FURTHER.
ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE WATER-CURE,
AS PRACTISED AT MALVERN.

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It is, in my opinion, too much the practice with our profession to allow the mendacious and bold empiric to pass unnoticed. There was a time when medical authority was furnished with powers to inflict condign punishment on such offenders; but that wholesome provision has passed into abeyance, and the quack now stalks abroad, and glories in his security from penal visitation. It is, however, the bounden duty of every physician to discourage empirical practice, not from the sordid consideration of its interfering with his professional emoluments, which is seldom or never the case, but from a firm conviction of the injury the public may sustain by confiding in and employing men who are ignorant of medical practice. The physician should not allow any false notions of spurious liberality to deter him from boldly denouncing every form of empiricism, whether it exists among the regular members of the profession, or among those who may have *surreptitiously* claimed titles which they do not really possess, for these delinquents always adopt extraordinary modes of obtruding themselves and their wonderful abilities on the notice of the public, and their true position is with the nostrum-mongers. A modern quack may be defined to be—a pretender to knowledge of which he is not possessed—a vilifier of all that is honorable and respectable in the medical profession—and a puffer of some remedy, the powers of which he does not understand.

Now, let us try the water-doctor by any or all of these tests, and endeavour to discover how far his recorded delinquencies entitle him to the unenviable distinction of ranking with some of the most notorious of those medical pretenders, whose deeds are celebrated in ancient and modern times.

Let any one who may be interested in such matters just turn to a certain book, called the "Water Cure," and he will there find that the author of that work has indulged in some most extraordinary assertions, which entitle him to a high degree of celebrity among the fraternity with whom he must henceforth be ranked.

Certain it is, that nothing which can be said by such an individual can in the slightest degree tend to cast a shade on the brightness of the halo which surrounds the imperishable name of Astley Cooper; and yet, as far as this can be done, it is attempted in the above book, for it is there broadly stated that Sir Astley Cooper had publicly vilified his professional brethren by casting aspersions upon them; but, as this reproach of so honorable and untainted a character cannot be believed without the most undeniable proof, I would ask, in what lecture, or at what date, and in what place, did Sir Astley Cooper say that his colleagues in his hospital treated their patients *infamously*, and tell his pupils that their practice was so *infamous* that he could not bear to go into their wards?

In another part of the same book the reader will find it stated that a physician in Edinburgh, by his medicines, caused cancer in the stomach. Now, I would beg to ask, what are the evidences, medical or

non-medical, that a physician in modern Athens not only could not cure a cancer in the stomach, but had even occasioned it in two instances, and killed both his miserable patients? These are very grave charges, which the author of them should be prepared to substantiate, or he will otherwise be despised as a foul libeller and miserable charlatan. But, vile and detestable as are such odious attempts to sully the reputation of some of the most honored of our noble profession, they are, perhaps, surpassed by the unblushing effrontery and impiety with which the author of the "Water Cure" announces that *henceforth there never need be a death from scarlet fever!*

But attend, gentle reader, pray attend, to the following choice specimen of water-cure physiology:—"Give me," says the same author, "any full-grown individual, and let me act on his system and his brain, through his stomach, with meats and drinks in *small* or *larger* quantity, *at my disposal*, and I will make him grave or gay, cheerful or melancholy, reduce him to the depths of despair, or elevate him to a fancied heaven. I will destroy his memory, or make him imagine himself the most miserable man on earth, the most to be pitied, having in his possession everything to make him satisfied. I will make him run or walk, lie in bed without the power of movement, to blaspheme or pray, and, although the best of persons, *LAY VIOLENT HANDS ON HIS OWN LIFE.*"

This precious paragraph forcibly reminds me of the story which that notorious socialist, Owen, tells of himself. When a boy he scalded his stomach with very hot Scotch porridge, and it so sharpened his wit that, in after years, he produced the immortal work called the "New Moral World." Now, I feel certain that, as far as the interests of religion and morality are concerned, this work does not contain a more mischievous paragraph than the one before quoted from the pen of one who, *par excellence*, may be styled the medical chartist of the present day.

Further comment upon such impudent quackery would be vain. One can only remark, that it is difficult to find any specimen more illustrative of empirical writing, and it reminds one of the high tone in which the quacks of the fifteenth century addressed the public; for instance, Theophrastus Paracelsus begins his principal work in these words, "Ye must give way to me, and not I to you; ye must give way to me, Avicenna, Rhazes, Galen, Mesue; ye must give way to me, ye of Paris, ye of Montpellier, ye of Swabia, ye of Misnia, ye of Cologne, ye of Vienna, and whatever places lie on the Danube and the Rhine; ye islands of the sea, thou Italian, thou Dalmatian, thou Arabian, thou Israelite, you must give way to me, and not I to you. The monarchy is mine!"

