

titioner* then calls to mind a reputed remedy for the cure of one of the most grievous and unsightly disorders to which the human species is subject—the *goître*—which infests the inhabitants of mountainous districts to an extent that, in this favored land, we have happily no experience of, and which was said to have been originally cured by the ashes of burnt sponge. Led by this indication, he tries the effect of iodine on that complaint, and the result establishes the extraordinary fact that this singular substance, taken as a medicine, acts with the utmost promptitude and energy on *goître*, dissipating the largest and most inveterate in a short time, and acting (of course, like all medicines, even the most approved, with occasional failures) as a specific, or natural antagonist, against that odious deformity. It is thus that any accession to our knowledge of nature is sure, sooner or later, to make itself felt in some practical application, and that a benefit conferred on science by the casual observation or shrewd remark of even an unscientific or illiterate person infallibly repays itself with interest, though often in a way that could never have been at first contemplated.

(44.) It is to such observation, reflected upon, however, and matured into a rational and scientific form, by a mind deeply imbued with the best principles of sound philosophy, that we owe the practice of vaccination; a practice which has effectually subdued, in every country where it has been introduced, one of the most frightful scourges of the human race, and in some extirpated it altogether. Happily for us, we know only by tradition the ravages of the small-pox, as it existed among us hardly more than a century ago, and as it would in a few years infallibly exist again, were the barriers which this practice, and that of inoculation, oppose to its progress, abandoned. Hardly inferior to this terrible scourge on land was, within the last seventy or eighty years, the scurvy at sea. The sufferings and destruction produced by this horrid disorder on board our ships, when, as a

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