SECTION X.

Chinese medicine—Antiquity and unchanging condition—Doctrine of elements—Of numbers—Organisation—Anatomy—Division of regular practitioners—Irregulars—Materia medica.

The healing art among the Chinese, with much pretension to learning and practical power, is in a very rude and inefficient state: it is, in fact, a chaos of unfounded conceits, contradictory notions, and pompous phrases. Doctrinally it has close analogy with the system of Pythagoras, as amplified, illustrated, and applied to medicine by Hippocrates; although it does not possess the coherence and methodical beauty which the former gave to his speculations, nor the keen observation of natural actions, close study of their relations, and acute practical precepts, of the latter. Like the former, the Chinese doctors have much faith in the theory of elements, to which they are constantly making reference; like the latter, they have hypothetical humours and imaginary spirits, of which they make liberal use in their intercourse with each other, as well as in their communications with the illiterate, and with which they contrive to amuse themselves and dupe their employers.

The apparent immutability of medicine, as of all other institutions and mental operations, is the most prominent point in the

Chinese character. Physics and their application to the nature and treatment of disease, were probably as perfect among them at the time of Pythagoras, as they are now; nay, there is reason to believe that they had reached the state in which they now remain, at an earlier period. This is concluded from what appears on the surface, from all that has been learned through foreign intercourse, from their antiquities, traditions, and historical records. Whether the physical system of Pythagoras or of the Chinese had the broadest basis in truth, and which of them was best fitted for useful application; whether both were original and independent of each other; or whether one was deduced from the other, and in that case which was the first and the transmitter, would be subject of interesting, if not very instructive inquiry. But if it were shown that, though nearly coeval, they were entirely independent of one another, each being the effect of a process of thought carried on in the east and in the west respectively,—similar when formed, but separate in origin and development,—how different has been their duration! The system of the west has long made way for more truthful systems, while that of the east remains in all its force, and gives no sign of alteration or decay.

In this, the Chinese exhibit a great intellectual phenomenon. All other nations and tribes, who have passed the merely savage state, not being bound by castes like the Hindoos, or absolutely insulated like the Japanese, go either forward or backward at different rates of progression, though the movement is generally in advance. They alone, having long ago reached a certain point, in some respects a high one, in civilisation, mental culture, and artistic accomplishment, continue as they were. They appear to have fallen into a petrified fixedness, which nothing but the most powerful external agents can move. Philosophy should look to this. It is not enough to say that the jealous and exclusive feeling of the government prevent all alteration; for since the time of Pythagoras, their forms of government and races of governors have been often changed; they have been overrun by conquerors, from the west and the north, visited by accomplished travellers,

and for hundreds of years had intelligent European missionaries settled among them. From foreign commodities, foreign ships, and other results of science, they must have seen the superiority of strangers. Information and improvement in many shapes, have been at their doors, and cordially offered to them, but they have rejected with contempt, or made no use of them. Then why should so many millions of men have their intellects trammelled and their hands bound by a single semi-barbarian? If it should be said that they think themselves perfect, and therefore beyond the reach of instruction, that would show at the same time prejudiced ignorance, and something peculiar in mental constitution.

Although the general conception respecting primary substances is similar, there is considerable difference in its development, in the Pythagorean and Chinese systems. The Greek philosopher was satisfied with four elements; the Chinese sages reckon five. While they do not admit one of those assumed by the western physiologist they supply two from their own stock of invention: subtracting air, they add metal and wood. According to their mythology, the five elemental matters are fire, water, earth, metal and wood, from which all substantial things, including the human body, are made, by the operation of the active or the passive, or the union of the productive with the reproductive principle. There is some speciousness in the fanciful fabric which they have thus erected; and they have hedged it round with so much elaborate mysticism and bewildering obscurity, as to render it acceptable to a people who are satisfied with sounds of which they do not ask the meaning, who are ignorant of the first principles of physical science, and destitute of the spirit of experimental inquiry.

As these elements are properly proportioned in the human system, so is the ratio of health. A slight preponderance of one over the others gives rise to temperaments, and proclivity to particular maladies, without inducing them; if the just equipoise is subverted, or disturbed beyond a given point, disease ensues, its nature and degree being determined by the element which is in a state of defect or excess, and the extent of error either way. Thus,

if water be in excess, it will diminish the healthy action of fire, and if it cannot be brought back to the right standard, will, in a certain state of surplus, extinguish it; hence arise dropsies, though when they come to details, they say that there is the yellow dropsy of the liver, and the red dropsy of the spleen,—two very important organs in their physiology, without explaining the connexion between those organic actions and excess of the watery element.

