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MEDICAL CRITICISM.

No. 4.

FEBRUARY 3, 1883.

2ND SERIES.

A Weekly Sheet, by DAVID EDWARDS, published on Saturday, and sold at Patterson & Co.'s No. 4 Adelaide Street West, Toronto.

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TESTIMONY RELATING TO MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE.

A physician of this city has kindly directed the Editor's attention to the opening words of an "Introduction" to a work by Samuel Sheldon Fitch, A.M., M.D., entitled "A Treatise on Health, its Aids and Hindrances, containing an Exposition of the Causes and Cure of Disease, and the Laws of Life, etc." The author has published "six lectures on consumption" and is the founder of a system of practice by which phthisis is found to be curable by medical art. Subjoined is an extract from this "introduction"—

"The late celebrated Dr. Rush, of Philadelphia, was once asked if he believed the profession of medicine had been, on the whole, a benefit to the world. 'Do you,' he replied, 'intend to include in the profession, *old women and nurses*? If so, then I answer—Yes; if not,—Doubtful.'"

Says the eminent French physician and author, Bichat, speaking of the "Science of Medicine;"—"An incoherent assemblage of incoherent opinions, it is perhaps of all the physiological sciences, that which best shows the caprice of the human mind. What do I say? It is not a science for a methodical mind. It is a shapeless assemblage of inaccurate ideas, of observations often puerile, of deceptive remedies, and of formulæ as fantastically conceived as they are tediously arranged."

Said another French physician and professor, Magendie, in a recent lecture to his class of students in the city of Paris:—"Gentlemen, medicine is a great humbug! I know it is styled a science—science, indeed—it is nothing like science! Doctors are mere empirics, when they are not charlatans. We are as ignorant as men can be. Who knows anything in the world about medicine? Who can tell me how to cure the headache? or the gout? or disease of the heart? Nobody. Oh, you tell me, 'doctors cure people!' I grant you, people are cured; but how are they cured? Gentlemen, nature does a good deal; doctors do . . . devilish little . . . when they don't do harm!"

It would be no satisfaction to the Editor to publish facts and testimony from time to time, in harmony with the foregoing, did he not cherish the hope that the period may not be remote, when thinking men and women may insist on some steps being taken in Parliament, which shall tend to ameliorate the present order of things, in relation to what is styled the healing art.

COLORED WATER.

The next time Dr. Pollard is judicious enough to avail himself of water as a healing agent, we recommend him to condescend to follow the example of his professional brethren, and to *color the water*; ladies of the mental calibre of Mrs. Dalton, instead of defending an action in a law-court, would, under these circumstances, be perfectly satisfied that the cure was effected by the colored water.

MAGNETISM AS A HEALING AGENT.

A child in this city had licked an axe, during a severe frost ; the consequence was that the skin was torn from its tongue, in the endeavour to separate it from the axe ; the child lost much blood, and cried from about mid-day till its father returned from his work, after six o'clock ; the father took the child on his knee, and gave it a few passes with his hand ; the bleeding ceased in consequence, and the child almost immediately asked for food, and ate it ; any incredulous person who may wish to satisfy himself of the authenticity of this statement, can have the name and address of the father by asking for it.

FOR A SCALD OR BURN.

We are indebted to a friend, who has many times tested the efficacy of cold water, in relation to a scald, for the assurance that in the event of such an occurrence, it is not necessary to send for a doctor, to apply ointment, flour or any other healing agent than cold water ; if the injured part be submerged beneath the water, until the coldness of it become painful, the effect of the scald or burn will have ceased, and there will be no scar left ; in the event of the burn being severe, a wet cloth should be kept on the part, and no inflammation will follow.

MAGNETISM IN RELATION TO A DOG.

A drunken man had trodden on the back of a favorite dog about a week ago, and injured it to such a degree as to render it unable to jump into its accustomed chair ; the dog's owner gave it the benefit of a few magnetic passes of the hand, and immediately it was able to leap into its chair ; the same dog, on another occasion was unwilling to lap from a saucer of milk which is given him as a daily dainty ; the magnetic hand was applied, and forthwith the dog took to his milk.

MAGNETISM ONCE AGAIN.

From another source than that, to which we are indebted for the facts above-named, we hear of a girl who had suffered pain in her right lung for four days ; she laid magnetized tissue paper on the part, by the desire of her brother, without knowing what it was ; she speedily found the pain transferred to her spine, and expects that a second application of such paper will remove the pain entirely.

CONGESTION OF THE LUNGS.

Our Physio-Medical friend, who last week presented us with some Babel-testimony as to the approved mode of treating pneumonia, has conferred on us the additional favor, on the present occasion, of expressing his own views, in relation to that disorder. Pneumonia, he observes, like inflammation of any other part of the body, is, in its incipient stage, only an accumulation of blood, in excess of the natural quantity in the parts affected ; the accumulated blood has been forced from its natural channels, by "taking cold," or rather by *losing heat*, which causes the surface to contract, and consequently the superficial blood vessels ; the capacity of these vessels being diminished, they cannot contain the natural quantity of blood ; the heart however expels, at each pulsation, the same quantity of blood as it did before the "cold" was contracted ; when the heart cannot send the blood to the surface, owing to the contracted condition of the superficial blood-vessels, it sends it in excess to some internal part ; if to the blood vessels of the pleura, the result is pleurisy, if to those of the bowels, inflammation of the bowels ; in pneumonia, the

