

THE WATER-CURE JOURNAL,

DEVOTED TO THE
EXPLANATION OF THE PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE OF
HYDROPATHY, OR THE WATER-CURE.

"Wash and be Healed."

JOEL SHEW, M. D., EDITOR.

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[WHOLE No. 20.

REMARKS ON SLEEP.*

Having fully ascertained the natural dietetic character of man, and pointed out the general rules which should govern him in his dietetic habits, we are next led to consider what regulations are necessary in regard to sleeping, bathing, air, clothing, and exercise.

We have seen that, in many of its properties and functions, the human body resembles a tree or plant.—With the exception of mastication, and gastric digestion or chymification, nearly or quite all the processes in the general function of nutrition, are very similar in the animal and in the plant; and hence, that system of nerves in the human body, which presides over the general function of nutrition, is called the system of vegetative or organic life, and all those organs which are immediately concerned in this general function, are said to belong to the domain of organic life, and in health, perform their particular functions without the volition and without the consciousness of the animal. But the food of the animal, being separated from it, and requiring perceptive, and locomotive, and prehensive, and voluntary powers, in order to furnish the digestive organs with the necessary supply of aliment, it is provided with organs of external relation, adapted in ana-

tomical structure and physiological endowments, to the properties of external things and to the internal wants of the organic system. These organs of external relation in man, consist of the brain and spinal marrow with all their nervous cords, branches, fibres and filaments; and of the various muscles of voluntary motion, together with the bones, cartilages, ligaments, tendons, &c., connected with those muscles, and acted on and moved by them. We have seen also, that the performance of every function in the living body is attended with some expenditure of the vital properties and organized substances of the organs which perform them: and that it is the constant business of the general function of nutrition to replenish and repair the exhaustion and waste thus produced:

In the domain of organic life, God has wisely and benevolently so ordered things, that the replenishing and repairing economy of the system—as a general fact—keep pace with the expenditure of power and waste of substance in the performance of the vital functions, so that the heart, with only the momentary rest which one part enjoys while another is in action, as the ventricles and auricles alternately contract, is able to continue its operations, without interruption, from the commencement of our being to the termination of our earthly existence;—and the lungs,

* From Graham's "Science of Human Life."

fruits nor their products were much used by the middle aged and the old, at any season, nor by the young in the winter. Let us suppose—what, indeed, we repeat it, we know is not so—that the use of fruits in New England, and even in the United States, generally, was confined to the young for five months of the year—the months of June, July, August, September, and October. Is not the treatment of the young, for five-twelfths of each year, a matter of some consequence?

Let us consider, for a moment, the numbers of the young—who they are; what is their condition; and what their destiny.

Of the free white population of the United States, in 1830, consisting of 10,849,620, considerably more than half, viz., 5,851,770, were under 20 years of age. Then there were 1,874,898 more between the ages of 20 and 30; making an aggregate of 7,726,668 white persons in the United States, under 30 years of age; or almost three-fourths of the whole white population. We confine ourselves, in our remarks, to the whites, for want of exact data in regard to the rest.

Now it is not to be supposed that children, under two years of age, eat much fruit, as a general fact; though some of them do a great deal. But, on the other hand, the young do not forget the habit of being fond of it the moment they have passed their twentieth year; nor is it usually entirely excluded even at this period, by the cud of tobacco, the cigar, or the other extra stimuli, or by a cramping mode of dress that gives no room for fruit or any thing else. We may at least take it for granted, that as many continue their free use of fruit beyond the age of twenty, as there are of those who are below that of two years. Yet this, as we said before, is much more than half our entire population.

This large proportion of our juvenile population is, of course, the material whence we are to make our adult population, a few years hence; and as is the health and happiness of these at the present time, so will be the health and happiness of the world in the coming generation; that is to say, the rising generation is the world in miniature.

But the condition of this moiety of our population—the youth—what is it? Are they not subject to a long catalogue of diseases; some of them of very great severity? And do not a very large proportion of these diseases make their attacks from the middle to the close of the fruit season of which we have been speaking? And if we should deny that the one is cause and the other effect, in any considerable measure, should we not still be forced to acknowledge, that the diseases of September and October must at least be modified by the fruits liberally received during the three months immediately preceding?

But if these things are so, if the great majority of our entire population—those who are to become, ere long, the bone and sinew of our country; if these, we say, are to have their energies wasted exceedingly, from two years old to twenty and upwards, by diseases induced, or at least aggravated, by the use—rather the abuse—of fruits, as we shall insist by and by, what shall we say of their destiny? Can we look forward to any thing better, in the future, than to infirmity for the individual, and imbecility for the nation?

It will here be objected, we know, that we are begging the very question in debate; that we are taking for granted—what we have not yet proved—that the use of fruits, by the young, during summer and autumn, does induce or aggravate their diseases. The objection is a fair one; and we are thrown by it on the necessity of proof; or as a lawyer would perhaps say, of making out our case.

1. In the first place, we feel assured that the present use of fruits is one prominent source of autumnal diseases, particularly among children, from the fact that these diseases come just at the time they do. Did they come, in all their frequency, or in all their severity, as early as June or even July, the evidence of their connection with, or dependence on, the use of fruits would be far less strong than it now is. In the production of disease, the more obvious effects do not always—perhaps do not usually—follow very closely upon their causes. The autumnal diseases of infancy and childhood come exactly at the time when they should

be expected, if the use of fruits were either the cause or an aggravation of the cause.

