

The danger, irrationality, and evils of medical quackery : also, the causes of its success : the nature of its machinery : the amount of government profits : with reasons why it should be suppressed : and an appendix containing the composition of many popular quack medicines : addressed to all classes / by Charles Cowan.

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THE
DANGER, IRRATIONALITY, AND EVILS
OF
MEDICAL QUACKERY;

ALSO,
THE CAUSES OF ITS SUCCESS; THE NATURE OF ITS MACHINERY;
THE AMOUNT OF GOVERNMENT PROFITS;

WITH
REASONS WHY IT SHOULD BE SUPPRESSED:

AND
AN APPENDIX

CONTAINING THE COMPOSITION OF MANY POPULAR
QUACK MEDICINES:

ADDRESSED TO ALL CLASSES.

By CHARLES COWAN, M.D. E. & P. M.R.C.S.E. &c.

PHYSICIAN TO THE READING DISPENSARY,
TRANSLATOR OF "LOUIS ON CONSUMPTION," "AUTHOR OF "BEDSIDE MANUAL,"
"OBSERVATIONS ON QUACKERY," &c.

"If therefore any one is possessed either of a certain method, or a specific remedy that will not only stop the progress of, but thoroughly cure these disorders, I think he ought to discover it for the good of mankind; and if he does not, I will venture to say, that he neither deserves the character of a good, nor of a wise man. For it is not acting the part of a good man, to convert to his private advantage what might prove so eminently serviceable to the public; nor of a wise man to deprive himself of the blessing he might justly expect from heaven, by endeavouring to promote the public good. For honour and riches are held in much less esteem by good men than virtue and wisdom."

SYDENHAM—(SWAN'S EDIT.) p. 58.

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THE
DANGER, IRRATIONALITY, AND EVILS
OF
MEDICAL QUACKERY.

“ LICET OMNIBUS, LICET ETIAM MIHI, DIGNITATEM ARTIS MEDICÆ
TUERI; POTESTAS MODO VENIENDI IN PUBLICUM SIT, DICENDI
PERICULUM NON RECUSO.”

CICERO.

—000—

ENGLAND has been designated, and we fear too justly, as the “hot-bed of Quackery,” the “Paradise of Quacks;” and the latter have been aptly termed the “perennials of history.” Cælius in his work, written more than 1300 years ago, exposes fallacies identical with those of the present day; and we shall find, says Dr. Paris, an unbounded credulity with respect to the powers of medicines, from the elixir and alkalest of Paracelsus and Van Helmont, to the tar-water of Bishop Berkley, the metallic tractors of Perkins, and the “Universal Medicines” of Morison.*

The Quackery of the present day is perhaps distinguished by a more artful plausibility, a more insidious appearance of candour, a greater pretension to science, and by being addressed to the credulity rather than to the superstition of mankind;† but, its characteristic features are still essentially

* It would be easy to refer to instances of still more ancient date. The book of Cato de Re Rusticâ is a proof of the gross superstition and ignorance of those times. It is proposed, in a case of fracture, to have it bound up, and the following words sung every day—“Huat, Hanat, ista pista, fista, dominabo, damnastra et luxata.”

† The following is an ancient cure for a quartan, or the gout:—“Take the hair and nails, cut them small, mix them with wax, and stick them to a live crab, casting it into the river again.” The moss from a dead man’s skull was held to be of sovereign virtue in some cases: Pierius mentions an antidote against the sting of a scorpion—the patient was to sit on an ass, with his face to the tail, for by this means the poison was transmitted from the man to the beast. Among the sympathetic doctors, it was gravely discussed whether the moss, which formed part of the celebrated sympathetic powder, should grow *in* the skull of the thief who had hung on the gallows, and whether the medicine, while compounding, was to be stirred with a murderer’s knife?

the same, its evils are rather multiplied than diminished, and its power of mischief, and of successful and rapid diffusion incalculably augmented.

At the present moment, the subject is one of more than ordinary interest, and is exciting the serious attention of the Medical Associations of this and other countries. It is actually undergoing a careful Government scrutiny in France, where there is every probability of measures being shortly enforced by which the evil will be curtailed to within comparatively very narrow limits.

In the estimation of every civilized population, the question of medical empiricism, were it rightly understood, could not fail to enlist in its behalf their deep and serious attention, since the correct and efficient administration of remedial means for the prevention, alleviation, or removal of disease, must necessarily involve considerations of the highest importance to the health and happiness of the community.

The national weal is inseparably allied with the national health, and each individual ought to feel himself personally interested in whatever has reference to determining the qualifications of those to whom so important a trust is committed.

Unfortunately, however, the question has in general been regarded as simply involving a struggle between the privileges and emoluments of the constituted medical bodies, and those assumed and usurped by the unqualified practitioner: to be in fact, a mere effort of monopoly upon the part of professional men to exclude, for their selfish purposes, all who are not similarly educated with themselves. Under such an impression, it is not surprising that the public have either felt indifferent as to the result, or their sympathies have occasionally been excited in favour of what they conceive to be the weaker or persecuted party; forgetting that their own interests are deeply implicated in all measures which have for their object to secure the qualifications of their medical attendants, and that in opposing empiricism, they are *benefitting* and *protecting* themselves.

The medical profession, as a body, would certainly be justified in interfering for its own protection, on the ground of its *intention and constitution*; but the public are comparatively little interested in the privileges or emoluments of any association of individuals, unless, as is the case in the instance before us, it can be shown that the general welfare imperatively demands that the practice of the healing art should be restricted to those, and those only, who have given evidence of their possessing the requisite knowledge and qualifications for the post.

We are aware that in opposition to this simple but just view of the case, it is very commonly urged, that medical men are often incompetent to the task assigned them, that doctors are perpetually differing among themselves, and that no fixed and invariable rules of practice have been decided upon. Now, admitting, to their fullest extent, these pleas of the unqualified, they prove nothing more than the intrinsic difficulties of the right application of medical science, and the additional necessity of securing the highest possible amount of information and experience for those who have so complex a problem to solve. Unless, indeed, the public are willing to admit the absurd conclusion, that in a subject where great difficulties and uncertainties are to be encountered by the most skilful, as is the case in medicine, that therefore it is a matter of indifference whether the individual attempting its application has any knowledge of it or not; and that it may, from the very fact of its obscurity, be equally committed to the care of the ignorant as of the well-informed! But surely such an outrage upon common sense can scarcely be openly propounded and espoused in the 19th century, though it is practically and successfully acted upon among a too easily deluded population.

The object of our present observations is to point out the absurdity and irrationality of medical empiricism, to disclose its evils, to lay bare its machinery, to show why and how it is successful, to prove why it should be suppressed, and to satisfy, if possible, the popular mind upon the question, by showing how hostile to their real interests must ever be the unrestricted practice of physic; and, on the other hand, to demonstrate the reasonableness and necessity of enforcing measures for ascertaining the qualifications of those who aim at becoming their medical advisers.

No one, probably, will deny that the organization of the human frame is the most wonderful and complex of all the animal creation; and that even a superficial knowledge of its structure requires much study and special opportunities. Unravelling the varied movements or functions of such a complex machine, must, by an equal, if not an additional necessity, be a task of far greater obscurity; for not only have we to ascertain the vital action of each individual organ, but to associate its functions with those of other and differently constituted parts, to trace their mutual re-action and dependence, to discover the laws by which they are regulated, the agents by which they are excited, and to contemplate them, as it were, from a distance, as constituting the life of the individual. The sub-

ject, indeed, is one which has absorbed and exhausted the highest powers of the human intellect, and after centuries of laborious experiment and observation, is still enshrouded in much doubt and perplexity.

It must also be recollected that in proportion to the number and complication of parts and the multiplicity of movements, must be the liabilities to derangements or diseases, and these must necessarily be varied in their seat and phenomena, often requiring very opposite means for their rectification, and only to be remedied, with any reasonable prospect of success, by one previously acquainted with the natural structure and functions of the whole.

But even such knowledge, as we are supposing, would not be sufficient, nor of great practical value, unless we were in possession of agents capable of such effects ; and acquaintance with these can only be achieved by a protracted and difficult series of experiments, requiring, on the part of the investigator, the power of accurately discriminating the particular character of the malady, its natural progress and termination, and to be able to detect what phenomena depend upon the remedy, and what upon the disease. Now, when we reflect upon the infinite modifications which age, sex, individual peculiarities, and many other causes, may induce in the progress and symptoms of the *same* complaint, the great complication of the morbid processes, and the frequent difficulty of extracting truth from an enfeebled, fanciful, or unwilling mind, we ought neither to feel surprise at the slowness of growth or great imperfection of our actual information ; nor ought we to wonder that the detection and treatment of disease should be regarded as one of the profoundest and most intricate enquiries which can engage the attention of a reasoning being.

That certain persons should be set apart in every social community for the especial investigation of the subject, and that they alone should be considered competent to exercise their skill upon the persons of others, must appear to every thinking mind not only rational and necessary, but, consonant with our daily experience in every other department of human occupation. There is hardly an employment, however humble, where the principle is not exemplified, tho' perhaps not legally enforced, and in scarcely any other department of human ingenuity has there been any danger of such a proposition being practically or theoretically called in question. Every civilized Government in the world has acted upon such a conviction, by providing or sanctioning schools and

universities expressly for the acquisition of medical knowledge; by appointing a long and laborious course of professional education, and by compelling each candidate to give proofs of his personal qualifications for usefully occupying the post to which he aspires. They are, in fact, almost annually endeavouring to provide additional securities to the public, for the requisite proficiency of those who are to be entrusted with such important and responsible duties.*

It is true, that all tests, of a sufficient practical acquaintance with a science so extensive as that of medicine, must be very incomplete, and liable to more or less evasion; and that all those who are legally entitled to practice are not equally qualified to do so; and also that unprincipled, incompetent persons will continue to intrude themselves into the medical as well as into every other profession: but, this is a defect which may be urged against all human institutions, and cannot be wholly avoided in the present state of things. Nobody, however, will venture to maintain, that it would be better to be without a diploma than with one, and that the public ought not to be better satisfied to have such a guarantee than none at all. And, admitting that serious evils have at times resulted from the deficient knowledge and skill of the regularly educated practitioner, they must still be infinitely less both in number and degree, than those arising from utter ignorance and blind empiricism. No amount of abuse in the method adopted to ascertain the qualifications of medical men, can for a moment sanction the principle that no education would be equally secure, or could ever render it consistent with the public safety to relinquish the practice of medicine to any daring or mercenary adventurer who might choose to undertake it.

