

**AN INQUIRY INTO THE CAUSE OF NATURAL
DEATH, OR, DEATH FROM OLD AGE;
DEVELOPING A NEW AND CERTAIN METHOD
OF PREVENTING THE CONSOLIDATION OR
OSSIFICATION OF THE BODY, AND OF THUS
INDEFINITELY PROLONGING VIGOROUS,
ELASTIC, AND BUOYANT HEALTH**

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HOMER BOSTWICK

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AND OF
RENDERING PARTURITION EASY AND SAFE.

BY HOMER BOSTWICK, M.D.,

AUTHOR OF "THE FAMILY PHYSICIAN," "HINTS TO YOUNG PHYSICIANS," VARIOUS
WORKS ON SEXUAL DISEASES, ETC., ETC., ETC.

"The human frame, as a machine, is perfect,—it contains within itself no
marks by which we can possibly predict its decay; it is apparently intend-
ed to go on for ever."—*Dr. Mourve's Anatomical Lectures.*

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INTRODUCTION.

THE author is fully aware, that in the following pages, conclusions have been arrived at, and practices proposed, startling and opposed to the preconceived opinions of general readers. This consideration, however, has had no influence in the statement of these conclusions, nor in the recommendation of those practices. Truth without mystery, intentional error, or the fear of man, is the motto best suited to this subject, and to serve the public. Everything of a metaphysical or speculative character has been carefully avoided; so that whosoever may feel disposed to raise objections, must do so not in accordance with any whim, prejudice or superstition which may afflict him, but by denying either the truth of the premises, or the legitimacy of the deductions. Let it not be said that the life of man cannot be prolonged to many

times the present period of his existence, because *it is not so*. Dr. Lardner and his dictum of Atlantic Steam Traveling is illustrative of this folly. It does not follow, that because a thing *is not*, or *has not been*, that therefore it cannot be. Yet Prejudice is ever a dead weight dragging at the chariot wheels of Progression. It is crazy with old crotchets and saws, and goes its way mumbling like a poor imbecile with no lightning in its blood. You meet it on the tops of mountains, in valleys, and ancient cities. It is always the same. Antiquated ideas, rotten by the action of time—make up its whole brain and utterance. It is deaf, blind, and to all mighty purpose, dumb as the stones. It can see only in one direction, and lives as it were in an eternal twilight. If a new sun were to burst through the heaven's concave over its head, it would scarcely believe it—or, if it did, what dubious words would it utter? The sun would assuredly be a God's bastard, a false light, deceiving at last the possible senses. Thus, does Prejudice reject all new truths—thus it laughs at all “regenerative schemes.”

But there is hope of the world enlarging its creed even in the department of knowledge we are now

treating, as the following paragraph from a weekly paper of large circulation testifies.

“LONGEVITY.—There is nothing in the system of nature which, in our present state of knowledge, appears so unintelligible as the scale of longevity. It must be admitted, indeed, that our knowledge upon this subject is very imperfect; for all that is known of domesticated animals, and the accidental facts which have been preserved concerning others, tend to the strange result, that longevity bears no relation either to strength, size, complexity of organization, or intellectual power. True it is that birds, which seem to rank higher than beasts in the scale of being, are also much longer lived. Thirty is a great age for a horse; dogs usually live only from fourteen years to twenty; but it is known that the goose and the hawk exceed a century. But fish, evidently a lower rank in creation than either, are longer lived than birds; it has been said of some species, and of certain snakes also, that they grow as long as they live, and, as far as we know, live till some accident puts an end to their indefinite term of life. And the toad! It cannot indeed be said that the toad lives forever, but many of these animals who were cased up at the general deluge, are likely to live till they are baked in their cells at the general conflagration.”

The individual existence of all organized bodies is temporary; no animal escapes the hard necessity of dying; nor is man exempt from this. The particu-

lar history of each function shows that in the first periods of old age, and often before, the organs become deteriorated; that many completely cease to act; that others are absorbed and disappear; and, lastly, that in decrepitude, life is reduced to a few miserable remnants of the vital, and some of the nutritive functions in an imperfect state. In this condition, the most trifling external cause, the slightest blow or fall, is sufficient to arrest one of the functions indispensable to life, when death invariably follows, as the last degree in the destruction of the organs and functions. But a small number of persons die solely through the effects of age; scarcely one in a million.—*Magendie's Physiology.* By Dr. Revere.

Now comes the question, Has the Creator so ordered this great destruction of human life by causes apparently accidental, or do they occur from the want of knowledge, from carelessness, or from causes which we have been endeavoring to point out? These are questions of vital importance to the whole human family, and if I have been successful in solving some of them, I shall feel myself amply paid in the consciousness of having done a little, while God spared my existence, to benefit and prolong the life of my fellow-man.

HOMER BOSTWICK, M.D., 504 Broadway.

THE CAUSE OF NATURAL DEATH.



CHAPTER I.

The Changes in the Body during its Progress from the Womb to the Grave.

THE first visible state of a human being, (in embryo,) is a small, globulous, pulpy or jelly-like substance, approaching the nature of albumen or the matter which constitutes the white of an egg. In this pulpy substance, or globule, various particles of more solid matter begin to appear. These particles of matter gradually increase in bulk and density, until they come in contact with each other. These different points of contact are slowly modified into so many joints or hinges; and thus, by degrees, a distinct framework of bone, or skeleton, is formed. During the formation of this bony fabric, the surrounding pulpy matter gradually accumulates, and changes in form, until, at length, that degree of organization is produced which constitutes a foetus, or child in the womb. This foetus becomes larger and firmer up to the time of birth, when the state of in-