

Homoeopathy unveiled : or, Observations on Hahnemann, his doctrines and treatment of disease / by William Perrin Brodribb.

Contributors

Brodribb, William Perrin.
Royal College of Physicians of London

Publication/Creation

London : Samuel Highley, 1851.

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/ab8ud2qv>

Provider

Royal College of Physicians

License and attribution

This material has been provided by This material has been provided by Royal College of Physicians, London. The original may be consulted at Royal College of Physicians, London. where the originals may be consulted. This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

6

HOMŒOPATHY UNVEILED :
OR,
OBSERVATIONS ON HAHNEMANN,
HIS DOCTRINES, AND TREATMENT OF DISEASE.

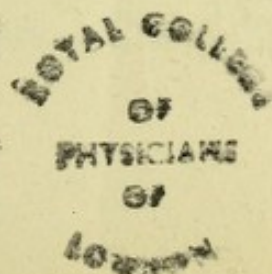
“ Decipimur specie.”—HORACE.

“ They drew aside the veil, and where they were taught to expect
a mystery, they discerned a fraud.”—ROBERT HALL.

BY WILLIAM PERRIN BRODRIBB,
MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS, ENGLAND,
MEMBER OF THE COURT OF EXAMINERS OF THE SOCIETY OF APOTHECARIES,
AND APOTHECARY TO THE MAGDALEN HOSPITAL.

LONDON :
PUBLISHED BY S. HIGHLEY, FLEET STREET.

MDCCCLI.



THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

THE

OF

THE

HOMŒOPATHY UNVEILED.

WHEN a person who has spent many years in the study and practice of medicine first hears of the doctrines and high pretensions of Homœopathy, a mixed feeling is apt to come over his mind: utter disbelief of their truth, and honest indignation against those who uphold them. Such a feeling, however natural as a first impulse, might be thought less justifiable if allowed to become an abiding one.

The common admonition, "*Audi alteram partem*," and the expostulation of the Athenian general, "*Strike, but listen*," rise up before the mind: so the disciples of Hahnemann may be allowed to say, "*Do not reject without investigation; and before you condemn, fairly examine.*" Truth can never suffer from being thoroughly sifted; while observation and experience teach us, that a slight and partial examination of a subject often serves only to confirm us in the belief of error. Hence the rapid spread of many popular delusions, and the reason why men frequently become the dupes of sophistical opinions, imposed on them by others. The public are

very imperfect judges of many questions, and especially in medical science, where we have to contend with peculiar difficulties and sources of error.

It seems therefore to be a duty especially incumbent on members of the medical profession, to inquire into the merits of a system claiming for itself not only new and valuable discoveries, but also the only true and safe method of healing.

[At the very threshold, however, of our inquiry into the truth of Homœopathy, we meet with assumptions so gross, and pretensions so extravagant, as to render investigation absolutely puerile and absurd. What would be thought, for instance, of a person who, on being gravely told that the sun is a body only three feet in diameter, and but a few miles distant from our earth, should think it necessary to apply himself seriously to the task of studying all the sophistries and ingenious arguments that might be offered in support of such an assertion?]

Yet in a like position any one must feel that he is placing himself, who patiently sits down to the work of travelling through the mazes and mysticisms of Homœopathy. Notwithstanding the disagreeableness of such a voluntary humiliation, I determined to enter upon the work, and to the best of my ability to examine and judge for myself. For this purpose, I resolved to study the doctrines and principles of the system, to test the homœopathic medicines, and to witness the practice as seen in the hospitals.

From the study of Hahnemann's writings we learn, that at a very early period of his professional life, he arrived at the conclusion, that neither any of those great

men who lived before him, nor even nature herself, had ever adopted the right method of combating disease and of restoring health. He represents all physicians before his time as having contented themselves with administering blindly in disease remedies of which they were ignorant; and he quarrels with the prevailing schools of medicine for having invariably regarded the spontaneous efforts of nature in diseases as a model to be imitated in the exercise of the healing art. He regards nature as a power destined solely to preserve the organism in a degree of perfection so long as the healthy state continues; but incapable of restoring the order and harmony of the system when health has been deranged. Thus undervaluing alike both nature and art, we feel no surprise at the modest conclusion to which he comes, as expressed by him in the following passage:—"If mankind had not constantly witnessed those imperfect and vain attempts (of nature), they would never have given themselves so much trouble to promote the blind efforts of this self-helping instinctive vital power, which is incapable of reflection; nor would they have been so zealous in coming to the assistance of the suffering vital powers, by inventing a system of the healing art. And since this art consists merely in the gross imitation of a useless, vain, and oft injurious effort, *so must it then be conceded that the true art of healing remained undiscovered till my time.*" (Preface to Hahnemann's "Organon," p. 14.)

