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POPULAR FALLACIES

CONCERNING HOMŒOPATHY REFUTED.

BY JOSEPH HOOPER, M. D.

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POPULAR FALLACIES CONCERNING HOMŒOPATHY REFUTED.

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It is recorded of several noted opponents to christianity, that they confessed they had never devoted much time or attention to the study of the Sacred Writings. Yet their invectives were most violent, and their opposition to revealed religion most persistent. The dishonesty and folly of such a course have not prevented many from being influenced to their ruin by the sarcasms, cavils and misrepresentations of infidel writers.

Much of the opposition to the benign, beautiful and rational system of medicine denominated homœopathy, would vanish like mists before the rising sun, if people would honestly study, and fairly put to the test, the teachings of this New School of medical science. But as it is often with religious truth, so it is with medical truth. *Ridicule* rather than *research* is allowed to influence the mind, and *sophistries* are made to supply the place of *logical arguments*. Many of the notions held of, and the mis-statements made about homœopathy, seem to those at all practically acquainted with the subject, to be so puerile and foolish as to be unworthy of a single line in refutation; yet, as they are often seriously put forth, and their very absurdity made the reason of dismissing the subject altogether, it is not wise to leave them unmentioned. We propose to state some of the popular fallacies concerning homœopathy, and weigh them in the balances of common sense and clinical experience. A very common misapprehension of the homœopathic law of cure, is, that the cause of sickness will produce its destruction, or in other words, that the same thing which makes a man ill will make him well again. We are represented as teaching, therefore, some such absurdities as the following: A man drinks until he is intoxicated; a little more liquor will make him sober. Or a person take a portion of poison; by taking a minute dose of the same drug, he will be saved from the consequences of his folly. Now this is *isopathy*; this is not the teaching of homœopathy. The law does not read, *iidem iisdem curantur*, the same things by the same are cured, but our law is, *Similia similibus curantur*, similars by similars are cured—like cures like. The reader will at once perceive there is a vast difference between the two propositions; and nothing less than the sheerest prejudice or the most malevolent impertinence, could cause any one so to misrepresent the law of cure announced by the adherents of the new system. No homœopaiñist is so silly as to believe that the *cause* of a disease can prove the *cure* of the same. The only practical illustration of an attempt to carry out such an absurdity that we can call to mind, is to be found in the effort of an allopathist, a few years ago, to prevent the fatal influence of small pox by inoculation with the virus produced during that disease; a course so destructive of human life that municipal and legislative bodies wisely put a veto upon the barbarous practice. Vaccination, on the contrary, is simply and purely a homœo-

* The second of a series of popular tracts for sale at the office of the American Homœopathic Observer, at \$4 per 100.

pathic-prophylactic remedy, or preventive of small pox. In this case we introduce into the system a poison, similar in many respects to (*but not the same as*) the poison of small pox; and doubtless hundreds of thousands, by the introduction of this true homœopathic course of treatment, have been preserved from disfigurement, deafness, blindness and death. To the question, "How is it possible that the production of a similar disease in the human frame can drive out or destroy a like set of symptoms?" we can here only reply, that it is perhaps as impossible to account for the fact, as it is to explain why the magnetic needle points to the north pole. But experience every day in innumerable instances, confirm the immutability of the law that *two similar diseases cannot co-exist in the same organism*, and consequently a drug that will produce similar symptoms to those of a disease, will effectually and radically cure that disease. Are we to deny the existence of every law, the operation of which we cannot fully comprehend? Then must we deny ten thousand things which we daily see and feel. We must deny the spirituality of our own being—the influence of mind on matter—and may ever more doubt the reality even of our own existence. Let every one who wishes honestly to understand or fairly to test the truth of the law of *similia*, experiment a little with two or three of our leading remedies, and he will never again be led astray by such pitiful attempts to deceive as are found in the statement that homœopathy proposes to cure drunkenness by whisky, burns by a little more fire, or a terrible cold by standing a few minutes out in the rain. The inquirer might begin, when in perfect health, with a few drops of the mother tincture of Belladonna (obtaining this and other tinctures for the purposes of proving from some respectable homœopathic pharmacy, to insure the purity of the drug and the production of their true pathogenetic symptoms). In a short space of time he would experience at least many of the following effects: The pulse becomes stronger and fuller; face puffed, red and hot; bright scarlet appearance of the skin; patchy eruption, or the appearance of flea bites; the pupils of the eyes dilated, or extremely contracted; dizziness; buzzing in the ears; drowsiness, with frequent starting; restlessness; swelling of the veins of the head and neck; violent raving delirium; feeling as if the brain were expanded, or of weight, fullness and oppression in the head; disordered sight; double or inverted appearance of objects; irregular breathing; deep, hollow cough; tongue painful, swollen or inflamed; fiery red, heavily furred, with red tip and margins; throat dry, hot and red; swollen tonsils, frothy saliva, &c., &c.* (See Laurie.) The next time the experimentalist met with a sick friend whose symptoms strongly resembled those from which he had been suffering when under the action of Belladonna, he should administer five or six pellets of the third, or some higher potency of Bell., about every four hours, and he would then get a pretty good idea of the law of homœopathy. In the same way he might prove on himself any other drug, e. g., *Aconite*, *Ipecacuanha* or *Mercury*, writing down carefully every symptom pro-

