London Med Surg J 1836 V-8

HISTORY OF MEDICINE IN CHINA.

The following is an account of the medical writers and doctrines, as they have existed and do now exist in this mysterious empire. It is the work of a writer in the "Indo-Chinese Gleaner," a periodical that appeared at various dates in the years 1817 and 1822 inclusive, and conducted by the indefatigable missionaries in that quarter of the globe; and among others by the celebrated Dr. Morrison. The work is exceedingly rare in this country, and this joined to the curious nature of the subject, renders all excuse for extracting the article unnecessary.

"We feel particularly happy in giving publicity to this paper, for two reasons: the first is, that the subject of Chinese medicine has not, that we are aware of, been laid before the British public. The second is, that the paper appears to have been read before a select number of gentlemen in China, who have, it would seem, formed themselves into a Society for the purpose of investigating the natural history, &c. of that country, and from whose united researches, much new information may be expected. We cordially wish them success. We shall rejoice in their every step in the path of science. We shall have great pride in giving publicity to any documents they may wish to be generally known; and it may be satisfactory to our medical readers to know, that we have reason to expect a series of papers on the subject of this one, which we shall, by the earliest opportunity, lay before them.'

"Gentlemen, the Chinese, whom I venture to pronounce the most unique, and the most original people at this day on the face of the earth, look at medicine in two points

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of view, a favourable one, and an unfavourable.

"1. The sincere, diligent, candid, and benevolent practitioner, who toils for the health of his neighbours, and fellow-countrymen, they regard as holding a place equal in importance to that of the virtuous minister of a powerful monarch, who is a blessing to the empire. On the other hand, he who has no higher motive than his own emolument, and who from his ignorance, or his fool-hardiness, as often kills as he cures, they regard with sovereign contempt, and feel ashamed that such men should be called by the same name as the sincere votaries of the healing art, who by a very appropriate and honourable distinction, they call jin-shuh, 'the benevolent art.' The ideas I have thus put into English, are taken from the preface of a work in forty volumes, compiled by the united efforts of about a hundred persons connected with the Imperial College of Physicians at Peking, during the reign of the late decided and prosperous monarch, known by the name or rather title of keen-lung, which, being interpreted means, 'celestial glory.' This book, which is the latest national work in China, on the subject to which this paper has a reference, was published about A.D. 1740.

"2. There is an individual and private work, in eleven volumes, printed not more than fourteen years ago, entitled E-shoo-hwuy-tsan, 'a comparative compendium of Medical Books:' this is the latest publication which has any pretensions to particular notice, that I have seen. In the year 1819, being desirous of procuring information on the Chinese notions of diseases and their cure, I bought all the books on medicine which were to be found in the populous and opulent city of Canton. They amounted to 892 volumes. I need scarcely add, as my other avocations are well known to you, that I have not yet been able to examine the contents of these books, to that extent which I could have wished; or rather, did and still do wish to effect.

"3. I shall this day furnish you with a few general notices on the history of Chinese medical practice; and at the same time would observe, that I by no means anticipate very important and useful discoveries from the Chinese in this department of human knowledge; for, since the genius of Bacon threw open the gate of experimental science, the European mind has outstripped all that ever preceded it, in the accuracy and the extent of its knowledge. However, you are not unacquainted with my maxim, which with reverence I adopt from an inspired and a divine author, viz. that 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.' I know it is a much more ungracious task to teach than to learn; for the assumption of superior knowledge, however justly it may be claimed, commonly offends one's pride; whereas, he who becomes a scholar flatters our vanity: this is a difficulty in our way; but, I would ask what honourable and benevolent course is not attended with difficulties? Let us therefore resolve to go onward.

"4. In the case of men so remotely situated, and of such a different speech, and discordant manners, and habits of thinking, as Englishmen and Chinese, a most discouraging difficulty *in limine* is, how to understand each other on physical and medical facts and theories; therefore, as I have before hinted to this Society, great patience is necessary in our pursuits; and one must learn a great deal of nonsense, in order to be able to refute it.

"5. The imperial work above referred to, is entitled E-tsung-kin-keen, 'a Golden Mirror of the most approved Medical Practice.' All books in China referring to medicine that could be procured by purchase, or by loan, were collected, and traditional popular MSS. were sought by the order of government. In four years it was completed. In this work it is maintained, that in the remote ages of antiquity, medicine, and the affinities and correspondencies in nature, were better understood than at any subsequent period.

