

is surely some good in ye! You are at least warriors against those bad old walls!"—MARCY.

On the Inhalation of Medicated Vapor in
Bronchial and Lung Diseases.

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It is a remarkable fact, that the professors of the Medical Art from time immemorial have always been slow to receive and adopt any course of medical treatment not sanctioned by long experience, and not originally forced upon their attention by striking and overwhelming facts. This truly conservative stand has had its advantages and its disadvantages. But to one conversant with the history of medicine it sometimes seems preposterous and absurd, for through the long vista of the past he sees nothing but an ever-changing theory followed by an ever-changing practice. A leading dogma of one age has given place to that of the succeeding, which has with equal reason been founded upon the development of new facts in science or art; and so from the time of Pythagoras, 500 B.C., the leading hypotheses of every age have been superseded by the discovery of new facts upon which still new hypotheses have been founded. Nor is this to be deprecated, for in the language of an eminent German pathologist, "an hypothesis which becomes dispossessed by new facts dies an honorable death; and if it has been instrumental in first bringing to light those truths by which it is itself annihilated, it deserves a monument of gratitude." So far all medical hypotheses have been and are still valuable, for without them science could progress but slowly. But in the present age, more than ever, facts are taking the lead in all departments of science, and a theory which is not supported by well-established truths cannot hope for general acceptance. Now, while new facts are constantly developing and discoveries are following in rapid succession within the vast domain of science, the medical profession, as a body, are in great danger of either too obstinately holding on to

the old theories of the past and their long-exploded practices, or of being led away to the opposite extreme, and flying beyond the basis of fact into the clouds of fancy which envelop all new discoveries, and which hold out ever new and alluring temptation to man's illimitable and never-satisfied imagination.

The middle and conservative ground between these two extremes is manifestly the only safe stand for medicine or any positive science. With the old chemico-anatomical materialism on the one hand, and the new dynamical-spiritualism on the other, the only solid basis between the two is confessedly that of fixed and established fact. If men would keep constantly in mind that the only road open to another world lies through the portals of the grave, that much as our souls may aspire to reach that spiritual home which all in some form or other picture to themselves, and on which they build their future hopes, still it is an ever-varying law of nature that we must go down into the bowels of the material earth before we can ascend to any purer or more immaterial ether; if while made of the earth, subsisting on the earth, and constantly attracted down into the earth by an ever-acting law of gravitation, men would cease their efforts to become all spirit and be satisfied with the dignity which belongs to terrestrial man, they would steer clear of both the Scylla of mental stolidity and the Charybdis of morbid imagination. So in medicine, if men would be satisfied to confine themselves to the solid basis of established fact, they would not on the one hand forget the useful lessons of the past, nor on the other fear the encroachments of present or future discovery and investigation: standing on a rock of truth, which loses none of its solidity by being built upon, they would welcome the refreshing breezes of hypothesis which sweep around them, and view with delight their very footstool gradually rising higher by the slow aggregation of even comminuted particles of experience.

Such reflections have often forced themselves upon me, and are here pre-