

Common sense, in its relations to homoeopathy and allopathy : with a layman's reasons for embracing homoeopathy: a letter to James Y. Simpson, M.D. ... on the subject of his "Speech at the Medico-Chirurgical Society" / by L.D.H., a Lay Disciple of Homoeopathy.

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COMMON SENSE,

IN ITS RELATIONS TO

HOMŒOPATHY AND ALLOPATHY:

WITH

A LAYMAN'S REASONS FOR EMBRACING HOMŒOPATHY:

A Letter to

JAMES Y. SIMPSON, Esq. M.D.

PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, AND
PROFESSOR OF MIDWIFERY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,

ON THE SUBJECT OF HIS

"SPEECH AT THE MEDICO-CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY."

By L. D. H.,

A LAY DISCIPLE OF HOMŒOPATHY.

"It has been alleged that we have no confession of faith in medicine,—no standard by which we can possibly judge, as clerical bodies do, of the amount of error and deviation of those members of the profession who, from time to time, may choose to set at nought the common principles of that profession. But we have a confession of faith, and a standard by which we can judge such men, namely, the STANDARD OF COMMON SENSE."—*Professor Simpson's "Speech,"* page 12.

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COMMON SENSE

HOMOPATHY AND ALLOPATHY

A LAYMAN'S ESSAY ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO

IN THREE PARTS

JAMES T. SIMPSON, M.D.

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COMMON SENSE, &c.,

A LETTER TO

JAMES Y. SIMPSON, ESQ., M.D.,

&c. &c.

SIR,

Your speech to the Medico-Chirurgical Society tempts me to make a few observations on Common Sense, in its relations to Homœopathy and Allopathy, which I trust you will "read, mark, and inwardly digest," for the benefit of that principle of common sense which you boast as the only confession of faith, and the standard medical creed, among your professional brethren of the present day. When I hear a man talk much of his fine sensibility, I set him down as, at heart, a callous selfling; when I see a great parade of piety, I suspect a more-than-ordinary rogue in masquerade: and the general accuracy of these deductions might lead one to conclude that a peculiar vaunt of *common sense* might possibly be a mask to cover its absence, or a cloak for a very different kind of sense;—just as the use of perfumed lozenges is a not unfrequent indication of a foul breath. But I refrain from such *à priori* reasoning. I should be sorry to prejudge you or your cause.

I have read your production with much care, as it professes to be a common sense review of the therapeutic system of homœopathy; which, in the exercise of my "common sense," I had embraced some years ago, as comparatively a far more common sense system of medicine than your allopathic orthodoxy, which you tacitly confess to have no definite *scientific* creed, nor any basis of practical agreement other than the vague one of "common sense."

Now, I cannot discover in your pamphlet any indications of a common sense judgment of the subject at all. The *principles* of homœopathy you do not once combat. You either do, or do not, know that there are principles in which all homœopathists agree, as well as, of course, many things, especially practical details, in which they differ. With what honesty would the orthodox system of medicine be judged by one who should leave out of his consideration the points of agreement among allopathists, and regard only those many particulars in which they differ "wide as the poles asunder?" I would not, for instance, give that man much credit for *common sense* certainly who should condemn your system (?) as