"Chinese writers attribute the ascertainment of the properties of herbs to Yen-te, the illustrious monarch, an antediluvian personage, in their annals placed about 3000 years before our era. This illustrious King Yen-te, is otherwise called Shin-nung, which appellation means, 'Divine Husbandman.' About the same time lived another king, Heen-yuen, and a statesman, named Ke-pih, who, with the monarch just now named, formed by their personal efforts a sort of Royal Society, for physical and medical research in China; and in allusion to them, medicine is sometimes called 'the art of Ke-heen.' To Ke-pih, the origin of Tsze-chich, i. e. 'impuncture,' is attributed. There are two fragments, yet extant, attributed to Ke-pih, and which, (according to the imperial editors, and other writers) are the most ancient notices in China, concerning the cause and cure of diseases.

"6. The first of these fragments is called Lingchoo, 'the intellectual hinge,' perhaps meaning, that turning point, that crisis, which determines the connexion, or the final separation of soul and body. The other fragment is entitled Soo-wan, 'plain questions,' and refers to, or contains the result of certain consultations between Heen-yuen and Ke-pih, on splanchnology.

"7. Both these medical fragments are given in the work published fourteen years ago, by a private hand, to which I referred in the beginning of this paper. They are considered more ancient than the classical books, collected and edited by Confucius; but how their authenticity and genuineness are traced I know not. The style of these, like that of several other ancient medical

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writings, is obscure, and abstruse to modern Chinese students. In these fragments, the circulation of the blood is recognized; whether in the form of a note or not, I am not prepared to say: however, there is little doubt, that as early as the days of Galen, the Chinese believed, and taught, and acted on the belief, that the blood, and a certain animal spirit, or subtile aura, circulated, or went round and round the human body, without intermission day or night, as long as life continued. But, up to the present time, I believe, they are ignorant of the manner in which it does perform its circuit, and of the structure of those canals, the veins and arteries, which convey it.

(To be continued.)

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MEDICAL BOTANY.

PLATE XII.—STYRAX OFFICINALE.

Off.—The balsam, called Storax.

This tree grows in the Levant, Italy, and France. The storax flows from wounds made in the bark, in countries where the heat is sufficient; for neither in France nor in Italy does it furnish any. Storax occurs in three forms. The best kind, *St. in granis*, is in grains, either distinct or slightly agglutinated, of a yellowish or reddish-yellow colour, about the size of a pea, as soft as wax, tough, and having the smell of the finest vanille. It is probably the product of spontaneous exudation, and is not now to be procured. The second kind is in masses (*St. in massis*), of a clear brown or reddish colour, less translucent, resinous, pieces agglutinated by a clammy substance. This is also rare, and now occurs in bladders. Formerly it was sent packed in the leaves of a reed, and hence called *Styrax calamita* or *canuliculata*. It likewise has an agreeable smell like balsam of Peru, an aromatic balsamic taste, and is inflammable. The third kind, which almost alone occurs in commerce, and is sold as *St. calamita*, is common storax, *St. vulgaris*, *Scobs styracis*. It is totally different from the preceding. It consists of large, light, compressed, clear brown, round or shapeless masses, which externally are not unlike peat turf, easily friable. It is evidently a compound of sawdust and other foreign substances with genuine storax, or is the residuum of black Peruvian balsam after decoction. When good, it should, by pressure between two hot plates, yield a fluid brown resin, smelling like storax.

Storax has an agreeable smell and an aromatic taste. Neumann got from 480 grains, 360 alcoholic, and 30 of watery extract; and inversely, 120 watery, and 240 alcoholic. In distillation it yielded benzoic acid. It is therefore a balsam, or natural combination of resin with benzoic acid.

Medical Use.—It is employed for perfuming wax lights, or for fumigations.

Leeches.

M. Noble, head physician to the hospital at Versailles, has invented a successful plan for breeding leeches in a reservoir made for the purpose. A quantity of potters' clay is put into the vessel, in which they deposit their cocoons, and in which they shelter themselves from cold and storms.

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BOOKS.

The Medico-Chirurgical Review. Edited by James Johnson, M.D., Physician Extraordinary to the King, and Henry James Johnson, Lecturer on Anatomy at the Kinneiton Street Theatre, adjoining Saint George's Hospital. Jan. 1836.

The British and Foreign Medical Review, or Quarterly Journal of Practical Medicine and Surgery. Edited by John Forbes, M.D., F.R.S., and John Conolly, M.D., Editors of the Cyclopædia of Practical Medicine. Jan. 1836.

The Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal. The last four numbers have not reached us in exchange.

The American Journal of the Medical Science is most irregularly received.

