

An essay on biliary derangement, and the excessive use of calomel, and other mercurials / by David Ward.

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WARD (David)

An essay on biliary derangement

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AN ESSAY
ON
BILIARY DERANGEMENT,
AND THE
EXCESSIVE USE OF CALOMEL, AND OTHER MERCURIALS:

BY
✓
DAVID WARD, M. D.

GRADUATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT.

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ADRIAN:

MAMMOTH PRESS OF THE JOB AND PUBLISHING ESTABLISHMENT OF
THE WATCH TOWER—E. W. INGALS.

1848.

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON
FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT
TO THE PRESENT TIME
BY
JOSEPH NEALE
OF THE BARR

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.
BOSTON: PUBLISHED BY
JOSEPH NEALE, AT THE
PRINTING OFFICE OF
JOSEPH NEALE, NO. 10, NASSAU ST.
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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE author of this little essay, has neither motives of ambition or profit to gratify in submitting it to the scrutiny of an enlightened public. If either or both, were only to be taken into consideration, he would most assuredly have remained silent. The most controlling motive which has actuated him, is a sincere desire to do good.— He believes the physician, who fancies he has done all that is required of him as a member of the profession, when he has prescribed correctly for his patients, has but limited conceptions of his duties to the rest of the profession, and the public generally. Much yet remains to be learned, and much error removed before the medical profession can claim to have arrived to that degree of perfection, of many of the sciences, these are in time to be overcome by promoting the one, and expunging the other, the task of which legitimately belongs to members of the medical faculty ; and they should enter upon the task boldly, but honestly, with a sincere desire to elicit truth in all of their investigations. The following treatises will be mainly devoted to the consideration of some important medical errors, that are prevalent in this community, to an alarming extent. To remove them entirely, is more than he anticipates. But if he should succeed only in part, he may be the means of saving many valuable lives from a premature grave, and thereby richly reward himself for all his trouble. He does not claim that the principles and doctrines here advocated, are original with him, they are the principles, and doctrines of the books. He is aware they are not in accordance with the doctrines, of many of those who claim to be members of the regular medical faculty in this vicinity, or that of many of their patrons. He nevertheless contends they are true.

An other object of the following treatises, is to remove many erroneous and false representations, that have been put in circulation with regard to himself by dishonest and designing medical men.

An other inducement which has had much weight, is the urgent solicitation of many warm friends.

These are most of the controlling motives, which have induced him thus to appear before the public. However they may appear to others, to him they have appeared imperative, and to possess a controlling power, which he cannot think it is his duty to resist.

That all the good that may be desired, should be accomplished, is

more than is expected ; but that much may be accomplished, and the health and life of many human beings preserved, is confidently anticipated. He is aware he labors under the prejudice of erroneous preconceived opinions, assiduously promulgated by those who pretend to be of the medical profession, adverse to those which he shall inculcate. Hewould therefore request, that his remarks may be read in an impartial and candid manner ; although the reader may not at first adopt all the conclusions of the author, that they may be preserved for future referance, they may be the means of preserving a dearly beloved child, wife or other relative, from a premature grave, or from becoming mutilated objects of pity, lothsome to behold. He is aware he exposes himself to renewed persecution, for promulgating doctrines so much at variance with most of those who claim to be of the medical faculty of this place ; as they appear to think it an unpardonable sin in him, not to talk and think as they do, although our best medical authorities are against them, he has however, this consoling reflection, that he is not the first medical reformer, who has been persecuted. He is confident what he has said and done already, has made an impression on this community, that will continue after he is in the grave, and this is a stimulus to renewed exertion. He disclaims all sinister or pecuniary motives in this work, or respecting the course he has heretofore taken upon the subjects which it treats.

BILIARY DERANGEMENT.