On the other hand, when there is too much fire, it interferes with the wholesome quantity of water, at a particular elevation, destsoys it; at the same time, it dries unduly the earth and the wood, perhaps burns the latter, and heats dangerously, if it does not calcine the metals. And so on with the other elements.

To correct such errors in the right proportions, to understand the signs by which they are manifested, to allay the storm among the elements, taking away where there is too much, and giving where there is too little, communicating not only the proper quantity, but giving also the right form and direction to each, thus restoring harmony to the jarring system, and health to the diseased body, is the business of the physician. And doubtless, if the supplies of an immense multifarious materia medica, of which he makes liberal use, and in which the patient, notwithstanding all failures, has much faith, were sufficient for the purpose, he would seldom be found wanting; for, in no part of the world does pharmacy appear in a more flourishing state than in this.

Yet, there are cases in which the doctor confesses his want of power, does not pretend that he can, by medicine, restore the loss of equilibrium among the elements, and wisely confines himself to the outworks, leaving the war in the citudal to subside of itself, or destroy the garrison, according to the force of the conflict. He says it would be folly, for instance, to attempt the cure of small-pox. In that disease he avers that a portion of the elemental fire is detached from the general stock, and accumulated in the stomach. This he represents as necessarily passing to the surface, and burning out there, if life be saved; that it often destroys in

its transit, but that its natural, and only safe progress is centrifugal; that if it pass easily and burn briskly outside, there is little danger; on the other hand, much mischief is to be apprehended, should it smoulder within, or get through slowly and imperfectly; and that consequently any artificial effort which might have the effect of hindering its outward progress should be avoided, as injurious, if not fatal. Notwithstanding his false premises and loose speculations, there is some sense in his conclusion. He has been taught by observation that, though he may modify, he cannot arrest small-pox.

The notions of the philosophers respecting the distribution and especial uses of the various elements in making up the entire body are curious, principally on account of their crudeness, and as showing the poor stuff and foolish fancies, with which men holding themselves superior to all others, and which appear to have undergone no change since the days of Laoutze and Confucius, can be content. It is not known whether all the doctors of the empire hold exactly the same opinions on the subject. There may be different, though it is probable that in this, as in other matters of belief, there is much uniformity in their modes of thinking. However that may be, the oracle of Tinghae, to whom the writer is chiefly indebted for what he has learned of the mystery, and who was represented as the most able expounder of physicial doctrine in the place, delivered himself, in answer to questions proposed, to the following effect:

From the element of fire are formed the ten noble organs. This is as imaginative, and as little allied to truth as may be. It was not easy to understand what was meant by the ten noble organs, where situated, or what their offices were; and it was felt that any questions respecting the essence of fire, or how it was converted into organic matter would have been useless.

Water, with less apparent incongruity, where ideas are so strictly mechanical, and when there is total ignorance of vital physiological and chemical actions, is held to be the direct source of the fluids generally. It appears also to be considered the fountain

from which spirit is derived,—a kind of ethereal essence, pervading the body, necessary to its health and very existence, and which is regarded in the light of an Archeus, or guiding and conservative principle. Of this imaginary agent and its influence, more account is taken than of the blood, its liquid results and solid products.

The alimentary apparatus is formed from the element of earth. It is probable that this part of their system has an analogical origin. From the soil spring the principal substances of nutriment. The earth, in the large acceptation of the word, is necessary to their formation; and pure elemental earth is the fit material from which to fabricate the chief, according to their doctrine, the sole organ for assimilating them with, and making them part of the living body.

Bones are produced from metal. As the former are the densest parts of the frame, so the latter, as understood by them, is the hardest of inorganic substances. There seems to be no better reason for the metamorphosis in question, so similar to the conceit of the poet, and so inconsistent with the sobriety of truth; but absurd as it is, it satisfies the people, who consequently ask no further questions.

From the element of wood are formed the five ducts, though it is not clear how the number five is made up. The rectum and urethra constitute two: other two are supposed to be the hepatic and pancreatic outlets, with perhaps the imputed one of the spleen. The last organ holds a high rank in their animal economy; and with them it would form no difficulty in completing the tale, that it has no duct; for their anatomy is as little fettered by fact as their physiology.

