

Homoeopathy briefly examined in a letter to Sir Henry Halford ... / by a licentiate.

Contributors

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HOMŒOPATHY

BRIEFLY EXAMINED,

IN

A Letter

TO

SIR HENRY HALFORD, M.D., BART.,

PHYSICIAN TO THE KING, PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL
COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, &c., &c.

BY A LICENTIATE.

'Accipe daque fidem.'—VIRGIL.

LONDON:
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1837.

J. HADDON, CASTLE STREET, PINSBURY.

R35566

HOMŒOPATHY EXAMINED,

&c.

SIR,

As the ostensible head of our profession, every discussion on a medical subject may with propriety be addressed to you. Therefore no breach of privilege is committed in directing the following lucubrations to one whose elevation and habits might otherwise exempt him from such molestation as any anonymous scribbler may with impunity inflict. But be assured, sir, that although these pages are unaccompanied by customary adulation, and although they may be deemed entirely unworthy your notice, the writer meant sincerely to render honour where honour is due; and not merely, by the lustre of your name in the title-page, to attract that attention to the subject which might not otherwise be so easily obtained. Your power and your place imply the possession of those lofty qualifications so necessary for the correction of professional abuses; and the exercise of your legitimate in-

fluence both in the college and the court might doubtless achieve much towards removing the opprobrium that at present rests with injurious weight upon the learned body over which you so ably preside.

The extension of Hahnemannism among the members of that body is an evil widely complained of, and the more since those who, by position and opportunity, are best qualified to oppose it, appear rather to encourage it as occasion permits, either by silent suffrage or active assistance. Many discerning persons have not failed, indeed, to express their belief that the pretensions of this system "have increased, are increasing, and ought to be diminished" under your own most honourable auspices. This asserted patronage may be the reverse of your desire; but since the presumption of those who pretend to your favour has not been publicly denounced, that presumption rapidly grows in its natural confidence; thus affording the readiest encouragement to a system which seems to possess but few attractions for the public eye, except such as are best aided by those meretricious adornments so well becoming the boldness of its character and its walk.

Homœopathy is indubitably the most ingenious and fascinating theory of medicine extant, and if false it bids fair to be immensely pernicious; for its errors, like the faults of all things false and pretty, are not perceptible to those who happen

to fall in love with it. The valuable and the vile often present equal external attractions, and are apt to be equally lauded by those who possess no correct standard by which to estimate their proper worth. The test of science is experience; but the multitude, being destitute of this advantage, are tempted to decide in favour of strange pretension, according to its boldness and the encouragement it affords to foolish expectation. For as ignorance is the parent of wonder, she naturally loves it as her own, and her faith and her affection towards her prodigious progeny are strong in proportion to the marvellousness of its promise. If Homœopathy betray any evidence of such a parentage, it is a wonderful family likeness on the face of it; the fondness also of the aforesaid parent seems to indicate an acknowledged and intimate relationship. But wherever and however produced, the system receives more countenance than such a stranger adventuring abroad usually receives without a better introduction than a bold and gentlemanly front generally ensures. A rumour prevails that the stranger is a dangerous vagabond, and though permitted to range in high places, some have dared to hint their conviction that a cunning murderer is muffled up in what looks something like the cloak of philosophy, only the better to accomplish a secret and terrible purpose. But this is probably the groundless surmise of suspicious timidity; at least it behoves

the honest and the manly openly to interfere, and it by no means becomes them to insinuate a charge, the evidence of which they will not publicly announce.

Notwithstanding these suspicious and unmannerly insinuations, it must not be supposed that this system is thrust forward by its friends without a firm persuasion on their part, that its credentials are not only plausible, but perfectly valid. They, therefore, seem not to seek any concealment, but rather regret that unavoidable mystery is so prominent a part of their protégé's character. Unprovoked, moreover, they offer an open challenge to all our colleges, on the heads of which, in consequence, devolves the new duty of defending their own dignity, and the vindication of those who instinctively seek shelter under the privileges conferred by their authority.

These pages are intended to exhibit a little of the intricacy of the homœopathic plot, and to distinguish the dangers from the advantages of a few Hahnemannian dogmata. To answer the assertions and inferences of Hahnemann would require a volume much larger than any of his own, as not only denial, but argument would be needed to meet a multitude of illogical assumptions. To write such, few possess sufficient either of patience or opportunity, and fewer still the requisites for reading it. The subject must, however, be fairly argued by the profession, and the sooner they proceed about it the better, for

the enemy already occupies the vantage ground of the field, having in command the respectful prejudices of the public mind, through the influence of large pretensions to reason and to rank. Laughter may suffice to enliven the coterie of parlours and debating rooms, but the authority of knowledge is demanded in the camp. Open warfare is declared, our weapons must be furbished for the conflict.

Hahnemann, like other philosophers, may, by the boldness of his genius, have provoked opposition only because his discoveries arouse the malice, envy, and hatred of prejudice and error. Time and deliberate investigation may hereafter fully award him the honours which he claims. The august and solemn silence, the conniving diffidence of our medical colleges may result from kindred and intuitive perception of that excellence which the many despise because they possess not the faculty either to appreciate or to discern.

“Meddle not with those who are given to change,” is an old-fashioned maxim, which doubtless contains some evidence of wisdom, and may, perhaps, be deemed by many, in this enlightened age, to have been suitable enough for protracting the settled ignorance belonging to the darker periods of human history; but altogether too antiquated to retain authority over modern minds. However wise it may be to deprecate fickleness, we must acknowledge it important to

distinguish that change of opinion produced by additional knowledge, from mere inability to resist the appeal and impulse of novel and startling arguments, and startling merely because they are new. Great, indeed, is the difference between that power of mental aggrandisement by which ideas, new and old, are stored away in their right places for right uses, and that insatiable disposition which is greedy after novelty in proportion to its narrow capacity of retaining or improving what it already possesses. But although instability is a positive evidence of that weakness which never excels; yet undoubtedly the obstinacy of prejudice is equally unfavourable to superior attainment. There is, however, something in the constitution of truth which ensures her stability. Like Atlas bearing the heavens on his shoulders, she rears her hand sublimely above the influence of the veering winds. And thus it is with science, for that can never be properly so termed which rests on no firmer foundation than a few ill-assorted conjectures, and rises no higher than the misty and varying clouds, presenting new aspects with every passing breeze. And if medicine have no enduring principles on which it rests, but consist, if it consist at all, of a few unsteady and shadowy notions, which, like the sand of the desert, are neither safe nor productive, then I say, "Give physic to the dogs, I'll none of it," it is no science. Science being the knowledge of natural

adaptations, must, like Nature herself, remain immutable amidst the changes of her elements ; all that is true concerning her now must have been true of her before she obtained a name. However opinions may change as to the causes in operation, and as to the appropriate classification and catenation of facts, the facts themselves continue the same. What was true of any vital endowment or medicinal power in the infancy of our science must be equally true in its maturity. Principles are unalterable however notions may vary. Facts cannot contradict each other, but we find that contradictions abound among theorists, and therefore deception must abound. The difficulty is, to distinguish truths from falsehoods, facts from fallacies, decked, as they are, in elegant disguises, by the ingenuity of man. Invention unhappily satisfies him nearly as well as discovery ; and as the facilities of the former are so much greater than those of the latter, it is not surprising that the exertions of most minds should be directed to fabrication rather than research.

Every speculator in the fields of science who offers his hypothesis to the admiration of the world, feels himself bound, by the demands of common sense, to present it in fair and accordant proportions. If he be a wise and skilful architect, he secures for his design an imposing front and a specious loftiness, combining the appearance of beauty and utility, which to be lastingly

available requires only, that it have a firm foundation. To determine this it is not enough that we admire the devising genius visible in all the grandeur and minutiae of the erection, we must examine deeply and far beneath the showy elevation. Thus it must be especially with the new wonder, Homœopathy, the contrivance of one whom we must acknowledge to be possessed of a master mind. If it can be shown to be based upon immoveable principles, as it professes to be, then it behoves us at once to bestir ourselves and fly to it for refuge; for truly no other presents half so much promise of affording all that we desire of reputation, emolument, and usefulness. You will pardon me, sir, that instead of proceeding at once in *medias res*, I deem so much of preface expedient as may express the sentiments with which I entered upon the examination of Hahnemann's Organon, for the spirit in which we commence an inquiry, necessarily affects the method and manner of procedure. In vain do we seek an opinion from common sense on this subject. Common sense scarcely deigns a reply to our appeal; or if we receive an answer, it betrays either prejudice or ridicule. Nor need we be surprised at this, even if the system be true, since we find that the more profoundly philosophy conducts her research, the more extravagant to uninquiring minds appear the discoveries she announces. Indeed, all truths exhibited *in puris naturalibus*, would perhaps

appear outrageous and indecorous to the sight of those familiar only with artifice and error.

