



A

GUIDE TO HEALTH,

BEING AN

EXPOSITION OF THE PRINCIPLES

OF THE

THOMSONIAN SYSTEM OF PRACTICE,

AND THEIR

MODE OF APPLICATION

IN THE

CURE OF EVERY FORM OF DISEASE;

EMBRACING A CONCISE VIEW OF

THE VARIOUS THEORIES OF ANCIENT AND MODERN PRACTICE.

BY BENJAMIN COLBY.

Third Edition, enlarged and revised.

Let us strip our profession of every thing that looks like mystery.—RUSH.

MILFORD, N. H.

JOHN BURNS.

.....

1846.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Quaint and antiquarian though this book may seem, Colby, a more polished voice than his mentor, Samuel Thomson, was dealing as best as possible with the arrogant, hubristic and mechanistic disarray of Medicine between 1800 and 1860. The Thomsonians were radical populists that espoused the rude concept that common sense and a little learning was a better doctor than professionals seemingly addicted to bloodletting, purging with heavy metals, and heroic cleanses. They were a popular and robust "sect", with lay practitioners crawling all over the woodwork like ticks on a feeble dog.

The substantial presence in later years of "irregular" physicians (licensed M.D.s) such as the Eclectics and the Physio-Medicalists, as well as medical Homeopathy, was opposed with almost religious fervor by the "regulars" of the Eastern Establishment. Better funded (often by public moneys) and with close ties to full universities, the regulars prevailed in almost all arenas by the first decade of the twentieth century. The last Eclectic Medical School closed to resounding indifference in 1938. Well before that time, mainstream American Medicine had responded to the CAUSE of opposition by cleaning its house, and reestablishing the general trust of most Americans. The populist movements, by whatever name, had served the greater good...and sealed their own doom.

Frankly, the problems of mid-nineteenth-century medicine uncomfortably resemble the state of medicine at the end of the twentieth century, with alternative medicine/healing/therapy presenting a populist resistance to Standard Practice Medicine that seems to be growing almost exponentially. The slow, ritually scathing indictment by Colby of Medicine in his day may seem quaint...unless you remember that the physicians he verbally eviscerates were products of the most rigorous training available anywhere. His denouncement of the quack remedies of his age are blamed upon the people's loss of faith in regular medicine, a state disturbingly similar to our present circumstance.

In my life I have seen DES therapy and the standard practice of thymus implants with radium come and go...a few brief years later scoffed at as "primitive". Yet hundreds of thousands of physicians still in practice dutifully used BOTH of these modalities at the time, with nary a question (until later). To the educated outsider, it seems astonishing how little attention is given by Medicine to its own history...even that of a decade or two past. History of Medicine as taught in medical schools consists of the exposition of its SUCCESSFUL lineage, whereas the most important parts are not who first observed the circulation of blood or saw the potential of the Digitalis in a Herb Woman's brew. The greatest lessons medicine has learned in the last several centuries has come from CORRECTING its mistakes.

If the last century is an example to learn from, it will be many frantic years before we "irregulars" bring about the re-ordination of mainstream medicine back into the vitalist center. In that context, as well as for some of its surprisingly sound observations, this popular little book from 150 years ago can serve as a parable for our present perceptions of the early-stages of medical decline.

Michael Moore

PREFACE.

IN presenting to the public this little volume, advocating and explaining a system of Medical Practice, diverse from the popular system of the day—a system against which there exists much unfounded, deep-rooted prejudice—prejudice, not based on a knowledge of its principles, on a trial of its remedial agents, but on the false and ridiculous reports in circulation against it; a brief history of the circumstances and motives that led to its publication, may not be uninteresting to the reader.

Having spent a large proportion of the last fifteen years of my life in examining the different medical theories, and observing the results of those theories carried out in practice, I arrived at conclusions that were to me startling—that were painful to contemplate—that could not fail to inspire in every benevolent man a fixed determination to wage an uncompromising war against systems productive of so much sorrow, misery, and death.

The evidences brought to bear upon my mind, in the testimony of the most eminent of the faculty, statesmen, and philosophers, and my own personal experience and observation, compelled me to believe, although very reluctantly, in consequence of the regard I had for those of my friends who were engaged in the practice of medicine, that the science of medicine, as taught in the schools of physic, and as practiced from the time of Paracelsus until the present, was a series of blind experiments with the most deadly poisons; the effect of which is now felt by millions of its unhappy victims, while millions more sleep beneath the clods of the valley, cut off in the vigor of youth and strength of manhood, by these poisons. I do not feel responsible for a belief, that the force of evidence urges upon me, any more than I should for falling to the ground from a height, when all intercepting objects are removed. Justice to my follow-men demands of me that I should fearlessly express my views, and I shall not demur. It is my candid opinion, and that opinion has not been formed hastily, that nine-tenths of all the medical practice of the nineteenth century, including a portion, but by no means an equal portion, of all the different systems, is not based on scientific principles, or benevolence and truth, but on cupidity, avarice, and a desire for fame, on the one part, and ignorance and misplaced confidence, on the other. Remove these pillars, and the gilded temple called medical science, that medical authors have been propping up for four thousand years—the material of which it is composed not being sufficiently strong to sustain its own weight—would fall to the ground with as much certainty as did the edifice from which Samson, with giant's strength, removed the pillars.

One quarter part of nearly all the newspapers throughout the country is filled with flaming advertisements of quack nostrums—the most of which are prepared without any regard to scientific principles or adaptedness to cure disease; for which millions of dollars are annually paid, and not one in a hundred receives any permanent benefit therefrom.

The editor of the Portland Tribune gives the following as the origin of that celebrated medicine, Brandreth's Pills:— “A few years ago, a young Englishman, by the name of Anson, was an under-servant in a large pill establishment in London, where he received trifling pay; but he managed to

lay by sufficient funds to bring him to this country. He arrived at New York; called himself Dr. Brandreth, from London; said he was a grandson of a distinguished doctor by that name, who died some years since. He was so extremely ignorant, that he wrote his name, or scratched it rather, as "Dr. Benjamin Brandreth, M D." He hired an office, made pills, advertised them pretty freely, and now they are all over the country. By such empiricism, this individual, whose real name is Anson, has obtained the cognomen of "Prince of Quacks," and has accumulated a handsome fortune, while not one in a thousand who has taken his pills, has any doubt of his being a regular physician. Such is the success of quackery; and in this manner are the American people gulled, when if known, they themselves, of brown bread and aloes, could make a better pill. Mr. A., alias Dr. B., in the course of time opened a shop in Philadelphia for the of his medicine, and appointed a man by the name of Wright as his sole agent. In a short time the Doctor and he quarreled, and had a newspaper controversy; the result of which was, Mr. W. set up for himself, made a new pill, or rather gave a new name to an old one, calling it the "Indian Purgative Pill," advertised it freely, employed agents, &c, and now it is used pretty extensively as an INDIAN medicine, when probably not a son of the forest knows of its existence.

In a similar way nearly all the medicines advertised so extensively, and recommended so extravagantly for their intrinsic virtues, were first brought into existence. Should the thousand pills of different names, daily vended in this country, and swallowed by the dozen, be analyzed by the nicest process, these should be found to contain nearly the same ingredients.

