

**Reply to Dr. Simpson's pamphlet on homœopathy, and, Second edition of the letter to the President of the Medico-Chirurgical Society : with a postscript / by William Henderson.**

**Contributors**

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# REPLY

TO

DR. SIMPSON'S PAMPHLET ON HOMŒOPATHY,

AND

SECOND EDITION OF THE LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE  
MEDICO-CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY, WITH A POSTSCRIPT.

BY

WILLIAM HENDERSON, M.D.,

PROFESSOR OF GENERAL PATHOLOGY.

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studies, that a purpose which presses into its service details that are usually either impertinent or monstrous can be neither good in itself, nor the offspring of a mind that has any claim upon their confidence.

I once had the good fortune to peruse an attack on Homœopathy, which bore internal evidences of having been written by an opponent endowed with the feelings, principles, and education of a gentleman.\* It is a long time, some six years since, and in the interval many attacks have fallen under my notice, but they have not obliterated, rather perhaps they have deepened by contrast, the remembrance of the pleasure I experienced in following the accomplished author in his endeavour to unfold what he believed to be the truth. His elegant style and classical taste set off to advantage the honesty of his thoughts; and whether he condemned a theory, satirized a doctrine, or laughed at a fancied absurdity, the courtesy of good breeding and the candour of philosophy gave dignity to his rebuke and grace to his merriment. Pleasant, too, was the task of replying to the gentlemanly critic:† there was no gross accusation to repel, no vulgar abuse to condemn, no cunning artifice to expose. To his mind, kindred in intelligence and candour, "Hahnemann was undoubtedly a man of genius and a scholar;" and it appeared to him "but an act of simple justice to admit, that there exist no grounds for doubting that Hahnemann was as sincere in the belief of the truth of his doctrines as any of the medical systematists who preceded him, and that many, at least, among his followers have been and are sincere, honest, and learned men;" nor, while he believed that "there are charlatans and impostors among the practitioners of Homœopathy," had he any difficulty in

\* Article on Homœopathy, by Dr. Forbes, Physician to Prince Albert, &c. British and Foreign Medical Review, 1846.

† Letter to Dr. Forbes, &c. British Journal of Homœopathy, 1846.

adding, "alas, can it be doubted, any more, that there are such, and many such, among the professors of orthodox physic?" His knowledge of men, and his love of truth and justice, forbade him to question the parity of the contending systems in the character and attainments of their respective disciples, and led him nobly to affirm that "we have no more right to reject the evidence supplied in favour of Homœopathy by its professors, than we have of rejecting any other evidence in favour of any other medical doctrine, theoretical or practical."

The contrast presented by the work of Dr. Simpson, in every particular, literary, moral, and scientific, to the treatise of Dr. Forbes, is so offensive as to have excited general surprise that he should have ventured to publish anything so disgraceful to himself. So common is this feeling, that if I had desired to avoid any further collision with this *President of the College of Physicians*, on the subject he has so unwisely chosen to misrepresent, my silence would have been ascribed to a commendable self-respect. But as the position occupied by the author of the pamphlet in the estimation of a portion of the public, accidental as it is and temporary as it must be, may possibly give some little weight to his assertions in the opinion of some of his readers, I feel it incumbent on me to disabuse them at whatever sacrifice to myself.

It will not be expected that I should notice every little-ness, misstatement, and rudeness in the "Speech," and its appendages; for characteristics of that kind are so interwoven with the whole fabric of the publication, as to give their stamp to every page, and to form almost the sum and substance of the whole work. It may be enough to caution the reader to bear in mind, as he reads it, the story with which I began; and as no quotation bearing on Homœopathy is taken from any work superior to the "Speech" in char-

acter and taste, the same general warning may be given in regard to all the authorities that are adduced : including a Dr. Wood, who has been fully exposed in the "Defence of Hahnemann and Homœopathy;" a Dr. Cormack, who is disposed of in the Postscript of my Letter to the President of the Medico-Chirurgical Society; a Dr. Schubert, of whom no one knows anything, although he must be regarded as suspicious from the company in which he appears; and a Mr. Lee, the accuracy of whose statements will be seen from a little explanation I am about to give of the principal particular among them. In connexion with these same statements, however, I shall first take an opportunity of displaying in a strong light the *candour* of the author who quotes them. Dr. Simpson introduces the extract from "Bradshaw's Guide to the Continent," published in August 1851, in these words,—“The author, Mr. Lee, incidentally makes the following observations regarding the *present state* of Homœopathy in its native country of Germany.” A better illustration of the caution and watchfulness that are needed in order to be disingenuous without detection can hardly be adduced than that which I am about to expose. It is notorious that the last ten or twelve years have been the most momentous in the history of Homœopathy. Previously advancing but slowly and fitfully against the tide of persecution, ridicule, and unbelief, it has, within the period adverted to, made a progress the most remarkable throughout Europe and America. That such has been its fortune in Germany as well as in other Continental countries, the account quoted from Mr. Lee, as shewing, according to Dr. Simpson, the *present state* of Homœopathy, is expressly brought forward to disprove. But, by a fatal oversight, he has quoted, along with the extract, the title and date of a work published at Leipsic “a few months before” Mr. Lee's “*last visit*,” when Homœopathy is said to have been at a low ebb, from which it

appears that the whole passage applies to 1840, with the exception of the first two sentences, which relate to a *first* and earlier visit! Great things have happened since then, even in Leipsic, and perhaps not the least significant was the inauguration, a few months ago, of a noble statue to Hahnemann, in its most public place, and in the presence of its magistrates and other public functionaries.

Next, in reference to the overwhelming statement of Mr. Lee, that "a few months before my arrival, the house-physician (of the Homœopathic Hospital) having become convinced, during a residence of some time in the dispensary, of the nullity and danger of Homœopathy, gave up his appointment, and published an exposition of the system pursued,\* with an account of cases," &c.; it is well known to Homœopaths, and the fact is singularly instructive, that there never has been but one renegade from their ranks; and his history is such as to render his defection as much an honour and advantage to them, as a loss and humiliation to Mr. Lee and his friends. The person in question began his vicious career by publishing false provings of some medicinal substances, a dishonesty which was detected and exposed by Dr. Noack; and he next, disgusted probably by the discovery of his crime, seceded from the cause altogether. Whether he ever was house-physician to the hospital I do not know, and it can be of little consequence whether he was or not; but we certainly find him eventually a house-pupil in a common jail, studying the consequences of *swindling*. The hero of this eventful history is notorious by the name of Karl Wilhelm Fickel. Can he be the person, of the same name, selected by Mr. Lee, as a credible witness against Homœopathy, and who published in 1840, at Leipsic too, a work entitled "Direkter Beweis von die *Nichtigkeit der Homœopathie als Heilsystem?*" If so, Mr. Lee, Herr

\* "Ueber die Nichtigkeit der Homœopathie, 1840."—Lee.



Fickel, and Dr. Simpson, deserve the cordial thanks of the Homœopathic world for their respective, and about equally *respectable*, performances in this matter.

Humboldt is said to have felt, on first experiencing the shock of an earthquake, as if all that he had previously regarded as firm, sure, and established in the world, had become unsettled and insecure. A feeling, similar in some degree, naturally rises in the mind when ignoble actions are brought home to men, who, from the situations they occupy, and the reputation they may have previously enjoyed, had been habitually looked up to as creditable to their kind, and as evidences of human worth. "After these things," one is apt to exclaim in sorrow, "who is to be believed? what man is to be trusted?" Such has been my own experience since these discussions began; and, though I cannot say that the conduct of Dr. Simpson could for a long time past have suggested to me any reflection of the kind I have mentioned, there may be some, dull of apprehension, and therefore shocked for the first time in the course of this controversy, who shall repeat the above sad exclamation on reading what I have next to lay before them.

On the fifth page, in a note, an extract is given from the "Confessions of an Homœopathist," and *the reader is left to believe, without a word of explanation*, that it contains a *bonâ fide* confession of practices the most dishonest being common among Homœopathic physicians. Whereas the "Confessions" are merely a romance, tale, or novel, written by an enemy of Homœopathy, and so ill written and ill contrived that a reviewer, who would have gladly applauded any tolerable work of the kind, is constrained to say of it,—“We cannot compliment the author. The scenes are far-fetched, and too grotesque to be truth-like; and the story is withal tedious. The roguery displayed by the hero of Hahnemannism, is very much of the same stamp and character as that

exhibited by the whole herd of miscreants—Homœopathic as well as Non-Homœopathic.”\* Dr. Simpson knew that the work was fictitious when he quoted it as an authority, in the same note with others, proving, as he wished his readers to believe, and as some of them *have* consequently believed, the guilty practices he charges against Homœopaths!

