

The public are not all doctors, but they are not altogether blind, stupid, or ignorant; when therefore a medical man in a public capacity declines to discuss questions raised by the laity, he perhaps reckons too securely on professional immunity. In this case the unenviable reputation of the institution concerned should, I think, (unless there is consciousness of error), prompt frank explanation, which might possibly go far to maintain public confidence.

Science—especially in the hands of the lower orders of her exponents—sometimes performs some curious antics, and is quite vulnerable to the weapons of common sense.

The ordinary run of theologian believes that his deadliest foe is Science, as usual, he is behindhand. His far more dangerous adversary is Common Sense. It is true that Science, Common Sense owes it that her feet have been set upon a rock, but Science has grown a little arrogant and presumptuous, while she has sufficiently sharpened the wits of her audience to endow them with the faculty of legitimate criticism. Medical Science is no exception. She is daily submitting to unspeakable tortures, countless innocent and helpless creatures, with but poor result beyond the callousness of heart which seems not altogether indiscernible in the Medical evidence under consideration. It may be that the reports convey incorrect impressions, but if so there is all the more reason for explanation. Let us glance at the evidence as reported.

The fatal blow was given about 5.30 on a Tuesday evening. The wound was temporarily dressed, and the patient sent to the Hospital on Wednesday morning. No exact time is given, but Dr. McKay was on the point of performing an operation when the patient was brought to his notice. This operation was finished, and Dr. McKay and Dr. Fitch went to examine McQueeney at 1.30. Elsewhere the operation is stated to have taken two hours and a half. That Dr. McKay had an operation to perform at the moment McQueeney was brought in could not be helped, and Dr. McKay could not perform two operations at once.

But Dr. McKay "intended to hold a consultation with the whole of the staff, but they all left except Dr. Fitch," before Dr. McKay had finished.

McQueeney's "life was in danger every minute, the bone was pressing on the brain," yet all the staff leave, knowing, it may be presumed, that a man in that state had been brought in, and that Dr. McKay had an operation on hand which would take him two hours and a half to perform, the patient having then been about 18 hours with the bone pressing on the brain.

Even then the doctors "decided to postpone the operation till the next day," although in the interim Dr. McKay "placed him under treatment for inflammation of the brain."

Common Sense, without much fear of contradiction, presumes that where inflammation is the result of the presence and pressure of a foreign or displaced substance, the first step necessary to relieve it is the removal of the pressure. The evidence, as reported, is most extraordinary, unsatisfactory, incoherent and inconsistent, for instance—"In my opinion it was not necessary when I found there was a depression to perform an operation. Every hour the bone was on the brain was ending his life!"

The following, evidently intended to be apologetic as well as explanatory, implies, if anything, condemnation. "The opinions of eminent physicians differ." * * * "some say perform operation immediately, others say don't operate till symptoms show."

It would be curious to know what symptoms the operating surgeon was waiting for, beyond the numerous very marked ones, he himself describes in considerable detail.

The impression left on the mind is that postponement is the course acceptable to vacillation and indecision, and that a clear-headed practitioner would have operated at once. The evidence could be picked to pieces and turned inside out and upside down in fifty ways, if space permitted. The great fact remains that the man remained from 5 p. m. on Tuesday to 9.30 a. m. on Thursday with inflammation of the brain from pressure which, it would seem, might and should have been removed at the very least 24 hours earlier.

It is all very well to say that "even if he had been operated on at once he could not have recovered," but the proof for this assertion is wanting.

FRANC-TREUR.

[FOR THE CRITIC.]

A TEMPEST IN THE ACADEMY OF MUSIC.

It amused me very much to see the way in which Miln and his troupe were lionized in Halifax. The better class of American Journals are far from being enthusiastic over them; yet our city dailies can scarcely find in their hackneyed vocabularies terms of admiration sufficiently strong to express—their desire to do the company a good turn. And the theatre-goers are equally indiscriminating. "He's the greatest tragedian living!" "He's wonderful!" "He's sublime!" are expressions one hears from every quarter. How many of your readers will be prepared to listen to so unorthodox an opinion as mine, when I say that Miln is no tragedian in any sense of the term? Yet, after having seen a considerable number of actors, both here and elsewhere, and after having made a special study of the Shaksperian drama, I have no hesitation in saying that I have never heard Shakspeare so outraged as I did on Saturday evening last. I was prepared to see Duncan murdered; but Shakspeare was the real victim. If Mr. Miln or his admirers think that an ideal or a real character, supposed to be gifted with common sense in addition to his more striking qualities, could indulge in such ranting, such inhuman howls and shrieks, such guttural bellowing as distinguished the representation of Macbeth, they differ widely from the opinions of truly great actors. Had the calm, philosophic, though imaginative, sage and poet who wrote this dramatic master-piece been sitting

on a chair in the Academy of Music, listening to the "sounding brass" and having his ears split by the maniacal shrieks which the actors affected, he would have groined in spirit as he cried, "Oh, that my words should be used to make fools and idiots of my characters." Had Garrick, Macready, the Keanes or the Kembles heard the extravagances of this troupe, they would have left in disgust, or taken mental notes to laugh over with their friends at the club.

