

and frown upon the mention of progress; but the light of Science is pouring a brightness into the dark recesses of mystery, error and hypothesis, that exposes its vacuity and slender foundation.

We might give a chapter of the unsatisfactory progress of Medicine with the leading Physicians of the old school, and the following is but one version of the same expression that has fallen from the lips and pens of many of the most eminent Physicians of their time.

Sir Wm. Knighton; Physician to King George IV., in one of his private letters, published after his death, says: "It is somewhat strange that, though in many arts and sciences improvement has advanced in a step of regular progression from the first, in others it has kept no pace with time; and we look back to ancient excellence with wonder not unmixed with awe. Medicine seems to be one of those ill-fated arts, whose improvements bear no proportion to its antiquity. This is lamentably true, although Anatomy has been better illustrated, the *Materia Medica* enlarged, and Chemistry better understood."

Why is it? One of the chief causes why the art of Medicine has not kept pace in its progress with the other arts of life is, that every new step has been met with virulent opposition: it has been treated as an innovation, and denounced as empiricism or quackery.

Before the 16th century, the practice of restraining hemorrhage after surgical operations, by the ligature, or tying the artery, was neither practised nor understood. The only means in those days were, burning the bleeding wound with red hot iron, plunging it in boiling pitch, or applying potential caustic to the surface. Sometimes a little refinement of this barbarous custom was practised, and the amputations were performed with red hot knives, so as to divide the parts and arrest the hemorrhage at the same instant. This exquisitely humane practice was introduced by Hildanus, the patriarch of German Surgery, if surgery it might be called. An art, to some extent indeed, it was.

The ligature must have been hailed at once as a great boon. We would sup-

pose a means so simple, so perfectly adapted to accomplish its purpose, and the only means resorted to now, in amputation, would have been at once adopted; but quite otherwise. The profession looked upon it with contempt. Ambrose Pare, principal Surgeon to Francis I., who introduced it, was ridiculed for "hanging human life upon a thread," when boiling pitch and hot iron had served the purpose so long and so well.

When Antimony, (the value of which, at the present day, when properly administered, is undisputed,) was first introduced as a Medicine, by Paracelsus, it was met by an act of the French Parliament, at the instigation of the College of Physicians, making it penal to prescribe it.

Previous to the discovery of Vaccination, Inoculation was found to mitigate the severity of small pox, and was introduced into England by Lady Mary Montague, who had witnessed its success in Turkey. But how was it received? Lord Wharncliffe, the distinguished gentleman who wrote her Biography, says: "Lady Mary protested that, in the four or five years immediately succeeding her arrival at home, she seldom passed a day without repenting of her patriotic undertaking; and she vowed that she never would have attempted it, had she foreseen the vexation, the persecution, and even the obloquy it brought upon her. The clamors raised against the practice, and of course against her, were beyond belief. The Faculty all rose in arms to a man, foretelling failure, and the most disastrous consequences: the Clergy descanted from the pulpit, on the impiety of thus seeking to take events out of the hands of Providence; and the common people were taught to hoot at her as an unnatural mother, who had jeopardized the lives of her children."

Grave Medical Biography informs us, that the discovery was instantly hailed, and the practice adopted, by the principal members of the profession. But professions, like individuals, are sometimes possessed of a moral obliquity, and fortunate forgetfulness, that enables them to believe their own assertions.