utterly worthless, merely on the ground that you and many others adopt, in ordinary use, a powerful sedative which others of your brethren denounce as morally wicked and physically dangerous. Yet, just as much as the adoption or rejection of chloroform has to do with ordinary medical practice, have the billionth and decillionth doses of medicine, which alone you criticise, to do with the principles of homœopathy. Now, this you either know, or you do not. If you do not, you are presumptuous in judging of homœopathy at all; and something worse than presumptuous when you take upon you to declare that you “conscientiously look upon it as a system of consummate charlatanry:” and if you do know the non-essentiality of billionth and decillionth doses to the homœopathic principle, your common sense, or common honesty, must be glaringly deficient when you omit all notice of the *essential creed* of homœopathy, and indulge in declamation and ridicule against the non-essentials of infinitesimal potencies. Homœopathsists all believe in the efficacy of the law by which they select specific remedies for the cure of disease—*Similia similibus curantur*—which you seem to have heard of, for you do once quote the formula; but they do not all agree in the *infinitesimal* exhibition of the curatives; although their universal experience has led them to the adoption of a maximum dose, which is greatly below the allopathic minimum. Perhaps you will allow that homœopathsists are so far under the influence of common sense, in being guided by experience; for surely you will admit experience to have some weight with common sense! Nay, what is your allopathy but a system of experiences? What were common sense without experience? And what is experience without common sense? These are questions pregnant with meaning, which I beg you to ponder. Common sense does not make every man who is blessed with it a doctor; therefore something else—whether with or without this—must be the standard of allopathic teaching and practice. Manifestly, common sense is not enough. I have in my acquaintance many persons of most excellent common sense, who, nevertheless, are by no means skilled in “culling simples;” and I doubt not that there are, at this moment, many students under your instruction who could obtain unimpeachable certificates for the possession of a full share of that excellent quality, if the production of such would entitle them to a diploma. A doctor is undoubtedly all the better for his common sense, but he does not go to college to learn it: it is not what he fees professors to teach him; nor is it the leading subject of his examinations. He gets his diploma without proof asked or given of its possession, and, indeed, it forms no part of his medical education. But if, in

the estimation of medical professors, "common sense" is the standard of medical science, what a fact for the public to profit by! Surely they are often called on to pay rather exorbitantly for the exercise of this common faculty by the members of the "Faculty!" Let us take a common sense view of this admission. Why make such an outcry against quackery of all kinds, and why so cry up the peculiar faculties of the "Faculty" for the treatment of disease? What need of *the* "faculty" at all, unless you can show that they are peculiarly endowed with this common faculty? And, above all, what need of such a vocabulary of verbiage to perplex common sense; and what need of such a mystery to blind common sense; and what need of such an abandonment of common sense on the part of the patient to the mere common sense of the doctor?

Let common sense reflect on these things, and the common sense conclusion will be—To give up my treatment to the mercies of a man who is directly interested in my prolonged illness, is against common sense; to follow the dicta of a doctor, and do this and avoid that, swallow this and suffer that, without knowing the why and the wherefore, is against common sense; to pay the price of a coat, or a week's lodging, or a quarter's class-fee for the exercise of a doctor's common sense for five minutes—especially when his "common sense" is unintelligible to my own common sense—is monstrously against common sense. Every man has generally sense enough to study his own interests first; and doctors, doubtless, are not deficient in this department of common sense, either in kind or degree! In the name of common sense, then—a patient may well exclaim—why should I have anything to do with a man who sells me what he calls common sense, in such a disguise that I don't know it when I get it, and at a higher price than any other professional man expects for his time and his talents and his labour? The truth is, that, if there is any sense at all in allopathy, it is a very *uncommon* sense. But it would, of course, be against common sense to expect either Dr Syme or Simpson, or any other son or brother of the medical corporations, to grant anything that common sense shows would be against their professional interests; as it would also be against common sense to accept their testimony—especially obtruded, as it is—in a case where it would be against common sense to expect a disinterested evidence as to the nature of their stock of common sense! "No cadger cries 'stinking fish!'" But, when you appeal to common sense to judge of the "foolishness," "absurdity," "gross deception," "consummate charlatanism," &c., of homœopathy, you invite common sense to judge between the two systems, and try your own allopathic craft by the same stand-

ard. Well, I have had some experience of both—and I believe I am generally supposed to possess a common quantum of common sense; and I beg to submit the course of my homœopathic conversion for your consideration, as parallel, doubtless, to that of many others of the thousands who are daily embracing this “heresy,” and rendering a sense of its comparative rationality more and more common. This sketch I had drawn out some months ago, and you will see that, as it adverts to every point in your accusations against homœopathy, your “speech” has added nothing to the argument as it then stood,—but the extraordinary assertion that “common sense” is the basis of allopathy. I may add that my reason for not completing and publishing this sketch at the time it was commenced was, that serious disease invaded my family circle, the result of which I was anxious to ascertain, to fortify my convictions, and to strengthen the homœopathic cause by additional experimental evidence, should I, happily, have grounds for so doing. The gentle “exiguities” of homœopathy have been blessed to the perfect restoration of four of those nearest and dearest to me from the prostration of that malignant distemper, scarlet fever, which has recently desolated, and which is still desolating, so many hearths around us, robbing our little ones of their playmates, and familiarizing their young minds with Death. I commend to you and the public the following as

A LAYMAN'S REASONS FOR EMBRACING HOMŒOPATHY.