The object of the preceding observations is to make it evident that the beneficial application of remedial means for the cure and relief of disease requires previous and special qualifications; that it is the duty of Government to educate a portion of the community for this express purpose; that the public are deeply interested in being secured from all false

* It is however too true, as Dr. Maunsell expresses himself, that "In return for the labour and expense of a prolonged education, they receive no protection whatsoever; they have not even a legal scale of charges which they can enforce upon those who employ and are unwilling to remunerate them. If they are required for the public service the hardest possible bargain is driven with them, and their exertions often obtained for nothing (as under the new English Poor Law) by a skilful use of the threat of employing their uneducated rivals."

pretenders to such knowledge; and that in sanctioning means for their suppression and punishment they are acting upon the principle of self-defence, and not, as has been argued, merely conferring unjust or exclusive privileges upon a detached and self-interested body of men. It is, perhaps, desirable to leave the medical profession open to all, but the *practice of medicine* should certainly be strictly limited to those who have given the public the appointed guarantee of their fitness for the task.

We are aware that the objection will be made, that "if so much previous preparation is necessary—so much knowledge essential, how can you account for the success of the quack? How can an individual who is ignorant of the first principles of medicine ever obtain the confidence and support of the public? Surely the imposition would soon be discovered, and the evil work its own cure? Calling upon the legislature to interfere cannot be required or desirable where the abuse is so easily detected? If the empiric does maintain his ground, it must be because his pretensions are realised, and because the public are benefitted; and since you admit the latter object to be the real end and intention of the medical profession, it matters but little to the community whether they are indebted to the qualified or unqualified practitioner so that they are really the gainers?"

Such statements are at first sight specious and plausible, but it can be shown, that they are fallacious in principle and false in point of fact.

There are, indeed, many reasons why quackery of the grossest description succeeds, and we shall now briefly advert to them, particularly requesting the attention of our readers to this view of the question.

In the first place, the great mass of the population are profoundly ignorant upon all subjects relating to the science of medicine, and are unable to distinguish *à priori* the qualified from the unqualified practitioner. They have an implicit and illimitable faith in the powers of drugs, and are incapable, from deficient information, of knowing what is or what is not impossible. No statement is too extravagant for belief, because they have no *data* to test its rationality, and when backed by garbled citations from medical authorities, by lists of great names, by the apparent sanction of stamps and patents, by numerous certificates of cure, and all those minor embellishments which the modern empiric knows so well how to employ, it is not surprising that the allurements so perseveringly held out should prove irresistible, and the

bait be so greedily swallowed. No person, however, who exercises his common sense, can read the current advertisements with which our newspapers are teeming, and not feel satisfied that there is no imposition too gross for popular belief, no pretensions too startling; and that some of the most successful speculators upon national credulity, are those who have sacrificed truth with least compunction, and most excelled in the bombast and extravagance of their language and pretensions.

A second reason of the empiric's success, is the strength of the *motive* which he engages in his behalf. The love of life is deeply entwined in the human heart, and the desire to retain or recover health, and to avoid pain, are powerful and absorbing incentives, often blinding the judgment in the application of means, and naturally favouring the selection of those which are supported by the most confident assurances of speedy and certain relief. Besides, the very class of persons most likely to be influenced by the considerations alluded to, are the timid, the hypochondriacal, or those whose judgment is enfeebled by protracted and incurable disease, and who are necessarily but very little disposed to scrutinize the rationality of promises so ingeniously adapted to their wants and wishes. The modern quack meets every craving of the mind, and by his confident assurances of a certain, rapid, and radical cure, by the omissions of all harassing restrictions, by the pledge of secrecy, the reference to thousands of other miracles of success, by his skilful inuendos against the regular practitioner, and by his ingenious adaptation of his remedy to the prejudices of his victim, certainly holds out inducements which we cannot be surprised so frequently mislead the suffering, the weak-minded, and the credulous.

There is also a spell in *mystery*, which to many minds proves almost irresistible, leading them to attach every desired virtue to a remedy, from the very fact of their being ignorant of its nature or qualities. They seem to imagine a quack medicine to be a something unknown to the regular profession, possessing virtues over and above those belonging to remedies ordinarily in use; and whatever benefit may follow their employment attracts far more attention than what may attend the administration of common and well known means. We shall farther on again advert to this part of our subject, and expose the fallacy of such absurd suppositions.

Another reason why the Quack succeeds, is, that his *theory* is intelligible to all, and each seems competent to become his own medical adviser. "It is a part of the system

of Quackery," says a recent writer, "to give a *rationale*—the philosophy—of all diseases it professes to cure. A Quack will make one, as ignorant of the subject as himself, believe that he knows all that he pretends. He will talk learnedly about the physiology of this or that organ, and the operation of medicines; he will discourse wisely on the nature and cure of disease, and his auditors will listen with great attention, and drink in with greedy ears every syllable uttered by this oracle, and be about as much edified as an assembly of ladies with a Hebrew oration at a college commencement." Empiricism, indeed, claims for itself the prescriptive right of infallibility amidst all the triumphs of truth and the progress of philosophy. Listen for a moment to the great Hygeist himself—"An identical fraction of the blood of Eve (the mother of all mankind) still circulates in the bodies of all now existing, as it will in the bodies of those yet to come into existence. All the diseases that have, since the creation, afflicted mankind, have been owing to humours, more or less acrimonious, corrupt, and putrid, incorporating with the original pure blood and degenerating it in millions of ways and strength, thereby increasing our infirmities." He then sagely draws the inference, that to cure all diseases it is only necessary to purge out the bad humours and to leave the good; and then boldly states that he is the lucky man, who has discovered the means to accomplish this most desirable consummation, which we need scarcely say are the pills of the late notorious Mr. Morison, who strongly impresses upon the minds of parents the necessity of giving them to their children from the first moment of their birth, and thus kindly supplies an omission of an all-wise and benevolent Creator!

Another universal candidate for popular support says, "Search the vegetable kingdom for curatives, and all *extreme* (?) diseases will soon be banished from your families, for you will find remedies in abundance, *then extract their virtues and judiciously combine them*, and the result will be a remedy of wonderful power, and certain success, and universal use, such as 'Dr. Stone's Tasteless Compound Herbal Solution!!' which possesses the aperient, tonic, alterative, antacid, and vermifuge properties of various plants so blended together, so as to produce all these effects merely by the variation of the dose!!!"

The two preceding oracles found their system upon the 'blood,' being the seat and cause of all diseases: the following one gives the palm to '*indigestion*.'—"It was a saying," the writer most learnedly remarks, "of the Emperor Marcus

Aurelius to Galen, that medical men satisfied themselves with lopping off the branches, and then the trunk of the disease, but never went to its root. This complaint has been reiterated in our times; but, fortunately for the suffering world, the invention of 'Dyson's Universal Digestive Pills' has at once remedied the evil. It is the most beneficial discovery for mankind that was ever made! One of these pills taken three times a week will nerve the frame against every complaint to which it is liable, &c. &c.!!!"

We could supply many more specimens equally monstrous and edifying with the above; but we presume enough has been cited in illustration of this feature of Modern Quackery, and also to illustrate to what extent knavery and impudence combine to traffic upon public ignorance and credulity.

Another and perhaps a still more cogent reason why an ignorant empiric prospers in his schemes is, because here and there *cures* are actually effected! and because the Quacks have occasionally succeeded after the conscientious and educated practitioner has failed! How, it will be asked, are such admissions reconcileable with the desire to abolish the system altogether? Our answer is as follows:—

Wherever there is a possibility of doing good as well as harm, the former *must* in the very nature of chances be sometimes effected. It would be *impossible* to administer any medicine whatever, in doses compatible with life, and for good not occasionally to result; and if the remedy possess active properties, there can be no question that, if extensively administered, it will in some instances succeed in accomplishing what other and milder means may have failed to produce. It would not, we again repeat, be in the power of the most ignorant individual invariably to do injury, unless he administered his nostrums as already remarked, in quantities absolutely poisonous.

Another reason is, that many diseases require no medical assistance for their relief, and even some of a very urgent and alarming character terminate favourably by the unaided operations of nature.

It should be remembered that all the phenomena of disease are efforts of the system for its removal, and that the human machine possesses a principle of self-rectification, the *vis medicatrix naturæ*, which will often bring matters to a favourable issue in spite of very injudicious interference from without. Diseases for the most part have also their natural terms of duration, and any remedy given at particular periods may seem to be the agent of cure, whereas its administration may

have either simply coincided with the natural improvement of the symptoms, or perhaps have retarded recovery. It is therefore evident from these considerations, that many causes combine to give an apparent efficacy to remedies which they may be far from deserving, the favourable result being often wholly attributable to the restorative powers and conservative principle of the constitution.

The public are, however, wholly ignorant of these facts; the nostrum and the cure are inseparable, and the former universally reaps the credit of whatever is propitious, while the bad consequences are in general attributed to the hopeless and invincible nature of the complaint. It should also be stated that certain classes of remedial agents, such as purgatives, are pretty generally employed in the treatment of various diseases, and however blindly administered they cannot fail to effect good in particular instances.

Again, the real nature of the disease, its distinguishing symptoms, are almost always unknown both to the Quack and the patient, and the term selected for its designation is one of arbitrary choice: the most alarming appellation is from many motives preferred, and all cases not absolutely fatal are published and placarded as wonderful cures. It is easy to perceive how simple tumors become cancers, and colds, consumptions; and since every one is prone to judge badly of his own symptoms, the public are doubly deceived, mistaking their own cases, while they are led to think that diseases of a most dangerous description have rapidly succumbed to the never-failing nostrum of the Quack.