Such is the Chinese doctrine of human organization. Whether, under the leaden sway of despotism, and the more crushing weight of fabulous philosophy and false religion, they can continue much longer in the complacent, dreaming ignorance of ages, remains to be seen. Recent events on their shores have shown them, in a way not to be misunderstood, the power, at least, of strangers,

whom they counted weak, simply because they were long in exhibiting their strength. Those events may be the beginning of better things for China. They contain the elements of change, and seem well fitted to form a great practical epoch in its history, such as it has never before experienced; not a change of rulers merely, and the substitution of one dynasty for another, satisfied with the sovereignty, without attempting the improvement of the people, but a change from darkness to light. Unwilling to be taught, and slow to learn, as they are, not yet having learned the connexion of knowledge with power, it can scarcely be doubted that henceforward they must move, however slowly and unsteadily, in the path of intellectual and moral amelioration. This is a tempting theme, which may not be followed in a sketch like the present, but is left to the able and philanthropic men who have studied, and are studying it diligently; who have the means of doing so thoroughly; and who, it is hoped, will have the power, as they have the desire, to aid materially in renovating this vast empire; breaking the incrustation, and shaking off the accumulated dust of ages—dissipating the rubbish, and stirring the dry bones. But to return to the subject in hand.

On its being hinted to the expositor of the human organization, that substantial provision was made for constructing parts of the frame only, and that, according to his showing, there were no materials for forming a large portion of it, he did not choose to proceed with his prelection. He either thought that he had shed enough of his precious light on barbarian darkness, or felt that if he advanced farther, he might get beyond his depth, and therefore considered it prudent to stand upon his dignity.

They affect to understand temperaments by the pulse. When one of the medical sages was requested to declare that of the writer, he laid his fingers along the wrist, appeared to think deeply while he interrogated the impulse, and after a little, said, gravely, that the element of metal predominated; and that in Mr. Gutzlaff, who was present, and submitted to the same scrutiny, the element of wood took the lead; thereby intimating that the

former had less than ordinary disposition to disease, or injury of his osseous frame-work; and that the latter was furnished with powerful excreting action, and therefore little liable to obstructive ailments. The worthy missionary admitted that the doctor's devination respecting that part of his constitutional energy was correct, and that so far he had the merit of being, at least, a good guesser. All that can be said safely of the response vouchsafed to the other inquirer is, that hitherto he has escaped node necrosis and broken bones.

Like the Pythagoreans, they have much reliance on the influence of particular numbers. Five, or one of its multiples, holds the first rank. The pre-eminence of the first is probably derived from the circumstance of its being the number assigned to the elemental substances. Then they say that there are five fingers, five toes, five ducts, five senses, five tastes, ten noble organs, &c. They are addicted to prescribing five three, or a multiple of either, ingredients for making up efficacious mixtures, and observing the same order in the number of draughts, boluses, &c., to be swallowed daily; and they contrive, by precept and practice, to administer drugs abundantly. The similarity between the ancient Greeks and modern Chinese in this respect—belief in the influence of numbers—would be more remarkable than it is, were it not known how generally this species of fatalism is felt among ignorant and ill-informed men, especially among those who dabble on the surface of metaphysics, without descending into the mines of nature, and turning up the ores of physical truth.

For their ideas of the structure of the human body, the Chinese are indebted to imagination even more than for their opinions respecting the division of the surface of the globe; their anatomical plates are consequently more ridiculous, and further removed from reality, than their geographical maps, &c. To dissection of the body, for the purpose of learning the mechanism and uses of the various parts, they never resort. It is not known whether there is any Imperial edict prohibiting it; it is certainly never practised. Even the dim, uncertain light which other people, at

the dawn of scientific inquiry, have derived from comparative anatomy, they neglect and despise. They kill the lower animals only to eat them. Being utilitarians in the strictest and most sordid sense, they continually ask, when anything new is proposed to them, however advantageous it may promise to prove, if it do not directly increase the store of food, or silver, *cui bono?* If they explored, or examined in the most cursory manner, the interior organization of animals, they would not continue gravely to publish the fallacies which the four authorised plates of the human body exhibit.

Three of those plates are devoted to various aspects of the circulating systems. The other refers to the cerebral, pectoral, abdominal, and pelvic organs, of which it gives a most whimsical, and as it embodies the knowledge of the Chinese professors, curious picture.

The brain is represented as occupying a small and central portion of the cranium. What might be the conceit as to the vacant space, could not be discovered; but, drawing from fancy at pleasure, it may be concluded that, in this part of the world, an empty skull does not denote poverty of intellect; and that no credence is given to the aphorism, "that nature abhors a vacuum." Chinese craniology is, therefore, directly opposed to the system of Gall, and utterly subversive of the deductions of phrenology, as it does not permit the brain to come near its bony enclosure. Yet the native portrait painters, from the manner in which they delineate the heads of distinguished persons, seem to have an impression of their reality. Aided, though more moderately than the anatomists, by imagination, they represent their sages, warriors, and demigods, with great development of the parts, alleged to be the especial instruments of the intellectual powers and moral affections. In some cases, they are so liberal in their cranial endowments, as to give an extent of forehead surpassing that of Bacon, Shakspeare, or Scott, both in breadth and elevation. It would, therefore, appear that, in China as in other places, notwithstanding the opposing evidence of anatomy, there

is an intuitive recognition of the general doctrine of phrenology.

