

# HOMŒOPATHY UNVEILED :

OR,

OBSERVATIONS ON HAHNEMANN,

HIS DOCTRINES, AND TREATMENT OF DISEASE.

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“Decipimur specie.”—HORACE.

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

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Second Edition.

LONDON :

PUBLISHED BY S. HIGHLEY, FLEET STREET.

MDCCCLII.

ALEX. MACINTOSH,  
PRINTER,  
GREAT NEW-STREET, LONDON.

R35574

## HOMŒOPATHY UNVEILED.

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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, without inquiry, 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 to be 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 almost 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 task, 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 the 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 producing “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 “(according 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 aggravation 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 resembles it,—by exceeding  
 “it in power and intensity.” (“Organon,” pp. 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  
 “substance; 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  
 “indicating 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 examination of them will enable us to judge of their real merit. 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. With a single grain of truth, it contains ninety-nine of utter absurdity and error ; 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.

We know from experience that Cinchona will cure ague, with many other affections of an intermittent or periodic character ; yet persons may take this medicine in any of its numerous forms for many weeks together without ever having ague produced by it. Mercury is a remedy for syphilis ; but, notwithstanding that it is taken by thousands for many different disorders, and under a great variety of circumstances, yet it never is the cause of that specific disease. Sulphur will infallibly cure Psora, but it may be taken in almost any dose for an indefinite time without ever producing the like disease. In each of these instances, the principle, “*similia similibus*,” utterly fails. These medicines are mentioned because their action is well known and striking, and because one of them (Cinchona) is the very medicine which first suggested the doctrine to Hahnemann’s mind. On the other hand, that condition of the body well known to medical men under the term anæmia, may be caused by great hemorrhage, or by slight but frequently-recurring losses of blood ; by unwholesome food, impure air, and other circumstances unfavourable to health. Does this state, however, admit of homœopathic remedies ? Do steel, sufficiency of good food, and pure air, bear any relationship or likeness to the causes of the disease in question ? Lead will give rise to all the symptoms of colic, and produce a certain form of paralysis, but it will not cure either of those affections. The stupor occasioned by an overdose of opium resembles a very prominent symptom of apoplexy ; but is opium, therefore, a remedy

for that frequently fatal complaint? These, without multiplying examples, are sufficient to disprove the doctrine "similia similibus," on which the whole theory of Homœopathy rests.

The beneficial action of most 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. 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 diarrhoea, 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. This brings us to the consideration of the doses in which homœopaths prescribe medicines.

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 eroton oil does not represent the quantity necessary to be given of eastor 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 ephæra,—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 lauda-

\* 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 versa*, 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

num 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 it 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 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  
 “ 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 one, or a perversion of reason and common sense. 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.

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 therefore 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  $\overline{1}$ ; the latter mark,  $\overline{1}$ , 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 millionth. 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 millionth. 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 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 following are the different attenuations or doses used up to the thirtieth:—

First,	=	One hundredth of a drop or grain.	
Second,	=	One ten thousandth	do.
Third,	=	One millionth	do.
Fourth,	=	One hundred millionth	do.
Fifth,	=	One ten thousand millionth	do.
Sixth,	=	One billionth	do.
Seventh,	=	One hundred billionth	do.
Eighth,	=	One ten thousand billionth	do.
Ninth,	=	One trillionth	do.
Tenth,	=	One hundred trillionth	do.
Eleventh,	=	One ten thousand trillionth	do.
Twelfth,	=	One quatrillionth	do.
and so on.			
Fifteenth,	=	One quintrillionth	do.
Eighteenth,	=	One sextillionth	do.
Twenty-first,	=	One septillionth	do.
Twenty-fourth,	=	One octillionth	do.
Twenty-seventh,	=	One nonillionth	do.
Thirtieth,	=	One decillionth	do.

This last number standing thus in figures,—

1,000000,000000,000000,000000,000000,000000,000000,000000,000000,000000,000000.