The empiric often also obtains the *confidence* of his patients by means which the conscientious practitioner would not condescend to employ. Mystery carries with it a spell that overcomes every prejudice, secures the implicit obedience, and reconciles the most refractory to privations which reason would in vain endeavour to enforce. Who is not acquainted with the powerful influence of mental impressions upon bodily diseases, and who does not remember cases of astonishing recoveries where some perfectly inert medicine has been administered?*

* By directly attacking the imagination did Mr. Louthenburg cure a vast number of patients. He became impressed with the idea that he had a commission from above to cure diseases, and his door was soon crowded with patients all day. Amongst others, a respectable man, from the country, had been afflicted with great pains and swellings, particularly about the loins, so that he could not walk across the room. On entering, Mr. L. looked steadfastly at him, and said, "I know your complaint, Sir, look at me." They continued looking at each other some

The history of the Royal touch, for scrofula, is a striking exemplification of the effect of faith. This ceremony was a religious one, a number of prayers from the liturgy were employed, it was performed on appointed days, in the presence of the whole court, the King sitting on his throne, and after touching the diseased parts with his uncovered hand, or as others say, stroking the patient's face or cheeks with both his hands, he usually put a white ribbon round the neck of the patient, to which was appended a gold coin. A second touch was always supposed to be effectual, provided persons had sufficient faith in the operation; for it was observed that Dissenters and Puritans were not healed, and also the disease returned where the patients sold or parted with the gold.

The royal gift, (a monkish invention, to increase the reverence for Kings,) was first practised in England by Edward the Confessor, and was continued for 640 years. Charles II. from May 1660 to 1686 touched the almost incredible number of 92,107, at the average of twelve every day! No doubt many were healed, tho' it should be remembered that part of the duty of the royal physicians and sergeant surgeons was to select such patients as evinced a tendency towards recovery, and that they took especial care to choose those who approached the age of puberty.* In the siege of Breda in 1625, by Spinola, the garrison suffered extreme distress from the ravages of scurvy, and the Prince of Orange being unable to relieve the place, sent in by a confidential messenger,

minutes; then Mr. L. asked if he did not feel some warmth at his loins. The man replied that he did. "Then you will feel in a few minutes much greater warmth." After a short pause the man said, "I feel as if a person was pouring boiling water upon me." Still looking him in the face, Mr. L. said, "How did you come here, Sir?" "In a coach." "Then go and discharge your coach, and walk back to town." The coach was discharged, and the patient walked to town, and next day he walked five hours about town without fatigue.—*Sketches of Imposture.*

* The seventh sons of seventh sons had a more than usual virtue inherent in them. One of the most celebrated among those who pretended to cure disease by touch was Mr. Valentine Greatrakes, called, par excellence, "The Stroker." He was an Irish gentleman, and came to England, invited by the Earl of Orrery, to cure Viscountess Conway of an inveterate headache; and though he failed in that attempt, he is said to have wrought many surprising cures, not unlike miracles. His fame did not last, however, and he soon ceased to have the reputation of performing strange cures. What a host of instances would not the modern records of animal magnetism afford? Prince Hohenlohe professed to be able to cure diseases at a given time, by means of prayer. He was resorted to by thousands from all parts of Europe, and he not only cured those who flocked to him, but he cured others, equally well, hundreds of miles distant, at a time agreed upon by himself and the patients.

from the ravages of scurvy, and the Prince of Orange being unable to relieve the place, sent in by a confidential messenger, a preparation which was directed to be added to a very large quantity of water, and to be given for a specific for the epidemic; the remedy was administered, and the garrison recovered its health, when it was afterwards acknowledged that the substance in question was no other than a little colouring matter. Many persons were healed by the blood of Charles I. which the people collected and dried on rags. Dr. Haygarth, in Bath, found that imitations of the celebrated metallic tractors produced all the effects attributed to the real ones, but that they immediately ceased if the patient became aware of the deception; and Dr. Thornton found a wooden skewer had all the power of the tractors in removing pain when clandestinely used instead of them. It would be very easy to multiply facts of a similar nature to almost any amount, but we think enough has been adduced to illustrate the powerful influence of imagination and confidence in the cure of disease, and to point out the occasional advantages possessed by the boasting and mysterious empiric over the unpretending but educated practitioner.

An additional reason of empirical success, is, that those who take the nostrum, and who fancy themselves benefitted, do all in their power, by exaggerating the relief, to make others follow their example; and this is done either from a sincere reliance on the virtues of the remedy—to exalt their own judgment and acumen in the selection of the means—to justify an act of folly by augmenting the number of dupes—or, perhaps, from motives compounded from the above, or even less rational and worthy. The zeal of such persons is sometimes quite extraordinary. Among their friends and acquaintances they are perpetually detecting cases the very counterpart of their own, and confidently urging a trial of the specific. They comment most freely on the treatment of the regular practitioner, boldly assert that he has mistaken the case, denounce his medicines as poisonous, and often connive with the patient in deceiving him; or, if they inform him of their intention, and he refuses to preside over the use of means of which he neither may know the nature or probable effects, he is told that they are determined to give the celebrated pills a trial and can dispense with his services. Should the rash experiment succeed, as sometimes it must, their exultation is great, they descant loudly upon the bigotry of the profession, on the great uncertainties of medicine, and soon persuade themselves that the healing art is much

indebted to their personal exertions and universal specific for its successful application. They become in fact, the missionaries of their own vanity and delusions; and it is often difficult to say whether the interests of the quack are most promoted by himself or his patient.

It is not surprising, that those who administer remedies of whose properties they are ignorant, and who are deficient in all knowledge of disease which could enable them to form a correct opinion upon the subject, should receive false impressions as to their efficacy from the most accidental successes; since, accurately ascertaining the remedial potency of drugs, is one of the most difficult and complicated enquiries in which any individual can engage. Notwithstanding centuries of enlightened research this department of human knowledge is still capable of much increased certainty and improvement; but, we trust, no one on this account will sanction the absurd inference, already alluded to, that because our knowledge is incomplete we might as well have no knowledge at all.

From the preceding remarks, we presume it will sufficiently appear why success occasionally attends the ignorant and indiscriminate administration of medicine—and why quacks, in spite of their deficiency in all requisite qualifications, should succeed in obtaining a considerable share of public confidence and support.

Enough has already been said to convince the reader of the absurdity and irrationality of Empiricism, but perhaps a few additional remarks will render them more prominent and palpable.

Curing all or many diseases by one remedy, is a leading principle of the system. Universal Medicines—Elixirs of Long Life—Purifiers of the Blood—Pills of Health—Life Pills—Balm of Gilead—*cum multis aliis*, are remedies of the class to which we are alluding, and their virtues are conveniently established by some absurd hypothesis, expressly created for their support, and admirably adapted for public comprehension. Now, admitting for the sake of argument, that there was but *one* disease to which the human frame was liable, one remedy would not always cure it. The most opposite means are often necessary at different stages of the same complaint, and in different individuals very material modifications of treatment are required. What would cure one will kill another, and any means not carefully adjusted to the existing conditions of the case, must, in the majority of instances, prove injurious. It would be better to use no remedies at all and trust to nature, than to sanction their

indiscriminate administration ; for though some cases would prove fatal which might have been saved, thousands would recover which are either aggravated or rendered hopeless by a rash and foolish experiment.

To attempt relieving an individual perishing from gluttonous excess, by the same means we would adopt for reviving the wretched victim of starvation, would be quite as rational as to set about curing diseases involving the most contradictory indications, by what is called a universal panacœa. It is self-evident that no one secondary cause can be the source of all possible effects, and that a remedy capable of producing benefit by one mode of operating, cannot possibly be of use, where the most opposite action is necessary. It is only the profound ignorance of the public mind upon the subject, that can allow the empiric, with a chance of success, to offer such puerile absurdities for their reception, and no stronger evidence in proof of that ignorance can be adduced, than the nature of the advertisements with which the columns of our newspapers abound. "When science and skill," says an intelligent writer, "aided by years of experience and constant investigation, both in private practice and in Hospitals, are at fault—when they, with the combined lights of the profession, are liable to err, and when they do make lamentable mistakes—is there not downright folly in placing confidence in a quack ? Who would employ a blacksmith to repair a watch, a butcher to shoe a horse, a ship-carpenter to make a bonnet, or a milliner to build a church ? And yet it is quite as reasonable and philosophical to do one of these things as to expect that the human system should be repaired by one who knows nothing of it. The reason that leads people to act thus would be called little else but madness if applied to other subjects."

Another leading absurdity of the system, and one great source of its success, is the fact of the quack adapting his nostrum for the cure of particular *symptoms*, as if these were some entities to be severally grappled with by the all-penetrating and sagacious specific, and to be summarily ejected from the system. We have, consequently, innumerable infallible remedies for coughs, headache, indigestion, low spirits, deafness, &c., as if these terms involved the diseases themselves, and not, as is really the case, merely expressing the fact of some deviation from a state of health, the cause of which might be of the most opposite description, and upon its right appreciation the nature and success of the remedy would entirely depend. A person, for example, may cough from a great variety of very different causes, the

cough being merely a symptom of impeded pulmonary function; and, is it not ridiculous to take a medicine for a cough, while in utter ignorance of its nature and origin? It is, however, easy to understand why such statements succeed in attracting and deceiving the public, for, the most ignorant can determine whether he has or has not the particular symptom for which the remedy is recommended, and it cannot be wondered at with so simple a problem to solve, that he should be tempted to swallow the imaginary antidote and to assume the management of his own case. Now this is one of the many evils of Quackery, viz. inducing every one to become his own doctor, and to weaken the public confidence in the qualifications and skill of the educated practitioner: the consequence inevitably is, that disease is frequently unsuspected in its earlier and more curable stages, or its nature egregiously mistaken, and a state of health too often allowed to establish itself, which baffles the best directed efforts of art for its removal, condemning its victim to hopeless suffering, or consigning him to an early grave. Medical men are almost daily meeting with illustrations of the truth of this observation, and they follow as it were in the wake of empiricism, striving to build the wretched constitutions of its deluded and devoted followers.