“I have had a little experience of doctors—being a family man; and I have made use of my opportunities of observation to test the principles of their practice, and its results. My faith in medical science grew less and less with every opportunity of putting it to the test, until I was brought to the conclusion, that a true *science* of medicine there was none. (This conclusion your own impolitic admission proves to have been correct.) I found the practice of medicine to consist in a series of *experiments*, based on no accurate knowledge of the effects of drugs, or of the symptoms of disease. A pain in one region, and a stiffness in another, an eruption here, a chill there, and a heat elsewhere, were prescribed for as if each were a primary cause of disease; and the conflicting antidotes were jumbled together into a powerful potion, that, if it did no good, was sure to produce mischief.* The absurdity of this mode of

* As a specimen of the kind of mixtures to which the “common sense” of allopathic doctors subjects their patients, take the following example. It is a **FACT**. A tonic, a purgative, and a diuretic, each to be taken twice a-day, were prescribed to an unfortunate sufferer. The “tonic mixture” consisted of *tincture of gentian* with *tincture of calumba*; the “purgative mixture” contained

prescribing was manifest to my common sense; and I have watched the sage prescriber to see if he himself had any definite faith in the virtues of his multipotent doses. I found that, from day to day, the same game of symptom-chasing went on; every day brought out something new in the patient, and every prescription something new to battle with it in the potion. I never could ascertain that the doctor had a definite expectation with reference to the effect the medicine should produce. A convenient mystery shrouded his true opinions and concealed his ignorance. 'He had given so and so—he hoped his patient would be relieved from such and such a symptom by his next visit—he would call in the evening to see the effects of the morning's medicine,' &c., &c. Thus a round of visits was kept up, each rendering more necessary the continuance of the same doctor, who, knowing best what he had given his patient, should have been best acquainted with the nature of the mischief he had to correct; for, by this time, the original disease had merged into some other—a DRUG DISEASE, which abstinence from medicine, probably from baffled skill, was ultimately the chief means of curing, unless a worse result followed in the shape of chronic disorder or premature death.* This hazardous experimenting I have wit-

tincture of rhubarb and tincture of jalap; and the "diuretic mixture" was composed of *oil of turpentine*, simply disguised in a coloured tincture. Besides these, the prescription included an *ad libitum* abundance of *hough soup*—as a "nutritive mixture," I suppose!—and all these to be taken, in order, twice a-day!! The poor patient, thus pitilessly drugged, had got as far as the turpentine diuretic, when DEATH set his seal on the doctor's work!

* The following recent and painfully striking illustration I have received from one acquainted with all the circumstances. The neighbouring doctor was called to attend a lady who had been suddenly affected with severe pain in the bowels. The reckless man, after the common cursory diagnosis, feeling the pulse, &c., pronounced the *mal-aise* to be "inflammation of the bowels." This terrible name of course frightened the patient and her friends into resigned submission to whatever might be proposed. A vein was opened, and a large quantity of "LIFE" abstracted (for physically true is the Scripture declaration, "the blood is the life"); a blister was laid over the whole abdomen; and a strong purgative was at the same time administered. With these three broad floodgates simultaneously opened for the ebbing tide of strength, the patient rapidly sank; and an eminent physician who was hurriedly sent for arrived just in time to see the poor destroyed one die!

Who does not see that this lady was killed by the insane treatment of the doctor? The pain was probably no other than that caused by the temporary lodgement of some undigested substance in the bowels, which gentle friction, or the "old wife's cure"—a bag of warm salt or sawdust; or the hydropathic cure—a cold-water plaster; or the allopathic cure—a dose of tincture of rhubarb; or the homœopathic cure—a few well-selected "sugar-pills," with a warm flannel to the abdomen, would have speedily relieved; and thus spared the frantic husband and the agonised children the bitterness of their unnatural bereavement, and the robbery of their dearest household treasure.

