PROGRESS OR CARELESSNESS.

Is medicine making such rapid advances that an opinion which is correct to-day will be incorrect six months hence? Are we advancing so rapidly in all matters pertaining to general medicine that a paper written this month will be obsolete a year from now? There are a few well-defined and specific medical conundrums the answers to which we seem to be within hope of securing before long; and in a few other directions distinct advances are made at frequent intervals. But speaking generally, is it so? These questions are prompted by several requests that have been received to return manuscript sent in to the JOURNAL for publication six or eight months ago. (Parenthetically, it may be remarked that the pressure on the columns of the JOURNAL was never greater than during the last year; some papers had to be held back for quite a while.) But why should a man who read a paper before some society last June, now think that the paper ought not to be published because it is a few months old? If it was worth writing and presenting at that time, is it not worth reading to-day? And if it is not, then what is the reason? Was it a good paper when read? Has medical science advanced so far, in the few intervening months, that what was true then is untrue now? It would hardly seem to be so. One is naturally loath to suggest that this peculiar condition of things could be due to carelessness on the part of the authors; and yet, aside from some single point about which an added word may have been said recently, it is about the only plausible explanation. Things like "606" do not come along every day to make men recall the opinion of yesterday. (Again, parenthetically, we may ask whether some of the present-day expresions of unbounded faith in "606" will not be regretted in six months' time; already reports of unexpected happenings are accumulating.) It is well to be a little "slow in the head"; if you are right to-day, you will be just as right a year from now; if science has advanced in the year beyond the world's knowledge of to-day, you need not be ashamed of it.

INCREDULITY VS. GREATNESS.

Occasionally, as the centuries have come and gone, a great truth has been voiced only to be clamorously quashed by the tumultuous outcries of the incredulous. Thus we have reached a condition in which the mass of the people, when any would-be great truth is announced by a would-be discoverer and is met by incredulity, assume that the incredulity is an unequivocal acknowledgment of the truth underlying the discovery. To call attention to the fallacy of this line of argument seems quite superfluous; and yet it is an argument that has a tremendous sub-conscious influence on a great many people; the argument of analogy is the most subtle and the most fallacious of all arguments; therefore it is the most dangerous. All of which is suggested by some occurrences in the San Francisco County Medical Society during the past two months. A certain physician claimed that he had discovered a wonderful vaccine with miraculous powers of a curative nature over everything from acnae to typhoid fever, including "housemaid's knee." The vaccine apparently consisted of a miscellaneous collection of germs, in more or less haphazard proportions, measured not by cubic centimeters but by so many "whisky flasks," and also containing some ingredient or ingredients which the "discoverer" was not prepared to announce, as he had turned the "discovery" over to a pharmaceutical house, for manufacture and exploitation. It is truly possible that a great truth may lie concealed in the "whisky flasks" of cultures; all things are *possible*. But that is not to say that all things are true—or even probable. It is difficult to see how such a dubious question could come before a learned society and excite its members to the extent which this question did, except on the assumption of the general tendency to believe that incredulity must necessarily mean discovery.

"CARE OF THE BODY."

If the dicta of the "Care of the Body" columns in the *Times* were written late at night and under the stimulus of wormwood or ethylated decoctions, one could understand it all; but presumably they are not so written. At any rate they are, apparently, published in good faith and not as "Joe Miller" notes. Listen to the words of "science" as they flow from the Brook in Los Angeles: "All disease is an effort of nature to expel from the system morbid matter . . . it should be encouraged, instead of being suppressed."

". . . the injection of filthy animal virus into the blood, a practice that has now been going on for a number of years, has been a contributary cause to the great increase in later years of such an awful disease as cancer, and to the rapid spread of the 'great white plague.'" And this in view of the wonderful fall in the death rate from diphtheria alone! Congratulations, "Mex"!

". . . the modern medical theory of germs is a colossal error that has led to an immense amount of false treatment and unnecessary deaths."

Of course all this has no relation whatsoever to an advertisement which appears on the same page and in the next column, in the *Times*:

"Hygienic Advice by Mail. By Harry Ellington Brook, N. D., Editor Care of the Body. How to cure yourself of chronic disease by the Natural Method. For particulars and terms, send stamped, directed envelope to Harry Ellington Brook, P. O. Box 612, Los Angeles."

This is probably the only instance on record of a newspaper openly giving its reading columns to the promotion of a quack. It would be worth while for the Post Office people to look into the matter with the object in view of issuing a fraud order against this person who, for "terms" will tell you how to cure yourself of "chronic disease." No one in the world but "Mex" Otis would "put this over." Too much pride is not good for anyone.