

Palmer (A. B.)

HOMŒOPATHY,

WHAT IS IT?

A STATEMENT AND REVIEW

—OF—

ITS DOCTRINES AND PRACTICE.

—BY—

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HOMŒOPATHY, What Is It? A statement and review of its doctrines and practice by A. B. Palmer, M. D., LL. D., Professor of Pathology and Practice of Medicine in the College of Medicine in the University of Michigan. Since the first edition of this little book was given to the public, about one year ago, the subject of homœopathy has attracted much attention—more attention, probably, than at any time in the history of the existence of that school in medicine. It is the opinion of its author that the work of disintegration of the homœopathic system has begun, and that during this time its general demoralization has gone on more rapidly, perhaps, than at any preceding time.

It is the opinion of Dr. Palmer that the reason for the present rapid destruction of the system founded by Hahnemann is not so much what has been said by its opponents, as the result of its own inherent weakness, and the general advancement of knowledge among all classes on scientific subjects. The present work, however, and one or two others in the English language, and one by a well-known author (Prof. Juergensen) in the German, have doubtless done much to draw general attention more distinctly to the subject. The recent events connected with the illness of Lord Beaconsfield, in which one of the most prominent reputed homœopaths of England denied his exclusive adherence to the system, and declared his readiness to adopt any measures in the case which a regular consulting physician should advise, certainly point to a breaking down of the barriers erected by the dogmas of Hahnemann, and a return to the broad ground of scientific medicine; and in the opinion of the author it "shows a state of things within the homœopathic fraternity which foretells its dissolution, if logic or consistency shall have any force."

GEORGE S. DAVIS.

cork as the operation proceeds. These manipulations are to be conducted thus through all the vials, from the first up to the thirtieth, or decillionth development of power, which is the one in most general use."

With regard to solids, he adds on the same page, "these were, in the first place, exalted in energy by the attenuation in the form of power by the means of trituration in a mortar (in sugar) to the third or millionth degree. Of this, one grain was then dissolved and brought through twenty-seven vials by a process similar to that employed in the case of vegetable juices up to the thirtieth development of power."

On page 207 of the same work, the same founder of the system says: "The best mode of administration is to make use of small globules of sugar the size of mustard seed; one of these globules having imbibed the medicine, and being introduced into a vehicle, forms a dose containing about a three-hundredth part of a drop of the dilution, for three hundred such globules will imbibe one drop of alcohol, by placing one of these on the tongue, and not drinking anything after it," * * * and then he adds: "But 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."

Dr. Hempel (*Mat. Med.*, vol. 1, page 92,) says: "In order to obtain good Homœopathic preparations, follow Hahnemann's rules as closely as may be possible and convenient," even in the mode of trituration, etc.

Dr. Rau, in his *Homœopathic Organon*, American translation, page 120, says: "One grain of the solid and one drop of the liquid substance, is mixed with ninety-nine grains of the sugar of milk, and triturated for one hour in a porcelain mortar with a porcelain pestle. * * * After an hour's trituration we obtain the first trituration. The second trituration is prepared by triturating one grain of the first trituration with an additional ninety-nine grains of sugar of milk. The third by triturating one grain of the second in a similar manner. Of this third we mix one grain with 100 drops of alcohol or water, and by shaking the mixture a number of times, obtain

the fourth dilution. Every successive dilution is obtained by mixing in a similar manner, one drop of the preceding dilution with ninety-nine drops of alcohol."

In the first dilution of one grain of the medicine with ninety-nine of sugar or alcohol, one grain of the mixture contains $\frac{1}{100}$ of a grain of the crude medicine. One grain or drop of this first is added to the next vial, thus forming the second dilution. A grain or drop of the medicine will contain $\frac{1}{100}$ part of $\frac{1}{100}$, which is $\frac{1}{10,000}$ part of a grain. The third dilution contains $\frac{1}{100}$ part of the second, and one grain of that contains $\frac{1}{1,000,000}$ part of a grain of the medicine. The fourth contains $\frac{1}{100}$ parts of the third, which would be $\frac{1}{100,000,000}$. The fifth, $\frac{1}{10,000,000,000}$, and so on up to the thirtieth, diminishing in this rapid geometrical progression—the denominator of the fraction representing each succeeding dilution being multiplied by 100, each one all the way through being 100 times less than the one just preceding; so that at the thirtieth dilution, a unit with sixty ciphers for a denominator, and a unit for the numerator, expresses the quantity of medicine, or the part of a grain which at that dilution is contained in a drop. This is the fraction:

$$\frac{1}{1,000}$$

A drop of alcohol containing this part of a grain is to moisten three hundred sugar globules. The alcohol evaporates, leaving that fraction of a grain in the globules, and one of these globules is the dose.

The quantity of liquid required to dilute the whole of a simple grain to the thirtieth degree may be arrived at mathematically by taking another view from the data presented in the language of Hahnemann and Rau.

When using the medicine at the thirtieth dilution, all the intermediate vials are discarded. If all, however, were used and brought to this dilution—if none were discarded, and the whole ultimately elaborated—a thing impossible except in theory, it would be as follows:

For the first dilution 100 drops of alcohol would be used. For the second, 100 times as many, which would be 10,000 drops,

the light source, being measured either directly by taking a single reading one drop of the preceding liquid was added to the drop of alcohol.