But adults, it will be said, are subject to disease at this season, as well as children. Yes, they are so; though not, we believe, to a similar extent. Granted, however, it were so, do they not eat fruit? Or if in less quantities than children and youth, which is the undoubted fact, do they not use other things at this particular season, which, so far as they are used, are more injurious; such as greens, crude and especially raw vegetables, and salad? Do they not use too many ice-cold substances? And do they not use cold substances, and many substances not cold, in excessively large quantities? May not the long continued heat, we shall probably be asked, have something to do in the production of disease, both in the case of the older and the younger? Undoubtedly it may, and does. The other causes, whatever they may be, would not make so strong an impression, but for this. Yet we still find that the diseases which fall upon the young at this season, usually bear some sort of proportion to the causes which operate more directly upon the stomach and first passages, such as food, drink, &c.; and that in proportion as the stomach can be kept in a good state, diseases are either fewer or milder in their appearance.

2. But we feel assured that the use of fruits is one principal cause of disease, at this season, from the fact that so much diseased fruit is eaten. Less of what we now call diseased fruit is, indeed, eaten in the country than in the city; and accordingly we find disease less frequent and less severe, about in the same proportion. Still there is, as we should expect to find it, no small amount of suffering even in the country.

By diseased fruit we mean, especially, premature, unripe and decayed fruit. Most children begin to eat apples, cherries and strawberries, long before they are ripe; and not a few families even bring them to their tables in this condition. Again; the first which ripen are usually wormy or knotty, and for this reason they ripen prematurely. These are eaten by children, and with great eagerness. Almost all those which are carried to market,

especially when the market is at any considerable distance, are plucked before they are ripe, by design. Thus, in the Boston market, which is not inferior, perhaps, to any other, at least in New England, cherries, strawberries, raspberries, whortleberries, bilberries, and indeed pears and plums, are seldom if ever found in a state of perfect ripeness. They are almost universally picked and sent in before they are ripe; and for these two very obvious reasons,—first, that the earlier they are brought in, the higher price they bring; and secondly, that if not brought in till quite ripe, they decay quickly.* And here again arises another source of disease in those who eat these fruits, that when not eaten prematurely, they are eaten very often in a state of decay; which is also a state of ill health or disease. We repeat it, we seldom get any healthy fruit in our markets. The same remark is also applicable, in no small degree, to the green vegetables in market, during the months of June, July and August—peas, beans, potatoes, turnips, beets, squashes, cucumbers, &c. &c. They are almost, or perhaps all of them, either unripe or diseased; and thus they tend to induce a diseased state of the stomach and alimentary canal. That is to say, the action they favor, is a less vigorous and healthy action than that which would be maintained by more perfect and more healthy substances; and consequently favors more the production of disease.

3. But again; we are confident fruits, have a conspicuous agency in the production of summer and autumnal diseases, from the fact that they are eaten in such a way as not only to do mischief by their own presence, but by the exclusion, in no small degree, of other and better substances. Thus, the child who eats from one to two pounds of green apples, or even of imperfect or decayed berries, is not only injured directly, by the substances received, but by the want of a suitable proportion of bread, milk, and other bet-

* We presume it is well known that the foreign fruits—for the last of these reasons—are always picked green; so that those of us who have never been abroad to tropical countries, can hardly allow that we have ever eaten any other oranges, lemons, pine-apples, &c., than those which are diseased.

ter and more wholesome substances to counteract their tendency;—since it is perfectly obvious that the stomach of a child cannot hold every thing. Again, still,—for even this is not all,—a large proportion of the fruits are eaten between the regular meals, so that they not only crowd out other things, if we may so say, and waste, and break down, and cripple the nervous energy of the system, but they also weaken the digestive powers in a more direct manner, in that they leave the stomach no time for rest. Parents make a great mistake when they not only permit, but encourage their children to eat almost incessantly, of something or other, but especially of crude, imperfect, or diseased substances. And though on account of their tenacity of life, the obvious punishment of such transgressions may be delayed, yet it will inevitably come, sooner or later, and perhaps with an accumulated vengeance.

We deem it impossible, in short, for the present abuses to exist, to which we have, however, but barely referred, without producing disease of some sort, and at some time or other; and we know not where to look for their effects, more naturally or more properly, than in the frequent summer and autumnal complaints of the stomach and bowels; especially among the children and young people.

4. The general testimony of medical men—we believe from the earliest dates—has been to the same effect. With one voice as it were, they attribute the complaints of which we have been speaking, in no small degree, to the use of unripe or bad fruits, crude vegetables, &c. Even the spasmodic cholera, which caused so much alarm among us, was often excited in this way.

He who entertains doubts on this point, has but to run through the authors who have written on medicine—in all ages and countries—a list of whose very names would be tedious in a brief essay.

Some are accustomed to regard all this as mere theory. But it is not so. If there is experience in this matter any where, it is with physicians. By observation, by conversation and by reading, they glean up as it were the greater part of what is valuable, in their own practice and that

of other men—we speak now of physicians who are endowed with common sense, and who have their eyes open—and some of them transmit it to posterity. What is commonly called experience, set off against what are called the theories of physicians, is mere tradition. A mother, perhaps, has known such a grandmother do so and so; but without knowing whether the results were favorable or unfavorable; for she has too little knowledge, either of health or disease, to enable her to discriminate causes and effects:—she pronounces, however, with the utmost confidence. These traditionary matters are wholly unworthy the name of experience. It is the wise physician who has it, if any body, as we have already said. This knowledge is based on experience. True science—the science of the medical man—is experience; the cream of all experience for thousands of years past.