ANATOMY, physiology and pathology, are the main pillars of medical science, and any theory or hypothesis which is not constructed on these, is mere speculation, and will ere long crumble into ruins before the vanquishing influence of truth and reason. A knowledge of structure, and its laws and functions, must constitute the starting point of all successful medical inquiries. And if we loose sight of the lights offered us by that knowledge, we are lost in a vortex of visionary speculation, and are liable to embrace the grosest pathological errors, and thereby the most destructive and irrational practice. An error of this description, is preavalent among a large portion of those who claim to belong to the medical profession in this community, who have assiduously inculcated the erroneous idea, that Biliary derangement is the cause of all, or nearly all, of the diseases incident to the human system. A more futile, simple hypothesis never entered the brain of a visionary enthusiast. It is not a doctrine taught in the books, either ancient or modern. And one would not hazard much to say it never would be ; for a medical man who had science enough to write a book, would not devote his time in writing such foolery.

The Books on the contrary discountenance such an idea. One celebrated author has justly remarked, that "the term Biliary derangement, hides much ignorance," virtully saying, that the ignorant

pretender when he does not know what ails his patient, calls it biliary derangement, and thus hides his ignorance.

The human system is endowed with many organs, each of which has a function or office peculiar to itself; and when these functions are performed correctly, and exactly, it constitutes a state of health, and with such harmony are they performed, that they proclaim the wisdom of an Infinite Creator. To say that any one of these organs are always getting deranged, and thus produce all the diseases incident to the human family, is indirectly charging Deity with imperfection, and contrary to all sound pathology.

Some of these organs are the following: The Stomach, Brain, Kidneys, Intestines, Pancreas, Liver, Lungs, Skin, Eye, Ear, Nose, Spine &c.

If one, a part, or all of these organs become impaired in its function, it produces disease. One of the most important offices of these organs, (and perhaps the only one, of some of them,) is its secretory function. The stomach secretes its gastric juice, the kidneys urine, pancreas pancreatic juice, the liver bile, (or what is familiarly known as gall.) That the secretory function of the liver does in some instances become impaired, as in jaundice, and in some instances during the progress of disease, is undoubtedly true. And where this is the case, the person may be said to be bilious, because the bile (or gall,) is in a deranged state.

It is equally true, that the functions, of all the organs above mentioned, as well as others become impaired, thereby producing disease, and some of them much more frequently than the liver. We might with as much propriety attribute all diseases to a deranged state of the kidneys or pancreas, as to the liver.

There are many things which serve either directly, or indirectly to produce a deranged state of these organs or their functions. We are surrounded with external objects, and things which occasionally produce disease, by impairing some or all the functions. To say that a deranged state of the functions of any one of these organs, is the cause of all or nearly all the diseases incident to the human system, is not agreeable to sound pathology, and is in fact gross empiricism and will lead to the most fatal errors in practice.

It is astonishing, since the physiological and pathological discoveries of Bichat and Broussais, that men who make any pretensions to medical science, should adopt such an inconsistent and vague hypothesis as that biliary derangement is the cause of most of the diseases incident to the human system. A deranged state of the bile cannot produce such alarming symptoms, as are frequently attributed to it. One would think unacquainted with its properties, to hear these learned Doctors talk, that it was one of the most deleterious poisons in the human stomach, and that it was eternally getting there, and thereby producing disease as well as evidence of biliary derangement. Now the facts are it seldom or never gets there, except it is in the last stage of severe puking; and if it did, it would not produce much incon-

venience. It cannot injure the stomach as its properties are harmless to it.