Disorders are often also imagined to exist which have no foundation but in the patients' apprehensions, and his fears urge him to the use of means which often bring upon him the evil he was so anxious to avoid. His suspicions are frequently confirmed or originated by the artful representations of the quack, and he is led to think himself cured of an incurable complaint, and is transformed into a living advertisement for his disinterested benefactor.*

* A lady was startled one morning by a big, blustering, showily-dressed man, who, after knocking at the street door, pushed past the servant, and rapping loudly at the parlour door, opened it without waiting for any reply,—“Goot morning, Matam, I am the optician to the Royal Family; your friend, Lady W——, terives so much goot from my pellucit lenses, she pegged me to call and suit you.” Before all this had been uttered he had taken a package from a confederate, dressed as a livery servant, who accompanied him, and covered the table with his stock.—“Your eyes are in a most alarming state, Matam—this pair of cold spettacles will suit you.”—“Really!” said the lady; “how came Lady W—— to suppose I wanted spectacles? I have never worn any at any time in my life.” “No, that’s the vary reason your sight is leaving you—your eyes are vary pad.” “What is the price of this pair?” inquired the lady. “Three guineas,” was the answer. The price was paid; and after punishing her eyes for a few days, the lady

Another art of the empiric, is to divest his remedy of all noxious or unpalatable properties, to state it not to be among the number of articles, against which he believes a popular prejudice to prevail, asserting, that it does not contain a particle of mineral or other poisonous preparation, that it is of purely vegetable origin and "so perfectly innoxious that the most afflicted patient might use it with the greatest safety," that "from its very nature it cannot possibly be injurious," that "it may be taken with perfect safety at all seasons, under any circumstances, and does not require confinement:" thus blowing hot and cold with the same breath, proving by the fearful catalogue of symptoms which his nostrum never fails to relieve, the extreme activity and power of the means, and then, fearing that such an impression should interfere with its sale, he transforms it by the magic wand of words into a perfectly inert and harmless preparation! The infamous policy and contradiction of such statements speak for themselves, and yet this experiment upon popular credulity is daily and successfully made. Another trick is to declaim against the use of those medicines which experience has demonstrated to be most effective against particular complaints, while the vaunted preparation consists almost invariably of one or more of the excepted and strongly reprobated articles. The object of this is to lead the public to suppose the quack to be acquainted with all ordinary means, and that his own specific is something infinitely more efficacious.

met with a scientific friend, who convinced her they were totally unfit and improper for her, her eyes being in excellent order, and not requiring spectacles at all!!—(*Spectacle Secrets.*)

An empiric of the first water had made himself famous for the cure of all human diseases, by the administration of peculiarly large pills of his own invention, and his success was partly depending on his telling his patients that some particular substances were lodged in the alimentary canal, and the identical causes were invariably discovered after taking a dose of the "big pills." At length, a lady having suffered a long time from indigestion, applied to the celebrated doctor for assistance. After many assurances of prompt relief, and calling her medical attendant a fool, he said, "why you have got lemon seeds in you—you must take some of my big pills and get rid of them, and you'll be perfectly well again." "Why, Doctor," said the lady in amazement, "I have not eaten a lemon for six years, and what you say is impossible." "No matter, Madam, if you have not eaten a lemon for twenty years, the fact is just as I tell you, and if you will take the pills you can be satisfied of it." The pills were taken, and the lemon seeds were found! A second dose, and still more! One pill was left, which the lady wisely examined, and lo! a lemon seed in its centre!!—(*Ticknor.*)

The *fatal results* of empiricism are but very imperfectly known. The actual mortality resulting from the use of quack medicines is probably far beyond what is even suspected or imagined, and cannot be at all correctly estimated from the comparatively small number of cases which have been dragged before a public tribunal. There are few practitioners who are not acquainted with one or more instances where death has ensued, (not to mention injuries short of a fatal termination), but the natural dislike to a legal investigation, on the part of the patients' family or friends, the dread of publicity, the unwillingness to disclose the folly of the victim or that of his advisers, the expense of the proceedings, the difficulty of proof, and many other motives to which we need not advert, all combine to render a public examination both painful and objectionable. More than a sufficient number of instances have, however, been recorded to demonstrate the danger of the system, and it is a most singular anomaly, that though repeatedly convicted in our courts of such deadly results, it should be still legally protected, and that the public are not more generally awakened to its real fallacy and danger.*

* Mrs. Cashin, an Irish lady, came to London with her two daughters to consult that unsuccessful painter, but successful quack St. John Long. The younger daughter, Miss Ellen Cashin, aged 16, was labouring under consumption, and being rubbed with the liniment and made to inhale some medicated vapour, rapidly grew worse. A large patch of honey-combed ulceration was formed on her bosom, and another on her back, the most extreme irritation was the effect, and death soon put an end to her misery. Notwithstanding this, the mother put the elder sister, a fine health girl of four-and-twenty, under his care, to avoid the consumption with which he said she was threatened in less than two months unless she was rubbed with this mixture. This was accordingly done, and with such extreme vigour that she was killed sooner than her sister, from an enormous sloughing sore on the back. Manslaughter was the verdict, and a fine of £250—a very trifling sum to one who made several thousands a-year by the credulity of the public.

Soon after, a Mrs. Lloyd, suffering under a nervous affection of the throat, was sacrificed in the same way, a sloughing sore being formed, extending over the abdominal muscles, all down her sides, over the hip, and over the shoulder. Though the coroner's jury returned a verdict of manslaughter, St. John Long was acquitted at the Old Bailey.

The immediate successor in public favour was Mr. Morison. In July, 1834, an innkeeper, George Webb, at York, agent of Morison, was tried and convicted of manslaughter, and sentenced to 6 months' imprisonment.

A gentleman in Dublin died about the same time from violent inflammation of the bowels, in consequence of taking Morison's pills.

In August, 1834, an inquest was held at Pershore, on the body of Rebecca Cross, aged 15, who died from the same causes and in the same way.

Let us now briefly examine the *machinery* which empiricism employs, and see whether in this point of view it presents greater claims to our confidence or support.

And first, it is natural to enquire, who and what are the QUACKS? Singular to say, this is a difficult question to answer, for notwithstanding their ambitious pretensions, the invaluable nature of their discoveries, and the incalculable benefits they are conferring upon humanity, they are yet to be numbered among the personally unheard of and the unknown! With some few sad exceptions, they claim no connection with the medical profession, by some singular fatality they are never met with in the paths of science, their profound preliminary investigations, as we may infer from their meek and modest confessions, seem conducted in the deepest mystery

In November, 1835, a precisely similar fact in the person of Mrs. Sarah Porter, aged 35.

On the 5th January, 1836, on an infant, aged 16 months, under similar circumstances.

In February, 1836, on Captain Mackenzie, aged 32, who died in consequence of taking Morison's pills. The verdict against Salmon, the agent, was manslaughter, and a fine of £200.

In August, 1836, on Mary Rebecca Russell, of Hull, who died from the same cause. The verdict was manslaughter and 9 months' imprisonment.

If the publicly convicted instances were so numerous, the reader may imagine what the real fatality in Great Britain and elsewhere must have been!

In France Quacks are more roughly handled:

Thus in 1835, one Gardereau, a peasant, applied to a quack named Gautier, and after taking his potions, expired in excruciating agonies. Gautier was convicted of obtaining money under false pretences, and sentenced to imprisonment for five years.

A more curious instance happened in 1837. Three doctors left Paris on a medical tour, to hold medical consultations in the country, and sell their medicines. Hand-bills were posted up in the towns they intended to visit, setting forth their titles and the virtues of their powders, which consisted of jalap and sugar, and received the ingenious name of "Mexican Sugar." Their tour soon came to an end, for their drugs were confiscated, and the Court at Orleans passed sentence upon them as swindlers, condemning one of them to a fine of £80. and two years' imprisonment, a second to fifteen months' imprisonment and a fine of £40., and the third to one year's imprisonment and a fine of £24. The Cour Royale confirmed the judgment, but reduced each imprisonment to three months, and each fine to 300 francs. The reasons given by the Court for this judgment are, that the accused called themselves members of a society (the Hippocratic Society,) which had no existence; and by giving the name of a medical discovery to a mere mixture of jalap and sugar, and by guaranteeing a speedy and complete recovery to the most incurable patients, they excited the hopes of cure in the minds of persons whom they had attracted by fraudulent methods, and thus cheated them out of a part of their substance.

and solitude, and they suddenly present themselves in the form of full-fledged discoverers, backed by hosts of experience, innumerable cases of success, and at once in possession of knowledge far beyond that to which the whole medical profession, with its accumulated experience of 2000 years, can dare even to pretend; (!!) knowledge, which if really attained proves the existence of the latter to be both superfluous and unnecessary. This is surely an unprecedented anomaly in human affairs, and too contrary to all known facts, not of itself to excite a doubt as to the reasonableness and truth of the quack's pretensions.*

* "In every age, medical quackery has been the great resource of men of broken fortunes and profligate characters. During the Protectorate there were numerous instances of disbanded soldiers of the vilest character, taking upon them the practice of physic. Yet never perhaps was common sense more egregiously outraged than it now is, by the open unblushing proceedings of notorious quacks, whose rights may be said to be held sacred by the law of the land—and who shall presume to bring their actions against those who meddle with their professional and moral character."

Dr. Thornton, writing in 1813, says, "It is a known fact that thousands of children lose their lives annually by *Worm Cakes*, advertised by the legal and infamous destroyers of their fellow creatures, whom, for the sake of gain, are still suffered to go on in their work of death in an enlightened period; and alas! no patriot has as yet stood up to remedy this growing evil. The calculation of the quack is this, 'I was in my youth a chimney sweeper, next a scavenger, and now I am a tinker, or mender of kettles; my brother, the cobbler, has made a decent livelihood and is much respected, by turning from mending soles to converting souls. I have no mountebank to be sure, but I can circulate handbills. In London alone there are a million of people; if one dies in seven years, many are ill before this comes, and I may reckon 25,000 are ill. If my bill reaches one in 100, and this one buy only a guinea's worth of my stuff, this would give me 2,500 a year. In the country I find 15,000,000 of people, and my stuff sells as well in the country as in town, or better, not needing to see the folk; and as I live upon onions, and follow my trade for a time, and will advertise more and more as I get on, the odds are very much against me, if with the King's Arms, authority of Parliament, Extracts from the Gazettes, but that I ride at last in my coach!!!'—nor is his conjecture wrong."

Salmon, the tobacconist, the accredited agent of Morison, and who was convicted of manslaughter for having dosed to death Captain Mackenzie with universal medicine, split from his employer upon the ground of the badness of the pills, which he states were slovenly prepared, very carelessly mixed, and consequently of very unequal strength, &c., &c. He then unites himself to Messrs. Bygrave and Hall, the former Mr. Morison's footman, the latter a carpenter accidentally employed in the premises of the great pill-maker; and forming a coalition, in the most patriotic manner, offer to supply the public with the only genuine Morison's pills! Pills more truly Morisonian than Morison's own! (*v. Medical Gazette.*)

Is it not a little singular that those whose whole lives are devoted to the study and practice of medicine, who are attached to all our public institutions, never, by any chance, make discoveries at all equal to those, which the needy and ignorant adventurer thus intuitively accomplishes? Is it not remarkable that every member of the profession, distinguished

A Dr. Meyersbach started about 1770, as a water doctor; he had arrived from Germany in a starving condition, and was first an ostler at a riding school. Not making money fast enough he set up as a doctor, and was consulted by all classes. It is believed that he acquired a good fortune, with which he retired to his native country.