A Practical Treatise on Urethritis and Syphilis; including Observations on the power of Menstruous Fluid, and of the Discharge from Leuchorrhœa and Sores, to produce Urethritis; with a variety of Examples, Experiments, Remedies, and Cures. With a New Nosological Classification of the various Venereal Eruptions. By William Henry Judd, M.R.C.S.L. 8vo. pp. 568. Numerous coloured Plates. London. 1836.

Guy's Hospital Reports, No. 1, January 1836. Edited by George Barlow, M.A. Trinity College, Cambridge; and James P. Babington, M.A., Trinity College, Cambride, M.R.C.S.

Encyclographie des Sciences Médicales Repertoire General de ces Sciences, an xix siècle. Dictionnaire de Medécine et de Chirurgie Pratiques. Dictionnaire de Medécine. Seconde Edition. tom. x. London.

A Brief Memoir of Sir William Blizard, Knt., F.R.S.L. and E.; Surgeon and Vice-President of the London Hospital; read before the Hunterian Society, October 7, 1835. With additional particulars of his Life and Writings. By William Cook, M.R.C.S., Secretary to the Hunterian Society; Editor of an Abridgment of Morgagni, &c. 8vo. pp. 68. London.

All communications and books for review are to be addressed (post paid) to Dr. Ryan, 4, Great Queen Street, St. James's Park, Westminster, or to G. Henderson, 2, Old Bailey, Ludgate Hill.

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13. Aspect improved; tongue moister, and less furred: skin pungently hot: pulse 120. He has not the least cough, nor any pulmonary symptom. Three watery yellow stools, sinking to the bottom of the vessel.

Adde Vini Opii m. iij. singulis dosibus Misturæ.—Applicetur Cataplasma Lini ampl. abdomini.—Injic. Enema Amyli c Syrupi Papav. alb. ℥ ss. horâ somni, urgente diarrhœâ.

14. Pulse 108: abdomen less tender; motions very loose and gritty, but only two in number.

Rep. Medicamenta.

15. Pulse 92: skin hot: one loose stool of the same character.

Rep. Medicamenta.

17. Pulse 96: skin hot: bowels open as before.

Rep. Medicamenta.

Aug. 19. It appears that the injection has been omitted the last two or three nights.

Injic. Enema Amyli c Syrupi Papav. alb. ℥ iij. omni nocte.

20. Dejections still very loose; but a portion of the fæces has changed its character, and floats on the surface. Pulse 92: skin less hot: tongue gradually cleaning.

21. A slight feculent motion, with some tenesmus. Pulse 80, rather weak: skin temperate. He has been sick, after taking nourishment.

Habeat Sodæ Carbonat. gr. x. Spir. Lavend. comp. ℥ ss. ex Julepo Menthæ, sextâ quâque horâ.—Omitt. Enema.

22. Motions to-day nearly natural. He is better in all respects.

Rep. Medicamenta.

24. Motions not quite so healthy.

26. Omitt. Cataplasm. Lini. Repetantur alia Medicamenta.

Sept. 4. Habeat Infus. Carscarillæ c Sodæ Carbonat. gr. xv. ter die.

He now appeared to be quite convalescent; and, as he expressed a great desire for animal food, a small quantity was allowed.

18. He has suffered a relapse: bowels relaxed: the dejections not natural: skin hot: pulse 120: tongue furred: some cough.

Hydrarg. c Cretâ, gr. iij. statim.—Sodæ Carbonat. gr. x. c Vini Opii, m. iij. ex Julepo Menthæ, sextâ quâque horâ.—Low diet.

19. Applicetur Cataplasm. Lini abdomini.—Hydrarg. c. Cretâ, gr. ij. horâ somni.—Rep. Mistura.

22. The irregular and unnatural state of the bowels remains.

Hydrarg. c. Cretâ, gr. ij. Pulv. Ipecac. comp. gr. iij. horâ somni.—Rep. Mistura.

28. He has improved decidedly; and his febrile symptoms are gradually diminishing; but he complains of a pain and tenderness in the left iliac region.

Applicetur Emplast. Cantharidis pa domini dolenti. Habeat Liquoris ℥ iv. quotidie c. Lacte.—Omitt. alia omnia.

He was kept entirely in bed, and strictly upon a mild milk diet, taking Liquor Calcis with his milk, till the 19th of October; during which period he took two doses of three grains of the hydrargyrum c. cretâ, each followed by two drachms of castor-oil. —His motions having now gradually acquired a healthy appearance, he was allowed two eggs, and some beef tea, daily; and on the 30th he left off all remedies, but continued in the hospital a week longer, to protect him from the danger of relapse; and left it at that time, full of flesh, and healthy in his appearance.—*Guy's Hospital Reports.*

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HISTORY OF MEDICINE IN CHINA.

