a large dose of croton oil. An old lady was near becoming blind, from a strong solution of caustic applied to her eyes, by the same individual. To another who had intermittent fever, he gave large doses of arsenic, which caused dropsy and rendered her unable to walk for two months.

The following is an instance of a ludicrous blunder perpetrated by one, who claims to be a member of the regular profession, and is such so far as a diploma can render him. A physician was called to see a young man having a fit of somewhat nondescript character. After bleeding and applying mustard poultices, a considerable time having elapsed, and the patient manifesting no signs of amendment, being unwilling to bear the sole responsibility of the case, he sent for another physician to consult with. The messenger who had been despatched brought a different physician from the one intended. Although disappointed, the former concluded to raise no objection, and was waiting until the other had finished his examination, to step aside and hold a consultation on the case, when, to his utter confusion and astonishment, and the consternation of the surrounding crowd, the latter setting aside all rules of etiquette pronounced it, "a decided case of hydrophobia," and ordered the patient to be put into a bag, and have his arms tied behind his back. The physician first in attendance, having been thus unceremoniously supplanted, left the case in the hands of the other, who treated it with all the severity so serious a disorder demanded; but in a few days the young man was walking about the street, and is now living and has occasionally similar attacks.

As a portion of the community are still wedded to Thompsonism and Thompsonian medicines—lobelia or Indian tobac-

co, the steam-bath, and cayenne pepper—an extract from the report of the trial of the empiric, who founded the system, may serve a salutary purpose :

“Commonwealth of Massachusetts, vs. Samuel Thompson :”

“At the beginning of this term—Nov. 1809,—the prisoner Thompson was indicted for the wilful murder of Ezra Lovett, jun., by giving him a poison called Lobelia, on the ninth day of January last, of which he died on the next day. On the twentieth of December, at an adjournment of this term, the prisoner was tried for this offence, before the Chief Justice, and the judges Sewall and Parker.

“On the trial it appeared in evidence, that the prisoner, sometime in the preceding December, came into Beverly, where the deceased then lived; announced himself as a physician; and professed an ability to cure all fevers, whether black, grey, green, or yellow: declaring that the country was very much imposed upon by physicians, who were all wrong if he was right. He possessed several drugs, which he used as medicines, and to which he gave singular names. One he called *coffee*; another *well-my-gristle*; and a third *ram-cats*. He had several patients in Beverly and in Salem, previous to Monday the second of January, when the deceased, having been for several days confined to his house by a cold, requested that the prisoner might be sent for as a physician.

“He accordingly came, and ordered a large fire to be kindled to heat the room. He then placed the feet of the deceased, with his shoes off, on a stove of hot coals, and wrapped him in a thick blanket, covering his head. In this situation he gave him a powder in water, which immediately puked him. Three minutes after he repeated the dose, which in about two minutes operated violently. He again repeated the dose, which in a short time operated with more violence. These doses were all given within the space of half an hour, the patient in the mean time drinking copiously of a warm decoction, called by the prisoner his *coffee*. The deceased, after puking, in which he brought up phlegm, but no food, was ordered to a warm bed, where he lay in a profuse sweat all night. Tuesday morning the deceased left his bed, and appeared to be comfortable, complaining only of debility: and in the afternoon he was visited by the prisoner, who administered two more of his emetic powders in succession, which puked the deceased, who, during the ope-

ration, drank of the prisoner's coffee, and complained of much distress. On Wednesday morning the prisoner came, and after causing the face and hands of the deceased to be washed with rum, ordered him to walk in the air, which he did for about fifteen minutes. In the afternoon the prisoner gave him two more of his emetic powders, with draughts of his *coffee*. On Thursday the deceased appeared to be comfortable, but complained of great debility. In the afternoon the prisoner caused him to be again sweated, by placing him with another patient, over an iron pan with vinegar heated by hot stones put into the vinegar, covering them at the same time with blankets. On Friday and Saturday the prisoner did not visit the deceased, who appeared to be comfortable, although complaining of increased debility. On Sunday morning, the debility increasing, the prisoner was sent for, and came in the afternoon, when he administered another of his emetic powders with his *coffee*, which puked the deceased, causing him much distress. On Monday he appeared comfortable, but with increasing weakness, until the evening, when the prisoner visited him, and administered another of his emetic powders, and in about twenty minutes repeated the dose. This last dose did not operate. The prisoner then administered pearl-ash mixed with water, and afterwards repeated his emetic potions. The deceased appeared to be in great distress, and said he was dying. The prisoner then asked him how far the medicine had got down. The deceased, laying his hand on his breast, answered *here*: on which the prisoner observed that the medicine would soon get down, and unscrew his navel: meaning as was supposed by the hearers, that it would operate as a cathartic. Between nine and ten o'clock in the evening, the deceased lost his reason, and was seized with convulsion fits; two men being required to hold him in bed. After he was thus seized with convulsions, the prisoner got down his throat one or two doses more of his emetic powders; and remarked to the father of the deceased, that his son had got the *hyps* like the devil, but that his medicines would fetch him down; meaning, as the witness understood, that it would compose him. The next morning the regular physicians of the town were sent for, but the patient was so completely exhausted, that no relief could be given. The convulsions and the loss of reason continued, with some intervals, until Tuesday evening, when the deceased expired.

"From the evidence it appeared that the *coffee* administered was a decoction of marsh-rosemary, mixed with the bark of

bayberry bush, which was not supposed to have injured the deceased. But the powder which the prisoner said he chiefly relied upon in his practice, and which was the emetic so often administered by him to the deceased, was the pulverized plant, trivially called Indian tobacco.”*

This extract needs no comment, every sensible man will agree with the Chief Justice: “that the deceased lost his life by the unskilful treatment of the prisoner;” although the latter was acquitted both of murder and manslaughter, for want of evidence that he was actuated by “malice,” or any other than “an honest intention and expectation of curing,” in the administration of his remedies;—and that “it is to be exceedingly lamented, that people are so easily persuaded to put confidence in these itinerant quacks, and to trust their lives to strangers without knowledge or experience.”†

In this city, two children, who had barely recovered from severe attacks of Cholera Infantum, were nearly purged to death by large doses of Vermifuge medicine recommended by an *itinerant preacher*. And the reader may remember the case of a gentleman of this city, who fell a victim to the advice of a travelling lecturer, after the most earnest warning not to meddle with his disease.

As for Hydropathy or the Water-Cure, although adapted to a few cases, there is no doubt that it would be equally injurious and fatal, as Thompsonism and other kinds of quackery, if it were more convenient of application, and like the latter practised in all cases indiscriminately.

Lobelia, cayenne pepper, steam, and water are all excellent remedies, if cautiously and properly used, at the proper time, but they should be administered and applied under the direction of an honest and intelligent physician.

To show the inefficiency and absurdity of Homœopathy, nothing more is required, than to describe the principles on which it rests. Homœopathy was invented and first promulgated almost half a century ago, by a German physician named Samuel Hahnemann. His famous “Organon of the Healing Art” was first published in 1810;—the fifth and last German edition of this work was published at Leipsic in 1833, and only such facts, as can be substantiated by a reference to it, will be offered on the subject.