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 potencies 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.\*

\* “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.) I was informed by a homœopathic chemist at the west end of the town, that he kept the forty thousandth dilution of



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 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 power 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 arsenic. This would be represented by prefixing the figure 1 to eighty thousand eiphers!

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.

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

\* 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.

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 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?"

It is only by illustration that any conception can be formed of even moderately high numbers. A billion of seconds has not elapsed since the creation of the world. The whole population of our globe from the time of

Adam, does not amount to the fifth part of a billion, assuming the world's age to be 6,000 years, and reckon 800,000,000 for each generation, and only thirty years as the average period of a generation. The nine existing Water Companies furnish to this great metropolis, 45,885,925 gallons of water daily. This quantity reduced to drops gives between three and four billions. If to this enormous quantity of water a drop or grain of any medicine be added, it would be only four times weaker than Hahnemann's 6th dilution, while it would be twenty-five times stronger than his 7th, or 100-billionth. It is stated in the Report by the Government Commission on the supply of water to the metropolis, that the average volume of water which passes Richmond daily is calculated at 800,000,000 gallons. This number multiplied into drops, amounts to 61,440,000,000,000, that is between 61 and 62 billions. This quantity of water with a drop of any tincture mixed with it, would make a solution stronger than Hahnemann's 7th dilution. A river a million times larger than the Thames at Richmond with the drop or grain added to it, might serve to represent the tenth dilution. Such a river, compared with which the Ganges would be a mere brook, a million times still larger, with the single drop added to it, would represent the thirteenth dilution; but no known quantity of water can be compared with it, because in all probability it would exceed that on the whole surface of our globe. Yet this exhibits only a few of the early steps in Hahnemann's process of dilution. His higher numbers, although capable of being expressed by figures, are beyond all power of illustration.

I am aware that many persons will not believe that

there is any truth in this statement of the subject, but it is vain to deny what figures can prove, and the correctness of which any one, by calculation, may ascertain for himself. Nothing, indeed, can surpass the puerility or folly of a belief in Hahnemann's series of dilution, and their power as remedial agents. Had he and all the physicians in Germany, exercised their united ingenuity in devising a scheme whereby to practise on the credulity of mankind, that they might afterwards expose and ridicule it, they could not have hit on a more clever contrivance.

It is, however, gravely maintained by Hahnemann and many of his followers, that medicines in this state of inconceivable dilution are capable of acting on the human body in health as well as in disease. Dr. Malan, in his pamphlet says, "the so-called infinitesimal doses are quite independent of the principle of Homœopathy." "The homœopathic medicaments are small only in their appearance: their peculiar mode of preparation renders them much more active than the ponderous doses of those used in their more rough state."

"They are active in a state of health, and are able, when taken in appropriate doses, to produce morbid symptoms and artificial diseases." Again,

"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 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 there is no evidence to prove any connexion between the two; and further observation would no doubt lead Dr. M. to a very different 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, 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. They tell us, that in order to excite any favourable action, there must be a certain relationship between the globules and the disease, and in the event of failure, that some hidden and disturbing force must be in operation. Like the French philosopher, they will not allow facts to interfere with their theory.\* Reasons are never wanting with these persons why their remedies (which are infallible under certain conditions) often fail to be followed by their intended effect. Either something is absent which ought to be present, or some state of the body exists

\* An enthusiastic philosopher had constructed a very satisfactory theory on some subject or other, and was not a little proud of it. "But the facts, my dear fellow," said his friend, "the facts do not agree with your theory." "Don't they," replied the philosopher, shrugging his shoulders, "then so much the worse for the facts."

which has a counteracting influence. These evasions remind us of the jugglery employed in the responses of the ancient oracles, and of the practices by which the priests of the false gods endeavoured to gain credit for their idols, and profit for themselves. When the oracles failed, the priests who officiated at them were never at a loss for subterfuges for preserving their credit. The sacrifices to be offered were preceded, attended, and followed by many prescribed ceremonies, the omission or mismanagement of any one of which was sufficient to vitiate the whole proceeding. Under such a system of imposture and deceit, exactly that happened which might have been looked for. The heathen oracles spoke only what rulers dictated, or what tended to advance the interests of the priests; precepts of morality and rules of just conduct never issued from the consecrated tripod.\*

