On the philosophy of medicine : on quackery, &c.;, being the last of a course of lectures delivered in the School of Medicine, Newcastle-upon-Tyne / by R. M. Glover.

ON THE

PHILOSOPHY OF MEDICINE.

BY

R. M. GLOVER, M.D. F.R.S.E.

On Quackery, &c.

BEING THE LAST OF A COURSE OF LECTURES DELIVERED IN THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.

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PHILOSOPHY OF MEDICINE.

Quackery: The New Spa, Newcastle.—Pseudo-Science: Phrenology, Mesmerism, Hydropathy, Teetotalism, Vegetarianism, Homœopathy.—Conclusion.

The tendency of mankind to favour Quackery is a necessary consequence of the difficulties which attend the treatment of disease. Where legitimate medicine fails, the patient, tortured, probably, by the misery of deferred hope, with the dread of death perhaps before him, is easily induced to throw himself into the arms of the charlatan, who is ready to indulge him in unbounded expectations. The greatest medical men have always been the readiest to deplore the necessary imperfections of their difficult art, even while they were striving for its advancement with their utmost energies. How great a contrast does this candour present to the vain glorious boastings of the quacks!

But it is easy to show how much Medicine has done. Hospital statistics are in existence, which prove, that in the same institution, where, about two centuries ago, one man in seven died, the deaths now do not exceed one in fifty.

But, prepared as we might be to anticipate the existence of quackery, the *extraordinary* proneness of the public to it is cer-

tainly a matter of surprise. Perhaps it arises, in great measure, from the ignorance of some of the sciences auxiliary to medicine which prevails. A moralist has remarked, that men are content to carry their minds like their watches, without any attempt to investigate the mechanism by which the work is carried on. But this moralist himself was probably content to live on in a body, of whose structure and functions he was ignorant.

"Man," said D'Alembert, "is fire for falsehood, and ice for truth;" and the readiness with which, in every age, mankind have believed in one gross delusion after another certainly countenances the assertion, especially if we contrast this credulity with the reluctance with which great truths, like those taught by Copernicus, Galileo, or Harvey, have been received.

There is an anecdote of Mead, which I shall quote, as it is contained in a classical work.*

"A man of good education had become a quack, and had a booth in one of the most frequented streets of London. He calculated on the weakness and credulity of mankind, and made a most fortunate speculation. Mead, regretting that an intelligent man, capable of advancing truth, should degrade himself to such a trade, advised him to abandon it. 'How many men a day,' said the quack, 'do you think pass through this street?' 'Perhaps 20,000,' said the doctor. 'And how many of these do you suppose possess the right use of their senses, and a sound judgment?' 'Five hundred.' 'The proportion is too great,' said the quack. 'A hundred, then.' 'Still too much.' At last they agreed to reckon them at ten. 'Let me alone, then,' said the quack; 'let me levy on these 19,990 *fools* the tribute which they owe me, and I have no objection to the ten having in you that confidence which most assuredly you well deserve.'"

Many sarcasms have been uttered against the medical profession; and as often, jocularly, by medical men themselves

* Richerand. Erreurs Populaires Relatives à la Médecine.

as by others. None was more forward to satirize our profession than Jean Jacques Rousseau, but he lived to repent bitterly of this injustice. Although he had suffered all his life from a painful and incurable disease, towards the close of his career he said to the celebrated Bernardin de Saint Pierre, as the latter reports: "If I were to bring out a new edition of my works, I would alter what I have said of medical men. There is no profession which demands so much study as theirs; in every country, these are the men most truly and deeply learned and scientific."

Unfortunately, quackery exists in the profession as well as out of it: where there is a demand there will be a supply. A deeply learned physician of the old school, now nearly ninety years of age, and long retired from practice, once told me, when we were speaking on this subject, "The fact is this —*Populus vult humbuggi, et humbuggendus est!*"

We often, in society, hear medical men praised for what, in reality, they should be condemned. Thus, how often have we heard the trick of a celebrated fashionable physician extolled. Being of opinion that one of his patients, a lady of rank, required exercise, which she was unwilling to take, he took her out in his carriage, and having persuaded her to dismount, drove off, and left her! It would astonish the popular admirers of this man, were they to read the expressions of disgust which the orthodox LANCET once thought right to utter, in reference to this transaction—A physician should "know no legerdemain, do no conjuring tricks."