Ox gall or bile, is recommended to be given in certain diseases by high authority, and it is said with good effects. In common vomiting, if the patient pukes up a gallon of yellow or green fluid, these very learned doctors exclaim with much self confidence, "I told you that you was very bilious." Now if it was not for their extreme ignorance of Anatomy and Physiology, they would have known it was no more bile or gall, than a thrashing machine. The natural receptacle of the bile, (gall bladder) is not larger than a mans thumb, yet these very learned doctors would have us believe that patients of theirs puke from two quarts to a gallon of pure bile, in a short time. What ignorance! There is no communication between the stomach and liver; the only outlet from the liver, is through the Biliary or Hepatic Duct, and Cystic duct, which pass directly from the biliary receptacle to the intestine called Duodenum some inches below the stomach. Besides there is a valve at the lower or pyloric orifice of the stomach, which prevents the contents of the intestines from passing readily back into the stomach. The perestaltic motion also of the whole alimentary canal tends to propel the contents of the stomach, and intestines downwards, this motion must be inverted before the contents of the stomach or intestines can pass upwards, and the contents of the intestines must be thrown upwards with considerable force, to overcome the resistance of the valve at the lower orifice of the stomach above mentioned. All this must take place before a person can puke bile, and the perestaltic motion of the intestines does not become inverted with sufficient force to overcome the resistance offered by the valve of the stomach, until after much hard puking. This yellow or green fluid, which is vomited up in ordinary puking, is in many instances a vitiated secretion of the stomach, which instead of secreting its healthy gastric juice, secretes this fluid. In some instances, in consequence of the functions of the stomach becoming impaired, the aliment and fluids taken into the stomach, may be changed in color to a green or yellow. Now as I have observed before, pathological errors will lead to destructive and irrational practice, and this idea of biliary derangement, being a cause of nearly all disease, together with the practice which follows in its train, has been the cause of more deaths, and human misery in this section of country, than intemperance, pestilence, famine, fire and sword.

I have never known one of these eternal biliary derangement hunters, (who were of the regular faculty,) but what were injudicious and excessive calomel mongers. And I have no doubt that their erroneous notions of biliary derangement, have led them into this destructive practice. I do not deny but where there is biliary derangement, as in jaundice and a few other instances, but calomel or some other mercurial would have a tendency to remove it. As much may be said of many other articles of the *Materia Medica*, less liable to produce injurious effects in the system.

EXCESSIVE USE OF CALOMEL AND OTHER MERCURIALS.

It is nearly thirty years since I commenced my professional studies, and from that time to the present, I have entertained sentiments adverse to the excessive administration of calomel, and other mercurials. My medical preceptors were among the most eminent physicians and surgeons of New England, who seldom gave calomel, or other mercurial preparations, and when they did, but little. I attended my first course of medical lectures at the Castleton Medical School, (at that time connected with Middlebury College. I afterwards attended two full courses at the University of Vermont, located at Burlington, (at this Institution I graduated.) The medical professors of both these Colleges condemned the excessive use of calomel, and other mercurials in the severest terms. I have now pursued the practice of medicine and surgery, more than a fourth of a century, and in that time, I have not prescribed as much calomel or other mercurials, as some of the Adrian physicians have given in three months; and I do not think I have as much as they have given in one month.

I practiced medicine and surgery in the State of New York, something rising twenty years, and have been in this place more than four. When I commenced the practice of my profession in this place, I was astonished at the quantities of calomel and other mercurials administered by those engaged in the practice of medicine in this village.— They were giving it for every disease, and every stage of disease; if they prescribed for a patient either at their office, or at the residence of the patient, these learned doctors would invariably say: “you are very bilious,” and would not fail in one case in fifty to give calomel or other mercurials. Although I was satisfied at that time such a practice was not tolerated in the books, but was the grossest quackery, and destructive to the lives of many, and healths of thousands. I knew if I should express my honest convictions at that time, respecting such practice, I should incur the displeasure and persecution of all those engaged in this pernicious practice. If I had said at that time openly and above-board, as I have for the last two years, that diseases were different and require different remedies for their cure, that it was as much quackery to always give calomel or blue pills, as it was to always give cayenne pepper or lobelia, that hundreds went to a premature grave in this county annually, and that thousands had their constitutions impaired, which would continue as long as they lived, in consequence of the excessive use of mercurials; If I had said this at that time, as I have for the last two years, it would have been very doubtful whether I could have sustained myself against their persecutions; and the only reason I did not at that time as I have since, was that I had just come to the place, and had not become known as a medical man, nor acquired a medical reputation. But as soon as I thought I could sustain myself against

their persecutions, I expressed myself freely on the subject. I think I have done my duty for the last two years, and if God will forgive me for holding my peace the first two years of my residence in Adrian, when I saw so much injury done by this system of quackery, I will never be guilty of it again under similar circumstances. In the regions of country where I practiced medicine in the State of New York, the physicians did not give one fiftieth part of calomel to what many do here, I expressed myself there openly & above board to members of the medical profession, and to the public generally, against the excessive use of calomel, and other mercurials, yet I was elected president of two county medical societies. I mention this fact merely to show that the medical faculty there, took a very different course from what they have here.

