

fatal errors are often committed, errors which may readily be avoided by seeking the most significant symptoms by the most direct modes of investigation, without yielding to personal repugnances on the opposition of mistaken or simulated modesty.

But this quick method has its perils, and we should always seek to corroborate and confirm its results.

A girl of 18 years, of feeble habit, says that her catamenia have been absent for several months; the hand detects a circumscribed globular tumor in the hypogastrium. We say that the girl is encephalic. An hour afterwards, a copious discharge of urine, and the pregnancy has vanished! Chlorosis alone remains. This is one of the humiliating errors that may be incurred in following the ready method, without looking for confirmatory evidence of the diagnosis. The touch would have betrayed the distended bladder.

Notwithstanding these restrictions, cautions, and illustrations, the pedants will be sure to criticise these essays towards simplification. I already hear the accusations of prestidigitation, of a desire to dazzle our public, etc. I reply that there are two ways of throwing dust in the eyes of the vulgar. One consists in being always ready with an infallible diagnosis. Our readers must judge whether my plan appertains to this juggling system. The other way is to pump a poor patient completely dry, to dissect him to his ultimate fibre, *apropos* of a whitlow or a sore throat, in order to assume the airs of scrupulous, profound, exact science. Chemistry and the microscope have lent a new impulse to this industrial method, which experience and common sense will some time reduce to its true value. The ignorance of ordinary practitioners is incompatible with all this paraphernalia; as the majority of physicians will only employ simple weapons, we should try at least to furnish them with those that are well tempered.

I fear that I shall share in the abuse showered on those poor manuals, which have at least the merit of teaching something to those who would otherwise know nothing. I shall be accused of wishing to "lower the standard of acquirement," the time-honored phrase, and of compromising the dignity of our art in placing it within reach of the indolent, the stupid, and even the outsiders, etc. I shall care little for such reproaches. My attempt at simplification of diagnosis is the result of extended practical observation, of investigations carefully and laboriously matured, combined, and arranged, so as to offer to practitioners the quintessence of the mass of materials heaped up in verbose and voluminous treatises, which embarrass the student and practitioner almost as much as they help him. I seek to substitute positive medicine for exact medicine.