One extraordinary thing about quacks is their stolid indifference to praise or censure; so they procure publicity. A quack wrote to a friend of mine, the editor of one of our local journals, requesting him to insert a long and costly advertisement, conditionally that at the same time a puffing editorial paragraph was inserted. This my friend refused, on which the quack wrote to say that a good cutting up would answer quite as well, and he might insert the advertisement just the same. This also the conscientious editor refused.

Public morality on this point is at a very low ebb. Some time ago a paragraph went the round of the newspapers, extolling the benefits of advertising, and giving as an illustration the extraordinary energy and skill of "Professor" Holloway. Apparently not the least idea was entertained by the writer of the article, or those who copied it, of the fearful immorality of quackery. Nay, as far as I can see, if "Professor" Holloway became only rich enough, he might be made a baronet as easily as Dr. Bright or Dr. Chambers.

As a most singular illustration of popular delusions regarding curative means, I shall relate an incident which happened in this town about ten years ago.

A new spa of wonderful merit was all at once discovered in a romantic dene near Newcastle. My attention having been attracted to the matter, I went to visit the spot, all the roads to which were covered with crowds bearing pitchers of water from the "spa," while hundreds were struggling and pushing which should be first to drink of the salutiferous waters. On making a rough examination of the water, I was amazed at the absurdity of the affair, and wrote a quiz of it in the *Gateshead Observer*, under the signature of "G." I jocularly hinted at the possibility of the medicinal virtue being owing to the drainings of certain dung-heaps. I did not long want an answer, being attacked in the *Tyne Mercury* by one who signed "Medicus," who called me a "wondrous boy and a would-be philosopher," and gave two reasons why the drainings in question could not flow into the "spa"—one being that the "spa" ran more than the drainings, and *therefore the greater could not hold the less;* the other being, that the "spa" was lower than the "middens," so that, *of course, water could not run down hill!!* He then proceeded to extol the virtues of the "spa" to the highest degree. The mania increased to a prodigious extent, and was not by any means confined to the lower classes; five hundred people might be seen at once around the spot; and I am ashamed to say that some medical men were not bold enough to avoid countenancing the delusion.

Upon this, finding the matter grow serious, I published an analysis of this interesting fountain, and showed it to be not quite so strong as some of the spring waters about Newcastle, with a mere trace of sulphuretted hydrogen, derived probably from the decomposition of sulphates by organic matters. A committee was then formed to investigate the matter, who, with characteristic rashness, commenced their investigation by publishing a list of wonderful cures performed by the water, including one of "stoppage of the windpipe." However, they made some investigations, to ascertain the source of the water, and stopped up sundry holes, by which it might be contaminated from a brook near, which is little better than a common sewer, and the result was a *stoppage* of the water, until some heavy rains forced a passage. This was too much even for the madness of the "spa" goers. Now, not a solitary votary ever visits the neglected spot, and the poor Naiad sits in melancholy seclusion amid the ruins of the temple erected to her. But the majesty of popular opinion cannot be affronted with impunity; and when all was over, poor I, who had been nearly a martyr in the business, actually got the credit of having *puffed off* the "spa" !*

Under the head of pseudo-science, I propose to treat, in a summary manner, of the merits of Phrenology, Mesmerism, Hydropathy, Teetotalism, Vegetarianism, and Homœopathy.