On reflection, however, we should be the less inclined to repudiate Homœopathy, because it seems a naked and immense absurdity. On that very account am I disposed to seek for information concerning her, if I may be allowed again to personify the system; for surely, unless there were something almost irresistibly persuasive in her charms, she would scarcely find followers and defenders in those gentlemen whose general character for science and sound sense we know demands and deserves our entire respect. It cannot have been, that having an unmanageable development of marvellousness, they stumbled, as if by accident, on an old doctrine furbished in a new fashion, and in astonishment exclaimed 'strange that a thing so simple, so evident, and valuable should have been in operation since the world began, and yet be left for us to discover and reveal.'

Believing, as I did, that the observation and accumulated experience of more than 3000 years were not to be abrogated but by unerring dictum, it must be granted that I entered on the examination of Homœopathic pretension with a very sceptical prejudice. But even in this respect Hahnemann affords all that he thinks sufficient to satisfy us. He informs us that his system of medicine is the only one which renders service to suffering humanity; so that Solomon was

wrong in saying that a merry heart doeth good like a medicine, for medicine did no good till this new system was invented—a system of truth sought in vain by the learned, the wise, and the good, until Hahnemann was directed to the discovery. That is to say, the benevolence which imparted remedial powers and properties to medicinal substances, had been disappointed of its purpose for 6000 years, and would have ever so continued but for the happy guess of one, who, by dissatisfaction, was rendered more acute than his brethren, and thus enabled to perceive what he acknowledges reason would never have led him to suspect, namely, that whatever causes a malady in the healthy, will cure it in the diseased. This unaccountable delay is of course only a presumptive argument against the system, for it does not follow because we cannot discern its consistency that it is therefore wrong. There may be a new era in medicine, and since the laws of nature are the laws of disease, an individual may be accidentally lucky enough, as he says, to discover a new method of controlling them, though open to the observation of all other since the creation.

We might indeed be tempted to suspect the validity of such a bold assumption, and were there not strong and plausible reasons sustaining it, and an almost irresistible array of apparent facts, it could hardly be supposed that individuals, whose minds have been trained to pro-

ceed in the safe path of inductive philosophy, could have been persuaded to adopt and advocate such a system. They have been accustomed to familiar converse with truth. They know that, in order to effect a grand revolution in the fashions of opinion, either political or philosophical, it is necessary that some master intellect should become so thoroughly possessed by the demon of system, as to lose the common proprieties of controlling judgment in that dominant enthusiasm which compels him to impress other minds, by all means in his power, with the weight of those convictions which influence his own. They know how common it is for Monomania to over-persuade reason till some single idea, magnifying itself into immensity, throws an indelible colouring of its own over the faculty of a man, exciting his morbid ingenuity into incessant exercise, perpetually discovering or imagining coincidences with his fancy, so that at length, instead of correcting his delusion by opposing facts, all facts appear to him of the same colour, and only lend their united aid to confirm his first impression. Such persons are in love with one object, and every other but strengthens their affection for it. I do not say it is thus with Homœopaths. The gentlemen who have recently given a fond attention to the new system, have yet cast "a longing lingering look behind," and therefore seem really in no danger of being permanently fascinated; but, if they are, it must be by su-

perior attractions, which perhaps none of us could or would resist. They cannot be deceived by flimsy arguments, for they know that the common course of men of strong imaginations and weak judgments, is to assume wrong premises, and then, by the soundest of all possible logic, to persuade others out of their senses. They know that sudden conversion is apt to induce strange suspicions; but they have the courage to brave such ungenerous suspicions, and we ought to admire them for their virtue. My object is inquiry, not contest—far less to treat the worthy with contempt; for who, if he could help himself, would imitate those who from a natural necessity endeavour to make up for deficiency of reason by excess of laughter?

I beg and entreat Homœopathists to convince me if they can. I assure them their labour will not be ill-bestowed, nor ungratefully acknowledged. Let them remember, for their encouragement, that the material most difficult to penetrate, is not only susceptible of the finest polish, but longest retains whatever impression it is forced to receive. Such are the sentiments with which this inquiry concerning Homœopathy was commenced; and I hope, therefore, I may have credit for desiring to ascertain the truth.

Hahnemann has very successfully exposed the folly of several dogmatical and exclusive systems of medicine which formerly prevailed; but if I mistake not, he has also invented another, which

in no respect appears less open to the charge of dogmatism than any of those which he has endeavoured to demolish for the accommodation of his own. His theory is indeed comprehensive. The foundation seems to be deep—the superstructure is imposing. But although erected, it may be according to the strictest order of argumentative contrivance, yet the style is so boldly opposed to what we are accustomed to admire, as at first view to appear extravagant and incongruous. His language is too oracular to be scanned by common rules, and seems rather prophetic of what hope, in the ardour of her dreams, sometimes instinctively promises, than descriptive of aught that science has achieved, or reason warranted. His dogmata, however, are too grand to be disregarded, and like truth, too profound to be discerned without research. I should therefore deem myself unfit even to turn the wheel at the well, but that I hope for sufficient aid in the kindness and courtesy of those who are well able to render the assistance required.

The first thing in the new doctrines to which I object is the following: Hahnemann says that “the essence of diseases and their cure, will not bend to our fancies and conveniences; diseases will not, out of deference to our stupidity, cease to be dynamic aberrations, which our spiritual existence undergoes in its mode of feeling and acting—that is to say, immaterial changes in the state of health.” This paragraph may be properly

considered as containing the foundation of Hahnemann's doctrines. There is, however, a metaphysical obscurity about the language employed, which renders it almost unintelligible. This obscurity is perhaps the necessary consequence of attempting to express abstract conceptions of what in the nature of things can never be explained. The terms by which we endeavour to describe an undefinable object must be indefinite, and capable of interpretations as various as the degrees of knowledge possessed by the interpreter. That diseases are dynamic aberrations of a spiritual existence in the modes of its acting and feeling, is a sentence quite as easily understood as that which is intended to explain it, namely, that diseases are immaterial changes in the state of health. It is, however, of importance to fair discussion, that the terms should be perfectly understood. By the words dynamic aberration, the notion conveyed seems to be that of deviation from the natural order of action in a motive power, and dynamic aberration of a spiritual existence, must be an erroneous operation of the living spirit. To say that disease is dynamic aberration in the mode of acting, is not only tautology, but also a truism; for disorder must be aberration, and aberration must be disorder, from a motive power; and moreover to affirm that disease is an aberration of our spiritual existence in its mode of feeling, is merely to say that the feeling of disease is not the feeling of health.

So that to denominate disorders immaterial changes in the state of health is only to assert that disorderly acting and feeling is disease. But as no one denies this, and as Hahnemann evidently intended to contradict opinions commonly received, he must mean by the words something more than they seem to convey. Perhaps it is emphatically the immateriality of the change, which in his opinion constitutes disease, yet it must be evident to every one, that to describe modes of acting and feeling as immaterial, is unnecessary, since we could not understand an accident or quality to be material. We confine our idea of materiality to the substance possessing qualities and relations, and subject to conditions and accidents. Passing on to the next paragraph, we find him declaring moreover, that "the causes of disease cannot possibly be material;" from which I should infer that matter could not be subjected to disorder, nor be capable of disturbing the vital power in its operation; it however remains to be proved that the power has anything to oppose but matter. He contradicts himself in the remainder of the paragraph. He says: "The causes of disease cannot possibly be material, since the least foreign substance introduced into the blood-vessels, however mild it may appear to us, is suddenly repulsed by the vital power, as a poison; or, where this does not take place, death itself ensues. Even when the smallest foreign particle

chances to insinuate itself into any of the sensitive parts, the principle of life which is spread throughout our interior, does not rest until it has procured the expulsion of this body, by pain, fever, suppuration, or gangrene." It is marvellous that he should affirm the cause of disease to be immaterial, and, as a proof of it, proceed to show that the introduction of a foreign substance acts on the living system as a poison. Does he mean to deny that foreign matter can be admitted into the blood-vessels, and at the same time grant that its admission produces pain, fever, suppuration, and gangrene? If the resistance of the vital principle to the actual presence of a foreign substance produces such effects, what more is required to constitute a malady? He evidently means to insist on the impossibility of a foreign particle being received by the action of the system itself into the circulation. But daily experience proves that substances, even inimical to life, are really so admitted, for we find that mercury and other substances, when applied to the surface, are absorbed and diffused with and by the blood, through every part of the body, so as to be detected in the secretions, and in the instance of mercury more especially, in the perspiration by gold or silver worn about the person. Is not nitrate of silver decomposed in the course of circulation, and pretty manifestly and extensively exhibited in the blue skin of the unfortunate patient? May not many poisons be tested

in the fluids of the body after having been imbibed by the vessels, either through the stomach or the cutis? Do we not see that irritating substances present traces of their course along the line of absorbants through which they are conveyed, by the inflammation thus produced? Does not the presence or arrest of syphilitic matter in a gland beget bubo? Perhaps this fact may be denied, because we possess no chemical test of venereal poison. Yet its infectious nature is a sufficient test. And indeed, if the circulation of this virus be not admitted, then it must continue to act on the surface first subjected to its influence, although it evinces no sign of its presence. We know that chancre is often perfectly and permanently healed, although the system is still exposed to the taint. What inference can be fairer than that the virus affects other parts because it is conveyed to them? We cannot suppose it to act where it is not.

