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THE

QUACKERY OF THE AGE:

A

SATIRE ON THE TIMES.

BY AUGUSTUS MASON, M. D.

MEMBER OF THE MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY.

“When any necessity or occasion has pointed out the convenience of addressing the public, I have never made it a consideration whether the subject was popular or unpopular, but whether it was right or wrong; for that which is right will become popular, and that which is wrong, though by mistake it may obtain the cry or fashion of the day, will soon lose the power of delusion, and sink into disesteem.”

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QUACKERY OF THE AGE

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THE QUACKERY OF THE AGE.

THE character of the Age in which we live is a subject to us of considerable interest and importance. Every Age has some lines of demarcation, some peculiar traits, which mark its dissimilarity from all others. But in many points we see a sameness of character, continuing for centuries. Even in circumstances that at a first glance are apparently disagreeing, we find no originality or change. This is most true of the different kinds of popular delusion. In some form or other it is ever existent. Could we look beneath its various masks, we should see the same spirit and the same countenance.

Every Age has its Hobby and Humbug—its seven-days Wonder—its week of Witchcraft—its Popular Delusion—its reign of Quackery. The Charlatan and Empiric—the False Prophet—the

Miracle Worker, in what age of the world has not history recorded their false and arrogant pretensions; aye, full as wonderful and fully as much believed by a credulous public, as at the present day.

Impostors have ever practiced their deceits; Witches have rode the air on broomsticks; Prophets have ever been bawling the end of the world; Religious Enthusiasts building up fanatical sects; the sick have been miraculously cured, and the self-puffing Quack has promised an eternity of youth and vigor to mankind.

The history of the past is strewn with the ashes of departed delusions. In a few years time we see them spring up, bud, blossom and decay. Ours has been the day of Grahamism, of Mormonism, of Millerism, of Come-outer-ism, of Thomsonianism, of Animal Magnetism, and Empiricism in many shapes. But the Grahamite has left his sawdust and sand; the Mormon has lost his Prophet; the Millerite has not floated upward in his robes of white, but still with the wicked, treads on terra firma; the Mesmeriser has put the world to sleep upon his theme;—but in their downfall, quackery and folly, deceit and superstition have not ceased to exist. Charlatanry has a Protean

countenance ; exploded to-day, it comes out with a new face to-morrow.

The arrogant pretender has always feasted on the credulity of the world. The multitude are dazzled by show and barefaced presumption and the gaudy trappings ; but Virtue and Truth and Merit make no use of these. Vice is ever bedecked with glittering robes and alluring baubles. Falsehood and Pretension ever sound their own brazen trumpets. The Quack boasts of his miraculous cures, and the Imposter wraps his mystery about him. But Virtue in her virgin robes shuns the gaze of the world. Truth receives the humble worshipper at her pure and simple shrine. Merit waits for her hour of triumph, nor forces her claims abroad.

To judge by the noise, the superficial observer would suppose that Vice and Quackery were lords in the triumphant ; that Humbug was the order of the day ; that Imposture had millions of followers. The Age has all these. It has many evils and many errors, many follies and absurdities. They may not be so extensive or so profound as may be imagined. The surface of the ocean is ruffled by every passing breeze, while its depths remain still and undisturbed. The ignorant, trifling and un-

reflecting are moved by every wind of doctrine; the weak and thoughtless float upon the popular current.

It is too true, that if anything is said upon this subject, the cry of interest and persecution is raised. But in spite of this clamor, I shall endeavor, with a spirit of charity and fairness, and with no weapon but common sense, to illustrate some of the more prominent features of this kind, which characterize the present age.

This is the Age of Reform. Associations for the suppression of every vice are innumerable throughout the community. Societies are as thick as the locusts in Egypt. The voice of the Reformer is heard in every street. One would think in such an age, when the loud cry of Reform echoes up to Heaven, that the people were inclined to become more moral and virtuous. But such is not the fact. The spirit of the age is to encourage vice. Its workings, its deceits, its pleasures and temptations are the paltry food on which our reading population glut their depraved appetites. Never since the art of Printing was invented, was the literary market flooded with such a load of profitless and loathsome trash. The Moral Reform Journal finds itself stowed promiscuously among

a heap of modern licentious Romance. Men, to whom the avenues and temptations of vice are familiar, pour out upon the town their vile publications, which are eagerly sought after and devoured by the public.

The mischief wrought upon the general tone of society by this ceaseless current of impure and unprofitable reading, is beyond calculation. The bright hours of day devoted by Heaven to action, are squandered; when balmy sleep should descend to close the lids weary with labor, the midnight lamp burns over the exciting page; unchaste pictures crowd upon the fevered imagination, as the mind wanders on through scenes of vicious temptation, of dark design, infernal plot and criminal fruition which it would make the virtuous cheek blush to speak of. Such are the thousand and one ephemeral Romances, labelled "Love and Guilt," "Temptation Unveiled," or some other catch-word suited to allure the eye of the public.