What then! it will probably be exclaimed here, Does science or experience confirm the common prejudice against fruits, which so extensively prevails, that they cause dysentery, &c. instead of curing it? By no means. They indeed cause it, as well as all other bowel complaints, if eaten in an improper condition, or eaten to excess, or in improper circumstances. But the moderate and appropriate use of ripe fruits, instead of inviting or aggravating dysentery or any other summer disease, most undoubtedly tends to prevent or check it. We have no doubt in our own mind—and we believe that others who have reflected much on the subject are of the same opinion—that the fruits of summer were designed, in part, by the Creator, to correct that tendency to disease which is induced by a variety of causes, many of which, at present, are not wholly within our control.

To be rendered most useful and salutary, however, more pains should be taken and more common sense exercised than has been commonly in demand or made use of among us. We shall probably be able to make ourselves intelligible in this matter, by arranging what we have to say under a variety of heads.

1. *Quality of Fruits.*—Few people take as much pains as they ought, in order to raise the very best kinds of fruit.

They content themselves with such as they happen to have, or can easily get. With many persons—our agriculturists and horticulturists, we mean now—an apple is an apple, as they say; a pear a pear; or a raspberry a raspberry. They seem neither to think nor care much about improvements. Nay, worse than even this; it has become almost proverbial with our farmers, that knotty, miserable apples make the best cider; and of course, the fruit which was once made into cider, but which is now used in the family, and among the domestic animals, will be of the same inferior description.

For one, however, who does not raise good fruit when he might, there are scores who do not buy good fruit when they might. Either they do not really know the difference, or they do not care to be at the pains to make a proper selection. Multitudes, moreover, buy the cheapest, without much reference to the quality, provided it *appears* tolerably well, or is not obviously *bad*. Especially do they this, when it is going to be disguised, by being mixed with milk or wine, or made into sauces or pies. In the few instances in which it is purchased for the known purpose of placing it on the table for our families, or presenting it to our guests in its purely native state, some small pains may possibly be taken to have it excellent in its kind. But how often is it true, that in order to save a sixpence in the bushel for apples, or a cent a quart for berries, we purchase that fruit which is coarse or otherwise imperfect in its quality, in preference to that which, though it may cost a trifle more, is comparatively ripe, sweet, pure and perfect.

2. *Early Fruits*.—We do not believe that the earliest fruits of the same kind are the best, even when we are sure there has been no hot-house rearing. Those fruits which have been urged forward by artificial means, almost every body knows to be less wholesome. But we believe that the intense heat of summer, joined to other causes, often urges forward the first pears, and apples, and cherries, faster than is really best; and therefore it is that we seldom use the first which appear of these and several other kinds of fruit, even though they may seem to be perfect-

ly ripe. We prefer to wait a little. Locke, the philosopher, advised to wait for new apples till October; but we usually think we do very well, if we wait till September.

3. *Unripe Fruits*.—Here is the great error, after all. It is not children alone who fall into it, but adults. Green currants and green apples are often stewed and sweetened for sauce, or made into pies, long before they have attained to the perfection of their juices. The same may be said of several other fruits. The grape, and perhaps a few others, are pickled while green. Indeed, as we have elsewhere said, the fruits of our markets, whether foreign or domestic, are almost always picked before they are fairly ripe.

There is a confused belief abroad, not only among the illiterate and vulgar, but even among the intelligent, that the cooking of green fruits, by baking, boiling, &c., renders them wholesome. Now we do not doubt that cooking them renders them less hurtful; but it does not and cannot bring them up to the excellence of the natural ripe state. The crude unhealthy juices of the green apple, for example, are changed by the slow action of the sun, in ripening. Now there is no process of cooking which can make things change exactly as the natural laws of the Creator would do it. Cooking—boiling, or baking—will not change the acetic or oxalic acid into the citric; or the malic acid into saccharine matter, at least to any very great extent. Still less is it true that mixing sugar, wine, or milk with unripe berries or fruits, raw or cooked, will render them as salutary as those which are perfectly ripe.

To say that unripe fruits, cooked or uncooked, are equally wholesome with those which are ripe, would seem to us like charging imperfection or error on the Creator. A perfectly wise Being would not waste—so to speak—his power and energy. But if fruits are as good before they are ripe—before the rougher acids and other juices are softened into sugar and citric acid—as they are afterward, why do they get ripe; that is, why is it so ordered in the laws of nature? Or rather, why is power wasted in bringing to a higher maturity that which is mature

enough already? It is not material to the perfection of the seeds and the propagation of the stock, whether the acid of the pulp of the fruit be malic or citric.

Some say that by beginning to use fruits a little before they are ripe, we prolong their use. Yet this is precisely a reason why they should not be thus used. The strawberry, for example, first ripens. Now this gets ripe in the natural way, just soon enough to take the place the Creator intended it should fill, as a preventive of disease. It is not wanted a day sooner than the Creator gets it ready. Nay, more, it is injurious to extend its use. Grant that it ripens quickly and passes quickly away. It is its short use, in a perfect state, rather than its protracted use in an imperfect state, that does the work of mercy assigned it.

These views are confirmed by a consideration of the regular succession of fruits. One is ripe, remains ripe, in its healthy varieties, a few days, or it may be a week or two; then comes another; then another; and so on. One is adapted to the early part of the season, another to the middle, another to the latter part; and seldom, if ever, when confined to their proper use, do they trench upon each other. But by our premature and prolonged use of them, we break in upon Nature's own beautiful arrangement, and thwart her sanitary purposes. Thus by eating the apple before it is ripe, we must either neglect the fruits which are better adapted to that particular season than the apple is, or by eating both, eat too much for the best purposes of health; either of which results is unhappy.

(To be continued on page 161.)

[From Chambers' Edinburgh Journal.]

WHITE AND BROWN BREAD.