In this manner, rejecting all instruction from others, and even from Nature herself, there remained therefore nothing for Hahnemann to do, but to lay the foundation of some new medical theory; and he has given us, as the

offspring of his own genius, his system of Homœopathy. According to this doctrine, and as the name implies, all disease is to be cured only by producing artificially a similar disease in the system. This is to be done by giving a medicine that is capable of exciting in healthy persons, symptoms that closely resemble those of the disease itself; and such medicine Hahnemann affirms to be the only one that is really salutary; and that it always annihilates the disease in an easy, prompt, and perfect manner. Of this, which Hahnemann lays down as his first law in the words, "*Similia similibus curantur*," he says,—“The homœopathic method which
 “employs against the totality of the symptoms of a
 “natural disease, a medicine that is capable of exciting in
 “healthy persons symptoms that closely resemble those of
 “the disease itself, is the only one that is really salutary,
 “and which always annihilates disease, or the purely
 “dynamic aberrations of the vital powers, in an easy,
 “prompt, and perfect manner.” (“*Organon*,” p. 163.)
 Again,—“But although it is certain that a homœopathic
 “remedy, administered in a small dose, quietly annihilates
 “the acute disease which is analogous to it, without pro-
 “ducing its other non-homœopathic symptoms—that is to
 “say, without exciting new and grievous sufferings—it
 “often happens, notwithstanding, that it produces, at the
 “expiration of one or a few hours after ingestion (accord-
 “ing to the dose) a state something less favourable, which
 “resembles the primitive affection so closely that the
 “patient supposes the original disease aggravated. But
 “in reality it is nothing more than a medicinal disease,
 “extremely similar to the primitive one, and rather more
 “intense in its nature. This trifling homœopathic aggra-

“ vation of the malady during the first few hours—this
 “ happy omen, which announces that the acute disease
 “ will soon be cured, and that it will, for the most part,
 “ yield to a first dose—is perfectly as it ought to be,
 “ because the medicinal disease should naturally be rather
 “ more intense than the one it is intended to cure, if it is
 “ to subdue and extinguish the latter in the only manner
 “ that one natural disease can destroy another that re-
 “ sembles it,—by exceeding it in power and intensity.”
 (“ Organon,” p. 222, 223.)

The second law laid down by our author is, “ the
 “ weaker the dose of the homœopathic remedy, the slighter
 “ the apparent aggravation of the disease ” (“ Organon,”
 p. 222): and on this law is founded the practice of
 administering remedies in infinitesimal doses. On this
 subject, Hahnemann says, that “ amendment is never
 “ visible, but when the dose has been attenuated to the
 “ proper degree, that is to say, as much as possible ; and
 “ if the remedy has been well selected, and the amend-
 “ ment, notwithstanding, delays its appearance, it can
 “ only be attributed to the lengthened duration of the
 “ homœopathic aggravation excited by the medicinal sub-
 “ stance ; and we ought thence to conclude that the dose
 “ was too strong. (“ Organon,” p. 279.) On the other
 “ hand, if the patient describes any recent symptoms in-
 “ dicating improvement, and these latter do not correspond
 “ homœopathically with the well-selected remedy, it will
 “ be vain for him to declare that he feels himself better :
 “ the physician, far from believing him, ought on the
 “ contrary, to consider him worse.” (Idem, p. 279.)

On these two laws, Hahnemann has constructed his
 system of Homœopathy ; and a very cursory exami-

nation of them will enable us to judge of their real merits. Nothing less, however, than a perusal of his "Organon of the Healing Art," can give any adequate idea of the speculative and hypothetical character of the whole system. In that work, he lays down as so many principles and laws, the wildest and most theoretical notions, and assumes as true, propositions, which no amount of experiment can ever verify and establish; while they afford ample scope for the credulity and imagination of his disciples to indulge in.

The often-quoted maxim, "*Similia similibus curantur*," has been made to justify and to include much more than belongs to it. Although it contains a truth, it is at best but a very partial truth; yet Hahnemann has endeavoured to raise it to the rank of an immutable and universal law in medicine; and by a false generalization, he has built upon it a superstructure entirely fictitious and imaginary. With certain exceptions, it is a mis-statement of facts to represent medicines as capable of producing symptoms corresponding to real diseases. It is equally incorrect to speak of them as specifics, i. e., as exerting any direct power over diseased actions. We have reason to believe that the great majority of medicines have certainly no specific power, and that their action is only subservient and auxiliary to the provisions of nature for the spontaneous decline of diseases, and to be dependent on the influence which they exert over the functions of the body. In a very few instances only, we can ascribe to certain remedies a specific power of counteracting certain morbid actions.