In the same note “the fate of the Duke di Cannizzaro” is mentioned, on the authority of Mr. Lee, as an instance of death from “Homœopathic globules,” which were in reality “a concentrated preparation of Nux Vomica,” while it was pretended that they were merely infinitesimal doses. I have information from a friend of the deceased Duke, that he died suddenly in Sicily some ten or twelve years ago, and that no rumour existed, at the time, of his death having been caused in the way mentioned by Mr. Lee. We have already seen how lightly that “traveller” takes up a report to the prejudice of Homœopathy; and it must be obvious to every one that there can be no end to charges of this sort, if every allegation of “interested enemies” is to be thought worthy of publication and belief. Every description of injurious imputation and alleged wickedness may be bandied at will between the contending parties, if proofs are to be regarded as unnecessary. What would be thought of an opponent of the “old ways,” who, travelling hurriedly through Edinburgh, should note down for future publication, and without inquiry into their truth, all the reports that reached him to the discredit of the old system and its professors? What a catalogue of misery, mortality, and “charlatanry,” would he have to detail! To give a few examples from the current news of the day; he might assert that Miss P—— died in a few hours, in consequence of a piece of *potassa fusa* having been thrust into the cavity of the abdomen, or some other fatal place; that Mrs. S—— was destroyed with prompti-

\* Ed. Monthly Journal of Medical Science, 1846.

tude, by a cut with the hysterotome ; that Mrs. —— had a polypus removed which she never grew ; that negligence and a sponge-tent proved rapidly fatal to Mrs. T—— —. And to vary the entertainment of his readers, our traveller might quote from the "Lancet," the animadversions of a correspondent on "Obstetric quackery in Edinburgh," in connexion with Dr. Simpson's "infernal and impaling" machines, including the "pumping" apparatus, the "hysterotome," the "poker," and the "baby-sucker," to which "dangerous weapons" all manner of mischief, moral and physical, is freely ascribed ; or he might report from the "Medical Times" Dr. Lightfoot's assertion, that one of Dr. Simpson's most notorious instruments is neither more nor less than M. Velpeau's, which this gentleman invented nineteen years ago, (as he himself declares,) and which Dr. Simpson introduced to the notice of the profession, without a word in acknowledgment of the Frenchman's priority. All these rumours, and a hundred more of the same kind, may be, for aught I know, equally false ; but still they are in the mouths of the public ; and I say again, that the man who would repeat them, without ascertaining the evidences on which they rest, as facts damaging to the character of the common practice, or any of its professors, would be as justly to blame as Dr. Simpson and Mr. Lee are for the gossiping tales they would palm upon the public as facts, without having carefully examined the grounds on which they are based. It is satisfactory, however, to the Homœopaths of this country to reflect, that while their enemies, argus-eyed, are ever on the watch for incidents to be perverted to their disadvantage, the most unscrupulous of all their persecutors has felt himself safe to seek his examples of the baseness he alleges against them only in Sicily and New York, or at such a distance of time or place, or both, as to render investigation, as he well knows, now impossible.

I scarcely know how to express myself, in adverting to what is termed "Modern Hahnemannic Theology." If the author meant to insinuate that the "wild statements" he notices under that designation, have the smallest appearance or shadow of encouragement from the writings, the system, or the life of Hahnemann, I am constrained to say, that anything more slanderously untrue was never uttered by man. I have no hesitation in affirming that in Hahnemann's works—nay, in but three of even his lesser writings—there is more evidence of piety towards God, and of love to man, as well as of sound and beautiful philosophy, than in all the other medical works this age can boast of. And to me it is not matter of surprise that one so venerable for the purity of his life and the dignity of his sentiments, so admirable for the vast reach of his learning and his wisdom, and so pre-eminent in his claims on the gratitude of mankind for his researches in the most important of practical sciences, should have some disciples whose reverence should rise to adulation. The tendencies of men under powerful excitement have been in all ages the same, and those of this age whose temperament inclines them to ecstasy, and whose judgment affords too scanty a ballast for the force which carries them away, are apt to repeat almost any of the follies of early superstition in respect to the objects of their wonder; and why should that special folly be excepted from repetition, which made Pythagoras a messenger from heaven, and led his followers to regard themselves as equal to the gods; which paid divine honours to Empedocles, and thought Epimenides inspired! This was the folly of the progenitors of the common sect of physicians; and when it is considered that the Mormonites, and thousands of crazy people besides, are disciples of Allopathy, we can account for the absence of a similar folly in our own days, in reference to physicians of their school, only by the circumstance that there is no

Allopathic physician great enough for even insanity to revere.

Far be it from me to palliate irreligion, or even the appearance of irreverence to the Most High; but it is no palliation of either to say, that, were Hahnemann, instead of the reverential worshipper he was of that God whom he delighted everywhere to recognise, not merely a wrong-headed zealot, but even a cold and thankless infidel, the most shameful ignorance alone could regard that as an objection to his scientific labours, when the author of the "Mécanique Céleste" is understood to have been a sceptic, and D'Alembert had notoriously no faith but in mathematics. If the author of the pamphlet knew these facts, and were at one with all men of sense and education on the subject, how shameful of him to pander to the bigotry of the weak and the ignorant by attempting to introduce religious prejudices into a field peculiar to science! And if he knew, as he must have done, the monstrous injustice of stigmatizing Hahnemann and his system with the smallest tendency to any form of impiety or irreligion, what are we to think of the man who, in contempt of all that is manly and upright, seeks to gratify his passionate animosity against opponents in a scientific controversy by insinuating imputations which he knew to be as groundless as he meanly wished them to be hurtful?

In dismissing the wretched artifice, I shall add only this, that, even supposing the "sermon" on which he comments to be as objectionable as he represents it to be, the society for whose service it was delivered are no more to be held answerable for the opinions it contains than the Medico-Chirurgical Society is for the "speech" of Dr. Simpson, which the council of that body have since felt to be so disgraceful to them, that they resolved to resign their office if it were not publicly announced that

2<sup>nd</sup>  
 edition  
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the Society did not sanction it by authorizing its publication.\*

What remains to be discussed of Dr. Simpson's pamphlet admits of being treated without such personal severity as was unavoidable in exposing a succession of cunning and disgraceful devices. It is with unfeigned satisfaction, therefore, that I turn from the contemplation of these guilty practices to the few arguments, or attempts at argument, on which he has ventured. And if I have expressed an honest indignation at the course he has had the bad taste and the bad faith to pursue in his attack on Homœopathy and its adherents, it was from no fear that conduct so glaringly improper could do any injury to the objects of his malevolence, but from disgust at the means he was capable of using in order to accomplish his design. Detraction, abuse, and all the *matériel* of bigotry, animosity, and ignorance, have ever been to new and great discoveries—what the unclean but fertilizing manure is to the seed cast into the earth; and so far am I from wishing that a sense of decorum or delicacy should restrain the author of the pamphlet, or any one similarly constituted, from being as scurrilous as he pleases, that I cordially exclaim, in the words of the poet, “*Ne saturare fimo pingui pudeat sola,*” although, at the same time, I have myself no desire again to handle such impurities. This was the treatment under which vaccination grew into universal favour, and which welcomed the discovery of the circulation of the blood; and if Hahnemann has had both impiety and infatuation laid to his charge, it is no more than the superior magnitude of his discoveries should have entitled him to expect, since

\* The conductors of the Journal in which the speeches of Mr. Syme and Dr. Simpson were published have been compelled to relieve the Council from their painful position, by exonerating the Society from the responsibility of their publication. See Number for January 1852.

Jenner was accused of thwarting the purposes of Providence, and Harvey was held to have been "crack-brained." To complete the parallel between a discovery which has long triumphed over opposition, and one that is now accomplishing the same destiny by the same means, if the Professor of General Pathology in the University of Edinburgh has been desired to resign his chair because he believes in the system of Hahnemann, so was Riverius, the celebrated Professor of Medicine in Montpellier, two hundred years ago, because he believed in the doctrine of Harvey!

