

Medical Criticism.

" FIRST ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
PROVINCIAL BOARD OF HEALTH
OF ONTARIO.

BEING FOR THE YEAR 1882.

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No. 1

With that *disinterestedness* which has led the Medical Profession to keep a representative garrison on duty in the Legislative Assembly, for the sole purpose of watching over the health interests of the public, and to employ a detective office, for the purpose of prosecuting all Quacks except those who are perceptible in their mirrors—With the like *self-sacrificing disinterestedness*, the representatives of this noble (?) profession induced the Government to introduce a Bill in the session of 1871-72, with a view to establish a Provincial Board of Health for Ontario, a Board which is to maintain intimate relations with all Local Boards which, under the Act, (36 Vic. cap. 48) are already in existence, or may yet be organized. This august Board has now issued its first Report, the "various diverse subjects" of which it has arranged under eight heads, in order that the contents may "appear more interesting and more readily attainable than if they were loosely arranged in chronological order throughout." We hope no one will suggest that *the heads of the Board* appear (by their diction) to have been "loosely arranged"; we think it probable that ourselves may find some occupation for the said heads; we observe that they commence their report by arguing "the necessity for" their existence, and they quote one Dr. Henry I. Bowditch, who is said to have delivered *the centennial discourse* (a discourse presumably delivered every hundred years) on Public Hygiene, before the International Medical Congress of 1876. This gentleman relieved himself of the following oracular utterance, on the occasion. "Theoretically Public Hygiene is the most important matter any community can discuss, for upon it, in its perfection, depend all the powers, moral, intellectual, and physical, of a state." The "loosely arranged" heads proceed to plaster the powers who have constituted the Board, in the following style.—"Recognizing a growing belief on the part of the people in the axiomatic truth of this (the foregoing) statement, carefully appreciating the opinions of the general public, and being actuated by an earnest and solicitous concern for the welfare of the people over whom it has been called to rule (here it is obvious that the "loosely arranged" forget their "D. V."), the Government last session introduced a Bill, and the public representatives in the Legislature (unhappy dupes) agreed to its clauses, establishing a "Provincial Board of Health for Ontario, &c." The subject of "Immigrant Inspection" is that which the Board puts in the forefront of its Report, as one which is to furnish matter for "permanent discussion" between the Dominion Government, the Provincial Government, that of the United States, and the "loosely arranged" heads already mentioned. It is well the several Governments have awoke to the necessity for preventing emigrants being sent to this country in the filthy condition they have been accustomed to present for we have a lively recollection of remonstrating with the Hon A. McKellar on that subject, nearly ten years ago, and being informed (after having made some dozen calls at his office) that—"we left the subject to the Dominion Government, and to the Imperial Government." There is reason to hope therefore (according to the testimony of

this newly appointed Board) that the Government has concluded that it is time certain measures were adopted in relation to "Immigrant Inspection." The Committee of public safety (which already includes three Physicians) is of opinion that it is also time to entertain the question of *Migrant Inspection*; a question which involves the consideration whether the treatment the sick receive at the hands of many who profess to heal, be or be not such as results in their *migrating to their grave*: at a rate which admits of reduction. It is a note worthy fact that these witnesses testify of the mselves that they are "high in the scale of scientific ability," and in the same breath they state that the rate of mortality of this Province exceeds that of the city of Geneva, by three per thousand; one would not expect such a Board to inform us that the deaths in Ontario have increased from 39,000 in 1878, to 44,000, in 1880. For the present, we must decline being led by any such will-o'-the-wisp as that of the consideration of "undrained lands, and lands drowned by dams and rivers," which are alleged to "create widespread epidemics of malaria, and other diseases too extensive for local municipal action"—we prefer not to be led off scent by "the dams," and contemplate, on the contrary, devoting all possible attention to *the sires* of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario—to that body which habitually grants *indulgences* styled licenses to gentlemen who are as remote from themselves, and from each other (in their principles and practice of medicine) as the East is from the West. To our thinking it does not require an exceptional amount of logic to conclude that if the Allopaths whose number preponderates (as do the numbers of Roman Catholics in Christendom) in the Medical Profession—if the Allopaths be right, the Homœopaths &c., are wrong; they who are right therefore license those who are wrong to practise at the cost of the health and life of the community; the same argument will of course apply equally to the Hydropaths, Eclectics, Medical Botanists, Electricians, Magnetists, &c.; we apprehend that while the majority of the medical-profession is manœuvring by means of its Legislative garrison, its detectives, and its Boards of Health; while it is seeking to concentrate our attention on intangible "malaria," it behoves the community to at least divide their attention between *the undrained lands* and those who too often drain their pockets, their health, and their lives.

As the foregoing article is intended to be the first of a series, it is repeated from MEDICAL CRITICISM.

SUGGESTION.

Since human credulity is ever on the watch for new objects to which to attach itself, and as "there is nothing new under the sun," we think the Faculty will do well to obtain a hint or two from Father Culpeper; this well known herbalist was wont to connect his instruction with astrology, and as if to forecast the delusions of later days, he says of the first herb in his alphabetical list—"It is under *the planet Mercury*, and a notable herb of his also, if it be rightly gathered under his influence. It is excellently good to remove witchcraft both in men and beasts, as also all sudden diseases whatsoever." One member of the medical profession in this city appears to be nearly on the track of Culpeper, as he tells his patients that neuralgia is traceable to (the planet) *Malaria*, which escapes from the soil in the spring, and during the present year has been unusually active, as *he escaped* before the spring set in, we remember another of these gentlemen tracing the malady of his patient, to the strawberries which were alleged to have been poisonous in that luckless season; they were probably gathered *under the influence of Mercury*. The second herb which appears in Culpeper's list, is, we learn "under