



# MEDICAL CRITICISM.

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2ND SERIES.

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## THE REPUTEDLY INSANE.

A case, of which we hear, on reliable authority, is one of a character which appears to us to require greater precaution than is at present exercised, to prevent its recurrence ; it is that of a farmer who, by dint of hard toil, had amassed some money, and appears to have concluded that he was more likely to take care of it, than were sons with "new lights" on agriculture, etc.; the sons, for their part, appear to be among the basest of the race, as they and their mother availed themselves of the horrid device (a by no means new one) of plotting against their father's liberty, by means of falsely charging him with being insane ; two doctors were consequently brought to the house, ostensibly to testify to this man's insanity ; one of them entered into conversation with him on the subject of farming, while the other remained in the kitchen ; the second doctor did not converse with him ; as the subject of this plot was told of it on the previous day, he refused to yield to it, until he had seen a physician of this city, who has known him for 25 years, and testifies to his being as sane as himself is ; it is from this physician that we hear of the case ; It appears to us that the law which enables any designing person to imprison another on the testimony of two doctors, (one of whom it appears may not happen to speak to him) should be amended without delay ; we think a lawyer, who is necessarily accustomed to evidence, is better qualified to examine a man as to his sanity, than is an average doctor ; we also think the public is entitled to know if the Inspector of asylums sees the several patients, and if consequently we have any sufficient guarantee against this kind of imprisonment under false pretences.

## THE DEATH RATE.

*Communicated by Dr. T. W. Sparrow.*

Notwithstanding the fact that much has been done to improve the sanitary condition of the city of New York, the death-rate of the inhabitants continues to advance. A table of statistics just published, shows that in 1880 there were 23,342 deaths ; in 1881 there were 28,624 ; and in 1882 there were 37,826 ; the increase in the number of births has been gradual and natural, there being 25,573 in 1880, 26,130 in 1881, and 27,321 in 1882 ; the number of marriages shows a corresponding increase, being 8446 in 1880, 10,079 in 1881, and 11,085 in 1882 ; a writer, referring to the above-indicated facts, remarks—" Here is a subject of study for scientists, in order to discover the cause of the increased mortality in the largest American city, and to suggest means for its prevention." In Ontario, during the ten years terminating in 1880, upwards of 321,000 deaths occurred ; in the latter year 44,000 !—The statistics show that half this appalling number died under the age of twenty ! The Registrar General of the Province, in referring to this melan-

choly fact, observes—" There is food for sad contemplation, in the fact now proved by statistics, that nearly one-half (in 1877 more than half) of the human race dies before reaching maturity; were it to be discovered that one quarter, or even one eighth of all the sheep, hogs, cattle and horses which come into life, were dying of preventible disease, before they reached maturity, would not the public take alarm, and clamour at the doors of Parliament for sanitary measures, tending to remove the causes of so terrible a fatality!" " Much," he continues, " has been done by legal enactment, for the protection of human life, but much remains to be done, and will be done when public sentiment (having been aroused by the knowledge of the portentous fact just referred to) will support the enactment of measures found necessary for the prolongation of life." In an address recently delivered before the faculty and students of one of the medical schools of *this* city, the audience were told that the science of medicine had so greatly advanced that whereas *seven* professors used to be able to conduct a medical college, *thirteen* are now required for the discharge of this important function! Spite of legislative enactments and the *alleged* advantages of medical science however, *the death-rate steadily increases* both in the city of New York and in the Province of Ontario; in Ontario, from 39,000 in 1878 to 44,000 in 1880. Scientists (so-styled) have for ages been ransacking every department of nature, in search of causes of disease and death, and many finely spun theories have been advanced until the people, like the six hundred of Balacava, are surrounded by disease-producing agencies more fatal than the cannon of the world-renowned charge.

They tell us of *poison* in the air we breathe—in the water we drink—in the food we eat, and also on the walls of the rooms in which we live, so that, to parody the lines of Tennyson, we might write:—

Poison to right of them,  
Poison to left of them,  
Poison in front of them, etc.

But as all theories, as to causes, or devices for prevention, have proved insufficient to stay the hand of death, we must look in other directions for a solution of the sad mystery.

The London *Lancet* has "struck a lead," which if followed, will, I doubt not, clear away much of the mist which beclouds the medical profession. It says—" It is high time that attention were directed to the subject of narcotics generally, and to the use of chloral and bromide of potassium in particular. Incalculable injury is being done, and public opinion is being grievously misled, by the tolerance given to the use of 'sleeping draughts' falsely so called.\* In regard to this matter, and that of the reckless use of the hypodermic injections of morphia, the profession should seek to form a deliberate judgment, and gravely deliver itself. At the present moment, we are under a heavy responsibility which it is idle to deny, and vain to disown."

The legislators of New York appear to have suspected that "there is something rotten in the state of (the medical) Denmark;" they have decreed that "any physician who while intoxicated, or by mistake, gives any drug to his patient in such dose as to kill, is guilty of murder in the second degree;" these legislators thus recognize the awful fact that physicians are administering to the sick, agents which by a slight error may cause the death of those who look to them for life. On a future occasion I will endeavour to show that in the direction above indicated, important truths lie hidden, which need but to be unearthed in order to explain what has until the present time, with many, been a mystery.