Let me not, however, detain the reader longer by dwelling on the specimens of bad taste and literary immorality which are to be found scattered in plentiful profusion through the work in question. My more immediate object in this communication is to draw attention to the treatment of a case of gout, which disease is supposed to be specially dispelled by the wand of this celebrated magician. The history is as follows, and I give it in the patient's own words:—

"I went to Malvern on the 16th of August, 1842, and had lately recovered from an attack of gout, and

after getting to Malvern, was enabled to walk about. At the expiration of a week, having taken cold, I felt gout was again coming on, so I sent for the water-doctor on the 22nd day of August. After he had examined me, he treated the case lightly, and said *he would cure me in a few days*, so as to be able to walk as well as he did. He then went away, and sent a man, who put me in a blanket and covered me with a bed, under which I remained four hours and a half, drinking a wineglass of water every quarter of an hour after I began to perspire; at the end of that time the blankets and bed were taken off, and I was wrapped in a cold wet sheet, and remained enveloped in it about seven or eight minutes. I suffered a good deal of pain under the bed, but when I had been there three hours and a half, I began to perspire, and did so profusely. The wet sheet immediately stopped the perspiration, and I was then enveloped in a dry sheet and well rubbed. After this I was told I might either go to bed or take a walk. I went to bed, and had a bad night.

"On the 23rd, in the morning, the same process was repeated, only that I went into a cold bath instead of being wrapped in a cold sheet. After this I was decidedly worse, having more pain, and a very restless, disturbed night.

"On the 24th the water-doctor again sent his man to put me through the same process; but, feeling that my life was endangered by what had happened the day before, I did not go through it. I passed another very painful night, and could not move a limb, or bear to be moved.

"On the 25th the doctor called, and said I must have hot flannels for fomentation instead of the foregoing process; this I accordingly did. All this time I took no aperient medicine, and had no evacuation for two or three days.

"On the 26th I had a tepid bath, and again on the 28th; but, feeling that I was not at all benefited, I did not persevere in anything but the fomentation with the hot flannels. I remained at Malvern until the 6th of September, and the water-doctor saw me about every other day. I was under his treatment for a fortnight, at the end of which time I was worse than when I began, and was taken home to Worcester in a fly, being carried into it from my lodgings at Malvern, and carried from it into my house at Worcester.

"Both myself and wife were very much disappointed, as the water-doctor, after he had seen and examined me, had endeavoured to make my wife believe that he should cure me in a very few days.

"I took no medicines after I came home, and remained in bed for several days, and got slowly better. On the 16th of September I still continued very weak, and Dr. Hastings then recommended me some strengthening medicine, and I have slowly recovered my strength, but am now, the 13th day of October, scarcely able to move at all on crutches, being decidedly worse, and less able to move now than I have ever been before at the same period after an attack of gout.

"Dr. Hastings has attended me in several severe fits of the gout, and I have never on any occasion, under his care, been confined to my bed more than eight days. The last time he attended me was in December,

1840, when I had a very severe fit of gout, and he paid me four visits. I was nearly well in six days, and soon able to walk about and pursue my ordinary avocations."

REMARKS.

Here was a case of inflammatory gout, uncomplicated with any remarkable visceral derangement, subjected to the treatment of the water-doctor, and the patient had, at the end of a fortnight, become so much worse, that nearly every joint in the body was useless to him. I had an opportunity of seeing the gentleman several times, whilst he was under the water-cure, and of watching the progress of the case. The first time I visited him was when he had been under the bed and afterwards enveloped in the wet sheet. I found the pulse about 120, the tongue furred, and the pain, on touching any of the affected joints, extreme. I made no suggestion as to the treatment, but merely watched the issue of events. For four days in succession I found the pulse upwards of 100, and the tongue much coated. The treatment did not seem to have the slightest effect in lessening the frequency of the pulse or diminishing the severity of the pain; indeed, I can state positively that I never saw him suffer so much pain in any former attack. It so happened that I had attended this patient in several former severe attacks of gout, and had always been so fortunate as to relieve him speedily by the ordinary means which are in general use for this disease. The application of leeches to the affected joints was always a part of the treatment, and after relieving the bowels by an active aperient he took diaphoretics and alteratives.

This treatment always succeeded in reducing the pulse, and counteracting the inflammatory action, and he on all occasions recovered more speedily than is customary in severe gout, being well and about in a few days.

But what occurred under the water-cure? The pulse was left uncontrolled for several days, the inflammatory action was not checked in the different joints, and the bowels remained inactive. The consequence was, that the usual results of inflammatory action—namely, deposition of serous fluids and lymph, took place, and the joints were thus seriously injured by those unnatural deposits; so that up to the time these remarks are written (nearly eight weeks from the attack) they have not recovered their normal state, and perhaps may not do so for a long time to come, whereby a serious injury is inflicted on the patient. Moreover, the treatment was such as produced considerable alarm; for the clumsy mode of producing perspiration, by putting the patient under a heavy bed, caused intense pain, and produced an apprehension in his mind that the disease might take a fatal termination.