Though the plate does not place them in juxtaposition, the doctors call the forehead the door of the brain, from which they say 360 nerves proceed; but what they understand by nerves, or what they suppose their properties to be, could not be made out, by questioning the most learned men of the place.

The heart is figured low in the thorax, is considered a single cavity, and designated the reservoir of good things; it has little active connexion, none that can be traced with the general circulation. From above, the windpipe passes directly into it; while from below, the tube of a second, elective stomach, connected with the first, recipient stomach, by some kind of conduit, enters it at nearly the same point with the windpipe. Short work is thus made with the complicated and mysterious process of assimilation. One vessel proceeds from the heart to the liver, and another descending along the course of the spine, after communicating, by a broad reservoir-like expansion, with the kidnies, *it is presumed* terminates in the genitals. There is, besides, a double canal, connecting the heart at a point near its apex, with the tube last noticed. But what all those things mean, and what part, if any, the heart acts in propelling the blood, the professor who was asked to explain what appeared in the plate, failed to show. Chinese notions regarding the circulating system, as on most other subjects, are peculiar to themselves, and differ entirely from those entertained by European physiologists, anterior to the time of Harvey and Servetus. In this, as in other vital actions, they introduce the sexual system. They have some idea of difference between arteries and veins, but what it is, and what offices they assign to each, could not be ascertained.

The arteries are said to be male and female. Of the former, three, belonging to the hand, proceed from it to the head; while three, belonging to the foot, originate in the hand, whence they descend to their proper place. On the other hand, three female arteries proceed from the bowels to the hand, to which they be-

long; and three, belonging to the foot, originate there, and thence proceed to the intestines.

Besides these vessels, there is the pulse artery, which moves with every respiration three inches, and performs its circuit in two minutes. The chief concern of the doctor is the study of this artery, that he may clearly understand, and accurately unfold its manifold meanings; for in so much as he has skill to read its language accurately, by so much is he excellent as a practitioner. From it, besides the temperament of the patient, he deduces the diagnostic character of the disease he is called to treat, after which, having settled the kind and degree of disorder which has arisen among the elements, he sets manfully to work, and boldly promises a cure, knowing, what is not peculiar to China, that the man who promises most in medicine is most followed.

The veins are said to circulate day and night, but it does not appear that they believe the motion to be onward and in a circle; for they say, that having arrived at the end, it again commences where it left off. Nor do they admit that the arteries and veins have any connexion; for they allege that all the arteries and veins have their respective cavities, twelve in all, such as the liver and heart, from which they proceed, and corresponding places where they end; and that, throughout the body, there are paths, ducts, and channels, distinct and appropriate to each, so that the blood does not meet with obstruction in its passage, though why it passes, and by what mechanism, does not appear.

The heart is said to be the ruler, from which the spirits proceed; it is also held to be the receptacle of marrow, which comes from the brain, and goes to the reproductive organs. The lungs are vehicles by which the temper is regulated. The liver holds the place of a general, whence proceeds contrivances and orders. The bile acts as umpire, settling disputed points. The spleen performs the part of messenger, and is the fountain of joy—a function not before ascribed to it, but to which it has as good a title as to be considered the seat of ill-humour and despondency. The stomach is the granary of the body, and the governor of the

five tastes. The great duct is the promoter of principles, and the operator of changes; the smaller ones being the receptacles of superfluity, where digestion is carried on. The kidnies are the rulers of strength, whence all skill proceeds. The bladder, having no connexion with the kidnies, is the general reservoir of the absorbents. These, as far as could be gathered through an able interpreter, are their most remarkable conceits respecting the formation and functions of the body.

They divide the labour of healing among various classes of practitioners. Physicians, surgeons, innoculators, and druggists, have their respective lines, though they do not appear in China more than in England, to keep very strictly within their proper limits. The first functionary is said to remain honestly on his own ground, but the surgeon and druggist poach on his property whenever they can.