Le Flevre, another German, a broken wine merchant, set up for a gout doctor, and was much noticed by the nobility. Under pretence of going to Germany for more of his powders, he quitted this country and had the prudence never to return. He carried over about 10,000 guineas, obtained by subscription and otherwise. Living in the style of a prince, he drunk daily, as his first toast, "To the credulous and stupid nobility, gentry, and opulent merchants, of Great Britain!" (*v. Sketches of Imposture, &c.*)

A mechanic was afflicted with a serious disease, to get rid of which he applied to a physician of eminence; he was accordingly furnished with a prescription, which wrought a most perfect and expeditious cure. So well pleased was the patient that he procured the same medicine for an acquaintance, and a like happy result followed its administration. He then procured the different ingredients and learned from the doctor the art of compounding them. He now set zealously to work, and with the assistance of his friends and coadjutors, circulated the reputation of what they called the newly discovered remedy, and its fame rapidly extended. A name was soon found, it was duly advertised, it obtained an increased sale, its proprietor received orders from abroad, and he now at once left the workshop, and assumed the name, title, and honours of a doctor. He can now count his millions (dollars), and laughs at the credulity and gullibility of those who have contributed to raise him from obscurity to eminence, and from poverty to princely independence.

Many adventurers in the pill trade, in England, have risen to wealth by this method. Among the list may be found several clergymen, as inventors of this class of medicines, although probably, the most successful of late years, is a man who was a short time ago a barber, and shaved for a penny!—(*Ticknor.*)

"It cannot be wondered at that so many take up the trade of quackery, as it is one of the most profitable in which a man can embark. 500 or 600 per cent. is deemed but a fair and reasonable remuneration for the outlay of capital. This may startle, but it is true. Let me ask any rational individual how persons, without a farthing in the world to begin trading with, have been able to build splendid mansions, drive a carriage and pair, keep their town and country houses, with elegantly laid out gardens and conservatories, and spend from five or six thousand per annum, on advertisements, which is the case with more than one of the present race of quack medicine doctors, if the trade was not more profitable? On a recent examination at the Insolvent Court, it oozed out that every pound laid out in the manufacturing of their body-destroying trash, produced a clear profit of six pounds."—(*Weekly Dispatch*, 24th February, 1839.)

by his integrity and talent, should confess himself ignorant of such infallible specifics, and should not hesitate to pronounce their existence a chimera and their attested virtues a juggle?

The fact is, that quack medicines, at the present moment, are among the most tempting and successful speculations to the needy, the unprincipled, and the avaricious; and success is nearly or wholly independent of the real utility of the remedy—but, on the extent of the publicity given to it, on the ingenuity with which it is adapted to the public prejudices and cravings, and on the persevering and reckless manner in which its pretended virtues are attested.

In some instances it does seem to have occurred to the modern empiric that it would be scarcely safe to found his claims to such wonderful knowledge upon his individual researches, and he therefore transforms himself into a body corporate and his house into a college (how?) by the speedy and simple process of having the word painted in large letters upon the wall!! Fearing that statements might be mistrusted if put forth in the name of the party deriving the sole emolument from the sale, so the ingenious device is adopted of giving them the appearance of emanating from an “association,” or “society,” “establishment,” “hall,” or “college,” of learned persons, and they come before the public with all the additional authority of an imposing name and an imaginary combination of wisdom! Of the morality of such proceedings every rational person is surely competent to judge, and it needs but little acumen to anticipate to what extent the public health must suffer from the practices of those who resort to such nefarious contrivances for obtaining the public confidence.

It is now time to enquire what are *Quack Medicines*? What are they composed of? The general curiosity should be intensely excited to know the nature of such miraculous remedies, before whose salutary influences all the ills which flesh is heir to are to vanish and be no more! It happens, however, that quack medicines are almost without exception nothing more than the revived formulæ of some obsolete pharmacopæia, the prescription of some medical man of eminence, or a modern preparation with a new name, and sufficiently adulterated to render its recognition difficult. They are not, as the empiric would have one believe, profound discoveries of his own, the result of deep experimental research combined with exquisite chemical skill, but, formulæ pirated from the regular profession, and puffed into notoriety by the use of medical words and phrases extracted from professional books. They form no real additions to the art

of healing, while they are indebted for their popularity and sale, to their occasional success, as already explained, but, more particularly, to the secret and mysterious mode of their announcement, the extravagance of their pretensions, and their adaptation to the fancies and prejudices of a medically ignorant population. The really distinctive character of a quack medicine is this, that it is an ordinary remedy to which are ascribed extraordinary virtues; it is administered by the empiric without knowledge or discrimination, while the educated practitioner attaches to it no other qualities than what experience has confirmed, and adapts its employment to those peculiar conditions of the system where it may reasonably be expected to be of use. The same remedy becomes in the hands of the quack a universal panacea, and in those of the medical man a means of occasional advantage.

We refer to the appendix as the best proof of the truth of these remarks, and whoever will take the pains to compare the analysis of stamped medicines with the statements put forth in regard to them, cannot but be convinced of the gross fallacy and knavery of the system.

The *Advertisements* next claim our attention, and they form a very leading and important feature of modern quackery. Advertising is the main-spring of empirical success, and it is only necessary to be in possession of sufficient funds for the purpose to ensure the sale of any remedy whatever. Thousands are occasionally risked in giving publicity to a nostrum, and the returns are in proportion to the courage of the speculator, his happy adaptation of his remedy to what he knows to be prevalent diseases and popular impressions, and to his more or less indifference to truth.* The facilities for extensively advertising are, however, far greater than is generally supposed. The leading journals of the metropolis insert very few quack advertisements, for the simple reason that the proprietors themselves are not vendors of patent medicines, and because they require cash for quack as well as for all other announcements. It is chiefly in the provincial papers, and in the less influential London journals, that the quack advertises, the proprietors of these frequently becoming joint

* The cost for advertising quack medicines in the United States, annually, is estimated at 200,000 dollars. A peck of pills per day is considered necessary for Boston, and half-a-bushel for New York. On an average, only one in twenty-five who take them is actually sick, and the proportion of those dispensing with some necessary of life to purchase nostrums, which do them a positive injury, is in the ratio of eighty-seven to every one hundred throughout the country.—(*Spectacle Secrets*.)

stock partners in his trade. The newspaper office is virtually his shop, and the sale of the nostrum is often the sole security for the payment of advertisements, the proprietors persisting in zealously advertising as the only means of securing remuneration. Many of the latter have large stocks of medicines on hand, which occasionally become valueless by the rapid sale of some more successful competitor for public favour. Journals just commencing, or of very inferior circulation, not only insert puffs of the empiric on these terms, but, sometimes deduct from the proceeds of sale only sufficient to meet the duty, and even this is occasionally paid by the newspaper proprietor himself, who seizes upon a quack advertisement as the only means of filling up his empty columns, and giving to his paper a factitious appearance of importance and wide circulation. It is evident from this that the quack wields a fearful power in the public press, his expences are often little more than nominal, while he secures the agency and interests of the newspaper proprietor in his behalf;* and thus the very means by which the public mind should be directed and enlightened, is converted into a source of incalculable mischief. It is to government—not to the press—that we must look for improvement—journalists are but men; and the temptation must be removed, before the evil is effectually remedied.†

We could occupy a volume in exposing all the tricks and falsehoods of the advertisement system, but our limits will not admit of our disclosing more than a very few.

Certificates of cure are among the most frequent means employed for seducing public confidence. Their real claims to attention may be inferred from the facts, that a very large number of them are purely fictitious, creations of the quack or his more literary agent, and of course accurately adjusted to the catalogued virtues of his nostrum. Others are penned

* The editor of the Medical Gazette sent to the principal London papers a short account of the composition of Morison's Pills, and some illustrations of their bad effects. The Times and Albion were the only journals which gave insertion to the article. The proprietors are afraid of offending the quacks.

† For the purpose of estimating the proportion of quack advertisements to all others, we have caused them to be counted in the extensively circulated provincial papers, and in some of the London Journals, and find that out of about 2000 of all descriptions, about 200, or one-tenth are empirical. In Scotland the proportion is one-half less, and in Ireland still lower; but adopting the highest standard, the profits to government from quack advertisements would amount to about £10,000. per annum. The general advertisement duty for Great Britain, for 1838, was £101,939. The present rate of duty is 1s. 6d.

by the quack, or his agent, in presence of the patient, who very naturally considers them to know best the nature of his case, and cheerfully appends his signature to any statement they may deem best suited to their purposes to make ; others again, are written by the patients themselves, and contain their own erroneous ideas as to the nature of their complaint, or that of others, and they are published as miraculous cures from diseases, which existed only in imagination, and of the real symptoms of which both the quack and the patient were equally ignorant. The latter is naturally pleased to believe that he has escaped some imminent danger, and the former is of course directly interested in overstating his patient's case. From these remarks the real value of the great majority of the certificates of cure may be correctly ascertained.*

A second and influential order of certificates are those purporting to come from medical men themselves. The greater number of these are surreptitiously obtained by a variety of expedients, and are eagerly made use of by the very men, whose pretensions imply the inutility if not positive injuriousness of the medical profession, and who do their utmost to render unnecessary having recourse to the skill and experience of the educated practitioner. Many of this class are like the preceding—purely fictitious, pretending to come from medical men long since deceased, or the name is slightly altered, but, sufficiently similar to the real one as to be supposed by the public to refer to some popular physician or surgeon. In other instances the names of eminent members of the profession are freely used without any regard to their sanction, the empiric concluding that they would not think it worth their while to interfere ; while others are induced to give an opinion under some erroneous impression or false limitation, which is immediately published as an unqualified approval of the remedy.

Another plan is to christen the specific with the name of some well known practitioner—as for example ; “Dr. John Armstrong’s liver pills ;” “Dr. Boerhaave’s red pill ;” “*Ashley*

* At the present moment a letter from Lady Sophia Grey to Mr. Morrison, attesting a cure of consumption, is going the round of the newspapers. Our space forbids its being copied, but nothing can exceed its absurdity, both as regards the statement of the supposed facts, and the qualifications of her ladyship to express an opinion upon the subject at all. We hope for her sake, it is a pure fabrication.