The 'Matchless Sanative,' said to be a German invention, was sold in very small vials, at the moderate price of two dollars and fifty cents, as a certain cure for the consumption. It was nothing more, we believe, than sweetened water, and yet hundreds were induced to buy it, because its price was so exorbitant, presuming by this that its virtues were rare; and many a poor widow was drained of her last farthing to obtain this worthless stuff. Even the Sanative, in its conspicuous advertisements, was not lacking in lengthy recommendations of its superlative virtues—throwing all other medicines far into the shade.

Had regular physicians adopted a system of practice in accordance with nature, reason, and common sense, they would have retained the confidence of the people, and no medicine could have been successfully introduced, unless sanctioned by themselves. But the misery and death occasioned by their practice having been too apparent to be misunderstood, and failing to cure in many curable cases, many have lost all confidence in them, and are ready to catch at any medicine that is recommended for their complaints. Men with large acquisitiveness and small conscientiousness, almost entirely destitute of medical knowledge, taking advantage of this state of things, have flooded the country with their pretended cure-alls, that they themselves would never think of using if afflicted with the same complaints for which they are so confidently recommended. Benevolence, conscientiousness and knowledge may have induced many to prepare and sell secret medicines, but avarice and ignorance many more

The only way to prevent quackery is to diffuse a knowledge of medicine among the people, and also to point out to them the proper course to pursue to prevent being sick. This I have made a feeble effort to do in this little work, reserving nothing for future emolument, for which I expect to be

ridiculed by those it is designed to benefit, and persecuted by those whose craft is in danger; begging the pardon of the *litterati* for entering the authors ranks with so few of the requisite qualifications, but asking no favors of the medical faculty, scientific as they may be; for if I have not succeeded in proving the Thomsonian system true, it cannot possibly come farther from the truth than their own.

I have endeavored to present plain, simple facts in a plain, simple manner, so as to be easily understood by all. The technicalities of medical works are left out, or explained in a glossary, where any medical word used in this work may be found, with its meaning. I acknowledge my indebtedness to Drs. Thomson, Curtis, and others, for the principles herein contained, especially to Dr. Curtis, Professor of the Medical Institute at Cincinnati, who has done more than any other man to present the Thomsonian system to the world in a receivable shape.

This little work is designed to be, as its name declares, a Guide to Health. Not a guide for a few to enable them to get rich by selling advice and medicine to the many; but a guide to all to enable them to avoid becoming the victims of the avarice and duplicity of physicians. Many of them, to be sure, take a philanthropic and noble course, consulting always the interest of those who place confidence in them. But common observation leads me to think that the large majority of physicians consult their own interests first, in doing which they are not "sinners above all others," as the common motto is, Let every man look out for himself. Therefore, if every man was his own physician, the interest of physician and patient would be identified. Those who make the practice of medicine a source of gain, will ridicule the idea of every man being his own physician. So have priests ridiculed the idea of letting every man read the Bible, and judge for himself of the important truths therein contained. As well might the village baker ridicule the idea of the good housewife making her own bread; alleging that it required a long course of study to make breads, and the people must not only buy all their bread of them at an exorbitant price, but pay them a fee for telling them what kind they must eat, and how much. The preparation and use of medicine to cure disease, requires no more science than the preparation and use of bread.

Every head of a family ought to understand the medicinal properties of a sufficient number of roots and plants to cure any disease that might occur in his or her family, and teach their children the same. This is in accordance with the declaration of the learned and philanthropic, and justly celebrated Rush. He says, "Let us strip our profession of every thing that looks like mystery and imposition, and clothe medical knowledge in a dress so simple and intelligible, that it may become a part of academical education in all seminaries of learning. Truth is simple on all subjects; and Upon those essential to the happiness of mankind, it is obvious to the meanest capacities. There is no man so simple, that cannot be taught to cultivate grain, and no woman who cannot be taught to make it into bread. And shall the means of preserving our health, by the cultivation and preparation of proper aliments, be so intelligible, and yet the means of restoring it when lost, so abstruse, that we must take years of study to discover and apply them? To suppose this, is to call in question the goodness of the Deity, and to believe that he acts without system and unity in his work. Surgical operations and diseases that rarely occur, may require professional aid; but the knowledge necessary for these purposes is soon acquired; and two or three persons, separated from

other pursuits, would be sufficient to meet the demands of a city containing forty thousand people.

The imposition practiced by medical men in writing their prescriptions in Latin, and the evils resulting from it by the ignorance or carelessness of apothecaries or their clerks, who may know nothing of the language in which the prescription is written—the mistakes of whom have destroyed thousands of lives, are too obvious to be misunderstood. The following narration of a circumstance which actually occurred in Boston a few years since, taken from a paper published at the time, illustrates the folly of such a course—

“A respectable physician of this city lately wrote a prescription of certain articles to be procured at an apothecary’s, and at the bottom were the words, ‘*Lac Bovis.*’ A young lady took the prescription to an apothecary, who did up three of the articles, and very gravely told her he had not the last-mentioned article, *Lac Bovis*. She took the recipe to another shop, and was there equally unsuccessful—and upon her inquiring whether it was a scarce or costly article, she was informed he could find no such article on his book, and he did not know where it might be procured, or what the price of it might be. On returning home, and acquainting her friends with her ill success, she was not a little amused when told she had been inquiring at apothecaries shops for *cow’s milk!*”

With these preliminary remarks we submit this volume to the people, trusting it may lend many a bewildered victim of disease into the paths of health.

Nashua, N H, 1844

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE rapid sale of the first edition of this work, of one thousand copies, has induced the author to revise, correct, and enlarge it, and by the advice of those who were competent to judge of its merits, to get it stereotyped; this will enable him to get out new editions as fast as the sale may require, making such improvements as future investigation may lead him to think proper. Those alone who have undertaken the task, know the difficulty of explaining and clearly illustrating the science of medicine, in as few words as must necessarily be used, to treat on so many branches of the subject, as are treated on in this small work; but his object is to get out a work, the price of which shall not be an obstacle in the way of any person’s possessing it who may wish, and thus diffuse more generally the important knowledge therein contained

Concord, April 10, 1845

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

THREE editions of this work are already before the public. The rapid sale of more than five thousand copies, and the constant and increasing demand, from every quarter, for a still further extension of it, has induced the proprietor to issue the fourth edition. He cannot but be grateful to a discriminating community for the liberal patronage thus already bestowed. And at the same time, he cherishes the hope and belief that he is deserving, in some measure, of this consideration, in that he is delivering the world from the use of the dangerous and deadly drugs to which the diseased have so long and so vainly resorted, and directing them to milder and far more effectual measures for the recovery and preservation of health.

No pains have been spared to render this book what its title indicates,—A Guide to Health. A careful attention to its principles and directions will enable almost any family to combat successfully all the ordinary forms of disease, without being poisoned by the fearful [remedies] of the druggist, or plagued by the bills of those who prescribe or administer them.

It would be easy to add a long array of valuable names, as recommendations to this treatise. But such a course (common and laudable as it is) the proprietor deems unnecessary. If it were not a recommendation in itself, surely the rapid sale of so many thousand copies, and the constant demand from every direction for more, would argue a blindness on the part of the public, into which no one believes it has yet fallen. It is therefore trusted, all heretofore, on its own merits—in the confident belief that it deserves all the consideration it has yet received, and with the expectation that it will continue to receive that patronage which it has already earned for itself.