The best examples are, the power of Cinchona over intermittent fevers, of Mercury in a certain form of

inflammation, and of Sulphur on Psora; with a few others of more doubtful character.

The beneficial action of all other remedies is secondary, and only auxiliary to the powers of nature, by placing the body in circumstances more favourable to the spontaneous decline of diseases.*

[Such a power on the part of nature to restore health is denied by Hahnemann; and all attempts on the part of the physician to promote her efforts are condemned by him as mischievous. On the other hand, he says, that the only true method of curing disease, is by administering a medicine capable of producing an artificial one, exactly resembling the original, and which artificial disease is to supersede and extinguish the other. But can homœopathic practitioners inform us what medicines will produce such complaints as pneumonia, croup, inflammation of the heart and its consequences, with many other equally dangerous diseases? A fair answer to this question would soon expose the hollowness of the system.]

Hahnemann says, that the external symptoms alone are to be the object of the physician's attention; and that no regard is to be paid to any changes in the interior of the body, which may give rise to them. But we can easily perceive, that the mere observation of external symptoms, without reference to the real nature of the internal changes producing them, will not sufficiently inform us what remedies are likely to exert a beneficial effect on the disease to be treated. The stupor occasioned by an overdose of opium resembles

* See Alison's "Pathology."

the most prominent symptom of apoplexy ; but is opium therefore a remedy for that frequently fatal complaint ? Lead will give rise to the symptoms of colic and of paralysis, but it will not cure those affections. Instances might be multiplied ; but a reference to the writings of homœopathic physicians supplies us with a sufficient refutation of their own principles. If each disease is to be cured by a medicine capable of exciting an artificial disease exactly resembling the original, what is the meaning of that host of dissimilar and opposite medicines directed to be given as remedies for each individual complaint ? Hartmann, in his work on Acute Diseases, mentions no less than thirty-six remedies for pneumonia, fifty-two for rheumatism, twenty-nine for dysentery, twenty-one for diarrhœa, the majority of them being the same for each of these complaints. Surely all this is a wide departure from the simplicity of the first law,—“ Similia similibus,” &c., and cannot be regarded as a testimony of its truth. It must indeed be allowed that the inconsistent and contradictory character of such treatment is only apparent, since we find that all these dissimilar medicines are in reality reduced to the same level of nothingness by the infinitesimal doses in which they are given. When the billionth, quintillionth, or decillionth of a drop or of a grain of any medicine is given, it matters not what that medicine may be, whether it be opium or chalk, arsenic or ipecacuanha, since either of them, or any other, would be alike incapable of producing any effect whatever.)

Dr. Malan has written a pamphlet, entitled “ An Answer to the Inquiry, How can such small doses have any effect ? ” as if such inquiry were ridiculous or vain.

But the question is a fair and rational one. Medical men are accustomed to administer medicines in doses and form according to their known powers; i. e., according to the effects which, by experience, they are found to exert on the human body. They do not, for instance, give calomel and emetic tartar in the same doses as rhubarb and magnesia; nor do they prescribe laudanum and Prussic acid in the same quantities as syrup of poppies or infusion of bark. A drop or two of croton oil does not represent the quantity necessary to be given of castor oil; nor does a grain of elaterium, or of a salt of morphia, produce as little effect as a like quantity of soda or common salt. Medical men do not believe all these remedies to be equally active and powerful, and therefore do not give them all in the same form and dose. But why not? Because the Almighty Creator in his wisdom has endowed the different forms of matter with wonderfully diversified properties and powers. These it is man's business to investigate, and by interrogating nature, to make himself acquainted with her laws, so far as he may be able; and in the employment of her products as medicines, to avail himself of all the knowledge which inquiry and experience can furnish.

But Hahnemann and his disciples put away from themselves all these responsibilities; and, disregarding the well-known fact that medicines vary in strength as well as in properties, by an uniform mode of preparation, they direct all their remedies to be made of the same dilutions and strength; so that arsenic and soda, strychnine and charcoal,—substances entirely inert, and others

the most energetic,—are all given in precisely the same doses.*

We know from experience that a few drops of laudanum will procure a man sleep, or give him relief from pain ; but suppose the same number of drops of laudanum put into as many gallons of water or alcohol and perfectly mixed together,—would it not be a mockery of a man's sufferings to offer him an equal quantity of such a dilution for the purpose of relief? and would not the unhappy man, who in his extremity of pain could credit and submit to such a proposal, be trusting in a delusion? and would not the physician who should prescribe such for a remedy, be practising a cheat on his patient? Yet this, although a correct, is but a faint representation of homœopathic dilution.