On the origin of acute diseases, namely, such as come on somewhat suddenly, and run a somewhat violent and rapid

*Tyng’s Reports. †Ibid.

course, Hahnemann's opinions are distinguished by no marked peculiarity, except that the greater number of those which result from abuse of the system, whether in excess or privation, are at the bottom only transient outbreaks of latent itch.* Thus when a person eats or drinks too much, or is overfatigued and overheated, and gets sick from these causes, the probability is, that the unseemly disease just mentioned has been excited into action.

According to Hahnemann all properly so-called chronic diseases are caused by chronic miasms inherent in the system, of which he specifies three, namely, Syphilis, Sycosis, and Psora or Itch.† The last of these, he says, is the cause of nearly all chronic diseases: "of nervous debility, hysteria, hypochondriasis, insanity, melancholy, idiocy, madness, epilepsy, and spasms of all kinds, softening of the bones or rickets, skoliosis, and kyphosis, caries, cancer, fungus hæmatodes, morbid growths, gout, hæmorrhoids, jaundice, cyanosis, dropsy, amenorrhæa, hæmatemesis, epistaxis, hæmoptysis, hæmaturia, and menorrhagia—of asthma, and suppuration of the lungs—of impotence, and sterility—of megrim, deafness, cataract, and amaurosis, gravel, paralysis, loss of sense, and pains of every kind, etc., which figure in pathology as so many peculiar and distinct diseases."‡

A person afflicted with any of these diseases, therefore, has only the secondary symptoms of itch, as Hahnemann expressly calls them.§ In the investigation and establishment of this great and important truth, unknown until he declared it, and the discovery of the best anti-psoric remedies, he says, he consumed twelve years of study and research.**

The next leading principle of Homœopathy is, that every disease has its specific; and that "the only and infallible oracle in the Healing Art, pure Experience, teaches that actually that medicine, which in careful trials has been shown to produce, in its action on the healthy human body, the greatest number of symptoms in conformity with those manifested in a given disease, will, in doses sufficiently potentized and reduced, quickly radically and permanently remove and transform into health the totality of symptoms of the diseased condition, that is, the entire disease present; and that all remedies cure, without exception, those diseases, which approach them nearest possible in similarity of symptoms, and leave none of the same uncur- ed."‡ which means, that the proper medicine, in doses suffi-

*Organon §73. †Ibid. §78, §79, §80.

‡Organon §80, ¶Ibid. §81, **Ibid. Note, under §80. †Ibid 25.

ciently attenuated and potentized, for any disease, is that which, if administered to a healthy person, would as near as possible, produce all the symptoms of the disease.

As Hahnemann appeals to experience, in evidence of the truth of this doctrine, it becomes necessary to state, that all experience, both in indirect observation, and in careful experiments made directly with the view of testing it, by competent and trustworthy men, among whom the truth-loving and philosophic Andral stands conspicuous, teaches quite the contrary. Medical men are ever ready to welcome with joy, and eagerly avail themselves of every new discovery in Medicine, and if the comprehensive doctrine announced were as true and universally applicable, as it is asserted to be, Hahnemann, instead of being condemned as the author of folly error and mischief, would be lauded as the greatest benefactor of humanity, and stand at the head of all medical discoverers. Or, can it be possible, that the great body of learned physicians, in all quarters of the globe, men who have uniformly proved themselves upright candid and benevolent, are without exception prejudiced unjust or infatuated on this point alone, since not a single individual of note and standing has from disinterested motives yielded his assent thereto!

As for specifics, all physicians of any learning and experience know, that not many of these exist. The majority of diseases require to be treated on general principles; a large number can merely be guided to a favorable termination; in some the physician can do no more than take care of the system, while they run their course; a few, intermittent fever for instance, have specific remedies. The physician can assist and direct the efforts of Nature, and remove obstacles that stand in her way, but in most cases Nature performs the cure. Indeed the Homœopaths are exceedingly ungrateful in denying Nature this power, since to her *unaided* efforts they owe nearly all their pretended cures. If every disease had its specific remedy, the practice of medicine would be very easy; almost every man might be his own physician; and in fact none ought to remain uncured; here, however, Hahnemann has left a loop-hole for the escape of his disciples, by attributing all incurable cases to the effects of the mal-practice of regular physicians.*

The third fundamental principle of Homœopathy is, that medicines operate remedially in infinitesimal doses. It is expressed in the following quotation from the Organon:

*Organon §74, §75.

"Two drops of a mixture of equal parts of Alcohol and fresh Plant-juices are diluted with ninety-eight drops of Alcohol, and by means of two shake-strokes *potentized*, as the first *Power-development*—and thus through twenty-nine other vials, each filled 3-4ths with ninety-nine drops of Alcohol, in such wise, that each successive vial is supplied with one drop of the preceding vial, which has already been twice shaken, in order then to be shaken twice also, and so finally also the thirtieth *Power-development*, *potentized Decillion-dilution*, as the most proper for use.

"All other substances fit for medical use—Sulphur excepted, which of late years has been prescribed only as highly diluted Tincture—namely: pure or oxydized and sulphuretted Metals and other Minerals, Petroleum, Phosphorus, also the parts and juices of plants which can be preserved in the dry state alone, organic substances, neutral and secondary salts, etc., all these together are first *potentized* to the *millionth Powder-attenuation*, by means of three hours rubbing; but of this, one grain is afterwards dissolved, and carried through twenty-seven diluting vials, in the same manner as the Plant-juices, to the thirtieth *Power-development*."†

For the thorough comprehension of these directions the uninitiated may need some explanations. In the original they are obscurely expressed, and it would seem intentionally.

The two drops of the mixture of equal parts of alcohol and plant-juice are manifestly composed of one drop of each. Therefore, upon the addition of ninety-eight drops of alcohol the vial contains ninety-nine drops of alcohol and one drop of plant-juice. The vial being shaken as directed, one drop taken therefrom is composed of ninety-nine parts of alcohol and one part of the juice, or ninety-nine one hundredths of the one and one one hundredth of the other. This drop being added to the ninety-nine drops of alcohol in the second vial—the first of the twenty-nine—and the vial twice shaken, one drop of the resulting mixture contains nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine ten thousandths of alcohol and one ten thousandth of plant-juice. This drop being again added to ninety-nine drops of alcohol in the third vial, and the vial twice shaken, one drop taken out of it contains already only the one millionth part of the original drop of plant-juice. Hence, it is evident, that it—the drop of

†Ibid. §270, §271.

One drop of the third Power-development contains the one-millionth of a drop of plant-juice, the dilution is the same, therefore, as if one drop were divided among a million. Now, about 625 drops of alcohol make one cubic inch, and one million drops consequently 1600 cubic inches, which are equal to very near 7 gallons—the number of cubic inches in a gallon being 231. Hence, one drop of a mixture of one drop of plant-juice and seven gallons of alcohol would be a Homœopathic dose of the third Power-development.

In the same way it is ascertained that if one drop of plant-juice were mixed with 109,943 hogsheads of alcohol, one drop of the mixture would be a Homœopathic dose of the sixth Power-development.

