

MEDICAL ADVISER.

OF CANCER—CANCER DOCTORS, ETC.

This disease takes the Latin name of the crab, from its fancied, or real, resemblance to that animal. It affects many parts of the body, as the breast, lips, skin—particularly of the face—stomach, or rather its pyloric orifice, etc.

The first that is discovered of this disease is, generally, a hard tubercle or tumour, of a greater or less size, sometimes having the feel under the skin of a shot, or not unlike that of a marble. The resemblance to a crab consists in what may be termed prolongations from the central tubercle; they are bands of diseased cellular membrane, and, diverging as they do, a fertile imagination has likened them to the legs of the sea crab.

It is not every lump felt in the breast, or any other part of the body that is a cancer; and, again, tumors that are at first harmless assume a malignant appearance and become cancerous. To distinguish at all times, and with accuracy, between what is originally simple, and what malignant, and to decide with certainty that the simple is not to become malignant, is a degree of perfection to which medical science has not yet attained. This much, however, may be considered as settled—that when a tumour does not disappear under the most appropriate treatment, and particularly if it shows any disposition to increase or to become painful, or otherwise troublesome, it should be at once freely removed with the knife. This is safe, but little painful, and if the disease is local, the constitution being unaffected, is pretty sure of success.

A cancerous tumour is most generally discovered by accident, so that it is probable that it may have existed for a long time, without in any degree disturbing the health. But immediately after discovery, it may commence a rapid march in its progress to maturity. This is, doubtless, accelerated by mental anxiety in regard to the suspicious character of the tumour; and the frequent handling, with, perhaps, stimulating or irritating applications, contributes in no small degree to the same result.

Cancer has, very justly, been considered as one of the *opprobria medicorum*—one, that under all or any circumstances, has small chance enough of being permanently cured. And because it calls for, and too frequently baffles, the skill of the profession, like other diseases it has afforded a most excellent opportunity to the empiric, to enrich himself, without affording to his patient any reasonable hope of benefit. The more certainly fatal, and consequently, the more alarming the disease with which a person is afflicted, the more is he disposed to trust himself to the uncertainties of charlatany. Cancer may be, as it frequently is, cured by extirpation with the knife—the only certain and only safe remedy. External applications have also been used, and sometimes, with temporary, or it may be, permanent good effect; and these are the remedies most constantly employed by the empiric. The cancer-doctor professes to be in the possession of a secret specific for this disease; he works upon the fears of those who have, or believe they have cancer, and who, being desperate, like a drowning person grasping at straws, seize upon the frail hope that is offered by the hand of ignorant charlatany. The empiric decries the surgeon's knife and professional skill; he boasts of his cures, and unparalleled success, and in confirmation of his arrogant pretensions presents certificates of cures signed by names of unquestionable veracity.

The applications most commonly employed by quacks for the extirpation of a cancerous tumour, are plasters into which enter, as a principal ingredient, some one of the mineral escharotics. A preparation of arsenic is more frequently used than any other. The patient is made to believe that the pain arising from the application of a caustic substance, and the consequent suffering, is much less than that caused by the knife, which is just as true as to affirm that the prick of a cambric needle is more dangerous than a stab from a bowie knife, or a thrust from a bayonet.

The "cancers," that are cured by cancer-doctors, are *not* cancers, though they may resemble them, and may have been pronounced such by eminent professional men. Their close resemblance to cancer, and their cure, answer all the purposes of the empiric—to gull the people and obtain their money. A man of gross habit, who is more likely to be affected with tumours in the skin, or other parts usually the seat of cancer, has a lump in the cheek which creates no little anxiety; he consults a physician who assures him that the disease has no appearance of cancer, and prescribes a course that will, in all probability, remove the unwelcome visitor. But not satisfied with this, he hears of some famous cancer-doctor who has wrought most marvellous cures, more especially in those whom *the doctors had given up*, and forthwith, he seeks out the quack to test his skill upon himself. A pretty liberal price, in advance, is always sure to elicit such an opinion and prescription as will harmonize with the preconceived notions of the patient; if he believes it is a cancer, then the cancer-doctor pronounces it so at once; if he thinks otherwise the cancer doctor thinks so too, unless it is for his interest to think differently. If the tumour is decided by the quack to be a cancer, an application of some caustic substance—something that destroys the part to which it is applied—is made; and if the thing be really a cancer there is a possibility that it may be cured, while there is great probability—many chances to one—that it will not only *not* be cured, but that it will be so aggravated that it can

never be successfully removed by a surgical operation. When a cancer is cured by plasters, or when any tumour is thus removed, it is done by the intense inflammation excited either in the tumour itself, or the adjacent parts, or it may be both; this terminates in a sloughing, or casting off the diseased part, leaving only an ordinary ulcer which soon heals.