Well, gentle reader, was not this a case for justice to take up? Was it not one in which the husband had a ground of "action" against the bloodstained Esculapian, for punishment and personal indemnity? Trusting that there was a standard of medical practice by which this culprit could be judged, the husband applied to the eminent physician above alluded to, for his opinion of the

nessed and watched again and again, with the result I have stated—a total want of faith in the existence of a true science of medicine.

This was not a very comfortable state of mind, considering the uncertainty of health, and the daily liability of the strongest constitution to be assailed by disease. In the event of illness, it would be rash to reject all assistance, and to what quarter could I turn in confidence for such aid as would give me a chance of benefit without the possibility, if not certainty, of the 'cure' proving as bad as, or worse than, the disease? Nostrum specifics for single ailments or for definite categories of disease, and patent medicines for the cure of 'every ill that flesh is heir to,' were vaunted as infallible, and their efficacy testified to by hundreds of *names* at least; and, however unwilling I might feel to trust myself in the hands of those whom diplomaed practitioners denounced as ignorant quacks, I could not look on them with less distrust than experience had compelled me to entertain with regard to the regular 'Faculty.' The difference I shrewdly suspected to be one more of 'cloth' and privilege than of principle; one, chiefly, between quackery unlicensed and quackery licensed and respectable.

Of systems of medicine professing to have a true *rationale*, there were not wanting many, founded too, or practised by M.D.'s and F.R.C.P.'s; and grand Latin, Greek, or Greco-Latin names distinguished the rival systems. These friends of humanity denounced each other in good, set, bookish terms, and the Regulars denounced them all—on such occasions, at least, employing plain language, and eschewing mystery;—so that I, a poor patient, could not venture to decide where doctors so widely differed. The various exotic 'opathies,' &c., labelling so many opposite systems, might be no more than classic translations of the plain English word 'nonsense;' and the safest course really seemed to be, the perhaps not quite secure expedient of 'throwing physic to the dogs,' and vowing, in general faithlessness, '*I'll none of it!*'

Among my friends were *hydropathic* converts, who had been revived by the revolutionizing 'water-cure,' and *homœopathic* converts, who were equally loud in proclaiming the magical virtues of their milder system; and each vied with the other in hearty con-

treatment to which his wife had been subjected. "Truly," said the great consultationer, "the treatment was not such as *I* would have thought the best; but I have no doubt that many authorities could be found who would justify it." Would "common sense" do so? Yet, to serve an anti-homœopathic purpose, COMMON SENSE, says Dr Simpson, is the allopathic standard; while, to screen a brother licensee from the penalties of manslaughter and family robbery, the standard is—according to another high authority—not even the refined common sense of one of the most eminent of the College of Physicians—but "Authorities;" some of whose many conflicting opinions would be found to justify any atrocity that ignorance and wantonness could perpetrate.

demnation of the "old-school" doctors, and in urgent proselytizing zeal for the new "opathy." The Regulars spoke of hydropathy as highly dangerous, and of homœopathy as simply ridiculous. There really seemed to be sense in what they said, if they represented the do-too-much water-cure and the infinitesimal do-nothing sugar-pill system correctly. Of good effects resulting from both modes of treatment, I had undeniable evidence; but then the patients of the Regulars did not all die. Nature might, in the one case as in the other, have cured in spite of the doctor, rather than the doctor in spite of nature. All was uncertainty.

Among other publications, I read a striking pamphlet in exposition of certain "Fallacies of the Faculty," which so far strengthened my distrust in the ordinary practice, that I resolutely set my face against the reckless phlebotomy in which the Regulars indulged in almost every case of serious illness. I clearly saw that bleeding—however useful to the doctors, by retarding convalescence, and protracting the period of medical attendance—was, to the patient, a most dangerous expedient; and Dr Dickson satisfied me that it was also an unnecessary one.* The doctor had a medical theory, too, of his own. His "Chrono-thermal" method of treatment was based upon striking facts of general periodicity in disease; and, on the whole, seemed vastly preferable to the old-school mixed-symptom-drugging and blood-letting. But Dr Dickson was not ubiquitous, and, unless other doctors heartily adopted his system, I could not satisfy myself that it might not be only another form of "fallacy," or obtain any advantage from it in case of necessity, residing, as I did, at a distance from the doctor.