The first observation in the pamphlet which makes any pretension to the sobriety of an argument, is that which implies that Homœopathy is opposed to *common sense*. This, if it mean anything, is tantamount, from the circumstances of the case, to an assertion that the system in question is opposed to the common sense of those who are not practically acquainted with it; for it is certainly not so to the common sense of those who are. Common sense—the *sensus communis*—is the general consciousness of mankind in respect to the subjects of their experience, and when there is no such general consciousness in respect to any subject, there can be no common sense in respect to it; it lies as yet beyond the pale of the *sensus communis*, which has therefore nothing to say either for or against it. Homœopathy is in this very position; for mankind in general have no conscious experience on the subject of medicines given according to the Homœopathic law, and in doses the most suitable for giving effect to their Homœopathic virtues. It is, therefore, only the merest ignorance of the meaning of *common sense* that could make that the court of appeal in the question at issue, in so far as the question relates to the Homœopathic law and doses. Common sense is, however, quite competent to decide on another part of the question—namely, which of two systems of treatment

is the best : that which has the greatest number of recoveries, or that which has not ; and I leave common sense to give its verdict from the following data :—

Dr. Fleischmann, of the Homœopathic Hospital of Vienna, at various periods has published the results of his treatment of inflammation of the lungs between the years 1834 and 1848—the latter being the last period for which his statistics have reached me. Dr. Reiss, of the Homœopathic Hospital at Lintz, Dr. Schweitzer, of the Homœopathic Hospital at Kremsier, and Dr. Tessier, of the Hospital of “Sainte-Marguerite” of Paris, also have published the statistics of their Homœopathic treatment of the same disease, and the collective results are as follows :—728 cases of inflammation of the lungs, 35 deaths, or one death in 21 cases ; less than five per cent. In my letter to Dr. Forbes, I have given an account of the comparative success, in the same disease, of the best hospital physicians, who use Allopathic remedies, in Paris ; they furnish 531 cases, of which 81 died, or one in six and two-thirds, or about fifteen per cent. In the “Introduction to the Study of Homœopathy,” (to which and to the Letter to Dr. Forbes the reader is referred for a more detailed discussion of this most important subject,) various Allopathic authorities are referred to as furnishing 909 cases of this disease, with 212 deaths, or 23.32 per cent. ; nearly one death in every four cases. In the same work is contrasted the mortality under each system of treatment, in pleurisy and peritonitis, and the same vast superiority of the Homœopathic practice is exhibited—the mortality of the former disease having been in Fleischmann’s practice, among 224 cases, only one in 72, and of the latter, among 105 cases, one in 21 ; while under the ordinary system the mortality was from 8 to 16 times greater. The absence of sufficiently large statistics on the Allopathic side renders these last comparisons less satisfactory than in the



instance of inflammation of the lungs; and in regard to other acute inflammations, we have no data whatever from Allopathy to enable us to form an estimate of its inferiority. I may add, however, that besides the diseases mentioned above, Dr. Fleischmann's table for the eight years prior to 1844 shews 181 cases of erysipelas of the face, and only two deaths; 31 cases of inflammation of the membranes of the heart, without a single death; 44 cases of dysentery, and two deaths;—results which are far beyond the reach of any other known method of treatment.\*

Dr. Forbes, apparently surprised at the results published in one of Dr. Fleischmann's tables, yet combating the notion that the cases must have been slight which recovered under what are commonly believed inadequate means, observes, "It would be very unreasonable to believe, that out of 300 cases of pneumonia, (inflammation of the lungs,) 224 cases of pleurisy, and 105 of peritonitis, (in all 629 cases,) spread over a period of eight years, *all* the cases, except the fatal cases (27 in number) were slight, and such as would have seemed to us hardly requiring treatment of any kind. In fact, according to all experience, such could not be the case. But, independently of this *a priori* argument, we have sufficient evidence to prove that many of the cases of pneumonia, at least, were severe cases. A few of these cases are reported in detail by Dr. Fleischmann himself, and we have ourselves had the statement corroborated by the private testimony of a physician (not a Homœopath) who attended Dr. Fleischmann's wards for three months."† And he says of Dr. Fleischmann, that he "is a regular, well-educated physician, as capable of forming a true diagnosis as other practitioners, and he is considered by those who know him

\* Since 1844 the German hospital statistics give us 164 cases of erysipelas, without a death; 84 of peritonitis, with 4 deaths; 75 of pleurisy, with 1 death.

† Brit. and For. Med. Rev., p. 243, No. 41.

as a man of honour and respectability, and incapable of attesting a falsehood." Of the whole 728 cases to which I have alluded above, 616 occurred in the hospital of this trustworthy observer. From my own experience in the treatment of inflammation of the lungs, and other acute diseases,\* I have not a doubt of the thorough accuracy of the accounts given us by the physicians to whom I have referred. But how do Allopathic physicians get rid of these remarkable statements? Some by denying their truth, (for there are men who will deny anything,) and some, Dr. Forbes among them, by ascribing all to the bountiful hand of unassisted nature! If this latter view of the subject be the correct one, then it is obvious that the medical men who believe it to be so should cease from all medical treatment in acute diseases. That it is not, however, the correct view of the matter appears very clearly from the cases published by M. Grisolle. He left eleven *mild* cases of inflammation of the lungs to follow their natural course;† and we find that the consequences of the disease were not gone in any till the end of the third, and in some not till the end of the fourth week, whereas under the Homœopathic treatment every trace of the disease is usually gone, in severe cases too, in a third of that time,‡ proving that Homœopathy is not a merely passive system.

\* I have treated Homœopathically throughout 16 cases of pneumonia, with 1 death; 10 cases of croup, without a death; besides a few cases of pericarditis, pleurisy, peritonitis, and many of dysentery, bronchitis, and erysipelas, with only two deaths, one from dysentery in an old man long in bad health, the other from general bronchitis in an infant. In one case only was blood-letting adopted. Of other acute diseases, I have treated Homœopathically 39 of measles, without a death; 45 of hooping-cough, with 1 death; and 36 of scarlet fever, with 2 deaths. Among the last two deaths, one is included of a gentleman who, having recovered from the fever, was seized with inflammation of the chest, and was treated during the greater part of that, his last, illness by Dr. Alison.

† See Letter to Dr. Forbes.

‡ See for ample details, "Recherches Cliniques," par J. P. Tessier. Paris, 1850.

What does common sense say now upon the subject? Is it so *very* plain, as some would have it supposed, that Homœopathy is a nullity? Making all due allowance for incidental errors in the statistics I have quoted, a large margin is left which no ingenuity can divest us of in favour of our much abused practice. No doubt cures will take place by unassisted nature, and, as little doubt, fancy and folly will suppose cures where there was nothing to cure. These are truths that cut both ways, for the Allopathic Dr. Forbes comes to the following conclusions:—

“ 1st. That in a large proportion of the cases treated by Allopathic physicians the disease is cured by nature, and not by them.

“ 2d. That in a lesser, but still not a small proportion, the disease is cured by nature, *in spite of them*; in other words, their interference opposing, instead of assisting the cure.

“ 3d. That, consequently, in a considerable proportion of diseases, it would fare as well, or better, with patients, in the actual condition of the medical art, as more generally practised, if all remedies, at least all active remedies, especially drugs, were abandoned.”

All that Dr. Simpson has said about the cures effected by nature had therefore been said long before, and said much better than he has succeeded in doing. He gives us the following curious passage on the subject:—“ It is *constantly forgotten*, that men labouring under disease, even the most acute, and consequently *much more so* when suffering under slighter ailments, do not, as a general rule, die, even when untreated.” The italics are mine, in order to apprise the reader that it is *much more than constantly forgotten* that men do not, as a general rule, die when untreated, of slighter ailments, as they do when labouring under the most acute. I had thought it to have been constantly remembered that men did die mostly of the most acute diseases, whether

treated or untreated, and therefore it was that I adduced the statistics of the most acute diseases in order to shew the difference between one kind of treatment and another. And when these facts are fairly met, and set aside on just and scientific grounds, we shall be ready to appeal to diseases of a slighter or more chronic description in testimony of the superiority of Homœopathy. As the matter stands at present, Allopathy seems to have a much better claim to Great-rakes, Prince Hohenlohe, the "Lee penny," and the Lama of Tartary, than we can pretend to. And if any one should doubt this, let him read the following commentary on the means which Allopathy employs to gain its ends. The words are those of the Allopathic Dr. Paris of London, a very eminent person. "It is impossible to cast our eyes over such multiplied groups (of drugs) without being forcibly struck with the palpable absurdity of some, the disgusting and loathsome nature of others, the total want of activity in many, and the uncertain and precarious nature of all, or without feeling an eager curiosity to inquire from the combination of what causes it can have happened, that substances, at one period in the highest esteem, and of generally acknowledged utility, have fallen into total neglect and disrepute; why others, of humble pretensions and little significance, have maintained their ground for so many centuries; and on what account materials of no energy whatever have received the indisputable sanction, and the unqualified support, of the best and wisest practitioners of the age."

