

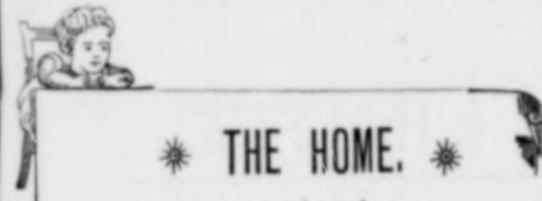
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it to be an agent that gives no strength, that reduces the tone of the blood vessels and heart, that reduces the nervous power, that builds up no tissues, can be of no use to me or any other animal as a substance for food. On that side of the question my mind is made up—that this agent, in the most moderate quantity, is perfectly useless for any of the conditions of life to which men are subjected, except under the most exceptional conditions, which none but skilled observers need declare



The Drug System of Treatment of Disease.

The long-suffering endurance and the blind trustfulness of humanity cannot fail to strike one as simply marvellous when their results are considered. Despite the misery resultant, mankind in the mass has worshipped from time to time fetishes, whose cult is lost slowly, how slowly! But it is significant of a coming change of attitude towards worn-out creeds and customs, that there is restlessness and discontent abroad in all directions. There is, too, a growing desire to give account of the hope and faith that are cherished, thanks, largely, to science, which has exalted the critical faculty. Worn-out systems are being attacked on every side, and soon they must yield to newer and to truer ones, which will most assuredly again give place to yet higher methods.

A study of the drug system reveals to the earnest student the fact that it has been tried and found wanting. One

terrible indictment urged against it, and one to which it must plead "guilty," is that it has induced a long list of terrible maladies by the multitude of poisonous agencies which go to make up the sum total of the drug practice. Dr. Trall says:—"It is a serious fact, among the curiosities of medical literature, that the standard books recognise *fifty-one distinct diseases* resulting from the medicinal administration of the various preparations of mercury." Dr. Johnson says: "I am certain I speak the literal, the simple, the unexaggerated truth, when I assert that thousands—not hundreds—of human beings are killed in Great Britain alone by drug medicines. The same gentleman, who spent a long life in the treatment of disease by natural methods, further urges that many drugs which are thought to be harmless are "highly deleterious in a great variety of ways. They alter the constitution and destroy the qualities of the blood." As an instance of the destructive properties of such simple drugs as common nitre and sulphate of soda, he instances an experiment by a celebrated analytical chemist, Schultz. Blood was taken from the arm of a robust countryman, and was found to contain 5 per cent of fibrin. During the following twenty-four hours the man took three drams of nitre and an ounce of sulphate of soda. Again the man's arm was bled and analysed, and this time the percentage of fibrin was 3.4. The use of the nitre and soda was continued during the next twenty-four hours, and the man was then bled again. The blood was now found to contain only 1.9 per cent of fibrin. The testimony of famous men with regard to the utter inefficacy of the drug system might be multiplied almost indefinitely. The celebrated Dr. Rush, of Philadelphia, after many years of practice, declared

to his medical brethren, "We have done little more than to multiply diseases and increase their fatality." Dr. Abernethy said, "There has been a great increase of medical men of late years, but upon my life diseases have increased in proportion."

Every remedy should possess the power of (1) removing the causes of disease, (2) of supplying the conditions for health, (3) of exalting the enfeebled curative principle of nature. Let us consider how the drug system attempts to accomplish these things. Suppose a patient to be suffering from constipation. The object, of course, will be to increase intestinal secretion. By drug practice this is achieved by administering certain acid and irritating substances called purgatives. "The stomach," says Dr. Johnson, "now becomes nauseated, its membranes inflamed, its nerves irritated, and its functions disturbed." From the stomach the irritating substance passes by absorption directly into the blood, and is circulated through all the organs—the heart, the lungs, the brain—which it irritates in their turn, till presently the conservative principle of nature, ever on watch to guard the living organism from harm, takes alarm and expels the offending substance. But at what cost has this been accomplished. The stomach has suffered, the blood poisoned, the other organs irritated, and the powers of nature been taxed to expel the cause of such trouble. But the mischief does not stop here. In a day or so the bowels are as badly constipated as ever. The same process is repeated, and frequently the strength is not restored for months.

In the light of such knowledge Dr. Johnson says:—"I need hardly advise the patient to close the door of his heart against drugs, and to bolt it on the inside."