Again, a drop of plant-juice thrown into a sea of alcohol 3315 miles long, 2760 miles broad, and 4000 feet deep—equal to, if not greater than the Mediterranean—and thoroughly commingled with it, would be diluted to the twelfth degree, or Power-development.

In the thirtieth degree of dilution the proportion of plant-juice to the alcohol is as one to a decillion; in other words, one drop of plant-juice being mixed with a decillion of drops of alcohol, one drop of this mixture would represent a dose of the thirtieth Power-development. The proximate extent of a decillion drops of alcohol is easily calculated: 1 decillion divided by 625, the number of drops in a cubic inch gives 1600 nonillions; 1600 nonillions divided by .5236, the ratio of a sphere to a circumscribed solid, the latter being 1, gives 3055 nonillions; the cube root of 3055 nonillions is 14,400000,000000,000000, the diameter in inches of the sphere, which a decillion drops of alcohol would form; this number divided by 63360, the number of inches in a mile, gives 227,400000,000000, the diameter of the same in miles; this diameter being upwards of 63000 greater than the diameter of the orbit of the planet Hershel, which is 3600,000000, some idea may be formed from this fact of the extent of the sphere to which it belongs.

To those unacquainted with the stupendous results of a rapidly progressive geometrical series, the above estimates will appear enormously extravagant, but their correctness can readily be verified.

It remains to state, that the liquid of any degree of dilution may be incorporated, by means of absorption, with powders or pillets, and thus administered in a solid form.

A number of other singular and erroneous doctrines might be extracted from the *Organon*, did space permit; the three presented, however, ought to suffice to convince every sane man and woman, that the system is utterly absurd, and unworthy of the slightest confidence. It is indeed difficult to realize, that it has obtained favour and credence in the present age,—and not so much with the ignorant as with the educated classes of society. In the twentieth century it will be regarded in the light, in which the world now regards the medical absurdities of the middle ages. It will be looked upon as the most singular hallucination ever engrafted upon the human mind. The belief in the power of charms is much more excusable, because in most cases it is founded on supernatural intervention, and consequently is not strictly amenable to the common rules of reason.

But what can be thought of men, who in so serious a business as the treatment of disease, in matters so momentous as life and death, knowingly recommend and practice a system so irrational and inefficient? How can such persons avoid the imputation, that they are either fools or knaves, that they are either deceiving themselves, or others? Can any sensible man or woman have any other feeling, than contempt for the understanding of a person, who has even cursorily studied, and still believes, and trusts in such unqualified and barefaced nonsense? or have any other feelings, than aversion and horror for the impudent and unscrupulous trifling with human health and life, which is daily perpetrated in imposing it on the community? The allegation, that modern Homœopaths do not hold the doctrines of Hahnemann to the full extent and signification amounts to nothing, and cannot be listened to. If it is intended to confer a benefit and render services to mankind, there is no necessity to start with childish absurdities. All that bears the slightest semblance of rationality, in the practice of Homœopaths, was known to the medical world before its founder existed.* And still more,

* It is commonly asserted, and admitted even by members of the regular profession, that Homœopathy has at least exerted a salutary influence on the practice of medicine generally, in conducting to a more moderate and less frequent use of remedial agents. This opinion is entirely erroneous and groundless, and those, who entertain it, thereby only manifest their lack of judgment, or ignorance of the present state of practice, and the history of its improvement during the half century about to close. *Alterative doses*, and the principle, that *no medicine is sometimes*

what can be the feelings of the thinking public in regard to physicians who practise both systems, the rational and homœopathic, according as their patients prefer one, or the other. Of all kinds of charlatanry, this is the most culpable and contemptible. For what is the physician employed? Who is the better judge of the manner and means of cure, he or the patient? Or, is the decision between two systems so diametrically opposed a matter of indifference? If small but appreciable doses, called in medical language *alterative*, are required, let them be administered. If no medicine is needed, let it be so declared and the case left to Nature, watching for an opportunity to assist her. But why palm upon a patient infinitesimal nothings, as efficient and salutary remedies?

The Homœopaths it is true point to the results of their practice, in proof of its efficacy and the soundness of its principles. They even assert, that the percentage of mortality in it has been less, than in the practice of regular physicians. As to the fact, that many of their patients get well, it proves nothing; every sensible man knows that ninety-ninths of the cases, which physicians are ordinarily called to attend, under proper precautions in diet exercise and confinement, recover without any medical attendance or medicine, though the time required would most probably in most be considerably lengthened. As to the superiority of their treatment, as proved by bills of mortality, it is equally notorious, that after all few persons are sufficiently simple and confiding, to send for Homœopaths when dangerously ill, and that they are generally dismissed and regular phy-

the best medicine, are older than Homœopathy. Sensible and intelligent physicians have always prescribed, and do now prescribe, remedies in such doses and frequency as are necessary to produce the desired effects, withholding them when not required, or when their action might be injurious, and not undervaluing the restorative powers inherent in the system. And, if the treatment of disease is more simple and rational, at the present day, than it was fifty or even twenty-five years ago, it is not owing to the ridiculous doctrines and practice of Hahnemann and his followers, but to the labours and precepts of the many eminent investigators and teachers of medical science, that have flourished on both sides of the Atlantic, within these periods—those who could not profit by their example, aided by individual experience, and required the absurdities of Homœopathy to set them right, were truly in a deplorable state of mental hebetude.

sicians called in, as soon as cases become serious, so that naturally a small number die in their hands. As regards cures said to have been performed by Homœopaths, after others had failed, these are to be attributed to Nature, time, the influence of hope often inspired by bold and confident promises, and sometimes perhaps to the entire abstraction of medicine, which may have been imprudently administered before. A large number of complaints also are powerfully influenced by the imagination.

But are the opinions and evidence of so many learned; respectable, and disinterested witnesses, so many gentlemen, divines, lawyers, and ladies of rank and education, who have testified in favour of Homœopathy—a number of whom have experienced the wonderful effects of infinitesimal doses in their own persons—to be thus summarily set aside and explained away? This remonstrance can be most effectually met by offering a brief history of a kindred delusion.

In the year 1796, *Perkinism*, so called from its inventor, made its appearance in Connecticut, in the shape of the *Metallic Tractors*, two pieces of metal, one apparently iron and the other brass, about three inches long, blunt at one end and pointed at the other. These instruments were applied for the cure of different complaints, as rheumatism, local pains, inflammation, and even tumours, by drawing them over the affected part very slightly for about twenty minutes. Dr. Perkins took out a patent for his discovery, and travelled about the country to diffuse the new practice. He soon found numerous advocates of his discovery, many of them in high standing and influence. In the year 1798, the tractors had crossed the Atlantic, and were publicly employed in the Royal Hospital, at Copenhagen. About the same time the son of the inventor, Mr. Benjamin Douglass Perkins, carried them to London, where they soon attracted attention. The Danish physicians published an account of their cases, containing numerous instances of alleged success, in a respectable octavo volume. In the year 1804, an establishment honoured with the name of the Perkinian Institute, was founded in London. The transactions of this institution were published in pamphlets, the Perkinian Society had public dinners at the Crown and Anchor, and a poet celebrated their medical triumph in strains like these :

"See pointed metals, blest with power t' appease,
The rustless rage of merciless disease,
O'er the frail part a subtle fluid pour,
Drenched with invisible Galvanic shower,
Till the arthritic staff and crutch forego,
And leap exulting like the bounding roe!"

