

**MEDICAL FASHIONS IN THE  
NINETEENTH CENTURY:  
INCLUDING  
A SKETCH OF BACTERIOMANIA  
AND THE BATTLE OF THE BACILLI**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649403653

Medical Fashions in the Nineteenth Century: Including a Sketch of Bacteriomania and the Battle of the Bacilli by Edward T. Tibbits

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**EDWARD T. TIBBITS**

**MEDICAL FASHIONS IN THE  
NINETEENTH CENTURY:  
INCLUDING  
A SKETCH OF BACTERIOMANIA  
AND THE BATTLE OF THE BACILLI**



**MEDICAL FASHIONS.**

# MEDICAL FASHIONS

IN THE

## NINETEENTH CENTURY

INCLUDING A SKETCH OF

### BACTERIO-MANIA AND THE BATTLE OF THE BACILLI

BY

EDWARD T. TIBBITS, M.D., LOND.

PHYSICIAN TO THE BRADFORD INFIRMARY; AND TO THE BRADFORD FEVER  
HOSPITAL; FORMERLY HOUSE PHYSICIAN TO UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
HOSPITAL, LONDON; AND CLINICAL ASSISTANT TO THE  
HOSPITAL FOR CONSUMPTION AND DISEASES OF  
THE CHEST, BRAMPTON, LONDON.

LONDON

H. K. LEWIS, 136 GOWER STREET W.C.

1884

157 0 3

## MEDICAL FASHIONS.

---

### INTRODUCTION.

It is now considerably more than a quarter of a century since I first entered the portals of the medical profession. During that time the art of healing has undergone numerous, some of them very remarkable changes. Theory has displaced theory, this remedy has supplanted that, and one method of practice has been entirely superseded by another. Some so-called improvements have proved to be simply changes in the cycle of fashion, and nothing more, and thus I presume it always will be.

We medical men of the present day are apt to flatter ourselves, that, compared with our great grandfathers who practised before us, we are vastly superior both in knowledge and practice. And although there is abundant reason to be thankful that medical education and skill have been, and still are progressive, it is just within the range of possibility that something may be said in favour of the antiquated, and now, alas! too much despised practice of our predecessors.

To-day is the day of novelty and fashion, and in

the following pages I shall endeavour to point out the necessity for more patient thought and corroborative testimony on matters medical and scientific before taking action thereon. It is not advisable to embrace every new theory with eagerness, because it happens to be encircled with a halo of plausibility, or even because it is supported by a certain, it may be a considerable, amount of circumstantial evidence.

In these days there is danger of precipitate legislation on sanitary and social affairs. It is even possible to be fettered by too many laws, and this is a fact, at any rate worthy of consideration. I do not for one moment question the expediency of framing laws for the preservation of health, or for the well being of man in society, but except under specially urgent circumstances, hasty legislation in the directions to which I have alluded is anything but beneficial, and too frequently mischievous.

It is my intention shortly to publish a little work entitled "*Mores Medici*" with the object of explaining in detail, how and why medical men differ so widely in their opinions and practice. That they do so differ is undeniable. Their opinions are as numerous as the various shades of the prismatic colours, and sometimes as diametrically opposed as light and darkness, or the north and south poles. But this difference of



opinion is neither peculiar to, nor characteristic of the doctors. It obtains in all other classes and sections of human beings, and is the result of several factors, amongst which may be enumerated for the sake of example, social position, education, manners, customs, fashions, morals, and general character. To most of these I hope to direct special attention at a future period. In the meantime I have ventured to select one out of the list, *viz.*, fashion, as the basis for a preliminary pamphlet, which will I trust be the means of ventilating more thoroughly some of the ideas therein contained. Many are more or less familiar to the public.

My views concerning some of them are not, medically speaking, quite orthodox, in fact, they are not fashionable. However, it is satisfactory to know that some, perhaps many, of my professional brethren entertain similar notions. I would respectfully ask the reader to consider what I have written without prejudice, and so draw his own conclusions. Although I candidly confess that I am to a certain extent biassed against frequent changes without very good cause, the explanation for such a state of mind will partly be found in the accompanying description of numerous facts about which there can be no dispute.

## FASHION IN GENERAL.

Novelty is not necessarily associated with progress or improvement. Indeed in many instances it is precisely the reverse. In these days when competition is running very high, there is a general tendency to engage the attention of the public by a novelty whether it be in the matter of religion, science, education, dress, medicine, or anything else. That all novelties are more or less attractive, is a fact which cannot be denied. That they are frequently worthless, if not injurious, is another fact quite as unassailable. Many of these novelties may be justly regarded as envelopes, tempting in form and colour and general appearance, disclosing when opened, perhaps nothing more than some well known object, the imperfections of which it has been thought desirable to disguise or conceal. Before entering into the special subject of "medical fashions" it will be as well to consider briefly what is understood by fashion. It is not rule, neither is it exactly custom. A rule is made for our guidance, without which, although not absolutely binding, it would be almost impossible to transact the business of every day life in a satisfactory manner. Custom is less binding than rule, but observed and scrupulously observed for long periods by large masses

of individuals in different localities, communities and nations.

Speaking generally there is usually some good reason for the observation of rules and customs prevailing in a particular district or kingdom at any given time. The same cannot possibly be said of fashion since it is often opposed to common sense and reason. It gives rise to appearances and manners of the most ridiculous and grotesque description. As regards dress, in many instances, it is decidedly unbecoming as well as uncomfortable, inconvenient, and even injurious to health. The fashionable but horrible high-heeled boots, artificial waists and crinolettes, constitute a combination, which, to say the least, distorts, disfigures, and detracts from the natural grace and elegance of the female figure.

The same remarks are quite as appropriate, taken in connection with the education of the period, especially that which concerns girls. Physiology and Zoology are in these enlightened days considered suitable subjects for cramming into the minds of our girls. I will not stop to consider the numerous arguments which might be brought forward against this kind of instruction, but if it is to be anything more than a farce, it must be associated with the dissection of animals, a very nice accomplishment forsooth for our daughters! Is it calculated to make them better