

Practical Medicine advances by the discovery of new facts, and by the application of such facts to the treatment of disease. During the present century its advance has been quite as great as that of surgery.

The means of diagnosis at the command of the modern practitioners—his increased knowledge of the nature of disease,—and the improvements in chemistry and materia medica, enable him to apply his remedies with greater judgment, and to combat disease with more confidence of success than did his forefathers.

It would be hard to find a medical man in the present day recommending "*Lizards*" for the cure of cancer and venereal disease, as did Dr. Lettsom—a practitioner of standing in London—who read a paper to the medical society of that city in 1783 recommending them. Well may the following lines be attributed to him. He is made to say :

When patients come to I,
I physics, bleeds and sweats 'em,
And if they choose to die,
What's that to I, I lets 'em.

I. LETTSOM.

Let us glance at the treatment of disease by *bleeding*. It is not many years since the lancet was in the hands of every practitioner, in daily, and I might say almost hourly use, whereas now it is one of the rarest operations; and instead of the loss of blood, we have the exhibition of stimulants;—and in place of almost starvation, we have the abundant use of nutriment. Now the question may be asked, what is the cause of this great change? It has certainly brought upon our predecessors,—by some,—the charge that they were ignorant and blind followers of error. But the reflecting man cannot bring his mind to believe that the fathers of British medicine were always bad observers and mistaken practitioners, consequently he is forced to look for the cause, in the "*change of type of disease*." There are many strong arguments in favour of this doctrine,—arguments difficult to controvert, and when such men as Allison, Christison, Stokes, Graves, and Watson, give their strong adhesion to such belief, we may readily pause before denying it.

Many of us can call to mind the time when cold water was forbidden to a person with fever, and as for milk, he who gave it would have been accused of "feeding the fever" and thereby endangering the life of his patient. I need not say to you that such notions exist no longer, both being freely used.

In proof of the progress in practical medicine I may refer to improvements in relation to particular diseases. Consumption,—for example—a disease in which the physician's duty consisted in watching the slow gradations of decay,—making a prognosis of two years' duration,—