For a small fee, not equal in value to a shilling, the physician, after examining the pulse, exhibiting deep interest in the welfare of the patient, and profound knowledge of his case, writes a recipe, which, in imposing appearance, would put to shame the most elaborate performance of a London professor. It occupies generally a large sheet of paper, is often diversified by red, added to the ordinary black characters, and is altogether a learned and laborious-looking composition. When carried to the druggist, he spreads it on the counter, examines it attentively, and then proceeds to dispense *secundem artem*. Many ingredients, seldom less than nine or ten, make up the total of articles prescribed; they are almost always powders, sliced roots, or other dry substances, fluids being seldom sent from the apothecary's store. For each, a separate piece of paper is laid out in regular array, some white and others red; the former are the most numerous, and to them the most common simples are consigned, the crimson being reserved for those which are more powerful, or more highly esteemed, such as ginseng.

From the practice of the celestials, terrestrials might take a very useful hint, that, namely, of compelling all dealers in drugs

to distinguish, in a manner that could not be misapprehended, such articles as are, at least, harmless, from those that are destructive in moderate quantities, marking the latter so conspicuously and indelibly, as to place mistakes respecting them out of the question. For this purpose, it would be sufficient to put all innoxious and comparatively inert substances into white vehicles—papers, phials, boxes, &c.—while those possessing poisonous qualities, of whatever force, in the common sense of the word, should be placed in red. To make the practice universal, and derive all possible advantage from it, an act of parliament would be required, rendering it imperative, and attaching heavy penalties to any breach of the law; but legislation would be well employed for a short time on such a measure. It would be the means of saving many lives which are lost from idleness and inadvertence. If it were at the same time enacted that nothing poisonous should be sold or disposed of, except by the written direction of a well-known medical man, the amount of suicide might be less. It is true that where a person is resolved on such an act, an instrument will seldom be wanting; for if one fail, another will be found; but it might happen, if the instant impulse could not be acted on, that the fatal resolution would never be carried into effect. At any rate, carelessness or cupidity should not be allowed, in whatever degree, to minister to the fearful deed of self-destruction.

Surgery, in any proper sense of the word, has no existence among the Chinese; as might have been concluded, without observation, from their total ignorance of anatomy. They set and support fractures of the extremities, after the fashion of an ordinary farrier; and they are moderately successful in the reduction of simple dislocations; but anything requiring knowledge of structure, or the nice application of mechanical power, is beyond their reach.

Their implements form a strange collection of rough tools, more resembling the collection of a cobbler than the instruments of a surgeon. One of them is a small hook; another is a triangular bit of metal, like the iron of a laundress in miniature, with

a projecting handle; a third is an exact representation of a reaping sickle; a fourth has the same form as the last, but with the cutting edge outwards; a fifth is a sort of Lilliputian spear; a sixth represents a lance on the same small scale; and a seventh has a like form, but is truncated at the point. The remainder, nine in number—the whole amounting to sixteen—are puncturing instruments, varying a little in form and size, but all of them much larger than the puncturing needles employed in Europe. Only one of them is round; the others terminate in an indifferent point, by two, three, or more sides, variously inclined; but what the object of the slight difference in the shape of those perforators might be, could not be understood.

In their cases of instruments, there is neither scalpel, bistoury, nor bleeding lancet; nothing but the sixteen contrivances enumerated above. Except by puncture, they work entirely on the surface. Cutting into a cavity, down to a diseased tissue, or off a limb, are barbarous practices of which they are altogether innocent. A vein is never opened by design. There is great horror of shedding blood, except by the hands of the executioner; but why venesection should be prohibited among people who do not, like the Jews, appear to consider that the blood is the life, is difficult to understand, as in certain states of disease there is, apart from reasoning and experience, an instinctive persuasion of its usefulness.

When a limb is irrecoverably injured, it is left, barring poultices and plaisters, to kill the patient, or drop off by mortification; and, if there be much hæmorrhage, the process is accelerated by ligatures, passed, not round the vessels, but the limb.

Together with the bone-setting and puncturing noticed above, Chinese operative surgery consists almost entirely in the application of moxas, which, although it was not witnessed by the writer, is said to be practised extensively. Of scientific principles, it is needless to say that it is destitute.

But the sub-division of the small-pox inoculators, and their practice, deserve notice. Instead of introducing the virus directly into the system, by a slight incision, they accomplish their object

in a circuitous and rather complicated way. The crust of a maturated pock is thoroughly dried, powdered, and rubbed into the mucous membrane of the nostril, or a piece of cotton, powdered with it, is stuffed into the nose. This is the most common method for the common people; but there is one of greater pretension, though probably less effectual, for the rich. A small metallic cup, shaped like the bowl of a tobacco-pipe, is introduced into the nostril of the child, while the inoculator, applying his mouth to the stem, blows the variolous contents forcibly against the lining membrane.