I will mention one circumstance, that I have often thought of, and one that has mortified me extremely, when I have reflected on it. It is this, there are botanic physicians in this community, who have had no opportunities for obtaining the science of the profession, except what they have obtained from botanic books at home, who have better success in business, and loose less patients in proportion to the amount of business than any of these calomel mongers, who boast of their medical opportunities. Now if this is true, one of two other things is also true: either the science of the profession is entirely useless, or these learned doctors do not follow its requirements and precepts. I unhesitatingly declare it is the latter. The science of anatomy, physiology, pathology, chemistry &c, are of immense value to those who understand them, and carry out their principles in practice. I have no doubt but the sick would do better to have no physician at all, and restrict themselves to diet and regimen, than by this excessive system of mercurialization.

I will now quote from one of our best and most eminent medical authors, which will speak for itself. Doct. Mackintosh says: "It is a despicable practice to give blue pills in every disease connected with the digestive function; and it is much to be regretted that the great name of Abernethy should ever have been associated with such insufferable quackery." Now this is as strong as I talk. The same author in another place, uses the following language: "Some physicians trust almost entirely to the action of calomel in fevers, and in India more particularly it is deeply to be regretted, that a great waste of human life has consequently taken place. Some years since Doct. Haliday of the East India Company service, was by the order of the Marquis of Hastings put under arrest, and deprived of rank and pay, for showing by most incontrovertable evidence, that in the General Hospital of Calcutta, the enormous quantity of 26 lbs of calomel were given, and that under the painful digestion of this mineral, the proportions of deaths, was one in about six of the whole sick list. While under a more rational treatment the mortality was reduced one half. In fact the mortality bore almost an exact ratio with the quantity of calomel exhibited. After a delay of many years, Doct. Haliday was

restored to his rank, by the express order, more than once repeated of the India directors. This transaction has never been brought before the British public, but having carefully perused all the evidence, I have no hesitation in saying, that as a piece of persecution from beginning to end, there is no parallel case to be found in the annals of any free country. The result of the practice of the rising medical faculty in India, has fully corroborated the statements formerly made by Doct. Haliday, and calomel is going rapidly into disuse; and as pathological knowledge advances in India, which it is doing rapidly, calomel will be less trusted to."

"In 1796 the deaths in the West Indies under Doct. Chrishoms mercurial plan, were never exceeded, amounting to nearly one half of the whole number of troops." I might quote many other similar passages from the same author, and other equal high authority, and will do it if it should be questioned, this may therefore suffice for the present. It will be perceived that this eminent author, speaks in very decided terms both against the excessive use of calomel and blue pills. He also says that the number of deaths among the troops bore almost an exact ratio to the amount of calomel exhibited. Now this is agreeable to my observations. The most excessive calomel & blue pill mongers that I have ever known, have been the most unsuccessful practitioners; and I have never known these articles administered as unmercifully as they are by some in this village. In the summer of 1846, I commenced taking notes and observations in this place. Among other things I took the amount of all the deaths of those attended by the Adrian physicians, which came to my knowledge; I noted also the name of the person dyeing, the disease they died with, and the name of the attending physician. With an intention of noting my own success as well as others, although I commenced and continued these observations with a sincere desire to elicit truth for the benefit of the profession, and the public generally, I like Doct. Haliday, was rewarded with the severest persecutions. The whole kennel of calomel and blue pill mongers, from the regular licentiate, down to the vilest, most self confident, clownish, boasting quack among them commenced an unhallowed persecution on me, so much so that I discontinued my observations after continuing them three months from the first of July.