Supposing many of the recorded cases of cure were not fictitious, it should be remembered they have been carefully culled from hundreds of others where the remedy has been either unsuccessful or fatal.

Cooper's botanical pill:" as if these celebrated individuals openly testified to its virtues and sanctioned its indiscriminate employment. The contrivances of this description are, in short, endless.*

SPECIMENS OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—We have now before us a large number of Quack Advertisements, consisting of Universal Medicines—Secret Remedies—Digestive and Liver Pills—Panaceas for Gout and Rheumatism—and Infallibles for Chest Affections. They are too numerous to analyse, and we can only venture to present the reader with a few brief specimens from the last version—"ex uno disce omnes."

1.—*Dropsy and Consumption cured!*—by a physician. The new system triumphant! The most extreme cases being daily cured by it with great rapidity, as reference to patients will prove. So satisfied is the discoverer of the certainty of his success, that he is willing to forego his fee for *advice until after they are cured!*

2.—Godbold's vegetable Balsam, for the cure of *Coughs, Colds, Asthmas, and Consumptions*. This medicine has stood pre-eminent for the last fifty years, as the only specific ever discovered for eradicating that dreadful malady consumption. It has never been known to fail of success, when taken upon the first attack; and is *acknowledged by the faculty, the only medicine for subduing a Phthisis!!*

3.—*The Occult Lozenges!* are a preventive and a destroyer of the incipient seeds of corrupt consumption, &c., &c. *Seventy years experience!* has placed their beneficial effects beyond the shadow of a doubt, having in *no one instance* during that long period!! fallen short of the *desired result!* (viz. enriching the proprietor).

4.—The cheapest and best medicine for coughs, colds, and asthmas. *Church's Cough Drops*, for recent colds, obstinate coughs, and confirmed asthmas, stand unrivalled. Congealed phlegm, acrimony in the fluids, and obstruction in the glands, are gently and safely discharged by easy expectoration.

5.—Coughs, asthmas, shortness of breath, weasing, colds; soreness, tightness, and oppression of the chest; and most affections of the chest and lungs relieved in *ten minutes*, by taking one dose of *Woodhouse's Balsam of Spermacei!*

6.—For coughs, colds, asthmas, hoarseness, difficulty of breathing, hooping cough, &c.—*Collis's Essence of Honey*, &c. &c. &c. If it be in the power of medicine to stop the ravages of that cruel disease, consumption, Collis's essence of honey will effect it!

7.—*Mulready's Cough Elixir*.—One dose is sufficient to convince the most scrupulous of the invaluable and unfailing efficacy of Mulready's cough elixir; the paramount superiority of this medicine above every other now in use, for the cure of the above complaints, only requires to be known to prove the passport to its being ere long universally made use of for the cure of every description of pulmonary affection?

8.—*Simco's Chemical Essence of Linseed* is universally allowed to be the best and most efficacious medicine in the world! for coughs and pulmonary affections.

9.—*Aldridge's Pectoral Syrup*, an admirable and agreeable specific for coughs, colds, and all affections of the chest and lungs!

"A physician of this city, in most extensive practice, whose name alone gives to it a pre-eminent recommendation, and to whom the secret of preparing it was imparted, gave as his decided opinion, that it was a valuable preparation, and could not fail affording to those who gave it a trial immediate and permanent benefit!!"

The above are among the favourable and least offensive specimens of the gross effrontery, impudent falsehoods, and extravagant absurdities

Puffing Paragraphs, often paid for as advertisements, but inserted as editorial remarks, are important assistances to the quack. They assume every imaginable form, appear to emanate from disinterested parties, to be written with a pure regard for the public good, and often attract attention by being headed with some exciting subject foreign to their immediate object, which with singular impudence and ingenuity is introduced unexpectedly towards the close.*

Another plan not unfrequently adopted, is to publish a long list of the nobility and gentry as patrons; and an advertisement is now lying before us—"Mr. Cockle's family antibilious pills," to which is subjoined a list of 8 dukes, 7 marquises, 17 earls,

of the present race of newspaper empirics. The handbill and placard system in London and other large towns, is, if possible, more revolting to good feeling and public decency, a set of blackguards being stationed in most of the great thoroughfares, who thrust into the hands of the passers-by, whether they be male or female, young or old, bills of a most disgusting character, and this without any attempt to suppress them by the public guardians of public morals!! The walls in the same localities are literally covered with such announcements, and yet, no doubt, any attempt to suppress the nuisance will be trumpeted forth by some of the ultra-liberals of the 19th century, as an infringement on the liberty of the subject!!

* "One of the puffing professional licensed hawkers entered the office of the Reading Mercury newspaper and with the authoritative air of an Alexander, desired that his announcement should appear in the front column, and the usual laudatory paragraph in another part of the paper. He was informed that his advertisement would be inserted, but, that the proprietors had determined never to admit such insidious clap-trap notices, which, while they injured the resident tradesman, and were looked upon as the *bonâ fide* opinions of the editor, generally referred to matters of which he could not honestly express a favourable opinion. The pedlar stood aghast! "What!" said he, "not put in a paragraph? why, I'd sooner pay for a good paragraph, than care about the advertisement at all!"—His professional visit was of unusually short duration, finding it impossible to bribe the press to trumpet forth his praise."—(*Spectacle Secrets*.)

"*Terrors of the Guillotine!!* The system of *decapitation* is now much less resorted to, as a milder principle of penal law prevails. Perhaps the terror of being guillotined is greatest when the clumsiness of the instrument makes it probable that the sufferer will be *mangled*, in lieu of at once losing his head. In the former case, however, a person in the present day would have little to fear, after having been given up to his friends, since the use of *Holloway's Universal Family Ointment* would speedily bring about adhesion of the wound; for which it is famous, as well as for a complete cure of rheumatism, gout, cancer, scrofula, paralysis, burns, wounds of all kinds, &c. &c."

"Never was there a grander display of the spirit of enterprise than the Carthaginian General Hannibal displayed in passing over the Alps. In medical science there are innumerable Alpine difficulties to surmount in the complicated disorders of the kidneys, &c., which require a medical Hannibal to overcome. Mr. Wray, of Holborn Hill, has pioneered away every obstacle by the introduction of his celebrated balsamic pills, from which he has judiciously excluded *copaiba!!!*"—*London paper*.

8 viscounts, 17 lords, 15 bishops, 6 right honourables, 17 baronets, 5 reverends, several members of parliament, and others less distinguished; all to be regarded as vouchers for the efficacy and value of the remedy!! In other cases they are appended to some feigned certificate, said to be published at the especial request of the supposed signing parties; and almost every patent medicine claims the support and patronage of the great and noble of the land. The absurdity of this must be apparent, since the parties who are cited, supposing them really to have come forward, are of no authority whatever upon the subject; and the certificate of a duke as to the efficacy of drugs in the cure of disease, would be of equivalent value to that of a deaf man on the relations of sounds. We shall not insist on the morality of the transaction on the part of the empiric, but proceed to the consideration of another feature of this hydra-headed system.

Offering large rewards to any one who will discover a more efficient panacea, is another decoy for the ignorant and unwary; the challenge seems candid and liberal, though it involves conditions impossible to be fulfilled, and is of course nothing more than an additional mode of practising a deliberate deception.*

The *Stamps* next claim our attention. There is no doubt that they are regarded by a great majority of the people, as direct testimonies on the part of the legislature in favour of the remedy, and the quack skilfully avails himself of such an impression by advertising his nostrum under the direct patronage of government. The truth is, that the stamp is a simple duty levied upon certain articles, and includes no inquiry or examination whatever as to their properties or value. Stamps may be purchased to any amount, and affixed to any thing the vendor may choose to select without the slightest interference or restriction on the part of the stamp office. Their object is merely to increase the revenue, and though not *intended* by government, to imply any approval of a medicine, the moral effect upon the population is unquestionably to do so.† Under such circumstances their continuance is morally wrong and indefensible.

* "The proprietors of Yoland's Specific Solution, being determined to prove it in every way, repeatedly offered *five hundred pounds reward!!* to any one who could equal it, but no one could. It has established itself upon its own merits alone, for the *empirical method of puffing!* has never been resorted to!!!"—(One specimen will no doubt suffice, we have others before us.)

† "In consequence of the most unparalleled success, and the wonderfully increasing sale, of *Brandreth's Vegetable Pills*, His Majesty's

Still more erroneous notions, perhaps, prevail with regard to a *Patent*. For the last twenty years there have not been more than six patents granted for medicines of any description. The conditions for obtaining it, are the claim of novelty by the inventor, and the obligation to enrol, within six months, a description of the preparation, which is then open for public inspection. Under these circumstances we can easily account for really Patent Medicines being so few, since the privilege involves no advantage to the quack, who must, under a severe penalty, admit the correctness of the statement he has made, whether it be so or not.* The term 'Patent' is applied to almost all secret medicines, but it is either used without authority, or a permission is obtained to employ it, by paying a small fee to the stamp-office. The cost of a patent is about £130. and the actual profits to government as regards medicines, must from this source be quite insignificant.

From these data it will be seen that stamps and patents are no security whatever as to the value of a remedy, nor are they intended to be so, and that very few medicines have any legal right to use the word "patent" at all.†

Honourable Commissioners of Stamps have allowed the proprietor (by express permission), to have his name on the government label!!!” Most wonderful condescension on the part of our rulers! and great the privilege for Mr. Brandreth!!”

* In the specification of the patent for *Godbold's Vegetable Balsam*, 42 different vegetables are directed to be distilled, to be preserved separately in syrups and mixed with various gums, &c. “It is to be bottled off, and kept *three years* before it is fit to be administered for the cure of consumption, or any asthmatic complaint.” It is hardly necessary to observe, says Dr. Paris, that no such directions ever are or ever could be followed; in short, the “*Balsam*” is little else than simple oxymel!

† The following is a correct statement of the profits which government derives annually from the sale of Patent and Stamped Medicines. Our information has been obtained at the government offices, and may therefore be depended upon:—

Stamps (about 3½ million annually)	£30,000
Advertisements	10,000
Licences	4,000
Wrappers (<i>i. e.</i> duty on paper)	about 5,000
Patents	say 300
	£49,300

For additional details see our “Observations on Quackery” before referred to. We have taken the highest averages, and the real sum received we are satisfied is less than what we have now stated. Cattle Medicines are not stamped, and only those cosmetics, as Rowland's Kalydor, which pretend to some healing properties.