As I should be sorry to make any statement without proof, or to give an unfaithful view of this subject, I will

* The following explanation of this subject is given in Jahr's "Homœopathic Pharmacopœia," p. 54 :—"It is not unreasonable to suppose that the more powerful the drug is in its crude state, the weaker will be, proportionally, the attenuations ; and, *vice versâ*, the weaker the drug in its crude form, the more powerful will be, proportionally, the attenuations. So that we may expect more intense effects from the higher attenuations of Lycopodium, Coffee, Chamomile, and the like, than from the lower preparations of these substances ; and, on the other hand, more intense effects from the lower preparations of Arsenic, Nux vomica, Aconite, and the like, than from the higher attenuations of these agents."

I leave it to the judgment of others to determine, whether such a supposition be a reasonable or an unreasonable one. According to this principle, a teaspoonful of weak coffee, still further diluted, ought to refresh and exhilarate us more than a cup of good, strong, genuine Mocha.

add a brief account of the mode of preparing homœopathic medicines. It is copied from the Homœopathic Pharmacopœia, compiled from the German works of Buchner and Gruner, and the French work of Jahr, by Dr. C. J. Hempel.

All those drugs which constitute the pure *Materia Medica*, and vegetable substances which can only be had dry, by repeated triturations with sugar of milk, are reduced to the millionth part of a grain, in which state all such substances are supposed to be soluble either in alcohol or water. Tinctures are prepared by macerating vegetable substances in a given quantity of alcohol for a certain number of days, and afterwards filtered. To one grain of the millionth trituration you add fifty drops of distilled water, and turn the vial several times round its axis. By this means the sugar of milk becomes dissolved. Then you add fifty drops of alcohol, and shake the vial twice.

A dilution from any tincture is obtained in a similar way; that is, by adding one drop of a mother tincture to ninety-nine drops of strong or diluted alcohol, as the preparation may require, taking care to shake the vial as before.

These solutions constitute the first attenuation or dilution; and the vials are to be marked with the name of the medicine, and the number 100th. Of either of these solutions you take one drop, and mix it with ninety-nine or a hundred drops more of alcohol, shaking the vial twice. By this is obtained the second attenuation or dilution, each drop now containing the ten thousandth part of the primitive drop; and the vial is there-

fore marked $\overline{10,000}^{\text{th}}$. Of this solution you again take one drop, mixing it with ninety-nine or a hundred drops more of alcohol, and shake the vial twice. This constitutes the third attenuation, each drop containing the millionth part of the primitive drop; and the vial is numbered $\overline{1,000,000}^{\text{th}}$, or $\overline{\text{I}}$; the latter mark, $\overline{\text{I}}$, being the symbol for a million. Of this dilution you again take a drop, and mix it with ninety-nine or a hundred drops more of alcohol, shaking the vial twice; this is the fourth attenuation, or one hundred millionths. Of this potency you again take a drop, and mix it with ninety-nine or a hundred more of alcohol, shaking the vial twice, and so obtain the fifth attenuation, or ten thousand millionths. Of this you again take one drop, and mix it with ninety-nine or one hundred drops of alcohol, shaking the vial twice, which furnishes us with the sixth attenuation, or billionth, represented thus, $\overline{\text{II}}$. In the same way you continue the preparation, and obtain the seventh dilution, or one hundred billionths; the eighth attenuation, or ten thousand billionths; the ninth attenuation, or trillionth, marked thus, $\overline{\text{III}}$. By repeating this process of dilution, the higher potencies are obtained; the twelfth attenuation being the quatrillionth; the fifteenth attenuation, the quintillionth; the thirtieth, the decillionth.

The attenuations or potencies are, however, carried far beyond these; the whole series now in use being divided into four classes,—lower, middle, higher, and highest. The lower potencies range up to the sixth attenuation; the middle potencies from the sixth to the thirtieth attenuation; the higher potencies from the thirtieth to the two hundredth; and the highest po-

tencies from the two hundredth to any attenuation above that number. All these different potencies are used by their respective adherents, and are proclaimed by them as the best and most useful, or rather, only useful, preparations.

