

## CAUSES OF DISEASE.

BY PROFESSOR SMITH.

The following extracts from Professor Alban G. Smith's admirable lecture, before the "College of Physicians and Surgeons of the State of New-York," will be read with much interest.

**VEGETABLE DIET.**—"It has been maintained by some men, distinguished for learning and research, that vegetable diet is most conducive to health. It seems singular that such men should advocate a doctrine of this kind in these enlightened—these Christian days. That such principles should have been taught in the olden times by a Braminical priest, or a Pythagoras, is not so wonderful, considering that the first belonged to a superstitious priesthood, whose doctrines were founded in error; and that the latter, although wise in the wisdom of his day, was evidently a wild theorist, who thought, by perverting the laws of nature, he might change man from a bloodthirsty animal to a lover of peace. Hence he taught,

"That man should ever be the friend of man;  
Should view with tenderness all living forms—  
His brother emmets and his sister worms."

"That such a doctrine should gain proselytes at the present time, when experience is the basis on which philosophers build systems of Hygiene is strange indeed. Does not the experience of every physician prove that nothing would deteriorate the human constitution more than an exclusive adherence to vegetable diet? What physician is there that does not know the necessity of rich animal food for the feeble and cachectic patient? Examine our medical journals, and see the experience of those attached to orphan asylums, and institutions of charity. Do they not tell you that the prevalence of scrofulous diseases could only be checked by the introduction of a larger allowance of animal food and nourishing drinks? I have myself known numerous instances of large families of badly-fed negroes swept off by a prevailing epidemic, while their neighbours, who were well supplied with meat, would almost entirely escape; and it is well known to many intelligent planters in the south, that the best method of preventing that horrible malady, *Cachexia Africana*, is to feed the negroes with nutritious food. I have sent several consumptive patients to the Rocky Mountains, where they were compelled to live entirely on animal food, and they have returned well, notwithstanding the low temperature of the climate. Take from the Laplander or the Esquimaux his oil and his blubber, and feed him upon roots, and he is no longer able to endure the chilling blast of his native clime."

**FRESH AIR, EXERCISE AND LIGHT.**—"The want of fresh air, exercise, and light, are active agents in the production of scrofulous diathesis.

"This we have powerfully illustrated in the manufacturing districts of Europe. One of the most afflicting instances I have known of the injurious effects of bad air, is to be found in the account given of the silk-manufactories of the sultan, at Constantinople. These factories are very damp, under ground, where the light of the sun is excluded. The labour is mostly performed by the children; and it is stated that few arrive at the age of manhood, and nearly all of them become afflicted with some loathsome scrofulous affection.

"I could bring innumerable facts in illustration of this point, but every practitioner knows the difficulty of treating disease in the crowded, low, and filthy parts of the city.

"Examine our bills of mortality, and see how many deaths there are among children, whose diseases arise from a close, unhealthy atmosphere. Even those of us who inhabit comfortable and airy apartments in open and elevated parts of the city, can sensibly feel the invigorating influence of a ride to Harlem, or an excursion to Hoboken or Staten Island.

"How can you expect to enjoy a cheerful mind, and a body free from pain, when breathing air that has been robbed of its vitalizing properties by a thousand lungs! It cannot give health and vigour to a frame that has to perform so many complicated offices.

"A sedentary life is a promoter of this diathesis, the animal economy having been arranged by its Creator for a life of activity.

"Constant excitement lessens nutrition, and impairs the powers of the digestive functions. Hence females and literary persons, often induce debility and sickness, from too close application to their pursuits."

**USE OF SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS.**—"Another source of this vitiation is the intemperate use of spirituous liquors; and although the lion-like eloquence of a Beecher has thundered its horrid consequences into the ears of our nation, in a language as loud and convincing as the roaring cannon; and many others of our luminaries and philanthropists have drawn pictures of its destructive and poisonous influence, that makes the heart bleed with compassion and sympathy; portraying in glowing colours the wretchedness which invariably follows the footsteps of this underminer of our nation's prosperity—this vitiator of human thought—yet I cannot forbear to call to your recollection some of those thousands of miserable scrofulous children, who people our orphan-asylums and poor-houses, and exhibit in our streets spectacles of beggary and decrepitude, from which we start with horror. I must needs

point you to the widowed mother, who added to her want and poverty, is obliged to toil day and night to obtain a scanty maintenance for a family of cachectic children, the progeny of a drunken father, or to a whole race of insane wretches, who are doomed to drag out a miserable existence, covered with the chains and manacles of a mad-house—the result of a father's love of liquor! If I could lead you through the various scenes of ghastly misery, suffering and deformity, that I have witnessed in my course of hospital practice, you would read a lesson of human depravity, from which you would instinctively recoil, and your blood would run cold at the sad effects of the intoxicating cup.

