

# Canadian Journal of Homeopathy.

*"Plus apud nos vera ratio valet, quam vulgi opinio."*

VOL. I.

HAMILTON, C. W., JUNE, 1856.

No. 6.

## Considerations concerning the Functions of the Bowels.

[CONCLUDED FROM OUR LAST NO.]

It is an error, and a serious one, to suppose that purgatives are harmless in their operation; and equally so to imagine that they will cure the numerous derangements for which they are usually and by many persons habitually employed. They create a necessity for their repetition, and hence the frequent remark—"Were I not to be constantly taking aperient remedies my bowels would not act." These organs are like many individuals—to assist them liberally is to paralyse their efforts. There is a mode of encouraging both which calls forth the latent energies they possess; and it should be the special study of the delicate—of those on whom nature has not conferred vigorous bodily endowments, or whose health and strength have been undermined by close sedentary application—by depressing emotions—by undue active medical treatment—by the baneful influence of disease, or by the loss of blood either from excited natural or abnormal causes, to conserve by every possible means the vital powers of the digestive apparatus.

Purgatives are used for a great variety of disorders. There is scarcely any morbid affection of the body for which they are not prescribed, and there is little discrimination in their employment, or consideration of the effects which they are calculated to produce. A difference of constitution or habit modifies only slightly the selection of the remedies, or the doses in which they are given. Whether the seat of suffering be

the head—the chest—the throat or any of the abdominal viscera; and whether it be chronic or acute in its character, and often when they are not so, it is deemed necessary, as a curative step, to act with more or with less severity upon them. It is regarded both by the practitioner and patient as a safe, if not a salutary course to pursue, and were it neglected, so prevailing is the impression of its importance, the invalid would quickly come to the conclusion that he was very improperly treated. Whatever might be the degree of relief derived or the progress made towards convalescence, he and his friends would be distrustful of the amendment—would be doubtful of its soundness—would question its permanence, if the bowels had not been acted upon almost daily. It is difficult to deal with prejudice so intense and general. It is to be met only by an exposition of just physiological views concerning the functions of the organs co-operating in the process of digestion: the nervous and other relations by which they are associated to each other, and to the rest of the animal system: the nature of disease, by which is to be understood not simply the condition of the organ particularly suffering, but the aggregate of the powers of life, which is the measure of their derangement and the extent of their vital resources: and lastly, what remedial agents shall be selected to meet the requirements of the occasion.

This selection, if judicious, implies a knowledge of their properties and action which few are studiously anxious to attain.