(*Continued from page* 768.)

"Just as Choo-foo-tsze, an eminent Chinese philosopher, (considered second only to Confucius), taught six hundred years ago, that there belonged to plants the distinction of sex; and any poor Chinese gardener will tell you, that this is a male plant, because it bears no seed; and that is a female, because it does bear children, (as their root for seed is); yet neither the philosophers, nor the gardeners of China seem to have followed up these hints, with an experimental scrutiny, to ascertain in what that sexual distinction consisted.

"8. So neither their genius, nor their doing, have prompted them to dissect carefully the bodies of the dead for the benefit of the living; and they remain satisfied with the fact of the blood's circulation without endeavouring to explain it.

"9. Although they teach that the blood goes round as in a circle which has no beginning nor any end, yet they choose to denominate what they call T'sun-k'ow, the inch mouth; i. e. that part of the wrist where they place the fore-finger in feeling the pulse, the head-quarters of the blood, or in their style, that part where the court is held, and a report made by the pulse of all that is going on in the little world, *man*; the most distant region of which microcosm they place in the foot.

"10. The Shoo-king, compiled by Confucius, mentions Woo hëen, as skilled in the cure of diseases about 3000 years ago. The next names of eminence in this department, are Tsang-kung, and his pupil, Pëen-tsoo, otherwise called (Loo-e) Doctor of Loo, who lived about 2100 years ago. During the civil wars of China, the state of society however afflictive to humanity, was probably favourable to discovery in the art of medicine, and one in which practitioners are of unusual importance, a circumstance that has gained a medical man in China the appellation of Kwo-show, "the nation's arm," that by his art he saves persons

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" 11. The middle of the 3rd century was in China a period of civil war, and great slaughter of human beings. It was then the, now deified, physician Hwa-to lived, and to him is attributed great skill in the use of the knife. He is said to have laid bare and scraped the bone of the arm of the deified hero Kwan-foo-tsze, and saved him from the effects of a poisoned arrow which entered his arm.

" 12. He removed the eye-ball of a king's child, cut away the diseased part, and replaced the eye-ball. It was Hwa-to who first discovered the present mode of gelding swine and fowls in China. Tsaou-tsaou, who is by some Europeans called the Bonaparte of that age in China, ordered the doctor to be decapitated (the books say), because he refused to attend on the general's wife; but, popular tradition says, because he proposed to trepan the general's skull, and cure him of some affection of the brain.

" 13. In consequence of Hwa-to's murder his wife burnt all his manuscripts; and one that he offered to the jailor, called 'the green bag recipe, able to bring the dead to life,'—containing many important secrets, being, from fear, refused, he burnt it before his death.

" 14. Shun-yu-e, a doctor of some note, lived about this time.

" 15. In the fourth century, Wang-shuh-ho was chiefly famous for his work on the pulse, an epitome of which is given in Du Halde's China.

" 16. In the sixth century Chin-kwei lived, who is said to have cut into the abdomen, removed diseased viscera, stitched up the part again, and healed the patient in a month's time. He gave an opiate to the patient which rendered him insensible before he began the operation; the opiate is called Ma-fuh-san, which seems to express that it was in the form of a powder.

" 17. There was one man of eminence, called Heu-yin-sung, who rather undervalued the doctrine of the pulse, and said, he could do without it. It was he who being advised to write a book, said, 'words cannot communicate my art.'

" 18. The above mentioned are a few of the desultory names of eminence connected with medicine in China. There are four persons still more eminent as writers, and who are well known by the epithet Sze-ta-kea, 'the four great masters,' or leaders of separate schools, and authors of distinct systems. From the first of them to the last embraced a period of twelve centuries.

" 19. The first is King-chung-chang. He lived during the How-han, A.D. 220, and was a native of Nan-yang.

" 20. The next is Lew-chow-chin. He lived under the Sung Dynasty, A.D. 1200.

" 21. The third is Le-tung-hwan, who lived under the first Tartar Dynasty, A.D. 1300; and the last is,

" 22. Choo-tan-ke, a native of Che-keang province, who lived during the late China Dynasty Ming, A.D. 1500.

" The first named is considered, 'The father of physic;' he left numerous writings which are still much read.

" The Chinese commence their theory by maintaining that man is a Seaou-teen-te, a little heaven and earth—a world in himself—an universe in miniature—a microcosm. With respect to the greater universe, viz. the system of nature, as it appears in celestial and terrestrial phenomena, the Chinese teach, that there is an eternal and necessarily existing power, or principle of order, which they call Tae-keih, and which may be translated by an indefinite and vague expression, such as—'the eternal,' or 'infinite principle.'

