

definite purpose is, perhaps, one of the symptoms of advanced civilization as regards literature, whether science, art, or theology are the subjects of discussion. It would not be difficult to illustrate this truth by "modern instances," appealing to the consciousness of every one. The motto, "Ne sutor ultra crepidam" has eaten into our minds. We are special everywhere. With only a few exceptions, politicians are wholly engrossed by politics, or at any rate only speak *ex cathedra* on political questions; merchants are absorbed in merchandise; ecclesiastics in theology; and medicine, more jealous than any other vocation, though undoubtedly linked with more that is collateral, studiously denies its honours and emoluments to all who will not link themselves to medicine definitely, clearly, and with a distinct purpose. Oliver Goldsmith was no physician because his heart was not in it. He was a poet and a *littérateur* of the first order; and there are other countrymen of his at the present time of the same kind, who stand just as much chance of living by physic as the graceful author of "The Deserted Village." Poor Goldy, in spite of his gold-headed cane and pills, was a sorry leech, and his continental tour made him, as it has made others, more gossippy than scientific.

In looking over the pages of "The Scalpel," we are particularly struck by the absence of any particularity in it. Why it should be "The Scalpel," or profess to be a medical publication at all, we cannot conceive, unless possibly the editor's name and address on the title page be the substantial cause of the existence of the journal. We strongly suspect it is so. The magazine should be entitled "The Dixonian Digest of Things in General." Then would it flourish; and all New York, reading the clever lucubrations of the distinguished editor, rush to No. 42, Fifth Avenue for advice, and then would Dr. Dixon flourish.

The repertory of articles in this journal is most heterogeneous. Of all the roving commissions an editor ever had, Dr. Dixon has the most latitudinarian. What would be thought of us if we wrote all the way from "popery and pig-sties" to "medical hygiene in pulmonary disease?" or what would be thought of us if we wrote about "popery" at all? Here are extraordinary dainties for the intellectual palate of New York physicians and surgeons: "Poetical Products of Yale College," "Life on Shipboard," "Banking-houses—what they are and ought to be," "Mormonism," "Hotel and Wall-street Stock-swindlers."

There are a few articles on medical subjects treated in the most popular *ad captandum* style. As a medical periodical, everything about it is superficial; the sociology is absurd; it abounds in vulgar jokes, and still more vulgar invective; and the attempt at literary trifles results in vapid imitations of originals, themselves too vaporous to read.

There must, of course, be better journals than this on the other side of the great Salt Lake—indeed, we know there are: this affair is a disgrace to the profession in the United States. In the Old World, a medical journal would be about medicine; in the New World, it appears to be about everything else beside medicine.

A Few Friendly Words to Young Mothers. By ONE OF THE MATERNITY. pp. 32. London: Hatchard.

THIS little book is the handywork of a lady whose large personal experience and clear judgment entitle her to the confidence of those to whom it is addressed. In a few pages is condensed much practical information on points that have great interest for every young bride when she receives solemn adjuration to take care of herself. The duty of a mother to her little ones, to watch that she may ward, to see that she may know, is impressively enjoined. The characteristics of that bed-room autocrat, the monthly nurse, are neatly sketched in a manner that may rob her of a part of her terrors, and valuable hints given as to the qualifications for which attendants on children should be selected.

Practical Hints on the Management of the Sick-room. By R. HALL BAKEWELL, M.D. pp. 48. London: 1857.

THIS little *brochure* should be in the hands of everyone—gentle and simple—whose province it may be to visit the sick chamber. It is extremely well written, and the author has carefully avoided trenching in any degree upon the province of the medical attendant.

VACCINATION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The following remarks are intended to explain the Origin and Nature of Cow-pox, on the principle of Leibig's theory of small-pox.

This eminent chemist compares the poisonous germ of small-pox to yeast, and supposes it acts on two principles which are naturally present in the blood in the same manner as yeast acts on the sugar and gluten in wort. The former of these principles, for obvious reasons, I propose calling the *fructifying*, and the latter the *augmenting* principle.

We will now examine what changes take place when small-pox is introduced into the teat of a cow: small-pox is not produced, but cow-pox. The poison-germ acted on the fructifying principle in the cow; but this principle differs from that in the human body in this important particular: in the cow, the poison only fructified where it was inserted—it had no power to act on the augmenting principle; but in the fructifying principle in man, it not only fructified, but the fruit had the power of acting on the augmenting principle, and appeared in all parts of the body.

The former class of diseases I would call *contagious*, and the latter *infectious*.

If, then, cow-pox be taken from a cow and be communicated to a child that has not been vaccinated or had the small-pox, the same changes take place as in the cow. The fructifying principle is, by the vaccination, either destroyed, or so far injured that small-pox takes no effect, or does not come to maturity; the *modified* form of the disease runs its course in four instead of eight, the usual number of days; the pustules are few and far between; and there is no consecutive fever.

When a person has the natural small-pox after vaccination, or the small-pox twice, we may suppose he has the peculiar power of again forming the fructifying and augmenting principles after they have once been destroyed. When revaccination takes full effect, we may also conclude that the fructifying principle had not been wholly destroyed by the previous vaccination; and had the person been exposed to the small-pox, he would have had a modified form of the disease. But when revaccination does not take effect, we should be careful in saying the person is safe, lest the failure depended on the lymph employed, and not on the state of the fructifying principle.

In some experiments I have made, I have transmitted the human small-pox through the horse to the cow, and so to the child in the form of cow-pox, and I think it fully proves that the grease in horses only acts the part the lancet does, or a blister would, in removing the cuticle; and that when small-pox was so general, as was the case previous to the introduction of vaccination, it was *accidentally* communicated to the open wound, and so to the sore teats of the cow, the hands of the ostler, the dairymaid, &c. It also explains to us why, now that small-pox is comparatively so rare a disease, we seldom or never hear of the natural cow-pox in the cow or the grease in horses affording any protection.

From what has been said I think we may conclude that cow-pox is a *contagious variety of small-pox*; that it is a constitutional, and not, as Jenner and some other writers are inclined to consider it, a local disease; that none but diseases which are contagious can be communicated by vaccination; and so difficult is it to convey other diseases, that many cases are on record where the lymph has been taken from persons labouring under small-pox, fever, scarlet-fever, measles, &c., and in no instance has the disease been transmitted with the cow-pox, which has taken its usual effect. I have myself seen two persons, the one vaccinated, the other inoculated, both at the same time from the same individual, and he having small-pox and cow-pox at the same time. The one vaccinated had cow-pox; the one inoculated had small-pox.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

J. S. FLETCHER,

October, 1857.

Surgeon to the Bromsgrove Union House and District.