THE PROPRIETOR

MILFORD, N. H., *May*, 1848.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1845,
By BENJAMIN COLBY
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of New Hampshire.

A

GUIDE TO HEALTH

PART I.

CHAPTER I

THE SCIENCE OF MEDICINE.

WHAT is it? What are the principles on which it is founded? and what are the results of those principles, carried out in practice? Science is knowledge. The science of medicine is a knowledge of the art of preventing and curing disease. Where can this knowledge be obtained? Should we heap together all that has been written on the subject of medicine, it would form a mountain, the base of which would spread out over the earth, and its summit penetrate the clouds. In perusing these works, we are astonished and disappointed: astonished, that such a combination of talent, erudition, and persevering research, should arrive at conclusions so visionary and unsatisfactory; disappointed, in not finding the knowledge of a remedy for the cure of disease. We must give these authors the credit of making untiring effort, and bestowing incessant labor upon the subject, but like the man who attempted to cross a pond frozen over, during a violent snow-storm; the snow flew so thick, that he soon lost sight of either shore, and after wandering many hours, he found himself on the same shore from which he started. So with medical authors: having no compass, and the visionary theories of others flying so thick about them, involved them in darkness, and they wandered in uncertainty and doubt, until they arrived at the same point from which they started, having found no facts on which to base medical science.

The reason is obvious. Truth is plain and simple. God, in his wisdom, has adapted important truths to the capacity of feeble intellects,—“has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the wise.” While the learned and wise in the literary lore of medical universities were groping amidst this darkness, uncertainty and doubt, in search of facts on which to base a correct theory each fully conscious that the discovery of such facts would enable him to write his name high on the temple of fame—Dr. THOMSON, an illiterate farmer, stumbled on the prize. Rude and uncultivated though he was,

he discovered facts which are destined to overturn the visionary theories of his predecessors. With nothing more than a general knowledge of the structure of the human body and the functions of its organs, he, by experience alone, dictated by common sense and reason, obtained the knowledge of a safe and efficient method of treating disease, that the experience of thousands for forty years, has confirmed. We shall endeavor to prove that the system of practice introduced by Dr. Thomson, and improved by many of his coadjutors, has more claim to the appellation of "*the science of medicine*," than any other system that has been yet introduced. Imperfect though it may be, its success in the cure of disease stands unrivaled.

CHAPTER II.

BRIEF REVIEW OF DIFFERENT THEORIES OF MEDICINE

If medical works have been wanting in facts, they have abounded in theories.

Dr. James Graham, the celebrated Medico-Electrician, of London, says of medicine, "It hath been very rich in theory, but poor, very poor, in the practical application of it."

Dr. Jacob Bigelow, Professor in Harvard University, says in his annual address before the Medical Society, in 1836, "The premature death of medical men brings with it the humiliating conclusion, that while other sciences have been carried forward within our own time, and almost under our own eyes, to a degree of unprecedented advancement, medicine, in regard to some of its professed and important objects, (the cure of disease,) is still an **INEFFECTUAL SPECULATION**."

It is almost universally believed that the science of medicine, as taught in the schools of physic, and practiced by the regular faculty, is based on established principles,—principles that have been handed down from generation to generation, that are as demonstrable as those of mathematics, and that a man who has studied three years, is prepared to practice **SCIENTIFICALLY**. If this were the case, it would save us the necessity of writing this little volume, as the literary world groans under the weight of medical works that have been thrown upon it the errors of which, each succeeding author has proved to be as numerous as its pages.

At what age of the world medicine for the cure of disease was introduced, history does not inform us. Frequent reference is made in the bible to leaves for the healing of the nations, the plant of renown, and to various other botanic medicines; but we have no account, in

that book, of mineral poisons ever being used to cure disease. Such an inconsistency, sanctioned by it, would have placed in the hands of the infidel a more powerful argument against its truth than now exists.

At whatever age disease may have made its appearance, the first man whose writings on medicine have descended to posterity in any thing like a respectable shape, is **HIPPOCRATES**, born in the island of Cos, about 460 years before Christ. Supposing himself descended from the ancient and fabled Esculapius, he devoted his mind assiduously to the healing art. He examined attentively the opinions of others, thought and judged for himself, and admitted only those principles that to him seemed founded on reason. As a theory of life, he advanced the doctrine that the body is endowed with a semi-intelligent principle capable of applying to its own use whatever is congenial with it, and calculated to improve and restore it; and of rejecting and expelling whatever is noxious, or tends to the generation of disease.

He believed in the conservative and restorative power of nature, when its laws were strictly followed, or aided by suitable remedies. Hippocrates studied diligently, and almost exclusively, the great book of nature, instead of the visionary theories of men, and probably adopted a more correct theory, and safe and successful practice, than any who succeeded him, until the time of Thomson.

CLAUDIUS GALANUS, or **GALEN**, was born in Pergamos, in Asia Minor, A. D. 131. He depended on innocuous vegetables; sometimes simple, generally very much compounded; and his practice was so successful as in many instances to be ascribed to magic. The theory of Galen was the acknowledged theory of medicine until about the time of—

PARACELSUS who was born in Switzerland, in 1493. He appeared as a reformer of the system of Galen, rejecting his safe botanic treatment, and administering, with a bold and reckless hand, mercury, antimony, and opium.

Notwithstanding thousands were destroyed by this reckless quack, his practice has been handed down to the present time, undergoing various changes and modifications. Says Professor Waterhouse, "He (Paracelsus) was ignorant, vain, and profligate, and after living the life of a vagabond, he died a confirmed sot. He studied mystery, and wrapped up his knowledge in terms of his own invention, so as to keep his knowledge confined to himself and a few chosen followers." It appears by Prof. Waterhouse, of Harvard University, that mercury, antimony, and opium were introduced into common practice by Paracelsus, who was the chief of quacks, which remedies continue to the present day to be the most potent and commonly used by the faculty.

STAHL, a native of Anspach, rejected all the notions of his predecessors, and has the credit of undoing all that had been done before him.

HOFFMAN, his contemporary and friend, supposed life dwelt somehow or other in the nervous system.