\* “Happy had it been for the heathen world if upon the subject of morality their oracles had been invariably silent. The few sentiments which they delivered were not only accommodated to the prejudices, the passions, and the vices of their votaries, but they frequently even commanded the grossest violations of morality and decorum, and sanctioned the most horrible abominations.” Happy, also, had it been for society, if the tricks of charlatans had always been only innocent delusions. Witness the sumptuously-furnished saloons of Mesmer in Paris, which were thronged by the debauched, the pleasure-hunting, and the enthusiastic of both sexes, in search of pleasant excitement. Witness, too, the “Societies of Harmony,” established in the principal towns of France by his admiring pupils, and which became such a scandal to morality as to call for their suppression by the State. Did not the artful course of deception practised by the two Okeys render necessary their expulsion from one of our public hospitals? Has clairvoyance yet proved to be anything but a clever imposture?—See *Memoirs of Popular Delusions*, by C. Mackay, Esq.



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 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 effects of time, together with the favourable influence of a cheerful, hopeful state of mind, and the natural tendency in many diseases to a spontaneous decline, are quite overlooked in all these cases.

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

\* 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.

“ 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 different  
 “ from what the quack himself pretends that they can  
 “ cure. Magnificent and unqualified promises inspire  
 “ 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  
 “ person of inferior character. In cases which have  
 “ appeared to me desperate, but where the patient  
 “ possessed 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 striking example  
 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, pro-  
 “ mising them the most speedy relief. These were

“ accompanied with medicines against the scurvy, said  
 “ to be of great price, but of still 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 commanders 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 of medicine.

“ 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 graecious Princee’s cure.” \*

It has been truly observed, that “ the agency of faith  
 “ in the cure of diseases is a rather ticklish topic for the  
 “ faculty. It might be said, if imagination will cure, he  
 “ must be the best physician who is able to act most pow-  
 “ erfully on this part of our nature, whether a learned  
 “ regular or an ignorant quack.” To this it may be re-  
 plied, that it is the dishonourable employment of such a  
 power, by the abuse of that confidence reposed in the  
 medical profession, which constitutes the worst form of  
 quackery. Without a certain confidence in the veracity  
 of mankind, the whole system of human things would  
 go into confusion. “ Even in regard to the most com-  
 “ mon events of a single day, we often proceed on a con-  
 “ fidence in the veracity of a great variety of individuals.  
 “ There is, indeed, a natural tendency to truth in all  
 “ men, unless when this principle is overcome by some  
 “ strong selfish purpose to be answered by departing  
 “ from it;—and there is an equally strong tendency to  
 “ rely on the veracity of others, until we have learned  
 “ certain cautions by our actual experience of mankind.  
 “ Hence children and inexperienced persons are easily  
 “ imposed upon by unfounded statements: and the most  
 “ practised liar confides in the credulity of those whom  
 “ he attempts to deceive. Deception, indeed, would

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

“ never accomplish its purpose, if it were not from the  
 “ impression that men generally speak truth. It is ob-  
 “ vious also, that the mutual confidence which men have  
 “ in each other, both in regard to veracity of statement,  
 “ and to sincerity of intention respecting engagements, is  
 “ that which keeps together the whole of civil society.”

—*Abercrombie on the Moral Feelings.*

It is the abuse of this confidence between man and man that characterizes the quack, and distinguishes him from the upright physician. From the reciprocal influence of mind and body in disease, it may often become the duty of the physician, by inspiring hope and infusing consolation, to enlist the patient's mind in his service, and thereby to promote his cure. But he need not, and if conscientious, he will not do this by the violation of truth: still less will he practise on the hopes or fears of his patient from unworthy and interested motives. Very different, however, is the conduct of the quack and the impostor, who for selfish ends, by his “ base and baseless promises of cure,” too often deceives and betrays.

