

**MEDICAL ERRORS, FALLACIES CONNECTED  
WITH THE APPLICATION OF THE INDUCTIVE  
METHOD OF REASONING TO THE SCIENCE OF  
MEDICINE  
MEDICAL ERRORS, FALLACIES  
CONNECTED WITH THE APPLICATION  
OF THE INDUCTIVE METHOD OF REASONING  
TO THE SCIENCE OF MEDICINE**

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Medical Errors, Fallacies Connected with the Application of the Inductive Method of Reasoning to the Science of Medicine  
Medical Errors, Fallacies Connected with the Application of the Inductive Method of Reasoning to the Science of Medicine by A. W. Barclay

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# MEDICAL ERRORS.

## FALLACIES

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INDUCTIVE METHOD OF REASONING  
TO THE  
*Science of Medicine.*

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## P R E F A C E.



WHEN I was requested by the esteemed President of the College of Physicians to deliver the Lumleian Lectures for 1864, it was not without some misgiving that I ventured to call the attention of the medical profession to the great want of logical precision in the mode of reasoning, which forms the basis of so many of our theories. The subject had long occupied my thoughts, and daily experience had only strengthened my conviction of its importance. In presence of such an audience, and with so little time at my disposal, it would have been unprofitable to enter upon the elements of logic; to give anything like a full and consistent account of the Inductive Philosophy alone, would have required much more time than is allotted for this course of lectures; and

my plan would have failed in its object, had it not been possible to illustrate my meaning by current examples.

The lectures are now published just as they were delivered, with the addition only of certain portions which were suppressed at the time, so as to occupy no more than the three hours allowed me. But it would require a volume of much larger dimensions to do full justice to the two subjects which I have endeavoured to place side by side. The true meaning of induction, the tests of its accuracy, and the value of its results, have been contrasted with the mistaken notion of it which is generally entertained, the fallacies which are accepted, and the erroneous conclusions which have consequently been adopted. And, though it be vain to expect that true principles of reasoning could be thus made intelligible to persons who have not previously studied the subject, I may yet be permitted to hope that the examples of false reasoning, selected from recent medical literature, may prompt a desire to become better acquainted with what I conceive to be the only true means for the advancement of science. I trust, too, that on their perusal, my lectures may continue to receive the approbation of those, my seniors in the profession, whose too partial judgment of the fragmentary portion presented to my audience at the college, has tempted me to publish them in their complete form.

In criticising the writings of others, I trust that I have not said anything calculated to give offence. The critic very generally shields himself behind the incognito of an anonymous article in a review, but when he lays aside all disguise, as I have done, he cannot be supposed to be prompted by the insane desire to make himself enemies. Many of the writers who have been referred to in these pages are personal friends, and I should be sorry if they could possibly feel aggrieved by selections from their writings having been taken to illustrate my meaning. Most of them occupy a higher position in public estimation than myself; and any criticism of mine will consequently leave them unscathed. Be this as it may, the following pages are but the effort of one who longs to see the science of Medicine placed in its proper position, alike beyond the reach of hostile depreciation and of base and fraudulent imitation.

BRUTON STREET,

*November, 1864.*