While all these things were going on, Mr. Benjamin Douglass Perkins was calmly pocketing money, so that after some half a dozen years, he left the country with more than ten thousand pounds, which had been paid him by the believers in Great Britain.

When the Perkinian Institution was founded, no less a person than Lord Rivers was elected president, and eleven other individuals of distinction, among them Governor Franklin, son of Dr. Franklin, figured as Vice Presidents. Lord Heniker, a member of the Royal Society, who is spoken of as a man of judgment and talents, condescended to patronize the astonishing discovery, and at different times bought three pairs of Tractors. When the Tractors were introduced into Europe, a large number of testimonials accompanied them from various distinguished characters in America, thirty-four of whom were physicians and surgeons, and many of them of the first eminence, thirteen clergymen, most of whom were doctors of divinity, and connected with the literary institutions of America; among the remainder were two members of Congress, one professor of natural philosophy in a college, etc. In Great Britain, the Tractors were not less honored, than in America, by the learned and the illustrious. The Perkinistic Committee made this statement in their report: "Mr. Perkins has annually laid before the public a large collection of new cases communicated to him for that purpose, by distinguished and intelligent characters, from almost every quarter of Great Britain. In regard to the competency of these vouchers, it will be sufficient simply to state, that amongst others whose names have been attached to their communications, are eight professors in four different universities, twenty-one regular physicians, nineteen surgeons, thirty clergymen, twelve of whom are doctors of divinity, and numerous other characters of equal respectability."

To clergymen Dr. Perkins sent his Tractors gratuitously, accompanied with a formal certificate, that the holder had become entitled to their possession by the payment of five guineas, which was the standard price.

They were originally conveyed to Denmark by the lady of Major Oxholm, and soon became the ruling passion. The workmen, according to a French writer, could not manufacture them fast enough. Women carried them about their persons, and delighted in bringing them into general use. In England as well as in Denmark, says Dr. Haygarth, there was a class of female practitioners, who went about doing good with the

Tractors. Nor can it be supposed, that the American ladies were behind their Trans-Atlantic sisters in benevolence and zeal.

Of reported cases there was the most cheering abundance. In addition to the American and Danish cases, the Perkinistic committee stated, that at the date of Mr. Perkins' last publication, the number reported in Great Britain was about five thousand, and it assumes that not more than one cure in three hundred was published; so that the actual number of cures amounted to upwards of one million five hundred thousand, performed by means of the Tractors on grown persons, infants and even brute animals.

A peculiar virtue was supposed to reside in the Tractors made and patented by Mr. Perkins, which, as has been stated, cost five guineas. But Dr. Haygarth of Bath, obtained equally wonderful effects with Tractors made of lead and wood, with nails, pieces of bone, slate-pencil and tobacco-pipe,—the patients supposing that the real five guinea Tractors were employed. Dr. Alderson employed wooden Tractors and produced such effects upon five patients, that they returned solemn thanks in church for their cures—one of them is thus described: Ann Hill had suffered for some months from pain in the right arm and shoulder. The Tractors were applied, and in the space of five minutes she expressed herself relieved in the following apostrophe: "Bless me! why who could have thought it, that them little things would pull the pain from one. Well, to be sure, the longer one lives, the more one sees; ah dear!"

Yet with all its array of respectable patrons, and immense number of reported cures, Perkinism was almost forgotten, only fifteen years after its invention; and "the Tractors," says Dr. Holmes, from whose small work published in 1842, the foregoing account has been extracted, "are now so utterly abandoned, that I have only by good fortune fallen upon a single one of a pair, to show for sake of illustration."

Here then was a Practice promulgated under the most favourable circumstances—the scientific world being just then excited by the important discovery of Galvani—by one who was himself a physician of age and reputation, well received by the learned and influential, the benevolent and wealthy, with every possible advantage, yet being founded on error, and there is reason to believe on fraud, it sunk into neglect and oblivion, and from its history and fate may be learned the value of the testimony on medical subjects of a class of individuals, to which

not a small number of physicians belong, who though well-meaning honest and intelligent, are driven about by every wind of doctrine, and welcome every novelty, especially in Medicine, so it be proposed under the garb of learning and with an air of plausibility and assurance,—a class too that are ever ready to accuse of selfishness, narrow-mindedness and bigotry, others more firm and incredulous than themselves, who proceed more slowly surely and wisely in the road of improvement, and feel it their duty to oppose the tide of mischievous error and delusion.

That Homœopathy is doomed to the same neglect and oblivion, is evident from its present condition and prospects. In Germany where it originated it has long been rapidly declining. In France, and especially Paris, where Hahnemann had fixed his Establishment, it has equally lost ground. In Great Britain where the good sense of the English nation did not suffer it to obtain an extensive footing, its limited popularity is also on the wane. Of the permanency of its success in America an idea may be formed by the subjoined facts: At the first introduction of Homœopathy into this country, two large edifices were erected in Allentown, under the auspices of the renowned Dr. Hering himself, one intended for a homœopathic college, the other for a homœopathic hospital—a Faculty of Professors was instituted—students received for instruction—patients admitted for cure—the clergy of Lehigh and surrounding counties became zealous advocates and practitioners of the New System—regular physicians embraced it—the community was ecstasized with its beauties, and deluded into a firm belief in the fancied potency of its remedies—the stockholders' most sanguine hopes were sure of realization—and Allentown seemed destined to become the future Bologna or Paris, the grand centre of medical illumination of the new world. But alas, the instability of human affairs! After a brief period of prosperity the fortunes of the Institution changed—the number of students decreased—the excellencies of Homœopathy were discovered to be empty conceits—patients began to doubt the efficiency of infinitesimal doses, and refused to submit to homœopathic treatment—even horses affected with spavin, glanders, etc., were in the end by preference entrusted to the Farrier—the Professors, like Othello, finding their “occupation gone,” and that a small community did not contain a sufficient number of fools to afford a living, migrated to places more populous and eligible for practising deception—the clergy transferred their advocacy and favour to patent medicines—the renegade physicians returned to their old

faith—the edifices themselves for a while entirely deserted, and afterwards tenanted by some half a dozen of families, who, it is said for inattention to certain obligations found it difficult to obtain abodes elsewhere, are again characterized by the respectability, which appropriation to useful purposes commands.

A Quixotic scheme connected with this homœopathic movement, was to Germanize the courts of law, petitions having been sent to the legislature praying that all legal proceedings might be conducted in the German language.

It was observed by a physician practising in the place, that after this brief reign of Homœopathy, the number of chronic diseases had greatly augmented. Inflammations for want of effective treatment had become subacute, and thus lingered on. Pleurisies and Pneumonias had passed into pulmonary disorganizations or actual consumption. Dysenteries, Diarrhœas, etc., were incurably confirmed. Apropos with this statement, in the South where diseases are mostly acute, run a rapid course, and require active treatment, Homœopathy has never been able to gain a foothold; nor can it have escaped notice, that in the North it is principally relied on in chronic complaints and slight indispositions, and confined to seasons when the latter abound and the former are unusually aggravated.