The applause of an audience is no criterion of the worth of a performance. Sometimes they applaud the poet's composition, or the sentiment expressed, without once considering how the actor has rendered the passage. This is strikingly illustrated in Macbeth, where the rhymed couplet at the end of a leading speech or at the close of a scene is always sure of rapturous applause from those whose ears are tickled by the "jingle at the end." Some again are so transported by the scenery, the costumes, the general theatrical trappings, that anything coming from the stage is considered acting.

Now, what fault have I to find with the performance of these actors? Just one—it was unnatural in the highest degree. There was not an actor in the troupe who could not have learned true elocution from any well-taught fourteen-year-old in our public schools! And this troupe is only typical of all second rate troupes. They lack the power of *realizing* a character. Their intellectual stature being too short to place them on a level with the great characters they attempt to personate, they mount a pair of stage stilts from which they never get down. They say "good-day" in the same pseudo-tragic tones with which they would utter a sentence of death. They seldom say or do anything as an acting, moving, rational human being would say or do it. Shakspeare's leading characters are sublime creations, but they are, after all, men and women; and those who cannot rise to a true realization of these characters in the various circumstances in which they are placed, had better leave the acting of Shakspeare to people of greater minds. Those who think it necessary, as Mr. Miln did, to howl and scream loud enough to wake the dead, while deliberating on the murder of a king who is asleep in the next room, have just one recommendation—they would make very poor murderers.

Good points there were in the representation of the piece; I can recall my satisfaction at the witch scene, the porter scene, the sleep-walking scene, and one or two other scenes; but the remainder of the piece inspired me with feelings which I had rather not recall. To avoid doing so let me close.

OSERVER.

COMMERCIAL.

FISH.—Since our last issue, some lots of Bank Codfish have come to market and have been placed at about \$2.50 per cwt. We do not know of any pickled fish arriving from the coast but one parcel of Bay Mackerel, which we learn have been placed at \$9, \$1 & \$3.25 per bbl. for No. 1, No. 2 large, and No. 2, and we think there is very little margin in those prices. We notice the advance that was paid on Bank Codfish some weeks ago is sustained, but late sales at the Porto Rico markets will not warrant any advance in prices here. It is hard to say whether the late advance paid on hard Shore Codfish will be got, as late advices from the Jamaica markets up to Feb. 11, report sales at 16s for tierces and boxes, 24s for Mackerel, 16s for Round Shore Herring.

Mackerel is in heavy supply and lacks demand. Herring are not in very large supply, but there is no enquiry for the article. Boxes not in demand yet, stocks are not large. All country buyers have been supplied. There are now six vessels en route for Jamaica, independent of the steamer *Beta*, so that the prospects for a good market does not look bright. The late advance in the Cuba markets has been kept up, but it is fully expected that when the late shipments begin to arrive, that a decline will take place. The Windward markets are very little, if any better, than any other. Large shipments have recently been made from Newfoundland to the Windward West India markets.

The fish market in this city, we think, was never in such a position as at present. The stocks of mackerel are not very large, but it is impossible to make any sales. There never was a time at this season of the year before this when there were not some sales of mackerel being made for the United States markets, but this season even the low price does not seem to move them. There does not seem to be the slightest enquiry for No. 3 large mackerel from the United States markets, though there are no stocks held there. Some really good fat large mackerel are enquired for at fair prices, but very few of this kind of fish is to be had. The frozen herring and fresh codfish arriving at the United States markets daily, are completely revolutionizing the fish trade, and it looks very much as if there would in the future be no sales in these markets for any kind of poor salt fish, except for export.

Advices from the Boston fish markets for week ending Feb. 19, are as follows:—

During the past week trade has brightened up a little. Mackerel are in quite liberal receipt from both Foreign and Domestic ports. Some lots of old No. 3 mackerel, of 1884 inspection, have been shipped to this market during the past week from Portland, they sold at \$3.25 to \$3.50 per barrel. Sales of No. 2 mackerel, delivered here at \$5.50 per bbl., and sales of choice lots of Large 2's, and Extra 1's, at \$8 and \$20 per bbl. Codfish are moving off at \$3.25 for large Dry Bank, and \$2.25 to \$2.37 for medium. Pickled Bank Georges' codfish, are arriving daily in small lots, and are selling at \$3.50 for new, and \$2.50 for old. Below will be found the arrivals of mackerel at the port of Boston for the week ending Feb. 19, for the past four years:—

1880	1885	1884	1883
3751 Bbls.	3441 Bbls.	6957 Bbls.	7762 Bbls.