The practice, whichever method is adopted, is at once more troublesome and less certain than the European; neither circumstance, however, lessens it in the estimation of the people, since it possesses the grand recommendation of having been long practised. With them, it is not novelty, but antiquity that charms. They say, why abolish, or meddle with, their plan of operating, which they affirm has been in use upwards of a thousand years. If this be so, and no reason appears why it should be doubted, they have arrived at the conclusion, through whatever channel, that, by artificially exciting small-pox, its violence could be controlled, long before it was dreamed of at Constantinople. The origin of the practice there, being so obscure as not to be clearly traced, its history in China may be supposed to be involved in impenetrable mystery. Its introduction anywhere, if it was not accidental, is one of the most extraordinary efforts at amelioration ever made, and one of the most successful in lessening the force of a naturally destructive disease. It is the more wonderful, from originating among people in a low state of intellectual improvement, who were little likely to reason, or prosecute experiments on the subject.

Surgeons dispense their own medicines, and local appliances, and do a little, what they can, in short, in way of medical prescription, to any one who will apply for it. They hold nearly the place of the English general practitioner, but their shops are

generally poorly furnished, and neither their employment nor profit is on a large scale.

The department of the druggist is more lucrative than that of the surgeon; for, as the people are fond of physic, and they have no desire to balk the inclination, they not only give on every possible occasion, but give liberally. As an example of the latter disposition, it was observed that five balls, larger than marbles, to be taken at once, were prepared for some form of bowel complaint. It might be assumed that they did not possess very active ingredients, but how the patient, without the assistance of a probang, contrived to gorge them, was the wonder. Men who should order or issue such perilous-looking pellets in England, would be considered fit to deal with the diseases of horses only.

It would be amusing to place together the dose of a Chinese and homœopathic doctor, contrast the pharmaceutical antipodes, and look with the gravity that could be commanded at the Brobdignagian and Lilliputian proportions. Yet there is no saying whether, among the many curiosities which will find their way hence to London, a celestial doctor may not be one; if he do, it will be still less easy to foretell the tide of success which may await him. He would possess pre-eminently the charm of novelty; and if to that he added the irresistible recommendation of boasting loudly, and boldly professing his power to cure all manner of disease, he might prove a formidable rival to the homœopathist. At any rate, he would be his fit antagonist, and a pretty race might be run between them for popular favour. It is suspected, however, that the expounder of the *pun-tsaou* would be beaten, principally through the burthen of his big boluses, by the light weight of the disciple of Hanneman; for the imaginative invalid who delights to toy with the immeasurably minute doses of the latter, would be frightened or disgusted by the drenches and balls of the former.

Here, however, where polypharmacy prevails, and medicines are apt to be valued in proportion to their bulk, the homœopathist would have no chance, whatever might happen to the hydropathist.

The man who professed to cure fever or inflammation by a microscopic remedy, averring that he would subdue the elemental war which subverted health, by an agent so small as to be scarcely within reach of the senses, would be considered a dangerous trifler and designing knave—a pompous charlatan, who, whatever success he might have, through the working of imagination, with hysterical girls, or dyspeptic hypochondriacs, by the simple privation of drugs, should not be trusted with the management of dangerous disease.

Their love of medicine leads the Chinese to take it, when they do not even suspect themselves to be sick. It is common for persons of condition to undergo, especially in spring and autumn, a course of physic, for its prospective benefits—a purifying, renovating process, by which they expect to be made stronger, and guarded against future maladies. Whether, in such cases, the doctor plays with the foibles of his clients, prescribes non-efficients, and so profits by their folly, without injuring their persons; or whether he enters seriously into their views, attempts to mend what is sound, and orders active preparations, could not be ascertained. If he adopt the latter course, there is little doubt that the often-repeated epitaph of the Italian might be written on many a Chinese tomb.

The drug-shops are large, and are commodiously fitted up. They have a great array of drawers and jars, arranged much in the same way as in England; glass vessels are very rare. Different departments are allotted to separate classes of medicaments; care is taken to keep things in order; and there is a degree of neatness and method in their appearance which would not be discreditable to a London laboratory. They do not seek notice by party-coloured bottles and cabalistic signs, which make so great a figure in the windows of English medicine venders, but are rigorously plain, and as far as mere appearance is concerned, appropriate.