An indubitable evidence of the decline of Homœopathy is, that it has ceased to be a topic of conversation in fashionable circles, which was its principal stronghold. A short time ago it was elaborately discussed in every social assembly, and formed the chief staple of gossip at every tea-table party. Homœopaths were the lions of men, and the pet-lambs of ailing mothers and marvelling daughters. Old maids—who seem to have an innate partiality for medical subjects—were loud in extolling the merits of the system. Even old bachelors, a proverbially skeptical and obdurate set were forced to admit, that there was something in it. Dandies and men of small mental calibre, who are needlessly apprehensive of being voted *bored*, for the weight and good sense of their discourse, were for once obliged to relinquish Novels and D'Orsay, in order to please the ladies, and acquire a smattering of homœopathic lore. Learned and experienced physicians, with the fearful odds against them, felt with Falstaff, that "discretion was the better part of valour," and opposed courteous indifference to the impertinent remarks, with which they were assailed. But, as the poet says, times change and people change with them, and none more than the vacillating and indiscriminating class, who are ever in quest of something

new, and countenance every ephemeral humbug that folly or cunning can produce or invent.

And who are the individuals that figure as Homœopaths? Are they men of learning and sound and stable understanding, who had attained distinction and been successful as regular practitioners, whose motives moreover for adopting an entirely different system could not be suspected? Or, are they men of unstable minds, or little knowledge and practical experience? Are they men whose prospects were good, and whose convictions were honest and conscientious; or men who had been unable to succeed as regular physicians, or thought their chance of success would be better in the new practice? And of these classes how many have recanted, after amassing fortunes or compelled by circumstances? Or, are they men who had failed in other pursuits, and were too indolent or incapable to acquire a regular medical education,—foreigners driven to our shores, at a loss for employment and means of living, suddenly metamorphosed into homœopathic physicians?

But, says some fond mother, there certainly is no danger in Homœopathy—if it does no good it does no harm. No injury can result from the decillionth part of a grain of charcoal, or of a drop of laudanum, nor from the minute quantities of sugar of milk, that accompany these doses. The children are fond of homœopathic medicines, and there is no trouble in giving them. Besides, it is important that they should be pleased with, or at least have no dislike for their physician. On the other hand, the medicines of regular physicians often have an unpleasant taste, are troublesome to administer, and sometimes act harshly and dangerously.

Such allegations would sound better in the mouths of the children themselves, but the subject is serious, and on this account they claim an indulgent and respectful consideration.

As to the harmlessness of infinitesimal doses, being entirely inert, it is certain, that there is no direct harm either in giving, or in taking them. The harm is indirect; often whilst parents are trifling with homœopathic medicines, disease increases in violence and becomes uncontrollable by proper remedies; the time for judicious action passes by, and when at length aid is brought, that at an earlier period might have been effective, it is too late,—and many a kind and affectionate father and mother have deplored their weakness and folly and, perhaps, misguided zeal for a favourite system, over the corpse of a dear and promising child.

This is the proper place for noticing a trick frequently practised by Homœopaths. It has just been granted, that infinitesimal doses, prepared according to standard homœopathic works on *Materia Medica*, are harmless. But homœopathic doses, or rather the doses of Homœopaths are not always infinitesimal. Both to effect cures, and to disprove the assertion that their remedies are inert and therefore useless, they often give large doses of medicines, which resemble their sugar-of-milk powders in colour. Of these there is a number of great power and remedial efficacy, such as, arsenic, corrosive sublimate, calomel, tartar emetic, sulphate of zinc, sugar of lead, quinine, morphia, strychnia, aconitina, etc. It is an easy matter to produce satisfactory conviction and silence the tongue of an unbeliever, who asserts that he can swallow an entire chest of homœopathic medicines with impunity, by giving him a powder of tartar emetic, or putting him asleep with morphia. And it is equally easy for persons accustomed to imposition, lyingly to attribute cures to the homœopathic system of practice, which have been performed, under the principles and rules of the rational system, by any of the above-named or similar medicines.

It is undeniable that homœopathic medicines are very pleasant to take; that children are fond of them; that they are easily administered; and that it is of some importance even, that they should like their physician. In the very nature of things, it is impossible in most cases, that the means requisite for restoring a sick person to health should be pleasant, and that medicine—to be efficacious and have the desired effect—should, at a time when there is a loathing for every thing, be agreeable to take. As for gratifying the wishes of children, let parents act in this matter, as they would act in others, and they will not indulge them to injury and, it may be, ruin,—they would not select for them a teacher, who would allow them to be idle and play all the time. The importance of not having a dislike for the physician is also limited by the bounds of safety and good sense.

As grown patients, in their own cases, very soon become convinced of the inefficacy of the homœopathic practice, and cease to trust in it, as children would do likewise, if they were able to reason, it is deemed unnecessary to address any formal arguments to them on these points; nevertheless, as the number is considerable, who, for want of experience, still have a fancy, on fitting occasions, to try the effects of medicine infinitesimally attenuated, the following case will prove to them, that trials of this kind are not always made with impunity. An adult young

man had a tooth drawn by a bungling dentist, who injured his upper jaw. Five or six days after he got excruciating pain not only in the jaw, but in the entire side of the face and head. In this condition he applied to a Homœopath, who gave him a powder, and enjoined him to apply for another on the third day, in case the pain continued. The patient took the powder without the slightest relief, and on the third day went back and got another with a like injunction. In the mean time the lower jaw had commenced to become stiff and an abscess to form in the upper part of the cheek. He took the second powder, but his pain increased. On the third day being unable to bear his sufferings any longer, he sent for a regular physician, who found him exhausted with excessive pain, and having strong symptoms of Trismus or locked-jaw. He could barely open his mouth sufficiently to admit fluids in small quantities. The most powerful internal and external remedies were required to relieve the pain and counteract the progressing tetanic disease, to which he would doubtless have fallen a victim, had he relied on homœopathic medicine for another day, as by that time it would most probably have been too far advanced to be arrested.

It must be admitted that regular physicians sometimes do harm : by giving improper remedies ; by giving proper remedies in too large doses ; or by giving medicine when they ought not ; they may even jeopard the life of a patient by neglecting to use the proper remedy at the proper time and to the proper extent. In the nature of things also they cannot cure all cases, and in the present state of Medicine, they may be incompetent to cure cases, which in a more perfect state would be curable. These admissions are freely and candidly made, and they only go to prove that people cannot be too deliberate and cautious in the selection of an honest and competent physician, one who understands his business, and will under all circumstances give an honest advice, and never prescribe a grain of medicine unless it be needed ; who will not even resort to the harmless artifice of administering bread pills and gum arabic solutions, to gratify and amuse patients, whose complaints are imaginary, or would be aggravated by more active remedies. One moreover who has sufficient energy and determination to put in force all proper measures, that may be required for the welfare of the patient. From such an one no injury nor danger need be apprehended. The alleged imperfection of Medicine, which after all is greatly exaggerated, ought not to constitute a plea for having recourse to a worthless and nugatory practice. An upright

physician will express himself cautiously, and avoid promises, which are more easily made than fulfilled, still in the vast majority of cases he can prescribe with precision, and foresee with certainty the action of remedies, and in no small number truthfully declare, that life would have been lost, but for the intervention of his science and skill.

