

observation and experiment. In fact, the history of medicine during the first fifty years of the past century was still the history of the rise and fall of systems and schools. So little did scientific methods affect the interpretation of the phenomena of disease, that Rokitansky, himself the most painstaking and exact of gross pathologists, was the father of that system which was the first to be attacked and overthrown by Virchow, namely, the humoral pathology. It would indeed take too much time to attempt to fully describe the state of medical thought at this period; it would perhaps be difficult for us to appreciate it properly; we have gone so far forward that to-day it is almost impossible for us to go back to the point of view of the physician of 1840, and appreciate the arguments which appeared to him so cogent. The tendencies were all transcendental; there was continually introduced into the arguments the action of a something which might be called the "nervous principle," the "life principle," or the "formative principle," or something else of the kind, to which all sorts of activities were ascribed; indeed Virchow, in the first volume of his *Archiv*, quaintly scoffs at the powers of this formative principle, as described in Loewstein's *Pathological Anatomy*, in the following words: "Does it not seem as if this *Bildungskraft* were a free burgher from 'the bloody land of Kentucky, half horse and half alligator,' or a small demon from the days of the Rosicrucians."

In Germany the system which perhaps had the strongest hold on the medical mind was that form of humoral pathology which had been promulgated by Rokitansky, a modification of the pathological views of Andral, the French pathologist. According to this view, the primary seat of all disease was in the blood and, as Rokitansky thought, disease consisted in false mixture of the elements of the blood, chiefly the fibrin and the albumen; to designate this abnormal condition he made use of the old Hippocratic term *crasis*, and classified all diseases into various *crases*. One of his most important *crasis*, for instance, was that in which he conceived there was an excess of albumen and a deficiency of fibrin; here he placed such widely different diseases as gout, rachitis, typhoid, acute tuberculosis, Bright's disease, cancer, and others equally varied. How strong a hold the humoral pathology had on the minds of men is shown by many terms still used and believed in at the present day, by the laity, such as pure and impure blood, and even the terms hot blood and cold blood; and although no one will gainsay the therapeutic value of brimstone and molasses, yet doubtless, in the minds of the common people, the humoral pathology is responsible for the vigor of its application.

The grave objection to these views and to others of the same period was that they were almost entirely speculative hypotheses, with but the slenderest foundation in the way of observed fact or experiment.