Hahnemann, in his latter days, confined himself to the thirtieth or some higher potency. This he is said to have done, from having made the discovery that by means of the above process of dilution, the curative powers of the remedial agent were rendered more active, —were, so to say, spiritualized.*

Preparations of such potency are not, however, to be lightly used, lest the magnitude of the dose should at any time be too great. To avoid such an evil, Hahnemann invented the following ingenious device. Globules, made of sugar and starch, about the size of a millet seed, are moistened with these attenuations, and afterwards dried. They are thus supposed to be sufficiently impregnated with the medicinal powers of any drug; and

* “The advocates of the doctrine of dynamization have now become convinced that the whole secret of the curative effects of one, two, or three pellets is explained by the peculiar mode in which the medicine has been triturated and succussed. They carry a remedy up to the eight hundredth, thousandth, and even two thousandth potency, and imagine that those high potencies still produce pathogenetic symptoms. If this game, which is particularly exciting to laymen, and in which physicians become so easily interested, is carried much further, the end of it cannot possibly be foreseen; and it may become true, what some of our opponents have said of us, that in homœopathic practice, nature triumphs both over the disease and the physician. Baron Gerstorff, one of the provers frequently mentioned in the ‘*Materia Medica Pura*,’ says, that arsenic has been carried up to the ten thousandth potency.” (See Hartmann’s “*Homœopathic Treatment of Acute Diseases*.” Vol. i. p. 63.)

75 two or three of these are to be given for a dose, according to the judgment of the physician. As fifty or more of these globules, previous to their being moistened, do not exceed a grain in weight, and as I cannot find any appreciable difference of weight in the medicated ones, it is difficult, if not impossible, to calculate what fractional portion of a primitive drop of any dilution each globule may contain. Such a series of infinitesimal division may fairly lead us to doubt, or rather to deny, the possibility of such doses possessing any power whatever.

But here the believers in Homœopathy, like the poets, have a supernatural world to range in. While the latter have gods, and fairies, and witches at their command, the Homœopaths have their dynamizations, and succussions, and spiritual agents at their service.

“ O ! who can tell

The hidden powre of herbes, and might of magic spell ? ”

“ Faery Queene,” Book I. c. 2.

As in the poet's world, all is marvellous and extraordinary, so with Homœopathy,—it appeals neither to the eye nor the ear, neither to the understanding nor the senses, but simply to the imagination, and so allows its disciples the liberty of multiplying and enlarging their impostures at pleasure, in proportion to the easiness and comprehension of that faculty. To speak in the language of one of our philosophical writers,—“ It is something much beyond the actual bounds, and only within the conceived possibility of nature.”

Nothing in the fictions of poetry or romance, or even in the lying wonders of a credulous superstition, can surpass the pretensions of these magical, wonder-working

globules.* We talk of the millionth part of a drop or of a grain, and we may form some conception of it; but do we attach any right meaning to the term, the billionth part of a drop? or can we do so, when speaking of the higher numbers—trillionths, quintillionths, decillionths, and so on? By a very easy sum in multiplication, we may calculate what quantity of any liquid would contain, or be equal to, a billion of drops. Reckoning according to the standard of sixty drops to the dram, eight drams to the ounce, &c., arithmetic infallibly shows us, that it takes no less a quantity than *thirteen millions, twenty thousand, eight hundred and*

* For the information of those who are uninitiated into the mysteries of dynamizations, succussions, &c., I may be permitted to state that Hahnemann and his disciples believed that the original drug contains a spiritual agent which is developed or set free by the triturating and shaking processes. These successive developments of the original substance are called dynamizations, potentizations, or attenuations. Hahnemann says,—“Frequent observation has convinced me, that it is better to shake the vials twice only, in order to develop the medicinal virtue of the drug just enough to affect the disease in a proper manner. By shaking the vial ten times, as I was in the habit of doing, the proportion between the progressively developed intensity of action of the medicinal properties of the drug and the degree of the potency was destroyed in favour of the former. The object of the dynamizing process is to develop the intensity of action of the medicinal properties of the drug, at the same time as that action is reduced to a milder tone. Two shakes are sufficient to establish the true proportion between these two effects.” (“Homœopathic Pharmacopœia,” p. 9.) Hahnemann gravely informs us, that he purposely recommended two succussions, and that he had known practitioners who, taking medicines about in their pockets, had thus produced so large a number of succussions as frightfully to increase their potency and action on the system. (See “Athenæum,” for Oct. 26, 1850.)

thirty-three gallons of a liquid to represent a billion of drops. If therefore a single drop of laudanum or of any other tincture, be perfectly mixed with that number of gallons of alcohol, it will represent the sixth attenuation ; and a drop of such dilution will contain the billionth part of the primitive drop.* But this is one of the lower dilutions only. What shall we say of the higher ones? when billions are multiplied by billions, decillions by decillions, and far higher numbers than are to be found in any books of arithmetic?

Figures may be multiplied by any given numbers, and the process may be repeated to any extent, but it is impossible afterwards to enumerate them ; still less possible is it to conceive what they represent. Yet in all these visions and mockeries Homœopathy deals, and calls upon its disciples to practise, and the public in their disease and suffering to submit to and trust in.