On examining the contents of the drawers, boxes, &c., few things were observed identical with, or similar to the medicinal substances employed in Europe. Camphor, rhubarb, and liquorice,

were conspicuous among recognized articles; but our familiar friends in the shape of purging-salts, calomel, tinctures, &c., were nowhere found. Even opium, of which so much is used as a luxury, does not appear to be admitted in the materia medica; at least, it could not be traced in any form in the drug-shops. Cinnabar, or a substance much resembling it, is a favourite remedy in many external diseases, and it consequently is a prominent article in every collection. It is applied to superficial ulcers, which are very prevalent, in the following manner. Round the circumference of a circular piece of paper a portion of pitch is spread, the cinnabar being placed in the centre. Whether the pitch is supposed to assist in the cure, or is employed merely for the attachment of the active principle, is not clear, but judging from the persistence of such disease, notwithstanding the continuance of the treatment, the entire effect is little.

As the Chinese convert almost every organised substance into human food, they make similar exactions on the animal and vegetable kingdoms for the cure of human maladies. What is wanted in precision and power, they endeavour to compensate by diversity, as well as abundance of means.

They have a notion, not peculiar to them indeed, that for every disease nature has provided a remedy, if man had only the wit to find it out; they therefore levy contributions everywhere, appearing to think that, if not by judgment, they may by chance hit on what is required. It is not, however, on the principle of accidental discovery, but by a process of close reasoning that, among the stranger substances they have pressed into therapeutical service, elephant's hide holds a high place in the list of remedies for cutaneous disease. Following up the syllogism which is established in such a case, it might be expected that it should be especially applicable in elephantiasis; yet it is not so, its curative agency being exerted in more acute and superficial affections.

There is a good deal of what is called counter-practice in England. While the assistant druggist is dispensing by prescription, the principal is often found performing the more important func-

tion of the doctorate. After listening to the tale of the patient, standing outside his counter, he puts such questions as enables him to settle the matter of diagnosis to his own satisfaction; he then appears to consider the case profoundly, and finishes by directing a subordinate to furnish the sick man with the means of cure. These, he assures the applicant, are the things he wants, that he wants nothing different, and that if they be not sufficient to establish health, he knows where to find more, taking care at the same time to supply an ample store. All this is so like what happens every day in England that, it would be difficult to tell the difference.

There is another point of similarity, connected with that just noticed, in the pharmaceutical practices of the two countries, which, considering the general contrariety of their usages, is curious; it consists in providing ready-made remedies for prevalent and popular diseases. In England every drug-shop has an ample supply of infallible cures for bilious, dyspeptic, and nervous affections, as well as every other human infirmity, prepared, labelled, and recommended by the experience of ages, the universal suffrage of the afflicted, and the sanction of government. The Chinese have not reached such legislative perfection as to enable them to have their life-conferring nostrums patented and protected by the state; nor have they the English horror of bile, and consequently do not tax their ingenuity to discover remedies for bilious disorders. But in their own way, and with their views of human weakness, they labour, and they say successfully, for the benefit of their suffering fellow-mortals. There is no lack of cures for all evils, as well as of powerful promoters of enjoyment. On the druggists' counters are ample boxes containing preparations for such purposes as these,—to arrest cholerainstantly, to communicate strength directly, to infuse courage, to excite love, and confer the faculty of being loved, and so on, in proportion to the wants and wishes of individuals. This is sufficiently ridiculous, but is not more so in reality than the pretensions to similar efficacy constantly put forth in more enlightened places, and is probably much

less mischievous. The Chinese panaceas, hero-making mixtures, philtres, and medicated charms, are believed to be generally harmless, which is more than can be predicated of many of the compounds so much vaunted and consumed in England under the titles of antibilious, antidyspeptic, antinervous, *antiomnia mala* medicines; for it cannot be doubted that they often subvert health, slowly indeed in most cases, but surely, where it is all but entire; and that in others they increase the evils which they are alleged to remedy.

There are also oculists and dentists, each superior to his neighbour, all professing to be perfect, and capable of repairing whatever may be wrong in their respective departments. Besides these, and the physicians, surgeons, druggists, and inoculators, who may be considered the regular practitioners, there are quack doctors of various kinds, no way inferior to their fellow-philanthropists of the west in staying the course of the most fatal maladies; so that here, as elsewhere, the simple might conclude themselves beyond the reach of danger, and the power of death, provided only that they had the means of purchasing the life-perpetuating elixirs, so abundantly furnished.

The most remarkable of the irregulars is a professor of specious mien, resembling the Vates of ancient Rome, and uniting the offices of prophet, priest, and healer in his own person. He is generally a man of grave, and even commanding appearance, with a white flowing beard, and wearing a kind of sacerdotal robe. He takes his station, with the keys of knowledge future as well as present on a table before him, at the door, in the porch or interior of a temple, and has many followers; for to his shrine repair the curious inquirers into things to come, the broken in health and fortune, and the despairing of every kind; and he has comfort and healing for them all. No case is beyond his ken, nor any so desperate that he cannot remedy it; and it therefore happens that when the medical sages fail, the sick apply to him for the succour which the other cannot give.

