

**MEANS  
WITHOUT LIVING**

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Means Without Living by Anonymous

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## A CHAPTER ON QUACKERY, ULTRAISM, &c.

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QUACKERY appears to be the order of the day; and the more impudent, abominable and unblushing it is, the more successful. Lecture rooms and Lyceums, and even pulpits are contaminated with it; and as to our newspapers, a large majority of them should adopt 'Herald of Quackery,' as a running title. The advertising portions of our periodical sheets, to which any one may have access for the usual fee, are full of the promises of charlatans; and the corners of the streets are brilliant with their glaring devices for attracting the attention of the passenger. If the mere amount of money out of which people are gulled were all the mischief, we would not say one word; and if the physi-

cal mischief worked upon the bodies of the victims were the worst calamity of this state of things, we would still be silent. But there are great moral evils arising out of this system of fraud. Not to notice the general evil of legal knavery upon the public mind — the disrepute into which moral honesty falls in a community which supports lying knaves like princes — levying a voluntary and onerous tax upon their own health and purses for that purpose — we pass to inducements to vice, appeals to individual passion, which are held out in many of the medicinal quack advertisements. Those who are suffering the penalties of dissipation in bodily illness, are promised what by any means short of a miracle is an impossibility : they are offered immunity from disease, and immediate cure, by the swallowing of some nostrum, to which, if we believe the advertisement, the long dreamed of Elixir of Life would be mere milk and water. And not only is a cure promised after disease is seated, but articles are advertised which are

warranted to enable the person who will swallow them to indulge in dissipation if he pleases — to challenge and defy the consequences, while he plunges into all the excesses, of vice. Now these people lie — or they are the accessories to the sin of their dupes. They would have the world believe that they have discovered a something which is 'purely vegetable, simple and harmless,' and yet potent enough to step in between cause and effect, and arrest the operation of the laws of nature. We might point out particular cases of this imposition — but it is unfortunately the case that the 'puff collusive,' operates more to the advantage of these monstrous humbugs than the most artful recommendation in the world would.

What does such a state of things argue for the delicacy of the moral sense of the community? What estimate of 'public opinion' have those persons formed who openly advertise themselves the panders to vice? We fear, a just one. They know that money-getting is an ex-

cuse for any and everything a man can do—short of direct larceny, burglary, or illegal swindling. They know that though they pursue a systematic course of deliberate lying and disgraceful self-debasement, that 'they get money by it' is a sufficient reason for their conduct in the estimation of the public—an ample justification. They are even quoted as smart, likely men, for a degree of moral turpitude and filthy baseness, which, if displayed in almost any other way, would degrade them to the kennel. *Money* induces the quack to forego his own self-respect, and announce himself the high priest of iniquity. *Money* procures his advertisements insertions in newspapers, simultaneously with moral essay editorials. *Money* induces respectable and responsible citizens to become the agents of irresponsible and dirty charlatans; for *money* they vend and recommend mixtures either positively innocuous and insipid, or actually poisonous. There are some modern newspapers which almost disgrace the



houses to which they are sent. They are capable of corrupting whole generations—and *they do it.*

But the quack dealers in patent medicines are not alone. They are kept in countenance by quack preachers, quack lawyers, quack teachers, quack lecturers, quack philanthropists, quack merchants, and quack mechanics. We have sometimes thought that it is this general consciousness of quackery in the community, which leads not only to the toleration, but to the patronage, of quack doctors.

*' A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind.'*

But there are some classes of quacks who are innocent of the deception they are practising upon the public, because they are first deceived themselves, and are only propagating, all in good faith, absurdities which they firmly believe themselves. Of these are the ultraists, who build extensive edifices of theory upon true premises, though all too narrow for the superstructure erected upon them. The 'science of human

life' has become a favorite hobby of late; as the world has existed, according to the Mosaic account but about six thousand years, its inhabitants have yet to learn the *science* of living. An uninitiated person might think this the most simple science in the world—easy of acquisition, if not indeed intuitive. But teachers have sprung up who would reduce the whole economy of living to a set of austere rules. Deeming temperance the only means of preserving health, it seems as if they never could get enough of a good thing. But the acerbity of an anchorite is intemperate temperance, and those who would introduce it into the walks of every day active life, attempt more than the hermit. If a person fatigued with over exercise should therefore resolve against any motion of his limbs as contrary to the laws of his organization, we should be amused at his ultraism. Yet those who, distressed at some time with a surfeit, thence infer that all generous food must be thrown aside, and that the body must be

supported on the least possible quantity of the least agreeable food, pursue a conduct and a system analagous to the dreams of a person who should build the theory of the necessity of an entirely passive life, upon the fact that a ten miles walk fatigues the body. Man is not an automaton, or a machine: therefore it is impossible to conceive rules for uniform diet, exercise, or habits, in all cases, and under all circumstances. All the experience of all ages goes against such a system, and rational pride revolts at the idea of being degraded into a creature of instructions, without discretion. But the worst of the business is, that our modern philosophers are not content to stop where reason and common sense might bear them some semblance of support, but push beyond reason, common sense, and practicability. And we regret exceedingly that it is in our power to state of one modern lecturer, not at present in this State, that he did not pretend to expect to effect a revolution among adults, nor to follow