"If I were called upon to say what was the most fruitful source of sickness and pain in the world, I should answer, the intemperate indulgence in spirituous liquors!"

**MAHOMMEDAN RELIGION.**—"It is said that the souls of martyrs reside, until the judgment, in the crops of green birds, which eat of the fruits of Paradise. Women are not to be excluded from Paradise, according to the Mohammedan faith; though it has been asserted, by many Christians, that the Moos'ims believe women to have no souls. In several places in the Ckoor-a'n, Paradise is promised to all true believers, whether males or females. It is the doctrine of the Ckoor-a'n, that no person will be admitted into Paradise by his own merits; but that admission will be granted to the believers merely by the mercy of God; yet that the felicity of each person will be proportioned to his merits. The very meanest in Paradise is promised 'eighty thousand servants' (beautiful youths, called wele'e'de, or wild'a'n), 'seventy-two wives of the girls of Paradise' (hho'o'ree yehs, or hho'o'r-el-'oyoo'n), 'besides the wives he had in this world,' if he desire to have the latter (and the good will doubtless desire the good), and a tent erected for him of pearls, jacinths, and emeralds, of a very large extent; 'and will be waited on by three hundred attendants while he eats, and served in dishes of gold, whereof three hundred shall be set before him at once, each containing a different kind of food, the last morsel of which will be as grateful as the first;' wine also, though forbidden in this life, will yet be freely allowed to be drunk in the next, and without danger, since the wine of Paradise will not inebriate. We are further told, that all superfluities from the bodies of the inhabitants of Paradise will be carried off by perspiration, which will diffuse an odour like that of musk; and that they will be clothed in the richest silks, chiefly of green. They are also promised perpetual youth, and children as many as they may desire. These pleasures, together with the songs of the angel Isra'fe'l, and many other gratifications of the senses, will charm even the meanest inhabitant of Paradise. But all these enjoyments will be lightly esteemed by those more blessed persons who are to be admitted to the highest of all honours—that spiritual pleasure of beholding, morning and evening, the face of God. The Moos'lim must also believe in the examination of the dead in the sepulchre, by two angels, called Moon'kir and Nekee'r, of terrible aspect, who will cause the body (to which the soul shall, for the time, be re-united) to sit upright in the grave, and will question the deceased respecting his faith. The wicked they will severely torture; but the good they will not hurt. Lastly, he should believe in God's absolute decree of every event, both good and evil. This doctrine has given rise to as much controversy among the Moos'ims as among Christians; but the former, generally, believe in predestination as, in some respects, conditional."

*Lanc's Egypt.*

**LATIMER AND HENRY VIII.**—"In the midst of the passions and cruelty of that bloodstained tyrant, the upright prelate preached a sermon in his presence at the Chapel Royal, condemning, in the strongest terms, the very crimes to which every one knew the monarch was addicted—peculiarly addicted. Enraged beyond measure at the rebuke thus openly administered to his 'pleasant vices,' Henry sent for Latimer, and threatened him with instant death if he did not on the next occasion retract all his censures as openly as he had made them. The proof got wind, and on the next Sunday, the Royal Chapel was crowded with the courtiers, eager to hear the terms in which the inflexible prelate was to recant his censures on the voluptuous tyrant. But Latimer ascended the pulpit and after a long pause, fixing his eyes steadily on Henry, exclaimed in the quaint language of the time, to which its inherent dignity has communicated eloquence. 'Bethink thee, Hugh Latimer! that thou art in the presence of thy worldly sovereign, who hath power to terminate thy earthly life, and cast all thy worldly goods into the flames. But bethink thee, also, Hugh Latimer! that thou art in the presence of thy Heavenly Father, whose right hand is mighty to destroy us to save, and who can cast thy soul into hell fire;' and immediately began in terms even severer and more cutting than before, to castigate the favourite vices and crimes of his indignant sovereign. The issue of the tale was different from what the cruel character of the tyrant might have led us to expect.—Henry who, with all his atrocity, was not on some occasions destitute of generous sentiments, was penetrated by the heroic constancy of the venerable

prelate, and instead of loading him with chains, and sending him, as every one expected, to the scaffold, openly expressed his admiration of his courage, and took him more into favor than ever.