Active substances are actually injected with violence into the veins, without exciting the deleterious effects which Hahnemann, in his usual positiveness, declares would follow from such an introduction of even a little cold water.* Thus, throughout his work he dares to contradict experiment whenever it impugns the verity of his system. If indeed there be no actual ad-

* Page 15.

mission of morbid or medicinal matter, what means the elaborate preparation of medicine according to Hahnemann's system? If the particles prescribed in so inconceivably minute a quantity, are not supposed to be qualified by their very littleness to insinuate themselves, and career like queen Mab's team of atomies athwart men's brains, we must suppose them possessed of some mighty magic, of more subtle influence than the love philters of olden days, when witchery was in the height of its glory. What is this "irresistible might of weakness?" as Milton says. Does it act by contact or by sympathy? By sympathy surely; by fellow-feeling for a spiritual aberration. Of course, if medicines operate neither chemically, mechanically, nor vitally, there can be no propriety in believing their reception into the circulation, since all their spiritual power may be better exerted on our spiritual existence, through the readier medium of that imaginative faculty which converts "an airy nothing" into whatever it either dreads or desires.

"Such tricks hath strong imagination;
That, if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy;
Or, in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush supposed a bear?"*

The subject of doses may occupy us by and by.

* Midsummer Night's Dream.

The medium operandi of medicine is more evident than the modus. But this spiritual theory really seems to render it doubtful whether the body has, either actively or passively, any thing to do with disorder. How ingenious, excursive, and adventurous an intellect, is that which, like the prince of proud and disappointed spirits, "at one slight bound high overleaps all bound!" How masterly to seek for explanation beyond the sphere of science, to create a difficulty for the pure delight of beholding confusion, to assume for truth what none can demonstrate, and to substitute surmises about undiscoverable dynamics, instead of accumulating evidence and argument from facts every where presented to the patient eye of the philosopher, within the legitimate limits of research.

The machinery of life consists of mutually dependent parts; the interruption of one process necessarily disturbs the rest. To alter the condition of the blood, or to divert the nervous power, is to interfere with the main-spring and balance-wheel of the vital clock-work. We know that both the former are as much under the control of chemical agencies as the latter; and as the magnet arrests the revolving steel in the one case, so the electric flash, with more than the instant speed of thought, stops in its course the vital current of the other. Life belongs to organization — action to machinery — to disturb the machine is to alter its action, to disturb the body is to disorder life. The marvellously

delicate intricacy of corporeal anatomy and function, is exposed indeed in the war of elements, by the very nature of its constitution, to innumerable causes of injury. But to suppose that it could live, and move, and have its being among the elements of its destruction, as well as of its growth, without the power of receiving within itself any thing detrimental to its economy, is to imagine it endowed with a charmed life, which the primitive dwellers in Eden perhaps enjoyed, but of which certainly none of their unhappy sons and daughters exhibit any indications. Is the blood independent on foreign ingredients, and not affected in its composition by any thing received into the stomach? It is not so affected, answers Hahnemann.

It results from this position that the natural aliment of the system, blood, itself cannot be formed in superabundance, since disease may doubtless be thus as readily induced as by the introduction of any other substance which may oppress the dynamics of the system. Hahnemann foresaw this inevitable consequence, and met it by declaring his antipathy to all that others approved, affirming that there cannot be more than enough blood in the vessels, although they seem distended almost to bursting; and therefore he held the employment of phlebotomy and derivatives in perfect abhorrence. Some timid disciples of this philosopher are too rationally to follow him to this conclusion, and say to

themselves, "we find the dynamics are really under the control of evacuants, and cannot help it, though our master denies their value by denying that the bodily condition can require them." This is common sense, with which they should have nothing to do, since they are bound in adopting his principles and practice, fairly to come by the same process to the same conclusions at which he has arrived, for they are perfectly consistent with each other, as also with a few other strange things by and by to be noted.

If morbid causes are not actually admitted into the body, it is impossible to explain the different effects of the same substance; for if its operation depend on a specific dynamy acting directly on the whole dynamics of the system, in whatever manner applied, it would follow that the same consequence should always succeed. We know that tartarized antimony, for instance, produces the same result, whether injected into the veins, or received into the stomach, the only difference being that the former mode is more direct, and acts more speedily; but yet, in either case, some delay is necessary. The same substance, however, produces another effect when applied to the skin, but in neither case could it influence the body, except through the nervous system. A blister, if allowed to remain on, almost invariably induces the constitutional influence of cantharides, besides its more partial effect as a vesicatory. How are these simple facts to be ex-

plained on the spiritual dynamic hypothesis? If we acknowledge absorption, the difficulty vanishes. We ask the homœopath, moreover, how it happens that disease is not manifested until some time after exposure to infection, if nothing is imbibed? He will probably be obliged to answer, that contagion excites a dynamic aberration, which evinces its energy at long and uncertain intervals after the disturbing cause is withdrawn. We reply rather sceptically, because all the analogy of natural operation would induce us to expect the immediate consequence of a self-acting unimpeded cause, and the aberration at once to result from a disturbance in the moving power. Do we not find that when the disturbing influence has immediate access, the disorder is concomitant? If direct access is not obtained, but a gradual effect is experienced, can we not discover the reason in the fact that imbibition is more or less gradual according to the kind of surface, and the degree of permeation in the substance applied? The Hahnemannist must still declare it is all owing to the spiritual dynamic. The Germanic transcendental mysticism may lead its votaries to institute more subtle distinctions than every-day folks, who derive information through their outward senses, can perceive. They can erect a kind of Jacob's ladder, either in day-dreams or in night-visions, on which they may not only see angels of their own ascending and descending, but scaling its ethereal

steps by their interior dynamics, they may also be able to elevate themselves to the highest "heaven of invention," and there scrutinize into the exact relationships of spirits. We dull clodpoles are, however, obliged to judge of things as we find them, and not being qualified to reach higher, must be content to examine the things about us in the light of laws that relate to matter. By so doing we act not the Sadducee, nor deny the existence of spirits, but rather are ready to grant that their *modus operandi existendique*, is beyond the limits of our comprehension, and need not be inquired into, since they will not help us to discover their nature. If spiritual existence is a refinement of that which is material, then it must be subject to the laws of matter, and therefore cannot govern them. If matter has no law of its own, then it must be under the dominion of spiritual law, and every operation in nature indicates the action of a spiritual operator. How well such a notion comports with chemistry and life, let the history of chemistry and life declare. There is no end to argument unless we distinguish things that differ.

There is much reason to fear that some persons, whose talents enable them to occupy a lofty position in our noble profession, have perverted their intellects by Germanisms, until they believed their minds themselves to consist merely of successive phenomena; thus mistaking the consequent operation of the machinery

for the inhabiting agent by which it is employed, and for whose convenience it was constructed. There is, however, the opposite extreme of spiritualizing away the body. This wondrous and sentient structure, although so wedded and united to a more transcendent nature, is not thus to be robbed of its individual prerogative, which, for aught we know, may claim as noble an independence, in the necessities and properties of its being, as the inscrutable spirit itself, with all its mighty and marvellous attributes.