“Except,” says Dr. Maunsell, in his recent pamphlet on ‘Political Medicine,’ “in the instance of the county infirmaries of Ireland, and

If such then be the absurdity, irrationality, and evils of Quackery—if such be the machinery it employs, it is natural to enquire how and why it should be suppressed? To the first part of the question we shall not at present attempt to reply, since the precise means which it might be advisable to adopt, involves questions of a lengthened and rather intricate nature, we shall, therefore, principally limit our remarks to the last consideration, and endeavour to point out why measures for its suppression should be enforced.

And here it is at once objected that all legislative enactments upon such a question infringe too much upon personal liberty, and that people must be left to do as they please—to quack themselves or not, as they think fit. That *si populus vult decipi decipiatur*; if persons are sufficiently foolish to believe the absurd pretensions of the empiric, they must take the consequences, and “no one is to blame but themselves.”

In answer to this statement, we would observe, that no additional restriction upon individual liberty in this respect is either necessary or desirable, and that it would be both absurd and impracticable to aim at legally preventing any person from using any means he might choose to employ for his own benefit; but surely we are justified, in accordance with the strictest principle of liberty, in asking that the man who lives upon the ignorance of his fellow-creatures, and who thrives at the expense of the general welfare, should be restricted by law? Many other attempts at imposition may be safely permitted to work their own cure, but medical imposture is not among the number. There is no instinctive guide as in animals, given to men for curing their diseases; all who are medically uneducated, are incapable of correctly estimating the relative merits of the qualified or unqualified practitioner, they are ignorant of the amount and nature of the information a medical man should possess, and they are thus unprotected from imposition, and with no beacon, but fatal experience, to warn them of their danger. It is, therefore, the imperative duty of government to take care that the public health shall not suffer from public ignorance, and to permit no one to advance

of sick prisoners in the public jails, the government in no way interfere with the providing of medical aid for the people. They may have it or not if they please, and how they please,—it is a matter with which neither whig nor tory concerns himself, further than to take advantage of human weakness, and of the ignorance which both parties have encouraged, for the purpose of wringing from the sufferings of the diseased a few paltry pounds of revenue, by the tax upon patent medicines and stamp upon diplomas.”

his private interests at the expense of those of the community at large. Every civilized country has not only acknowledged the principle, in the case we are considering, but by instituting universities for the express purpose of imparting medical education, they have practically acted upon it, and from the time of Henry V. up to the present day, penalties have been enacted against the practices of the empiric.

That legislators *ought* to provide to the utmost of their power for the public health may be argued on the common principle that the national prosperity and the national health are intimately connected, and the same motive which demands a distinct provision for acquiring a knowledge of the healing art, equally involves the duty of suppressing the practices of those who act without such qualification.

The object of an authorised medical profession is not to forward the interests of a particular body of men, but to benefit the community; and legislative efforts to exclude the ignorant empiric are not for the purpose of advancing the interests of the medical profession, but, to secure the public from imposition and injury. It is upon this principle that all measures for the suppression of Quackery should be founded, for if it could be proved that no injury was sustained by the population in consequence of its prevalence, then there would be little or no urgent reason to agitate the question at all, but since fatal experience has proved over and over again that the public are the sufferers to a fearful and untold amount, it becomes the unquestionable duty of government to do all in its power for its diminution and suppression, and enactments for such a purpose are in strict accordance with the soundest principles of public liberty.

We are anxious that this view of the question should be clearly understood, for the whole subject has too often been regarded as nothing more than a scramble for loaves and fishes, an effort on the part of medical men to increase their own gains and to diminish those of their less qualified competitors. Such is not the fact, for it is, at best, very doubtful whether the medical profession, in a pecuniary sense, would gain at all, or whether they would not lose by the suppression of empiricism—the latter inflicting such extensive injury upon the popular health. But supposing their pecuniary interests *were* at stake, this is surely no argument for medical men being passive, for if their cause be rational and just, if it involve the general welfare, and if circumstances render them the fittest and only competent agents for its prosecution, it is a false delicacy and a feeble morality to be deterred from their

purpose, because, success includes some increase to their individual or collective interests !

We again say, that medical men are alone capable of forming an accurate judgment of the fatal effects of empiricism, and of clearly pointing out why it should be suppressed, they are, therefore, morally as well as ex-officio, bound to express firmly and openly their opinions, and to expose to the utmost of their power the nature and extent of the evil. As a nationally constituted body, they might with justice (and as an individual we conceive they ought) urge their corporate claims to national protection, but, we freely admit that the general welfare of the community, and not that of any particular body of men, should be the leading motive for all legislative interference, and we have demonstratively shown that such a motive exists in all its force in the instance we are discussing.

It will here no doubt be objected, "what is the use of agitating the question at all, for if government, as you admit, has constantly endeavoured to put down Quackery, and if the latter is still flourishing, it proves that legislative prohibition is of no avail, and that the evil is not amenable to such a power." The truth is, that all existing statutes are directed against the unqualified practitioner himself, and not against the sale of his nostrums, and that legal enactments, by the nature and extent of the penalties imposed, have to a very great extent, been efficient in reducing the number of those personally practising ;* but, no effort has yet been made to suppress empiricism as it now exists, but, on the contrary, it is by the stamp and patent system legally *protected*, and

* "As early as Edward VI. one Gregg, a poulterer, was set in the pillory at Croydon, for practising in a much more harmless way than any of the present race of Quacks. In the reign of James I. an order in Council, founded on the Statute of Henry, granted the College of Physicians, was issued to the Magistrates of the City of London, for the apprehension of all reputed empirics, to bring them before the Censors, in order to their being examined as to their qualifications to be intrusted either with the lives or the limbs of the subject, when several of the quacks and nostrum vendors were fined, imprisoned, and banished. In the reign of William III. it became again necessary to enforce the law, which led to many of these offenders suffering their just reward."—(*Weekly Dispatch*.)

The great defect of all existing legislation against the quack, is not its intention, but in the great difficulty and expense of the proceeding. The remedy would principally consist in rendering the offence simple, the process cheap, and to allow the penalty to be inflicted by the local magistrate. This subject is considered more fully in the "Observations" already referred to.

government converts it into a source of revenue, receiving its share of the fees of the quack, and has therefore a direct pecuniary interest in its maintenance!

Now it is palpable to every reasonable mind that *quack medicines are virtually printed prescriptions of particular doses of secret ingredients to be taken as medicines, and their object is to render it unnecessary to resort to the educated skill and judgment of the qualified practitioner.* They, therefore, as clearly include the *practice of medicine*, as much as if the individual were to give his personal attendance and to write his prescription at the moment, while they involve the great additional evils of the prescriber being wholly irresponsible and not personally superintending his own means, the patient becoming his own medical adviser, and swallowing the physic which the quack has prescribed! The latter is exempt from all the toil, anxiety, and exposure of personal practice, escapes all visual scrutiny and those numerous tests of his pretensions and worth to which a closer intercourse would subject him; but, in the privacy of his closet, fixes upon his remedy, arranges at his leisure his diseases, creates his qualifications, manufactures his experience, and with the powerful aid of the press, emerges at once from his obscurity as professional adviser not only to the favoured inhabitants of Great Britain (a sphere far too narrow), but of the whole world!* It is, therefore, evident, that permitting the sale of secret remedies is far more extensively injurious to the public health, than would be the personal practice of the unqualified and ignorant; and whatever necessity has existed for repressing the latter, is increasingly applicable to the unrestricted sale and diffusion of quack medicines.

To expect *education* to be the corrector of empiricism is nothing better than practical folly. At what period of the world's history did Quackery ever more rankly flourish than

* "He who is too lazy to earn his bread by labour, or too stupid to do it by any occupation that requires intellect, and who is so much of a rogue as to desire to profit by the credulity and ignorance of his fellows, has only to purchase a right for the sale of his nostrum, and he is forthwith transformed into a doctor,—he is born, Minerva-like, full grown, and completely armed from the brain of this legislative Jupiter."—(*Ticknor.*)

"The practice of the Quack is at best the empiricism of a single life, that of the Physician is founded on the registered results of the experience of his predecessors. Every thing useful, elicited by the experiments of 2000 years, survives in his practice, and the current treatment is collected from the best writers of all ages. The educated is strong in the accumulated knowledge of 70 ages; the impostor acts as if the healing art were an affair of yesterday."—(*Medical Gazette.*)

in the nineteenth century? How can we explain its unequalled successes, at the present moment, on such a supposition? Are its knaveries and absurdities current only among the ignorant and unlettered? Is it not notorious that some of the great, the noble, the learned of the land, are credulous beyond expression in all matters which have reference to the curative powers of empirical remedies? And they fall a prey, not from a general lack of information, but for a want of it in regard to that in which they are most deeply concerned,—their own health and comfort. “It is not,” says Dr. Paris, “the least extraordinary feature in the history of medical superstition, that it should so frequently involve in its trammels persons who on every other occasion would resent with indignation any attempt to talk them out of their reason, and still more to persuade them out of their senses; and yet we have continual proofs of its exclusive influence over the most powerful and cultivated minds. In ancient times we may adduce Cicero and Aurelius. Mr. Boyle was pre-eminently credulous with respect to specifics, publishing many formulæ of infallible remedies, and seriously recommending the thigh bone of an executed criminal against dysentery. Lord Bacon believed in the existence of a panacea that would prolong life beyond its natural term; he considered one principal cause of death, was the action of the external air in drying and exhausting the body, which he thought might be prevented by nitre, but although this great man took three grains of his favourite salt for the last thirty years of his life, he died nevertheless at the age of 66.”

Many modern instances might be cited if necessary, but we think enough has been said to refute the idea of education ever being competent for the suppression of Quackery. But admitting, for the sake of argument, that it ultimately will be so, on what principle of public expediency or common sense can we discourage the enactment of more speedy and summary measures, because, some centuries hence, the state of society will be such as to render legal interference unnecessary? Such reasoning is absurd and delusive, for if we were to make an indefinite future anticipation of good the ground of not legislating for the present, we ought to repeal every penal enactment whatever, since, unquestionably, the time will come when iniquity shall hide its head, and truth and justice prevail.*

* “It is difficult to decide which affords the most fit subject for our astonishment, the unblushing impudence of the empiric, or the down-

By others it is urged, "that by legally interfering, we only give quacks greater notoriety than they at present possess, and raise them to the dignity of martyrs." So long as we limit our efforts to the prosecution of individual offenders, leaving them in possession of their present means of publicity, this objection is not wholly unfounded, though we do not think it to be strictly correct; but the assumption that we shall exalt the quack in public favour when we deprive him of the very sinews of his trade, is too little probable to merit discussion. Let the avenues of the press be effectually closed, and the quack's hold upon public sympathy or support will be found to be very slender indeed.

