

privation, irregularity or excess—of air, exercise, food, drink, sleep, recreations, employment, study, &c. I have endeavored to expose error, both as regards quantity and quality.

As long as what I taught corresponded with the views of Combe and others of the same school of philosophy, all has seemed to go on very smoothly. But whenever, in the expression of my own independent opinion, I have departed one iota from received doctrines—the most *fashionable fashion* in opinion—an outcry has been raised. I have said but little, that is *comparatively*, on the subject of dietetics, but have expended the far greater proportion of my efforts in endeavoring to remove that murderous quackery, moral and physical, which everywhere prevails, and the ignorance in which it thrives. Still, whenever I have touched upon any topic which led inevitably to the inculcation of self-denial—to the restraint of any one of the *three animal appetites*—it has been my lot to awaken, most strongly, the opposition of those whose bodies are not kept in due subjection, as well as of some from whom we might hope better things. My remarks have called forth, at times, whole torrents, not of sober argument, but of ridicule and reproach. Argument, had it been elicited, I should have been prepared to meet. Those who have opposed my views, in the columns of your Journal, have, without the slightest exception, fallen into the error of assailing me with confident assertions, reproaches or ridicule, or at most with arguments that were obsolete, not to say worn threadbare.

This species of opposition will never do. The cause I have espoused—be it true or untrue—is not to be put down by ridicule and reproach; by crying out “bran bread and water,” “starvation,” “mad-dog,” or “Grahamism.” Such outcries may deter people from inquiry for a little while, but they soon lose their effect. And I say again, that if I am to be put down at all, it must be by sober argument.

But enough of mere personal defence. It was painful to me to begin with such a course of remark, and it is exceedingly gratifying to me to close it. Under various heads, such as the Natural Food of Man, Artificial Drinks, Temperance, Longevity, &c., I propose to meet, in a few successive numbers of your Journal, everything worth answering which your correspondents have brought against the views I entertain; and also to show, to every candid and ingenuous medical man, that the reform at which I aim, is one at which—as a lover of just medical science as well as of intelligence, virtue, and sound piety—he could not fail to rejoice. It is in truth—I repeat it—the application of Christianity, pure and undefiled, to the physical condition and physical and moral redemption and renovation of man.

Yours, &c.

Dedham, Oct. 31st, 1839.

WM. A. ALCOTT.

ULTRAISM.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

INNOVATION is the order of the day. It pervades every class and calling in the community. From the elevated statesman, who devises

the laws and regulations which bind together the different elements of which society is composed, down to the most obscure mechanic in the most insignificant art, it is the *presiding genius*. This is as it should be. We are wiser than were our fathers, and we are willing to believe that our children will be wiser than ourselves. Were it not for this spirit of change and innovation, the world would forever remain *in statu quo*; the condition of man would cease to be gradually improving, and the whole human race, like the Egyptians of old, would relapse back into a state of darkness, ignorance and doubt. If it had not been for this love of change implanted in the human breast, we should never have heard of those modern discoveries and inventions, that show the ingenuity of man, and assert the sovereignty of the human mind.

It is only when this spirit is carried to extremes—when it runs into ultraism, that it becomes subversive of the good it would otherwise accomplish. And, unfortunately, this spirit of innovation has of late years been too often carried to extremes, and especially has this been the case in medical science.

We often hear it remarked that this is an age of realities—an age unfavorable to poetical fictions, to airy speculations and visionary theories. But this remark is the farthest possible from truth. Men now indulge themselves in as wild dreams, as visionary fancies, and as absurd speculations, as ever they did in the most palmy days of chivalry, when courtly knights and crazy squires wandered about the country, seeking adventures, armed to the teeth against giants, and for the especial protection of bewildered maidens. What! call this an age of reality and common sense, when animal magnetism is attracting the wonder and astonishment of the world! Call this an age of reason, when homœopathy, with all its glaring absurdity and ridiculous theories, finds its advocates! Call this an unvisionary age, when the pale, half-starved vegetable-eater comes forward with his consumptive visage and emaciated limbs, and tells you that he is the “properest” formed man—that his limbs are fashioned in the mould of beauty! and when he farther tells you that the abundance of flesh with which the Almighty has filled the earth was not made to be eaten—that the innumerable herds that roam over the thousand hills were not provided for the benefit and sustenance of man—that man must live upon the herb—when, I say, he tells you these things, and finds those who believe him and endeavor to follow his precepts, would you believe that you existed in an age of reality and common sense?

It is now almost impossible for a man to become known and popular in the medical profession by straight-forward, plain common sense. He must be the author of some monstrous theory, or the starter of some novel doctrine, if he would get his name up. Talk of moderation, of reason, and of an intellect that is able to demonstrate all its assertions! It will do well to talk of these qualities, but they will avail us but little in the profession of medicine at this epoch of time. Moderation is trampled under foot; every one imagines himself possessed of common sense, and men are now too much engaged in gathering up the gear of this world to permit them to listen to demonstration. It is, therefore,

nothing but startling assertions, which cannot be maintained by reason, that now attract the attention of the world in our profession.