And what, it may be asked, is Homœopathy, but a mere fiction, the invention of a speculative, crazy enthusiast, whose followers, under the guise of science, and with all the spurious aids of art, have wrought it up into a systematic plan of imposture; professing under the veil of some mysterious hypothetical agency, to cure the maladies and sufferings of mankind by the employment of a series of nihilities, rejected by honesty and common sense, as downright artifice and fraud?

Dr. Marshall Hall has defined Homœopathy as “ the  
 “ art of amusing the patient whilst nature cures the dis-  
 “ ease,” and there can be no doubt but that under such

amusement, nature has worked many cures. There is, however, a class of diseases, in which, with all our confidence in the powers of nature, (and it is very great,) it would seem a criminal trifling with health and life to trust to such a delusive system. Although homœopaths may disregard the changes produced by disease in the internal parts of the body, physicians and surgeons well know that the natural tendency of many complaints is to damage the structure of organs, and thereby to endanger health, or even to destroy life. What takes place in acute inflammation of the various membranes of the body, is no doubtful or unascertained point. From the peculiar structure of the eye, we may often actually witness what is going on in diseases of that organ. The transparency of the cornea enables us to watch the progress and effects of severe Iritis. We can note the contraction of the pupil, its closure by being glued up with effused lymph, and the disease ending in partial or complete blindness. With the same fidelity we can observe the effects of efficient treatment in the arrest and removal of the disease, and that too with such unerring certainty, as to leave no doubt in our mind of the relation of the two as cause and effect.

Although removed from our sight, yet we have evidence, scarcely less sure, of the effects of inflammation in internal organs. We know that in Croup, a certain portion of the air tube is so narrowed and blocked up by the disease that it impedes respiration to such an extent as frequently to end in death. We are not ignorant of the effects of inflammation of the membranes of the heart, producing disease of its valves and other changes, leading sooner or later to dropsy, or some other

equally fatal, and more speedy result. And so with Pleurisy, Pneumonia, and acute inflammation of many other important organs of the body, each working its own peculiar mischief.

Yet in the face of all this positive knowledge of the destructive effects of acute disease, Homœopaths tell us, that they have nothing to do with what is going on within, and that the external symptoms alone claim their attention. Hahnemann himself 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. Is this the language of reason and sound knowledge, or of science, falsely so called? Let us contrast it with that of our great teacher, the late Mr. Abernethy. "We must understand structure and function, *and the changes produced in each by disorder and disease.* "There is no short cut, nor 'royal road' to the attainment of medical knowledge. The path which we have to pursue is long, difficult, and unsafe. In our progress, we must frequently take up our abode with death and corruption: we must adopt loathsome diseases for our familiar associates, or we shall never be thoroughly acquainted with their nature and dispositions; we must risk, nay even injure, our own health in order to be able to preserve or restore that of others. Yet, if we do this, our profession will be held in the highest respect; not as in ancient times, merely on account of the beneficence of its object, but because it will be further perceived, that the means are adequate to its accomplishment."

—*Hunterian Oration, 1819.*

Had Hahnemann and his disciples, perplexed by the

discordant theories of physicians, and discouraged by the imperfections of their art, simply discarded the use of medicine altogether; had they said, "So great is our confidence in the powers of nature, and in her ability to restore to health the disordered body; so strong is our belief that medicine is unnecessary, and often even mischievous, we therefore renounce it altogether, and rely exclusively on nature's unaided efforts, only taking care that she be not counteracted in her work by improprieties in diet or other disturbing causes:" had they reasoned thus, their course would have been consistent, intelligible, and honest. Their opponents, however they might have differed from these views, from a conviction that thus very valuable aid would oftentimes be rejected, yet might have said nothing, but have been content calmly to await the issue of events, and to leave the public to determine the necessity and value of medical science.