To the same effect is the evidence of Dr. Christison, who, in reply to the question why the graduates he addressed had not such precise ideas as were desirable respecting the actions and uses of medicines, says it is "simply on account of the difficulty of Therapeutics," (the Allopathic,) "and because, of all the medical sciences, it" (the Allopathic)

“is the most unsettled and unsatisfactory in its present state, and the least advanced in its progress.” And a little farther on he says, “As for the theory of Therapeutics,—embracing a generalization of the actions of remedies, an accurate description of each, a just idea of their Therapeutic influences, and a knowledge of the conditions for employing them,—we” (Allopaths) “are little in advance of our predecessors thirty years ago.”\* And the ever candid Dr. Forbes, adverting to the “lamentable condition of medicine” of the Allopathic sect, remarks, “It is, in truth, a fact of such magnitude, one so palpably evident, that it is impossible for any careful reader of the history of medicine, or any long observer of the processes of disease, not to be aware of it. What, indeed, is the history of medicine but a history of perpetual changes in the opinions and practice of its professors respecting the very same subjects—the nature and treatment of diseases? And, amid all these changes, often extreme and directly opposed to one another, do we not find these very diseases, the subject of them, remaining (with some exceptions) still the same in their progress and general event? Sometimes, no doubt, we observe changes in the character and event, obviously depending on the change in the treatment; and, alas! as often for the worse as the better,” &c. I shall add nothing of my own to such graphic delineations of the ordinary practice, as given by its friends. From these singular, startling, but eminently trustworthy statements, it must appear plain to common sense, that but a small proportion of the recoveries which take place under Allopathy can be due to the treatment, and many a reader will now perceive for the first time the vast importance of almost the only truth contained in Dr. Simpson’s pamphlet, when he adverts to recoveries not due to physic,—“When reasoning on the efficacy of different medicines and different

\* Edinburgh Monthly Journal, September 1851.

modes of cure, the mind is constantly liable to fall into the greatest errors, by neglecting this leading truth." Homœopaths fully admit the great curative powers of unthwarted nature, and are happy to reflect that the existence of such powers gives their patients a double chance of recovery; for should the Homœopathic physician fail at first to select for his patient the remedy suitable for his case, that which he may have erroneously prescribed cannot do harm, as Allopathic remedies in similar circumstances (and how often do they occur!) must do, because he always administers medicines in such doses as can operate only curatively, and on the sensitive organs alone that are diseased, when they operate at all.

Dr. Simpson adduces the authority of a Dr. Schubert for affirming that Hahnemann regarded nature alone as the great agent in curing diseases; but it is evident from the extract given in the pamphlet, at p. 19, from Dr. Schubert's evidence, that the latter had placed a forced and false construction on Hahnemann's language. "I have heard him declare," says Dr. Schubert, "that he looked with contempt upon medical practice, and he thought that a patient would be none the worse if left to himself." I firmly believe that such were Hahnemann's genuine sentiments, for I have read much, to the same effect, in his works. But of what kind of medical practice, and of what patients, was he speaking when he uttered such opinions?—*that* is the question; and of course the answer is—Allopathic practice and Allopathic patients. We know, too, from his books, without Dr. Schubert's testimony, that he gave medicines seldom, and was firm and absolute in his dealings with his patients, affording in this particular a dignified contrast to physicians in general. But so little did he conceive nature, unaided by remedies, to be capable of doing for the cure of disease, that such mistakes as he may have committed in drawing

inferences from his practice will, I apprehend, be found to have resulted from his having attached too little value to the powers of nature instead of too much. Dr. Schubert's accusation is most remarkably at variance with the whole tenor of Hahnemann's philosophy of disease, as the reader may satisfy himself by perusing his fine treatise on the *Medicine of Experience*.\* Dr. Forbes, indeed, holds him up to ridicule for maintaining that chronic diseases are never cured spontaneously at all; but in doing so he somewhat mistakes, and rather overstates, the actual doctrine of Hahnemann in regard to such diseases.

Having adverted to the statistical evidence in favour of Homœopathy; and now reminding the reader that there are thousands of medical men in the world who practise Homœopathy with remarkable success, a very large proportion of whom had the advantage of a previous experimental knowledge of the old system, and deliberately forsook it, after inquiry, in favour of the new, I might dispense with the discussion of the reasonableness of minute doses, for the chief evidence of their reasonableness is to be found in their effects. To experiment, to practice, we constantly appeal; and we as constantly add, that no medical man has ever yet tested for himself the Homœopathic remedies, according to Homœopathic rules, without having become satisfied of the truth of the system!† This, of itself, is testimony of the highest order, and ought to be conclusive, for it is not by dialectic disquisitions on the properties of untried substances that any question on any natural science is determined, but by putting them to the proof. Difficulties, however, having been felt by inquirers, who do not give due weight to such truths as I have now stated respecting the doctrine of

\* Hahnemann's Lesser Writings, by Dr. Dudgeon.

† The celebrated M. Adral tried the *remedies*, but not the *rules*. See *Intro.* to Homœopathy.

“infinitesimal” doses, usually associated with the idea of Homœopathy, I must devote some little space to the question of dose. In the first place, then, “infinitesimal” doses form no necessary, and did not form an original, part of the system. Dr. Forbes, the only candid and intelligent opponent Homœopathy has ever had, in so far as I know, admits the truth of my statement, while others, for reasons best known to themselves, keep the fact carefully out of view, or expressly deny it. His words are: “It would appear that the doctrine of *infinitesimal doses* constituted no original or necessary part of the general doctrine of Homœopathy.” He who is satisfied with the Homœopathic principle—*similia similibus curantur*—is therefore at liberty to employ any dose he finds to answer the best, and he still, however large his doses, remains a consistent Homœopathist. He will not practice long, however, without discovering that he must lessen his doses very materially below those of the ordinary practitioner, if he wish to avoid producing, now and then, very serious consequences. It was to avoid such evils—aggravations they are called—that Hahnemann gradually diminished the dose more and more, in order that he might at length reach a degree of attenuation which should cure, without the risk of distressing even the most sensitive. My own firm opinion is, that in his eagerness to get beyond the possibility of doing injury to any one in any form of disease, he overstepped the limits of attenuation that are the most suitable for the speedy and effectual cure of the majority of the sick;—that, indeed, in order to avoid offending the extreme sensitiveness of the few, he has sometimes decreased his doses so much as to have got out of reach of the sensitiveness of the many. Holding these opinions, which I do after long and careful investigation, I cannot but rejoice that Homœopathic Practitioners are gradually descending to the lower dilutions of the medicines,



and generally reserve the higher for cases of unusual susceptibility to medicinal action. And I have peculiar pleasure in stating, that the apparently unanswerable objection of Dr. Simpson to Homœopathy and its doses, namely, that "Dr. Grosse and his followers use, however, the 200th, 400th, or even 900th dilution," turns, upon examination, to be singularly favourable to my views. The fact is, Dr. Grosse and his followers never had a 200th, a 400th, or a 900th *dilution* to use. These high *potencies*, as they are termed, were manufactured secretly by a German chemist, Jenichen, now dead; who, by adopting a meaning for the word *potency*, different from that of Hahnemann, and preparing his medicines in a different way, produced a series of potencies (as he called them) as high, I believe, as the 2000th, but which were almost all a great deal stronger, in point of fact, than the *dilutions* of Hahnemann, that are termed only the 20th, 12th, or, for aught we know, the 3d! Jenichen's potencies were found more successful, not because they were *more* diluted than Hahnemann's, but because they were *less* so; and those physicians who used to employ them because they were so *high*, are now bound to give them the preference because they have been discovered to be in reality so *low*; or they should use the lower potencies of Hahnemann to which they corresponded. If it be said, that though the extravagances ascribed to Dr. Grosse, and the arguments against Homœopathy derived from them, have been easily disposed of, still a very extraordinary tenuity of dose remains to be defended in Hahnemann's scale of dilutions; I grant the extraordinary nature of the case as freely as any one can desire, but yet maintain the fact that the lower dilutions—the 1st, 2d, and 3d, especially—have been proved to cure the most acute and dangerous inflammations in a far larger proportion, and much more speedily, than any other means yet known,

and that the higher have been found to exercise an unquestionably curative effect, apart from all possible sources of fallacy, on multitudes of human beings of all ages, and that even the highest have had some persons, in the experience of hundreds of physicians, who have been sensible of their powers. If any man doubt, let him try. Nature is full of examples that might be adduced to prove the reasonableness of even an *a priori* belief that "infinitesimal doses" would be not inoperative on persons whose sensitiveness to the action of medicines was heightened by disease. For a full and beautiful disquisition on the whole of this question, I refer the reader to Dr. Samuel Brown's essay in the Introduction to the Study of Homœopathy—an essay which will refresh and delight those who are wearied and disgusted with the small philosophy of Allopathic argumentation. I can do no more at present than merely touch on the chief points of the subject.