A robust man, about 35 years of age, made application for advice, in case of an affection, which he said had given him much uneasiness and anxiety of mind for the last ten years, during two of which—though otherwise healthy, having uniformly enjoyed a good appetite, and been able to work without fatigue—he had on account of it remained idle. It came on principally in the variable weather of spring and autumn, and consisted of a pain in the region of the heart. A physician whom he had consulted increased his anxiety by telling him, he had disease of the liver, and actually gave him medicine for that complaint. On examination no sign or symptom of disease could be discovered, except a slightly intermittent pulsation of the heart, which most probably was natural, or might perhaps have been produced by his former occupation, shoeing horses, as a blacksmith, and which, or a strain in the side similarly received, gave rise to the pain complained of. He was dismissed with the assurance that his health was excellent, and the direction to rub the part with some stimulating liniment whenever he felt the pain.

A young man applied for advice thinking he had an affection of the kidneys. He complained of pain low down in the back, which had no connection whatever with his kidneys and was caused by his occupation and sedentary habits. This was one of the cases in which quacks delight. Had the person been encouraged in his conceit, and advised to take medicine—especially such medicine as imposters administer in cases of supposed renal disease, namely, active diuretics—he would have produced the ailment, with which he erroneously believed himself affected.

Before taking a final leave of charlatanism and quackery, patent medicines and astrology deserve a passing notice. The amount of mischief done by the making and vending of patent medicines is incalculable. The immense quantity sold and taken is proved by the numerous large fortunes amassed by this means. A considerable portion of the disease, which physicians have to prescribe for, is caused either directly or indirectly by the daily use of nostrums. It is true that many are entirely inert, such are most of the panaceas and syrups, whose

most active ingredient is molasses, scented with oil of winter-green, and in so far they are harmless, except to the pocket—though the stomach does not always remain uninjured; some of these syrups also contain dangerous proportions of arsenic and corrosive sublimate. Most patent medicines however are positively hurtful, chiefly by the habit which is soon acquired of taking them constantly, for no one can long enjoy health, who makes frequent use of medicine. In ordinary health, and slight ailments, it is seldom required, and should never be taken unless under the direction of an intelligent physician; even what are commonly called domestic remedies demand his supervision and sanction. It would be well if in this matter the public imitated the example of physicians, which is to take as little medicine as possible. If it were generally known that most of the certificates of cure are forgeries, written by the makers themselves, the injury now done by patent medicines would be greatly lessened. Indeed, the fact that they are recommended for all diseases should convince people that their object is fraud and imposition.

Astrology, or the reading of planets and nativities, which has been revived and come extensively in vogue, and even pretends to cure all kinds of disease, seems at first sight void of pernicious consequences, and resort to it an innocent superstition, and therefore undeserving of notice. But experience teaches differently; it is not seldom the cause of much mischief and misery to the weak-minded persons, especially nervous and hysterical females, who are the dupes of this imposition. Such are haunted day and night by the predictions of nativities, particularly when unfavorable, and thus is strengthened the already existing proclivity to disease, both of mind and body.

When will the world cease to support and encourage knaves and imposters? When will the Press cease to disgrace itself by the publication of their infamous and indecent advertisements?

Having demonstrated both by argument and example the danger and folly of confiding so precious a possession, as Life and Health to the care of an ignorant, inexperienced and dishonest physician, and of trusting to prevalent systems of irregular practice, it follows, that it is the duty as well as interest of every individual to be extremely cautious and discriminating in the choice of a medical adviser. The information requisite in making a selection is comprised in the remarks on the necessary qualifications of a trustworthy physician; it will not be superfluous however to present the same in a different and more available form.

When a person is about employing a physician for himself or his family, he ought to make the following considerations: Is he by nature adapted to his vocation? Has he natural abilities and have these been improved to the proper extent by education? Was he prepared by sufficient preliminary knowledge for the understanding and perfect and complete acquisition of so difficult and comprehensive a science as Medicine? And did he avail himself of all the requisite means for obtaining a full and thorough knowledge thereof? Is he industrious and studious, and zealous to keep pace with the progress of medical science? The physician will never cease to have occasion for reading, both to refresh his memory on subjects studied before, and in making himself acquainted with new facts and discoveries. The time, it is hoped, has gone by, when frequent reference to books and application to study were decried, as disqualifying. Learning is deemed necessary as well as experience. What do books contain but the recorded experience of others? What qualifies more for observation, and what enhances the value of experience more, than reading and comparison with what others have observed?—Having satisfied himself on these points, he ought to inquire further: Has he a good judgment? This qualification is of all the most indispensable, without it no amount of learning, be it ever so great will render a man a safe and serviceable attendant in sickness. Without judgment he will be a mere prescriber for names, without reference to complicating symptoms and peculiarity of constitution; he moreover will be unable to discern the useful and appropriate from the worthless and unsafe, and accept the crudest novelties for real improvements. Is he entirely honest? Does he study the welfare of the patient more, than his own interest? Is he more anxious to do his duty, than to make a display, or please meddling friends? Is he firm and unyielding in measures that concern the safety of the patient, preferring to give up the case rather than do what is wrong, or leave the right undone; yet willing to listen to reasonable remonstrances? Has he sufficient independence to do nothing, and give nothing, when this is the proper course? People are too little aware, that no medicine is sometimes the best medicine, and that there are complaints, which it is better to bear, than to aggravate by treatment. The trees of a forest are not all healthy, both by nature and from accident. And there are many whose condition no amount of care and culture would improve. So it is with a large number of human systems, naturally weakly, or debilitated or

injured, beyond the possibility of restoration to perfect health, the most judicious treatment is useless, since they do equally well when let alone, and their possessors must be content to bear an inevitable portion of suffering or inconvenience.

Is he free from the arts of quackery? * Is he devoted to his calling? Is he possessed of those habits of attention and regularity, which the serious and important nature of his duties demands? Is he moral; upright; honourable; and gentlemanly? Has he the proper degree of patience, kindness, and compassion for constant intercourse with the afflicted?

