

# THE MEDICAL CHRONICLE.

VOL III.]

SEPTEMBER, 1855.

[No. 1

## ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

ART. X.—*Malaria*. By DR. HENRY, Inspector General of Hospitals H. P.

The proper elucidation of this comprehensive subject, would require ten times the space of an article in a magazine, and also ten times the abilities of the writer of this. He presumes not thus far, and only ventures a few remarks on what may be called *vegetable malaria*;\* founded chiefly on his own experience.

There are some well known unhealthy spots in Europe, possessing great unchangeableness of character, and retaining still the same insalubrious reputation that was attached to them many hundred years ago. In spite of repeated but futile attempts at draining, under the Republic, the Cæsars, and the Papal Government, the Pontine Marshes and the whole Maremma are at present, as unfavorable to human life, as they were before the Christian Era. Indeed, their deadly area seems to have extended during the present century, and to have invaded Rome itself, on one bank of the Tiber. It is said, too, that several of the elevated towns in the neighbourhood, to which in former times, the shepherds and peasants repaired at night, to pass the dangerous hours of sleep, no longer afford them protection. The river shores of the Danube, and the adjacent country, as we know by the painful military experience of the last year, are as unhealthy now as when Ovid was banished to Thrace. The South of Spain, especially the banks of the southern rivers, are infested by fevers; and Spanish writers assert that this has been the case from time immemorial. Yet, it may be reasonably doubted; for we can

---

\* For a long time, it was believed that the decomposition of vegetable substances, combined with heat and moisture, gave rise to fevers of the Remittent and Intermittent type; but this has been much doubted since the publication of a striking paper by Dr. Ferguson, Army Physician, *Marsh Poisons*, in the *Edinburgh Philosophical Transactions*. The writer was well acquainted with Dr. Ferguson, in the Peninsula in 1812 and 13, and served as his assistant. Notwithstanding, that clever and amiable, but somewhat crotchety gentleman's specious arguments in this matter, the writer adheres to the old faith.