

Kepler was forced to depend upon the income derived from his fame as an astrologer to aid him in the pursuit of his astronomical studies, and excuses the deception in the following words: "Nature, which has conferred upon every animal the means of subsistence, has given astrology as an adjunct and ally to astronomy." If, then, through the pages of medical history we are confronted only too often with the spectacle of a noble art prostituting itself to vulgar needs, what else can we expect? The progress of medicine as a science is so indissolubly united to the intellectual progress of the human race, that it is a sad commentary upon the intelligence of a person who attempts to cast reflections upon its achievements. Will the same persons who deny a place to medicine in the scientific world, also deny that whatever is to be learned of the diseases which attack the human body must be studied in their effects upon the human body? Do these same people realize that all the knowledge that the world possessed of the structure of the human body, until Vesalius, in the sixteenth century, chanced the perils of the hangman's rope to make human dissections, was purely deductive, and derived from the dissections of the lower animals? And that morbid anatomy was for the first time systematically studied by Morgagni nearly a century later? Have these same people, who attempt to belittle the greatest, because the most comprehensive, science that has ever engaged the attention of man, been able even to rid themselves of the foolish sentiment which makes even the contemplation of the dissection of the human body a horror? It is this unwillingness on the part of mankind to consider the true relations of medical science and practice that enables the charlatan who evolves his ideas of disease from his inner consciousness, and deduces from them an absurd and fantastic system of treatment; to prey upon their credulity and offer them hope of cure, when death is inevitable.

We have passed the dark ages of speculative philosophy in medicine. No longer is it possible for a man to advance a chimerical theory of disease, and not be silenced by the forceable arguments or deserved contempt of those competent to judge of its merits. Medicine is, in its broader sense, not the mere treatment of disease, but in the knowledge of its nature, its causes and its effects upon the body, a science founded on accurate observation and rational deductions. If the application of this science in the treatment of disease often falls short of what we could wish, is it not possible to object that there is that in the nature of certain diseases that defies treatment? But the people will have nothing but a cure, and if Dr. Science can't do it, why it will at least do no harm to try Dr. Assurance. It may interest us to consider for a few minutes some of the many delusions which have from time to time obtained more or

less credence or support. It may be well to say that during mediæval times, in fact, up to the days of modern medicine founded upon pathological research, we could hardly expect to find anything like a scientific theory of disease, when all conclusions in regard to its nature must have been reached through speculative philosophy having no premises worth considering. The old humoral pathology, founded upon the belief that the body was made of humors and solids, and that various changes in their proportions constituted disease, was about as satisfactory as the modern teachings of Christian Science, namely, a mere play upon words. Notwithstanding the unsatisfactory state of medical science at this early date, we are still prepared to declare that medicine was abreast of the times. Francis Bacon, who *might* be considered at least a fair example of average intelligence, gravely considers as to whether he is altogether prepared to endorse the weapon ointment. This belief in the efficacy of the so-called weapon ointment was one which prevailed so widely that we find frequent references to it in literature. Dryden refers to it in his review of the "Tempest," and Scott in his "Lay of the Last Minstrel." The cure consisted in the application of an ointment to the weapon which caused the wound, while the wound itself, after washing and bandaging, was let alone. The astonishing success of this treatment was attributed very much in the same way to the ointment applied to the weapon, as some surgeons to-day attribute the success of aseptic surgery to the number of noxious and vile smelling drugs, which, after cleansing the wound, they may see fit to use in the bandages. In neither instances has the thought, that perhaps the success of the treatment was due to cleanliness and non-interference, seemed to dawn upon the minds of the enthusiastic advocates of either method.

Another of the humbugs which for a time served to delude prince, poet, and peasant, was the so-called sympathetic powder, introduced by Sir Renelin Digby, cotemporary with King James I. and his son Charles. Sir Renelin obtained this powder at the price of a great service from a friar in Florence, who, in his turn, had brought it from the East. It will be invariably noticed that humbugs are imported—far-fetched and dearly bought. This powder had the wonderful power of curing a wound when applied to the garments of the person injured. When you come to think of it, this way of using the powder was a most ingenious idea. When any one was too severely injured to admit of delay, a scrap of clothing could be carried to the possessor of the powder, and the cure be in progress and the fee collected at once. In a day when travelling was poor, and remittances by mail were unknown, the advantages of this method of treatment were too obvious to require argument. King James and Charles I. both