Several years ago, we threw out the surmise that the separation of the white from the brown parts of wheat grain was likely to be baneful to health. We proceeded upon theoretical grounds, believing Providence must have contemplated our using the entire grain, and not a portion only, selected by means of a nicely-arranged machinery. It struck us forcibly, that to go on, for a long course of years, thus using a kind of food different from

what nature designed, could not fail to be attended with bad consequences. We have since learned that our views have some recognized support in science. The following paragraph from a recent pamphlet, will at once serve to keep the subject alive in the minds of our readers, and explain the actual grounds on which the separation of flour is detrimental:

"The general belief," says the writer, "is, that bread made with the finest flour is the best, and that whiteness is the proof of its quality; but both these opinions are popular errors. The whiteness may be, and generally is, communicated by alum, to the injury of the consumer; and it is known by men of science that the bread of unrefined flour will sustain life, while that made with the refined will not. Keep a man on brown bread and water, and he will live and enjoy good health; give him white bread and water only, and he will gradually sicken and die. The meal of which the first is made contains all the ingredients necessary to the composition of nourishment of the various structure composing our bodies. Some of these ingredients are removed by the miller in his efforts to please the public; so that fine flour, instead of being better than the meal, is the least nourishing; and to make the case worse, it is also the most difficult of digestion. The loss is, therefore, in all respects a waste; and it seems desirable that the admirers of white bread (but especially the poor) should be made acquainted with these truths, and brought to inquire whether they do not purchase at too dear a rate the privilege of indulging in the use of it. The unwise preference given so universally to white bread, led to the pernicious practice of mixing alum with the flour, and this again to all sorts of adulterations and impositions; for it enabled bakers, who were so disposed, by adding more and more alum, to make bread made from flour of an inferior grain, look like the best or most costly, and to dispose of it accordingly; at once defrauding the purchaser, and tampering with his health. Among the matters removed by the miller are the large saline substances, which are indispensable to the growth of the bones and teeth, and are required, although in a less degree, for

daily repair. Brown bread should, therefore, be given to nurses, and to the young or the growing, and should be preferred by all, of whatever age, whose bones show a tendency to bend, or who have weak teeth. It is believed that brown bread will generally be found the best by all persons having sluggish bowels and stomachs equal to the digestion of the bran. But with some it will disagree; for it is too exciting to irritable bowels, and is dissolved with difficulty in some stomachs. When this happens, the bran should be removed, either wholly or in part; and by such means the bread may be adapted with the greatest ease, to all habits and all constitutions."

Mr. Smith, in his late remarkable work on Fruits and Farinacea as the food of man, gives some illustrations of this doctrine. "Bulk," he says, "is nearly as necessary to the articles of diet as the nutrient principle. They should be so managed that one will be in proportion to the other. Too highly nutritive diet is probably as fatal to the prolongation of life and health, as that which contains an insufficient quantity of nourishment. It is a matter of common remark among old whalers, that, during their long voyages, the coarser their bread the better their health. 'I have followed the seas for thirty-five years,' said an intelligent sea captain to Mr. Graham, 'and I have been in almost every part of the globe; and have always found that the coarsest pilot-bread, which contains a considerable portion of bran, is decidedly the healthiest for my men.' 'I am convinced, from my experience,' says another captain, 'that bread made of the unbolted wheat meal is far more wholesome than that made of the best superfine flour—the latter always tending to produce constipation.' Captain Dexter, of the ship *Isis*, belonging to Providence, arrived from China in December, 1804. He has been about one hundred and ninety days on the passage. The sea-bread, which constituted the principal article of food for his men, was made of the best superfine flour. He had not been long at sea before his men began to complain of languor, loss of appetite, and debility. The difficulties continued to increase during the whole voyage; and

several of the hands died on the passage of debility and inanition. The ship was obliged to come to an anchor about thirty miles below Providence; and such was the debility of the men on board, that they were not able to get the ship under weigh again, and the owners were under the necessity of sending men down from Providence to work her up. When she arrived, the owners asked Captain Dexter what was the cause of the sickness of his men. He replied, 'The bread was too good.'

[From the Regenerator.]

FEATHER BEDS.

Friend Murray,—As the Regenerator is for "universal inquiry," permit me to inquire into the propriety of using feather beds. For some length of time I have thought them injurious, from some facts that fell under my observation. Of late I have come to the conclusion that I was correct. In certain states of the constitution they cannot be used; such as asthma and some species of phthisis. Most cases of inflammation, croup, &c., are made worse by couching on feathers. If they cause more suffering in disease, it looks reasonable that they are not good in health. They have a tendency to interfere to a certain extent with the delicate fibres of the system, and impair their functions.

One or two reasons may be given. First, they are a non-conductor of caloric, confining the heat that escapes the system about the surface, causing a suppression in the system, consequently a greater consumption of carbon, thereby producing debility and derangement. A second reason may be, they are a non-conductor of electricity and water; preventing the escape of perspiration, thereby confining a greater part of the perspired impurities from escaping as they should from the excretory ducts of the skin. The effect is to prevent the throwing off the impure parts of the system, causing disease or a tendency thereto, that may result, with the assistance of other causes, in a manifestation of dangerous symptoms.

These appear to be some of the reasons why I think them injurious, summer or winter. There are other reasons, but of

less importance and not as apparent. For the same reasons I object to woollens, especially next the skin. Would it not be about as well to let the geese and sheep wear their own covering? This was first suggested to me while hearing a goose complain of being "picked," as the saying is. Vegetable beds would be of less expense, less trouble, more healthy, more comfortable after a little usage, and no one wronged. If reasons exist why I am not correct, bring them forward; none will be the less wise or happy.

Little Falls, N. Y., Aug., 1846.