The nature of a layman's education, which altogether, but very foolishly, neglects the study of physiology and pathology, rendering one so dependent on professional medical men in every case of illness, I was fain to look round me for some rational ground of trust for the next emergency that might arise, either in my own person or that of any member of my family. I was led to peruse a work on the "Principles of Homœopathic Treatment," which included articles by various authors,—by Hahnemann himself, and by several well-known medical men. I was surprised to find that the only objection which I had ever heard urged to homœopathy formed no essential part of it at all. The Regulars and others whose denunciations of it I had heard or read, had generally left the *principle* of the system altogether unnoticed, and attacked what I now found to be merely one of the practical peculiarities which experience had shown to be expedient in following out the

* "Fallacies of the Faculty," by Dr Samuel Dickson. London.

homœopathic law. I was more than struck with the beautiful simplicity of this law—an argument *per se* of its truth—attested, too, as it was by so many illustrations, some of them as old as observation itself. I was convinced, by the facts adduced, that Shakspeare's principle for curing love was the natural one for curing more ills than those of the heart:—

“Tut, man, one fire draws out another's burning!
Take thou some new infection to thine eye,
And the rank poison of the old will die.”—*Romeo and Juliet*.

Whatever the operative cause of the efficacy of the law—*similia similibus curantur*—that it was naturally efficacious, could not rationally admit of question. I found that the most potent medicines used by the Regulars were homœopathic in their mode of action; and that their exhibition to persons in health produced the very form of disease for which they were known to be the most powerful curatives. Doubt on this point was over. Homœopathy was a law of nature, gainsay it who would. In examining the details of its application to therapeutic practice, I was delighted to find that it utterly rejected as fundamentally erroneous those mixtures of medicines which I had before so much disliked in the licensed quackery of the Regulars; and also that its practitioners repudiated the common abuse of the leech and the lancet, trusting to the specific action of proved medicines for the removal or abatement of every form of disease. I had now discovered a system of medicine founded on a natural law, and simple, intelligible, and perfectly rational in its application.

Knowing that a feeling of distrust with reference to ordinary medical practice is even more prevalent than openly expressed, and that very many doubters are kept, by misrepresentations and false prejudices, from examining the subject of homœopathy; knowing also that many who do embrace it are driven to it, not from conviction, but in despair, when blistering, bleeding, and violent drugging have all but extinguished the flickering life, I have thought it a duty which I owe to the cause of truth, to do my best to remove obstructing prejudices, and to set the subject of homœopathic principle in a true light, for the benefit of those who are so far prepared for conviction as to have been led to entertain doubts of the rationality or efficacy of the ordinary medical practice.

All medical treatment proceeds on the assumption of a specific potency, inherent in certain substances to act on certain tissues or organs of the living frame; one acting on the nerves, another on the kidneys, a third on the stomach, and so forth. *How* they produce their effects is not known; but that they do possess a specific

action is a fundamental fact in medicine. Now, in the "old school," the exact effects of drugs on the body in health and disease have not been studied with any accuracy; least of all, their effects on each other, which, chemically, especially at the high temperature of the stomach, must be considerable. They have been prescribed in a set routine, according to a set theory, for symptoms and nomenclatures of disease, and with too careless a diagnosis of the antecedents of the malady; and they have been administered, not singly, to produce their specific effects with observable precision, but in various mixtures of from two to half-a-dozen, or more, at a time, in such a way that the nature of their combined action could not be anticipated, or the proportion of effect due to each ingredient in the heterogeneous mixture ascertained with even approximate correctness.