Every well-educated medical man knows that some persons possess what are termed *idiosyncrasies*, or peculiarities of constitution, which render them liable to be more or less seriously affected by substances, or quantities of substances, which have little or no sensible effect, or no bad effect, on other men. Thus, Dr. Prout tells us of one on whom mutton, in any form or quantity, acted as a virulent poison. Erasmus, again, could not taste fish without being thrown into fever. Scaliger was seized with convulsions at the sight of cresses. A French secretary, Johannes de Querito, is reported to have fallen a bleeding if an apple were held near him. Orfila mentions of a woman, that she could not be in a place where decoction of linseed was being made without swelling of the face, followed by fainting; and examples are far from uncommon of persons who are incommoded, in one way or other, by the odours of flowers, which are agreeable to the great majority of human beings,

—a well-known instance of which is the case of Cardinal Hauy de Carbonne, who swooned at the smell of a rose. Now, a person in disease has an idiosyncrasy or peculiarity of constitution, for the time, either of the body generally, or some part of it, and is sensible to influences which have no action, or no action of the same kind or intensity, on a person in health. Thus, the eyes, when inflamed, are painfully affected by a very moderate light; the ears, in certain states of disease, are acutely sensitive to ordinary sounds; the skin, when inflamed, is pained by inconsiderable heat or pressure; and similar instances of morbid sensibility to the most common, and, to healthy persons, most innocuous impressions, abound. Homœopaths maintain it to be the result of their experience, that diseased parts are sensitive to still more delicate influences, when these are of a kind that have in each case a special and peculiar fitness to act medicinally upon the affected organ in accordance with the Homœopathic law—that is, when the diseased condition is one which closely resembles that which the specific medicine, taken in considerable quantity, is capable of exciting in healthy persons. There is *then* a special relation between the disease and the medicine which is Homœopathic to it—the part affected coming to possess an idiosyncrasy, or peculiarity of constitution, for the time, that renders it susceptible of an influence from a quantity of such medicine, which, in a healthy state, would fail to affect it at all. The most striking illustration of all this, from among the facts known to most medical men, is the following:—while druggists in general feel no inconvenience from handling ipecacuan, there are some, subject to spasmodic asthma, whose organs of respiration possess an idiosyncrasy at all times in relation to that drug, so that they cannot weigh it out to their customers, or even remain in the room with the bottle of ipecacuan unstopped, without

experiencing some symptoms of their habitual disorder. Now, ipecacuan is one of our chief Homœopathic remedies for spasmodic asthma, and since it is capable of exciting the disease in such minute quantities as are present in the air of a room, in the instances I have mentioned, common sense must perceive, that, according to all analogy, still more minute, or "infinitesimal" quantities, must be selected as the doses that should be administered during an attack of asthma from ordinary causes, in order to secure the curative without the aggravating or injurious action of the medicine; just as we know, although the instance is not perfectly apposite, that a scalded part of the skin cannot bear the application of water at a temperature nearly so high as it would have borne previously to the injury. It is, indeed, experience alone that can determine the degree to which medicines must be attenuated in order to produce only their beneficial effects when given Homœopathically; but, apart from such experience, there are facts known to scientific men which ought to prevent those who aspire to the same honourable designation, from ridiculing "infinitesimal doses" as things incapable of having any effect even in circumstances the most favourable to their action. In the words of Dr. Samuel Brown, "Illustrations of the manifestations of great forces by little bodies, drawn from the region of pure physics, as distinguished from the study of animated objects, might disabuse of this vulgarity; and it would be worth while to marshal an array of them before contemptuous objectors, to confound their inbred prejudices. Davy, fearlessly following the principle of electrical induction by contact, discovered that half a dozen square feet of the copper sheathing of the British fleet are rendered electro-negative—(that is, the polarities of all the innumerable particles which make up that extent of surface are reversed)—by a zinc nail driver

through the centre of the space, and are thereby protected from the corrosive action of the sea, with its stores of oxygen, chlorine, and iodine, everywhere ready to be let loose upon metallic substances. Nay, Sir John Herschell finds that the relation to electricity of a mass of mercury is such that it may be reversed by the admixture of an almost infinitesimal proportion of a body, such as potassium, in an opposite electrical condition: and with such electrical conditions are all chemical actions whatsoever inseparably connected; while every one is aware that physiological phenomena are complicated with chemical changes, as well as chemical disturbances with mechanical alterations. So impressed is Herschell with this class of observations as to observe, 'That such minute proportions of extraneous matter should be found capable of communicating sensible mechanical motions and properties, of a definite character, to the body they are mixed with, is perhaps one of the most extraordinary facts that has appeared in chemistry.'" Again, "Dr. Daubeny having, in a memoir read before the Royal Society, in 1830, on the Saline and Purgative Springs of Great Britain, expressed his doubt of the possibility of any medical action being exercised by so insignificant a quantity as one grain of iodine shed through ten gallons of water, (the *largest* proportion he had ever found,) felt himself constrained to announce, in 1831, that the considerations above stated, 'now induce him to attach more importance to the circumstance of its presence; for it is just as possible, *a priori*, that this quantity of iodine should infuse new properties into the salts which accompany it, and cause them to act in a different manner upon the system, as that *less than a millionth* part of potassium should create so entire a change in the relations of a mass of mercury to electricity.'" Finally, on this subject of the "power of littles," physicians have lately been so impressed with the notion that "infini-

tesimal doses" of miasms, and other morbid agents, in the atmosphere or water, must be the causes of epidemic diseases, that even so great a scourge as malignant cholera has had its origin ascribed to microscopic animalcules or fungi; and minute quantities of magnesia in the water of some countries have been supposed, on what appear good grounds, to produce the goitre and cretinism that are endemic among their inhabitants; and Mr. Herapath lately discovered the cause of symptoms of lead poisoning among the occupants of a village in the west of England, to have been so small a proportion of carbonate of lead, in the water they used, as one part to half a million of the fluid,—the lead having been introduced into the river, that traversed the village, from a mine, opened some time previously, at a distance of three or four miles.

As to the Homœopathic law itself expressed in the formula, *similia similibus curantur*—like cures like—there is no question, among intelligent physicians of every school, that it is in truth a law of nature. It is a law, too, which Hahnemann does not even claim the credit of having discovered, for he quotes the following passage from Stahl, who flourished more than a hundred and fifty years ago: "The rule admitted in medicine, to treat diseases by remedies contrary or opposite to the effects which they produce, is completely false and absurd. I am persuaded, on the contrary, that diseases yield to agents which produce a similar disorder, (*similia similibus*)." Nor is it a doctrine peculiar to professed Homœopaths that in order to produce the best effects from remedies given in accordance with that law, they should be given in much smaller doses than usual. Jörg is held to be a great authority among Allopaths on the action of drugs, and he makes the following remarkable admissions: "Medicines operate most powerfully upon the sick when the symptoms correspond with those of the disease.

A very small quantity of medicinal arnica will produce a violent effect upon persons who have an irritable state of the œsophagus and stomach. Mercurial preparations have, in very small doses, given rise to pains and loose stools when administered in an inflammatory state of the intestines.

. . . . Yet why should I occupy time in adducing more examples of a similar operation of medicines, since it is in the very nature of the thing that a medicine must produce a greater effect when it is applied to a body already suffering under an affection similar to that which the medicine itself is capable of producing."

Dr. Simpson endeavours to be merry at the expense of the psoric, or itch-doctrine of Hahnemann ; ignorant, apparently, that it is no new doctrine, and that it has had some able advocates who have no other agreement with Hahnemann. The following passages on the subject are from my Letter to Dr. Forbes, and have not yet been answered :—

"The psoric theory, or rather hypothesis of Hahnemann, is, perhaps, the most unfortunate of his speculations. Not, indeed, on account of anything essentially unphilosophical in either its pathological or practical bearings ; but because of the peculiar light in which the disease from which it takes its name is regarded, at least in this country. And as I, like yourself, am an undeniable Caledonian, I am not less sensible than you are, that there is something of the ludicrous about it. But if we lay aside our national feelings on the subject, and look at it in sober seriousness, we must admit, I think, that it may bear a construction discreditable neither to the pathological acuteness of its author, nor to his practical sagacity. It amounts essentially to this, that the majority of chronic ailments are due to a constitutional taint, which betrays itself by a variety of symptoms and sensible effects in different persons, or in the same person at different times ; and that, in order radically and effectually

to cure those chronic disorders, it is not enough that the physician should direct his treatment against them individually or collectively, but that he should also have regard to the state of the constitution from which they spring. There is nothing new in all this. Every one knows that in one form or another, the doctrine is applicable to a multitude of troublesome and dangerous disorders. Scrofula, gout, syphilis, rheumatism, are each held to be constitutional affections, and any one of them may persist for years, or for a lifetime, sometimes latent, or lulled into inaction, sometimes betraying itself by more or less considerable disorders of one kind or another. In the treatment of these occasional outbreaks of disease, the prudent physician does not always content himself with seeing them disappear, but follows up his treatment of them by means that are supposed capable of improving the condition of the system, of modifying or subduing the constitutional evil.

