

toothed forceps, and is ready for treatment. If the tumor is large, it should be tied with a strong silk ligature, doubled and passed through the centre of the base, tying each segment separately. The hemorrhoid is then cut off a short distance from the ligature; provided, however, the tumor is not too large, a strong ligature tied tightly around the base answers every purpose. Great care should be taken to not remove too much of the hemorrhoid with the knife, for fear of cutting the ligature or causing it to slip. A suppository of opium, belladonna, and coca-butter—two grains each of pulv. opii. and ext. belladonnæ, and four of the butter of coca—is then introduced, and the patient put to bed and kept quiet for several days. The bowels should be opened by mild laxatives within four or five days.

Hemorrhoidal tumors vary so much in their appearance and character that they can not all be successfully treated alike. One pile can best be treated by the hypodermic injection, and another by the ligature in the same individual. In timid persons who have a dread of surgical operations, we would advise the slow, patient, and less offensive treatment with the hypodermic solution. When persevered in, it will cure most of the worst forms of piles with little pain to speak of, and no danger or inconvenience to the patient, provided the weaker solution is used.

EMPIRICISM IN MEDICINE.

Many a thoughtful physician probably, in intervals of leisure, when his mind is withdrawn for a time from the usual routine of his practice, is accustomed to reflect upon the progress and present state of the profession which he has adopted. If he is a reader and keeps abreast of the times; above all if he is himself an original investigator, and takes delight in discovering for himself the secrets of nature, the more often probably, will he allow his mind to dwell upon the more scientific or theoretical part of medicine.

As a rational man, as one to whom the public looks, not only as being a person devoting his life to the mitigation of suffering, but also as a person devoting his life to the discovery of the laws of suffering, this occasional review of the progress, and consideration of the present standing, of the science and art of medicine is a duty. If every

medical practitioner in the world thought of nought else but the *practice* of his profession, its *science* would lamentably decline. Nevertheless there are evidences, we think, that even in these days there is exhibited far too much apathy upon this subject. True, medical works and magazines abound, and discoveries and inventions do much more abound; but this does by no means necessarily imply, that a real knowledge of the workings of nature in health and disease is making true progress. And for this reason: These discoveries and inventions may be, and often are, purely empirical. For example, by mere accident—by what might have eventuated in a grave error—it is found that the injection of ergot is as efficacious as that of iodine in hydrocele. What have we learned? Merely that in the next case of hydrocele which we have to treat, it will be immaterial whether we inject ergot or iodine.

This is a typical, though extreme, example of the way in which many advances have been made in medicine. They are truly empirical. Certainly, wonderful discoveries, thanks to the microscope, have been made, and legitimately made, by other and more logical methods. Still it remains true that these have not been as numerous as our hopes might have suggested. Where then lies the remedy? This is no easy question to answer. A few suggestive hints, however, may be hazarded.

Every variety of natural law, operating in health or disease, may be reduced to one of two classes: Chemical, or Physical. The term "vital processes," we know, is used; but what "vital" here truly means, we hesitate not to assert, no one can define. The only fields of investigation open to us are chemical and physical fields. If we are right in this, then the only rightful conclusion to be drawn is that, if we desire to see the science of medicine advance by the only path in which it can properly advance, we must devote our energies very much more in the future than we have done in the past to attaining a more accurate knowledge of nature in her chemical and physical aspects. That is to say, instead of resting satisfied with the fact that quinia is a specific for intermittent fever, that mercury is a standby in syphilis, that aconite lowers the temperature, and so forth, let us not remain satisfied with any such facts, learned purely empirically, but let us betake ourselves to our laboratories, and with retort and microscope ask,