May we not adopt here the language of a critic, used on a very different occasion, and say of such speculations, “ That they are unnatural and absurd : that they surpass all bounds not of truth only, but of probability ; and look more like the dreams of children, than the manly inventions of a sober mind ? ”

But homœopathic practitioners appeal to the fact of the recovery of persons from disease while taking their medicines, and regard these events as cause and effect. It would be well if these gentlemen would study the

* The degree of dilution, if carried to the fifth attenuation only, would be that of one gallon in more than the whole quantity of water furnished by the New River, East London, and Southwark companies in an entire year ; and the sixth attenuation, in more than the whole quantity of water furnished by those three companies in a century.

writings of the late Dr. Abercrombie on the Intellectual Faculties, especially those parts on "the application of the rules of philosophical investigation to medical science," and "on tracing the relation of cause and effect." They might there learn the difficulty of tracing effects to their true causes, and the various sources of error in conducting medical inquiries; together with the evils arising from unsound deductions.

The influence of the passions upon disorders of the body has been excellently illustrated by physicians of superior understanding, as Sir George Baker, Dr. Falconer, and others. The late Dr. Haygarth of Bath says,—"I have long been aware of the great importance of medical faith. Daily experience has constantly confirmed and increased my opinion of its efficacy. On numerous occasions I have declared that I never wished to have a patient who did not possess a sufficient portion of it. These trials* place its efficacy in a very conspicuous point of view, and must even astonish persons who have particularly attended to this subject. They clearly prove what wonderful effects the passions of hope and faith, excited by mere imagination, can produce upon diseases.

"On this principle we may account for the marvellous recoveries frequently ascribed to empirical remedies, which are commonly inert drugs, and generally applied by the ignorant patient in disorders totally dif-

* Dr. Haygarth here refers to trials made by him and other physicians and surgeons with fictitious tractors, by which they detected and exposed that gross imposture which prevailed so extensively half a century ago, under the name of metallic tractors, or Perkinism.

“ferent from what the quack himself pretends that they
 “can cure. Magnificent and unqualified promises in-
 “spire weak minds with implicit confidence.

“I have sometimes observed that the administration of
 “a new medicine, even when its composition was known,
 “if recommended to the public with exalted praise, has
 “been attended with great success,—much greater than
 “what was confirmed by future experience. Hence we
 “may discern the great advantage of medical reputation.
 “This explains what has been frequently observed, that
 “the same remedy will produce more beneficial effects
 “when prescribed by a famous physician than by a per-
 “son of inferior character. In cases which have ap-
 “peared to me desperate, but where the patient pos-
 “sessed implicit faith, I have seen very astonishing
 “success; and have ascribed the recovery full as much
 “to the influence of hope and great confidence as to the
 “medicinal quality of the drug.”

History supplies us with a very remarkable ex-
 ample of the truth of this remark. During the famous
 siege of Breda, in 1625, the garrison was afflicted
 with the scurvy in a most dreadful degree. “When
 “the Prince of Orange heard of their distress, and
 “understood that the city was in danger of being
 “delivered up to the enemy by the soldiers, he wrote
 “letters addressed to the men, promising them the most
 “speedy relief. These were accompanied with medi-
 “cines against the scurvy, said to be of great price, but
 “still of greater efficacy: many more were yet to be
 “sent them. The effects of this deceit were truly
 “astonishing! Three small phials of medicine were

“ given to each physician,—not enough for the recovery
 “ of two patients. It was publicly given out, that three
 “ or four drops were sufficient to impart a healing
 “ virtue to a gallon of liquor. We now displayed our
 “ wonder-working balsams; nor were even the com-
 “ manders let into the secret of the cheat put upon the
 “ soldiers. They flocked in crowds about us, every one
 “ soliciting that part may be reserved for their use.
 “ Cheerfulness again appears on every countenance, and
 “ an universal faith prevails in the sovereign virtues of
 “ the remedies. The herbs now beginning to spring up
 “ above the ground, we of these make decoctions, to
 “ which wormwood and camphor were added, that by
 “ the prevalent flavour of these, they might appear
 “ medicines of no mean efficacy. The stiff contracted
 “ limbs were anointed with wax melted in rapeseed or
 “ linseed oil. The invention of new and untried physic
 “ is boasted; and amidst a defect of every necessary
 “ and useful medicine, a strange medley of drugs was
 “ compounded. The effect, however, of the delusion
 “ was really astonishing; for many were quickly and
 “ perfectly recovered. Such as had not moved their
 “ limbs for a month before, were seen walking the
 “ streets sound, straight, and whole. They boasted of
 “ their cure by the Prince’s remedy; the motion of
 “ their joints being restored by a simple friction with
 “ oil, and the belly now of itself well performing its
 “ office, or at least with a small assistance from medi-
 “ cine. Many who declared they had been rendered
 “ worse by all former remedies administered, recovered
 “ in a few days, to their inexpressible joy, and the no

“ less general surprise, by their taking (almost by their
 “ having brought to them) what we affirmed to them to
 “ be their gracious Prince’s cure.” *

Dr. Malan, in his pamphlet, says,—“ If a man in health takes for a few consecutive days, any one of the homœopathic medicines, it will soon produce symptoms similar to those which it cures : as the evident result of its action, an artificial disease will be created.”