I. *Of Phrenology.*—Some may be surprised at my placing Phrenology at the head of this list. I admit that a phrenologist has the disease which disposes a man to believe in these false sciences in a mild form; but he is in a condition of mind fit to go on. He has consented to believe in doctrines

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* It is very extraordinary that there are really near Newcastle waters well worthy of attention, and which never excited the least *furor*. In all these matters mystery has a great charm. The very out-of-the-way composition of the "spa" was likely to lead people to believe in its possession of some mysterious virtues. I was credibly informed at the time of one man having drunk in the course of a forenoon forty tumblers of the stuff, which looked just like dirty rain water !

established on insufficient grounds; to pin his faith to certain *dogmata* as matters of *belief*, and to square all facts which come in his way to the principles of his creed. I have not space to enter into the estimation of the amount of truth which there may be in phrenology, by which I mean the doctrine of Gall, Spurzheim, and Mr. Combe.* But I shall make some general objections, which will show how far I am in error in terming it on the whole a false science.

From the very beginning it was easy to observe the tendency of phrenologists to take note of all positive facts, and to disregard negative ones, to avail themselves of whatever favoured their doctrines, and to ignore all that was opposed to them. If a man had a certain part of the skull which they call an organ (for corresponding *organs* in the brain there are none) largely developed, and a corresponding manifestation of the mind or propensity belonging to it, then the fact was loudly proclaimed, and that without much reference to anything that might account for the character in the temperament, circumstances, or education of the individual. But if the contrary were the case, if the development of the alleged organ and its manifestation did not coincide, then everything which could be brought to bear was dragged forward, in order to account for the discrepancy. Many instances of this kind might be cited. I shall quote one as an example, and an illustration of the kind of proof, as regards application to facts on which phrenology reposes. And here it may be remarked, that it is of little use trying to prove or disprove phrenology from the evidence afforded by ordinary characters, since it is almost impossible to tell what an ordinary man's real or native character has been amid the influences to which we are all subjected. The very thief in jail may have been a better man naturally than a lord mayor of London, or a monarch upon the throne. The best evidence of the kind we can get, is that perhaps which is derived from the study of history;

* I had delivered before many of the audience two lectures on phrenology, some time before, in the same place.

and here again we are beset with a thousand difficulties. However, let us proceed.

The bones of King Robert the Bruce were discovered in his tomb at Dunfermline, and phrenologists have his development. According to Mr. Combe,* he had the organ of *combativeness* large, *cautiousness* large, *veneration* large; of *benevolence* I find no mention. Mr. Combe considers this to be in accordance with the character of the man as revealed to us by history. As far as combativeness is concerned the conclusion may be granted; and it would be difficult to find a single baron in that warlike age whose character would not warrant a similar influence. If Robert Bruce indeed had been a man of feeble stature, instead of gigantic frame and strength, then the exhibition of combativeness in him would have some value; as it is, the fact is worthless. Then, as a proof of his excessive veneration, Mr. Combe reckons the ordering his heart to be sent to the Holy Land. What does this signify? Had Robert Bruce, in that age, himself conducted a crusade, and sacrificed his personal ambition—had he obeyed the edict of the Pope, instead of resisting it — had he refrained from stabbing the Red Comyn in a CHURCH—there might have been some evidence of his veneration. But to pretend, in that age, when it was common for nobles to bequeath houses and lands for the sole privilege of being buried in the robes of the Hospitallers and Templars, to derive anything in favour of the veneration of Robert Bruce from his dying act, is absurd. Then with regard to his cautiousness and benevolence. Had his cautiousness been small, Mr. Combe would have considered his encounter with Bohun, before the battle of Bannockburn, taking into account his large combativeness, a sufficient justification, so far, of phrenology. But surely his benevolence should have been enormous, since he, a king and a general, in spite of his cautiousness, risked the defeat of his whole army, in Ireland, rather than desert the wife of a common soldier,

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* System of Phrenology, ed. 1825.

suddenly seized with the pangs of childbirth! Upon such as this, and slighter facts, is this alleged science chiefly founded.

Again, it may be denied that many of the phrenological organs really represent functions of the mind, or of the brain; many of them correspond to mere manifestations which may arise from the most complex motives. Many of them are propensities which exist ni animals without brains, and even in plants.