WATER-CURE JOURNAL.

NEW-YORK, OCTOBER 15, 1846.

We are again compelled to ask pardon of our readers for the want of editorial in the present and preceding numbers, as we have been literally drove with business, with scarcely time to eat and sleep. We hope, however, to make the Journal interesting to all, by quotations from European and American books on the subjects of Water-Cure, and physiological, and dietetic reform.

The following description of the various effects of different drugs upon the intellect and passions, is strongly corroborative of the testimony of hydropathists against drugs; for it is a rule with *all* stimulants, that the prostration of the mind and body,—after the stimulating powers of the drug has disappeared,—is equal to, and in proportion with, the preceding unnatural excitement:

THE ACTION OF DIFFERENT DRUGS UPON THE MENTAL FACULTIES.

Each drug, besides its general and special action upon the organs of the body, exerts at the same time an action upon the mental faculties. The stimulants increase to a greater or less degree the quantity of blood which flows into the brain in a given time; as a consequence

of this, the whole brain is excited, provided the stimulation does not exceed a certain limit; but the local excitement differs according to the stimulant employed. Thus, ammonia, musk, castor, wine and ether, increase the power of imagination and perception; the empyreumatic oils cause peevishness, melancholy and visions. Phosphorus acts upon the generative functions; so also does iodine, and, at the same time, induces sadness. Cantharides excite, and camphor diminishes, the sexual propensity. Arsenic causes melancholy; gold, hope; mercury, increased sensitiveness (mental); and carbonic acid gas, placidity. Among the narcotics, opium stimulates the sexual desires, the intellectual powers, and the imagination. Belladonna dulls the mental faculties; hyoscyamus causes moroseness, jealousy and violence; cicuta weakens the understanding; digitalis diminishes, saffron increases, the sexual desires; canabis causes calmness; and amanita muscara, courage; tobacco operates in the same way as opium.—*Northern Jour. of Med.*, March, 1846, p. 179.

[From the Journal of Health.]

THOUGHTS ON HEALTH.

Sir William Temple says, "A man has but these four things to choose out of: to exercise daily, to be very temperate, to take *physic*, or to be sick." In reference to these remarks, Dr. Bell says, "We may venture to assert, with a much later writer, that the principal secrets of health are early rising, exercise, personal cleanliness, and leaving the table unoppressed."

If a family rises early in the morning, you may calculate it is well governed, and its members are industrious and healthy.

A proper use of water is as necessary as of exercise.—"Dispel the ill humors from the pores." Cleanliness is an important virtue.

Johnson, speaking of a book in which temperance was recommended, says: "Such a book should come out every thirty years, dressed in the mode of the times." An old proverb says, "He that would eat much, must eat little." But it should ever be remembered, that "temperance is not starvation, but moderation."

This has been one grand reason why much that has been written about temperance in eating has produced no more effect. The proper use of food has been discarded, and starvation, instead of moderation, recommended. But radicalism always finds its true level soon.

It has well been said, "They are the most healthy who have nature for their cook; hunger for their caterer; who have no doctor but the sun and fresh air; and no other physic than temperance and exercise."

(From the London Medical and Physical Journal.)

SIR GEORGE SMITH GIBBES ON LIFE.

It appears from well-established experiments, that all the animal tissues are resolvable, on decomposition, into minute bodies, which, in water and under the influence of the sun, possess life and activity.—These animalcula, or, more properly speaking, these ultimate points of vital activity, cannot be further decomposed, except by the agency of fire, when they become subject to chemical laws, and assume the state of gas.

By the aid of the microscope, and with a little management, it may be clearly seen that many of the processes of life depend upon these minute animals, and that the ordinary laws of matter, or the laws which regulate the material world, are totally out of the question in explaining the phenomena presented by these, the apparent rudiments of vitality.

The vitality and activity of the animalcula infusoria depend upon the influence of the sun, under which every pool becomes tenanted by myriads of them, all displaying, when examined by the microscope, the most unequivocal proofs of life.

The sun, the source of life as well as light, supplies this vitality in all the endless variety of organized and living action; and modifies matter, in all these processes, in a manner totally different from all physical and chemical principles. We might as reasonably compare a scarlet color with the sound of a trumpet, as the phenomena of life and organization with any of the subjects, or any of the laws, of the material world.

The most subtle fluids, as heat, light, electricity, magnetism, &c. present phe-

nomena which every new discovery brings nearer in affinity to the material world. Life, on the contrary, is wholly independent of all these, opposing the laws of matter in every instance, and defying, in all its combinations, those laws of affinity and attraction which form the foundation of the physical sciences. Organized bodies are endowed with properties totally different from all others, and no portion of such bodies is subject to the ordinary laws of nature, until every vestige of life be extinct.

Although in the dissecting room the human subject be dead as regards the creature then under consideration, yet the vitality is not lost, for every part of the organized structure resolves itself into new arrangements, and myriads of vital rudiments re-assert their rank in the living world. Thus manures supply them to the growing vegetable, and digestion prepares them for the use of animals. Built up as the human fabric is by innumerable myriads of living rudiments, we easily admit the fact, that every portion of it possesses vital powers: powers, in every possible view of them, wholly differing from the laws which regulate every subject of the material world.

About thirty years ago, I instituted a series of experiments respecting this very curious subject, which appeared then, as they now do, quite conclusive as to the essential purpose which the animalcula infusoria perform in the growth of vegetables. It was from considering the opinions of Ingenhouz, Priestley, and others, on the nature of the green matter which forms on water, that I was led to examine very carefully with the microscope the animalcula infusoria, and to observe this matter, and the fibrillæ of the roots of other vegetables, whilst growing in water. Myriads of animalcula may be seen around the extremities of such vegetables, and it appears that these minute living bodies agglutinate themselves together, and *absolutely themselves become the added part; so that the fibres seem to be nothing more than a congeries of these animalcula, forming the growing part.* They may be seen like bees entering a hive, and making up, where fixed together, the fibre itself.