“Had Hahnemann admitted psora to rank but as one among many constitutional taints that might from time to time discover itself by various local symptoms, I do not know that any one would be prepared to convict him of error. Nay, it is certain that his opinion would be strengthened by the concurrence of more than one respectable authority. For it is not a doctrine peculiar to Hahnemann, that the disappearance of the psoric eruption from the skin, gives occasion to other evils of a more serious kind. One of his opinions is, that the mischief to the constitution is less when the eruption is abundant on the surface; and it is at least some excuse for his notions on the subject, that when the persons affected with the disease are enfeebled by chronic ailments, of one kind or another, the eruption is much less considerable than in the vigorous and robust, as Biett justly observes. He may be wrong in having supposed that the chronic disorders of such persons are due to the ‘miasm’ of psora being thrown in upon the system; but the two facts,



first, that the eruption is abundant when it affects the robust; and second, that it is scanty in the feeble and otherwise unhealthy, form as good grounds for his particular view of the matter, as many of our common pathological opinions regarding cause and effect can boast of. And when it is further considered that such a man as Pringle, not to mention earlier writers, avers that the psoric eruption is sometimes critical, or appears on the surface just when some serious internal maladies have ceased, and apparently in a pathological connexion with their cessation, we see some additional reason for regarding the doctrine of Hahnemann on this subject with leniency.

“I confess I have not given the subject so much consideration as to justify me in giving an opinion of the question, Whether psora is ever the cause of a constitutional taint, which may appear in the form of chronic maladies of various characters? And I hesitate all the more to give an opinion regarding it, that the question is answered in the affirmative by men who are held, even in our day, as no contemptible authorities in medicine. For example, Autenrieth advocates the doctrine in the following remarkable terms, and at great length in the same strain:—

“‘The most formidable, and, in our country, the most frequent source of the chronic diseases of the adult, are the psoric eruptions badly treated by sulphur ointment, or generally by other active greasy applications. I have so often seen here the misery which by psora occurs to the lower classes, and to those who have a sedentary occupation, and I see it daily in such a manifold melancholy aspect, that I do not hesitate a moment to declare it loudly as a subject worthy of the observation of every physician, and even of every magistrate, who lay to heart the health of those committed to their care.’

“I may notice that pulmonary consumption is one of the diseases he traces to this cause. Again Schönlein, the present Professor of Pathology and Therapeutics in the University of Berlin, in his Clinical Lectures for the year 1840, is re-

ported to have expressed himself to the following effect—  
(The case under observation was one of organic disease of  
the heart, with dropsy):—

“ ‘What is the cause of this affection? On looking backwards we find no other complaint than the itch. Latterly, the admission of sequelæ of the itch, that old medical dogma, is not only become dubious, but has been abandoned and turned into ridicule. Among the older physicians, we particularly notice Autenrieth, who wrote a masterly treatise on this subject, so that it was remarkably impudent in Hahnemann to pretend that he was the first to point out the sequelæ of the itch.\* I must confess that, according to my own observations, and to those of many other physicians who deserve the fullest confidence, I have no doubt whatever about the existence of sequelæ of the itch.’

“And then he goes on to give reasons for his opinion, and the grounds on which he presumes that the chronic disease under consideration took its rise from the itch, which had existed nine years before.”

The concluding observations of Dr. Simpson are occupied with ridicule of what appears a fair enough subject for a passing jest; but in his hands attempted wit degenerates into coarseness and irreverence. To one unaccustomed to scientific studies, it may appear absurd and incredible that insects, such as the *Pediculus capitis* and *Acarus scabiei*, can possibly possess remedial powers. I confess my entire ignorance of their virtues, if they have any; but with the knowledge that there are very many insects in the world, besides the blistering beetle, which are endowed with acrid and poisonous properties, and that one of the two mentioned by Dr. Simpson is reported by so good an authority as Dr. Adams, an Allopathic physician, to have produced inflammation of the skin and fever in a person who had submitted his hand to its operations, I am not in circumstances to question the possibility, or even the probability, of these animals, like others, being possessed of some principle

\* Hahnemann did not do so. He claims the credit only of having traced almost all chronic diseases to the itch, which is more than others had done.

capable of sensibly affecting persons subjected to their influence. And if this admission be regarded as disparaging to myself, or the system which I practise, I shall have a more than compensating satisfaction in reflecting, that to truly scientific men, any more than to the Author of all science and wisdom, there is no living thing in nature "common or unclean;" and that the opinions of the vulgar are not to be put into competition with the following sage remarks of Bacon:—"But for unpolite, or even sordid particulars, which, as Pliny observes, require an apology for being mentioned, even these ought to be received into a natural history, no less than the most rich and delicate; for natural history is not defiled by them, any more than the sun, by shining alike upon the palace and the sty. And we do not endeavour to build a capital, or erect a pyramid, to the glory of mankind; but to found a temple, in imitation of the world, and consecrate it to the human understanding: so that we must frame our model accordingly. For whatever is worthy of existence is worthy of our knowledge, which is the image of existence: but ignoble things exist as well as noble. Nay, as some excrementitious matters, for example, musk, civet, &c., sometimes produce excellent odours; so sordid instances sometimes afford light and information. But enough of this, as such delicacy is perfectly childish and effeminate."

At the same time, I am far from admitting that Dr. Simpson's insects have been proved to be so valuable as the author he refers to asserts them to be. Dr. Mure may possibly be a Herr Fickel in disguise; for a versatile personage of that name has found it convenient, owing to the particular nature of his pursuits, to have several designations, that which he has once worn soon acquiring a kind of notoriety with which he finds it difficult to prosper.

*January 6, 1852.*

TO THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
MEDICO-CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY  
OF EDINBURGH.

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61, NORTHUMBERLAND STREET, EDINBURGH,  
1st December 1851.

SIR,—I should not have troubled you, or the Society over which you preside, with any comments on the proceedings of your last meeting, did I not observe in the Report of the speeches made by Mr. Syme and Dr. Simpson, published in the *Monthly Journal* for December, statements which I cannot allow to pass unnoticed without appearing by my silence to admit their substantial accuracy. In the Resolution\* which called forth these speeches I feel no interest, for I had long ceased to expect from the Society a calm, candid, and unbiassed judgment on the important Therapeutic law to which that Resolution refers, and had for several years absented myself from its meetings, as being those of a sectarian body with whose limited views I could not sympathize. I need scarcely add, that the Resolution in question amply justifies the estimate I had formed of the Society.

In my Letter to the Patrons of the University, I allege that Mr. Syme on two occasions acted in the face of the motion which he had himself proposed in the College of Surgeons; that he twice met in consultation with one who "practises Homœopathy," while the motion referred to

\* See Appendix.

maintains that to meet with those who do so is to countenance the system. That such meetings on Mr. Syme's part (if they occurred) were a countenancing of Homœopathy is an allegation of his own, as contained in his motion in the College of Surgeons. That they *did* occur I repeat, and Mr. Syme admits that they did, although he endeavours to explain away one of them as if it was not entitled to be regarded as a consultation at all. I sincerely regret that I am under the necessity of saying that Mr. Syme's version of that meeting, in particular, is most inaccurate. His printed statement is as follows:—"The first of these (cases) he would mention was that of a young man from Dundee, whom he had been requested, by Dr. Nimmo of that place, to take under his charge. Finding that he was attended by Dr. Henderson, he had requested a meeting with him, for the purpose, not of consultation, but of arranging for the medical treatment of the patient by the respected Secretary of the Society, Dr. John Taylor, with whom Mr. Syme might co-operate, as he could not do so with Dr. Henderson." Now, Sir, if such was Mr. Syme's purpose, he never communicated it to me; and I feel, as others no doubt will do, that there was something very marvellous in the manner in which I, all unconsciously, carried Mr. Syme's purpose into effect. Mr. Syme called at my house, and after stating that he had been requested to see this patient of mine by one of his friends in the country, an hour for our meeting was agreed on, as I then knew nothing of Mr. Syme to prevent my meeting with him.