Cancer, if it be at first a purely local disease, the constitution uncontaminated, shows an invincible tendency to extend itself to the neighboring glands, and to develop itself in them. If, for instance, it appears in the breast, it soon affects the glands in the arm-pits; they become involved in the disease, and if they do assume the cancerous nature, the patient generally becomes a victim. Hence it is, that in all treatment for cancer, irritating applications and stimulating medicines should be studiously avoided; and, therefore, every caustic that does not cure, invariably does mischief, by adding fuel to the flame. When a tumour, whether it be cancerous or not, is cured by the application of a caustic plaster, it is generally removed whole; and if there are prolongations, or offsets, from the central body, these not unfrequently come away at the same time. The cancer-doctor then boasts of the triumph of his skill; and the patient, not knowing that his life has been placed in jeopardy by the rash means of cure, readily believes all that is told to him. The disease is named cancer, the cure is proclaimed far and wide, and the cancer-doctor reaps a fresh harvest of glory and—cash.

But while one is cured of cancer by quackery, forty are killed; and when death is the result, the cancer-doctor, though he be as ignorant as a baboon, attributes it to anything else rather than to his want of skill, or ignorant interference. The fame of cancer-doctors is acquired by curing bad ulcers, and by removing suspicious tumours that might perhaps have become cancerous, and by also removing simple tumours that would never have become malignant. These are all named cancer, and hence the reputation consequent upon curing them, which would be no more than is justly due, were the claims founded in truth and justice. An empirical mode of treatment of cancer is, in any case, without exception, when the disease is not recent, and the tumour small, and confined to a single spot, positively hurtful; and every irritating application, and every day of delay, is increasing the danger and diminishing the chances of a recovery.

There seems to be a tendency, in the minds of most people, to magnify the dangers of disease. If a child is sick, its parents think it very sick; and if the doctor looks upon it as a little dangerous, they think the danger imminent. And so it is with adults themselves; they like to be thought dangerously ill, when perhaps they are only moderately indisposed; and they perhaps take offence if their disease is not regarded by their friends as it is by themselves. It is not an unfrequent occurrence that a physician, when he perfectly understands a case, and is treating it wisely and successfully, is dismissed in disgrace, if he does not concur with the patient and his friends as to the degree of danger. To account for this obliquity of the mind is not to our purpose; but it is used as a most powerful lever, by more than cancer-doctors for the furtherance of selfish, and disreputable objects. It is this strange feature in the mental character that accounts in great measure for the easy credulity of those who happen to have any tumour that resembles cancer; they help to cheat themselves even to their own most serious detriment.

We here subjoin an extract from an epitaph on a cancer-doctor, written by Dr. Hopkins, of Waterbury, Conn. many years ago.

"Go readers gentle, eke and simple,
If you have wart, or corn, or pimple,
To quack infallible apply,
Here's room enough for you to lie.
His skill triumphant still prevails,
For death's a cure that never fails."

For the Pearl.

PHYSIOLOGY.—No. IV.

In the last paper the necessity for maintaining the existence of vital principle or force was discussed. Now by the expression *vital principle*, it is not intended to give an idea of something existing independently of those actions by which its existence is made evident to our senses; but merely the aggregate of the powers observable in living beings, and distinguishing them from inanimate matter. This vital force, it may be remarked, is ever acting in opposition to the laws which inorganic matter obeys;—thus the blood is propelled in opposition to the force of gravitation. When we stand erect, the fluids do not fall to the lowest part, in obedience to the above-mentioned laws of gravity. The standard of heat in the human subject is also the temperature most favorable to the process of putrefaction in dead animal matter; but by virtue of the vital force, such a result is prevented in our bodies;—this opposition however does not prevent the physical laws exerting a degree of controul, for effects chemical, physical, and mechanical are always being carried on, but modified and influenced by the vital power.