But when Homœopathists adopt principles and practice quite the reverse of this; when they deny any salutary powers on the part of nature, and represent her efforts and processes as blind, vain, and often hurtful; when they affirm all medical treatment based on past experience and knowledge to be not only useless, but even injurious; and when this and a great deal more is said only to clear the stage for the introduction of their own system, which they represent to be the only true method of healing, and which consists in the exhibition of homœopathic medicines in infinitesimal doses, in the billionth, quintillionth, or decillionth part of a grain or drop, there can be no hesitation in saying that these persons are practising a cheat on mankind, are degrading themselves, and dishonouring the medical profession.



Since disease and suffering are so inseparably associated with man's present existence, that it was long ago truly said of medical art, "Hæc quidem nusquam non est;" and since the very condition of our common nature renders, sooner or later, the services of others indispensable to each of us, every one is interested in the rectitude of those who practise it, while it is the special duty of each member of the profession to unmask and oppose all in it who pursue an unfaithful or mistaken course.

To substitute what is unreal, incomprehensible, and a manifest absurdity, for the lessons of experience and the teaching of science, is assuredly neither creditable to our profession, nor will it bring health and safety to our fellow-creatures, when in the hour of sickness and of danger they most need our help. On the contrary, a system, which is an object of confidence to thousands, will prove in the season of trial a thing of nought: and in a time of real disease, when succour is pre-eminently valuable, because then so much needed, it will be found to be altogether worthless and unprofitable; and its impotency and inadequacy of purpose will be witnesses against those who, by practising it, disgrace their reason and understanding. On one occasion, after seeing a homœopathic physician prescribe for a large number of patients, I took the liberty of asking him, what principle guided him in his selection of one dilution rather than another? To this question, after a moment's deliberation, he replied, "provided you choose the right medicine, it matters very little what dilution you employ." The answer, no doubt, was as true as it was ingenuous; for the effect of any medicine would be the same, whether the dilution be made by putting a drop of it

into the New River, the lake of Geneva, or the German Ocean.

I believe that when a homœopathic physician take his pen to prescribe for a patient a few globules of the quintillionth or decillionth of a grain or drop of any medicine, he must do so with the full consciousness that, although assuming a very important office, he is in reality acting a childish mockery; and with a feeling very much akin to that with which a priest or monk exhibits to the deluded multitude some precious relic, illustrious for the miracles it has wrought, in the healing of the sick, the raising of the dead, or the conversion of the infidel and heretic. There is no apology, and there can be no defence, for either the one or the other. Each presents a plain instance of deceit and imposture; the one of priestcraft, the other of quackery; and both are as impudent and as gross as the very worst forms that ever characterised superstition or charlatanry.

There is one explanation, and only one of this subject, and it is to be sought for in the inexperience and credulity of mankind, and the dishonesty of those who do not scruple to prey on them. They are the same dispositions which in past ages led thousands to pretend to, and millions to believe in, the most absurd and extravagant powers; in the possession of the philosopher's stone, which was to create plenty by turning old iron and pewter into gold; in the elixir vitæ, or water of life, a remedy against old age and decay; and in the mysteries of astrology, which were to enable blind man to pierce the thick darkness of futurity. Such dispositions have always been the fruitful parents of a numerous and odious offspring; of all the wilful

cheats who have encouraged and preyed upon the credulity of mankind ; of astrologers, necromaneers, sorcerers, geomaneers, and fortune-tellers ; of dealers in charms, amulets, and philtres ; of universal panacea-mongers, touchers for the evil, animal magnetizers, and all the motley tribe of quacks, empiries, and charlatans. "Gulibility seems an incurable disease in many persons. Experience is lost upon them. The lying promise that has been a thousand times repeated and as often falsified, is as readily believed as when first uttered. The more extravagant the expectation of benefit held out, the more eagerly is it adopted—the more glaring the base self-interest which prompts the deception, the more unflinching is the faith with which it is swallowed. The readiness to be deceived, and the grossness of the artifice employed to that end, are melancholy evidence of the weakness of the one party, and the successful audacity of the other."—*The Times*, Aug. 28, 1851.

