

remedies ; he appears to have directed his attention chiefly to those medicines, the therapeutical actions of which have been well ascertained and generally admitted.

We think Dr. Beck fully justified in pursuing this course. A lecturer on *Materia Medica* should not be too fond of novelty : his time can be much more profitably employed in teaching the preparations and uses of those medicines which have received the sanction of experience. Let us not, however, be misunderstood as deprecating the use of new remedies ; we only wish to express our opinion that a lecturer on *Materia Medica* should not be too hasty in introducing new and comparatively untried remedies into his lectures, but should rather wait until their merits have been thoroughly tested by competent authorities.

The following appropriate remarks upon the adulteration of drugs are extracted from the Author's Introduction.

“ Under the head of *physical properties* I shall call your attention particularly to such circumstances as may assist you in ascertaining the purity of the article as used in medicine. This is a subject, gentlemen, of great importance, and one not sufficiently attended to. To those who know to what an extent the adulteration of medicines is carried, and how often, from this cause, the expectations of the physician are frustrated, it will scarcely be necessary to say anything to show the importance of such knowledge as shall enable the practitioner to be certain that he is really giving the medicine which he has ordered.”

We confess it is a matter of surprise to us that any physician should be found entertaining a contrary opinion. Yet it has been said, even by eminent men, as, for instance, Dr. Graves, that this knowledge is unnecessary ; that if you go to a respectable druggist and pay fair prices, you will be furnished with the best drugs and chemicals of the kind. This may be perfectly true, so long as there are some physicians who are competent judges of their qualities, and who act as a check upon druggists who may be inclined to fraudulent practices. But would it be true, if there were no members of our profession with sufficient knowledge of the subject to enable them to detect these frauds ? Would not the adulterating, even now somewhat too extensively practised, increase in the same ratio as our want of knowledge ? If our memory does not deceive us, Dr. Thomson, some years since, stated before a committee of the House of Commons, that one of the chief causes of the extensive adulteration of drugs, was the ignorance of the majority of the profession on the subject. We would refer our readers to the results of the *Lancet's* analytical commission, where they will find that some of the *most respectable* dealers in groceries &c., are amongst those who impose most largely upon the ignorance of their customers, and that high prices are no guarantee of