Such are the points on which inquiry should be made before confidence is accorded to a physician, and such, or as many as possible, are the qualifications which he ought to possess, to deserve it. A few of the sterner qualities have been dwelt upon, because their exercise demands a more than ordin-

* The reader may think quackery has no existence in the regular profession. If such be his opinion, he is greatly mistaken. The definition of quackery is, the practices of quacks; and whoever is guilty of these is a quack, be he in or out of the regular profession. Administering nostrums constitutes one of these practices, and this distinguishes the quack *par excellence*, but there are many others. In a general way it might be said, that whatever is done for mere effect's sake, what is meanly crafty and unbecoming a member of so honourable a profession as Medicine is quackery, but this is not sufficiently explicit. A better idea of it can be conveyed by citing particulars: To adopt unusual peculiarities of conduct for the sake of making an impression on the public. Designedly to differ, both in opinion and practice, from the commonalty of educated and experienced physicians. Without reason to pretend to be overrun with business, or with similar intent to walk or drive about unnecessarily. To have one's self purposely called out of church. Insidiously to undermine or injure the reputation of other physicians either directly, or indirectly by countenancing false or erroneous assertions. To offer to attend patients cheaper than other physicians. To make an undue exhibition of books, surgical instruments, etc. To perform surgical operations in bar-rooms in order to attract attention. To trumpet about cures or induce others to do so.—Additional instances might be adduced, but these will suffice to enable the public to discriminate between what is done in the plain honest unostentatious fulfilment of duty, and what is done for individual and selfish ends—to command notice and obtain patronage.

ary share of virtue, and is frequently censured as a fault—the man whose aim is to please being preferred to him, whose aim is the honest fulfilment of duty.

Such is not the standard however, which medical men are commonly judged by, and preference for a physician is not unfrequently founded on the most frivolous and irrelevant grounds. Some are satisfied with the mere name of *Doctor*, and a decent outward appearance, supposing all physicians equally well qualified. One takes a fancy to a physician, because he is affable, and agreeable in his manners, making up perhaps by extreme obsequiousness and courtesy for deficiency of education and skill. A second employs a physician, because he deals with him. A third, because he goes to the same church, or belongs to the same society or party in politics. A fourth, because he is a man of fashion. A fifth, because he is not; and so on.

In the relative estimation of Surgery and Medicine, the public constantly err. It has been observed by one competent to form an opinion, “that the whole operative surgery of one of our largest towns would barely be sufficient to support a single individual.” So that in the nature of things very few prepare themselves for performing capital operations, and very few, in fact, can command opportunities for constant dissection of the dead body, which is requisite for safe and skilful operation on the living. Surgeons, therefore are scarce, not because only a few have capacity for that branch of the Healing Art, but because only a few are wanted, and able to live by it. The contrary conclusion would be as unreasonable, as to suppose that only a few have capacity for making surgical instruments, because but a small number are engaged in that occupation. The question is here concerning capital operations, or Major Surgery; Minor Surgery, such as setting fractured limbs, and reducing dislocations, etc., every physician is presumed to be able to practise.

Another source of fallacy is the fact, that the surgeon’s operations being manual are striking to the eye and deeply impressive; on the contrary the operations of the physician are mostly mental, unaccompanied with display, and concealed from view. Yet is more knowledge skill and judgment required, for the successful treatment of a serious case of simple uncomplicated disease, inflammation of the lungs for instance, than is exhibited in the most important and striking operation of surgery. In fact, the chief qualifications of the good surgeon are, to know *when to operate*, and *how to conduct the after treatment*. The mere manual part—expertness with the knife—although

that which the crowd most admire, is of secondary consideration. It demands an accurate knowledge of anatomy, but this can be acquired by any one who has a good local memory and sufficient patience and perseverance;—the manual skill is less than is displayed in a number of ordinary handicrafts?

It is just, however, that the able surgeon should be held in high esteem, and be well rewarded. His course of preparatory education is long, laborious, and expensive, while the demands for his services are comparatively few in number. But a distinction should be made between the man of judgment and prudence, as well as skill, and the blood-thirsty operator, whose only aims are display and public notice, regardless of the welfare of the patient. Neither should one branch of the Healing Art be unduly elevated, and the other inconsiderately and unjustly underrated.

Another error of the unprofessional public, educated and uneducated, of which systematizing imposters eagerly take advantage, is to expect the same certainty in Medicine as in the Exact Sciences. Any system that claims to comprise the whole in a nut-shell, with principles as simple and universally applicable as the law of gravitation, is eagerly grasped at. This degree of certainty is unattainable, and its assurance and expectation equally delusive and unreasonable. The science of medicine is founded on pure observation and cautious and necessarily restricted experiment; it embraces the phenomena of Life, in every imaginable state, from perfect health to death, and the influence upon these states, of a great number and variety of agents, in an exceedingly complicated and variable machine, the human body—it is therefore utterly impossible, that it should ever attain the simplicity expected. It constantly advances in perfection and completeness, but this progress only increases the number of facts and general principles. There is no approach to anything as simple and comprehensive, as the like cures like, of Hahnemann, or that for every disease a specific herb or mineral exists; no more, than to the discovery of the Philosopher's stone, or an Universal remedy. Still the practice of medicine according to facts and principles, already discovered and accumulating for upwards of three thousand years, is sufficiently certain to satisfy every reasonable mind, and warrant the fullest confidence therein. Yet it does not pretend to cure all diseases, nor every degree of diseases that are curable.

Nothing is more common than an error of this kind: Two physicians have each a case of disease, as much alike as possi-

ble, under similar circumstances and with equal chances of success. One treats his patient prudently and skilfully, and in a short time he gets well, without much suffering or reduction of strength. It is looked upon as a mild attack, and the physician receives no credit for bringing it to so easy and early a conclusion. The other treats his case carelessly and unskilfully, the disease gains in severity, the patient becomes weaker and weaker, until finally he is brought to the brink of the grave—at length the power of the disease is exhausted, Nature prevails, perhaps in opposition to remedies, and the patient gradually recovers. This on the contrary is considered a severe attack, it lasted long, and restoration to health was slow and late; the physician is lauded in proportion, he receives great credit for bringing so difficult a case to a favourable termination, when in fact his bungling treatment was the cause of its severity and protraction.

Again, if a patient recovers under some irregular mode of treatment, in the hands of a quack or Homœopath, it attracts general attention, and every one speaks of it, whereas hundreds of equally important cures in the practice of regular physicians pass unnoticed, or are viewed as a matter of course.

Lastly, the community and especially invalids, whose credulity is proverbial, are constantly misled by the bold and extravagant promises of imposters. The honest and enlightened physician is hemmed in by the bounds of truth, and can promise no more than he is able to perform. The dishonest and ignorant quack, whose only aim is to impose on and fleece the credulous, speaks without care, knowledge or forethought, and stops at no promises whatever.

If mature deliberation should be exercised in choosing a physician, he should not be abandoned nor dismissed, except for very good reasons. Frequent changes are extremely injudicious and imprudent. "A medical man, who has become acquainted with the peculiarities of constitution, habits, and predispositions, of those whom he attends, is more likely to be successful in his treatment, than one who does not possess that knowledge."* Stability of adherence to a family physician will encourage him in dangerous cases to call in another to consult with, which he might be unwilling to do, if he entertained any fear of being supplanted. It sometimes happens, that in peculiar cases or diseases, one physician possesses more skill of treatment than another, either because he has studied them more particularly, or met with them more frequently. If under

* Code of Medical Ethics.

such circumstances, the consulting physician should excel the family physician, this should by no means lessen the previous confidence in the latter, on the contrary his willing recommendation and admission of the other's superiority should rather increase it. It does not follow, that he is generally inferior because he is surpassed in a peculiar case.