The physicians residing here, who do not use calomel and other mercurial preparations, (to their credit be it said,) took no exceptions to these observations; some of them even offered me their assistance in procuring the required information, and were of service in this way for which I am under obligations. During the time that I made those observations as above mentioned, two of our noted calomel and blue pill mongers, lost between forty and fifty patients, which they attended during their sickness, others of this class were equally unsuccessful. In the summer of 1847, which was last summer, they were still more unsuccessful, two of them had at one time six patients in the village dead, above ground. I will now mention my own suc-

cess, during the time of three months of each year, from the first of July, which I do reluctantly, and which I do for no other purpose than to show the difference between giving calomel and blue pills for every disease, and not giving it at all, or but seldom. I do not pretend that during this time, or any other time, that I have had very extraordinary success, or such success as is worth boasting of. I hope therefore the reader will excuse any appearance of egotism, in my mentioning the following, although it relates to myself; and I pledge him my veracity, that it is true, and I challenge any one to controvert it.

During the first three months, I did not loose a single patient, commencing three months from the first of July, 1846. The last three three months commencing the first of July 1847, I lost four patients and that is all. During the time my own health was good, and I done all the business I was able to do, in fact I could not attend to over two thirds of the calls I had. I am confident I done as much business as any physician in this place, I have not lost a single patient with the fever since I have been in the country, that was originally my patient, and but one that I have taken from the hands of other physicians. As I remarked above, I do not mention this to boast of my own success, but I would appeal to an enlightened public, and ask if such success should not have stoped the sneers, sarcasms and persecutions of an illiberal brotherhood.

Since I have lived in this place, I have observed closely the success of the different physicians of this village, and as I have been in all parts of the country, my opportunities for making such observations have been good, and judging from these observations, I am confident that some of the most noted calomel mongers, loose more than fifty patients each annually. We have some dozen men who practice medicine in this place, all of whom attend more or less to obstetrical business, some fifteen or twenty woman have died since I have lived in Adrian, in child bed, who were attended by the Adrian physicians. Now I am about to make a remark, which if true is worthy of much consideration, and I say that it is true. All of these women, were attended by the calomel and blue pill mongers. I have been particularly informed of the circumstances attending many of them, and I must say they are such that they reflect much discredit on their medical attendants, as well as on some others unconnected with the profession.

The other physicians have not lost a single case of this kind, since I have lived in town, to my knowledge; to my mind this is conclusive evidence that these physicians are either miserable accouchers or bad practitioners, or both. Such reckless practice must lead to ill success, not only in this branch of the profession, but in every branch of it; and they will continue to be unsuccessful practitioners until they embrace sounder pathological doctrines, and adopt a more rational practice.

We would naturally suppose, as calomel & other mercurials produce

such delterious effects in the system, that those who resort to their excessive use should save more patients from the grave in proportion to their busines, than those who do not use it at all or but seldom, or they would not be justified in continuing the excessive use of it.— But so far from this being the case, I have come to the conclusion, after much reflection, and observation on the subject, that they loose from five to ten times as many patients in doing the same amount of busines, as those of the regular faculty who pursue a more patologic-al, and a more rational practice, and a practice more in accordance with our best medical authorities.

I will mention an other circumstance, which to my mind, proves something against the excessive use of calomel. We have two young and enterprising physicians in practice in this village, who do an extensive business, (I allude to Doctrs. Graham and Decker,) who seldom use calomel or other mercurials; their preceptors also reside here, who use calomel and other mercurials extensively in their practice.— Now I know for a certainty that those young physicians, have much better success than their preceptors. Now I do not pretend that all of the extraordinary amount of patients who die under this excessive calomel and blue pill system, are killed by mercury, but many of them, I have no doubt are. And that others die for want of proper remedies for removing disease which would have cured them, had they been properly administered, but have been laid aside to make room for this eternal calomel or blue pill, which does not, and cannot cure, except in some particular instances, and even in those few cases, some other article of the Meteria Medica, might do it better, in less time, and with more safety.

We have in our drug stores, many drugs and nostrums, purporting to be patent medicines; on the labels of each kind, are advertisements claiming that each particular preperation, will cure almost every disease that the human system is subject to. I have ever considered such preparations and advertisements gross empiricism. And I have frequently heard some of our most noted calomelites say, that they consider them in the same light. Now I would ask with all due deference, if these learned Doctors are less guilty of empiricism, in always prescribing or recommending calomel, or blue pills, to cure almost every complaint the human system is heir to.

