

This is not peculiar to any one century, but each, as it succeeds the other, looks back over the preceding centuries and wonders that it was at all possible to fall into so many gross systems and theories. When we review the medical history of the present century we find, with all our boasted enlightenment, that we are no more free from error than the earlier centuries, and indeed even surpass them in the monstrosity of many of their medical doctrines. Yet we flatter ourselves that the hypotheses of the time are as so many truths, while we have accustomed ourselves to condemn only the theories of the past.

The systems and theories of the present day, as well as the methods of investigation, will pass away like the races from which they spring, and what we now regard as facts and apparently beyond dispute may readily be disregarded by the historians of the future, as has been done with so many similar views in the past. I know that I tread on dangerous ground when I attempt to call in question any of the so-called facts of science as set forth in the present day, but I hope to be able to show before the conclusion of this paper that in the early part of this century we had quite a number of enthusiastic workers in all parts of the world who were as firmly convinced that they were on the right track in their search for truth as are the scientists of the present time. Yet when we view the work done in the early part of the century with the light now at our disposal how readily do we conclude that it was only the dawn before the breaking of the bright and clear day of the foundation sciences of 1894. History will repeat itself, and I have very little doubt that many of the young men now present will live to see the day when many of our highly cherished theories of disease will be changed for something else. The systems in modern times are becoming more ephemeral. Indeed many of our own day scarcely last more than a couple of decennia, and are outstripped only by the revolutions in therapeutic methods.

The reason of this is obvious. The more cultured and better educated the community become the more likelihood there is of producing a more general spirit of inquiry, and consequently a greater diversity of views in the science and art of medicine as well as rapid changes in recognized systems and theories. This is not simply confined to medicine, but extends to all the sciences, as well as to theology. In the early history of medicine the systems were longer lived, this was no doubt due to the fact that a few leading minds seemed to take the initiative and were willingly followed by a number of others less brilliant, who had neither the education nor the desire to investigate the correctness of the system.

In my review of the state of medicine in the early part of the century it will be impossible for me to follow in detail the various systems, theories and schools that existed during that time. I will therefore briefly name some of them, and when I find one that has been on a line with present medical thought and has given tone to the medicine of the century, I will follow it more in detail. It is quite unnecessary for me to discuss at any length the system known as Homœopathy, as nearly all, if not all, are familiar with the rise and progress of this system that has for its maxim, "Similia similibus," and whose contention is that all the products of disease found on post-mortem section are the result of blundering, and particularly of the blunders of allopathic physicians. Such products are not found after homœopathic treatment. Hahnemann, however, never made autopsies, and consequently was not in a position to express an opinion. Before leaving this subject I wish to call your attention to one of the offshoots of Homœopathy, viz., Isopathy. It can scarcely be conceived that in this enlightened age of the nineteenth century such an abominable, foul and disgusting system could be tolerated for one day, yet it existed and had its followers.