I cannot see, if there be an organ of locality, why there should not be, according to the phrenological way of going to work, an organ of love of home. If a man manifests any particular tendency, a phrenologist goes and lays his hand on his head, and finding one part bigger than another, exclaims, "This is the organ!" It is well known that many men have a passionate attachment to the place of their birth, while others have no such feeling. Anything connected with the organ of locality itself will in nowise account for this feeling. I ask this question—Have the Swiss troops in the service of the King of Naples, whose bands dare hardly play the airs of Switzerland, without exciting feelings of longing for home among the soldiers,—have they the organ of love of home—as good an organ as any phrenological one with which I am acquainted,—have they this organ more highly developed than the troops of any other nation? It would be easy to prove, from the works of phrenologists themselves, that their conclusions from the skulls of various nations, with regard to national character, are entirely erroneous.

There are no divisions in the brain itself corresponding to the phrenological organs. The very attempt to show that some of the convolutions faintly correspond to the phrenological divisions only shows the weakness of the system, since, according to this, corners of convolutions must be cut across by the phrenological lines as remorselessly as an American carries his boundaries across rivers, seas, lakes, and mountains, in one straight line.

But there are real anatomical divisions in the brain, of which phrenology takes no note; and, as far as experiments on animals

are concerned, and pathological facts also, everything tends to show, that the functions performed by parts of the brain anatomically distinct have nothing in common with phrenology, except, perhaps, the single fact of the grey matter of the *cerebrum* being the organ of perception, judgment, and volition.

Experiments on animals show that the cerebellum, esteemed by phrenologists the stronghold of their doctrine, does not perform the functions which they ascribe to it, and performs other functions which they do not place there at all.

The phrenologists themselves are obliged to admit that the power of an organ may depend on its intensity as well as its quantity; and how are we to judge of the intensity? It is plain, from the admissions of phrenologists themselves, that a man with a small organ may have more power than another with a larger one. How, then, are we to judge of the truth of phrenology by measurement of skulls?

Then Dr. Skae, by adopting a more scientific mode of measuring the head than that in ordinary use, has shown, it appears to me, the *utter fallacy* of the alleged science. It is true, Mr. Combe objects that Dr. Skae's mode is not that adopted by phrenologists. This, if it mean anything, means that the phrenologists are to have their own way of measuring the head, and their own way of estimating character, and then undertake to make a science.

How are we to judge of the true character of a man? Suppose two men pass a beggar in the street. One of them gives him alms, and the other declines. Which of the two has more benevolence? A superficial observer would say, the giver; but the alms may be conferred from carelessness, from a wish to be relieved of importunity, from the mere redundance of a full pocket; and may be refused from a conviction that the gift in the long run may do more harm than good, or from a sense of justice, which reflects that the alms cannot properly be afforded. Now it appears to me that out of such conflicting circumstances, phrenologists always reserve to themselves the power of choosing or rejecting what respectively favours

or opposes their views. By such evidence you can prove nothing, least of all an alleged science, which stands in opposition to anatomy, physiology, and pathology.

II. *Mesmerism.*—I shall not attempt, out of the vast mass of materials, to extract the amount of truth which exists in animal magnetism, but shall confine myself to the relation of some facts which will serve to show the extreme amount of caution which is required before we should give our assent to such marvels. Impostors like Mesmer have existed in all ages. Apollonius of Tyana was believed to have restored sight and raised the dead. In the time of Richelieu, there were the convulsionaries of Loudon, whose tricks brought Urbain Grandier to the stake. Just before the appearance of Mesmer there occurred the miracles which began at the tomb of the priest Paris at Saint Médard, and which, after the cemetery was shut up, were continued in private houses. These performances are as well authenticated as any of the facts of mesmerism. A councillor of the parliament of France presented an account of them to the king! Of what kind they were will appear from the following:—"A young girl of twenty-two or twenty-three years, erect, and with her back against a wall, had administered to her as *alms* a hundred blows of a *chenet** weighing thirty pounds: she could only be *comforted* by violent blows. Carré de Montgeron took it in hand to administer them: he had already given sixty; but the sister found them *insufficient*, and a more vigorous man began to administer the blows which she yet wanted. However, Carré de Montgeron, in order to be sure of the force of his blows, started to batter a stone wall with his *chenet;* at the twenty-fifth blow the wall was shivered to pieces!"†

I should like to ask the magnetizers why somnambulism was not produced by Mesmer? The history of mesmerism

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* A kind of andiron, on which wood is burned.