* Should the prover become alarmed by any violent symptoms, he will find very strong coffee the best antidote to Belladonna. Lemon juice antidotes Aconite. Peruvian bark or China antidotes Ipecacuanha.

duced by the medicine; and when meeting such a picture of symptoms as had appeared in his own frame, administering the same medicine, only in very minute doses. A very easy experiment would be to take enough of *Agaricus muscarius* to produce the symptoms of intoxication, then administer a few drop doses to the next drunken man you meet with, and you will have a beautiful illustration of the action of a homœopathic remedy, and will appreciate the motto of the New School, *Similia similibus curantur*. But it is objected, if it be really true that a homœopathic medicine is capable of producing similar symptoms to those found in disease, will not the administration of such medicaments be likely to increase the symptoms and aggravate rather than cure the trouble? This is a sensible objection, and merits a careful reply. We believe that such a homœopathic medicine *does* increase the symptoms when given in *large* or even in appreciable doses; hence the necessity of diminishing the dose to the minimum amount, which experience teaches will have a curative effect upon the diseased organism. But it is to be remembered, *first*, that symptoms of disease consist in the manifestations of nature's effort to relieve herself of some poison, obstruction or difficulty, and a slight increase of symptoms may prove the turning point in the malady. And *second*, every drug has two actions, the primary and the secondary, and if the primary action be to increase the symptoms, the secondary action will be to allay them and restore to health. Now the primary action of a minute homœopathic dose does not perceptibly increase the difficulty experienced by a patient, and is speedily followed by the secondary or curative reaction.

A second misapprehension concerning homœopathy, is, that it consists in administering infinitesimal doses of medicine, a few pellets no bigger than spider's eggs, hence the appellation with which some of us are honored,—“*spider egg doctors*”—and as the popular creed is that “seeing is believing and feeling is the naked truth,” it is considered absurd to expect anything but disappointment from relying upon medicines that are tasteless and invisible. The *size* of the dose has really nothing whatever to do directly with the principles of homœopathy. A medicine may be truly homœopathic to a disease, and the prescriber a true homœopathician, though the dose be filthy to the taste, disgusting to the eye, and weigh five, ten or twenty grains. The great question is, Will the medicine to be administered produce upon a healthy person similar symptoms to those you wish to cure? If so, it is homœopathic in whatever dose, and every practitioner is at full liberty to administer *as much or as little* as he finds most beneficial. Homœopathic practitioners differ greatly amongst themselves as to the best potency or attenuation to be used in a given case. Some prefer the high, some the low dilutions or triturations. All, however, find that a very minute dose is safer, more reliable, and more speedy in producing curative effects, than a massive dose, even though it be truly indicated as the agent under the new therapeutic law. In the Old School, the quantity of medicine administered is being rapidly diminished year by year, and some practitioners almost rival the New School in the small amount of medicine they employ. That minute doses can

and do have a magnificent effect, none doubt who take the trouble to experiment; and why should one nauseate himself with bulky drugs, if a sufficient dynamic influence to cure can be concentrated in the space of a little sugar globule, or a sweet and pleasant powder, that can lie on the point of a penknife. A volume might be filled with proofs in nature, every day illustrations of the fact that the eye, the ear, the nose, the mouth and some of the more internal organs, are influenced by infinitesimal particles of matter. We propose to occupy the space of one tractate with such a collection of facts, and, therefore, dismiss the subject for the present, reminding you that homœopathy does not consist in infinitesimal doses of medicine, and that minute doses are more rational than grosser, undynamatized, masses of drugs.