If, then, you would wish to aspire to eminence in the science of medicine, you must launch out, and go the whole figure in something. Become the advocate of some new theory, or some dogma dropped from the overflowing mind of some great man. No matter how absurd the doctrine you advocate. The more absurd, the more conspicuous you will appear, if you can contrive to make yourself as wild and as enthusiastic in its support as the doctrine itself is revolting and ridiculous. If you can hit upon no other way to make yourself notorious, become a Grahamite, an animal magnetizer, a steamer, or anything, in fact. No matter what you take up in our profession; if you only become somewhat insane and inspired in its support, your fortune and your reputation are made.

We often talk of merit succeeding in the medical profession. But small is the chance for merit, when it has to compete with brow-beating impudence. Modest merit will always stand abashed to hear impudence proclaim its virtues and its many acquirements. It matters not how small a man's talents are, or how few are his acquired abilities; if he is able to puff himself, he will surely succeed.

Let not, then, the medical tyro rely on his talents, his learning and his acquirements, for success in the profession. Talents, if he does not have a peculiar faculty of showing them, will lie buried, and the people will trample on them in contempt; while the blusterer, with scarcely a scrap of learning and less honor, will be raised into favor. I would not here speak lightly of learning and science in the medical profession; science and application are the only qualities that can make a medical man truly great. But let him be cautious, lest, whilst he is giving his attention to scientific investigations, the quack, the mere pretender, the man without merit or honor, run away with all the profit of the profession.

I have known a quack who was not acquainted with even the first rudiments of the science of medicine, go into a city, and by mere dint of blustering and puffing, gull the people out of more money than all the rest of the physicians of the city received for all their hard services. He was a Grahamite—he was a Thomsonian—a vender of nostrums, and a puffer of placebos—and the people brought unto him their lame, their halt and their blind, and even besought him to touch them, as if they believed him possessed of the powers of a Saviour. And they would have continued to think him a superior being, if he had not unfortunately committed an extensive forgery, and cleared out with another man's wife, leaving the sick to heal the sick, and the dead to bury their dead.

I would again say to the young practitioner, if you wish to succeed, become an ultraist, an enthusiast, a monomaniac, or, indeed, anything that may attract the attention of the people. If you are a scientific man, you must, in these days, use quackery, in order to bring your science into action. Quackery must be your van guard, but science the body of your force. Without your van guard, you would be taken by

surprise ; and without science, you are weak and puerile, just fit to contend with

The noisy quack, who by profession lies,
And utters falsehoods of enormous size.

Gray (Me.), Oct., 1839.

N. H. ALLEN.

LABOR WITHOUT PAIN.

[A CORRESPONDENT in Virginia, to whom we are indebted for many favors, has kindly related the following case, which occurred in the practice of Dr. J. N. Powell, an eminent practitioner in that State.]

In the year 1834 (February 5th), says Dr. Powell, I was requested to visit a servant woman, the property of Mr. Jno. L. Bailey, who was represented to me *as being in labor*. Upon my arrival, the old midwife directed my attention to a huge mass of something, lying upon the bed, of which, she informed me, the woman had just been delivered. By this time I had been in sufficiently long to know that if the woman had been in labor, she was not then so; for she had no parturient pains, the abdominal tumor had subsided, and the *uterus* contracted, I was myself at first at a loss to conceive the character of the product, but upon examining it, soon discovered it was a *fœtus* enveloped in the membranes, precisely as *in utero*, except that the *placenta* had been detached from the *uterus*, and expelled along with the *fœtus* and membranes. I ruptured the membranes; the *liquor amnii* was discharged, and a full-grown *fœtus* exhibited to view, occupying the exact position that it had done in the *uterus*, and illustrating the force of the expression of the celebrated Hogarth, that "it was an excellent living specimen of retirement from the world." The umbilical cord still *feebly* pulsated (scarcely perceptible), and I attempted its resuscitation, but in vain; it was too late.

This is the first instance of the kind that has come under my observation in an extensive practice of 6 or 8 years; and I don't know that I have seen *a similar case recorded*. The process of labor is usually *gradual*, exhibiting regular and successive phenomena, and giving a timely premonition of the approaching event. But in this case most of the incipient indications of labor were absent, and the condition of the *os uteri*, as to dilatation and resistance, being favorable, when pain supervened, by one powerful contractile effort of the womb *all its contents were expelled*; thus verifying the language of the distinguished Harvey—"Fœtus ejicitur, potius quam paritur."

ON VACCINATION.

BY EDWARD LEESE, ESQ., M.R.C.S.

IN different ages of the world, more human beings have been destroyed by the ravages of smallpox, than by any other known disease; consequently there cannot be a medical subject of greater interest and im-