Another class of objectors state, that by suppressing empiricism the public would be deprived of many valuable remedies. We have already shown what quack remedies are, and disclosed the nature of the evidence on which their virtues are founded; but, independently of these facts which prove that were the whole of them extinct, the public loss would be inconsiderable, we fully admit that it is desirable that no really valuable medicine should be suppressed: on the contrary, every facility and encouragement should be given for the discovery of fresh and more effective curative agents, but then their worth must be ascertained by competent and appointed authorities, and not by the party interested in its sale, and ignorant of any means of properly testing its efficacy. Should its claims after such an examination be established, let the discoverer be rewarded in proportion to the real value of the means, but the secret of its preparation must then be divulged; or, if these conditions were not acceptable, let the inventor be allowed to use it only after he has qualified himself for so doing, by going through the appointed course of medical studies, by which alone he can be competent to exercise any proper discretion in its administration. "But let not (says Dr. Barlow) every daring and hardened impostor who can muster up the cost of procuring a patent, and sear his conscience to the point of sacredly attesting those falsehoods by which he unblushingly maintains the efficacy of his inert or noxious nostrums, have power to extend his deceptions under the sanction of the royal

right stupidity or *gullibility* of those who take his nostrums. People who claim to have common sense, and who manifest it on most other occasions, men who are educated and enlightened, are quite as prone to follow in the wake of some notorious quack, and to sing hosannas to his name, as those of less pretensions. Were the positively ignorant the only supporters of quacks, they would soon be driven from the field by starvation."—(*Ticknor.*)

license, or to practice successfully this juggle of the worst kind."

The whole genius of a liberal profession is and should be opposed to what is secret, and no individual belonging to it should be allowed to make a profit by any such preparation, beyond the limits of his own practice, unless it were by the simple sale of the article, in a way only available to those who by their knowledge and qualifications could safely and beneficially apply it. Such restrictions, if properly enforced, would effectually cripple the present system of empiricism, they would shield the public from much gross imposition, preserve whatever was valuable, and protect, as far as possible, the national health from ignorant and mercenary speculators.

There is no doubt that Quackery in some form or other will, in spite of all regulations, continue to exist, but that its amount may be materially diminished by legislative prohibitions there can be no reasonable doubt; and our present object is not to accomplish its utter extinction (a project we admit to be Utopian), but to reduce its present monstrous and unsightly growth into comparatively narrow and harmless dimensions. That thus far is practicable we are, after a long and rather laborious consideration of the subject, perfectly convinced; and believing, as we do, that such measures would confer a real boon upon the public, we shall continue to adopt every means in our power to accomplish their enactment, notwithstanding the abuse and imputations such efforts never fail to elicit from those whose interests are involved in the perpetuation of the evil. No general reform can be effected without disturbance to individual interests; and while the latter should always be attended to as far as justice and the public welfare can admit, they ought never to prove insuperable obstacles to the enforcement of measures essential to the health or well-being of the community.

In conclusion, we would observe that it is the duty of every upright and conscientious mind acquainted with the preceding details, to discourage a system so adverse to the public welfare and so generally at variance with honesty and truth. We have no sympathy with those who would patronise an abuse on account of some inferior and contingent advantages which may happen to result from it. That system must be iniquitous indeed in behalf of which nothing whatever can be alleged, no apology be made, no palliation be admitted, and from which no indirect and occasional benefit can be shown to proceed. But we must beware how, for the sake of such inferior considerations, we overlook the number and magni-

tude of the real evils which it occasions: and we are not morally justified in even seeking our own benefit at the price of encouraging what is radically wrong and indefensible.

These observations apply in all their force to the present system of medical empiricism; and while they justify us in seeking its legislative suppression, we trust they will bring to our assistance the common sense and correct principle of the nation at large.

OUR object in making the reader acquainted with the formulæ of some of the many nostrums, which are now candidates for popular favour, is to convince him of the impossibility of such preparations possessing a tithe of the virtues so lavishly ascribed to them, and to prove that quack remedies are not *discoveries* of the empiric; but, with very few exceptions, the very same drugs which the educated practitioner is daily in the habit of employing, the latter, however, adapting them to the nature of the case, while the quack attempts their blind and indiscriminate administration. Supposing the nostrum of the empiric to be actually as potent and efficacious as he describes it, still it would be necessary to entrust its application to properly educated individuals. No argument, therefore, for the continuance of ignorant and irresponsible medical practice can be reasonably supported upon the ground of many quack remedies being really useful combinations.

Their value can only depend upon their active influence upon the system, and in proportion to this, should they be cautiously and skilfully administered, for it is a monstrous absurdity to suppose, that a remedy capable of doing great good, is not equally capable of inflicting serious injury, and whether it does the one or the other, entirely depends upon its being rightly applied. "The principal defect in the practical part of physick," says the sagacious and upright Sydenham, "proceeds not from a scarcity of medicine to answer particular indications, but, from the want of knowing the intentions to be answered."

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APPENDIX,

CONTAINING THE COMPOSITION OF SOME OF THE MORE
POPULAR PATENT MEDICINES AND NOSTRUMS.*

—o—

Anderson's Pills.

Barbadoes Aloes, with a proportion of jalap and oil of aniseed.

Barclay's Antibilious Pills.

Extract of colocynth, resin of jalap, almond soap, guaiacum, tartar emetic, oil of juniper, oil of rosemary, and syrup of buckthorn.

Lady Webster's, or Lady Crespigny's Pill.

Aloes, mastic, red roses, and syrup of buckthorn.
These popular pills are taken from the fifth edition of the Paris Pharmacopœia. Aloes is the basis of almost every dinner and antibilious pill; the latter also contain almost invariably some preparation of mercury.

Dixon's Antibilious Pills.

Aloes, scammony, rhubarb, and tartarised antimony.

Speediman's Pills.

Aloes, myrrh, rhubarb, extract and oil of chamomile.

Hunt's Pills.

Compound extract of colocynth, jalap, castile soap, and cloves.

Dr. James's Analeptic Pills.

James's powder, with essential salt of bark and syrup of castor.

Morison's Pills.

Gamboge, colocynth, aloes, squills, cream of tartar, and ginger—No. 2 contains three times as much gamboge as No. 1.

“Now experience and practice have shown that those persons who make use of Morison's pills in largest doses and the longer persevered with, have invariably reaped most benefit.”

* We refer those who desire more extensive information, to the last Edition of Dr. Paris' Pharmacologia; to Grey's Supplement to the Pharmacopœa; and to Bateman's Magnopœa.

“If Morison’s pills do not cure, no other medicine on earth will; and infallibility only belongs to one—to God!!!” We need scarcely say that these notorious pills are drastic purgatives, and it is not surprising that the bowels of so many patients inflame under this rough usage—the wonder is, that any escape!

Solomon’s Balm of Gilead.

An aromatic tincture, of which cardamoms form a leading ingredient, made with brandy. Cantharides are supposed to enter into its composition. It need scarcely be remarked, that taking such a medicine is only another mode of dram-drinking, and its effects in every respect similar.

Kalydor.

Bitter almond emulsion with corrosive sublimate.

Gowland’s Lotion.

Very similar to the preceding.

Godfrey’s Cordial.

Infusion of sassafras, seeds of carraway, coriander and anise, treacle and tincture of opium. The extensive and indiscriminate use of this nostrum in the nursery is, says Dr. Paris, a subject of national opprobrium, and is so considered by foreign writers.

Dalby’s Carminative.

Carbonate of magnesia, oils of peppermint, nutmeg and aniseed, tinctures of castor, assafætida and opium, spirit of pennyroyal, compound tincture of cardamoms and peppermint water. There are cheaper compositions sold under the same name.

Johnson’s Soothing Syrup.

Opium is the active ingredient.

Opiates are extremely dangerous remedies for young children. Parents and nurses, who would shrink from giving laudanum under its own name to a baby of a month old, are deluded by the names of carminative, cordial, or soothing syrup, and extinguish with a heavy narcotic the slender flame of infant life!

Daffy’s Elixir.

This is the compound tincture of senna, with the substitution of treacle for sugar candy, and the additions of anniseeds and elicampane root. Different kinds of this nostrum are sold under the names of Dicey’s Daffy, Swinton’s Daffy, but they differ merely in subordinate minutiae.

Friar's Balsam—Wade's Drops—Jesuits Drops.

They are nothing more than the compound tincture of benzoin.

Elixir of Longevity.

An aromatic tincture, with aloes.

Bateman's Pectoral Drops.

Consist principally of the tincture of castor, with camphor and opium, coloured by cochineal.

Pectoral Balsam of Liquorice.

The proprietor gravely affirms that this contains the virtues of a whole pound of liquorice root; but it is little more than paregoric strongly impregnated with oil of anniseed.

Pectoral Balsam of Honey.

Merely the tincture of benzoin or tolu.

Cough Drops.

The various nostrums with this name are preparations of opium, very similar to paregoric. "The mischief," says Dr. Fothergill, "that has proceeded from the healing anodynes of quacks can scarcely be imagined." The annual amount expended in cough mixtures in this country is beyond calculation.

Norris's Drops.

A solution of tartar emetic in rectified spirit, and disguised by the addition of some vegetable colouring matter.

Golden Ointment—Singleton's Eye Salve.

It consists of sulphuret of arsenic, with lard or spermaceti. The nitrate of mercury ointment is sold under the same title.

Roche's Embrocation.

Olive oil, mixed with about half its quantity of the oils of cloves and amber.

Cephalic Snuff.

The basis of this errhine is powdered asarum diluted with some vegetable powder.

Steer's Opodeldoc.

Castile soap, rectified spirit, camphor, oil of rosemary, and origanum, with the solution of ammonia.

Ward's Paste.

The confection of black pepper.

Worm Cakes and Lozenges.

The great majority are compounds of calomel and jalap.

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