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CONFESSIONS OF A QUACK.

[Although we would not be understood as approving of every sentiment and expression in the following lively satire, we deem it worthy of insertion as an amusing and instructive exposure of the arts by which empirics rise to fame and fortune, and of the credulity of those who are at once their patrons and their victims.]

When a person, who for many years has been living and making money by practices which a moralist would term fraudulent, comes forward at the end of his career with a confession of sins, it is likely to be presumed that he has reformed, and is ashamed of, his former course of life. Now I, for a considerable period, have been not only getting my bread, but also buttering it richly, by medical quackery; and I am retired on a handsome fortune which I have thereby amassed. But for my part, so far from feeling either shame or repentance on account of what I have been, I declare solemnly, with my hand upon my breeches pocket, that I glory in the name of Quack. I wish any body could imagine with what inward exultation I hear, as I pass by a village pond, the popular cry of the boys upon it. Quack, quack, quack! Yes; I am a Quack, although a retired one. I own it, I boast of it, and when I look back on all the years, ay, and all the persons too, that I have lived to become the rich, fat, comfortable fellow that I am, I am delighted.

So pleasing is the retrospect that thereby, truly, it is that I am induced to publish these disclosures, which nothing but an ingenuous desire in speaking of my own affairs makes me term "Confessions." In so doing, however, I am actuated by another motive, namely, by a longing for sympathy; a desire to render kindred minds partakers of my own. This amiable instinct is one which we Quacks, in the busy world, as it may be truly called, of our lives, are forced to repress. We cannot unbosom, even to our dearest friends, without putting ourselves in each other's power. Our secrets, in that case, would be betrayed, at all events they would be shared in; and this would not do—would not suit us. But now my active days are over. My mission is fulfilled. I am independent, able to look out, and can tell what I choose without owing a farthing by it. And let me mention here, although in this position, I am only a middle-aged man. I reflect on this circumstance with great complacency, while, when riding in my carriage, I behold one of my brethren, though they disown me—grown old and gray in what is called honorable practice, hobbling on foot.

Full particulars respecting my birth and parentage shall be recorded on the monument which I mean to have erected over my remains. I was educated, that is to say half educated, like most boys whose destiny is the medical profession, at a classical and commercial academy. There I remember I was once, and only once, flogged; and I mention because the infliction made a powerful impression on me, and, I believe, was the means of doing me much good. My offence had been a verbal fiction. My executioner, with the concluding lash, bade me mind how I told lies for the future. I recollected this advice in after years, to my no small success and advantage. Having left school, and being required to choose a calling, I made choice of physic, influenced, I believe, chiefly by the love of the mysterious and the marvellous; attributes with which the imagination had invested that science. A first course of practical pharmacy, however, in a master's surgery, soon dissipated all the romantic notions I had formed respecting it, but it vanished me at the same time in an unexpected manner. I had fancied that the ills that flesh was heir to were many, and that their corresponding remedies were equally numerous. I was, therefore, surprised at finding that by far the greater part of my employment consisted in mixing into phials, or 'putting up,' as it was phrased, 'Haust: Rub:' 'Haust: Nig:' 'Mist:' &c. Three sorts of medicine, I thought to go on treating diseases, and the dim forecast of a still grander generalization, the embryotic notion of a universal pill, would occasionally occur in my conception.

When the term of my apprenticeship expired I proceeded, as a matter of course, to London, for the purpose of completing my studies. To one I really did apply myself with some diligence, and all that I now regret is, that I wasted so much time as I did in attending lectures on dissections, and storing my mind with a knowledge of anatomy, and chemistry, and botany, and other sciences, which, in the first place, as I crammed them all up by rote, I forgot in less time after my examination than I had spent to learn them in before it, and which, in the next, if I had remembered them, would have been of no use to me. A large per centage of incurable diseases is to be cured with a blue bill and a black dose; those which are incurable are to be treated with colored water and placebo-pills. Of what service is chemistry, or any thing of the sort, in the prescription of such remedies as these? To arrive at the great truths contained in the foregoing statement, it will be supposed that I endeavored, at least, to acquire some knowledge of medicine, and that I reflected, to a certain extent, upon the information which I acquired on that subject.

Such was actually the case; for before I entered into private practice, I thought, and certainly not without a show of reason, that the success of a medical man was proportionate to his professional skill, and that the better commodity he had to offer, the more he would gain by the sale of it. How beautifully was I deceived! How not less beautifully undeceived, shall show presently! Under this delusion, solely did I cram my head with scientific verbiage in order to pass the Hall and College, but I diligently attended hospital practice, and between whiles visited, in the capacity of pupil, parties belonging to another public charity.—Walking under the physician to the institution, I knew stock their cases, and visited them at their houses; thus acquiring a knowledge of disease and its treatment at the bed-side. Hence I arrived at the two great principles in therapeutics which I had formed respecting it, but which vanished me at the same time in an unexpected manner. I had fancied that the ills that flesh was heir to were many, and that their corresponding remedies were equally numerous. I was, therefore, surprised at finding that by far the greater part of my employment consisted in mixing into phials, or 'putting up,' as it was phrased, 'Haust: Rub:' 'Haust: Nig:' 'Mist:' &c. Three sorts of medicine, I thought to go on treating diseases, and the dim forecast of a still grander generalization, the embryotic notion of a universal pill, would occasionally occur in my conception.

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