There is another point worthy of remark. The discipline of the water-cure weakened this patient to a great degree; indeed, more so than one usually sees in patients who go through severe discipline from lowering medicines, and this weakness was not easily removed, for it remained a considerable time, and until I prescribed some quinine for him, three weeks after the attack, he did not begin to regain strength.

Some apology seems necessary for having said so much of the former treatment of this patient; but the

only means I had of contrasting the effects of the ordinary treatment of such cases with the water-cure, which it is asserted by the modern empirical sect is a more speedy and safe mode of managing gout, was, so far as this one case is concerned, to bring both modes in strong contrast before the reader, in order that he may himself judge of their respective merits. Having thus far performed a duty, which my position seemed imperatively to demand, I shall be satisfied with the result, and as opportunity serves, and as occasion seems to require, I shall still draw the attention of your readers to other cases, which have fallen under my notice, where the boasted water-cure has signally failed in performing any of those miracles which the infatuated admirers of this system seem to look for from it. Not that I expect by such means to produce any impression on the incorrigible dupes and monomaniacs who are invariably found to lend their support to any new system, however ridiculous; but I make my appeal to the medical profession, and through them to the rational part of the community, at the same time begging that my remarks may not be supposed to disparage the efficacy of water as an *adjuvant* to other means. I only repudiate the absurd notion, that it is the *only remedy* which Providence has placed at our disposal for the alleviation of the pain and suffering of the human race.

That facts decisive of the false pretensions on which the water-cure rests, might be abundantly adduced, were "the whole truth and nothing but the truth" told, is not to be doubted. As I before observed, I shall feel it my duty, should occasion require, to bring other facts before the profession. I say *duty*, for "England expects every man to do his duty;" and I would fain have that memorable watchword recollected whensoever such reckless violations of every thing to be called science, and still more of all which is due to a profession, which a great moralist has left so honorable a testimony to, are unblushingly thrust upon us. I believe it to be the plain duty of every honest man, medical or not, to declare his mind on such a matter as this. Not that he need fear, for "*magna est veritas et prevalebit*"—that axiom cannot fail; but while it is veiled from the ordinary eye by the dust thrown over it by an artful and a shameless hand, fearful evils are perpetrated on the sick and the suffering; and a body, "*nulli secundus*" in disinterestedness, is held up as only disturbed and offended for the sake of "*filthy lucre*." Most sure I am that this imputation, now so ungenerously insinuated, now so impudently affirmed throughout the pages of the strange production, called the "*Water-Cure*" (for strange, to say the least, it is for any thing professing to be either scientific or humane), I say, most sure I am, that this imputation is utterly without foundation. It is impossible to speak of it without indignation. Let empirics make what promises they will—and let the credulous of whatever rank—*miserabile dictu!* believe them! These are their proper privileges, and I seek not to interfere with any man's liberty. But let both empirics and their dupes "do as they would be done by." Let them, while the one pursue their vocation, and the other are content with its performances, let them leave those who are doing their duties diligently, and at a cost of labor, self-denial, and devotedness, ex-

ceeded by none, to themselves. The medical body is not—in no degree—chargeable with illiberality, as to any new method of treating the various ills that "flesh is heir to," nor with the covetousness of money, which the author of this production alleges against them. Very thankful, on the contrary, would they be if diseases were more tractable, and patients sooner out of their hands than the imperfection of their art at present permits them sometimes to be. They are, however, doing all which the limited nature of human means allows. They are cultivating their science, and they are practising their art more and more successfully, and with most honorable self-dedication.

To say less than this would be inconsistent with truth. To say for them all which might be said, would be as contrary to their unostentatious principles as to the spirit which, from Hippocrates to the present day, has been their predominant characteristic.

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Among the many changes which the progress of events has recently introduced into the general and political institutions of this country, will be found some which must ultimately give rise to questions calling for careful and prolonged medical investigation. It does not require much prophetic skill to divine that the newly received doctrines relating to trade and commerce, so extensively acted upon during the late session of Parliament, will lead to still more extensive changes of a similar character. Whether it be for good or for evil it is not our province to inquire; but the tendency of these measures is manifestly to the removal of all commercial restrictions, financial and protective. We have heard much, in connection with this subject, of the evils of class legislation, and the principle has been broadly laid down, that in no case are the interests of the whole community to be compromised by the attempt at affording protection to those of a portion, however large and influential that portion may be. Were we inclined to discuss the general merits of these intricate questions, it must be in another place, as the subject, as a whole, is foreign to our professed objects. There is, however, one branch of it which ultimately concerns us, and which we foresee will, before long, force itself upon our notice; and it is for the well-being of no single class of the population only that this should be carefully considered, and that any changes in existing arrangements which may hereafter be thought necessary should be neither hastily nor rashly entered upon. The commercial aristocracy of the country will not long remain satisfied with the concessions already made, and the demand for the removal of financial restrictions will be followed by a similar demand for