" This eternal principle, in their view, is merely the first link of the great material chain;—it is not a being distinct from the universe, nor is it endued with any moral perfections.

" They represent this first cause, this first link of the chain, by a circle, or zero.

" But, as they find it difficult to account (from what they see in nature), for all the appearances which present themselves, on the supposition of a simple homogeneous body, acting on itself, they suppose that, when the present system of nature assumed the form it now possesses, the one eternal principle was divided, and became a Dual Power, or two powers, called, in their language, Yin and Yang, and which is represented by a figure of a circle divided in two, by a waving line across the centre.

" This figure is very commonly seen as a sort of sacred ornament on various occasions among the Chinese.

" From all that I can recollect of the original import of the words, Yin and Yang, I am inclined to translate the word Yin, by calling it a Vis Inertia, and the Yang, a Vis Mobile; and in my further disquisitions on this most ancient theory, I shall, instead of the original terms, which recall no associations to the mind of an English reader, employ the terms by which I have translated them.

" The Vis Inertia, the Chinese consider to be of the feminine gender, and attribute to it darkness, weakness; passive, and inferior qualities.

" The Vis Mobile, they consider to be of the masculine gender, and attribute to it light, strength; active, and superior qualities.

" To one or other of the Dual Powers, viz. the Vis Inertia, or the Vis Mobile, all existences in the universe (and, by the way, all numbers), belong.

" However, the Dual numbers of Pythagoras, and the infinitely changing series of Chinese Diagrams, called Pakwa, are not now our subject, and I therefore pass them over, and return to the Dual Powers.

" On the regular action of these two powers reciprocally, the order and harmony of the universe, both naturally and morally

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depends. Excess or defect in either power, introduces disorder and confusion into the system of nature, and the affairs of mankind.

"Thus far of the Dual Powers on the grand scale of universal existence; but every individual human body is a world in itself—a microcosm; and although, in nature generally, woman takes her place amongst the dark and weak—the Vis Inertia,—and man is classed with light and strength—the Vis Mobile;—yet in each animal body, whether male or female, the Dual Powers exist; and every part of the body is ascertained to belong either to the Vis Inertia, or the Vis Mobile.

"A due reciprocal action of these on each other, preserves the harmony of the system, which is health; excessive or defective action in either power, causes disorder or disease; and high degrees of excess or defect cause death.

"The object, therefore, of Chinese physic is, to preserve in due strength and exercise the Vis Inertia and the Vis Mobile: that the first may offer a competent resistance, and the latter may not destroy by acting with undue force. Or (according to the phraseology of the celebrated, but unfortunate and unhappy Brown), 'that the fire of human life may not go out for want of fuel; nor the combustion be too vehement and too soon terminated by having an excessive supply.'

"Such, gentlemen, is an outline, I believe, tolerably accurate, of the fundamental principles of Chinese philosophy and medicine, which system, they say, was taught in the antediluvian age, and has maintained its ground, in this most singular country, ever since.

"The doctrine of a Vis Inertia, and a Vis Mobile, may appear to some, at first glance, the same as the matter and motion of Asclepiades; but, I am inclined to think, the theory is different.

"*Of the Affinities of Dead and Living Matter.*—As in the system of the universe, Europeans believe that the planets are endued by their Maker with certain attractions; and as in minute particles of dead matter, there are affinities of adhesion, cohesion, and repulsion; so the Chinese maintain that in animated matter there exists certain affinities and repulsions in reference to all nutriment or medicine taken into the stomach; for example, mercury will affect the liver; and they say, injure the generative powers. Opium affects the heart and its functions.

"I would ask, by the way, does this doctrine resemble the attractions, repulsions, and affinities of Hippocrates?

"However that may be, with the Chinese, the existence of the above named Dual Powers, of these affinities and correspondence, is received as an axiom in theories of physic.

"Natural bodies, or the elemen[ter], are divided by them into five classes, viz.: metal, water, wood, fire, earth; and these five elements produce and destroy each other in a perpetually revolving circle; thus metal produces water; water, wood; wood, fire; fire, earth; and earth, metal. And having thus gone round the circle, the same operation recommences, and goes round ad infinitum.

"But, in nature, destruction is going on as well as production: thus metal destroys wood; wood (or vegetation) destroys (or impoverishes) earth; earth destroys water—water, fire, and fire, metal.