BOERHAAVE, a native of Holland, selected from all the preceding writings whatever he deemed valuable, preferring Hippocrates among the ancients, and Sydenham among the moderns. This celebrated physician and scholar ordered in his will, that all his books and manuscripts should be burned, one large volume with silver clasps excepted. The physicians flocked to Leyden, entreating his executors to destroy his will. The effects were sold. A German count, convinced that the great gilt book contained the whole arcanum of physic, bought it for ten thousand guilders. It was all blank except the first page, on which was written,— “*Keep the head cool, the feet warm, the body open, and reject all physicians.*” How noble the course of this justly celebrated physician! After thoroughly investigating the theories of all his predecessors, and writing out a theory of his own, which, when he came to practice, he found so uncertain and dangerous, that he would not leave it, with his sanction, to entail misery and death on future generations. He therefore gave his dying advice to the world, with a full knowledge of the value of all the systems of medicine that had preceded him, to use a few simple medicines, and reject all physicians. Had this advice, given in the seventeenth century, been regarded by the world, what a vast amount of suffering and human life would have been saved! Its benefits would have been incalculable. A monument should have been erected to his memory, on which should have been inscribed in letters of gold, “**HERE LIES AN HONEST MAN, THE NOBLEST WORK OF GOD.**”

Succeeding Boerhaave, were Haller, Cullen, Hunter, Bostock, Brown, Rush, and Chapman, of modern times; the history of whom may be told in the language of Thomas Jefferson, the illustrious statesman and philosopher. In a letter to Dr. Wistar, he says, “I have lived myself to see the disciples of Hoffman, Boerhaave, Cullen, and Brown succeed one another like the shifting figures of the magic lantern; and their fancies, like the dressers of the annual doll babies from Paris, becoming from the novelty the vogue of the day, each yielding to the next novelty its ephemeral favors. *The patient, treated on the fashionable theory, sometimes gets well, in spite of the medicine;* the medicine therefore cured him, and the doctor receives new courage to proceed in his bold experiments on the lives of his fellow-creatures. “I believe,” continues Mr. Jefferson, “we may safely affirm, that the presumptuous band of medical tyros, let loose upon the world, destroy more human life in one year, than all the Robin Hoods,

Cartouches, and Macbeths do in a century. It is in this part of medicine I wish to see a reform, an abandonment of hypothesis for sober facts, the highest degree of value set upon clinical observation, the least on visionary theories.”

Dr. **WILLIAM BROWN**, who studied under the famous Dr. William Cullen, lived in his family, and lectured on his system, says in the preface to his own works, “The author of this work has spent more than twenty years in learning, teaching and scrutinizing every part of medicine. The first five years passed away in hearing others, and studying what I had heard, implicitly believing it, and entering upon the possession as a rich inheritance. The next five, I was employed in explaining and refining the several particulars, and bestowing on them a nicer polish. During the five succeeding years, nothing having prospered according to my satisfaction, I grew indifferent to the subject; and with many eminent men, and even the vulgar, began to deplore the healing art, as altogether uncertain and incomprehensible. All this time passed away without the acquisition of any advantage, and without that which, of all things, is most agreeable to the mind—the light of truth; and so great a portion of the short and perishable life of man was totally lost! Here I was, at this period, in the situation of a traveler in an unknown country, who, after losing every trace of his way, wanders in the shades of night.”

Dr. Brown’s experience probably differs in only one particular, from that of every student of the theories of medicine, and that is, he spent seventeen years longer than is customary, to obtain authority to kill according to law.

Dr. **RUSH** says, in his lectures in the University of Pennsylvania, “I am insensibly led to make an apology for the instability of the theories and practices of physic. Those physicians generally become most eminent, who soonest emancipate themselves from the tyranny of the schools of physic. Our want of success is owing to the following causes,—1st, Our ignorance of disease, of which dissections daily convince us. 2, Our ignorance of a suitable remedy, having frequent occasion to blush at our prescriptions.”

Had not Rush so soon fallen a victim to his own favorite practice of bleeding, he would unquestionably have laid a foundation for medical reformation, that would ere this have swept away those false theories with the besom of destruction. He says, “We have assisted in multiplying diseases; we have done more—we have increased their mortality. I will beg pardon of the faculty for acknowledging, in this public manner, the weakness of their profession.” He then speaks forth in the dignity of his manhood, and from the honesty of his heart, “I am pursuing truth, and am indifferent where I am led, if she only is my leader.” A man of so much

benevolence and conscientiousness as the venerable Rush could not long have reconciled his acknowledgments and practice.

Dr. L. M. WHITING, in a dissertation at an annual commencement in Pittsfield, Mass., frankly acknowledges that “the very principles upon which most of the theories involving medical questions have been based, were never established. They are, and always were, false; consequently the superstructures built upon them, were as the baseless fabric of a vision, transient in their existence; passing away before the introduction of new doctrines and hypotheses, like dew before the morning sun. System after system has arisen, flourished, and been forgotten, in rapid and melancholy succession, until the whole field is strewn with the disjointed materials in perfect chaos; and amongst the rubbish, the philosophic mind may search for ages, without being able to glean from *hardly one solitary well-established fact.*”

Dr. BENJAMIN WATERHOUSE, after lecturing in Harvard University twenty years, retired, saying of all he had been so long and zealously teaching, “I am sick of learned quackery.”

We have now clearly shown, by incontestable evidence, that the science of medicine, as taught in the schools of physic, is based on no established principles, and therefore must be false in theory, and destructive in practice. Can the object of medical science be accomplished by these theories, while all admit that object to be the prevention and cure of disease ?

CHAPTER III.

THE EFFECT OF THE REMEDIES USED BY THE MEDICAL FACULTY.

Notwithstanding the darkness, uncertainty and doubt in which medical science is involved—its incapability of answering the desired object of such a science; if its remedial agents were innocent, there would be much less occasion for a reform than there now is. Should we see a blind man armed with a pistol, shooting into a group composed of friends and enemies, should we not suppose he would be as likely to kill his friends as enemies? Equally as liable is the physician, armed with deadly poison, administered without any certain criterion to guide him in their use, to kill nature instead of disease, or kill more than he cures.

The most common remedies used by the faculty are, mercury in some of its forms, antimony, opium, bleeding, and blistering.

MERCURY, or the ore which contains it, abounds in China, Hungary, Spain, France, and South America; and of all the metals

used as a medicine, is the most extensively used—there being scarcely a disease against which some of its preparations are not exhibited.

CALOMEL, a preparation of mercury, is said to be the Sampson of the *Materia Medica*, and, as another has expressed, has destroyed more Americans than Sampson did of the Philistines.

Dr. **POWELL**, formerly professor in the Medical College at Burlington, Vt., in a letter to Dr. Wright of Montpelier, says, “It is to be hoped the time is not far distant, when all deleterious poisons will be struck from our *Materia Medica*. It is my opinion, calomel or mercury has made far more disease since it has been so universally exhibited, than all the epidemics of the country. It is more than ten years since I have administered a dose of it, although I have been daily in the practice of physic, and I am sure I have been more successful in practice than when I made use of it. The last dose I had in the house, I gave to some rats, and it as radically killed them as arsenic.”

Dr. Powell, having administered calomel for many years, could not have been mistaken in regard to its effects.

Dr. **CHAPMAN**, Professor in the University of Pennsylvania, after speaking of the extravagant use of calomel at the South, says, “He who for an ordinary cause resigns the fate of his patient to mercury, is a vile enemy to the sick; and if he is tolerably popular, will, in one successful season, have paved the way for the business of life, for he has enough to do ever afterwards, to stop the mercurial breach of the constitutions of his dilapidated patients.”

Dr. **GRAHAM**, of the University of Glasgow, says, “We have often had every benevolent feeling of our mind called into painful exercise, upon viewing patients, already exhausted by protracted illness, groaning under accumulated miseries of an active course of mercury, and by this forever deprived of perfect restoration; a barbarous practice, the inconsistency, folly and injury of which no words can sufficiently describe.”

Dr. **ROBERTSON**, of Cincinnati, says in his lectures, “It is astonishing, and will remain an astonishment to future generations, that the very rankest poisons are the greatest remedies now in use in the world, and have been for the last fifty years past. It would be a melancholy tale, could it be told of the millions who have perished through this practice.”