On all the follies and delusions of past years, on Homœopathy, Mesmerism, and the many forms of artful pretension and imposture of the present day, should be stamped the words—

"The coin by craft for folly's use designed,  
Spurious, and current only with the blind."

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 a very humiliating reply to this statement. How many things that by turns have seized and occupied the public mind, have

proved no better than heathen idols, which derived all their importance and authority only from the folly and ignorance of those who worshipped them! Frenzied multitudes have journeyed to the holy land, on errands of supposed piety, but in reality of blind passion and superstition. Thousands of victims have been sacrificed to a belief in witchcraft; how many became crazed on the subject of the philosopher's stone? while whole nations have run mad after some visionary object of wealth, or ridiculous folly. Who can read the world's history without viewing it as "the great and awful book of human folly, which Porson once jestingly said he would write in five hundred volumes?"

"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, 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 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.’ ” \*

\* See Dedication to W. Wilberforce, Esq., of “ Evening Exercises,” by Rev. W. Jay.

That Homœopathy, like other delusions of the day, will be evanescent, and after a while take its place in the records of popular follies, no one acquainted with the history of the human mind can at all doubt. It is not to be expected, however, that it should be superseded by truth. It is one of the perversities of human nature, when we reject what is true, at the same time to swallow, with the utmost credulity, that which is absurd and false. Some fresh novelty will in all probability usurp its place; and they who have been deceived by one error will easily become the dupes of another.

Whatever is novel, incomprehensible, and marvellous, is eagerly sought for and admired by many persons, who, when they wish to support any theory, however extravagant, can easily torture facts into their service. "By confounding those very distinct things, *post hoc* and *propter hoc*, that which simply follows and that which consequentially results," they blindly take up with and are confirmed in the most ridiculous errors. As a specimen, I may be permitted to mention the following, and it is only one of a thousand. A gentleman, who suffered from Neuralgia of the face, took his usual dose of globules at bed-time. The following day he was at the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park. The weather was unusually warm and moist, and the Crystal Palace exceedingly crowded. The pain of the face was as bad as ever, yet the globules lost no part of their credit in the patient's estimation; on the contrary, as he was perspiring profusely, they acquired the additional reputation of being a very powerful sudorific. False conclusions, of an equally ludicrous kind, are formed by others from whom better things might have been expected.

Early in the history of Homœopathy in Edinburgh, Dr. Simpson witnessed the following circumstance. “An old schoolmate of Dr. Simpson having begun business as a homœopathic druggist in Liverpool, kindly sent Dr. S. a present of a small box of homœopathic medicines; and a very beautifully painted box it was. During the time it was in Dr. S.’s possession, he put it only to one use, viz., he gave it as an occasional plaything to his eldest son, who was then a child. The boy used in his sport to uncork the small bottles, empty their globules into a heap, and then refill the bottles from the general mass. Of course, this had speedily the effect of altering and disarranging the contents of the entire Lilliputian drug-shop; the globules pertaining to the different bottles were more or less thoroughly mixed together; and sometimes, when the child was tired of his occupation, others at last refilled the bottles from the general heap. A professional brother happening to call at Dr. Simpson’s house one day when Dr. S. was absent from home, saw the box, and put it in his pocket. Many weeks afterwards the new proprietor of the box met Dr. S., and told him that he had been trying to practise homœopathically, and he added, that he had seen some wonderful effects and cures from using the drugs contained in Dr. S.’s own former homœopathic box! Wrongly, perhaps, as Dr. S. now thinks, he did not at the time tell this physician that the globules of the bottles which he had been using were elaborately commixed; but the whole struck him as so good a joke at the moment, that he thought he would reserve it to bring it out upon his friend on some future and more ripe occasion, for the purpose of laughing him out of his homœopathic delusion. But, unfortunately,

matters hastened rapidly on, the physician became more and more a homœopathist, and then it became too serious a matter to joke about, when he actually published a list of supposed homœopathic cures." The physician alluded to was Dr. Henderson.—*Edinburgh Monthly Journal*, Dec. 1851.