The fevers of this country are much easier controlled by proper remedies, than they are in the State of New York, or in the New England States. I am confident calomel or other mercurials, seldom, if ever do any thing towards removing them, they are generally administered in combination with other remedies, which perform the cure, while the calomel gets the credit. Many suppose that an agent capable of produciug so much injury to the system, must consequently, also be capable of producing much good. Now, agreeable to this mode of reasoning, the poison of the asp or that of the rattle-snake, or that of the canine species which produces hydrophobia, would be efficacious remedies.

I am confident, patients with fevers of this country, are more sure to recover, get up sooner with much better countenances and much less liable to relapses without calomel than with. Yet I have known patients with the common fevers, dysenteries and other diseases incidental to this country mercurialized for weeks, and in some instances for months, if they had the fortune not to be destroyed under such reckless practice. In most instances all that remains of their constitutions is a mere wreck; I had much rather have the fever of this country twenty times, and run my chance of being cured without calomel, or other mercurial, than to be as severely salivated as patients have formerly been in this community in fevers under this mercurial system.

Now that these learned doctors may not think or say, that I am more severe on them than our best medical authorities, I will quote again from the justly celebrated doctor Mackintosh, who uses the following language: "Much mischief is done in this country by the conduct of many medical practitioners, who denominate every little indisposition 'a fit of the bile,' and attribute a great deal too many of the phenomena that daily present themselves, to disorder of the liver."

"They either pour mercury quickly into the system, or keep people for months, under the gentle influence of an alternative course of blue pills. All this is too frequently done, when nothing whatever ails the liver. Many examples of this description, fall under my care annually, in which a properly restricted diet, gentle unirritating laxatives, a warm bath twice or thrice a week, & the application of counterirritants occasionally for a month or six weeks, produce as much relief as can be expected after years of maltreatment and quackery."

I might relate many very interesting facts connected with this mode of practice. It would increase however, the size of this essay beyond the original design; and the feelings of some unconnected with the profession might be wounded thereby, I will therefore withhold them for the present.

There is not a person who has resided in this community any length of time, but what has seen his friends and neighbors hurried to a premature grave, in consequence of the excessive and injudicious administration of calomel and other mercurials; others have had their constitutions ruined; many made cripples, and others have been mutilated and disfigured. In consequence of the doctors asserting so much, that it was necessary to give calomel or other Mercurials, as they said for every disease, many had settled down into the belief that it was necessary, to give calomel for every departure from health; yet they thought it a peculiarly unfortunate circumstance, that it produced in many instances much more deleterious effects in the system, than was to be apprehended from the disease for which it was given; and it has afforded them much satisfaction to know that diseases can be much more successfully treated with other remedies, that do not leave those deleterious effects in the system. I admit that this system of always giving calomel or other mercurials, is a convenient mode of

