

cramp in the calf of the leg for a short time ; has headach at present.

She had no return of the pain about the hip after this ; the headach was relieved by ordinary means.

CASE 2.—January 20, 1840, —, a glazier, complained of rheumatism in the elbow-joint, of three days' standing ; the part was slightly swollen, and tender ; he experienced great pain upon extending or flexing the joint ; no constitutional symptoms.

Rub in one drachm of tincture of aconite. The pain was much relieved at the time ; could extend the arm, but not flex it, probably from the skin being swelled. He did not attend again.

CASE 3.—Jan. 23, 1840. Miss P., ætat. about 35, is subject to rheumatism of the scalp, particularly in cold or windy weather ; has had severe pains to-day, the weather being very windy ; has no constitutional symptoms.

Rub in two drachms of tincture of aconite. 24. Has no pain since the application.

I saw this lady occasionally for some weeks afterwards, during which she had no return of the pain. Although living near me, she has not since applied to me ; therefore I consider the cure perfect.

CASE 4.—Jan. 25, 1840, Mr. Y., ætat. about 70, has severe pain along the lower jaw, on the right side, and shooting up to the forehead, in the course of the fifth pair of nerves ; likewise over the posterior part of the right parietal bone.

Apply two drachms of the tincture.

Felt the usual sensations of cold, heat, and numbness during the application ; and lost the pain in about a quarter of an hour. I saw him about six weeks afterwards, when he had had no return of the pain.

This gentleman was very much out of health at the time, his digestive organs being disordered, accompanied by fever, &c., which symptoms remained after the pain in the face was removed.

CASE 5.—Mary Keith, ætat. about 40, has been long subject to rheumatism, by which the use of her hands is impaired. At present complains of severe pain across the forehead, on the left side, in the situation of the course of the supra-orbital nerve. The pain comes on several times daily, and is much increased by going near a fire. During the accession of pain she loses the sight in the left eye. Has had pain under the right lower jaw, which is better ; otherwise she is in tolerable health.

Apply one drachm of the tincture.

The application produced the usual symptoms, and with them the loss of sight in the left eye. After the numbness left her the sight of the eye returned, but she felt no more of the pain.

This is a remarkable case, showing that there is some very important connection be-

tween the supra-orbital nerve and the organ of vision. I remain, Sir, your most obedient servant,

JOSEPH CURTIS.

Camden Town, May 24, 1841.

OBSERVATIONS ON EMPIRICISM.

By WILLIAM FREDERICK BARLOW, Esq.,
Surgeon, Tonbridge Wells.

"Miracles appear to be so according to our ignorance of nature, and not according to the essence of nature."—MONTAIGNE.

(Concluded from p. 398.)

It is difficult to discuss gravely the follies of empiricism ; they are so truly ludicrous—"Spectatum admissi risum teneatis amici ?" The same remedy is advertised for apoplexy and a disordered stomach, for the sobbings of hysteria, and the convulsion from teething. Nothing can exhibit quackery in a more laughable point of view than a comparison with the science of medicine. Contrast affords us the best means of perceiving alike defects and excellencies. Would any one discover the blemishes of an ill-executed bust, he should place beside it the production of a Chantrey or a Behnes.

Some confound together empiricism and science, as if they were united by the closest of alliances, as if, like the sisters in the "Midsummer-Night's Dream," they were "both warbling of onesong, both in one key." They speak of nought but remedies, putting entirely out of question the intent and manner of their use ; forsooth, they have been cured by the *physic* ; but the time of its administration, the symptoms which indicated it, and the discretion which selected it from among countless other remedies, form no part of their profound reflections.

Medicine is no enchanter, it possesses not the word of the magician, it has no pretensions to the miraculous whatever, but it solves the problems of diseases, by those reasoning powers which the conduct of empirics prove them to imagine altogether superfluous in the practice of *physic*. That it may strike whatever it shall aim at, unlike the charlatan, it shoots not in the dark, but takes advantage of the best position it can occupy, and the clearest light it can procure. Moreover, like a prudent general, it watches every movement of the enemy ; it wastes not its ammunition on a deserted fortress, and justly measures the force of the attack, by the greater or less obstinacy of the defence. Cautiously distinguishing between the influence of a medicine and the effects of a disease, it does not, as was the custom of the renowned Sangrado, destroy with a remedy, and then lament that it was used so moderately. There is as much analogy between