Truly an Age of Moral Reform! when the defection of a clergyman from his exalted station, by the strength of his unsubdued and unbridled passions, furnishes exciting aliment for the public taste; when every point of transgression, every

minute deviation from rectitude, every indelicate liberty taken, is clamorously called for and paraded before the public view, teeming from the press with all its immoral tendencies, and circulated into the bosom of every family. How wise in our day and generation are the children of light! seeking to preserve the virgin purity of the female mind by making it familiar with vice and temptation and immorality in every form, instead of shielding it unsullied from the breath of pollution, guarding it, free as an Angel's wing, from the thoughts of sin, and training it up pure and unspotted in the contemplation of virtue.

Reform Societies are the offspring of excitement; while the fire burns the contagion spreads. To-day with headlong zeal we rush to the conflict to annihilate some monstrous evil. We level the sturdy battering ram of popular reproach against it. A society is formed for its suppression. Now then we think to see it topple and fall before the associated force arrayed against it. But to-morrow the war-cry has died away on the breeze. The popular enthusiasm finds another vent. A new Reformer springs from the purlieus of sin, shouting Eureka, Eureka, throughout the land—a sin, a sin direful, hellish and soul-destroying, and away

speed the pack of Reformers, like hungry hounds, to hunt it from the world—but ere the day is over they quit the chase and leave the evil, with its leprous touch and poisonous breath, to spread contagion and moral death throughout society.

Halcyon Age of Humbug! Age of Reform that needs Reform, and of Reformers that need Reforming! These Moral Reform Associations, for the most part, are among the greatest quackeries of the Age. If men would reform themselves, and strive to purify their own thoughts and actions, instead of being so full of love and earnestness for their neighbors, mankind would be benefitted and the world blessed.

The truth is, the popular heart is corrupt; its beatings are not for virtue; and so throughout the wide ramifications of veins and arteries and capillaries, it circulates a foul current that pollutes and vitiates the whole. Societies never were so numerous as at present. Each evil has its counterpart Society. Yet when did vice ever more abound? When did its stench so much offend the nostrils of the world? But each Society in its little sphere thinks itself triumphing and triumphant, and blazons forth annually its glorious prospects of success, unheard of in its operation, except

at the period of its annual visitation. Look at them in the mass; how weak, peurile and inefficient their exertions, none of them wielding the Archimidean lever, whose powerful purchase can upheave the evils of Society.

The world is too lenient towards sin. It would morally persuade all men to be virtuous. It pardons the offender with a heaven-dispensing mercy. The sickly sentimentality of the Age is shocked at the sound of punishment, except it is inflicted upon the backs of the poor, ignorant and degraded, while high-handed rascality stalks scathern through the land. Every paper pours out its details of seduction, ministerial crim. con., mobs, street-fights, lynching, outrage, repudiation and default.

Are the people shocked? Does morality groan? Does the pulpit denounce? Does the press hold up the offender to popular indignation? Does Society cast off the leper? Far from it—seducers, hypocritic clergymen and fiery-headed brawlers are the great pets of the public—they keep the world in a constant state of excitement, and were it not for them, the columns of the daily press would become stale and unreadable.

“Time was,” says one of our papers, “when

crime was wickedness ; now it is mental aberration. Time was, when shooting a neighbor was murder ; now it is an unfortunate affair. Time was, when Seduction was a fiendish act ; now it is an affair of the heart. Time was, when taking the property of another was downright theft ; now it is simple default !”

Ministers were formerly set over us to teach us morals and guide us by their bright example ; but now their errors are excused, their failings pardoned, they are so much exposed to temptation.

Public officers were formerly entrusted with the public purse, to guard it like the honest mastiff ; but now they make it their business to run off with the money. Men were once supposed honest enough to pay their debts ; but now they fail, and retire to live at ease on the spoil they have accumulated.

Offices of Government were once placed in the hands of manly, honorable, and able statesmen ; but now they fatten the pockets of dishonest demagogues, and electioneering partizans.

Such is the age of Reform ! Not that I would discountenance the spirit of Reform or detract from the character of the Reformer. There have been reforms that have worked a mighty and

perceptible influence—like the giant struggle against the vice of Intemperance. There has also been the true Reformer, who has spent the flower of his years, taken no thought what he should eat or drink, freely opened his purse and scattered the seeds of truth among the poor and needy. But when the Reformer prostitutes a glorious cause to private gain, bargains his services to the highest bidder, he paralyzes the energies of humanity, disgraces the cause of Truth, and every superstructure predicated upon his exertions, must of necessity fall in shame and dishonor.

The great agents of substantial Reform, must be the Pulpit and the Press. These are the leaders of the masses. They are equally powerful for good or evil. An unshackled priesthood, and an incorruptible press are the great preservatives of Virtue and Religion.

But these powerful engines, that wield the dynasty of morals, have in a great degree conformed to the times. The bread that feeds their mouths, is, too often, the stimulus that guides their pens.

The priest ceases to be the censor of evil deeds or the prime mover in good works. The press, instead of guarding the public, but expresses the public voice, and cooks the exciting morsel, which

the false and depraved appetite of the people delights to feed upon. And all this amid the thunderings of Reform, when societies for the extirpation of vice are Legion. But each pulls at but a solitary hair on the head of the hydra; each fights against his neighbors' sins and forgets his own—the shadow is denounced and not the substance—the ghost of evil offends, while all love to feast upon its paltry pleasures. The Bible is read on Sunday and the libertine and licentious trash on the other six. The New Bonnet, the flaunting ribbon, the gay cut cloak, seek the sanctuary to see and be seen of others, while the word of morality, or too often, the dogmatic doctrines of a creed, are propounded to deaf ears.