getting along; the articles are light and easy carried, and it saves the trouble of investigating cases, as calomel or blue pill will cure it whatever the nature of the disease; and I doubt very much the propriety of physicians who adapt this irrational practice, of going to see their patients at all, neither do I discover the necessity of their knowing what disease the patient labors under. In prosecuting my profession, since I have lived in this place, I have daily witnessed ruined constitutions, and mutilated objects of pity, the wrecks of men, women and children; some of whom have lost their jaws or a part of them, others have lost the use of their limbs, some have lost the bones of the nose, and palate; some have lost a part of the face; some are severely salivated every time they take cold, although they have not taken calomel for many years; some have inveterate ulcers. All of which have been produced by the excessive use of calomel, and other mercurials, while the grave-yard conceals the remains of thousands destroyed by calomel. When I have witnessed these things my feelings have been extremely wounded, and I could but grieve at the ignorance of some part of the profession. When I have witnessed these effects, I have had one consoling reflection, viz: that I was not either directly or indirectly the cause of them. This consoling reflection the guilty instrument in producing them, cannot have. When I have observed these effects in those who act for themselves, I have regreted it very much; but when I have seen them in children, who do not, my feelings have been much more wounded. And I must say that those parents who have lost children, or had them mutilated, and their constitutions ruined under this system of quackery, have incurred a responsibility which they should have avoided, and which should have caused them serious apprehensions, and reflections, yet I know many such parents, as if they were determined that these dreadful effects should not stop with their own families, who have through their urgent solicitations and recommendations, indirectly been the cause of the same effects upon others, by this same system of infernal quackery. The legislature of the State of Michigan, have in their wisdom legalized quackery and quacks to any extent they may desire. A year ago last winter a bill was before the legislature of this State, the object of which was to regulate the practice of medicine, and prevent quackery, which would had it passed, excluded more than one half, and probably two thirds of the calomel mongers, as it prohibited any one from practicing medicine who had not licence. It put some of this class of practitioners in this vicinity in quite a panic at the time, for, said they, if it passes we cannot practice medicine. Previous to my coming to this State, I was aware that the medical profession of this state, was at the lowest ebb, so far as the science of the profession was concerned. I had known many instances of men emigrating to Michigan to practice medicine, with no other medical education, than a few weeks study of the *Materia Medica*, most of them used calomel; these men wrote home to there friends that they were doing an extensive busines. I know some of this class in this vicinity, who have had no better oper-

tunities, who are doing a lucrative business, and deal out calomel as though it had no more power than chips.

I have mentioned many of the evil effects of calomel, and other mercurial preparations, there are others which I consider equally important. I have long been sensible that when a person has been once mercurialized or salivated, that he is ever after more subject to disease. It has a tendency to impoverish the blood, by depriving it of its fibrin and collering matter, thereby rendering the system ever after much more liable to many diseases, such as dropsy, scrofula, consumption, &c. It produces, long after it has been taken, pains in the bones like rheumatism, and may be the cause of rheumatism itself. It is the cause also of many foul ulcers, and caries of the bones &c. I have abundant authority to sustain me in these assertions. I will quote from ¹Druitts sergery, one of our most eminent authorities; he uses the following language: "A very large portion of what is regarded, and treated as scrofulous disease, in this part of the country, appears to me to be merely the result of indiscreet mercurialization, under the prevalent idea that biliary derangements, either constitute or coexist with every departure from health. Some form of mercury is administered in almost every prescription, and the whole capillary system of persons who happen to be occasionally unwell, soon becomes impregnated and poisoned, by the subtle mineral."

"So also if an alterative impression is desired under any morbid condition whatever, instead of employing regular diet & harmless medicaments, it is common to resort indiscriminately to mercurial agents, the consequences of such reckless medication, present themselves to the physician, in dispeptic affections, chronic head aches, pains in the limbs called rheumatism &c. And to the surgeon in the more striking forms of alvioler absorption and adhesions, inveterate ulcerations of the faucies and nostrils, and various degenerations, malignant or semimalignant of glandular organs."

"Moreover the evil does not stop with the individual, for where important elementary tissues are deteriorated in the parents, a constitutional influence will be impressed on the offspring, which if it may not properly be called scrofulous from birth, is the most favorable condition possible for the developement of the phenomina, of that diathesis, whenever co-operating influences shall assail the unfortunate subject."

"The interests of humanity, no less than the honor of medicine, demand that those who observe and understand these things, should utter on all proper occasions, the most unqualified protestations against such abuses." An other eminent author uses the following language: "Mercury in all of its preparations, or different modes of giving it in some states of the lungs, is as certainly fatal, as the dagger or pistol." "In some sections of our country, calomel as it is given, is a most dreadful scourge."

"In many parts of the United States, cities, towns, villages and country, are strewn with the wrecks of living men, women & children, while the grave-yards conceal the decaying remains of thousands

killed by mercury. This is not every where the case ; I am happy to present the city of Philadelphia, as an exception, more calomel is consumed in some small towns than in the whole city of Philadelphia."

"Every consumptive should understand, that whenever he takes calomel or uncombined blue pills, he does it at the risk of his life."