light and darkness, as between irrational empiricism and the art of medicine; the latter has long taken a proud position among the sciences, but the records of the former are dispersed among the prophesies of astrology and the fables of witchcraft. They will most despise the pretending charlatan, who can best appreciate the character of the physician. I will not explain my notion of that character, by instancing a man of exalted genius, or a great discoverer; I will rather describe it in the elegant language which was spoken by Sir Henry Hallford in his "*Oratio Harveiana*," in reference to Dr. Warren:—"Erat illi ingenii vis maxima, perceptio et comprehensio celerrima, iudicium acre, memoria perceptorum tenacissima. Meministis, socii, quàm subtilitèr, et uno quasi intuitu res omnes ægrotantium perspiceret et intelligeret! in interrogando quàm aptus esset et opportunus, quàm promptus in expediendo! Omnia etenim artis subsidia statim illi in mentem veniebant, et nihil ei novum, nihil inauditum videbatur."

When I have been reading the observations of the philosophic Louis on clinical instruction, I have thought "what a contrast to empiricism is here presented!" Here are rules for a physician, every one of which he may follow with advantage, but all of which the empirical pretender neglects entirely. Let a non-professional person contemplate what is necessary to the detection of disease, and that the quack does nothing of what is necessary, and then let him decide between the competent practitioner and the juggling impostor: in quackery all is discord, in science all is harmony. The confused appearance which is presented by the microscopic view of a drop of water, cannot surpass that of the perplexed and trackless movements of self-interested empirics, each taking a different route to attain his end, and each interfering with the other's progress; yet all, like the insects in the magnifier's fluid, agreeing in the demonstration of an extraordinary rapacity. In vain does every one exclaim, "You, who would prolong the life which is so dear to you—you, who would be free from the sufferings which torment you, drink of my medicine;" the universal medicine is not swallowed universally, and is by many neglected for some other potion. If one mode of imposition is examined, it would seem that none more preposterous could be devised, that it must be as unrivalled in its peculiar way as is the religious anathema which Dr. Slop so gravely reads to Mr. Shandy and his brother Toby, and which drew from the latter the emphatic observation, "The army swore terribly in Flanders, but nothing to this." But the attention is no sooner directed to another kind of deception, than a more startling attempt at delusion is perceived. If the conduct of many empirics be impartially and carelessly viewed, but one of these inferences can be

arrived at; they are either knaves or madmen, and, perhaps, both mingle in the formidable array of those dangerous impostors, who tamper with diseases with as much coolness as an engineer deceives with his curious devices. But since it is presumable that if quacks conversed on all subjects as irrationally as they do on medicine, that a legal inquiry would be instituted into the condition of their minds, we must infer either that they labour under monomania, or that, like Hamlet, they feign their madness to promote an end, and the latter conclusion is in many cases entirely irresistible; and where such shameless iniquity exists, let it be condemned as it deserves, not mildly but indignantly—polite language was never invented for dishonest conduct. The profession should expose boldly the infamy of quackery; the more obstinate is prejudice, the more it should be exposed. Is there no power in truth? Has it not often checked the most arrant impostors in their prosperous career?

It seems like an insult to the understanding to pass time in demonstrating to any sane person the fallacies of empiricism; but it is a task which, though it may require little reasoning, calls for the exercise of the greatest patience; and I have often been reminded, when endeavouring to procure for an hypothesis an admission of its absurdity, of the well-known fact, that those creatures which are lowest in the scale of the creation, bear the severest mutilation with the greatest impunity. People judge only by results, and it is the "*post hoc ergo propter hoc*" mockery of reasoning, which is the staff of imposture, and the varnisher of fools; it mistakes antecedents for causes; and it will frequently acknowledge not the slightest difference between the most astute physician and the most reckless empiric, the wisest philosopher and the dullest dunce. A quack declares that "he can cure all kinds of fits" with some trumpery concoction of his foolish brain; and people believe him, as if one and the same nostrum could be alike adapted to the apoplectic attack, the puerperal, epileptic, and crowing convulsions; the convulsions from loss of blood and plethora, and those arising from absolute disorganisation and temporary and removable irritation.

Perhaps many fly into the arms of empiricism, because science has failed to relieve their sufferings; but the rashness which would have recourse to ignorance where knowledge is inert, would be well characterised by the line of Virgil,

"Flectere si nequeor superos Acheronta movebo."