But Vice in order to be conquered must be attacked, not in its branches, but the axe must be laid at the root of the tree. The head of the hoary hydra of Vice, must be severed from the loathsome carcass by the united efforts of the mass; for he can never be slain, while individual societies pluck at individual members of his body, and leave his great and polluted heart, his foul and death-scheming brain, unwounded and unassaulted.

And, on the other hand, Virtue must be loved

for itself and as a whole. It has a oneness, a unity and perfection. It consists not in the doing away with one sin—it is not the absence of lying, or swearing, or cheating, or slandering, or gambling, or intemperance, or slavery, or infidelity, or seduction, or murder, or blasphemy, or war—but in the absence of all. Then alone do we see it, in its beauty, pure and white as the lily of the valley, clear as the unclouded noon, fragrant as the breath of flowers, melodious as the whispers of a zephyr among the pine boughs, universal as space, and blessing mankind, like the spirit of the ever beneficent and merciful.

In religion we see the same spirit of division. Even in Christendom, where we worship the only one and true God, society builds up frail partitions to separate into thin and feeble communities the worshippers of the same adorable Being.

Catholicism and Protestantism, Universalism and Presbyterianism, Unitarianism, Transcendentalism, Come-Outerism, and many other ism's, contend in opposition to each other. Yet the spirit of truth is indivisible, and unchanged has dwelt in the bosom of man, since the morning stars sang together on the birth day of creation. God, to whom in his infinity of duration, a thou-

sand years are as one day, has not altered his character in the little while that has elapsed since the first man woke into life, amid the flowery banks and shady groves of Paradise. Nature has not changed her bloom—still the stream rolls on, the mountain frowns, the meadow smiles with her perennial blossoms, the tall trees wave, the summer breeze chants Eolian music, the spring clouds drop their dew, the wild bird claps her wing, and the voice of nature speaks to the heart of nature's God. Yet External Religion has altered her forms, like the shifting scenery of the stage.

But from each chrysalis state, she spreads her wings more bright, and beautiful, and holy. True Religion is not a thing of forms nor creeds, but the genuine love and the genuine adoration of the heart. Beautified and expanded and stripped of cumbering ceremonies, it has been by Prophets and Sages and Philosophers, and last of all came Christ, the bright Exemplar, the limit of Perfection, the Pattern, Guide and Hope of the Nations; came poor, persecuted and despised, teaching that mankind were brothers, with one Father, God; and that the whole duty of man was to love each other and to love God.

There is a beauty and propriety in adopting the visible ceremonies which Christ himself followed, like his predecessors. But these constitute not the Deity and heavenly excellence of the Saviour. The glorious promises of great joy, lighting up the dim firmament of life with the electric brightness of the northern sky; the doctrines of Peace and Mercy, like the rainbow when the storm-cloud has passed, spanning the world with the eternal surety of forgiveness and pardon; the sympathy, kindness and fellowship extended to the publican and sinner, these bear the impression of the God-like and Divine. The Christian of a sect, if he follows in the footsteps of his Master, will be a friend to all men also. The Minister of a creed, if he acts according to the principles of true and absolute Religion, will be honored of all men.

Thank God! there are many such in the world, who go up into the Lord's temple with hearts clean from bitterness, selfishness and worldly passions, and whose private life and conduct make them beloved, respected and esteemed by all that know them. But there are a few whose only pretence to religion is the preaching of a creed—who wear the holy garb of the priesthood of God, but pander the livery of Heaven in idolatrous

obedience to man's will; who in their common intercourse with Society, live not up to the character of the gentleman, the scholar, or Christian; who bear not the olive-branch of peace in their hands, but go abroad kindling dissensions, and more widely severing the breaches which separate communities; whose fire burns on an individual altar. What shall we say of them, except that they are known and despised of all men—that their religion is a mockery, a shadow, a nothing—that their acts are blight and mildew on the progress of Truth; that they are the Quacks in Religion, making specious pretences they do not fulfil; that their sacerdotal robes are impiously worn, and that they make the Holy Offices of God a by-word and reproach.

Let not then men place their whole faith in forms and creeds and ceremonies, but be like brothers in one bond of unity; do good to their fellows, and approach their Father with child-like confidence and humble spirit, placing their trust in the ever living truth, which sanctifies all creeds, and all acts, in unison with the principles of pure morality and absolute religion.