The whole substance of the conferva rivularis certainly appears to be nothing more than a condensed congeries of the animalcula infusoria. If a basin of water be half shaded from the sun whilst the other half is exposed to its rays, we find the shaded water to be without the animalcula, whilst they swarm by myriads in the exposed portion.

If a sprig of mint be placed in this water, the fibres of the roots extend and grow in the illuminated portion, but they make no advance in the dark part. The animalcula are seen to be supplied on the one side, and to fix themselves on the ends of the fibres, and to increase them longitudinally; on the other side, the animalcula being absent, the roots do not grow. The increase of the several parts of vegetables seems entirely dependent on the supply which they receive of these animalcula by the roots, leaves, &c.; for the leaves and blades of corn, even when growing in a room, are terminated by drops of water evidently supplying these monades, which arrange themselves according to the necessities of the growing vegetable, and according to the impulse originally given, and continually supplied by the seed of the plant.

The whole history and nature of compost and manure lead to the conclusion, that, by certain decompositions of animal and vegetable matters, these first rudiments of life are again set free to become, under new arrangements, subservient to the growth of the renewed vegetation.

I purpose, in my next communication, to show the application of the foregoing observations to the animal system; their importance in explaining and directing the actions and functions of its most essential organs, and proving how far we may consider the living world independent of the ordinary laws of matter.

Although, from a great variety of observations and experiments, which at various times, during upwards of thirty years, I have made on the animalcula infusoria, — although, from these experiments, I have been convinced of their importance in explaining many of the phenomena of animal and vegetable life, yet I never should have ventured to make my opinions public, until I saw that others

had led the way in the same line of inquiry.

The subject having, however, been brought forward, I feel at liberty to detail some experiments corroborative of the opinions that have thus been promulgated.

If it be admitted, that there exists a totally different series of laws which regulate the vital and the material world, it must be of importance to trace those laws in each instance.

There is no division of inorganic matter by which we can arrive at an ultimate living particle. In organized bodies we find a terminating rudiment, evidently endowed with a power of spontaneous activity, beyond the simplicity of which we cannot go. This is the *monas termo*, so called for that reason.

Some recent and most highly interesting views of the animal economy have appeared, wherein the composition of the human body is portrayed in a very novel and most curious manner.

“All the tissues of the animal body are shown to be ultimately resolvable into minute globules, and these globules, as they are successively disengaged from the mass, exhibit distinctly a power of spontaneous activity, moving about rapidly in all directions. In short, they become animalcula, possessing the power of locomotion, and have been named monades. It appears that these bodies are capable of existing as animals or vegetables, and of forming elementary parts of either.

“Thus, according to the above view of the subject, we arrive at the singular conclusion, that the human body, with all its organs, is built of animalcula, and that it is a congeries of countless millions of organized beings, each capable of living in a separate state, and perhaps exercising some of the functions of individual life, whilst incorporated with our system. It is not certain, but it is at least probable, that these monades form the last link in the chain of organic life, and that beyond them there is nothing but the ultimate gaseous elements.

“They are the units, we may reasonably suppose, by the addition or subtraction of which all the parts of the body are daily enlarged or diminished.

“The process of digestion, perhaps,

consists merely in the operations necessary to separate these monades from the combinations in which they existed in the animal or vegetable substances that form our food; and that of assimilation, in the mode of conveying them to, and depositing them in, the various parts of the body for whose nourishment they are destined."

In my last communication I described the observations I had made on the part these animalcula perform in the growth of plants. In conformity with the object of the present paper, I shall describe some further experiments illustrative of the above view of the subject.

The green matter which spontaneously forms itself in vessels of water which are exposed to the action of the air, bears a strict analogy with the *conserva rivularis* and the *tremella nostoc*. If the property of producing oxygen gas during life and growth belong only to vegetables, it would appear, from the experiments of Dr. Ingenhouz, that there exists, in the three above mentioned vegetables, an insensible change from the animal to the vegetable kingdom, and *vice versa*.

Water which has been boiled, enclosed in an inverted vessel over mercury, does not produce the green matter, however exposed it may be to the light; whilst spring water, on the contrary, generally produces it under the same circumstances.

Boiled water, when exposed to the air and to light, will produce the green matter.

Boiled water contained in a vessel inverted over mercury, will produce the green matter, if any vegetable or animal substance be added to it, as blood, flesh, fish, bile, potato, indigo, &c. At first, these substances are decomposed, the water gets turbid, and a mixture of hydrogen gas, azote, and carbonic acid, is disengaged; the water at length becomes green, and, in place of these airs, nothing remains but oxygen gas, in a state of very great purity. If this water be examined with a good microscope, when it becomes green, we see a great number of animalcula, which move freely about it. In following our observations with these animalcula, we see them after a time relent in their movements, and unite together, forming the green matter.

If this green matter be suffered to dry, and be broken to pieces, and, if the broken pieces be placed in water, animalcula, absolutely similar in form to those which had united themselves in the green matter, re-appear, and move about freely in the water.

In observing this curious fact, which can be easily done by a drop of the water being placed in a concave glass, and covered over with talc to prevent evaporation, the round bodies, which are the animalcula, observe at first a perfect immobility; after a time, they acquire an oscillating motion, which increases, and at last assume the same activity and vivacity that they had previously to their forming the green matter.