"There is no doubt that mercury will remain in the system many years after it is taken, and produce injurious effects, even twenty years after it has been swallowed or rubbed into the skin." "Calomel administered to the children of consumptive parents, is very liable to bring on consumption. If tubercles exist in the lungs, calomel softens and inflames them, and thus develops consumption."

It will be perceived by the above quotations, that these eminent authors assert all I have endeavoured to maintain, respecting the evil effects of calomel, and other mercurial preparations. The first quoted authority asserts in addition to what I have said, that where the system has been severely mercurialized, that the evil does not stop here, but that the parent communicates a tendency to disease to his offspring.

He also says that "the interests of humanity, no less than the honor of medicine, demand, that those who observe and understand these things, should utter the most unqualified protestations against such abuses." Now for doing what this eminent author says the interests of humanity, and the honor of the profession demand I should do, I have received the most unrelenting and unhalowed persecutions from those who claim to be members of the medical profession. I can assure them I shall not be deterred from uttering my honest convictions respecting the mode of practice, of any part of the profession, or that of any physician, although they should continue to calumniate and anathematize me, at every corner of the street. I have said no more against their practice, than I should have said, were they my brothers, and engaged in a practice, that I believed to be as destructive to the healths and lives of community, under the circumstances, I should have been unworthy of the profession, if I had said less. I harbor no feelings of animosity to any of them, on the contrary I would do them a kindness, were it in my power, I do not know that I could do them a greater one, than to convince them of their errors. If it should be said that I have been severe, this is my answer : The nature of the subject required that errors should be exposed, that our best medical authorities, are more severe against this pernicious practice, than I have been, and that the case was a severe one, and could not be removed without severe remedies.

It is more than twenty five years, since the reform commenced in the United States, as to the excessive administration of mercurial preparations, since that time they have been continually going more into disuse by the most scientific portion of the profession. Thirty years ago there was but one medical school in the city of Philadelphia the medical professors of this school, taught and recommended the excessive use of calomel and other mercurial preparations, and probably done more injury by doing so than any other medical institution in the world.

So much so that the reaction in that city and even in the whole State of Pennsylvania, has been astonishing. There are at the present time three medical Institutions in this city, all of which are almost entirely anti calomel, many of the most eminent physicians of this city do not use it at all, while the rest but seldom resort to its use, and this reaction has pervaded the whole State. Some five years since the legislature of that State, were petitioned from all parts of the State to pass a law to make it a penal offence to give calomel, in any case whatever, a bill was introduced to that effect which came very near passing. I do not mention this because I suppose it was a case that required legislative action, my object is merely to show the reaction in that State.

The reform has already commenced among the people of this community, and it is from them I anticipate still greater reforms; already the excessive calomelites acknowledge they have given too much, and that they do not give as much as they formerly did. If they do not it is because they know the minds of a large portion of community are adverse to it, they will give just as much as they think their employers will take, and here they must stop.

It is more than two years since the author entertained the design of publishing his views of biliary derangement, and the excessive use of calomel, and other mercurial preparations, but which he has neglected until the present time, and which might have been delayed much longer, had it not been for his feeble state of health, that not only afforded him occasional opportunities to write, but admonished him of his duties to the profession, and to the public generally.

He is well aware that there are many imperfections in this essay; there may be in some instances some ambiguity or tautology, and in others that connection may not have been observed, that might be desirable, as he had to write at odd spells, as his state of health would permit. But as to the principles and doctrines here maintained, he unqualifiedly contends they are true; and he challenges those of the medical profession of this community, who have maintained and practiced different doctrines and principles, to refute them in any way, except by mere denial of them, or by sneers, sarcasms and persecutions, (as they have formerly that met them,) which he does not consider very powerful arguments.

In my advertisement two years since, I observed, that it was not a certain indication of great medical acquirements, to have given enormous quantities of calomel; and that I believed the time was not far distant, when medical men would not be held in estimation, in proportion to their having administered such quantities of calomel. I will now add, I believe a radical reform, cannot much longer be postponed in this community; the interests of humanity, as well as the interests and honor of the profession demand it.