Prof. **WATERHOUSE** says, “When calomel is pushed to a salivation, it delipidates, if we may so speak, or dissolves the human fluids, all of which are made of globules or round particles, on the crisis of which depend the vital energy of our bodies, and of course our health and vigor. After the hazardous process of salivation, the physician may, perhaps, be able to say, Now I have so far changed the morbid state of the patient, that his disease is conquered, and entirely

overcome by the powerful operation of the mercury. But then in what condition does he find the sufferer ? His teeth are loosened, his joints are weakened, his healthy countenance is impaired, his voice is more feeble, and he is more susceptible of cold, and a damp state of the weather. His original disorder is, to be sure, overcome, but it is paying a great price for it. Secret history conceals from public notice in numerable victims of this sort.”

Prof. BARTON, of the Medical College of Louisiana, says of the tomato, “I freely wish it success, after having witnessed, for sixteen years, the horrible ravages committed by calomel.”

The administration of calomel, to be safe, depends on circumstances beyond the knowledge of the prescriber; therefore, he who administers a dose of calomel, under any circumstance, strikes a blow in the dark, the result of which will be exhibited too late to be remedied.

In spite of the efforts of the medical faculty to keep from the people a knowledge of the effects of mercury upon the human system, which effects they had been accustomed to attribute to a change in the disease; some of their number, having too much benevolence longer to administer the disease-creating poison, have laid before the astonished calomel-eater the legitimate results of its use; leading him to exclaim, Is it so ? that I have been so long duped by pretended science—so long swallowing down that which has been destroying my constitution, leaving me as I now find myself, but a wreck of the man I once was ! Is it so ? that man is so depraved, or so blinded as to deal out to his fellow-man deadly poisons, to increase his disease and suffering, when his punishment for the transgression of the laws of nature is already greater than he can bear ? These facts, coming to the knowledge of the people, have led many to reject those physicians who give calomel or mercury; physicians, therefore, find it for their interest to deny that they use it except in extreme cases. But if, from this moment, the use of calomel should be entirely abandoned, the suffering that must necessarily follow the use of what has been already administered will be incalculable.

Dr. COX, a member of the medical faculty of Cincinnati, who has recently renounced the old school practice, thus writes in a communication to the editor of the Medical Reformer: “I could enumerate at least fifty cases of *poison* and *death* by CALOMEL, that occurred in the practice of physicians who were practicing in the region of country where I practiced for the last seven years previous to my coming to the city, many of whom were sent to their graves mutilated, disfigured, and partially decomposed before death released them from their sufferings.” Suppose each physician of the thousands who are practicing in the United States after the old school routine of

giving calomel, were to hand a list of the cases of death produced by that mineral poison, that occurred within his knowledge and region of labor, what a stupendous and alarming amount of mortality it would make ! In view of these facts, Dr. COX comes to the following conclusion, and how could an honest man have come to a different conclusion ? “Lest I should farther give countenance to a species of legal and wholesale murder by the use of it, I hereby notify my friends, that from this 22d day of November, A. D. 1844, I forthwith and forever relinquish the use of mercury, in any of its preparations, as a medical agent.” He says he has found the simple plants of nature’s garden far more safe and efficacious than mercury; he therefore goes for a reform in the practice of medicine, and hopes the time is not far distant when it will be an offense against the statute law, as well as the moral and physical, to administer mercury as remedial agent. There are, no doubt, thousands of other physicians, who are constantly prompted by an enlightened conscience to abandon the use of poisons, and declare to the world that there is mischief in them. Even so mote it be.

“The following Hymn on Calomel,” says Smith, “is to be sung on certain occasions; as the following: 1st. When any one or more are convinced of its dangerous and ruinous nature, when applied under the name of medicine, so as never to use it. 2d. When any one has taken it until his teeth are loose, rotten, or have come out. 3d. When it has so cankered their mouths, that they cannot eat their food. 4th. When it has swelled their tongues out of their mouths, so that they could not shut their mouth for some time. 5th. When it has caused blindness, and partial or total loss of sight. 6th. When it has caused large sores on their legs, feet, arms, or any part of the body. 7th. When it has caused palsy, epilepsy, cramp, or any other distressing complaint. When cured of any or all these difficulties, this is to be sung by all such, and as many others as may join heartily in putting down calomel. At the close of the hymn let some one of the singers repeat aloud —Amen.

(Tune, *Old Hundred*.—*Very grave*.)

Physicians of the highest rank
(To pay their fees, we need a bank)
Combine all wisdom, art and skill,
Science and sense, in calomel

Howe’er their patients may complain
Of head, or heart, or nerve, or vein,
Of fever high, or parch, or swell,
The remedy is calomel.

When Mr. A. or B. is sick—
“Go fetch the doctor, and be quick”—

The doctor comes, with much good will,
But ne'er forgets his calomel.

He takes his patient by the hand,
And compliments him as a friend;
He sets awhile his pulse to feel,
And then takes out his calomel

He then turns to the patient's wife,
"Have you clean paper, spoon and knife ?
I think your husband might do well
To take a dose of calomel"

He then deals out the precious grains
"This, ma'am, I'm sure will ease his pains;
Once in three hours, at sound of bell,
Give him a dose of calomel"

He leaves his patient in her care,
And bids good-by with graceful air.
In hopes bad humors to expel,
she freely gives the calomel.

The man grows worse, quite fast indeed—
"Go call for counsel—ride with speed"—
The counsel comes, like post with mail
Doubling the dose of calomel.

The man in death begins to groan—
The fatal job for him is done;
His soul is winged for heaven or hell—
A sacrifice to calomel.

Physicians of my former choice,
Receive my counsel and advice;
Be not offended though I tell
The dire effects of calomel.

And when I must resign my breath,
Pray let me die a natural death,
And bid you all a long farewell,
Without one dose of calomel

ANTIMONY, says Hooper, is a medicine of the greatest power of any known substance; a quantity too minute to be sensible in the most delicate balance, is capable of producing violent effect. Tartar emetic is a preparation of antimony, commonly used by the faculty as an emetic. A Mr. Deane, of Portland, Me., was poisoned to death few years since, by taking a dose of tartar emetic through mistake; had it been administered by a physician, his death would have been attributed to some fatal disease. It is said that Basil Valentine, a German monk, gave it to some hogs, which, after purging them very much, fattened; and thinking it might produce the same effect on his brother monks, gave them each a dose, who all died in the experiment;

hence the word is derived from two Greek words, meaning *destructive to monks*.

OPIUM is obtained from Turkey and East India. It is the most common article used by those who wish to shuffle off this mortal coil, to accomplish their object. In the form of paregoric it is used to quiet children, and thousands have no doubt been quieted beyond the power of being disturbed. It does not remove the cause of disease, but relieves pain by benumbing sensibility.

BLISTERING.—This practice, though not so fatal as bleeding, is evidently as inconsistent and more tormenting. In some isolated cases, blisters may produce an apparent good effect, but the amount of injury is so much greater than the amount of good accruing from their use, that they may well be dispensed with.

BLEEDING.—Blood-letting was introduced as a frequent remedial agent, by Sydenham, in the early part of the 16th century; since which time it has consigned millions to the tomb, and cut off the fond hopes of many a tender parent, affectionate husband and wife, and dutiful child.