But let us not ridicule the weakness of the deluded; let us rather endeavour to convince them of their error. In a letter with which I have been favoured by Dr. Marshall Hall, he forcibly remarks, "Quackery is iniquity in its author, and ignorance,

folly, superstition, and bigotry in his victims. The deceiver is incorrigible; his eyes are open; our work must be with the deceived, the blind, the misled; they are objects of our pity, and should be of our help."

The greatest of blunders will ever be committed, the most shameless of impostors will ever be encouraged by those who give credence where they should examine, and blindly credit where they should wisely doubt. Lord Bacon tells us, that "the weakness and credulity of men is such, that they will often prefer a quack or a mountebank before a learned physician." Credulity is the cradle of empiricism, and the enemy of philosophy; it receives the impression of any stamp, and its history is the record of the follies of mankind. It is observed by Gibbon, that "a believing age was easily persuaded, that the slightest caprice of an Egyptian or a Syrian monk, had been sufficient to interrupt the eternal laws of the universe."

Let us turn to our own time. Have not we ourselves borne witness to that most farcical scene in the "Comedy of Errors," in which the disciples of Mesmer played their fantastic parts? And do not some even now believe that the waving of a hand merely can produce insensibility, exalt the intellect, endow with provision, and transfer the senses? Have not men whose reputation and attainments had led us to hope better things from them, bowed down before the monstrous image, which empiricism, in its extravagance, had set up? Have they not regarded hysterical females as prophetic sibyls? I know how severely such unheard-of folly has been exposed and ridiculed by that severest of all satirists—truth itself; I know that the celebrated Miss Okey did not advocate the cause of the animal magnetists with all the consistency which might have been desired of her, that mesmerism is generally regarded as destroyed and buried; but when I consider that, ere now, its death has been apparent more than real, I cannot but believe that it will appear again, to enact its vagaries with a new vigour. Happily we hear but little of them now; and those who formerly accredited them might not exclaim inaptly—

"The air hath bubbles, as the water has,
And these are of them: whither are they
 vanished?
Into the air: and what seemed corporal,
 melted
As breath into the wind."

I may be pardoned this cursory allusion to a subject, which constitutes one of the most remarkable chapters of empiricism. As we read it attentively, we are quite astonished that beings, who have been styled "noble in reason, and infinite in faculties," could have treated the fable with anything but ridicule. It has been remarked by Sir John Herschel, that "the character of the true

philosopher is to hope all things not impossible, and believe all things not unreasonable;" and I remember seeing this sentence quoted, to procure the doctrines of Mesmer a favourable hearing: but surely the distinguished author of this passage would class such doctrines among those things which are far too impossible to hope, and too unreasonable to be believed.

The members of the medical profession should be most careful how they sanction empiricism in any of its forms; for how can they, who themselves lend it the authority of their name, complain of the support which the public render it. They should do everything to expose it, condemn it, annihilate it.

To place before the public the distinctive characters of medicine and quackery,—to agitate a question from the discussion of which empiricism has everything to fear and science much to anticipate,—to write works not on domestic medicine, which can be nothing save domestic quackery, but works on popular physiology similar to the admirable book of Dr. Combe,—to lecture on this subject in the spirit of Arago's phrase, "that clearness constitutes politeness in a public speaker,"—to point out plainly that the mechanism of the frame is of a contrivance so delicate and complex, that ignorance cannot meddle with it with impunity,—are some of the obvious means which should be taken to arrest an evil, the ill consequences of which defy exaggeration, and earnestly demand inquiry and redress. If any one should deem it in any way beneath him to make intelligible to the public the knowledge he has gained, let him consider that Davy and Faraday have not thought it unworthy of their genius to give popular expositions of the truths of science.

The profession should diligently impress the public with the high estimation which *they* have for science, both by pursuing it industriously themselves, and encouraging to the utmost its successful cultivators. They should regard their Hunter with all the veneration that poets do their Shakspeare, and philosophers their Bacon. They should prefer the man of talent to the man of fashion; looking to his actual attainments rather than to the degree he wears, for degrees can be no accurate indications of gradations of intelligence; and often confer as much real value on those they ornament, as did the collar on one of "the two dogs" of Burns,

"His locked, letter'd braw brass collar,
Show'd him the gentleman and scholar."