Man is a compound creature. In our corporality we are subjected to all causes capable of interfering with our organization, which being built up of materials around us, will be still obnoxious to elemental influences. The changes of which we are conscious, are indeed different modes of feeling and acting; but these imply actual changes in our bodily relation. For instance, the evident alteration taking place in what we call an inflamed organ, is a change in the state of the fluids and solids constituting that organ, which change is evinced by altered temperature, colour, consistence, and dimensions. What is inflammation but a name for this condition? Not surely an immaterial mode of feeling and acting merely, but the necessary result of some material impediment to the proper performance of structural and vital function. If Hahnemann, by the announcement of his splendid theory of spiritual pathogeny, meant to affirm

that disease itself was immaterial, it would seem that his mind's eye had been darkened by the blaze of excessive light. Who but himself could discover that pathologists ever thought disorder itself was material any more than that matter was motion, or motion matter? Every one, however, is apt to conclude that motion signifies changes of place, and change of place signifies change in the position and relation of matter to matter. The properties of matter are essential to its existence. But it must be granted that the living organization is not governed by the common affinities of matter, but results from the co-operation of vital, chemical, and mechanical laws—an harmonious and wonderful coalescence of opposites for specific purposes. Life can never be disturbed in its processes, but by the undue prevalence of chemical or mechanical force, unless a principle be imagined to exist as a direct antagonist to that of life.

In that case three kinds of disturbing cause are discerned, none of which, except perhaps the imagined antagonist, can act without matter as its vehicle. To the declaration that disease is an immaterial change in the state of health, a reply may be given by inquiring what is health? Is it the comfortable and immaterial subsistence of a spirit at ease in the body, because it cannot be disturbed by matter? or is it a bodily condition dependent on the harmony of corporeal operation, and the fitness of certain organs to perform cer-

tain functions? Is not health the perfect adaptation of organization to its uses, so that the agent employing it suffers no inconvenience or impediment in the operation of any of its functions? Is not disease a deviation from the rectitude of bodily constitution? If health depend on material causes, so must disease. To talk of immaterial changes in the state of health, is to talk of that which cannot be demonstrated, since change can only be exhibited in matter, and which indeed can scarcely be true, since, if not a contradiction in terms, it is, at least, a contradiction to what we continually witness. Have we not before us sufficient evidence of disease being connected with material alteration; not indeed always to the extent which is called structural derangement, but always so far as to be evinced by signs in the physical condition—for what else are all symptoms? The only immaterial change of which we know any thing, is change of mind, effected indeed by causes sometimes palpable enough to be easily detected. But it will again be argued that material change itself is dynamic change. Of course it is. Of course whatever change takes place must result from a change in the mode of action—a change in the *modus operandi* of the motive power. But where resides the motive power, except in matter, as a property, faculty, or virtue, of that matter? And what determines its mode of action but the relation in which it happens to stand with other matter? If medicine be

exhibited, is it the medicine *per se* which acts, or is it the spiritual virtue contained in it? If the virtue be removed where is the medicine, and if the medicine be removed where is the virtue? How shall we divest physical existence of its several attributes? How separate the property from the substance? How dissever what Omnipotence has joined together? If a medicine has the power of producing a certain influence on the human economy, is it not by a property it possesses as a material thing? Or is it because of its spiritual virtue, according to Hahnemann? Is this spiritual virtue of such a transitory nature as to be modified at will by chemical agencies? As a spirit it should be subject to the laws of its own kingdom, and not so readily yield to those of another. Truly this spiritual virtue is wonderfully infirm, to be so easily subjected to the operation of physical laws, for we find the most virulent poisons disarmed by a little chemical manipulation, and the most deadly miasmata, despoiled of their mighty malignity by an antagonist, like the gods of Homer, in a flimsy panoply of vapour.

Another objection to this definition of disease is, that if Hahnemann carried out his notions to their legitimate and logical issue, he must deny, with Bishop Berkeley, that there is any such thing as material existence; and all the accidents of what he calls his body, must be regarded as manifestations of spiritual dynamics. Perhaps Hahnemann has also proved, by unanswerable

arguments, what no man in his senses can believe.

But to imitate his style, I would say, that in spite of all his ingenious parade concerning the dynamic aberrations of our spiritual existence, plain reason asserts and proves that our being is compound, and may be disordered either by material or moral causes, because its nature is both corporeal and spiritual. Every morbid impression, in order to be rendered permanent, must produce a bodily change or alteration in the structure, which acts only on being acted upon, and that in obedience to the laws of living matter. For properly speaking, the cause of disease cannot be in that which perceives it, nor disordered action in the motive power; but the disease is felt as an indication of disorder existing in the body, and in that which is acted upon. The aberration itself results in that which is acted upon from a motive power being disturbed in its action, by other forces interfering in the material acted on. A power cannot act without a subject of action; neither can there be disordered action in a power itself; there must be a conflict of powers, and this conflict can only exist when two or more powers exert themselves upon the same structure, and in that structure alone the disorder exists and is evinced. It is a disorder of structure, a confusion of material action, an interference with organic harmony and function. It is true that the action of a virus on the

vital system is neither a chemical nor a medicinal action ; yet as its power is destroyed by chemical agency, it is fair to infer that its operation must depend on its combination with the material of the body. It may possess a deadly power, a perfect antagonist to life, but that power, however intense, is still a property of matter peculiarly modified : we always find it associated with matter, and its operation is modified according to its condition and quantity as matter. And as with all other matter, to alter its condition is to alter its power. It may not be a mechanical or a chemical property ; it acts against the life of matter in some other manner. Indeed, chemical agents themselves do not act on living substances according to chemical laws alone, but under another law, namely, that of life, yet it is material action, and the change produced by it is material change.

Perceiving that there are many causes of disease which cannot be reconciled with the notion of spiritual pathogeny, Hahnemann is obliged to invent a term with the hope thereby of surmounting the difficulty his own ingenuity has created. Every detectable cause he calls a *causa occasionalis*. Indiscoverable causes he attributes to strange unimaginable miasms.*

* On these, however, he charitably bestows family names, such as syphilis, sycosis, and psora. The itch, however, appears to be esteemed by him as the original sin of the

But who shall explain how a *causa occasionalis* can be consistently admitted by one who denies that the causes of disease are material, for such a denial absolutely implies that man must be invulnerable, and uninfluenced by the elements which surround him, or that the elements themselves are to constitute a universe of immaterial dynamics. But seeing that a *causa occasionalis* is unavoidably permitted by this system, although the truths of physiology seem altogether disregarded, may we not inquire whether all cause that interferes with functions must not be of the nature of *causa occasionalis*? what is it but an interference with functions?

If manifest accident and disorder be produced by the contact of a foreign body, and it is granted to be so merely because we see it, why may not those causes of interruption which are not so palpable and evident be also considered in the same light, as acting in the same manner? Is it so ridiculous as Hahnemann has endeavoured to

human constitution. It "brings death into the world with all our woe," in the form of "nervous debility, hysteria, hypochondriasis, insanity, melancholy, idiocy, madness, epilepsy, and spasms of all kinds, softening of the bones, scoliosis, and cyphosis, caries, cancer, fungus hematodes, gout, hemorrhoids, yellow jaundice, and cyanosis, dropsy, amenorrhœa, gastrorrhagia, epistaxis, hœmoptysis, hæmaturia, metrorrhagia, asthma, and suppuration of the lungs, impotency and barrenness, megrim, deafness, cataract, and amaurosis, gravel, paralysis, loss of sense, pains of every kind, &c."

make it appear, to cry *tolle causam*? Disease is dependent on the circumstances in which the body lives, whether it arise from chronic miasms, propagated with the body, according to Hahnemann, or result from the physical and vital disturbance of function, induced by foreign agency. Is not ague produced by a *causa occasionalis*, is not syphilis, are not all the maladies that flesh is heir to? If there be exceptions so numerous as homœopaths declare, if most disease be of pure dynamic origin, as they term it, they are bound to point out what and where they are. Surely all contagious affections arise from a *causa occasionalis*. Every exciting cause is a *causa occasionalis*. Whence then the sneer against the reasonable cry of *tolle causam*? Why but to suppose a cause that can be removed is to suppose a material cause, acting by contacts and affinities.

He refers to the instances of infection being conveyed even by letter, from one friend to another, to a great distance, and triumphantly asks, "How can we entertain the opinion that any thing material entered in these cases?" "The least breath of air emanating from a patient labouring under small-pox is sufficient to produce that formidable disease in a healthy child." What is conveyed or communicated but a material? It is folly to say that we cannot show the necessary quantity by weight and measure. We can show that some quantity and concentra-

tion are requisite to produce the effect, since, by dilution and diffusion, and by new material combinations, the morbid poisons are easily deprived of their power. The matter of small-pox, we know, is rendered incapable of its specific effect after being submitted to the action of chlorine, or on being blended with a certain quantity of pure water. Matter per se, it is true, has only a *vis inertiae*, therefore, when alone, it cannot act; but the beauty of its constitution is exhibited in the fact, that although it exerts no influence when alone, yet all material elements influence each other. The dynamics of matter are evinced only by affinities. To imagine that any substance possesses specific power is contrary to natural analogy. Power is not specific, but relative. The *modus operandi* of any substance must depend on its relation to some other with which it acts. It cannot operate but in connexion, and the mutual operation will be diversified according to the nature of the agents, and of the condition in which they stand with regard to each other. This observation is illustrated by all chemistry. That it holds equally good in vital operation, we find by the various and even opposite effects of the same agent upon the same system, under different circumstances, so that we cannot predicate what will result from the exhibition of any medicine, unless we are previously acquainted with the patient's condition. The *Fragmenta de Viribus* of Hahnemann display

the same truth, by different symptoms being produced, by similar agents in different individuals, and in the same individual under different states of the nervous system. This fact must be granted by homœopaths, or otherwise their attempts to explain ill success by supposing foreign interference with the action of their medicated molecules must be altogether futile.