After this, the animalcula re-unite, and again form the green matter, which produces oxygen gas when exposed to the light.

From following these experiments with Dr. Ingenhouz, and in watching the progress of vegetation under a variety of experimental management, I have long since felt the conviction that vegetables acquire their growth under the instrumentality of the animalcula infusoria; and that the preponderating influence which the germ of either the animal or vegetable exercises seems to determine the *monas termo*, or its combinations, towards the formation of one or the other.

Although we may combine, in numberless ways, the ultimate elements of almost all food, oxygen, hydrogen, carbon, and azote, by chemical means, yet we never can produce that combination which will nourish animal life. That power belongs elsewhere, and must be sought for in the knowledge of the laws of vitality.

FUNCTIONS OF THE SKIN.

Mr. Ducros has showed by experiments that covering the skin of animals with a coating of gum-lac, kills them more or less rapidly according to their relative strength, producing convulsions, which resemble those of epilepsy.—*Gaz. Medicale*.

(This shows the importance of keeping the skin clean and in a healthy state, to do which nothing can compare with the influence of bathing).

[From the Phrenological Journal for October.]

THE WATER-TREATMENT APPLIED TO THE TREATMENT OF CONSUMPTION.

By Dr. Underhill.

Before giving Dr. U.'s article, the Editor will mention a fact touching the application of water to a broken limb. A boy, while at play at school, had been thrown upon the stones and fractured his arm, so that the bones remained much bent and splintered. The boy was brought into the Editor's house, a tub of water was drawn, and the arm kept immersed in water nearly half an hour, which so reduced the inflammation that, from being extremely painful, it became comparatively easy, was set, and in two or three days he was out at play, his arm, however, in a sling. So much for arresting inflammation by water, one of the very best means of reducing it to be found.

"O. S. Fowler."—In a letter to you last November, I briefly stated some of the good results of Water, in my hands, in the treatment of disease. Since that time, I have had farther evidence of its superior efficacy, as a remedial agent. Out of about ten cases of consumption, all of which were pronounced incurable by educated men, in the medical profession, I have effected cures in full one half, and all have been benefitted by it. Of those cured, there were in some, clearly, tubercles fully formed; others had bronchial consumption, and one clearly marked abscess of the lungs, which was so pronounced by four M. D.'s, not including myself. These persons have all carried out the treatment at their homes under disadvantageous circumstances, and where I saw them but seldom. This was doubtless calculated to protract the cure, and often to prevent it altogether. From observation founded upon my own practice and success, I am now satisfied that when the lungs are only functionally diseased, the disease is curable by a proper use of pure water. I believe my manner of using it in that disease is not in strict conformity to the books, but based upon the Physiological functions of the skin, and the action of water, variously applied, producing its various and even opposite effects. That water properly applied, is capable of removing pus from the lungs upon the sur-

face, through the skin, I have the most indisputable evidence; thereby relieving the lungs, and enabling them to regain their lost functions. This fact was fully demonstrated in a case of abscess of the lungs; it was also sustained in every case where pus had formed. Let any one who shall doubt the above fact, address G. D. Sheppard, Cincinnati, Ohio, who was the subject of the disease. And also as to whether it was actually abscess, address P. Wallace, M. D., Massilon, O., or J. T. Boone, M. D., Georgetown, Columbiana Co., Ohio. The fact is an important one, and one I believe the medical profession have not been fully conscious of.

If my views are correct as to the true philosophy of disease, and also of the action of water, all active functional disease is curable by water. Nor are all organic diseases incurable by it. This, I know, is claiming much, but the facts sustain me in making the assertion, such has been the experience at Graffenburgh of Preissnitz. Of the uncertainties of medicine, to say nothing of the evils it leaves upon the human system, every physician of sense must have often been convinced. That his confidence in it is less and less every year, he must, however reluctantly, acknowledge. That as age and experience advance, he gives less medicine, and more advice, he will also admit to be a fact, and all this just in proportion as he loses confidence in medicine as a curative agent. To sustain what I have said of water, I will relate the following case and circumstances. In December last, I received a letter from Charlton, Saratoga County, N. Y., stating that my brother, Dr. A. K. Underhill, was in a poor state of health, and had been so for five months, and wished me, if possible, to visit him, and see what I could do for him. He has been a regular practitioner for more than twenty years, and stands fair as a man of science and skill. He was my preceptor. I arrived there on the 14th of January. He had been confined to the house for some months, and to his room for several weeks; he had prescribed mostly for himself, but not improving, availed himself of counsel, and he informed me that several abscesses had formed upon his liver and discharged, was sensitive to the slightest changes of the

weather, had a discharge from one ear, and was suffering much from pain; he had some fever every day, and was much blotched. His appetite was morbid, and rather craving. In short, the unanimous opinion of all who saw him was, that he would never be any better. He had himself become discouraged; was taking medicine daily, if not hourly. Having satisfied myself as to his condition, I resolved to try water. I first rolled him in a wet sheet, after stopping all medicine, the water cold from the well. In two hours he sweat profusely, and at the end of three hours I took off the wet sheet, and washed him all over in cold water, rubbed him dry with coarse towels, and let him return to bed. He sweat most of the night, and in the morning I repeated the washing. Space will not allow me to particularize. Suffice it to say, that by the continued use of water, he has been restored to better health than he has enjoyed for years; he continues its use daily, and will soon be in perfect health again. He is not only cured of his disease, but of the use of drugs also.