This is called an Utilitarian Age. The Age of the practical and useful. The wild hurrah of fren-

zied speculation has subsided, but still the eager desire and burning thirst for wealth remains. The great God of the world is Mammon. The spirit of the Age is money-grasping and money-worshipping. The Republic of Votes bows to the Aristocracy of Wealth; the broad acres are the title deeds of nobility; the signet of power is the clink of the heavy coin. That for which all strive, all worship; men set up the golden calf, and bow down before it. The strife, the bustle, the toil-worn countenance of the world bear witness to the eagerness of the pursuit. Inventive Genius strives, night and day, to discover new money-making and money-saving machines. Patented Economies flood the land lauded to the skies for their miraculous convenience, utility and saving. The great capacious fire-places, lit up by the ruddy glow of the crackling embers, within whose broad and genial bosoms our fathers bade defiance to the whistling blasts and howling storms, have been swept away by the refinements of this Utilitarian Age. Stoves of a thousand patterns bear away the palm for utility and economy, from the grim and ghostly cooking-stove of the kitchen, to the cheerless and gloomy air-tight that lords it over the parlor. Patent lamps, for burning lard or chemical

combinations of Alcohol and Turpentine, are highly recommended for cheapness and beauty over the expensive oil lamps that exhaust the finances of our frugal housewives.

The love of display and the rage for economy go hand in hand. It leads men from Scylla to Charybdis. When all are desirous of passing for rich, it is almost impossible to find a rich man—by his own confession. They are all poor in their own conceit. The times never were so dreadful for money. Men seem to grudge the paltry dollars without which the poor must perish, the sick go unrelieved, the sanctuary be deserted and the temple of God crumble. The best object for Philanthropy is that which yields ten per cent.; the best knowledge, how to get money; the best book, the Ledger; the best friend, Wealth.

Yet prosperity smiles over the land; business thrives; the white-winged vessels cover the ocean; the sunbeams fall; the raindrops refresh the earth; the harvest bends under the sickle; the fruitful soil teems with plenty. To be rich is the universal aspiration. It is the dream by night and the impulse by day; the prayer in the closet, the aim of life. But it is a false and unworthy ambition, pointing to that which is neither the highest good

or noblest pursuit, and detracts much from the otherwise brilliant and splendid character of the Age.

There is something truer and more divine than the heap of gold dust, more beautiful than the sparkling of gems, more lasting than houses and lands. But in an Utilitarian Age, when the greedy cry of Avarice is loudest, Genius must hide herself in the garret, while Wealth flaunts in the parlor; Mind must go clothed in sackcloth and rags, while the Purse queens it in state.

The universal pursuit for money is a death-blow to the customs of the past. The good old fashioned habits of our fathers are abolished. The farm-house and the old homestead are deserted. Tilling the earth is neither money-making, nor genteel. The teeming granary, the velvet grass, the tasseled corn, the fragrant orchard, the quiet fireside, the true life of independence, are exchanged for the workshop and the counter. The plough is left for the cobbler's hammer; the free and healthy breezes of heaven for the dense and suffocating atmosphere of the mill. The young men flee to the cities to become knights of the yard-stick, like gaudy butterflies, to float and caper and run at the beck and nod of the shopping Belles.

They grow up, weak, puny and mindless, dunned by their tailors, beset by a thousand little debts that annoy their ephemeral life, ever in dread of the pay-day at the Bank, or with the jobber, and ninety out of a hundred fail, cheating the tailor, the butcher, the baker, and the washer-women out of their little earnings.

Most any device will be followed after rather than hard work. Men will go round with a monkey and a hand-organ, making the arch of heaven hideous with discord, and pass round the hat to levy contributions for their melody ; or exhibit the three-legged calf, the two-headed goose, the great anaconda or the wonderful baboon. The Fejee Mermaid, manufactured from the chest of the monkey and the tail of a codfish, proves a profitable expedient to puzzle the learned, gull the people, and fill the purse.

Pack on his back, like the dromedary, the Biped roams from house to house, to sell pins and tape, spool thread and needles, through the country, or versed in a few tricks of legerdemain, with the aid of a screeching fiddle and a magic lantern, nightly astonishes the town with feats of cunning, harmonious cat-gut and beautiful pictures. If he can balance a straw on his nose, or dance on the

slack rope, or twist his limbs out of shape, he is better paid than the minister of the Gospel, or the impartial dispenser of Justice. If the Almighty made him too small to be a man, instead of perishing in insignificance it is as good as a fortune in his pocket; he is one of the lucky ones, that are born with golden spoons in their mouths, made great by their very littleness.

A man born without hands cuts himself out a fortune with his feet, and has reason to thank God for being shorn of his members. White men black-washed play the African buffoon and sing the Ethiopean songs.

More mysterious than all, a score of vagrants perambulate the country practicing deceptions on the people by Humbug Lectures, from Mnemonics to Animal Magnetism. Mystified crowds who take an "*ipse dixit*" for law and gospel, with open mouths pass through the various stages of wonder, astonishment and belief, at the sight of incredible mental phenomena.

The great world is divided into parties of believers and unbelievers—for a time you will see men associating disconnected objects with each other, the glimmerings of their knowledge in the science growing fainter and fainter, till the first

principle of Mnemotechny are forgotten. Or in the pleasure party the wonders of Neurology or Mesmerism become the theme of conversation and experiment, while the excitement lasts. The brains of society are turned topsy turvy by the immensity of the importance of this greatest discovery of all time, till another mysterious topic seizes upon the public mind and puts the subject of Magnetism into a perpetual Mesmeric sleep.