"A patient should never be afraid of making his physician a confidante in regard to his disease, or its true cause, he should always bear in mind, that a medical man is under the strongest obligations of secrecy. Even the female sex should never allow feelings of delicacy to prevent their disclosing the seat, symptoms and causes of complaints peculiar to them. However commendable a modest reserve may be in the common occurrences of life, its strict observance in medicine is often attended with the most serious consequences, and a patient may sink under a painful and loathsome disease, which might have been readily prevented had timely intimation been given to the physician.

"The obedience of a patient to the prescriptions of his physician should be prompt and implicit. He should never permit his own crude opinions as to their fitness, to influence his attention to them. A failure in one particular may render an otherwise judicious treatment dangerous, and even fatal. This remark is equally applicable to diet, drink, and exercise. As patients become convalescent they are very apt to suppose, that the rules prescribed for them may be disregarded, and the consequence, but too often, is a relapse. Patients should never allow themselves to be persuaded to take any medicine whatever, that may be recommended to them by the self-constituted doctors and doctresses who are so frequently met with, and who pretend to possess infallible remedies for the cure of every disease. However simple some of their prescriptions may appear to be, it often happens, that they are productive of much mischief, and in all cases they are injurious, by contravening the plan of treatment adopted by the physician.

"A patient should never send for a consulting physician without the express consent of his own medical attendant. It is of great importance that physicians should act in concert; for, although their modes of treatment may be attended with equal success when employed singly, yet conjointly they are very likely to be productive of disastrous results.

"When a patient wishes to dismiss his physician, justice and common courtesy require that he should declare his reasons for so doing.*

* Code of Medical Ethics.

Patients should take no medicine whatever, but by the advice of their physician. Family medicines should be procured from him, or by his prescription. The most trifling articles needing repair are sent to the proper artisan, the health of the body certainly demands at least equal attention.

"Patients should always, when practicable, send for their physician in the morning, before his usual hour of going out; for, by being early aware of the visits he has to pay during the day, the physician is able to apportion his time in such a manner, as to prevent an interference of engagements. Patients should also avoid calling on their medical adviser unnecessarily during the hours devoted to meals or sleep."*

Patients owe their physician gratitude friendship and respect, as well as a just and liberal reward for his kind attention and valuable services. The labourer is worthy of his hire. No one is willing to work for nothing, and it should not be expected, that the physician is willing or can afford to do so. It is the height of ingratitude to allow the physician, who has restored them to health and put them in condition to attend to business, and earn the means of living, to go unrewarded, or wait until every other debt has been discharged. He ought to be rewarded not only for services actually rendered, but for his knowledge and skill, which he has acquired at much expense, and years of unremitting toil and application to study. He should be rewarded for the thought and anxiety bestowed on his patients, when absent from them—if he is worthy of his vocation he cannot but constantly feel the weighty responsibility resting upon him. He should be rewarded for holding himself in readiness at all hours, and under all circumstances, and making himself in the strictest sense a public servant,—the physician cannot like other men leave home even for a single day, nor has he a single hour that he can call his own. How can it be expected, that he should bring to the bed-side, and carry away with him to his office, the requisite energy, solicitude, kindness, and compassion, unless he feels, that his patient is correspondingly grateful and worthy of them? How can he otherwise look upon him, as a member of the family, of which he is the medical guardian? There are cases in abundance in which he willingly and cheerfully gives his attendance gratuitously—the honest poor, who cannot reward him, except with thankfulness, must be attended as well as those who are differently circumstanced; but the physician no more than any other individual can be expected to render

* Code of Medical Ethics.

services, and lavish his best and kindest feelings on persons, who have no sense of honesty, accountability or gratitude.

Attendance on the sick has been justly regarded a benevolent occupation—no class of men do one tithe of the charity done by physicians, but it is highly unjust to expect it to be gratuitous also. Where is the mechanic or man of business, who is willing to give for nothing his own manufactures or purchased goods and produce, or reduce their value from one to two-thirds, even to the poorest,—much less to those who by due industry and economy are able to pay the full price? Yet how often is a hue and cry raised against a physician, and encouraged by persons who ought to know better, that *he wont attend the poor*, hoping thereby to bring him into public odium; and for no other reason, than because he refuses to serve the thriftless and dishonest, who could pay if they would. Again, while only a part pay, and none, with rare exceptions, more liberally than they ought, the public senselessly exclaim: *The Doctor gets money enough, he makes the rich pay for the poor*—and thus a large portion excuse themselves for not paying at all. The truth is, from the rich he barely obtains his due, in the case of people of moderate means he is continually obliged to make deductions.

In fact, all who with equal abilities and outlay devote themselves to any kind of business, during one half the time which the physician gives to his professional duties, with one half the toil and anxiety of mind, grow rich, whilst nearly all physicians remain in limited circumstances. Those who are wealthy have in most cases become so by inheritance, marriage, or speculation. And whilst men who have been successful in other pursuits, can increase their business to any extent by the employment of additional hands, and can even delegate the management thereof, the physician can undertake no more, than he is personally able to superintend.

Physicians, moreover, are entitled to compensation for advice given in the office. No one has a right to walk into a physicians office and claim his time and knowledge without paying him therefor. Time, Knowledge, and Skill are the physician's capital, and no one should expect to use them without remuneration. Let it be the rule to compensate physicians for advice, and they will not give medicine in order to get pay, when they ought to give none. Or, as is practised by some, whose sense of honesty is not the most tender, incorporate with mixtures, and charge for, large quantities of an ingredient which may be

procured from the Water Company much cheaper and equally good, or, when they do not keep their own medicines, have an understanding, by means of a private mark, with the apothecary, that he is to charge their fee in addition to the price of the prescription.*

Compensation for advice is honestly and fairly due to the physician, and he should have the independence to demand it openly and directly. The round about way of obtaining it, just described, is not only dishonest; it is also hurtful to the interests and dignity of the profession. It induces the public to mistake the functions of the physician, to degrade him into the apothecary, and to set a higher value upon recipes and medicine, than professional ability. Besides, it induces people often wrongly to suspect those who are truly honest and conscientious.

Let it be generally understood that the principal duty of the physician is to give advice, not medicine; to inform his patients in some cases, that no medicine is needed, and in others to prescribe the proper remedy—and that one is as important and difficult to determine as the other; that medical ability does not consist in the knowledge of a number of recipes and nostrums, but in the correct interpretation of symptoms of disease, and their safe and judicious treatment;—then will quacks and imposters be unable to practise their arts, fraud will cease, and the upright and enlightened physician be esteemed and rewarded according to his desert.

* There is a class of itinerant quacks, who give advice gratuitously, and charge only for medicine. Some of these, to succeed the better in defrauding the public, assume the clerical garb and preach as well as treat disease. With Thompson they declare that all regular physicians are wrong—laying great stress upon the pernicious effects of *mineral remedies*. The trick of these gentlemen is to make patients believe, that their ailments are of a very serious and alarming nature, and demand immediate attention. A short time ago a female patient consulted one of these hypocritical villains, in case of slight habitual asthma. He informed her, she had enlargement with other disease of the liver, *gravel of the tongue*, and was in great danger from imminent apoplexy. For this very learned and *analytical* opinion he took no fee—but as an offset asked the moderate sum of *six dollars*, for some medicine which he recommended her to use.

