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## Original Articles

### MEDICAL FOLK LORE IN INDIA.\*

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In India the practice of medicine is in the hands of many classes. We have, in the first place, the European physicians and their numerous native pupils who practise what is there called "English medicine." But their practice is of comparatively recent introduction and has taken very little hold on the masses, the united mind of which is eminently conservative—what is good enough for a Hindoo's father is good enough for his son, is the rule there, not only in medicine, but in agriculture, dress and most other directions.

A much more numerous class is that of the Aryan physicians—men who, highly educated in the wisdom of the ancients, practise medicine much in the same way as did their predecessors of hundreds of years ago. They quote their authorities, Charaka, Sashrata, etc., as European physicians some centuries since would swear by Hippocrates. While quite ignorant of pathology and most of what we consider constitutes the science of medicine, they are most deeply versed in what we might term *physicians'* lore (as distinguished from the lore of the villagers), and especially in the department of dietetics, have brought their art to great empirical excellence.

Next we have the priests, bone setters, many charlatans of various kinds, and lastly, a vast horde of people who combine more or less of medical practice with their other occupations. It has been said that a man is either a fool or a physician at forty, and the remark might in India be applied to women, and every village has at least one wise woman who does a large amount of the practice which turns up. She is ignorant of all the wise writings of the ancient authors, most likely cannot even write her own name, but

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