In order to make a good speculation, and have their theories gulped down by the people, the more irrational, incredible and supernatural the pretence the better; but however ready the mass are to patronize humbug, and to be led by the nose by the arrogant pretender, it is some consolation to the diligent searcher after the truly useful and valuable, whose investigations are annoyed by every false philosophy that monopolizes the public mind for a season, to know, that the passion for the indecent is superior to the love of the marvellous, and that a dancing girl, in short clothes, who can turn herself three times round on her great toe, is a greater object of attraction to the multitude, than all the incredible theories that ever spun out an abortive existence.

We have the Eccalobeeon, hatching chickens by

steam, which would be really useful were it not necessary to have hens to lay the eggs. What use for a talking image with vocal chords of India rubber, when since the creation of Eve, woman's tongue never failed her!

Indeed, of what use are many things of which I have spoken, and countless others, except to fatten parasites on the public purse! They increase not the domain of knowledge; disseminate not the principles of virtue or industry; create no value for the public advantage, and add nothing to the common enjoyment of the race.

But were this all no fault might be found; but while vice, and idleness, and pretension, bask in the smiles and approval of community, virtue and modest merit in vain seek an honest livelihood from the charities of the world. The busy seamstress starves over her ill-paid work, toiling bitterly for a few cents per day, while vice spreads her golden wings of allurements ever in her path. The honest and hard-working laborer barely keeps even with the world; the minister of the Gospel wears a threadbare coat; the man of science finds a grudging subsistence; the poet feeds on his imagination; the scholar, like the hermit in his cell, stints the body to enrich the soul. These

are the true benefactors of mankind—that coin drachmas from their hearts' blood—whose giant minds push on the world's destinies—they keep the flame burning on the altar of truth—they mint the wealth of the world by their ceaseless toil—they smooth the pillow of pain—they pour balm on the world's agonies—they light Heaven's pathway with celestial radiance.

They sow, but the harvest is not white for them. Because the molten gold flows not from their brains pure and glowing, as from the smelting furnace, they bear the world's sneer and cavil and reproach. Like their Lord and Master, in their day and generation they are rejected and despised; the public look upon them—the true Philanthropists—as unworthy Parasites, while

“Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw,”

she showers down her laurel wreaths and golden favors on the dancing girl and the buffoon.

One word as to the Taste of this Age of utility and refinement, of general education and cheap literature. The reformist chuckles over the downfall of the theatre as the destruction of a great engine of vice and immorality. The crook-back Richard and the ghost of Banquo appear to a beggarly account of empty boxes. The bright

array of beauty and fashion that laughed at Falstaff and wept with Romeo, have deserted the dress-circle. The public taste has changed.

Music has charms for this Age. Not the psalmody of our Puritan ancestors, nor the pealing organ, nor the symphonies of Haydn and Mozart, but the one string of Paganini, the squeaking cat-gut of Ole Bull, and the banjo and bone castanets of the "Nigger Melodists." Thousands sit in raptures while white men aping the Ethiopian, bawl into their refined ears the words of "Old Dan Tucker," or "Dandy Jim of the Caroline."

Refined Age! that leaves the immortal bard, whose pen has traced words of eternal beauty and duration, for the ribald song, coarse mimicry, and stale jest. The literature of the day is bought for its cheapness, and not for its worth; the call for a book or for an amusement being in the direct proportion of its being labelled, fifty cents or twelve-and-a-half.

This is superlatively the Age of Quackery in that which refers to the diet and health of man. Graham had his day and thousands of followers, who, in spite of their teeth, abjured the flesh, and like starvelings denied their stomachs the comforts and indulgencies of life. Many modern writers

on diet launch out into a crusade against the common luxuries of the table, and sweep away with one fell swoop, the desserts, condiments and spices, tea and coffee, sauces, gravies and preserves,—everything but bread and water, and visit every evil of nature, as a penalty for offending against their favorite theory.

But in medicine itself we find the great field of the labors of the Quack. Health is the greatest blessing of life, but disease is incidental to mankind. Sickness comes in the changing seasons, floats in the pestilential miasmas of the soil, spreads on the wings of contagion and descends as an heirloom from family to family. To relieve “the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to,” to bring back rosy-hued health to the pale and sunken cheek, and find a balm for man’s infirmities has been the study of all time.

From the garden, the field, the river, the ocean and the bowels of the earth, the hand of science has developed the secret agencies which control disease, cut short its duration, bring balmy sleep to the pillow of pain and strengthen the halcyon promises of hope in the hours of distress and despair.

The Alchemist, laboring with the chimerical

hope of finding the Philosopher's stone, which should transmit every baser metal to gold, built up the science of Chemistry, and thus developed the great secrets of Nature's Laboratory for the use of the Physician and the benefit of man.

The Botanist, exploring the meadows and forests, brought in their rich treasures, tested by study and careful use, to lay upon the common altar of the art.

The Anatomist inquired into the organic structure of man, demonstrated the complicated machinery of his frame, and the morbid changes which it experiences from disease.

The Physiologist investigated the constitution and laws which govern the fabric into its various powers and operations, and the agencies by which they are performed.