Now, homœopathy has less to do with *names* of diseases, and more with the simple specific action of medicines. Every article in its materia medica has been tested again and again upon the healthful body, and the symptoms which it produced have been noted with carefully minute exactness by observers in various parts of the world; and, in practice, it is administered in such disorders as, on a minute diagnosis, present the nearest approximation to the *totality* of the symptoms produced by the medicine on the healthy subject. This simply is the homœopathic principle and its application. **THE QUANTITY OF THE MEDICINE ADMINISTERED HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE PRINCIPLE.** Experience has shown, that greatly smaller doses than are usually given suffice to produce the required effect on the diseased organs; and, of course, it would be folly to administer more than is found to be enough to create the curative reaction. But the opponents of homœopathy have fixed on this peculiarity of minute doses to ridicule the whole system, and declare, that (facts to the contrary notwithstanding) it is **IMPOSSIBLE** for the "infinitesimal" exhibition of a drug to produce any effect whatever. The principle they say little about; nay, they quietly act upon it in many cases, and, while they denounce the homœopathic system as an absurd imposition upon credulity, they at the same time adopt its essential principle in their own practice. And the small dose system, too, against which they so awkwardly stumble theoretically, has to a certain extent been practically adopted; for it is a fact well known to every druggist, and happily to many a suffering patient, that medicines are now administered more simply, and in greatly reduced quantity, than they were before the homœopathic "heresy" was introduced. Important reforms are gradual in their establishment, and this reduction of medicine and simplicity in drugging are

but the beginnings of a reform which will in time become universally extensive. There can be no doubt of this, for, when homœopathy is in favour with the public, doctors will not fail to court public favour by its means."

Such were my convictions, recorded three months before your speech, in answer to which they are now first published, was spoken before the Medico-Chirurgical Society, or given in print to the common sense of the community. I believe it will not be long before multitudes of your brethren—who are at present quietly feeling the public pulse—will, as Dr Ransford has recently done, make very ungraceful penitent recantations, and most ungracious revelations of the "getting up" of society and college oppositions. It is plain that the extensive falling away of allopathic patients is the cause of this last spurt of persecution; but is it not somewhat impolitic in you to tell these patients that they are dupes and fools, and destitute of common sense? This is not the way to convince them of error, and recover their foolish dupeships to the old dupery. And, depend upon it, you will sooner consent to give up your present "common sense," and doctor them according to theirs, than they will return to your purgings and bleedings and blisterings and mysteries, which hide, as most mysteries do, only what it would be *inconvenient* to bring to light.

Talk of a common sense standard of medicine! Pray, when was it adopted? Before or since the persecuting war of "circulation?" Before or since the superstitious battle of "vaccination?" Before or since the logomachous turmoil of chloroform agitation? The only common sense in your position is the common sense of holding on to privileges, of striving to keep up advantages, of struggling to maintain interests. There is certainly but little "*common*" sense in your medics, and still less in your arguments, against homœopathic practice.

I daresay you know that, some years ago, the Atlantic was crossed in a steamboat by a philosopher who, not many years previously, had denied the *possibility* of such a feat being ever performed! He reasoned on the scientific "common sense" of his day, and "*proved*" that steaming the Atlantic was *physically impossible*! Would you, now, hold to his scientific reasonings, and still deny the possibility of the act, in the face of the fact that it is now accomplished every fortnight? No: this, you will say, would be an outrage on common sense! Well: we have the fact of a *potency* in infinitesimal doses announced throughout the civilised world on as indubitable testimony as the steam passage of the Atlantic; and you, in virtue of your scholasticism, *deny the POSSIBILITY of the thing*! All your

reasonings about the Lake of Geneva, and an imaginary ocean deeper than from the earth to the moon—either of them a bulk of water sufficient to drown the common sense, and every other sense, not of yourself only, but of all the faculty—are not worth one fact! And I happen to possess more than one, which are at your service: but you may get others for yourself which will perhaps be more convincing than the best at second hand.

You have got into “deep waters,” Doctor! rather near the circling planets for safety to the head! ’Tis dangerous to venture on a *Luna-sea*!

I know, in my own person, the efficacy of a 3 globule-dose of Nux Vomica of the 12th dilution, for the removal of headache, again and again. Aconite and Belladonna, Chamomilla, Arnica, Arsenicum, Mercurius Solubilis, Camphor, and a variety of other globule and tincture medicines, I have seen to produce their recorded effects on members of my family, infantile and adult. Measles in three cases, scarlet fever in four, bilious fever in one case, and cholera in another, have been successfully treated by homœopathic medicines alone, under my own roof; and therefore whether should I or you know best whether these exiguous medicines are operative or not? Let common sense answer!