"And thus it is that the system of nature is perpetually going the round of production and destruction. No substance is annihilated; it is its form only which is destroyed; it rises again in some other; it is corrupted, only to be again generated. The disposition to generate, or corrupt, to produce or destroy, reciprocally, is chiefly referred to in medicine.

"The viscera of an animal body, are divided into five classes, or as Du Halde calls them, 'noble parts'—the liver, heart, lungs, kidneys, and spleen—the latter, I think, sometimes includes the pancreas and stomach.

"The Materia Medica are all classed under one or other of the five elements; those that belong to

"Moh joh kan, wood, have an influence on the liver,

"Ho joh sin, caloric, on the heart,

"'Too joh phe, earth, on the spleen,

"Kin joh fie, metal, on the lungs, and

"Shwuy joh shin, water, on the kidneys.

"Again, tastes are divided into five, viz. sour, sweet, bitter, acrid, salt.

"The five tastes have certain affinities to the five elements, and to the five viscera; the affinities are these:—

"Sour, to wood and the liver,

"Sweet, to earth and the spleen,

"Bitter, to heat and the heart,

"Acrid, to metal and the lungs,

"Salt, to water and the kidneys.

"Farther, as Dr. Herschel has proved that the rays of light differ in their degrees of heat, and that the red ray possesses the greatest heating power; and as it is light which gives colour—so the Chinese divide their colours into five; and refer red to heat and to the heart.

"The five colours are these:—tsing, hwang, chih, pih, hih. Green, yellow, red, white, and black, and the affinities are these:—

"Tsing shoh muh, juh kan,

"Ch'eh shoh ho, juh sin,

"Hwang shoh 'too, juh phe,

"Pih shoh kin, juh fie,

"Hih shoh shwuy, juh shin.

[illegible]n is related to wood, and affects the

[illegible] affects the heart,

[illegible]d affects the spleen,

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"White to metal, and affects the lungs.

"Black to water, and affects the kidneys.

"Thus the Chinese divide natural bodies; the viscera, tastes, and colours; and such as I have stated, is their belief of the affinities, attractions, and repulsions, or in one word, the correspondences in nature.

"The system is possessed of a beautiful symmetry; but I fear it wants, (what is indispensable to all science), the basis of truth. How do they prove what they say?

"Perhaps some of the ideas are not without support from analogy; how they correspond or disagree with theories, formed or promulged in the western world, in ancient and modern times, I shall leave to our worthy president to point out, as his professional pursuits, for many years, in different parts of the world, and his extensive reading, eminently fit him for the task.

"I have promised to state the different views of the four great masters of the healing art in China, whom I mentioned to you at our last meeting; but that I must defer till a subsequent opportunity.

"*Rule of Medical Practice.*—I promised, on a former occasion, to lay before you, gentlemen, a view of the different systems of the four great masters of Chinese medicine; that promise I am unable to keep; for I cannot command time enough to read Chinese medical writers and inform myself fully on the subject.

"Their differences are thus briefly stated in the first volume of a work, entitled E tsung peih tuh, 'The best authorities in medicine, very necessary to be read.'

"First. The first writer, Chang-chung-king, in whose great and original work on fever, the Imperial College of Physicians say, not a single sentence is found taken from any more ancient authority, antecedent to his own time, (which was sixteen centuries ago)—was remarkably decided in his practice; and all who take him as their model 'err in giving immoderately large doses of medicine:' he was the first publisher of prescriptions in China; but his prescriptions direct taels weight (or ten ounces) of different ingredients to be taken, where the men of our day can only bear tseen, or single ounces.

"From this circumstance, one writer infers, that the human constitution is much weakened in China, since the time of Chang-chung-king, who is, I think, from the little I have read, considered their first and greatest physician.

"About a thousand years elapsed before their second great master appeared; viz. Lew-show-chin, and all who followed his system 'erred in an immoderate use of bitter and refrigerating remedies.'

"In the thirteenth century, Le-tung-hwan the third great leader of the Chinese school of medicine, directed the fashion to an extreme degree of stimulating, or as the Chinese expresses it, 'elevating and strengthening remedies.'

"His system, two centuries afterwards, Choo-tan-ke opposed, and went to an extreme in cleansing, or 'attenuating, and lowering the powers of nature.'

"I have seen a brief memoir of the third named writer, Le-tung-hwan, which states, that he was thoroughly versed in all the learning of his age and country, and was remarkable for a retentive memory. He attached himself to an eminent practitioner, and procured from him all that his long experience had amassed.