He adds, that when studying in Paris, he made trial on himself of homœopathic remedies, in order to ascertain if really and truly they were invested with any medicinal power. For this purpose he took, for several following mornings, a few globules, pursuing, at the same time, his usual occupations. After some days, he was seized with many unusual symptoms, great sleepiness, fatigue, shivering, soon followed by violent fever and delirium, with an eruption of transparent vesicles from head to foot. Two physicians who visited him, were at a loss as to the nature of the complaint. Stating afterwards all these circumstances to Hahnemann, he was not a little surprised to hear him say,—“ You have taken too great a dose of some Homœopathic medicine, and it is *Rhus toxicodendron* ; which was, indeed, the medicine that had been taken.”

At a later period while at Lyons, Dr. Malan again took daily some globules of a remedy, to him entirely unknown, till after a few days of trial, he was seized with giddiness, nausea, a violent oppressive frontal headache, depression of spirits, want of appetite, and many other symptoms, which persisted day after day. A

* Frederic Vander Mye, “ *De Morbis et Symptomatibus popularibus Bredanis, tempore obsidionis.*”

homœopathic physician chancing to call, and finding him laid up ill, stated at once that he had taken Nux vomica, which proved to be correct. An antidote on each occasion rapidly removed the symptoms. I express no doubt of the truth of this statement, but I cannot receive the facts, the taking of the globules and the illness which followed, as cause and effect; because the evidence is insufficient to prove the connexion between the two: and a course of minute and long continued observation would be necessary to arrive at a just conclusion.

[My own experience is quite the reverse of this. [I have often given to persons homœopathic medicines, but without their producing any effect. I have also repeatedly made trial of them on myself in the way mentioned by Dr. Malan, viz., by taking some for several days together. I have taken daily for a fortnight some globules of rhus toxicodendron, varying in number from four to thirty. I have taken also for the same period, globules of Nux vomica, of Aconite, of Pulsatilla, of Mercurius, and of Arsenic, and on each occasion without feeling the slightest effect whatever. Desirous of testing them as fairly as possible, I have requested homœopathic practitioners to give me any of their medicines, offering to take them in any dose, and for any length of time they pleased, but these offers have always been declined.]

Other persons, more cautious in their admission of the powers of these globules, say, that they are active for good, but not for evil; that they produce their effects on the body, not while in health, but only in disease; and then too, only when given homœopathically.

This representation of the subject reminds us of the ambiguous responses of the ancient oracles; but the matter might be at once and more honestly expressed in the words of an eminent writer, "a mystery and a trick are generally two sides of the same object, according as it is turned to the view of the beholder."

From the trials made of them on myself, and from all other means of judging, I do not hesitate to declare, that these globules have no more effect than so many particles of starch or of sugar: that, like the gods of the heathen, "they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good."

Again, the advocates of homœopathy urge, that the fact of its having been honoured by so many proselytes throughout the Continent, England, and America, is a proof of its being founded in truth.

A very slight review of history, however, will furnish us with not only an ample, but also with a very humiliating reply to this statement. "We cannot justly infer the worth of a thing from the attention paid to it by men. They may be compelled by authority, biassed by interest, governed by vanity, or led astray by novelty. Even great men have had their follies. Nothing has been brought forward so absurd as not to have attracted to it some names of distinction." } Almost any pretensions and novelties broached with confidence "may strike and produce a temporary impression in their favour, especially in a country like this: a country proverbial for its credulity; and its more than Athenian rage for something new, whatever be the nature of it. In England, it has been said by a satirical yet just observer, that 'any monster will make a man:' that is,

begin
A

be the means of rendering him renowned or rich. Who can question this for a moment, that has patience to mortify himself as a Briton by reflection and review? Take prodigies—dwarfs, giants, unnatural births, deformities—the more hideous, the more repelling the spectacles, the more attractive and popular have they always been. Take empiricisms. Their name is Legion: from animal magnetism and the metallic tractors, down to the last infallible remedy for general or specific complaints: all attested and recommended by the most unexceptionable authorities, especially in high life. How has learning been trifled with and degraded! Two or three insulated facts, and a few doubtful or convertible appearances, have been wrought up into a science: and some very clever men have advocated its claims to zealous belief, and contrived to puzzle the opponents they could not convince. What exemplifications may be found of religious absurdity and extravagance! Has anything been ever broached with confidence that has not gained considerable attention? Did not the effusions of a Brothers, who died where only he should have lived, in confinement for madness, secure numerous believers and admirers? Had he not defenders from the press? Did he not obtain the notice of a very learned senator in the House of Commons. And as to Joanna Southcote, the Exeter prophetess, without any one quality to recommend her but ignorance, impudence, and blasphemy; yet did she not make a multitude of converts, not only among the canaille, but among persons of some distinction? And had she not followers and defenders even among the Clergy themselves? And is there nothing