I must say, that, personally, I like a *sensible* quantity of the medicine in preference to a “billionth” or a “decillionth;” and, in most cases, the solvent water has been appreciably tintured by my ordinary dose. Some homœopathists do not think so much necessary, but they and I are no less homœopathic in our views and practice. I prefer, personally, tinctures to globules; and I use them, generally, in the proportion of from four to six, or even sometimes eight or ten drops of a No. 3 tincture to a wine-glassful of water, in tea-spoonful doses. I, thus, please my own fastidious “common sense,” which likes to be sensible of a something which is palpably more than nothing. Smaller doses—the very smallest—may, for aught I know, and certainly for aught you can prove to the contrary, be as effective, or more so, than those which I approve; and, while I grant more faith to those who employ a “500th dilution,” I do not dispute their possession of an equal share of common sense to my own. For the principle on which medicines act is not as yet definitively ascertained. If, as seems highly probable, electrically, or in some analogous way, the most attenuated dilution may exert such an influence on the diseased tissues as to reverse the polarity of electric action; at all events, there is, at present, no reason for thinking that the action of medicines depends upon their bulk, and that an ounce must always be more powerful than a grain! A given

quantity of electricity may be held condensed in a few *yards* of wire, or distributed over an equal number of *miles*; and you do not need to be told, that the force of the electricity is immensely increased with its extenuation. A sovereign may be beaten out so as to cover an acre of ground, and you will not deny that the foil will gild a surface: for instance, that of a doctor's pill (though not of his *palm*), as well as, if not better than, the coin. One spark of flint fire, or of imponderable electricity, falling upon sensitive combustible material, would suffice to kindle a fire that would consume the world. It liberates a pent-up agency that rends the solid rock, and tumbles the towering cliff into the sea. Do you think that all the fagots that intolerance ever kindled to burn truth out of the world, would do the business one jot better? Infinitesimal impotency indeed! Finite ignorance! "There are more things in heaven and earth," Dr Simpson, "than are dreamed of in your philosophy!"

Is it possible that you are serious in your ridicule of imperceptible potencies? Let your "common sense" next anatomise a grain of mustard-seed or an acorn, and, in the same strain, deny the possibility of its containing a germinating principle that can spring up into the "largest among herbs," or the monarch of our woods. To the microscopically-assisted, and most unusually acute "common sense" of seeing, there is no indication of the stem, the branch, and the petal in the tiny seed; but can common sense deny the fact that within that little pericarp the principle of all these is compacted? Plant it, and you will obtain the proof. So with little doses, TRY THEM, and you may possibly experience their efficacy. At all events, all the reasoning and magisterial dogmatism in the world are worthless to gainsay THE FACT, experienced as it has been by thousands. *Experientia stultos docet.*

But granting the "*nullity*," which you assert, of homœopathic doses, how stands the argument? Take a given number of cases of any disease, acute or chronic, and *compare results* between homœopathy and allopathy. You cannot deny at least an equal proportion of cures to the "*vis medicatrix naturæ*" of homœopathy—a preponderance has been distinctly proved in hospital practice—but take an equality. Wherein, then, are patients the better for your violent and always debilitating treatment? Who, therefore, in the name of common sense, need submit to your dangerous drugging? Or what man, with his faculties unmeshed by the cobwebs of the "Faculty," would allow the doctors to physic his body into a practical exposition of allopathic asthenology? Manifestly, homœopathy, even as a nullity, is infinitely preferable to allopathy; and well may your reasoning make men exclaim against all medics as "consummate charlatanry."