**THE LAWS OF HONOUR.**—A duel was some years since fought at Starbourg between two ladies, one French, and the other German, on a quarrel about a young miniature painter. The combatants met, pistol in hand, and each attended by a female second. The German was furious, and insisted on fighting muzzle to muzzle; but the Frenchwoman, regulating her conduct by the advice of her second, stood out for twenty-five paces. They fired together and missed. The German then insisted on their approaching, and firing until either fell. The seconds, however, now interposed, and declaring that the laws of honour were satisfied, took away the pistols, and the affair ended; but without any apology. The fair Frenchwoman, before leaving the ground, handsomely professed herself not actuated by any personal hostility; "she had thought it due to her honour to take a shot with the German, but now that the affair was at an end, the lady was welcome to the miniature-painter, whom she had forbidden her presence that very morning." The German was a baroness, and the Frenchwoman a lady of rank.—*Court Journal.*

**VOLTAIRE AND LAMOTTE.**—One day Voltaire, when a young man of about twenty four, read to La Motte, who had prodigious memory, a tragedy which he had written. La Motte listened with the greatest possible attention to the end. Your tragedy is excellent, said he, and I dare answer beforehand for its success. Only one thing vexes me; you have allowed yourself to borrow, as I can prove to you, from the second scene of the fourth act. Voltaire defended himself as well as he could against the charge. 'I say nothing,' answered La Motte, 'which I cannot support, and to prove it I shall recite this same scene which pleased me so much when I first read it that I got it by heart, and not a word of it has escaped me.' Accordingly he repeated the whole without hesitation, and with as much animation as if he had composed it himself. All present at the reading of the piece looked at each other and did not know what to think. The author was utterly confounded. After enjoying his embarrassment for a short time—"make yourself easy sir," said La Motte, "the scene is entirely your own, as much your own as all the rest, but it struck me as so beautiful and touching, that I could not resist the pleasure of committing it to memory."

**CHANGING SEATS.**—The following problem may be found in many of our elementary books of Arithmetic:—A club of eight men agreed to dine together as long as ever they could sit down to table differently arranged. How many dinners would be necessary to complete such an arrangement? Answer:—By the well known rule of permutation, it will be found that the whole party must live four hundred and ten years and one hundred and seventy days, and must eat three hundred and sixty-two thousand eight hundred and eighty-nine dinners. So rapidly does the sum roll up on this process, that if the party had consisted of one more person, they would have had four hundred and forty three thousand five hundred and twenty dinners to get through; and if ten persons were to enter into the compact, it would be necessary for them, in order to complete their task, to live long enough to devour three million six hundred and twenty-eight thousand eight hundred dinners.

**ARGUMENTS.**—The Thermopylae were defended by only three hundred men; but they were all Spartans; and in advocating our own cause, we ought to trust rather to the force than to the number of our arguments, and to care not how few they be, should those few be incontrovertible. When we hear one argument refuted, we are apt to suspect that the others are weak; and a cause that is well supported, may be compared to an arch that is well built—nothing can be taken away without endangering the whole.—*Lacon.*

Such is the force of well-regulated industry, that a steady and vigorous exertion of our faculties, directed to one end, will generally ensure success. Would you, for instance, be rich? Do you think that single point worth the sacrificing every thing else? You may then be rich. Thousands have become so from the lowest beginnings, by toil and patient diligence, and attention to the minutest article of expense and profit.—*Barbould.*

**IDEAS.**—Though a linguist should pride himself to have all the tongues that Babel cleft the world into, yet if he have not studied the solid things in them as well as the words and lexicons, he were nothing so much to be esteemed a learned man, as any yeoman or tradesman competently wise in his mother dialect only. Hence appear the many mistakes which have made learning generally so unpleasing and so unsuccessful; and we do amiss to spend seven or eight years merely in scraping together so much miserable Latin and Greek as might be learned otherwise easily and delightfully in one year.

**FIVE FACTS.**—A firm faith is the best divinity; and good life is the best philosophy; a clear conscience the best law; honesty the best policy; and temperance the best physic.