Now if disease be the disturbance of a functional power, it must be either from a diminution or increase in the action of that power; since a power cannot be altered as a power, but as it may be less or more; for to suppose it changed in itself is to suppose another kind of power. Diminution or increase of action depends upon the mutual influence of agents. To impede is to lessen, to excite is to increase; but to impede or to excite implies the presence of another power, or rather a change in relation or the mode of action, for action is the result of mutual affinities. There is no such thing as power in a monad or solitary element.

All nature is a system of relations. To search for specific powers, unless we mean thereby ostensible property merely, is to seek for gems at the base of a rainbow. The power of any thing is simply its condition, and we cannot know exactly what any thing will accomplish in the vital system, until we can discover what it may meet with, for the operation results from its connexions.

In chemical manipulations we can demonstrate a fact by experiment, because we secure the reagents, and are sure we always employ the same substances in the same relation to each other; and if we could always determine the exact condition of a disordered function, we might hope to attain the same certainty in directing medicinal agents. But as experience never has been, and never can be sufficiently discriminative for this purpose, because it never can be sufficiently extensive, since the accidents are too numerous, and involved for scrutiny, therefore medicine never can be any other than a conjectural art, in which he who has been observant for himself, and is best acquainted with the experience of others, and has guessed most frequently, has the best chance of guessing correctly. That alone can be depended on which is invariable, and doubtless the same causes always produce the same effects; but who can say that those medicines, which are most certain in their palpable effects, are always to be relied on to produce the same effects? If those, therefore, which most commonly tell, are not certain, how can we depend on such as being exhibited to the healthy produce no sensible operation? Are we more likely to be deceived in our attempts to purge by an every day dose of jalap, than by a Homœopathic globule containing the decillionth of a drop of express juice of poppy?

Even at the hazard of wearying patience and

wasting time with jargonish disquisition, it is desirable to arrive at a clear understanding of Hahnemann's grand dogma, *similia similibus curentur*, since it constitutes the basis of Homœopathic practice, and is the keystone of the arch on which Hahnemann has erected his system above the tide of all previous opinions.

Matter must act according to a law imposed by the Creator, by which the elements reciprocally influence each other; so that if disorder occur in a physical or vital function, it must be from the intervention of power, foreign from that function, and not subject to the same laws; that is, it must be governed by laws of its own, which oppose those existing and acting in the organization which its presence [disturbs. Now every kind of matter must have properties peculiar to itself, and if every kind must have different properties, every kind must act differently. Two kinds of medicine, for instance, cannot produce the same effects in the same structure; neither can a medicine and a miasm produce the same effect, unless their properties are the same, in which case they are the same thing, which is absurd. Now if disease be induced by the operation of a miasm, as according to Hahnemann, and by the action or dynamic influence of a medicine, however minute, that disease be cured, it follows that unless the medicine and the miasm were in all respects the same thing, the cure was effected by an opposing power, for it was shown that they

could not produce the same effects, therefore their actions must be different, and if different capable of disturbing and counteracting each other. And as two actions which differ cannot co-operate, they must, in some respect or other, be opposed; and that opposition cannot cease until the weaker yield to the impulse of the stronger, or being equal they balance each other. Therefore there can be no such thing as *similia similibus curentur*, since no two actions can be similar unless under the same conditions; and they cannot be under the same conditions unless in the same organization; and as two actions cannot operate in the same place at the same time their residence together is impossible. So that in exhibiting medicine which produces in the healthy symptoms similar to those against which it is prescribed; we, in fact, operate allopathically by exciting a new action, which must differ so much from that previously established, as in effect to oppose its continuance.

This, so far from being a new doctrine, is the generally acknowledged rationale of therapeutic agency, namely, counteraction. Whatever new disturbance may result in the system from the first impression of a remedy, cannot be the direct aggravation of a morbid action. It may, however, incidentally and apparently exaggerate a symptom in as far as it influences the whole nervous system. In the case of incipient inflammation, where an excitant or diffusible stimulus

is administered, the increased arterial action will be felt in the disturbed structure, merely in consequence of the tendency to general excitement, before which, if it be sufficiently powerful and continued, the local disorder will gradually subside, but of course at the expense of so much wasted energy in the increased demand on function not otherwise diseased.

Having thus shown the palpable impropriety of supposing, with Hahnemann, that maladies are cured by slightly increasing them; and that dynamic aberration cannot be overcome by any power which aggravates the erratic impulse; it remains to be explained how a morbid affection may be rectified by the interference of agents that possess the property of inducing vital disturbance, similar, in some particulars, to that against which they are prescribed. Disease is disturbed function. Every modification of tissue and energy is adapted to a specific purpose, and that purpose is function. Whatever interrupts that purpose produces disorder, violent in proportion to the power of the interference. This interference disturbs, either by exciting increased action of function, or by diminishing its natural power. In either case there is disease. A secreting gland, the parotid, for instance, consists of organization so delicately adjusted for specific purpose, that under certain conditions of healthy excitement a pellucid and limpid fluid is secreted by and through it from the blood. Now it is

manifest that disorder of this function or office can arise only from one of five causes. An imperfection in the organization, deficiency or redundancy of blood, and deficiency or redundancy of nervous excitement. Disturbance, either of the apparatus, or of the material submitted to it, equally constitutes disordered function. Whatever disturbs the operation of the apparatus must be in it, or acting on the spring of its power : if, therefore, a medicine be required to act on a diseased organ, it would be reasonable to choose one known to act on that organ when healthy ; for if then influenced it could only have been by direct operation on the structure, or on its nervous or sanguineous supply. If the disease were spontaneous salivation, mercury might rationally be employed, since it produces salivation in those otherwise healthy. But should we always employ mercury to cure salivation ? No. Salivation may arise from several causes, which might be much more conveniently removed by other means, as daily experience testifies. Would even Homœopaths feel justified in treating mercurial salivation with mercury ? No. That would be aggravating morbid action by the very cause of that action. If, however, it depended on another cause, doubtless it might frequently be cured by mercury, since it naturally exerts an action directly or indirectly on the function disordered. As mercury makes a new demand upon that part of the nervous system which influences the salivary

gland, that gland, in case of its disease, must become subject to a different action, if mercury be exhibited in sufficient quantity to produce its usual effects on that organ.

Thus mercury may cure spontaneous salivation, and iodine that produced by mercury. But would it be wise always to employ a remedy, that possessed the power of simulating the disease? Surely not; for have not anatomy and physiology revealed to us that morbid conditions depend on different kinds of interference with normal function? If we can detect the cause and remove it, why should we attempt at haphazard to arrest one disturbance by introducing another, that may just slightly aggravate it, with the hope that they will gradually subside together when the latter is withdrawn. This is like adding more fuel to the fire, and blowing it that it may burn out the more quickly. To withdraw the supply, or to regulate its consumption, as the occasion may demand, certainly appears a more rational procedure.

That a new agent must produce a new action, and not a continuation of the same, is manifest from the fact that the action or exercise of dynamic power is only attributable to the inherent faculty of the body itself. The agent induces action, that is, calls into operation the natural power which influences a function. If, therefore, an action be spontaneously proceeding, that spontaneous action cannot be increased but by increasing the disturb-

ing power in the nerve, that is, by causing the power to exert itself more. We cannot create power, we can only use that which exists in the body, so that by exhibiting a medicine capable of producing unnatural excitement, we divert or call into new operation the power which may at the time be acting. So that if we adopt as true a part of the ostensible system of Hahnemann, we must believe that part to be merely allopathy in disguise; and if we can prove that so much of this system as is in accordance with physiological truth is allopathy, may we not conclude that whatever is true belonging to it must also be explicable on the same principles?