† Histoire Académique du Magnétisme Animal.

before the Academy of Medicine of France is peculiarly instructive. At one time a favourable report on it was submitted by M. Husson; and at length, after the exposure of a pretended *clairvoyante*, in 1840, the Academy, on the proposition of M. Double, resolved to have nothing more to do with the subject. Behold in what terms the dupe of an unmasked impostor speaks:—"I am horrorstruck, *murdered*, confounded by all that you have made me see this morning. Four years of cunning! What audacious perseverance! Oh! she is a mistress of a woman, this Mlle. Emilie! But you also are a master who have unmasked her in four days."

I am myself acquainted with an instance where a somnambulist, in Paris, after deceiving thousands, was discovered to be an impostor. Look at the sham phreno-mesmerism. No sensible man could even witness the performances which appeared so convincing to the vulgar without being certain that the whole affair was a hoax.

In regard to such matters, then, let us suspend our belief—let us wait; and for my part I shall probably be content to wait the term of my natural life before believing many of the marvels of animal magnetism.

III. *Hydropathy.*—With regard to this quackery, we cannot doubt but that there is power in it. The virtues of bathing will be found as well stated, by Sanctorio, in his "Medicina Statica,"* as could now be done. But there is no reason why what is beneficial in the application of water should not be pursued under the direction of medical men, and combined with suitable treatment. A great many of the pretended cures at ydropathic institutions are doubtless due to other causes than the treatment, while the mischief done is concealed.

IV. *Teetotalism.*—The assertion made by the teetotallers, that alcohol is poisonous in all doses, in the sense in which

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* Sect. 2. Of Air and Water, with Explanations by Quincy. Lond. 1728.

arsenic and prussic acid are poisonous, is rank quackery. Alcohol, in small quantities, is an aliment, which the common poisons never are. Cold water itself might be made to be a poison, reasoning after the teetotal fashion.

V. *Vegetarianism.*—This is a harmless delusion. No doubt bread contains the chemical elements which the body requires; but I shall cut this matter short by remarking, that as we *must* kill animals, in order to prevent them shoving us out of the world, we may as well eat them into the bargain.

VI. *Homœopathy.*—But all the false systems and all the quackeries that ever did prevail, or, I believe, ever will prevail, are eclipsed by one so absurd that the human mind itself cannot measure the extent of its monstrosity—this is the offspring of Samuel Hahnemann. In speaking of him we might address all the quacks from Apollonius of Tyana to Mesmer, in Wotton's lines to Elizabeth of Bohemia.

> "You meaner beauties of the night,
> That poorly satisfy our eyes,
> More by your number than your light!
> *You common people of the skies!*
> *What are you when the sun shall rise?*"

The author of this system was born in Saxony, in 1755, studied at Leipsig and Vienna, and graduated at Erlangen. It is curious that from about the same region we should have derived these three transcendent geniuses—Gall, Mesmer, and Hahnemann.

The last named appears to have been a somewhat learned physician, and we may presume, without offence, unsuccessful in practice. Without offence, certainly, since learning and science have little or nothing to do with success in practice.

The greatest moralist of modern times, Samuel Johnson, has said that a physician in a large town is the mere sport of fortune; those who employ him and those who reject him are alike ignorant of his defects and his merits. But what is the

duty of one placed in the position of the inventor of homœopathy? It is not his duty to quit the standard of his profession, and start a new system to catch the credulity of the vulgar. It is true, that by such a course he is almost sure to realize a fortune; and the example of Hahnemann shows us that the greater the absurdity the more sure the success. But Science has had its martyrs as well as Religion; and in such cases a conscientious man should resign himself to his destiny, and say to Fortune, with Horace—

> " Laudo manentem, si celeres quatit
> Pennas; resigno quæ dedit, et meâ
> Virtute me involvo, probamque
> Pauperiem sine dote quæro."