By the way, the temples are used for many purposes besides

that of worship. In addition to soothsayers, there are found within the walls dealers in sweet and other meats, and players at petty games, and on a stage, facing the altar, and long array of idols, parties of scenic performers, dressed gaudily, and strutting, and mouthing, in the most approved Thespian fashion. The temples are the only established places of theatrical representation, which has no resemblance to the religious dramas formerly exhibited in Christian churches; and the show-gods are content, through their degraded ministers to share the sanctuary with gamesters, gluttons, impostors, and mountebanks. The Mandarins and other great men convert them likewise into caravansaries, when they want such accommodation.

The Chinese pharmacopeia, or rather materia medica, is, in accordance with what was stated above, a work of great magnitude, a brief epitome of it in the writer's possession, extending to upwards of 1,300 octavo pages. Like all their other devices, it lays claims to great antiquity, and is represented as a perfect composition, omitting nothing that is curative, and admitting nothing that is useless, or can injure. The whole is divided into six books, which are subdivided into chapters and sections in the following manner:

Book I.—*Treats of grasses:*

Chap.		No.
I.	Of those growing on hills	55
II.	,, growing in marshes	35
III.	,, fragrant	58
IV.	,, poisonous	29
V.	,, spreading and creeping . .	28
VI.	,, aquatic	7
	,, growing on stones . . .	6
	,, mosses	3

Book II.—*Treats of trees:*

I.	Of fragrant woods	25
II.	high growing trees	26
III.	free growing	20

Chap.		No.
	3rd. Section.—*Treats of fire:*	
	Kinds of	10
	4th Section.—*Treats of earth:*	
	Kinds of	10
	Book VI.—*Treats of animals:*	
I.	Of birds of the wilderness . . .	11
II.	,, of the water.	3
III.	,, of the forest	2
IV.	tame animals	9
V.	common quadrupeds	15
	rats and mice	2
	insects chrysallined	5
	,, produce of eggs	11
	,, engendered by moisture . .	4
VI.	Of fishes with scales	10
	,, without scales . . .	19
	dragons	4
VII .	Of serpents	4
	shell-fishes—tortoises . . .	3
VIII.	Of frogs	16
	human species	14

To this their general scheme of arranging medicinal substances, though no conjecture is offered as to its meaning, an example or two of their therapeutical reasoning may be appended.

Gold is of a moderately acrid taste; dissolved by mercury, it is poisonous, and will cause death, if taken in a larger dose than three candareens. It is a heavy metal, and hence suppresses fear, tranquillizes the heart and gives rest to the soul. Being a corrective of the element of wood, it proves remedial in spasmodic affections, diseases of the liver and gall, and all disordered actions of the five ducts.

Edible birds' nests are of a sweet insipid taste, and are restora-

tive to the lungs. They transform phlegm into other substances, and thereby cure cough. Combined with other things, they prove powerful tonics, and are of great use in consumption. In all diseases of the lungs arising from disorganisation, this is the best medicine, and will often do great good when every thing else fails. In chronic dysentery it increases the power of the stomach, and is very beneficial in small-pox. There is a long disquisition on the materials, and manner of forming the nest, and the various opinions of the most learned on the subject are quoted; preference, however, is given to that of a sage who maintained that the bird picked up small fishes, glued them together, and so constructed the precious commodity.

But ginseng is the paramount promoter of health, and prolonger of life. It is said to possess astonishing power, not only of sustaining, but restoring the human frame, and is regarded with a degree of admiration bordering on religious adoration. No one's case need be considered desperate, who can procure this, the *pabulum vitæ*, in abundance; but it is so costly, as to be beyond the reach of the great proportion of the afflicted. Generally it is, except in very small quantities, an article of sale by itself, the man who deals it dealing in nothing else; and it cannot be procured in every drug-shop. At Tinghae, the writer visited a ginseng repository, which was a most unpromising and barren-looking place. The commodity is too precious to be displayed at windows, or deposited on shelves. Strong boxes behind a rampart of counters alone appear; there it is rigidly kept, disposed in small cases, each of which contains about a drachm weight. A stranger well introduced, or a person of known character, may look at, but not touch, it, till he has paid the price. Proverbially it is represented as worth more than its weight in gold, which is confirmed by common practice; for the dealer alluded to asked, as a matter of course, for a bit shown, at the rate of twenty-four dollars an ounce.