

MEDICINE IN ARABIA.

The following narrative from the Travels of Wm. G. Palgrave, who practiced the medical art in the remote interior of Arabia, will give the reader some idea of the difficulty a homoeopathic physician would encounter in getting symptoms from that race of wanderers, whose language abounds in the most luxuriant metaphor:

"It is a stout clown from Mogah, scantily dressed in working wear, and who has been occupied for the last half hour in tracing sundry diagrams on the ground before him with a thick peach-tree switch, thus to pass the time until his betters have been served. He now edges forward and, taking his seat in front of the door, calls my attention with an 'I say, doctor.'

"Whereupon I suggest to him that his bulky corporation, not being formed of glass or other transparent material, he has, by his position, entirely intercepted whatever little light my recess might enjoy. He apologizes, and shuffles an inch or two sideways. Next I inquire what ails him, not without some curiosity to hear the answer, so little does the Herculean frame before me announce disease. Whereto Do'eymis, or whatever may be his name, replies,

" 'I say, I am all made up of pain.'

"This statement, like many others, appears to me to be rather too general to be exactly true. So I proceed in my interrogatory: 'Does your head pain you?' 'No.' (I might have guessed that; these fellows never feel what our Gallic friends entitle *le mal des beaux esprits*.)

" 'Does your back ache?' 'No.' 'Your arms?' 'No.' 'Your legs?' 'No.' 'Your body?' 'No.' 'But,' I conclude, 'if neither your head, nor your body, back, arms, or legs pain you, how can you possibly be such a composition of suffering as you say?' 'I am all made up of pain, doctor,' replies he manfully, entrenching himself in his first position. The fact is, that there is really something wrong with him, but he does not know how to local-

ize his sensations. So I push forward my inquiries, till it appears that our man of Mogah has a chronic rheumatism; and on ulterior investigation, conducted with all the skill that Barakat and I can jointly muster, it comes out that three or four months before, he had an attack of the disease in its acute form, accompanied by high fever, since which he has not been himself again.

"This might suffice for the diagnosis, but I wish to see how he will find his way out of more intricate questions; besides, the townsmen sitting by, and equally alive to the joke with myself, whisper, 'Try him again.' In consequence, I proceed with, 'What was the cause of your first illness?' 'I say, doctor, its cause was God,' replies the patient. 'No doubt of that,' say I; 'all things are caused by God; but what was the particular and immediate occasion?' 'Doctor, its cause was God, and secondly, that I ate camel's flesh when I was cold,' rejoins my scientific friend.

" 'But was there nothing else?' I suggest, not quite satisfied with the lucid explanation just given, 'It was all, I say, from God, doctor, but then, I drank camel's milk, too.'

"Well I consider the case and make up my mind regarding the treatment. Next comes the grand question of payment, which must be agreed upon before-hand and rendered conditional on success, else no fees for the doctor, not at Ha'yel only, but throughout Arabia. I inquire what he will give me on recovery. 'Doctor,' answers the patient, 'I will give you, do you hear, I say! I will give you a camel,' but I reply that I do not want one. 'I say, doctor, remember God,' which being interpreted means 'do not be unreasonable.' 'I will give you a fat camel, everyone knows my camel; if you choose I will bring witnesses, I say.' And while I persist in refusing the proffered camel, he talks of butter, meal, dates and such like equivalents.

"However, all ends by his behaving reasonably enough; he follows my prescription with ordinary docility, gets better, and gives me for my pains an eighteen penny fee."