The diligent Student gathers from the love of the past and the improvements of the present, that knowledge, hallowed by the test of time and experience, which is to assist him in his chosen profession.

Yet strange to say, in this day of general light and knowledge, as it is called, the ignorant pretender and the impudent Quack feast merrily and luxuriously on the credulity and self-deception of

the public. Persons who would not trust a man unskilled in mechanics to mend the simplest machine, will, without hesitation, place the complicated structure of their bodies to be repaired by the botcher and ignoramus, unacquainted with its thousand delicate strings and the frail bond which holds each chord in harmony.

Could we believe the advertisements we meet with in the public prints, we should believe that the concentrated essence of all healing virtues were embodied in—an Indian Vegetable Pill. That Brandreth's or Parr's, or the various other kinds with which the market is glutted, were all that were necessary to keep men in perpetual health and vigor.

Consumptions and every other form of disease, are cured daily by Hungarian Balsams, Lily Syrups, Wild Cherry Balsams, Tomato Bitters, Expectorant Panacea, Sarsaparilla Syrups, and innumerable other magical compounds, each bearing well authenticated certificates of marvellous and sovereign powers.

What joy for the afflicted the present Age affords! He cannot turn his eye but he meets the promise of a cure. The remedy for every ill is at hand. He has but to reach forth to obtain it.

No matter which one of the patent drugs his fancy happens to light upon, its healing virtues are equally miraculous, and a recovery is equally certain.

And then how simple and cheap the mode! The same pill cures every disease; the headache and chilblains, pain in the side and in the toe, hysterics and apoplexy, a cough or a jaundice, the asthma and sore eyes, humors and worms. There is no difficulty about prescribing; no need of investigating the causes and nature and location of diseases, when the *never-to-be-sufficiently-admired* empiric has, after the lapse of five thousand years of darkness and obscurity, discovered the important fact, that there is but *one disease and one remedy*—and that a purgative pill.

What reward in the gift of a mighty nation is sufficiently stupendous to bestow upon the author of a discovery so immensely important to the happiness of millions yet to exist!

But mark the ingratitude of man! The people are base and ungenerous enough to desert their first teachers in the new philosophy of healing, and run after any new pretender who takes the field, and sets up equal claims for their patronage, advertises largely, and fees as good a composer of

authenticated certificates. Gloss over their nauseous compounds with the catchword title of *Vegetable*, and they are swallowed without a compunction of conscience, while at the same time the most powerful and energetic minerals are dissolved in a weak and dishwater menstruum to increase its activity. They warn the people with hypocritical zeal to beware of the mineral doctors, while they foist upon their deluded patrons the most dangerous compounds of mercury and arsenic.

It is astonishing to any one at all acquainted with the composition of the elements of the body, that the interested Quack should have been able to have deceived so many on the subject of mineral medicines. Such a fever burns among a portion of community upon this topic, that they would banish minerals from the world, if man could annihilate what God has created. The mineral kingdom, the vegetable and animal are alike the gift of Omnipotence, and, though separable, are, in the works of nature, eternally commingled with each other. They are alike essential to the life and being of man. His bones and teeth are like the minerals of the soil. Iron flows on in the constant current of his blood. These must come from without like the nutriment which sustains him and

contributes to his growth. Yea! he eats them in the flesh and the *herb*, he drinks them in the water that wells up from the depths of the earth, dissolving their solvent parts; with them the race survives; without them, man, in the form of man, ceases to exist. The great wonder is that people will trust in the safety of a building, the foundation of which is laid upon palpable falsehood and glaring deception. Medicines, advertised to the public as imported from foreign countries, labelled and *even signed* by foreign names, are notoriously manufactured at home.

The names of distinguished physicians, long since dead, are stolen from their grave-stones by brass-faced and ignorant medicine-makers, to puff, by the greatness of their hard earned reputation, some miserable compound into notoriety. How ridiculous the idea, that men, eminent in their day, should have their laurels consigned to so ignominious a fate! Wistar, the anatomist, the scholar, the physician, fathering the lies and fulsome laudations of a "Wild Cherry Balsam," and Sir Astley Cooper, one of the greatest of physicians and surgeons, going down to posterity lending his name to trump to the public ear the wonderful virtues of a corn salve.

Is it not strange also, that each Quack should denounce the nostrums of his fellows, and hold up his own, as the only good and true? Out of their own mouths the public might be led to distrust them; the testimony of the tribe would condemn them in any court of law.

The use of Quack medicines may be ascribed to their cheapness, the hired encomiums of the press and their ubiquity. They are for sale by the tin pedlar, the itinerant news vender, and at the country grocery. Men who have no knowledge of disease or of the composition of the powerful drugs they deal in, supply them to their neighbors. It is useless to say that men will have them, when every means is taken to vaunt them to the skies and parade them before the eye. Public opinion at this day denounces the rum-seller for presenting the object of temptation, and profiting by the injury of others. Common sense and experience proves the utter uselessness and positive harm resulting from the prevalence of Quack medicines.