1
A now going forward far exceeding in credulous wonder, arrogant pretension, and miraculous boasting, all that has gone before it, in a country which, in a twofold sense, may well be called 'a land of vision.' *

It is related of Hahnemann, that on commencing the study of medicine, he soon became disgusted with its different theories, and entirely sceptical of its power. A few subsequent years however served to show, that he rejected the doctrines and collective experience of past ages, only to substitute for them the creations of his own brain: and that although he was an unbeliever in the generally received opinions of his day, he was the subject of the silliest credulity. No one indeed can follow him through the fine-spun subtleties of his system of homœopathy, without believing him to have been insane, or crazed upon that particular subject. It is the peculiar character of insanity, that a certain impression has fixed itself upon the mind, to which undue and extravagant importance is given; and that influences the conduct, in a manner in which it would not affect a sound understanding.

The doctrine of "like cures like," together with the novel idea of giving medicines in doses, as we have seen, inconceivably small, was the impression which fastened itself upon Hahnemann's mind, so as to become its leading character, and finally to exercise the force of complete hallucination.

Abandoning the use of adequate and efficient doses, he invented a series of such infinitesimal ones, as to defy

* See Dedication to W. Wilberforce, Esq., of "Evening Exercises," by Rev. W. Jay.

all power of calculation, and to preclude all possibility of knowing what quantity of any medicine was given, or whether any was really given at all. With the inconsistency moreover peculiar to such minds, he believed that by these means he developed new powers in his remedies, and thereby rendered them more active and curative. By a false principle of reasoning, every change for the better in any complaint of his patients was attributed to the suitableness of the dose: while on the other hand, every aggravation of the disease that took place, was considered by him to be a proof of its excessive magnitude, although given in precisely the same quantity. Under the influence of this belief, which distorted and ruled his mind, he sometimes resorted to the practice of olfaction,* or smelling to a few globules, that the emanations proceeding from them might be inspired. At other times he directed them to be held in the hand for some minutes, that their curative power might be absorbed through the skin. On some occasions he would not give a second dose, until the former had spent all its power, believing that many remedies acted for weeks or even months.

Who does not see in all these fancies, marks of a disordered imagination? and that the visions and illu-

* "If the patient is very sensitive, and it is necessary to employ the smallest dose possible, and attain at the same time the most speedy results, it will be sufficient to let him smell once to a phial that contains a globule the size of a mustard seed, imbibing the medicinal liquid attenuated to a very high degree. After the patient has smelled to it, the phial is to be recorked, which will thus serve for years, without its medicinal virtues being perceptibly impaired." ("Organon," p. 298.)

minations of the enthusiast, put out the reason of the man? Does not the physician here resemble the benevolent-minded astronomer in Rasselas, whose uncontrolled imagination exercised dominion over the other faculties of his mind, and deluded him into the belief, that the regulation of the weather, and the distribution of the seasons, were committed to his care? and that by a mere act of volition, he could send rain and sunshine, and thereby confer plenty upon the inhabitants of any particular country of the earth?

And is there anything less visionary or insane in the dreams of the German doctor, who in the warmth of his enthusiasm, believed, that by a single grain of chamomilla, or a drop of any other medicine, if homœopathic, divided, and succussed, and further subdivided into billionths, quintillionths, and decillionths, &c., he could imitate, and thereby cure, the diseases of the whole population of the globe.

But whatever may be thought of the system of homœopathy itself, only one opinion can be entertained of those practitioners who adopt both methods of treatment; and who are ready to suit their practice to the caprice and prejudices of their patients. Without pronouncing any judgment on such a mode of practising an honourable and deeply responsible profession, the fact itself ought to be sufficient to awaken the attention of the public; and to lead them to inquire, whether truth and double dealing are ever seen associated together. Such persons may admire the worldly prudence inculcated by Miss Edgeworth in her tale of "Two Strings to your Bow," forgetful of the sound advice given by

the same excellent writer in "Honesty the best Policy." The Word of Truth however assures us that, "No man can serve two masters ;" the service has often been tried, but it is an impossible service : and the attempt must always issue in failure and dishonour.

Bloomsbury Square, May, 1851.