\* Is not death a sleep?—ED.

## CURE FOR DIPHTHERIA.

The subjoined is from an American paper. When diphtheria was raging in England a few years ago, I accompanied Dr. Field on his round, to witness the so-styled wonderful cures he performed, while the patients of others dropped off on all sides. He took powdered sulphur with him, and a quill ; and with these he cured every patient. He put a teaspoonful of flour and brimstone into a wine-glass of water, and mixed it with his finger instead of using a spoon, as the sulphur does not readily amalgamate with water. When the sulphur was well mixed, he gave it as a gargle, and in ten minutes the patient was out of danger. Brimstone kills every species of fungus in man, beast, or plant in a few minutes. Dr. F. desired his patients to swallow this mixture ; in extreme cases, in which the doctor arrived just in the nick of time, when the fungus was too nearly closing to admit of gargling, he blew the sulphur into the throat through a quill, and so soon as the fungus had shrunk sufficiently to admit of it, he administered the gargle. If the patient cannot gargle, a live coal should be taken, and put on a shovel ; a spoonful or two at a time of the flour of brimstone should be sprinkled on it ; if the sufferer hold his head over this, and inhale the brimstone, the fungus will die. If plentifully used, the room may be filled with the sulphur, almost to suffocation, and the patient will be able to walk about in it. This mode of fumigating a room has often cured violent colds in the head, chest, etc., and is also recommended in cases of consumption and asthma. Possibly the goose-quills of England may be differently formed to those of the Canadian geese, or the sulphur may be of a different quality, and probably Dr. Field had a head on his shoulders.

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The German scientist Koch disputes Pasteur's application of the microbium system, as he claims that the microbium of smallpox and scrofula are identical, consequently vaccination is a dangerous experiment. Dr. Koch's words have aroused a strong feeling of opposition to compulsory vaccination laws in Germany.

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## MILK AS MEDICINE.

*Its curative properties for Bright's Disease, for Typhoid and other Fevers.*

General Robert C. Schenck, ex-minister to England, instead of being decrepit as has been represented in the papers, appears to be in good physical condition. He has stated that he had been about given up some months ago as incurable with Bright's disease, when his physician told him to use skimmed milk as his only diet. He says—"I tackled the skimmed milk, stuck to it, and here I am, almost a new man. I believe that skimmed milk is a specific for Bright's disease." Surgeon-General Barnes, when in Virginia, heard of an allopathic physician who never failed to cure typhoid fever. As there were many in the United States army, dying with that disease. General Barnes called on the doctor in order to ascertain how he treated his typhoid patients ; the doctor informed the General that it was "the simplest thing in the world," and proceeded to tell him that all that was necessary was to get that sufferer's stomach and bowels in good order, and then *fill them up with butter-milk*; and keep them filled with that alone. The doctor added—"I never lose a patient if he isn't in a collapsed condition when I am called." Surgeon General Barnes states that he adopted the buttermilk treatment for the soldiers, and found it most efficacious. Some ten years ago, the Medical Societies of France and Russia compared notes as to the use of milk in the treatment of their typhoid patients, and they agreed that it is not only of wonderful efficacy in cases of typhoid fever,

but, as one might expect, in all other cases of fever. The problems for Canadians to solve would therefore appear to be (1) Is the milk of France, Russia, and the State of Virginia of a different nature to that of Canadian cows? (2) Are Frenchmen, Russians, and Virginians men of another mould than are Canadians? or (3) Is it the doctors who differ?

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### A DAILY BALACLAVA CHARGE.

Pills to the right of them,  
 Pills to the left of them,  
 Potions in front of them  
 "Some one has blundered ;"  
 " *Theirs* not to make reply,"  
 " *Theirs* not to reason why,  
 " *Theirs* but to do and die ;"  
 " Into the valley of death "  
 Sink "the six hundred."

Flashed all the lancets bare,  
 Flashed, with pretensions fair—  
*Charg-ed*—of course they are—  
 " O, the wild *charge* they made !"  
 " When will their glory fade ?"  
 And when their blunders ?  
 Battered with *mortar's shell*  
 Patients who struggle well,  
 " Back from the jaws of death,"  
 " Back from the mouth of hell"—  
 " All the world wonders."

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### AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

Dr. G. Felizet. of Paris, claims to have discovered a cure for saccharine diabetes—a disease long supposed to be incurable. He claims to have cured glycosuria artificially produced in animals ; and as he traces glycosuria, intermittent diabetes, and confirmed diabetes to the same cause, that which will cure the one will cure the other. The production of sugar is in all cases owing to irritation of the rachidian bulb, and the true cure is not a dietary one, but the immediate suppression of the irritation, by large and repeated doses of bromide of potassium.

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" WHAT FOOLS THE MORTALS BE !"—*Midsummer-Nights Dream.*


In the "dark-ages" the priests traded on the ignorant fears and superstitions of the people.—(Have those ages passed?)

*Now, the Doctors do the same.*

Then, the priests used the secular powers to compel conformity to their dogmas and support of their practices.

*Now, the Doctors do the same.*

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 In the event of any irregularity occurring in the delivery of this publication, the Editor requests that he may be addressed respecting it.

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