"Like many eminent men, he seems to have grown proud and morose; for, unless in difficult and dangerous cases, he showed great displeasure when called on for his assistance.

"I once before noticed to you, incidentally, that the Chinese rule given to physicians to ascertain a patient's complaint, is expressed in four words:—

"Wang, look.
"Wan, listen.
"Wan, ask.
"Tsee, feel,

"What method can be more rational? And with such a comprehensive and concise precept before our eyes, what can be more unfair than the representations of those Europeans who say, the Chinese pretend to know every thing concerning a complaint by feeling the pulse, and asking questions by stealth?

"In the work entitled Sze-tsae-san-shoo, from which I have taken the above precept, it is laid down as the only regular practice to proceed thus: to inquire of the patient the probable cause of his complaint—whether from affections of the mind; from excess in eating or drinking; from irregular conduct, &c., before proceeding to feel his pulse. The order, however, is, that of the precept given above—first look at the patient's countenance, next mark the tone of his voice; then ask him all about his Ping-yuen, the probable source or origin of his malady—and finally feel his pulse.

"The same writer, however, mentions, that there are foolish people in China, who want to try the doctor's skill, and will not tell him the truth. He reprobates the absurd practice, and to discountenance it quoted the saying of an eminent statesman, Soo-tung-po, who declared, that when he called a doctor, his object was to have his bodily complaints cured; and he gave the physician every possible aid, by telling all that he knew of the cause and progress of his disorder. In the same work, next follow various rules to judge of diseases by the patient's look and voice, as well as by his pulse; and I dare say, many of the remarks will agree with the experience of all ages and countries.

"I cannot now, however, enter upon an account of them."

(*To be continued.*)

—o—

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Solutio Chloridis Calcis.

Fit ex duobus ad grana decem ad unciam aquæ.

Solutio Chloridis Sodæ (Labarraque's liquor).

℞. Solutionis Chloridis Calcis (Sp. Gr. 1.010) uncias sex,

Bicarbonatis Sodæ in aquæ uncia dimidia soluti grana quatuordecim.

Misce solutiones et cola per chartam.

Servetur in vase bene obturato.

(To be continued.)

HISTORY OF MEDICINE IN CHINA.

(Continued from Page 831, Vol. VIII.)

"*Certain Medicines.*—An account of Heuen-ming-fun: translated from the Puntsaqu-kang-muh. (Vol. 13, sec. 11, p. 23.)

"The specimen now before us, called by the Chinese Heuen-ming-fun, is, our president says, distinctly the Sulphate of Soda, the Salt named after Glauber, the German chemist, who discovered it, in examining the residuum of the decomposition of common salt, by means of sulphuric acid.

"This admirable Salt of Glauber, as it was styled in Europe, where it has not yet been known two centuries, (for 1646 was the era of Glauber), became famous in China about twelve centuries ago. But there are slight notices of the Puh-seau-leen-ne, Mother of Saltpetre, being formed, by artificial means, into crystals, and taken as a medicine, in the Materia Medica of Shinnung, the divine husbandman, who lived 4900 years ago.

"The notoriety of the Sulphate of Soda, in China, was occasioned by the following circumstances:—

"The Emperor, Tang-ming-hwang-te, having heard, that in the southern mountains there lived a Taou-sze, or disciple of the Chemical or Alchymical School of Laoutsze, summoned him to court, and inquired of him the means by which he had attained so great an age. The Alchymist, whose name was Lew-heuen-chin, attributed his longevity to the use of the admirable Salt of Glauber, or the Heuen-ming-fun of China, which takes part of its name from the aged Alchymist, as the Sulphas Sodæ did, for a long time, from its discoverer. The virtues attributed to this medicine are, the removing a sensation of heat in the region of the heart; a parched feeling in the mouth; removing obstructions in any of the viscera; swellings, and so forth, by its purgative qualities; or, in one word, it possesses cathartic and diuretic qualities of the most salubrious tendency; being a most effectual cleanser and purifier of the system. Those who take this medicine (says the original), never need fear any illness.

"The aged Alchymist said to the Emperor, that he could cure by it, an hundred and twenty forms of disease; and two pages of the Pharmacopœia are filled by a rehearsal of their names. From the attention of the Emperor to the subject, the Sulphas Sodæ, in China, was called, the Yu-yo, the Royal Medicine; and Pih-lung-fun, White Dragon (an Imperial) Powder was an appellation given to it by the Court Physicians.

"Its high reputation made it a sort of fashionable Cheltenham Salts, and induced some persons to use it constantly, and to excess; which brought upon it the reproach of one medical writer; but, in time, it formed, and maintains its proper place in the Meteria Medica. In the west also, I believe, it is no uncommon case for medicinal substances to be over-praised, neglected, and revived, by turns.