Dr. J. J. STEELE, a member of the medical faculty of New York, says, “Bleeding in every case, both of health and disease, according to the amount taken, destroys the balance of circulations and robs the system of its most valuable treasure and support. This balance must be restored and this treasure replaced, before a healthful action can be complete in the system.”

Dr. REID says, “If the employment of the lancet were abolished altogether, it would perhaps save annually a greater number of lives, than in any one year the sword has ever destroyed.”

Dr. BEACH, a member of the Medical Society of New York, says, “Among the various means made use of to restore the sick to health, there is none so inconsistent and absurd as blood-letting. Those who were so unfortunate as to fall victims to disease, were doomed to suffer the most extravagant effusion of blood, and were soon hurried to an untimely grave.”

Dr. LOBSTEIN, late physician of the hospital and army of France, reprobates, in strong terms, the use of the lancet. He says, “During my residence of fourteen years past, in this happy land of liberty and independence—the United States—I am bound to say that in all my practice as a physician of twenty-seven years, never have I seen in any part of Europe such extravagance of blood-letting as I have seen in this country. It is productive of the most serious and fatal effects—a cruel practice—a scourge to humanity. How many thousands of our fellow-creatures are sent by it to an untimely grave? How many parents are deprived of their lovely children? How many husbands of their wives? How many wives of their husbands? Without blood

there is no heat—no life in the system. In the blood is the life. He who takes blood from a patient, takes not only an organ of life, but a part of life itself.”

This testimony of Prof. Lobstein is deserving the consideration of every individual, on account of his high standing in the medical professions and his opportunity of judging from experience and observation of the effects of blood-letting.

Dr. THATCHER, a celebrated medical author, says, “We have no infallible index to direct us in the use of the lancet. The state of the pulse is often ambiguous and deceptive. A precipitant decision is fraught with danger, AND A MISTAKE MAY BE CERTAIN DEATH.” Here is a tacit acknowledgment that the most discriminating and cautious physician cannot Decide when bleeding is safe, and he has no certain criterion by which to decide, whether bleeding will relieve his patient—place him beyond the reach of a cure, or immediately destroy life. Well may such a science of medicine be called the science of guessing.

Think of man within the short space of twenty four hours being deprived of eighty or ninety ounces of blood, taking three portions of calomel, five or six grains of tartar emetic, and blisters applied to the extremities and the throat. *Such was the treatment of the illustrious Washington*; of him who was first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen. To have resisted the fatal operation of such herculean remedies, one would imagine this venerable old man should have retained the vigor of his earliest youth.

Says Magendie, an eminent French physiologist, “I assert, then, loudly, and fear not to affirm it, that *blood-letting* induces, both in the blood itself and in our tissues certain modifications and pathological phenomena which resemble, to a certain extent, those we have seen developed in animals deprived of atmospheric oxygen, or drink, and of solid food. You shall have the material proof of the fact. Here are three glasses containing blood drawn from a dog on three different occasions, at intervals of two days. The animal was in good health, and I took care to supply him with abundance of nourishing food. In the first glass you see the serum and clot are in just proportions to each other. The latter, which is perfectly coagulated, forms about four fifths of the entire mass. This specimen of blood, consequently, appears to possess the desirable qualities. Now turn your attention to the second glass. The animal was still well fed when its contents were drawn, and yet you perceive an evident increase in the quantity of serum. The clot forms, at the most, only two thirds of the whole. But here is the produce of the third venesection. Although the animal's diet remained unchanged, we find a still greater difference. Not only is the proportion of serum more considerable, but its color is changed.

It has acquired a reddish yellow tinge, owing to the commencing solution of the globular substance.”

If it was a fact, that the science of medicine that teaches the doctrine, that the most powerful poisons are the best medicines—that drawing from man his heart's blood is the best way to restore him to health when sick, is based on the immutable principles of truth, and proved itself true by the practice, then we should be bound to admit its principles, however inconsistent they might appear. But if there is a shade of doubt resting upon our minds, let us rather trust to the unassisted and undisturbed powers of nature, than to remedies that require the banishment of reason from her throne, before a thinking man can consistently use them. Give a sick man poison that we have positive evidence will destroy the life of a well man, to cure him? Take from a feeble man his blood, on which his little remaining strength depends, to strengthen him? Does it appear reasonable, or does it carry with it the evidence of its truth, by immediately curing the sick, or strengthening the weak ?

There is not, in my opinion, and I am not alone in that opinion, to be found, in all the superstition and ignorance of this or any previous age, a more complete inadaptedness of means to ends, than the old school system of medical practice to cure disease. As consistently might we attempt to heat an oven with ice, put out a fire with alcohol, or fatten a horse with grindstones or shingle nails.

It is now the wonder of the more enlightened of the present generation, how the belief in witchcraft could have obtained among the most learned of the 16th century. So it will be the wonder of future generations, that their forefathers of the 19th century should be so hoodwinked, as to swallow down deadly poisons, be bled, blistered, and physicked; sacrificing their own common sense, for the pretensions of a class of men, whose gain depended on the ignorance of the people of the result of their remedies.

Are there not, besides, a sufficient number of influences brought to bear upon mankind to drag them down to the grave ? Is not alcohol slaying its thousands? war its millions? and the transgression of the physical laws of nature in food, exercise, and dress, its tens of millions? Why, then, should Pandora's box be opened for another outlet for human life ?

CHAPTER IV.

THE HOMEOPATHIC SYSTEM.

As this system of practice is different in many particulars from the allopathic or old school system, and is gaining the attention of the American people, it may be expected that we should give it a passing notice.

Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, of Germany, the author of this system, was formerly a physician of the old school, and was said to be a man of talent and learning. Like many of his predecessors, after wandering in the shades of night for many years in search of truth, he deplored the healing art as altogether "uncertain and incomprehensible." He saw the danger of striking at random with such deadly weapons as mercury, antimony, opium & Co., and therefore labored to prove that the ten millionth part of a grain of calomel was better than 250 grains. This one fact he has clearly proved, and we challenge the world to refute it, that the patient who takes infinitesimal doses of poison will recover sooner, and be less injured, than the patient who takes large doses. Another fact can as easily be proved, that the patient who takes no poison does better than either.

The views entertained by Hahnemann of disease and the method of cure, are original, and remain yet to be proved. The distinguishing features of his system appear to us visionary, and the remedies inefficient, but generally harmless, though not always. He includes in his *Materia Medica* the most deadly poisons, given in such small quantities, however, as to do little harm or good, but sometimes increased so as to produce the most alarming effect. Dr. Beach, of New York City, says he was called to a distinguished dentist of that city, (Dr. Burdell,) who was taken unwell, and called a homœopathic physician to attend him. He requested him to give him no mercury; but contrary to his express desire, he gave him both mercury and arsenic; and he now states that he has been injured, particularly by the latter. He thinks the absorbents have taken up the poison, and that it has settled in all his joints. They are now swollen, stiff, and contracted; and he is unable to walk. So indignant does he feel against the practice, that he proposes to caricature it, by exhibiting two rats, one in a healthy state, and the other, after having passed through the ordeal of taking ratsbane or arsenic, with the hair off. The fundamental principle is, that in all diseases we are to use a medicine in small doses to cure a disease that will produce the same symptoms as are manifested by the disease we wish to cure, and that a medicine can be made to operate on the particular portion of the system designed by the prescriber, without effecting any other portion.