Is life a trifling thing? Is health a bauble or a toy that it should be trifled and sported with without thought or concern? Is disease a plaything to be dallied and fooled with like a bubble or a

top? Why then should a man palter and play with the sicknesses of his neighbor? and for what? — to have a per cent. in the profits of the Quack.

But the Age is not only remarkable for the innumerable number of patent medicines, but for the new theories of medical treatment, which many suffer to be *experimented* upon themselves. We hear of the Botanic Physician, the Thomsonian, the *Analytical*, the Indian Doctor, the Homœopathist, the Hydropathist, and many others of greater or less degree, whose great pretensions, mighty in their little spheres, have not so much obtruded upon the world. They share the glories of the present, treading in the footsteps of the equally renowned and equally evanescent systems of the past, that, for a brief space, gained the trial of a portion of the community.

There seem to be persons in the world whose whole business has been to take medicine—ever sick—ever complaining—ever dosing—cured half a hundred times of the same disease, they try every new medicine and every new doctor, and most wonderful to relate, are cured again, and on such testimony each system gains a short-lived popularity.

When the cry is up, and the new routine of

practice introduced, the hostler and the cobbler, men unacquainted with disease and with the constitution of man, become the demonstrators of the system.

The principle involved is the same as in the Quack medicines—that the same medicines will cure every disease—that one plan and one method combat the thousand ills of man. That which is good for everything is good for nothing, is an old saying, but many will not discover its truth till after a sad and bitter experience. It would not be a whit more foolish to believe that a man with *one idea* could comprehend all kinds of knowledge, than to suppose that one unvarying course of practice could cure all diseases, however dissimilar.

The systems of Quackery are all partial and imperfect. The Thomsonian is good enough in his proper time and place; the Botanic Physician in his; the diluting and infinitesimal Homœopathist in his; the Hydropathist with his floods of cold water in his. When they grasp every disease, when they isolate themselves to treat all disease, they sink below our trust. When the stable boy dubs himself “Doctor,” and throws down his dung-fork for the steam-box and cayenne; when the foreign adventurer hies to our

shores to enlighten us upon theories exploded at home; when the Hydropathist tells us that water is omni-curing; or the Mesmeriser that his science instructs him in *disease and remedy* without knowledge of books, disease, or medicine, we see that there is something false and deficient at the foundation. Imposture and ignorance are always loudest in their professions; they can cure, what by the laws of Nature and God is incurable. Time and trial prove the unsoundness of their pretensions.

There are little insects born in the morning, that buzz all day in the sunbeams and perish with the setting sun to give place to another race—so ephemeral are the systems of Quackery, but as one dies, there are always enough people to patronize another.

But the True Physician is none of these. He is patient of study and toil and investigation. He makes himself familiar with the structure of man. His progress is lighted by the lamp of ages. The pathway he walks in has been trod by the great Benefactors and Philanthropists of the world. For by-gone centuries they have preserved the confidence of their fellows. He is not wedded to a single idea. The whole earth is his laboratory,

and from her broad and capacious bosom he selects that, which not the caprice of to-day, or a changing fancy overlards, but that which the test of time and experience proves valuable. He owns the healing power of nature, and is willing to be her helper and adjuvant, nor like an empty braggart claims every recovery from disease as the triumph of his art. He neither rises nor falls on the breath of excitement. His works are ever with him in visible presence. He makes no shallow or false pretensions, nor promises that which science teaches him is impossible. He goes to the sick bed as to the couch of a friend. He smooths the pillow with a brother's care. He deals not with strangers, uncaring and uncared for. He passes not from place to place with the rush of the hurricane. He envelops himself not in mystery and wonder. He has no object to deceive. He practices not an art which shall fail him to-morrow, but one which has been and will be eternal.

And what is his reward? It is not the bubble reputation nor the fulsome adulation of the silly crowd, nor the heap of paltry gold which pleases the itching palm.

It is the consciousness of doing good—the virtue, dignity and manliness of his office. It is the love

and confidence and affection that entwines itself about him. It is to see the rose return to the cheek, fire to the eye, health re-invigorating the pale and enfeebled frame, and balmy sleep stealing over the long awakened lids refreshing as the fragrant breath of June to the opening flowers. These cheer his midnight vigils, his patient watchings, his anxious hours of toil and the cold asperities of life.

Ignorance may condemn, envy may oppose, slander may insult, malice may gnash its teeth, but what if the voice without be stormy and tempestuous if the voice *within* says GOOD CHEER. The desert has its fountain; the blue sky peeps through the clustering clouds; truth has her votaries, justice her followers; honesty and uprightness ever work their own reward.

One of the greatest Quackeries to which the people subject themselves in this Age, is the Quackery of Fashion. Health, comfort and happiness are sacrificed to meet its demands. Fashion is ever mutable and often absurd. At all times the fashions have been the subject of sport, raillery and ridicule. The antique stomacher, the top-knot, the hoops and train have each come in for their share of mirth and satire.

“Nature when unadorned is adorned the most,”

says an old poet, but the term native graces is now almost obsolete. Nature is annihilated by the multitudinous appliances of art. This is not true only in regard to the dress, but of the person.