How far temptations to eupidity might lead to self-deception, or might prove temptations to impose on others, is a question for the moral philosopher or divine. He, however, must be ignorant of the records of history, who does not know that such things have been very realities. The doctrine of relics and their sale are familiar to us all, and the knavery of priests and the credulity of an ignorant people, are no mere fancy or uncharitable supposition. If any credit can be given to ecclesiastical history, it has been proved that "men have worshipped the skull of a heathen, when they supposed they were worshipping the skull of a Christian; have prostrated themselves before the bones of malefactors, when they imagined themselves kneeling before the bones of saints; and were breathing invocations to souls in hell, when they imagined themselves invoking the prayers of the saints in heaven. In the matter of relics, imposture has done its work."—*Pilgrimage to Rome*, by Rev. Hobart Seymour.

This was the natural consequence of a blind and abject superstition; the just reward of men disregarding the light of their own reason and understanding. And what an abnegation of all understanding and reason is involved in the belief that the billionth or decillionth of a grain of chalk or charcoal, or of any other substance, should be capable of acting on the human frame. And what delusion to trust to such nihilities during the progress



of dangerous disease, and to look for health and recovery to that which is no remedy at all. Is it not the very counterpart of what we read in the Wisdom of Solomon? "For health, he calleth upon that which is weak ; for life, prayeth to that which is dead ; for aid, humbly beseecheth that which hath least means to help ; and for a good journey, he asketh of that which cannot set a foot forward ; and for gaining and getting, and for good success of his hands, asketh ability to do of him that is most unable to do any thing." (Ch. xiii. vers. 18, 19.) After all that I have read, and seen, and known of Homœopathy, I believe that it is an empty and deceitful system, having no foundation whatever in truth, being formed merely from imagination, and having its origin in the pride of human reason ; that very reason in Hahnemann, its author, having been unbalanced and disordered by excessive vanity, and the habitual ascendancy of the imagination over the other faculties of his mind.

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 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

\* "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

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 illuminations 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, no difficulty can be felt in forming an estimate of a certain class of practitioners. Every

“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.)

physician and surgeon may justly entertain so strong a feeling of the dignity of the medical profession, as to wish that no one included within its pale may ever tarnish its lustre, or, by disingenuous conduct, diminish its claims to public respect. What then can be thought of those of its members, who, to the practice of an honourable profession, unite that of a degrading quackery; and who by adopting both methods of treatment, proclaim their willingness to surrender their own judgment and conscientious opinion to the caprice and fancies of any who may consult them? On the same grounds is to be equally condemned, the conduct of those persons who seek to obtain the diploma of our Universities or Colleges, intending afterwards to practise the system of Homœopathy. The diploma is granted, on certain well understood terms, to those who have acquired a competent amount of knowledge, and who also profess those principles of practice which our Colleges believe to be sound and correct. Yet these principles are immediately afterwards denied and renounced, and there is substituted for them a system, which those very Colleges have declared to be a fallacy and an imposture. Is not such dissimulation in each case incompatible with that sincerity and honesty of purpose which constitute an essential ingredient in the medical character?

The late Mr. Abernethy was accustomed to say to his patients, "I cannot undertake to give you good advice, but I will promise to give you honest advice; I will tell you what I would myself do in your situation." This was following the golden rule, of doing as we would be done by; and that man who most sedulously strives to qualify himself to advise others, and likewise best obeys

this precept, most nearly approaches the beau ideal of the medical character.

The Word of Truth assures us that “no man can serve two masters,” and no man without a compromise of his character can adopt both kinds of practice. The two are not consistent with, but contrary to each other; and for any one to believe in both is a plain impossibility. No casuistry, therefore, can justify or explain away such double-dealing; and all moralists will agree that “if a man represents as true what he believes to be untrue, or even doubtful, he tells a falsehood, and that if he does it from interested motives, he is a dishonest man.”

*Bloomsbury Square, March, 1852.*