In the first instance, if one grain of the preceding water be added to a grain of alcohol, and again if the mixture be taken up of a grain of the second substance, if the greatest drop of the first be added to the second, then, during the second dilution, a grain of each of the mixtures will contain $\frac{1}{2}$ part of each, which is equal to a grain. For the third dilution, a grain of the second and one grain of the mixture will contain $\frac{1}{4}$ part of the first and $\frac{3}{4}$ part of the mixture. The fourth dilution will be $\frac{1}{8}$ part of the first and $\frac{7}{8}$ part of the mixture, and so on, until the dilution being in the third decimal progression, the amount of the first representing each successive dilution being multiplied by ten each time, the amount of the first will be less than the one-hundredth part of a grain.

Pages 28-29 missing

The quantity of light required to dilute the first of a simple glass to the thousandth degree may be ascertained by taking up the first view from the data presented in the chapter of Hahnemann and his.

When using the procedure for the dilution of the intermediate view are discarded, all are however, returned and brought to the solution of one was discarded, and the whole ultimately elaborated a clear, uniform, matter, if there was to be no further.

For the first dilution, the amount of alcohol would be equal to the amount of water necessary which would be necessary,

declaring (see page 62), that "it holds good, and will continue to hold good as a homœopathic therapeutic maxim, not to be refused by any experience in the world, that THE BEST DOSE of the properly selected remedy is ALWAYS the very smallest one in one of the high dynamizations (X or the 30th dilution) as well for chronic as for acute diseases." Now, this 30th dilution, which Hahnemann thus asserts as indubitably "*the best dose*" of all drugs for chronic or acute diseases, consists of a decillionth of a grain of the drugs used; or, in other words, it consists of a *minute globule of sugar, moistened by being simply dipped in a drop out of an ocean of fluid one hundred and forty billions (140,000,000,000,000) times as large as our whole planetary system, and which enormous ocean has been medicated for the purposes of homœopathy, by having dissolved and mixed through it one single grain of the appropriate drug.*"

Dr. Simpson adds :

"Surely common sense and common sanity both dictate to the human mind that it is utterly impossible that any such dose, from any such an inconceivable ocean, medicated by a *single grain* of any drug dissolved and mixed in it, can have any possible medicinal effect upon the human body, either in a state of health or in a state of disease; and,—looking at these and the numerous and diversified facts; CONFIRMATORY IN ALL RESPECTS OF THE SAME VIEW, which have been already stated in the preceding pages, we cannot but conclude with a writer whom the homœopaths themselves regard as the mildest and fairest among their opponents, namely, Dr. Forbes, that in rejecting homœopathy, "we are discarding what is AT ONCE FALSE AND BAD—USELESS TO THE SUFFERER—AND DEGRADING TO THE PHYSICIAN."

Possibly we cannot deny the credit [?] of originality to Hahnemann, for insisting upon the efficacy of infinitesimal doses; and yet Cervantes in his inimitable sarcasm on Knight-errantry—in the third chapter of Don Quixote, says:

"In the plains and deserts where Knight-errants fought and were wounded, no aid was near, unless they had some sage enchanter for their friend, who could give them immediate assistance by conveying in a cloud through the air some damsel or dwarf, *with a vial of water*, possessed of such efficacy, that upon tasting a single drop of it, they should instantly become as sound as if they had received no injury."

Many of the statements of Hahnemann and his followers are very much after this style—are indeed quite as marvelous. In the case of the "Sage enchanters," unearthly powers were

Opinions of the Press.

We are very glad to notice a second edition of Prof. Palmer's "Homœopathy, What Is It?" We know of no book more worthy of circulation as a tract by the profession.—*Philadelphia Medical Times*.

It should be read by every practitioner.—*Southern Medical Record*.

It is a masterly review of the Hahnemann system, and has doubtless had much effect in overthrowing the faith of many of its followers.—*Louisville Medical News*.

The most condensed picture of homœopathy that we know of, together with the most unanswerable arguments establishing its fallacy.—*Pacific Medical and Surgical Journal*.

All that is necessary to secure the complete downfall of homœopathy is to have the masses understand the absurdities, and for that purpose Dr. Palmer's book answers admirably.—*Kansas Medical Index*.

That this little volume has in the short space of one year attained its second edition, is an evidence not only of the masterly dissertation and exhaustive exposé of its distinguished author, but also of the interest manifested by the public and the medical profession in an absurdity now rapidly fading under the broad glare of truth.—*Southern Practitioner*.

All who have a desire to learn something about homœopathy should read this book.—*American Medical Journal*.

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We have no doubt but that this little brochure has effected considerable good, and would urge upon all our readers the importance of reading it.—*Nashville Journal of Medicine and Surgery*.

Dr. Palmer's work is readable and we commend it to all.—*Southern Clinic*.

We beg leave to acknowledge the receipt of the above work from the publishers. Recent treatment of the subject by prominent societies and

individuals—for example, the action of Sir Wm. Jenner and Dr. Quain in the case of the late Earl of Beaconsfield with the action of the British Medical Association in the premises; the reference to the subject in the new code adopted by the New York State Medical Society; the article by Dr. Palmer in the March number of the North American Review, etc.—attach additional interest to "Homœopathy, What Is It?" at this time.—*Canada Lancet*, August, 1882.

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