Another result of Hahnemann's spiritual reasoning, is an attempt to spiritualize medicaments by minute sub-division, by trituration, and agitation. Contrary to all the analogy of natural dynamics, as far as we are acquainted with them, he asserts, that to diminish quantity is to magnify power, provided, however, that it be effected in a peculiar manner. He did not at first represent his diluted medicines as capable of producing appreciable effects on the healthy. In fact, he recommended to others, and tried on his own person, the effects of medicines in ordinary doses, for the purpose of determining their power of producing certain symptoms of disease. Minute doses were advised by him on the principle that it was only necessary to aggravate the prominent symptoms in the least degree, and in

devising modes to effect this object in the best manner he believes himself to have discovered a power of developing the virtues of medicinal agents to an immense degree. He therefore recently judged it more proper to administer these attenuated doses even in experiments on the healthy.*

If the facts avouched by Hahnemann be really as stated, and he have not been deceived by the fond credulity so apt to accompany the ardent expectations of enthusiasm like his, then, of course, all arguments derived from analogy and bare reason must prove mere obstinate resistance to improbable truth. But however fatuous and futile our notions may be, it is absolutely impossible to prevent suspicions and surmises as to the fallacy of experiments, the accuracy of which no one is found inclined boldly to vouch for, except their inventor. If the energy of attenuated doses were nearly so evident as those in common use, there could scarcely be any cavilling about them, *factis non verbis*, they would speak too plainly to be often misunderstood. Besides the broad improbability of such powerful effects from such diminutive causes, the statements concerning them appear in a more dubious light by considering the modes of preparation by which these powers are said to be developed. If friction and agitation possessed the declared influ-

* See note p. 204, Organon.

ence over medicines, it is quite marvellous that such influence had not a thousand times been revealed by accident to those observant men who for centuries have been employing them in all forms and combinations. What shaking must every tincture undergo in transmission over the Atlantic; and yet our brethren in India and elsewhere have never discovered any exaggeration of their particular powers, but continue to employ them in the same doses and with similar success as at home. How incalculably awful must have the consequence of that notable direction to the patient or nurse,—

“ When taken to be well shaken !”

That many substances may be rendered more miscible and permeating by pulverization and by agitation in a suitable menstruum, is a fact as familiar to chemists as any in connexion with their science. Indeed, minute division and solution are perhaps essential to that approximation of particles by which they are brought within the sphere of each other's attraction, because chemical affinity exerts its influence only at unappreciable distances, or it may be only when the atoms of different elements are actually in contact that electric transposition or decomposition is effected. If, indeed, a solid could, by agitation, be expanded into a gaseous substance, of course it would obey the laws of gases, and be disposed to diffuse itself in virtue of its

inherent elasticity, and thus become extensive in its operation on the living structure, in proportion to the natural virulence of the substance so expanded, and to the permeation which the tissue and vital energy of the part on which it acted might permit. This kind of increased power can be comprehended, and is constantly witnessed, but it does not appear to be any thing like this which Hahnemann supposes, although, by way of illustrating his meaning, both he and his disciples repeatedly refer to such evidences of development; as, when they say a grain of assa-fœtida, for instance, being triturated for a certain time with a hundred grains of sugar, a detached grain of the mixture will be more sensibly perceived by the olfactories than the original grain of concrete assa-fœtida. Of course it will. But will it, when taken, become as manifest in the breath and secretions of the patient as the grain of gum taken alone, when dissolved in the intestinal juices, and diffused by vital chemistry through all the body? Of course it will not. Where, then, the advantage of such elaborate manipulations to develope its fœtor before it is administered, seeing the hundred and one grains of sugar and devil's dung will produce no more effect than the dung alone. So five grains of tobacco, when distributing its perfume in smoke, scents a whole house; but the whole fume, could it be successively administered, would produce no more effect on the stomach than a perfect

tincture of the same quantity. If exhibited in greater bulk it would present a larger surface, and its effect might be more rapid, because its absorption might be expedited, or a larger nervous surface would be implicated. But this is contrary to Hahnemann's doctrine. He seems to contend that by friction the agitated atoms attain a new kind of galvanic, magnetic, or other influence which has not yet been detected in nature, as if reduction even to atomic minuteness could alter the nature of the substance. Any but mechanical or chemical change must be a change of the elements themselves, and tantamount to a new creation. Thus to control and regulate the elements, probably the grand cabalist, Hahnemann himself, would consider hopeless pretension. The philosopher's stone, however, is but a type of the power which he possesses of turning all his lead into gold. But homœopaths appeal to facts, and so does every body.

“As they will prove it by their practice,
 No argument like matter of fact is,
 And we are best of all led to,
 Men's principles by what they do.”

HUDIBRAS.

The most unlucky empiric could scarcely practice on a number of patients, without producing improvement in some of them, provided his medicaments possessed activity enough to influence a single secretion; but what do we find that the

dilutions of homœopaths have affected in the extensive experiments in some continental hospitals where ample scope and room enough were afforded them. What do we find? Alas! the malaria of crowded maladies overpowering the dynamics of decillionths and quadrillionths of their mightiest medicines. None of their obstinate patients would recover; but the few in whom the *vis medicatrix naturæ* took this capital opportunity of performing cures in her own way. An hundred and thirty individuals were treated by homœopathic remedies, in the presence of numerous witnesses, at the hospital La Pitié, in Paris; Hahnemann's regimen and prescriptions were strictly adhered to, under the care of M. Andral. The experiments were of two kinds; first, to ascertain whether symptoms can be produced in healthy persons by medicines which cure similar symptoms when arising from other causes. The second kind of experiments was made to ascertain whether homœopathic remedies would in any case affect the progress of disease. In neither case was the result such as Hahnemann predicted. The remedies did not cause diseases resembling those which they cure, neither was the progress of disease in any case affected by homœopathic medicines. Surely such an experiment proves, if any thing can, that to leave diseases to homœopathic treatment is to give them free course. This may, indeed, be sometimes better than busy meddling; but

generally to do nothing is to risk a danger which might be often averted by doing the little in our power. Could homœopaths exhibit any report nearly so like demonstration as the above brief statement affords, the balance might yet turn in their favour ; but at present their scale decidedly kicks the beam, and that equally whether their opinions be weighed by reason or tried by observation.

If Hahnemann had adhered to his early method of exhibiting influential doses, his *materia medica pura* might have been esteemed of great value, as indeed they still should be, even by those who are not governed in their practice by the later notions of their very industrious and ingenious author.

The caution observed by homœopaths in directing abstinence from every thing that can disturb natural function either in the form of physic or of food, accounts for their occasional success in such cases as are referred to them, after having been thoroughly medicated in the loose manner so common to slap-dash prescribers, who *vi et armis*, are accustomed to attack à la Cobbett, every power of the body, whether friendly or opposed, and calculate their success according to the disturbance excited. To succour a sufferer from such maltreatment, and nurse and feed him not homœopathically, is a mercy, for the exercise of which it is hoped that many a dispensary patient will yet feel duly grateful to

mann, whose practice, at least, teaches that gentle and kindly forbearance will effect much more for the removal of many maladies, than force, such as multitudes are now subjected to, in the form of drastic pills, powders, and potions.

The opposite extreme is the evil of doing too little from the fear of doing too much. When acute disease intimidates the doctor, death shakes his dart over the patient, nor long delays to strike. Force must be met by force. To aggravate the symptoms of violent inflammation, or to add to apoplexy, is to poison the shaft of the enemy, as homœopaths will find severely to the cost of their consciences, if they venture on their *similia similibus* principles to treat such cases. To this happily they seem not to be often tempted.

The facts of homœopathy ought, perhaps, to have preceded the investigation of its principles. The latter, however, take precedence of the former in Hahnemann's organon, as, indeed, might naturally be expected, since he could scarcely follow any other order than that existing in his mind, which having accidentally adopted the conclusion *similia similibus curentur*, from a solitary coincidence, set itself at once to convert all other convenient accidents into confirmation of the truth of his first assumption. Thus with a ready and learned faculty of association, he examined and enumerated a multitude of cases, which with apparently more ingenuity than ingenuousness, he made to speak a language the very reverse of

what the writers from whom he quotes intended to convey. Because cholera happened to be cured when hellebore was exhibited; therefore hellebore cures cholera homœopathically. Sudorifics were given in the decline of sweating sickness, therefore sudorifics will always cure it, and so on Hahnemann proceeds through scores of learned pages, crowded with similar proofs of homœopathic power. If theories are to be constructed after this fashion, Morison has the advantage, since scarcely a malady is cured except *post catharticum*. He absolutely represents every cure that had ever been accidentally effected by all practitioners before him as completely illustrative of his doctrine. So that those facts of which he makes the most use, are already disputed, having been promulgated in defence of one doctrine, and adopted in defence of another. Doubtless they are as serviceable to the one as to the other. Let the doctors decide the preponderance by putting what each can in either scale, and if their facts, as usual, are still of equal weight, let every one turn the balance as he chooses by pressing down the nearest scale with his finger, or by adding the weight of authoritative words, also as usual. The great mass of medical facts, like clouds, are blown about by every wind. They assume no permanent shape. They hang about the enduring hills of science, "the glimmering landscape fades upon the sight," and in the dim horizon the flitting and the