The diplomas for which there are many candidates, and which can be attained by many, must necessarily be bestowed on men whose intellects and knowledge must vary greatly; but the degree which an improver of, or still more, which a discoverer in his art ac-

quires, cannot be conferred by any school or college, and is a man's best title to the admiration, gratitude, and support of the public.

Tonbridge Wells, June 12, 1841.

PUERPERAL CONVULSIONS.

ARTIFICIAL DELIVERY OF TWINS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—If the following case of puerperal convulsions be considered worthy of introduction into the pages of your useful Journal, you will, by its insertion, oblige your most obedient servant,

EDWARD AUGUSTUS CORY, M.D., M.R.C.S.
Cannon-street-road, June, 1841.

A German woman, named Zimmerman, of a leucophlegmatic constitution, during the process of her second parturition was attacked with convulsions early in the morning of the 5th of June. She had been under the care of her midwife for some hours previously, and had complained during the preceding day of intense headach, for the relief of which her friends had very improperly recommended her copious potations of gin and water. On the supervention of the convulsive attacks, it was deemed expedient to procure the assistance of a medical practitioner, and Mr. Beale, surgeon, of Bedford-square East, was accordingly sent for, who immediately and very properly bled her to a considerable extent, and had also recourse to the usual secondary remedial agents. The os uteri at that time showed no signs of sufficient dilatation to permit the artificial evacuation of the uterine contents, and she almost immediately sunk into a state of complete coma. Mr. Farrer, surgeon, of the Commercial-road, had also very kindly lent his assistance. I was requested by the above gentlemen to see her about eight o'clock on the same morning. I found her in a state of complete insensibility, with no interval of consciousness; the breathing was stertorous, and the pulse so feeble and wiry as entirely to preclude any further depletion, which appeared to have been carried to its fullest extent. The os uteri was at this time dilated sufficiently to admit the careful application of the forceps, and I accomplished the delivery of the infant without difficulty. Another child was now detected in the uterus under head presentation, which I immediately delivered by the operation of turning. The uterus showed no disposition to contract after the expulsion of the children, but by the employment of compression externally, it contracted tolerably, and one large placenta was expelled. There was no hæmorrhage; both children were still-born. The woman died in about an hour after delivery.

Sectio-Cadaveris Twenty-four Hours after Death.

The dissection of the body was performed by Mr. Beale, assisted by Mr. Charles Bell, one of my pupils. On the removal of the dura mater, considerable vascular tumescence was observable on the surface of the left cerebral hemisphere, and some patches of imperfectly-formed lymph were also evident. The tunica arachnoides presented a remarkable degree of dryness. On the superior portion of the anterior lobe some extravasated blood was discovered, and, on extending the dissection, the left ventricle was found to be completely filled with a coagulum. The effused blood, when collected, weighed altogether about three ounces. The right hemisphere partook but slightly of the increased vascularity which had been observed on the opposite side, and was comparatively healthy throughout its whole structure. Nothing further of interest was noticed in the dissection of the brain. The intestines were much distended with foetid gas. The uterus and its appendages were in a healthy condition, and presented the appearances usually observed in a woman recently delivered.

Remarks.—The above is a case of the apoplectic form of puerperal convulsions, which may be considered the most fatal of all the varieties of that formidable and frightful affection. I think it may very reasonably be assumed, that if the patient, in the first instance, had been under the care of a medical practitioner instead of a midwife, her life might have been saved—I mean, that had she been copiously and repeatedly bled and purged on the accession of the intense headach, of which it will be recollected she complained on the preceding day, instead of having been plied with ardent spirits by her ignorant friends, the more formidable stage of the disease might have been effectually prevented. I do not intend to trespass on your valuable columns by detailing the symptoms and pathology of the disease under consideration, for they can be fully comprehended by a reference to any of the standard works on obstetric medicine: I shall merely observe, that some writers, among whom may be mentioned Baudelocque and others, have described several varieties of puerperal convulsion. I am, however, of opinion, that the division of Dewees into hysterical, epileptic, and apoplectic, is pathologically correct, and sufficient for ordinary practical purposes. It appears that primiparous women, and those having more than one child in utero, are the most liable to puerperal convulsions; and that these attacks are more common and dangerous during the parturition than at any period of utero-gestation or after delivery. Mauriceau had 42 cases of the above disease, of which 7 occurred during pregnancy, 3 of