lungs, or frequently but one of them is thus overcharged; the *cause* of the trouble is not in the disordered part, but *in the contracted state of the surface*; common sense coming to the rescue, would not, in such cases, remove the blood, nor poison or stupify the patient by means of opium or morphine, but would seek, in some simple fashion, to *equalize the circulation*, by restoring the superficial blood-vessels to their natural size, that uncommon doctor, Dr. Commonsense would seek to restore the lost heat without delay; if he had a heated head and cold feet to treat, he would recognize that there was too much blood in the head, and too little in the feet; he would order a warm foot-bath, the effect of which would be to enlarge the veins of the feet, and make room for the superfluous blood from the head; the pressure of an undue amount of blood into any internal part may be relieved in like manner by applying water or vapour to the whole surface of the body. Persons who, under the circumstance of taking severe cold, prefer to be dosed with antimony, morphine, and mercury, are of course at liberty to die in the orthodox medical faith, but some of us believe that we are sent here to live out our natural term of days; we consequently leave the undertakers to wait till called for.

EXTRACTS FROM A TRACT

ENTITLED REMARKS ON "THE MISTAKES OF MOSES."

By H. L. Hastings.

The more we study the law of Moses, in its relation to health, and in the provisions which anticipated the sanitary science of our day—in its system of dietetics, in its purifications and its varied restrictions which touch the social life at every point—we shall be amazed at the wisdom manifested in that law, as exhibited in its safeguards against vice, disorder, and disease.

From its initiatory rite, the seal of the covenant, which was in itself a protection against disease, Israelitish law sedulously guarded the physical health of the people; and even the laws concerning the dead exhibit the same divine wisdom. Modern times have afforded instances where persons, in their misguided affection, have pressed the cold lips of the dead, and taken thence disease which has laid them in the grave; and it is well known that the slightest wound inflicted by a dissecting instrument, almost inevitably produces death. Against such sad consequences, the Mosaic law carefully guarded the Israelites. Contrary to the usages of the eastern world, where the dead were sometimes embalmed, or where the living and dead were consumed together in the flames, the Jews were taught that death was a curse, that its presence was defiling, that the living were to be carefully separated from the dead, and that any person who touched a dead body thereby became unclean, and was not allowed to touch any other person or thing until he had passed a period of separation and had been thoroughly bathed. Modern science cannot fail to recognize the utility of such restrictions; and many lives might have been saved by paying attention to the sanitary instructions which are embodied in the Mosaic law.

Skeptics may prate about the mistakes of Moses, but it would be difficult to find a greater mistake than they make, when they undertake to sit in judgment on a law which they have never studied, and the reasons for which they are not wise enough to comprehend. The most advanced science of our times has not yet reached the plane that Moses occupied, and we may still, with Israel's Psalmist, exclaim, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

A fire in an open grate in a sick-room may be replenished without disturbance to the patient, by feeding it with paper-bags filled with the coals.

WHY WOMEN ARE DECLINING IN PHYSICAL VIGOR.

The following summary of the causes which are at work to undermine the health of women, especially in the early years of life, was recently published in a circular sent out by the Association of Collegiate Alumnae, and presents the subject in a forcible and concise manner:—

1. Social dissipation and excitement, which is neither amusement nor recreation. Girls are too often stimulated to shine socially and intellectually at the same time. A mother proves her daughter's perfect health by saying: "She has been able to go to parties or entertainments four or five evenings a week all winter, and she stands at the head of her class."

2. Habitual loss of sufficient and healthy sleep. In a New York academy, a class of sixty girls, between the ages of twelve and eighteen, chanced to be asked by a recent visitor what time they retired the night before. The average was found to be twenty minutes before midnight; but no surprise was manifested by teachers, nor regret by the scholars.


3. Irregularity and haste in taking food, the use of confectionery in the evening, and the omission of breakfast. The principal of a large girl's school in Philadelphia lately said that so many habitually came to school without having sufficient breakfast, and taking little or no luncheon, that he had been compelled in order to obtain good mental work, to have a warm luncheon furnished, and to insist on every scholar taking it in the middle of the morning.

4. Tight, heavy, or insufficient clothing, which frightfully increases the tendency to consumption and spinal diseases. A physician of wide experience confidently states that this cause alone has incapacitated more women than overstudy and overwork of all kinds.

5. The lack of sufficient out-door exercise. When a proper amount of time is devoted to such exercise, no time will be left for excessive study.

WATER-DRINKING A PREVENTIVE OF DISEASE.

An old English proverb says, "Drinking water neither makes a man sick nor in debt, nor his wife a widow." It is not only a good temperance maxim, but with a slight addition it might be equally accepted as a rule in therapeutics. Drinking water neither makes a man sick, nor hurts him when he is sick, but rather helps him. It must be admitted that the doctors have often been wrong in refusing water to their thirsty patients; and it is gratifying to find that they are beginning to see the mistake, and to warn their professional brethren against it. Dr. J. F. Meigs, of Philadelphia, in a clinical lecture on "The Internal Use of Water for the Sick," delivered at the Pennsylvania Hospital a year ago, gives a painful, almost a terrible, picture of the suffering and the injury caused by the prejudice of physicians and nurses against the free use of water as a beverage in certain diseased conditions. He lays down the rule, that the sick should be allowed all the water they desire. It is the appetite implanted in the body by the Creator, for the determination of the amount of water needed. . . . For myself, I dare not oppose this divine sense in thirsty patients any more than I would oppose the instinct of the infant to take from its mother's breast the material it needs for its growth.

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

"PULPIT CRITICISM," by the same author, sold at PATTERSON & Co.'s, 4 Adelaide Street West. Price \$1.50 per annum.