The position taken by the advocates of Hahnemann's system cannot be successfully defended, there being too many well-established facts in contrariety in it. But however much the old school physicians may ridicule this system, the light of truth now dawning upon the world will show, that the consequences of *their* system (the allopathic) are *too serious to be ridiculed*. While Hahnemann may divert the patient with his grain of calomel, mixed with a barrel of sugar, and a grain of the compound divided into infinitesimal doses, requiring him to regard the physical laws of his nature in food, exercise, &c., allowing nature all her power to contend against disease; the old school physician lifts his fatal club and strikes at random, the force of which oftener comes on the head of the only healing principle that exists in man, termed nature, than on his enemy, disease. Much good, therefore, may result from this system of practice, in the present benighted state of the world on all medical subjects, by diverting the patient while nature effects a cure.

A large majority of the homœopathic physicians are seceders from the old school, and condemn in unqualified terms the extravagant use of poisons, bleeding, blistering, and physicking; having themselves seen enough of their destructive effects to arouse their better feelings, and lead them to adopt a system more in accordance with humanity. Although we differ from them in theory and practice, we cannot but respect them for the uncompromising stand they have taken against the pernicious practice in which they themselves were once engaged, and to remove which they have sacrificed their standing with the medical faculty, been cast out from their society, and are now the objects of their ridicule. An enlightened community will do them justice, which is all, we presume, *they* ask.

CHAPTER V.

HYDROPATHY, OR THE COLD WATER CURE.

There is no individual who appreciates the value of cold water, both as the most natural and healthy drink for man and beast, and as a valuable remedial agent, than we do; but we are not prepared to admit that it will accomplish every indication in the cure of disease. There are cases in which an immediate relief cannot be obtained without the use of some medicine besides cold water. We think, however, it may be successfully applied in a great variety of cases where there is sufficient vitality to produce reaction; but much caution is necessary in its application, or serious injury might accrue from its indiscriminate

use. The time is not far distant when the virtue of pure cold water will be more generally appreciated, and occupy an important place in the consistent physician's *Materia Medica*. If it is a fact that pure water will accomplish every indication in the cure of disease, we sincerely pray that the time may speedily come when the fact will be known to the world. Many, in whose judgment and sincerity we have much confidence, thus believe; but we cannot so believe until we have the evidence. We intend to thoroughly investigate the subject, and shall always be governed in our theory and practice by the light we receive.

A hospital has been recently established at Graeffenberg, by Vincent Preissnitz, who makes no pretensions to book learning or a knowledge of medicine. He treats all forms of disease with cold water alone, internally and externally, with a success that is perfectly astonishing. It has been stated on good authority that out of 7600 patients, the most of whom had applied to nearly every other source for relief, he has lost but thirty

But little is known in this country of his method of applying this valuable remedial agent.

Mr. Henry C. Wright, of Philadelphia, a distinguished anti-slavery and peace-lecturer, has been at Graeffenberg, and entirely cured of a pulmonary disease: he writes thus to the editor of the *Liberator* in relation to the Principal of the hospital and the mode of cure:—

“It requires the constant exercise of a desperate resolution to carry on the *cure* amid such snows and ice. With such a temperature, to have our bodies packed up, twice a day, in a sheet wrung out of water, whose temperature is down to freezing— (last evening, the sheet in which I was packed, three minutes before I saw spread out on the snow before my window, frozen stiff as ice)—to lie in that wet sheet till I get warm, and then go down into a bath-room, often full of snow and ice, and there throw all off, and smoking, plunge into that dreadful bath, and stay in it one or two minutes— then to be rubbed dry, and have a long wet bandage tied around the whole body—then dress, and go out and face these fierce, howling tempests, the snow all blowing into your eyes, ears, hair, neck, and bosom; and then to have to sit down in cold water, and there sit fifteen minutes at a time—sure, such a fearful process must kill or cure. Strange to say, not one here seems to have the least fear of the former. It kills no one—it invigorates and strengthens all, and produces a pretty thorough indignation in each at himself, that he should ever have subjected his body to the healing process generally pursued by the medical faculty. I am certain that the process—though so fearful that I almost catch my breath and shiver all over to think of it—has done me great good.

“Four days ago, a woman who had taken cold during the day,

and was not aware of the enemy lurking in her, was seized in the night with a most violent fever. I saw her in the morning, and she looked exactly like a person in scarlet fever. A wet sheet was at once wrapped about her whole body, and changed and wet again every twenty or thirty minutes. This was pursued about twenty hours, and water was applied in other ways. The next day, I saw her up and dressed, and looking as well and eating as hearty as usual. Not a particle of medicine was administered. I do not believe that out of the three hundred patients now here, or out of several thousands that have been here, there is one who has the least fear of fevers or colds. Each seems to feel that, so far as fevers and colds are concerned, a certain remedy is always at hand. I do think it is the duty of all who have young children, to learn to apply this remedy. How many diseases in little children originate in cold !

“Vincent Preissnitz is certainly an extraordinary man—has a countenance on which one loves to look—a man of unpretending simplicity, of quiet look and demeanor, but of dauntless resolution and unyielding firmness. If a patient puts himself under his control, and he assumes the responsibility of the case, the patient must conform. He is a man of very limited *book* learning—pretends to none, has none—says but little to his patients—has no *theory* at all—and would be probably incapable of giving a written account of his system. Cold air and cold water are the only remedies with which he attempts to combat disease, and he does not pretend that he can cure all diseases with these. But he makes his patients work for health. We can't sit down in an easy chair, or stretch out on a soft sofa, in a warm room, with a warm wrapper gown on, and take little nice things, and be petted and comforted, and all that ! No—we have to work, work, work—no rest day or night —have but little heat, and no comforts at all, (comfort is unknown here, in anything.) Our food is plentiful, but of the coarsest kind—no tea, no coffee, no condiments but salt—milk and cold water for drink; dry, stale rye bread, butter, boiled beef, soup, &c., for food. To cut our rye bread is a labor of no small magnitude, and each must cut for himself; and to see barons, counts, princes, cavaliers, priests, generals, doctors, and what not, all mixed up together, cutting and gnawing away at this coarse food, like hungry wolves—you could suppose that the genius of famine had come forth from the desert of Sahara, and was at our table.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE THOMSONIAN SYSTEM.

This system of medical practice, unlike most other systems, is the result of experience. Facts were first established, and then a theory based on such facts. Without facts it is as impossible to establish a correct theory as to commence building a chimney at the top. There would be no difficulty if the first brick could be made to stick. So in medical science. Establish one important fact, and you have a foundation on which you may build with safety.

Dr. Thomson, the author of the system that bears his name, was altogether unacquainted with the prevailing theories of medicine. His mind was therefore untrammelled. If, as Dr. Rush has said, those physicians become most eminent who soonest emancipate themselves from the tyranny of the schools of physic; was it good reason why Dr. Thomson could not be a reformer, because he had never been enslaved by these theories? He took reason and common sense for his guide, and established every principle by long experience. It was the inefficiency of the regular practice that induced him to turn his attention to the subject of medicine. His children were attacked by disease, a regular physician was called, exhausted his skill, and abandoned them to the cold embrace of death. At this critical period, Dr. Thomson resolved to call into exercise his own judgment in the use of such remedies as he had become acquainted with in his earlier days. Necessity is the mother of invention. He applied these remedies, and succeeded beyond his most sanguine expectations. All of them recovered under his treatment, besides his companion who was given up by five physicians.