We met accordingly, saw the patient together, retired to converse about the case, and then found that we differed both as to the seat of the disease and the suitable treatment. *I informed Mr. Syme that I could not superintend the execution of the plans he recommended! I suggested that Dr. John Taylor should take charge of the case instead of myself! I*

called on Dr. Taylor, told him of the circumstances which had occurred, and sent him to Mr. Syme for his instructions! I never heard a whisper from Mr. Syme of his being unable to co-operate with me. Dr. Taylor, no doubt, remembers my visit to him on the occasion referred to; and those who know me cannot believe that I would go in search of him for Mr. Syme, had the latter given me the smallest reason to suspect that he entertained the purpose which he now says he did. Mr. Syme's account of the other case contains several inaccuracies, short though it be; but as he admits the fact of the meeting, and does not attempt to deny any allegation of mine in reference to it, I do not think it worth while to lengthen this Letter by adverting to it farther. In concluding this part of the subject, I think I am amply entitled to aver that all my allegations respecting Mr. Syme, in my Letter to the Patrons, are incontrovertibly true.

Mr. Syme says, in reference to Dr. Black, that he "had proposed to attend along with him a lady who had come from England to undergo an operation, but met with a decided refusal of any such co-operation;" but he does not tell us that he met with Dr. Black on another occasion, to which the following note refers; nay, he virtually denies that any such meeting took place, for he omits it from his account of "the whole amount of countenance which Mr. Syme had afforded to the Homœopathists of Edinburgh."

*From WILLIAM ERSKINE, Esq., late of East India Company's  
Civil Service.*

"23, REGENT TERRACE, 17th September 1851.

"MY DEAR DR. HENDERSON,—On looking into my books, I find that Mr. Syme visited my late daughter, —, on the 8th November 1843. He was accompanied by Dr. Francis Black, who at that time attended her.—I remain, Dear Dr. Henderson, yours very truly,

WM. ERSKINE."

I come next to the speech of Dr. Simpson. The confusion, inaccuracy, mis-statement, and irrelevant matter, that abound in this production, make it difficult to deal with it so concisely as with Mr. Syme's, yet I hope to pick my way to the simple truth in this, as in the other case. That his hearers condemned the oration with "faint praise," I cannot omit to notice, as it was so very much to their credit. Why a member of my family is introduced to the notice of the Society, I can only conjecture; and I must, in common, I should hope, with all who heard the speech, denounce the very bad taste of alluding to "some long and anxious hours" of attendance upon her, made in a public place, and made most unnecessarily for any worthy purpose. If the allusion was made in order to prejudice me in the estimation of the Society, as having, in my various recent notices of Dr. Simpson, made him a bad return for obligations received at his hands, I take this opportunity of saying, that even had there been a balance of obligations against me, (which I utterly deny,) there are acts capable of cancelling any amount of obligation, and of such I hold Dr. Simpson to be guilty, by having aided in the composition of the scandalous Resolutions of the Royal College of Physicians,—if indeed he did not actually compose them. But, Sir, it is not my intention to lose temper even with Dr. Simpson, for I cordially agree with him who says, that "so much as there is of passion, so much there is of nothing to the purpose," in any discussion.

Dr. Simpson makes one distinct affirmation, when he avers that the case from which he removed a polypus, was, with the exception of the member of my family to whom he adverts, "the only patient at whose bed-side he had met Dr. Henderson." Were my own character not concerned in this miserable business, I should grieve to lay the following letters before the Society:—

*From J. HAWKINS, Esq., late Judge H.E.I.C.S.*

"2, REGENT TERRACE, June 17, 1851.

"MY DEAR DR. HENDERSON,—Dr. Simpson, at your request, attended a lady at my house on the 17th August last, and you and he met here together on the 20th of that month.—Believe me,  
yours very truly,  
J. HAWKINS."

This was little more than a year ago, and cannot have been difficult to remember, especially by one who attached so much consequence to such meetings, as, on the other and previous occasion to which he alludes, "to have felt it was perhaps more than questionable whether he should have met him." These are the two cases to which I made reference in my letter to the Editor of the *Witness*, and I told Dr. Simpson so, when he called at my house professedly to make inquiries on the subject. I have never mentioned the case on which Mr. Syme subsequently operated, as having been one of those which Dr. Simpson and I visited together; and, therefore, all that Dr. S. has said respecting it, has nothing to do with the matter at issue. That there may be no evasion of the evidence of the last letter, I have to state that the meeting it refers to was at "the bed-side." And so was that to which the next letter bears testimony; and if it was not of a very recent date, it shews all the more clearly the probability of the statement contained in my letter to the *Witness*, that Dr. Simpson was in the habit of agreeing to such meetings whenever he was asked, a circumstance which can be attested, likewise, I believe, by my friend Dr. Russell.

*From CHARLES CHALMERS, Esq., late Principal of Merchiston Academy.*

"KATESMILL, COLINTON, June 17, 1851.

"DEAR SIR,—It consists with my knowledge, that towards the close of 1846, you and Professor Simpson attended professionally together one of the members of my family, who was then residing in Merchiston Castle.—I remain, Dear Sir, yours most truly,

"CHARLES CHALMERS.

"PROFESSOR HENDERSON, M.D."



Dr. Simpson excuses his having operated on the case of polypus in the company of Dr. Henderson, on the ground that "Dr. Henderson was the only medical man that the lady would, he believed, have allowed to be present." How he ascertained this, it would be curious to know. I know that there is no human being less likely to have had any such exclusive and unreasonable prejudice than the person in question. The plain fact seems most unquestionably to be, that when Mr. Syme and Dr. Simpson were in the practice of doing just what they ought to have done, and what humane, candid, well-informed, and liberal-minded men will always do, it had not been generally believed that Homœopathy had stolen a march upon its opponents, and had fastened itself firmly in the confidence of all classes of the community. Medical men have waked up lately as from a dream, and having found themselves surrounded on all sides by this ubiquitous intruder, their alarm and hatred cry out with a vehemence proportioned to their former indifference or contempt, and with as little reason, too, if they would only make themselves acquainted with the subject of their ridiculous excitement.

I have no intention of taking to pieces Dr. Simpson's *re-chauffé* of the stale jokes and vulgarisms on Homœopathy which are current among a certain class of men. I shall not even stoop to rebut the foul insinuations in which he indulges; but I will say this to him;—If you are conscious of rectitude, of truth, honesty, and fair dealing, and of these simply and alone, in all the particulars to which I have been alluding in this Letter, you must feel more deeply now than you have ever done before, the liability of an innocent man to fall under the gravest suspicions, and you will be prepared, by contemplating the peculiarity of your own position in this controversy, to judge hereafter more charitably of those whom you have reviled.

The story of the box, in which all the medicines are said by Dr. Simpson to have been mixed before they were given to me, meets me in the published speech in a somewhat different form from that in which I heard of it formerly from the author of the petty narrative. He told me on that former occasion, on the 10th of June last, that I had said to him some six or seven years ago, "your box has converted me." I remember well, Sir, and so must Dr. Simpson, that I replied to him emphatically on that occasion, that *I did not believe that I had ever said so, and that because it would have been untrue.* My first experiments on Homœopathy were made by medicines from five different sources in addition to Dr. Simpson's box. The "respected Secretary of the Society" favoured me with a box, in connexion with which there was, as became his character, no trick, but all that was fair and honest. Dr. Russell supplied me with many other medicines; Headland of London did so too; the Chemist in this city, at a later period, did the same; and some I prepared with my own hands. The results were published, and drew from Dr. Forbes of London the admission, that had the cases been treated according to the rules of the ordinary School, he would have regarded the results as "very satisfactory." Among them were "some wonderful effects and cures," which I have always regarded as evidences of the power of Homœopathic remedies; but that they were due to "Dr. Simpson's own former Homœopathic box," in which the trick was, I do not believe that I could have ever averred, because I was not in the habit of noting in each case from what source the medicines I employed were taken, for I suspected no trick. Since Dr. Simpson made his trick public, I have suspected, reasonably enough, that some of the failures which I could not formerly account for but on the ground of my own want of skill, must have been due to the dishonest box. At any

rate, if this paltry affair must be judged of on the word of either party, I ask you, Sir, to look back on what is recorded on the preceding pages, and to judge by that test, as to which of us is the most entitled to credit.

To one only of all the remaining rash and idle statements of Dr. Simpson, shall I advert at present. He avers, that there are men, who, to use his characteristic language, "doctored people according as people themselves wished, either with drachms of drugs, or billions of a grain of the same." That Dr. Simpson knows of any such persons I do not believe. I know a great deal more of those whom he delights to calumniate than he does, and I solemnly aver, that I neither know, nor ever have known, a single instance of the conduct he has ventured to lay to their charge. I dare him to the proof, and if he fail to prove his allegation, he must be contented with the disgrace of having uttered a deliberate and groundless calumny. I rejoice to say, that I know many physicians who, while they adhere to the Homœopathic law as the great regulator of their practice, consider themselves entitled, in the free exercise of their profession, as independent men, to prescribe any quantity of medicine they think necessary for their patients, and, where the Homœopathic principle cannot be of service to them, whether from its own present or necessary limitations, or their insufficient acquaintance with it, consider themselves not only at liberty, but bound in duty, to employ any other expedients for the benefit of their employers that may be within their knowledge.