"In European books I read, (Encyclopædia Britannica, vol. 6, page 42), that the Chinese do not consider the knowledge of any branch of medicine, in the smallest degree necessary; and again, that their books are mere enumerations of the names and qualities of different plants.

"In a former paper I stated to you, that the Chinese called medicine, by way of eminence, the benevolent art; and a good physician they hailed as the arm of his country. (Most honourable appellations.) The government support a College of Physicians, amounting, in number, to a hundred persons—and yet Edinburgh writers tell us, the Chinese do not consider medicine in the smallest degree necessary. We know that the Chinese Materia Medica are taken from all the kingdoms of nature, animal and mineral, as well as vegetable; and yet we are told, it is confined to a few plants; a few simples, as some say, as the admirable Salt of Glauber, which has been known in China from time immemorial.

"Whence is it that scientific men in Europe speak so dogmatically of things about which they know so little? Why is this age of reason so eminently an age of self-complacency?

"The Chinese hold together, in tolerable comfort, the greatest associated population under heaven—yet, with some, they know nothing of government.

"Their health, and age, and increase of numbers, are, I dare say, equal, in proportion to the nations of Europe; yet it is affirmed they know nothing of the healing art. There has never been a medical man in Europe, who could, in conscience say, he thoroughly knew what the Chinese taught and practised in medicine. A few garbled extracts from Wang-shuh-ho, by no means one of the first names in China, and the hasty reports of embassy travellers, are the data on which learned and scientific men venture to pronounce their sentence of condemnation on things which they know not, and to flatter into a pernicious self-conceit

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both themselves and their young Edinburgh pupils. Thus, Dr. Gregory, addressing the young Scotch lads who composed his class, says, in the greatest, most ancient, and most civilised empire on earth—no such good medical aid can be obtained, as a smart boy of sixteen years, who had been but twelve months apprentice to a good and well employed Edinburgh Surgeon, might reasonably be expected to afford. I mean not to affirm any thing positive about the rank Chinese medicine holds; but I regret deeply, and reprobate strongly, the injudicious conceit and self-complacency which such speeches proceed from, and tend to cherish in others; and those young students of medicine, some of whom—probably from Gregory—should visit China; because such self-complacency, and contempt of others, is a complete check to the object of our Society, viz. physical research in this country.

"I incline to our president's opinion, that the Chinese are in possession of facts, respecting the healing art, probably derived from the great progenitor of human kind; who taught his descendants the knowledge he received from the Omniscient Creator; but which physical knowledge, like the knowledge of God himself, has been, by the wickedness of man, gradually obscured, though not entirely lost; and to ascertain the truth, by an extensive knowledge of the subject, is worthy the attention of a philosopher; whereas, to decide with a contemptuous scorn, from a very partial induction of particulars, is (not to say, unamiable and unchristian, but also) extremely unphilosophical.

"European terms of science are chiefly of Latin or Greek etymology, to which the Chinese nomenclature has no resemblance; and as no European philosopher, or physician (that I know of), has ever studied Chinese technical terms, and accommodated them to European terms, with a precise definition of their import, it is not to be expected that the occasional rendering, given to scientific terms, by general students of the Chinese language, at the spur of the moment, and drawn only from the common use of those terms, should be accurate; and we should be careful to avoid the littleness of vulgar minds, which induces them to despise ideas couched in an uncouth, a halting, or a strange phraseology.

"But I appear to have wandered from the subject—however, it is only in appearance, for the subject of this paper, viz. the Sulphas Sodæ, is at once an illustration and a confirmation I what I have said.

A common reader of Chinese would translate Heuen-ming-fun, by the English words, black bright powder; and its synonym, Pih-lung-fun, by white dragon powder; but, under these odd names, none but the patient inquirer could ever discover the admirable Salt of Glauber.

The Chuh-hwang, of China.—It is so called to denote its being a yellowish substance, procured from the inside of large bamboos, in the southern and more marshy regions of the country.

One of the synonyms is Teen-chuh-hwang, which means, the Indian yellow substance; and some think proves, that it originally came from India. They consider it a concretion of sand in the hollow centre of the bamboo.

It is chiefly used in diseases of children—especially frights and convulsions.

Its medicinal virtues are much the same as another drug, procured from the bamboo, and called Chuh-leigh, Bamboo exudations.

The Chuh-hwang, it is added, has all the good properties of the last named medicine, without any of its deleterious effects.

(*To be continued.*)

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