But Hahnemann imagined, and gave to the world a system which has not an atom of common sense in its composition—so totally absurd, that a single ray of rationality might have served to make the darkness visible. It is difficult to reason on such a subject. When a man takes refuge in an absurdity he is beyond the reach of argument. I shall proceed to expose the doctrines of homœopathy, and then briefly refer to the alleged cures of disease which it is said to have produced.

Hahnemann, then, disgusted, as he says, with the results of ordinary treatment, was led to the discovery of an infallible mode of combating disease. The fundamental principle of his doctrine is, that like cures like; and so he called it homœopathy, from the Greek, *homoios*, " the same," while the nickname of allopathy is given by his followers to the divine art of medicine. Hahnemann maintains that diseases are cured by remedies which would, especially in health, used sufficiently, bring about symptoms similar, or, as he afterwards modifies his views, analogous at least to the diseases which they cure. In support of this view, homœopathists allege a few vague facts, all susceptible of explanation, on the Hippocratic axiom, " contraria contrariis curantur," or else absolutely false.

Thus the cure of intermittent by cinchona is accounted for

on the supposition that the remedy can in health occasion symptoms similar to those of ague. Now this is not true. Bark does not produce symptoms like those of ague. It is true in large quantity it does produce some febrile symptoms, and, on the homœopathic principle, it should be a specific in common continued fever rather than in intermittent.* Then the workmen in quina manufactories are subject to a cutaneous eruption. Quina, therefore, should be a specific in skin disease! Does arsenic, which also cures intermittent, produce symptoms like ague in a previously healthy person?

To cure disease in an organ, we have often of course to administer a remedy which has some kind of action on the organ. Thus, strychnia, which can produce paralysis, is given in paralysis. But, in fact, the action of strychnia is to destroy the influence of the will, but to exalt the sensibility of the true spinal system; and it is given in a case of atony to *rouse* the spinal cord. As a specimen of the loose assumptions on which homœopathy is founded, take the following:—"Among the disorders which belladonna provokes in a healthy man, are symptoms, which, put together, resemble very much the hydrophobia produced by a mad dog — a disease which Mayerne, Münch, Bucholz, and Neimike, have really and perfectly cured by this plant."† So that we need no longer be afraid of this terrible malady! But I may certainly congratulate myself on having discovered a remedy for hydrophobia; for I have been making some experiments on animals lately with picrotoxia, and I find this substance produce symptoms very closely simulating hydrophobia.‡

When a substance like nitrate of silver is used to cure inflammation, which it will produce when applied to a healthy part; it is to cause the dilated vessels to contract, and so restore

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* See Dr. Wood's admirable exposure of homœopathy.

† Hahnemann, Exposition de la Doctrine Médicale, &c., p. 74.

‡ I expect shortly to communicate these experiments to the Medical Society of London.

the circulation; the after processes of suppuration &c. depending on the blood-globules being separated from the general circulation, and taking on a diseased action of their own. This, therefore, is the very reverse of *similia similibus curantur.*

One of Hahnemann's illustrations is the following:—"The cook who has burnt his hand presents it to the fire, at a certain distance, without paying any attention to the increase of pain which results at first, because he has learned, that in doing so, in a short time after, in a few minutes, he will perfectly cure the burn, and cause it to disappear, without the least trace of pain."*

"Un peu de vérité fait l'erreur des vulgaires." Let us hear Dr. Billing's explanation of the same fact. "The same observations are applicable to the blush produced by heat from a fire; and we have a proof that this is the effect of nervous influence before injury or alteration of the structure of the vessels, by the common experiment of those who have resolution to hold the burned or scalded part to the fire, and remove it gradually, which will prevent the disorganization that would otherwise take place — in common language prevent blistering. The mischief is caused by exhaustion of the nervous influence; the sudden removal of the excitant leaves the capillaries destitute, and they *yield* immediately to the *ordinary injecting force;* but if the excitation be renewed by holding the part to the fire, nervous influence is supplied from the neighbouring parts to the capillaries, with pain certainly, but by slowly removing from the heat, the nervous influence will be gradually supplied, till the excitant be reduced to a natural standard, relieving the pain and incipient inflammation."†

Similar explanations may be given in other cases. As to the alleged foundation of homœopathy on experiments on healthy persons, I make this reply:—I deny totally that

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* Exposition &c., p. 104.