When the space of action of the vital principle is narrowed, the effects appear to be more energetic; this led to the observation of Pliny. "*Nusquam magisquam in minimis tota est Natura*," which may be thus rendered—That Nature is no where more powerful than in the smallest things. In short men the action of

the heart is quicker, more energetic than in those of higher stature; and that this should be the case will not appear extraordinary when we consider that the heart and digestive organs are of very near the same size in all men, the cavities of the body of the same capacity, and that it is chiefly in the greater length of the lower extremities that they differ. We can easily therefore imagine that the same quantity of nourishment supplied to a smaller bulk, would not only arrive at its destination sooner, but effect its purpose with more power than if distributed to a larger quantity. And in accordance with this, we find that a patient increases in vigour after losing a limb, and frequently the fulness of the system is so great as to indicate frequent loss of blood. Of the nature of this vital force we are totally ignorant, although its actions are known to us. For instance, the liver is constantly forming, from the blood poured into it, a new material called bile; we can trace the blood into the substance of that organ, and we know that there the fluid called bile is prepared from it, and we can trace the residue after this has been done, and find that its nature is altered; but the cause is inexplicable, there is nothing in the structure of the organ (at least hitherto discovered) which can explain to us the cause of this alteration, and this is what we call *vital action*. We know that the continuation of this vital action is a consequence of nutrition, and that when the latter is withheld the former ceases; but this leads to no more intimate acquaintance with its nature. It teaches us, however, that all the varied and beautiful phenomena of life consist ultimately of nutrition and vital action; their peculiar mode of action, it is true, is hidden from our ken, but it is not to this our researches ought to be directed; their results should be our object, and for this purpose it is necessary that we become acquainted with the physical properties of the organs, and then try to find out how the general effect is produced by the concurrence of each.

Hitherto our remarks have been general; but now that we have arrived at the consideration of the various phenomena which make up the life of the individual, it is necessary that we confine ourselves to the observation of these events as presented in some specific object: for since the range is so wide, including all animated beings, we should soon become involved in inextricable confusion, if we attempted the consideration of the phenomena offering themselves to our notice in such a mass of beings; in order therefore to avoid this, it may be as well to consider separately, the process of life as occurring first, in man, then in the lower animals, and lastly as exhibited in the vegetable kingdom; not following this division, however, so rigidly as to prevent the use of familiar examples whenever it may be necessary.

An animal then is the union of a formative or vital principle and organized matter; and while this union exists a series of phenomena occur, which are termed formations: thus the heart propels the blood into the arteries, and this is termed its function—the liver forms bile from the blood as above noticed, and that is its function. These functions then are of two kinds: first those which are intended for the preservation of the individual, as digestion, circulation, respiration, etc. etc., and those intended for its reproduction. Each of these functions is performed by its appropriate organ or organs—and as we are to see these as they occur in man, we may first take a glance at the composition of his frame, and this will form the subject of the next Essay.

C***.

HYMN TO THE SETTING SUN.

BY ROBERT GILFILLAN.

Sun of the firmament! planet of wonderment!
Now thy far journey of day it is done;
Still art thou parting bright—shedding immortal light,
Down on thy throne of night—hail! setting sun!

Slow thou depart'st away—far from the realms of day,
Lingering in pity on summer's loved bowers;
Thy last ray is streaming—thy farewell tint gleaming,
Yet soon thou'lt return to refreshen the flowers.

Thy parting brings sadness—yet nations in gladness
Are waiting to worship thee—fountain of light!
Where'er thy footsteps be, there do we beauty see,
Thou kindest day in the dwellings of night!

Where sleeps the thunder—there dost thou wander,
Down 'neath the ocean deep, there dost thou stray,
Kissing the stars at morn—high in the air upborne,
Skirting creation's far verge on thy way!

Grandeur and glory—they travel before thee:
Brightness and majesty walk in thy train!
Darkness it flies from thee, clouds may not rise to thee,
When thou awak'st from the ocean again.

All own thy influence—kindly thou dost dispense
Blessings o'er nature, where'er its bounds be;
Afric's lone desert, it blooms at thy presence;
And Lapland is turned into summer by thee!

Time cannot conquer thee—age cannot alter thee,
Years have no power to limit thy sway;
Strength and sublimity—still they attend on thee,
Pilgrim of ages, but not of decay!

Sun of the firmament!—planet of wonderment!
Now thy far journey of day it is done;
Still art thou parting bright—shedding immortal light,
Down on thy throne of night, hail setting sun!

Glasgow University Album.