

AN INTERESTING OLD BOOK.

It is always instructive and frequently interesting to take a retrospect in medicine. An opportunity has been afforded me in this direction by falling in with a copy of "Wesleys Primitive Physic," bearing the date of 1747. This work seems to have enjoyed no little popularity, since it ran through three editions, at last appearing in 1760. The preface is somewhat lengthy, and surcharged with religious theories that will compare in their reasonableness with many of the startling prescriptions which the work contains. While no doubt exists that medical science was in a condition of extreme imperfection, there is evidence that the author has used no small amount of discretion in his selection of prescriptions, since after many of the prescriptions appears the word, "tried."

It is difficult to harmonize some of the writers sentiments with reference to original man "clothed in body as in soul with mortality and incurruption" with his conception and evolution as stated in his "Survey of The Wisdom of God" in which he states "The ape is the rough draft of man. Mankind have there gradations as well as other productions of our globe. There are a prodigious number of links between the most perfect man and the ape", but since this quotation bears the date of 1775 we are assured that this eminent theologian waxed in knowledge as well as in grace as the shadows began to lengthen.

With reference to the presence of suffering in the world, and the attitude of Nature towards the sufferer, the author says "Man rebelled against the Sovereign of Heaven and earth"—"The seeds of wickedness and pain are now lodged in our inmost substance. The heavens the earth and all things contained therein conspire to punish the rebels against their Creator. The sun, the moon shed unwholesome influences from above, the earth exhales poisonous damps from beneath, the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, the fishes of the sea are in a state of hostility, yea the food itself we eat daily saps the foundation of a life which cannot be sustained without it,"—a condition of depravity of the elements hardly consistent with their behavior in our day. In answer to the question can anything be done to soften the evils of life he says "Without question there may. One grand preventive of pain and sickness seems intimated by the Author of Nature in the very sentence that entails death upon us 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, etc.' The power of exercise both to preserve and restore health is greater than can well be conceived."

The reference to the beginnings of the healing art shows that the author had but little confidence in the "educated" physician of his day. After discussing the roll played by tradition in both religion and medi-