† Principles of Medicine, pp. 28, 29.

allopathic doses will produce the symptoms generally described by homœopathists; and as for homœopathic doses, a healthy man may swallow the whole pharmacopœia with perfect impunity; it is therefore unnecessary to enter into any account of the horrible and disgusting twaddle which constitutes the physiology of medicines of Hahnemann.

The next branch of the doctrine is the theory of small doses. It is difficult to make the public understand that it is impossible, by any refinement of chemistry, to detect anything except the vehicle in the homœopathic medicines properly prepared; although some of the homœopathic medicines have been found to contain poisonous doses. A fact has come to my knowledge. A London wholesale druggist informed one of the most respectable citizens of Newcastle a few days ago, that his firm manufactured sixty pounds weight of homœopathic drugs every fortnight, and sold them to the various homœopathic institutions; and that they were so well aware of the farce, as never even to attempt the troublesome mode of manufacture required by homœopathy; so that the drugs really and truly contain nothing.* To show how little the public can estimate the absurdity of the homœopathic doses, a layman wrote lately to the *Medical Gazette*, pointing out the poisonous effects of small doses of lead as a corroboration of homœopathy. But the smallest dose of lead likely to have an effect is, in comparison with the homœopathic doses, like a mountain to a molehill.

I once heard the law of infinitesimal doses compared to the law of gravity? Much gravity was required to make the comparison. In the law of gravity a relation exists between the masses and the forces. But homœopathy requires us to divorce the relation which we are compelled to believe in between quantity and quality.

But then it is said they make cures. But there are the

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* If this fact be disputed, I have no objection *privately* to give the Editor of THE LANCET a reference to the party who informed me.

strict diet and the imagination to account for these. The history of Perkins's metallic tractors may serve to show what the mind will do. Sometimes, too, an overdrugged patient may be benefited by the mere absence of treatment.

Absurd as are the doses, the PATHOLOGY of Hahnemann transcends even his therapeutics. The following choice *morçeau* should be printed in large letters in every homœopathic institution. "It is only after having infected the entire organism, that the ITCH announces its immense internal chronic *miasma* by a cutaneous eruption quite peculiar, accompanied by an insupportable itching, and peculiar odour. This itch is the true fundamental and producing cause of the innumerable morbid forms which occur under the names of nervous weakness, hysteria, hypochondriasis, madness, melancholy, dementia, rage, epilepsy, and all kinds of spasms, softening of the bones, or rickets, caries, cancer, dropsy, spitting of blood, asthma, deafness, cataract, paralysis, &c."* He adds in a note, that it has cost him many years' research to discover this great truth, unknown to his predecessors. Mercy on us! What a state poor Sawney must be in? But we know that the itch is dependent on a parasite; and has nothing on earth to do with any of the diseases with which Hahnemann connects it. It is enough to make one's blood boil with indignation, to know that in the nineteenth century this drivelling idiocy has been taken for the oracles of Science. To be told that the images of the immortal benefactors of mankind who have adorned our profession are to be displaced from the temple of Fame in favour of Samuel Hahnemann!

In conclusion, there are certain tests by which false sciences may be recognised. One is, the fanaticism of those who are believers in them. Yes! they believe—they do not

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* Exposition, &c., p. 17.

reason. They believe in Hahnemann as the Mormonites do in Joe Smith.

True science is of slow growth, like the majestic oak, which has withstood the storms of a thousand winters; but these false sciences are like mushrooms, they spring up in a single night. The day before, you saw them not; and the day after, you may look for them in vain. False science is like the meteor, which flashes for a moment, and then is buried in the gloom of everlasting night. True science is like the star, which may indeed be obscured by a passing cloud, but which will continue to shine on for ever in the firmament of heaven.