

tion experienced, but simply from the quiescent state of the bowels. The usual practice is then to have recourse to aperient remedies of some kind, and hence the baneful habit of irritating and disturbing the finely organised intestines—forcing them to act when their temporary and prolonged repose may be essential to their future vigorous operations. The advantage of this repose, in connexion with the weakened or disordered functions of the bowels, is not at all understood by mankind, nor is it appreciated in any degree by the profession. The opinions of both on this matter—on the necessity of the regular action of these organs, in health, and in every stage of disease, are in extraordinary accordance. It almost invariably happens, whatever may have been the nature of the derangement, if conjoined with any degree of constipation, that the patient, when the medical practitioner is called in, informs him, as a circumstance altogether unobjectionable, *that he had previously taken care to act freely on the bowels*; but as the result proved with no decided benefit. Such indiscriminate conduct is fraught with evil. In numerous instances it precludes the possibility of recovery; and in others so exhausts the vital powers that what would otherwise have been an ordinary and easily curable disease, becomes a severe and aggravated affection, requiring for its successful treatment great skill and patience. The practitioner likewise, whatever be the character of the symptom, *goes at the bowels*. They are regarded, either as the cause of the ailment, or the channel through which it is to be relieved; and, with few well marked exceptions, the profession concentrate their attention on these organs, and imagine that they cannot do wrong in keeping them in active operation. If a patient dies after being bled, blistered, and well purged, the surgeon is spoken of as one who has done his duty—that in fact he treated the disease with becoming energy—and unfortunately his skill is measured by the severity of the means which he employs. It is lamentable that medical science or knowledge should be judged by such a scale.

There is frequently consummate wisdom manifested in doing little.

The interference of the practitioner has for its object either aiding nature in her efforts to throw off disease—seconding these efforts in their salutary direction; or attempting to arrest the progress of disordered action. To accomplish either end, it must be kept in mind that we have to depend on the vital organs, *and that it is by these and through these that our remedies influence the animal system*; and therefore it should be our study to economise them, as every undue expenditure of their resources proportionately limits the efficiency of our agency. There is less vital capital to co-operate with our endeavors, and without such active co-operation medical treatment is of little avail.

We have stated that persons who live generously, or who are prone to gratify their appetite, in reference rather to amount than quality or variety, are seldom troubled with constipation. It likewise only occasionally occurs in those who are corpulent, or those who border on this condition. There are two causes which account for this. In the first place such individuals are not often found among the abstemious of society. They may be moderate in stimulating liquids, but as a rule they indulge largely in ingesta of some kind; and further, either from the evenness of their temper or the sluggishness of their disposition, their slumbers are easy, sound, and prolonged. Nature has an excellent opportunity of appropriating, whether to advantage or not, is not the question, the materials furnished to her. She adds steadily to the existing bulk, until at length corpulency displays itself in its imposing rotundity. This is generally accompanied with a tendency to a laxity or frequent action of the bowels. The accumulation of adipose matter or fat, is evidence of the want of vigorous constitutional tone or vital energy. It mostly characterises the phlegmatic temperament, which does not imply bodily activity or powers of great endurance. Severe medical treatment quickly prostrates the strength, and recovery, after the removal of dis-