All medicines were suspended. Water, air, and exercise were the agents. Some six weeks or two months after he commenced the water, being on a visit several miles to a patient, the weather suddenly changed, and having no overcoat, he became very much chilled, and took a severe cold. It was followed, as he informed me, by a violent attack of fever, of congestive or bilious character. I was absent at the time, but he resorted to the wet sheet and water in various ways, and in three days was well again. He believed it was such an attack as generally requires nine to twelve days to overcome by the common course of medicine. Physicians may wage a war against water, as they did against Phrenology, but like it, it is destined to triumph.

Yours respectfully,

A. UNDERHILL.

Massillon, Ohio.

SHOES.

Many complaints are made about corns and swellings upon the feet, and, indeed they are often very troublesome. Not unfrequently they lead to painful operations, such

as the amputation of the toes, especially the great toe, or some part of the foot. We wonder at the foolish practice of the Chinese, in the bungling form and uncomfortable pressure of their shoes, while at the same time the construction of our own is often but little better. We rarely see a shoe or a boot constructed in the form of the foot, making an equal pressure on every part. If this were the case, corns and bunions of the feet would never exist. The toes of our shoes are usually much too narrow for that portion of the foot. Besides, for the purpose of displaying a neat and very small foot, or what is usually termed a *genteel* foot, the whole upper portion of the foot, especially of ladies, is left uncovered, thus throwing the pressure of the shoe in front upon the toes. By this means the toes are first squeezed against each other, and then pushed out of their natural position. The joints on the projecting points are thus pinched either by the encroachments of the neighboring toes, or by the pressure of the leather. Thus are generated those troublesome things called corns. There are many persons who profess to be corn-curers, but we think prevention here, as every where else, is much to be preferred to cure. It is simple and easy; only let shoes be made of the size, and in the shape of the feet. But alas! how many belles and dandies would this deprive of their pretty feet!! Well, let them have their corns. It helps surgeons.

SINGULAR ANCIENT CUSTOM,

Dr. Shew :

The following interesting historical account of a somewhat hydropathic fashion among the ancient Scots, shows that one of the most important principles upon which the Water-Cure treatment is based, was a matter of common sense and common observation long before the days of Priessnitz. It was furnished me for publication by my friend John Morrison, of Chatham street; but as it seems more suitable for your Journal, I hand it over to you, to be disposed of as you see proper:

"The Highlanders,"—Scots, Celts,—says Logan, in his "Scottish Gael, or Celtic Manners," p. 82, "were so accustomed to sleep in the open air, that the want of

lication, where the reader has in past times been regaled with those noble and lofty views which are the characteristics of Mr. Fowler's philosophy. It is not possible to mix hydropathy with phrenology; the oil will rise to the top; and therefore it is not out of place to say that Mr. Fowler's Journal always excites the most pleasure when it breathes his own elevated sentiments, unmixed with the false schemes of adventurers, who would make the unthinking world believe that moonshine is tangible."

The above is a fair specimen of the manner in which the theory and practice of hydropathy is met by its opponents. It is easier and pleasanter to laugh and make merry when innovation endangers our craft, than to meet fairly and crush the opposition by plain facts and arguments. Will Dr. Smith point out the fallacy of the Water-Cure, or show us wherein allopathy should be preferred over all other modes of practice. "*Moonshine may not be tangible,*" but we freely grant that bleeding to syncope is a very *tangible* operation; that the sensation produced by ten grains of tartar emetic is perfectly *tangible*, or that the "touching the gums" from the use of calomel is most clearly *tangible*. Indeed, we would do violence to our conscientiousness not to confess that all processes of Allopathy are as painfully *tangible* as bleeding, blistering, puking and purging can make them.

WATER DRESSINGS IN SURGERY.

Since the greatest discoveries were made by Priessnitz in the remedial uses of water, surgeons appear to have employed the water dressings, as they are called, much more than formerly. For some years past the "German water dressings" have been spoken of. In England they have been used considerably, and within three or four years by some surgeons in this country. Professor Mutter of Philadelphia, an experienced surgeon, gives us the following in his edition of Professor Liston's work, a London publication. The Professor agrees with Mr. Liston in the superiority of the water dressing in wounds and injuries, as follows: "In lacerated wounds, to which

Mr. Liston refers in the text, no dressing is comparable to water, in some form or other, and for several years I have employed, as a first dressing, nothing else. In summer I use *cold*, and in winter *warm*, and apply it as recommended by Liston and McCartney, viz.: after cleansing the wound, and approximating its edges, whenever this is proper, pledgets of *patent lint* dipped in water are to be gently placed upon its surface, and the whole covered with a piece of oiled silk, to prevent evaporation. In summer I found it best not to apply the oiled silks, as it keeps the part too hot, and in its stead apply two thicknesses of wet lint, which will retain the moisture much longer than one. An assistant should, also, about every half hour, pour a spoonful or two of water over the dressings, but without removing them. Thus treated, I have seen the most terrific lacerated wounds from machinery or gun-shot heal most rapidly by the first intention. Only a few weeks since, I treated the son of a professional friend, who had received a severe lacerated wound, with the loss of a portion of two fingers, from the bursting of his gun, by the cold water dressing, and nearly every fragment of skin that could be placed in a proper position united by the first intention."

Water is the greatest of all agents to remove and prevent inflammation and pain, and it is as important to growth in animal and vegetable life. When the healing virtues of cold water become thoroughly and generally understood, most of the mutilations of the human body will be prevented, as well as many cures effected in injuries that have been hitherto too often fatal.

Dr. C. Stephenson, of Chesterfield, Mass. has just issued a pamphlet entitled, *A New System of Medicine*, founded on philosophical principles. We are indebted to the editor for a copy. It is another voice in favor of Hydropathy, and is calculated to do good to all who may become acquainted with its contents, and follow its directions. Price 25 cents.

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