everlasting are confounded together. This uncertainty arises from looking widely about instead of fixing a rational and scrutinizing attention upon objects immediately before us. No one's facts will do for another, nor, indeed, answer any useful and reasonable end to himself, unless, instead of flinging them loosely into heaps, he skilfully adjusts them in their proper relation to each. Then and not till then should they be admitted as fit to form any part of the temple of science. Science herself is consistent, and her sanctuary must not be incongruous. The rubbish left by her earlier architects, the nuisances and handbills of vulgar visitors, rabble, and quacks, have rendered the fair fane almost inaccessible. Her altars are thrown down, and the inscriptions of truth on her marble pillars are traditionally repeated or travestied, since they remain illegible even to the antiquarian few who desire better knowledge of her mysteries. That so beautiful a structure should have been left unfinished is a proof of barbarous incursion; that its beauty should be thus neglected is a proof that barbarous hordes are yet in possession of a treasure which they neither know how to improve nor to value. "*Mutat terra vices.*" All that is exact is now generally despised. Rude picture painting, which characterises rather the art of the savage than the delicate perception and execution of polished genius, is now in vogue. What is commonly represented as fact is as like natural

occurrence as the outrageous colouring and hideous portraiture of a Chinese dragon is to the human face and form divine.

Almost every one draws and colours to his fancy, and thus the catalogue of so-called facts has been monstrously enlarged by many unnatural appendages. A disposition exists in many minds to be continually scrawling and scratching rough sketches of something or other; and because these delineated phantoms of their own creation present to the morbid and over-excited eye of their untutored imagination some faint resemblance to acknowledged truths, they forthwith classify them together, or huddle up the incongruities in so confused a manner, that without nice discrimination they pass like current and counterfeit coin, as of equal value. How difficult, how impossible, for those who are possessed of a theorizing spirit to avoid extorting false evidence from nature's plainest truths, in support of whatever wayward hypothesis may chance to be dominant in their minds at the period of their inquiry!

We seem to see whatever we look for. And no wonder if the most fertile imagination should be most easily convinced, when that which we seek to know is equally out of sight to us all. Thus one traces all diseases up to that grand centre of sympathies and affections, the stomach. Another, perhaps some retired East Indian, discovers the hidden source of all malady in a disordered

liver. Another finds every thing wrong in the brain. Another, with Stethoscopic skill, hears enough, as he assures his patients, in their hearts. This doctor would reduce nosology to the order neuroses, that terminates all in itis. One detects nothing but gout; another, nothing but poison, in the water. One observes that all pre-disposition and epidemy have a volcanic origin, or perhaps a meteoric. Another represents the body as an electro-magnetic machine, regulated or disordered by its own power of producing perpetual motion. Some make disease a matter of humour, with others it always bears the aspect of a solid affair. This fraternity consists of materialists, that of spiritualists. These are all suspicious of contagion, those of spontaneous combustion, or at least incandescence. Here we have the awkward accidents of restorative energies, there we have the interference of unfriendly agencies. But some more rational and liberal, like Hahnemann, attribute the devious streams to different sources, namely, acute and chronic miasms. The first class is too numerous to mention; the second consists of syphilis, psora, and sycosis. "Every opinative fellow must maintain his own paradox, be it what it will; *Delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi*; they dote, and in the mean time the poor patients pay for their new experiments; the Commonalty rue it." (Burton's Anat. Melan. p. 346, 1628.)

A few, *rari nantes in gurgite vasto*, believing

that causes are as numerous as consequences, therefore conclude that diseases differ as widely in their sources as in their symptoms.

Now all these clashing and contending doctors have confirmed their own opinions, and endeavoured to convince others by an appeal to incontrovertible facts, which happened, in the most accommodating manner possible, to present themselves exactly when they were wanted, for the purpose of confounding all gainsayers. What can afford a prettier illustration of the beautiful heathenish fancy that Apollo presides over both poetry and physic; because doubtless they both employ facts with the same felicitous faculty. What wonder that German, and even French facts, are apt to be spoiled by the loss of their native brilliancy, when even among those of our home manufacture so few are found untarnished from the bad quality of the material with which they are lackered or plated. We would however, refrain from meddling with foreign productions, because their producers are not here to answer for the grotesque appearance of their progeny. Those of British Homœopaths will more honourably and conveniently subserve the present purpose, since, if we misuse them, their respectable sponsors can answer for them, and at once correct us and forgive the injury.

But, like angel visits, few indeed and far between, are their facts; and fewer still are those which assume a sufficiently tangible shape for dis-

section or demonstration. "Like airy nothings," left by their cruel parents, "without local habitation or a name," some of these foundlings are in such a state that none but the most benevolent are likely to adopt them, or rather the trouble of tracing them to their source, since it is evident they must so soon perish from the maladies so manifestly entailed upon them by their illicit progenitors. Some are honestly begotten and well protected. No one could desire to behold more fatherly and excellent gentlemen than two who have recently published their experience of Homœopathy.* Whatever proceeds from them must be as worthy of our regard as they themselves are of our perfect respect. It is their honour to be reviled by those who understand neither honour nor honesty. From the profession they deserve more of admiration than of ridicule, and if they have dared to encounter the latter from many who owed them thanks, the former will not be withheld by the few who feel the worth of candour and of truth. To what these gentlemen have stated concerning the operation of Hahnemannic medicines, observation will now therefore be restricted. It is fair to premise, that they disavow the character of pure Homœopaths.

An analysis of those cases published by Dr. U.

* Homœopathy and Allopathy, by Dr. U., and a paper published in the *Lancet* by Mr. K.

will repay attention, and that attention is demanded by the doctor's standing as a gentleman of tasteful talent and professional authorship and experience. Let it be observed that "the instances of trial of small doses," &c., to which he alludes, "are a very few among a very many that were made during two or three weeks" immediately before their publication.*

No. 1. A case of over-dosed dyspepsia cured by the "right nail being hit," as the patient expressed herself. Hahnemann, Quin, and homœopathy were expounded to her, followed by faith and abstinence, at least from all injurious medicaments, by which "her poor sensitive mind and body" had been previously so reduced, "that the task of renovating seemed almost hopeless."

2. A bronchial cough, setting time and medicine at defiance. Neither homœopathically treated nor cured.

3. "A sort of nervous fever," relieved by leeches and moderate doses of aconite, probably rather aided by long required quietness.

4. Suspected phthisical disorganization. Cough seemed reached only by small doses of aconite and belladonna.

5. Suicidal insanity sensibly amended, and promising recovery after two homœopathic doses of gold (given at the interval of a week); what

* Homœopathy and Allopathy, by D. U., M.D.

else is not stated, except that she might have recovered without any thing.

6. Acute rheumatism. The patient preferred the disease to the kind of relief afforded by homœopathy. He was cured at length by leeches and aperients.

7. A case in the country of "nervous complainings," for which the 48th of a grain of belladonna was prescribed. So much the better for the change that her medical attendant declared that "*if the post hoc be propter hoc* there is certainly *something* in homœopathy."

8. Infantile convulsions. Every indication of approaching death. "An atomic dose of aurum foliatum was put into the mouth." "Next day, found the little fellow amusing himself with his brothers and sisters, and the parents in astonishment," at the miracle.

9. "Change of life," and an oculist's word that two gallons of water were in the abdomen. After the 48th of a grain of hydrarg. oxymur., with a 12th of aconite, the patient said she was never so thoroughly benefited before; the "change was so speedy."*

10. A son of the former improved by the 24th

* Perhaps not so speedy as that of an old lady afflicted with ovarian dropsy, of whom Abernethy relates, that on being frightened by the cry of mad-bull, the deluge was assuaged in the natural way while she stood in a recess on Blackfriars-bridge.

of a grain of hydrarg c cretâ, "speedily, manifestly, radically."

11. Disease—the death of a sister from consumption. The word "Homœopathy" legibly prescribed with exceedingly minute medicines, and on the third visit her pallidness was exchanged for bloom.

12. "Pains in stomach, head, and shoulders ;" "in short, a digestive organ affair." Exceedingly minute doses of sublimate and aconite, or perhaps belladonna. Only supposed consequences alluded to, redness and pain in a recent cicatrix.

13. "Cerebral irritation running high, and system powers low." The gentleman whom the doctor met (in consultation) kindly allowed an aurum to be put into his hands. The child recovered—by what means, as the doctor says, remains—never to be proved.