Vastly more agreeable undoubtedly it is to swallow a tea-spoonful of unsophisticated water, than to gulp and wriggle down a throatful of black draught; or to lick in a few pin-head sugar-pills than to ram a nauseous bullet-pill by muscular force down the œsophagus! And what is it to me to be told that I may just as well spare myself the trouble of taking this palatable nullity, and save my pocket the expense of paying such an enormous per centage—even as draught and pill per centages go—on this huge quantity of milk-sugar; for that it is not homœopathy, but the “*vis medicatrix naturæ*,” that cures me? Blessed *vis medicatrix naturæ*, let me ever be cured by thee! I ask no medicatrix else. And if a handmaid ever should be necessary to assist without obstructing thy gracious work, let that gentle handmaid be homœopathy! Avaunt! thou Vampire, with thy leech and lancet; thou shalt never drain my life-blood, or stifle my breath with thine abominable compounds! If unassisted Nature has cured all the patients whose health enroseates the laurels of homœopathy, then blessed be nature, and perish the vile scholasticism and the selfish interests that would interpose between nature and the sick man’s restoration!

You have, sir, damaged your cause to an extent that will surprise you. You have confessed that you have no standard of therapeutic right and wrong but the vague one of “common sense,” which condemns your system as far as it can understand it; you have admitted that your graduates are decreasing, while this “delusive heresy” is fast increasing; and you have resorted to such tricks of argument and insinuation as never could be used but in a failing cause. Abandoning the “stale, flat, and unprofitable” pretext for opposition, that all homœopathic remedies are powerful “*poisons*,” you declaim against them as “*nothings*!”—therefore harmless at least—and endeavour to stir up *religious* prejudices, by insinuating that some dangerous potency of what you call “Hahnemannic Theology,” is rolled up in the little sugar-pills. This is unworthy both the writer and the cause, considering that the one is the orthodox teaching of our medical schools, and the other the President of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh!

You ought to know the sort of prejudices that you have striven to pander to by this line of argument; for you have felt them directed in some small degree against yourself, and you have very satisfactorily exposed their brainlessness in the chloroform case. Read yourself a lesson thence!

That there is a Hahnemannic, or any other sort of theology associated with homœopathy, I utterly deny; though common sense might well dispense with the repudiation, did not a boaster of common sense assert the connection. I distinctly accuse you of insinuat-

ing a charge which common sense rebuts—a charge groundless, reasonless, and calculated only to impose on the foolish fearfulness of the weak. A Hahnemannian theology! “O, shame, where is thy blush?” How many of your allopathic brethren are materialists, deists, atheists! Shall I accuse your allopathic teaching of making them so? Charity forbid! What common sense would charge the individualities of a fanatic, a visionary, or an enthusiast, on the *system* with which he happens to be connected? To tell you the truth, your pamphlet is as uncommonly senseless a production as I have read for a length of time. You are confessedly irate at “nothing!” And why?—O, charming ingenuousness!—Because of the vexatious attractiveness of this nothing in drawing off increasing hosts of credulous dupes, or (to quote your own happy quotation) of the “very RICH, but *always* very credulous and very dupable, people of England,” to pay increasing numbers of prescribers and purveyors of this nothing! In other words, you see a flock of geese—stupid animals!—many of them well-fatted, too—walking into your neighbour’s yard, and you *envy him his pluckings!*

This is the primary one of the various “concomitant circumstances” to which you allude as having “tended to direct the particular attention of the medical corporations and societies of Great Britain to the anomalous position and status of practitioners of homœopathy.” Another one is, “The craft is in danger!” Homœopathy is simple, and enables any intelligent man to be, to a great extent, his own doctor, and to dispense with a professional medical attendant in most ordinary cases. It may put an end, therefore, to many of those comfortable “family doctorships.” Thus the old outcry, “Great is Diana of the Orthodox,” rings in your halls. But let the small still voice of common sense whisper amid your uproar, “If this ‘heresy’ be not true, it will come to nought. Leave it alone. *Ex nihilo nihil fit.*”

I honour you, sir, for your contributions to medical science, and, above all, for the obligations under which you have laid the suffering world by your manly introduction and defence of the merciful anæsthetic—chloroform. Whatever your motives were—professional renown, fame, fortune, or humanity—all honour to the man whose science has bound up in balmy slumber the pangs of surgery and of parturition, realising the poet’s description in a new sense, and making sleep literally

“Sore labour’s bath.”

Would that any other name than yours had blotted the title-page of that “Speech,” and would that a fame less sacred to my heart had been sullied by its shallow special pleading and its selfishness!

Yours, &c.,

L. D. H.