The lover once wedded, finds the teeth whose pearly whiteness he so much admired, were fresh from the dentist; that the auburn ringlets that caught his fancy waving in the soft winds, were purchased of the hair-dresser; that the roseate cheeks bloom with rouge; that the lip is shorn of its down, and the forehead expands in graceful loftiness by means of the *poudres subtile* of Gouraud, while the angelic form that captivated his affections puts off its fair proportions at will with its whalebones and fixtures, and the deluded man finds, too late, the truth of the words of a modern poet, that

“Bustles are a fleeting show
For man’s delusion given.”

But the female sex is not the only one that conforms to fashion. The young men think it fashionable to drink and smoke and be dissolute; to be bearded like a goat, and strut in prismatic garments like a peacock. In how many cases the tailor makes the man. With his padded coat,

strapped pantaloons, French boots, opera glass, frizzed hair and scented handkerchief, and lispng twattle he goes out into society to create a sensation among the tender hearted and susceptible ladies.

What is beauty? What is the world-wide attraction in woman? The standard of beauty is conventional. The ancient Romans praised narrow foreheads and red hair; the Ethiopian prefers thick lips, and the Chinese loves thin; the Circasian admires the straight nose, and the Tartar the flat. Who now is able to decide upon the truly beautiful when our women float by us in butterfly apparel, adorned with gold and jewels, and dazzling us with shapes unreal.

But there is a beauty which never changes, and which all can feel. It is not the loveliness of Venus, nor the grace of Diana, nor the robe of Syrian purple. It is the beauty of Virtue and Modesty and Goodness. It speaks volumes of tenderness from the brightly beaming eye; it swells in harmonious music from the innocent heart; it mantles on the cheek in the conscious blush of purity. It needs no gaudy ornaments to commend it, no tinselled jewels, no sparkling gems, no rainbow dress. It needs no falsity or

show. It burdens not the purse with useless expense. It is a joy, a treasure and a comforter. It lights the pathway of care with the brightness of a sunbeam; it refreshes the heart like the palm-tree, and the well-spring in the desert.

Time writes her wrinkles on the fairest brow, steals the crimson from the rosiest cheek, scatters her hoar frost amongst the raven locks, and bends the graceful form to the earth; but the true beauty of goodness enriches youth, blesses age, and ever blooms, fadeless, and imperishable.

I have thus commented upon some of the peculiarities, humbugs, absurdities, and fashionable follies of the present age; many, for want of time, have been left untouched, and all have been but slightly glanced at. It is sufficient if enough has been said to call your attention to the subject. If reason was God-given for man's benefit—let him make it his judge, nor transgress its laws by putting a blind trust in every doctrine without its pale.

But, after all the Quackery of the Age, the spirit of true improvement, of true philanthropy, of true philosophy, of true genius, beats in the hearts of the people—the world presses on with

giant strides—the aspect of society ever changes and for the better.

There is less of romance, and more of reality in the world now, than in the centuries past. There are fewer lordlings, and more men. The spirit of advance, has lowered the feudal lord and elevated the lowly serf. The many have risen, and the few have fallen. The universal influence of knowledge, has exerted a world changing action.

Chivalry and knighthood, principalities and powers, have succumbed before it. The lover no more will seek the smile of Lady fair in the arena of the tournament, when all may earn her smiles by gentler means, without strife or bloodshed.

The Troubadour who sang in the bower of his fair, has given place to the serenading lover, who sings, “Am I not fondly thine own” under the chamber window. The Crusader throws off his panoply of war with his cast off incubus of ignorance and superstition.

The truths of science are more miraculous than the arts of the magician, or the feats of the sorcerer. The Astronomer supercedes the Astrologer—the Chemist, the Alchemist—Religion puts

Superstition to flight—Knowledge scatters Error—Peace spreads her healing wings over the bleeding wounds of nations. Law assimilates itself to Justice. The weak hand with subsidiary agents, puts to shame the mythological exploits of the Theban Hercules—Man becomes more like the image of God.

But the progress of the race has been gradual; learning never sprang into the world like lightning from the cloud, dazzling with its brilliancy, and electrifying with its thunder. The slow fire burning beneath the earth's crust for ages, has upheaved the everlasting mountains; knowledge is the sum of the traditions of all time. Each age and each people have added to the stock; the widow her mite, the weak of his feebleness, the giant of his strength.

Is it not so?

Error may have clustered round the truth as the Ivy twines itself about the oak, and the progress of knowledge may rend asunder the frail attachments of the parasite. The truth itself in all its beauty, magnificence, and loveliness, never yet beamed upon the earth. Science is not perfect.

What then must we think of a system which annihilates the Past, tramples in the dust the

accumulated wisdom of ages, blots out the discoveries of centuries?

Based on no foundation, a superstructure reared on superstition and ignorance, its history is written in sand. Quackery is illusory and evanescent, but truth never perishes.

Blot from the page of history, if you can, the names of the world's reformers, its martyrs, its discoverers in science, in art, its philosophers and benefactors. There they are now, and will be, forever. Go.

“Strew his ashes to the wind
Whose sword or voice has served mankind—
And is he dead, whose glorious mind
Lifts thine on high?
To live in hearts we leave behind
Is not to die.”