In this simple manner originated a system of medical practice, based on the immutable principles of truth, that has saved thousands of suffering human beings from the jaws of death, who had been abandoned by the medical faculty to die. It soon became a topic of conversation, in the region around, that Mr. Thomson, an illiterate farmer, had cured five of his family after the doctors had given them up to die. Soon he was called to administer to his neighbors after all other remedies failed, and such universal success attended his practice, that his name and unexampled success were soon known abroad: and so numerous were his calls to attend the sick, that he was under the necessity of relinquishing his farm and devoting himself exclusively to the practice of medicine. We now find the illiterate farmer a doctor—a graduate of the school of nature, with almost universal success for his diploma.

Little did he think, when he yielded to the pressing requests of

the suffering and dying to administer to their relief, that he should call down upon his head the curses and denunciations of the whole medical faculty, whose craft they now saw to be in danger. But he soon fully realized that the sentiment of the celebrated Dr. Harsey was true—"that he who attempts a reform in medicine, runs the risk of the sacrifice of his life, reputation, and estate." Such was his success in curing the incurables of the faculty, that their indignation was aroused against him, and poured on his devoted head without mercy. Every means within their power were used to destroy him and his followers. If one in a thousand of his patients died, although they might have been incurable when he commenced upon them, he was charged with murder, and in one instance was prosecuted and put into prison. Notwithstanding the deep rooted prejudice, and time-honored usages of the people, and the hellish animosity and unprecedented persecution of a profession whose influence was almost omnipotent, Thomsonism has flourished and progressed until its remedial agents have found admittance into nearly every hamlet and mansion in the United States.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TESTIMONY OF OLD SCHOOL PHYSICIANS IN ITS FAVOR.

Notwithstanding the medical faculty as a body violently persecuted Dr. Thomson, and ridiculed his system of practice, some of the most candid and humane had the magnanimity to express their conviction that his system was far more philosophical than their own. Among the first and most unwavering of the friends of Dr. Thomson, was Prof. Waterhouse, of Harvard University. He says in a letter to the editor of the Boston Courier, "I remain firm in the opinion that the system and practice of Dr. Thomson is superior to any now extant; for by his remedies, as much can be accomplished in three or four days, as can be done by the regular system in as many weeks, and that too without injuring the patient."

Dr. THOMAS HERSEY, too, of Columbus, Ohio, an eminent physician and surgeon, who was surgeon in the United States army during the last war; after thoroughly investigating Dr. Thomson's system, publicly renounced a system he had practiced forty years, and adopted the more philosophical system of Thomson. He says, "More than forty years of life have been devoted to the ancient or regular practice. Ten years have been spent in ascertaining the claims of the Thomsonian system. A partial learning was the first step, and the result was a mixed practice, which I found could not succeed. I found I must be a Thomsonian altogether, or abandon the cause. The result

has been, that thus resolutely pursuing this course, I became astonished at its success. This outrivalled any thing with which I had ever been acquainted in private practice, or in my former official capacity as surgeon in the United States army, or any public or private station I had ever been called to fill.” He says also in a letter to Dr. John Thomson, “My practice has been extensive—my experience and opportunity for observation has seldom been exceeded; but I venture to pledge myself upon all I hold sacred in the profession, that in my estimation the discoveries made by your honored father have a decided preference, and stand unrivalled by all that bears the stamp of ancient or modern skill.”

Dr. SAMUEL ROBERTSON, of Cincinnati, Ohio, who pursued his studies in England, and afterwards under the celebrated Dr. Rush, of Philadelphia, says, “I have renounced the depleting and poisoning system altogether; and hereafter, from this day, my life shall be spent in diffusing a knowledge of the superiority of the Thomsonian system, however much I may be abused by my former brethren.”

Dr. W. K. GRIFFIN, of Clinton, N. Y., also embraced this system. He says, “After having attended three courses of lectures at the college of physicians and surgeons at Fairfield, and obtained the degree of Doctor of Medicine, I commenced using calomel, opium, and the like, with the most unshaken confidence. Frequent failures I was wont to attribute to the inveteracy of the disease. But experience soon taught me a different lesson. I had frequent occasions to notice, that when circumstances prevented the administration of the popular remedies, nature performed a cure much sooner, and left the patient in a more favorable condition, than in cases where the scientific medical books were followed. I communicated this discovery to my confidential friends in the profession, and found to my no small surprise, that many of them were equally conscious of the fact. ‘*But,*’ said they, ‘*the people love to be deceived, and in this respect it promotes our interest to accommodate them.*’ They call on us to prescribe, and by crying down our own medicines, we should at once throw ourselves out of business.’

“Though I had always possessed the strongest prejudice against that class of men vulgarly called steam doctors, yet testimony in their favor had at length become so abundant, that I was forced to relinquish in some measure my preconceived opinions, so far at least as to give their system a fair investigation. When I entered upon the Thomsonian practice, I was convinced that it possessed rare virtues, yet it was natural for me to suppose that those virtues had been much exaggerated by the friends of the system. But in this respect I was happily disappointed, for I discovered, as my practical knowledge of the system increased, that half its virtues had not been told.”

STEPHEN DEAN, M. D., of Hamburg, N. Y., who was seventeen years a "regular," in giving his reasons for renouncing the old system and embracing Thomson's, says, "I tried the same remedies upon myself that I used upon my patients, and they nearly ruined me, and I accordingly threw away my lance, and all my poisonous drugs, and adopted the safe, simple and efficacious system of Dr. Thomson."

Dr. THOMAS EVELEIGH, M. D., of Charleston, S. C., in a letter to the editor of the Thomsonian Recorder, says, "The theory of disease upon which is based the Thomsonian system of practice, I consider as approaching nearer the truth than any other theory with which I am acquainted; and so perfectly satisfied am I of this fact, that I have abandoned the old practice altogether, and have adopted Thomson's in preference; and every day's experience tends to confirm me in the opinion I first formed, that the system is based on the immutable principles of truth, and wants nothing but faithful and intelligent practitioners, to evince to the world its superiority over every other system. I am persuaded that as soon as the public mind becomes enlightened upon the subject, it must and will supersede every other practice."

We could fill this volume with the encomiums of those who have practiced many years on the old school system, who have renounced the same, and become thorough-going Thomsonians; but enough have already been introduced, to show that the advocates of Thomsonism are not all an illiterate, ignorant class of men. About three hundred more might be added, whose testimony would be in accordance with those whose names we have inserted, who have spent the usual time in studying the works of the faculty, attended medical lectures, and practiced many years, poisoning people well. After a thorough and candid examination of the Thomsonian system, with all their prepossessions against it, and a trial of its remedial agents, in all the different forms of disease, they were compelled, by the force of evidence, to abandon their poisoning system, and adopt one more in accordance with nature, reason, and common sense. Thousands of others have adopted a mixed practice to secure the patronage of all parties.