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# ◇ MEDICAL CRITICISM. ◇

No. 10. -NOVEMBER 4th, 1882.

The divorce between the vocation of the barber and that of the surgeon transpired some years ago: it is now more than time we had a divorce between the practice of surgery and that of medicine, inasmuch as the successes of the one serve to screen the failures of the other.

We are indebted to a chymist of this city for the following information:—Pork is so injurious to children, that if a piece of bread is dipped in the gravy of it, or a piece of the rind is given to a child, the child will have a fit within four hours of the occurrence. The same gentleman has, in multitudes of cases, traced the fits of children to the circumstance of the mothers having eaten pork, while bearing or nursing the child. For our own part, we have long been convinced that the prohibition of pork in the book of Leviticus, and of all shell-fish, and other fish without fins and scales, was traceable to physical knowledge.

## HOSPITAL AMENITIES.

A citizen of Toronto who is affected with lumps to the number of one hundred, and upwards, all over the lower part of his body—these lumps varying in size from the size of a pea to that of a hen's egg—tested the knowledge of the medical men of the city by seeking advice at the hospital: children, we know, always want to look inside anything that admits of being opened, and these medical innocents were no exception to the rule; fortunately for the patient, he was too well acquainted with the character of these children, to trust them with knives. One of them, who played the part of instructor, addressing the students relative to this case, did not apparently think it unbecoming to adopt the following style:—"Gentlemen, some men get fat in the cheeks, some in the arms, some in the legs; this man, it appears, prefers getting fat by chunks." It might be well for these would-be priests of nature to avoid perpetrating stupid jokes at the expense of the feelings of their victims for the time to come.

REV. JOHN WESLEY

ON THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE.

"The European, as well as the American, said to his neighbour, "Are you sick? Drink the juice of this herb, and your sickness will be at an end. Are you in a burning heat? Leap into that river, and then sweat till you are well. Has the snake bitten you? Chew and apply that root, and the poison will not hurt you." Thus ancient men (and women, John), having a little experience joined with common sense and common humanity, cured both themselves and their neighbours of most of the distempers to which every nation was subject. But in process of time, men of a philosophical turn were not satisfied with this. They began to enquire how they might account for these things; how such medicines wrought such effects. They

examined the human body and all its parts ; the nature of the flesh, veins, arteries, nerves ; the structure of the brain, heart, lungs, stomach, bowels ; with the springs of the several kinds of animal functions. They explored the several kinds of animal and mineral, as well as vegetable substances. And hence the whole order of physic which had obtained to that time, came gradually to be inverted. Men of learning began to set experience aside, to build physic on hypotheses, to form theories of diseases, and their cure, and to substitute these in the place of experiments.\* As these theories increased, simple remedies were more and more disregarded and disused, till in a course of years the greater part of them were forgotten, at least in the politer nations. In the room of these, abundance of new ones were introduced by reasoning, speculative men ; and those more and more difficult to be applied, as being more remote from common observation. Hence rules for the application of these, and medical books, were immensely multiplied, till at length physic became an abstruse science, quite out of the reach of ordinary men. Physicians now began to be had in admiration, as persons who were something more than human ; and profit attended their employ, as well as honor : so that they had now two weighty reasons for keeping the bulk of mankind at a distance, that they might not pry into the mysteries of the profession. To this end, they increased those difficulties by design, which began in a manner by accident. They filled their writings with abundance of technical terms, utterly unintelligible to plain men. They affected to deliver their rules, and to reason upon them, in an abstruse and philosophical manner. They represented the critical knowledge of anatomy, natural philosophy, (and what not? some of them insisting on that of astronomy and astrology too), as necessarily previous to the understanding the art of healing. They who understood only how to restore the sick to health, they branded with the name of empirics. They introduced into practice abundance of compound medicines, consisting of so many ingredients that it was scarcely possible for common people to know which it was that wrought the cure ; abundance of exotics, neither the nature nor names of which their own countrymen understood : of chemicals, such as they neither had skill, nor fortune, nor time to prepare ; yea, and of dangerous ones, such as they could not use without hazarding life, but by the advice of a physician. And thus both their honour and gain were secured : a vast majority of mankind being utterly cut off from helping either themselves or their neighbours, or once daring to attempt it." We are of opinion that in view of the foregoing testimony, and of our own experience, the double serpent is a well-chosen symbol of the medical profession ; in so saying, we have no desire to impugn the integrity of many of its members, but we are satisfied that it is more than time their claims to confidence were thoroughly examined ; meanwhile we very distinctly deprecate those nine members of the profession who occupy seats in the Ontarian Legislature taking any further trouble in relation to our physical welfare.

\* The kind of experiment to which the author refers, is manifest from a previous portion of his work, wherein he speaks of a person having cured sores in that person's mouth, and in the mouths of others, by applying a drop of gum to them, which, in the first instance, fell from a tree, on a book which he was reading.