14. Professional prejudice, in which, on high and disinterested authority (Dr. U.'s), the patient declared himself coming round.

15. A lucky escape from the grasp of apoplexy, by the aid of an atom of aconite and eight leeches to the temples.

16. Cynanche, so decidedly improved after aconite, that the surgeon expressed his delight in a most candid and ingenuous manner.

17. Hemorrhoids and suspected stricture relieved, after 24 hours' torment, and an atomic dose of sulphur, to a degree far beyond either the patient's or the doctor's hopes.

18. Sickness and irregular heart actions in a medical friend, subject of course to anxiety and irritation. Astonishingly and inexplicably relieved after rest (probably), and a homœopathic dose of *nux vomica*, in spite of no faith.

Such is a substantial statement of the Dr.'s choice cases. Should it be suspected of partiality, its fulness and fairness will at once appear on comparison with the doctor's own words, of which the foregoing is a faithful condensation, both of sense and essence. How much medicine had been previously misused, in no case, except the first, is stated.

Surely a gentleman of such accuracy and research as Dr. U., could not be converted to so unpromising a faith as Hahnemann's, by intelligence so vague and vagrant as that with which he has favoured the public. He cannot expect but that those who are accustomed to observe facts and weigh evidence, will be very indisposed to believe on less consistent testimony than would serve for his own conviction. The worthy doctor probably need not be reminded of that royal law of every good man's creed, "do unto others as you would that they should do unto you." His benevolence may well be appealed to for fuller and more practical details of his homœopathic and small dose experience, in the "more systematic treatise" which he has kindly pledged himself to bestow on his professional brethren, as "the result

of further observation and more enlarged inquiry," both of which are certainly much wanted.

The cases * related by another gentleman, appear rather more to the purpose, but all, as he allows, that can be fairly inferred from them is, that the recoveries cannot be accounted for, and perhaps are to be deemed but a few additions to the many examples of sudden and inexplicable amelioration, by which practitioners of all sorts are so often surprised, and their reputation extended.

These gentlemen, however, are honest, upright, and straightforward witnesses, whose testimony merits and demands more consideration than it can receive on the present occasion. The best attention of the writer shall soon be devoted to their facts, the result of which will be addressed to them individually; in the meantime, what has already been stated certainly warrants the conclusion that homœopaths are either more deceived or more uniformly successful than other practitioners. Whichever it be, the subject equally requires the scrutiny of those who, blessed with opportunity and talent, can test the practice, and sift the evidence of either party. To whom shall we look for decision but to those dictators of our royal colleges, whose authority we quote, and by whose merciful permission we practise? To you

* Lancet, November 12, 1836.

especially, Sir Henry, as president, of at least all metropolitan physicians, *socii, candidati, permissi*, &c., must lift their hopes for conduct out of this labyrinth of legitimate and illegitimate opinions. Both licensed and unlicensed heterodoxies are at present so completely under your, perchance, unwilling patronage, that, since neither conscience nor understanding afford a light sufficiently clear to those who cannot think for themselves, they very naturally remain like weather-cocks in a huffing wind, quite unsettled themselves, and useless to the public.

Probably sufficient has been written to answer the purpose avowed at the commencement of these pages.

The inconsistency of Hahnemann's system, with the opinions and experiments of all previous pathologists, has been stated.* His proposition that a malady is an unhealthy change in the vital principle, independent on chemical or mechanical interference, has been shown to be gratuitous. His explanation that homœopathic application cures a malady by converting it into an artificial

* Hahnemann declares that disease is neither cured spontaneously nor by any means that are not homœopathic; but maladies are cured every day without the employment of his method, and therefore his assumption is false. Two contradictory propositions cannot both be true, and as we can prove the truth of the one, we need not trouble ourselves to unravel the intricate sophistry by which the other is made to appear plausible.

disease, slightly exceeding that which arises from supposed invisible miasm, and which medicinal disease is easily dissipated by the natural functions, is also shown to be an explanation completely unsustained by facts.

Evidence has been advanced to prove that Hahnemannian medicines neither cure diseases nor produce in the healthy symptoms similar to those against which they are prescribed. The best facts which the friends of homœopathy in this country have been able to muster are also found inconclusive. Therefore, it cannot, from this examination, be inferred, that remedies are efficacious in proportion to their homœopathic selection, and their near approach to the finite bounds of dilution. A fuller investigation might nevertheless completely reverse this conclusion. Enough, however, has been advanced to exhibit the insidious character of the new system; and to show that the boldness and fairness of its pretensions demand the exercise of judicious authority for its suppression, if proved false, or for its encouragement, if proved true. If, like those awful fanatics, the Thugs of India, the devotees of this mysterious system feel the sanction of their practice in its success, it is well, unless indeed their success, like that of Thuggee, be proportioned to the number of victims secretly sacrificed to the goddess Kalee. Then, although rapacity and murder seem sanctified to them by the most religious persuasion of propriety, they may not be

left to the freedom of their perverted consciences, nor treated quite like those who feel themselves accountable. But this is impertinent, and not applicable to Homœopaths, who doubtless believe themselves endowed, not with "a prince's privilege to slay," but with that noble power by the use of which they approximate to heaven—"Nulla re, ad deos homines propius accedunt, quam salutem hominibus dando."

What pity that such philanthropists should hurry from the rocks of Scylla only to be engulfed in the greedy vortex of Charybdis.

"Excutitur pronusque magister
Volvitur in caput."

Those who entrust themselves to such a pilot should prepare for a similar catastrophe.

When it is considered that physiology and chemistry afforded but comparatively slight assistance to pathologists at the period that homœopathy was first broached, and that inductive philosophy had only been so far applied to medicine as to throw suspicion over all its theories, it is not surprising that a bold ingenuity should have been roused by a love of novelty and renown, to the invention of a scheme which, although inconsistent in itself, and at variance with every science, was yet sufficiently removed from vulgar empiricism, and paradoxical enough to engage the ardent attachment of learned enthusiasts, who, kindled with the flattering hope of sudden in-

sights into nature's arcana, were ready to believe whatever marvellous imitation of revealment a fine imagination might suggest, or a plausible persuasion might commend. But, although Hahnemann's theory, or rather hypothesis, may be deemed a beautiful production for so dark an age as that which gave rise to it, yet surely it is wonderful that men, whose minds might be supposed somewhat illuminated by the recent lights of science, should entertain themselves with vain endeavours to pourtray and exhibit the loveliness and value of so incongruous a monstrosity. Were it not the common habit of great minds to amuse themselves with some pleasant absurdity and darling of their fancies, it might be suspected that modern homœopaths either revelled in the bliss of ignorance, or perverted truth because they preferred more profitable delusion. But neither supposition can be true. They love it and defend it because so far from level to the herd of intellects, it surpasseth all understanding, and so far from probable, that, like Tertullian, these disciples must exclaim, "It is impossible, therefore we believe."

It is a most ingenious and gentlemanly system, a royal road to science and to practice, for Homœopaths can conscientiously afford to be ignorant of anatomy, physiology, and chemistry; and indeed, as to obtain an intimate acquaintance with these sciences requires a great expenditure of time and patience, it behoves such practi-

tioners to despise them, since they serve rather as obstructions than auxiliaries to their proper and more profitable research. Their attention should be confined to a study of the "Fragmenta de viribus medicamentorum," and a quizzical curiosity after the minutest symptoms of their patients, which cannot fail to be recommendatory, interesting, and edifying; especially when noted down in regular categorical columns during the visit. Such a display of learned accuracy demonstrates plainly that the physician's mind is completely absorbed in the case, and appeals at once to the paying quality of the individual whose benefit is so scrupulously studied. The sphincter of the most constricted purse is naturally relaxed by such homœopathic persuaders, and *similia similibus curantur*, is written in characters of gold, that no arguments can divest of their current value. Far from us be the uncharitable suspicion that such effects enter into the calculations of those who adopted so liberal and noble a profession.

As Homœopathists incessantly complain of being misrepresented, perchance these pages will not tend to diminish their dissatisfaction, although it was the author's honest intention to treat their opinions with all possible candour. It unfortunately happens, however, either from the superlative speculations of certain writers, or from the general obtuseness of those whom they address, that their refinements can never be perfectly understood. Should it be my ill fortune to stand

among the latter, having done my best to comprehend their system, I have still some consolation, besides the hope that this feeble attempt will not be quite despised, since it arose from a sincere desire to investigate the subject, and to elicit further information by the free expression of those opinions which appeared correct.

In this hope, Sir Henry, permit me to remain, with profound respect,

Your obedient humble servant,

A LICENTIATE.