This course has had my hearty concurrence, and public advocacy, as the only course of professional and scientific catholicity; and I confidently anticipate the time, as not far distant, when there shall be physicians, worthy of the honourable name, in all parts of our country, whose model shall be that philosophic greatness,—beautifully sketched

by one who formerly adorned our University, and whose spirit is not yet utterly extinct among us,—which “knows how to distinguish what is just in itself, from what is merely accredited by illustrious names; adopting a truth which no one has sanctioned, and rejecting an error of which all approve, with the same calmness as if no judgment were opposed to its own.” If the Society shall sneer at all this as inconsistent and unfair, I would remind them that the sneer will come with a very bad grace from men who, while they profess themselves to be Allopathists, often employ remedies which they admit to operate Homœopathically, and that it is incumbent on them honestly to restrict themselves to their sectarian principle of “*diversa diversis curantur*,” before they can consistently stigmatize others as dishonest for openly advocating a more comprehensive creed.

As I perceive, from the newly printed list of members, that I still belong to your Society, I conclude with the following motion; and, if it be not adopted, I request that my name may be erased from your records, for in that event it can be no longer reputable to remain a member of the Society. I move,—“That any one who cannot exonerate himself from the suspicion of deliberate mis-statement, shall be held disqualified for being admitted, or for remaining, a member of the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Edinburgh.”

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your obedient Servant,

WM. HENDERSON.

## POSTSCRIPT.

*1st January 1852.*

Since the former edition of my Letter was published, Dr. Simpson has endeavoured to exculpate himself from some of the very serious charges, which in self defence, it was my disagreeable task to bring against him. I cannot say that he has succeeded in the very least degree. His whole defence is too plainly an attempt to evade the indictment, and to escape from the dilemma in which it has placed him, by mystifying his readers as to the real points at issue. If I return to the painful subject, it is truly from no pleasure I take in personal wrangling, and from no desire to gratify unamiable feelings by distressing another. Those who believe Homœopathy to be a great and invaluable system of practical medicine, have been with unsparing acrimony, and in the most offensive terms, stigmatized as unworthy of credit; all the courtesies that are usual among gentlemen have been denied us, and now that an occasion, apart from all the perplexities that pertain to the operation of medicines, has presented itself of testing the candour and uprightness of the contending parties, those who have been heretofore maligned have a right to appeal to the public, in a question which the public is qualified to comprehend—to decide between them and their opponents, as to which shall henceforth be esteemed the most entitled to confidence. This controversy, therefore, ceases to be a merely personal one; it is rather to be regarded as a combat in which those who are engaged do battle for the honour of their respective hosts. This is the only view of the subject that could induce me to recur to it.

When the President of the Royal College of Physicians affirmed in the notorious Resolutions of that body, that no

Fellow of the College could, "by any possibility," meet professionally with those who "practise Homœopathy," without "derogating from his own honour and that of his profession," I took the liberty, in order to shew the absurdity of that Resolution, of replying in the columns of the *Witness*, that the President had done so whenever he was asked, and that he had met me twice within the two years prior to the date of that reply. This statement of mine was felt by all parties at the time as, if true, fixing on Dr. Simpson the odium of the grossest inconsistency and want of candour; and he himself must have felt that it did so, for I have good authority for stating that he endeavoured to free himself from it by denying that he had ever met me professionally but in my own family. That he was capable of denying the accuracy of my statement, I was prepared to believe by a conversation I had with him on the subject, and I accordingly collected my proofs in expectation that I should catch him making his denial in print some time or other, when there could be no possibility of escape.

The conversation to which I have just adverted was partly to this effect, and there can be no mistake, for the whole was committed by me to writing very speedily after it occurred. "Besides, Dr. Simpson," said I, "you at once agreed to meet me on other occasions, but, as is not unusual with you, you failed to keep your appointments." "That," was the reply, "was because you practise Homœopathy." Now, what a dilemma had he fallen into here! If that reply was correct, what are we to say or think of the appointments which were made with the intention of being broken?

In the notes to his speech, and in his letter to Dr. Russell, Dr. Simpson endeavours to mystify the subject I am now dealing with, in two ways, first, by affecting to suppose that the charge brought against him was of *practising Homœopathy*; and, next, by speaking lightly of the past, and pro-

fessing to consider the whole question as relating to the future. Neither expedient can avail him. He was never accused by me of practising Homœopathy, though I perceive, in a recent pamphlet by a former pupil of his, that he is said to have stated in his class that he did practise in that way once at least, and with success, at the recommendation of his Homœopathic friend Dr. Arneth of Vienna. I raised no question with him as to the future, but the whole matter between him and me, is a question of fact and veracity respecting his conduct during the past. And how does he endeavour to escape from what I must call the awful position in which he is placed, between his deliberate and altogether unqualified denial of all but one professional meeting with me, and the confounding evidence of the letters I have produced? The one case, in no respect a more uncommon one than the other, my letter "brought back to his recollection," though it was between five and six years ago; the other he has "quite in vain attempted to recall any recollection of," although it was little more than *one* year ago! Am I dealing harshly with Dr. Simpson in pointing out these very curious particulars? Before you condemn me for doing so, consider how *I* should have been treated had I fallen back on a defective memory; consider too that Dr. Simpson's allegation in his speech, that he did *not* meet with me, as I had alleged, was a direct attack upon *my* veracity, and that it was regarded by those who heard or read his speech, previous to the publication of my Letter, as establishing against *me* the guilt of deliberate misstatement.

I need scarcely add that all the frank and candid and tasteful confessions of frequent meetings with Dr. Russell, in his letter to that gentleman, are made too late; and that the apparent openness with which he admits them, cannot *now* be received as a justification of the virtual denial of them in a speech which professed to take advantage of an oppor-

tunity of replying to "charges which had been brought against himself" of countenancing Homœopathy, similar to those which Mr. Syme had been engaged in answering; those charges having included this—that he met with the obnoxious practitioners "whenever he was asked," and not merely with me. His audience, doubtless, thought that he had told them all; and where was the candour of trying to excuse or explain away the meetings with *one* such practitioner, when he knew that there was another with whom he had acted, as he now (alas! too late) admits, even more frequently! Mr. Syme professed to relate all *his* meetings with us; Dr. Simpson as plainly *professed* to do the same; and there can be no doubt that he would never have adverted to the meetings he concealed from the Society, had he not been threatened with the same exposure from Dr. Russell, that he had experienced from me.\*

Dr. Simpson, in reply to my challenge to prove that any practitioner among us "doctored people according as people wished," with Homœopathic or Allopathic drugs, brings forward in a foot-note a quotation from a speech of *Dr. John Rose Cormack!* The medical public of Edinburgh will not think much of the authority, and will not expect that I should take the trouble of saying more in reply to the assertion of that person, than that his allegation is untrue.

W. H.

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## APPENDIX.

Resolution of the Medico-Chirurgical Society, of date the 19th November 1851.—

Moved by Mr. Syme, "That the public profession of Homœopathy shall be held to disqualify for being admitted or remaining a Member of the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Edinburgh."

\* That exposure was, I believe, the cause of the Resolution of the Council of the Society referred to at p. 13.



truly of trying to "charge which had been brought against himself" of countenancing Homoeopathy, similar to those which Mr. Syme had been engaged in answering; these charges having included this—that he met with the Homoeopathic practitioners "whenever he was asked," and not merely with rare. His audience, doubtless, thought that he had told them all; and where was the conduct of trying to excuse or explain away the messages with one such passage, when he knew that there was another with whom he had acted, as he now (alas! too late) admits; even more frequently! Mr. Syme professed to relate all his meetings with us; Dr. Simpson as plainly professed to do the same; and there can be no doubt that he would never have adverted to the meetings he concealed from the Society, had he not been threatened with the same exposure from Dr. Russell, that he had experienced from me.

Dr. Simpson, in reply to my challenge to prove that any practitioner among us "doctors of people according as people wished," with Homoeopathic or Allopathic drugs, being forward in a footnote a quotation from a speech of Dr. John Ross Cowan. The medical public of Edinburgh will not think much of the authority, and without report that I should take the trouble of saying more in reply to the assertion of that person, than that his allegation is untrue.

W. H.

APPENDIX

Resolution of the Medical-Chirurgical Society of Edinburgh, 1851—  
 Moved by Mr. Syme, "That the public profession of Homoeopathy shall be held to disqualify the holder thereof from remaining a Member of the Medical-Chirurgical Society of Edinburgh."  
 Resolved, That the following be the grounds on which the Society is of opinion that the public profession of Homoeopathy is incompatible with the duties of a Member of the Society.