A third fallacy is, that *the medicines of the homœopaths are really inert, and their cures are effected through the power of imagination.* The homœopaths must be the most wonderful people under the sun. Physicians and laymen alike must be endowed with powers surpassing far those possessed by other mortals; and strange to say, this peculiarity is possessed by all living creatures owned by them. They have most wonderfully imaginative babies, imaginative horses, cows and dogs, for all these, when afflicted with disease, receive a few inert pellets or powders, when their troublesome symptoms pass away and they get well. Let us give you a few cases. A nursing infant screams out with pain, rolls and tosses about in evident distress; the little pulse is running very high; the skin, dry and parched, quite burns one when you touch it; the bowels feel hard and intensely hot; the little knees are drawn up nearly to its chin, and the breath is so short and labored, that tears roll down the mother's cheeks, expecting her little one very speedily to pass away. The father hurries off to the nearest physician, who, on his arrival, gives two small pellets of *Aconite*. In fifteen minutes there is a gentle moisture on the forehead, then the chest is wet with perspiration, the limbs are straightened out, and the moaning ceases. Is the child dead? Oh no! that wonderful power of imagination wrought by the cunning doctor on the mind of a six months' old babe, made her feel better, and she went to sleep. The next morning she was crowing and tugging at papa's whiskers, as though no trouble had ever happened. A full grown man is seized with an epileptic spasm. He has often suffered from them before, but this time a homœopathic physician is called in, and with a few pellets administered occasionally every day for a week or two, and by the force of imagination, the sufferer escapes the return of the malady for years.

In Naples, Dr. Rubini and other homœopaths treated five hundred cholera patients with drop doses of the homœopathic remedy, Camphor, (given, of course, as a pretence and a basis for the mind to work upon). Four hundred and ninety-nine out of the five hundred (by the power of imagination) convalesced. In Cincinnati, in 1849, Drs. Pulte and Ehrman treated one thousand one hundred and sixteen cases of Asiatic Cholera. So powerfully did those gentlemen act on the imagination of their patients (though many of them were insensible) that one thousand and eighty got well. Blessed imagination! What a pity it is the Old School cannot get up some such a state of mind on the part of their patients, to help the Calomel and Cantharides, the Jalap and the lancet, and save a few more out of their per centage of mortality. It would be worth while for them to attend a homœopathic class of psychology, and try and learn the secret. But ridicule apart, are not those persons more credulous who believe that hundreds of thousands of the sick are cured through the power of imagination, based on inert sugar pills, than those who attribute these cures to the efficacy of the divine law, appointed by a beneficent Creator, and brought to light by the learned and philosophic Dr. Samuel Hahnemann—" *Similia similibus curantur?*"

Again, it is asserted—*Homœopathic patients recover, not by any virtue in the medicine, but by the influence of the excellent dietary system always enforced.* So true is it that nature, unimpeded in her restorative efforts by improprieties in diet, often proves alone sufficient to raise to health again those who seemed almost beyond hope, that we should not be surprised at this objection, coming from thoughtful, unprofessional men, but we confess it is a little astonishing that this statement should originate in the ranks of our professional opponents. Is it true, then, gentlemen, we would ask of them, that it would be better, safer and easier—a saving of time, money and pain—if your patients were to leave Blue mass, Opium and Quinine alone, and trust themselves to the care of Dame Nature and Dr. Common Sense? We heartily agree with you, that the expectant system, or the do-nothing system, is far preferable to the heroic treatment of the Old School. But statistics show, that while nature will effect many cures, homœopathy will effect still more, by gently, yet efficiently, assisting nature. Our medicines are not inert, although it is true that in some instances a person in health might take a handful of medicated pellets, without suffering inconvenience. The writer has in numerous instances observed that drop doses of *Aconite*, the third decimal attenuation, will, in case of fever, reduce the pulse from two hundred beats per minute to eighty, in less than an hour's time. Many a time half a dozen pellets of *Colocynth*, sixth potency, removed violent colic in the abdomen in fifteen minutes, and we might, from personal experience, multiply illustrations by hundreds. It is rational to suppose that a very minute particle of medicine, acting on an inflamed or diseased surface, will produce powerful results, even though no perceptible influence could be observed upon the healthy organism.

Let a man put a drop of alcohol on his sound skin, and the nerves are scarcely conscious of its presence; but if the epidermis be removed and the surface irritated and inflamed, that drop of spirit will almost drive him to distraction. Even if it could be proved that homœopathic medicines were inert, still, in accordance with the statements of the most honest and observing allopathic authorities, our patients would be no losers, and the belief they would cherish in the efficacy of the remedies employed would be in favor of the new practice.

Once more. It is asserted by some that there is something in homœopathy. *The system is suited for children, perhaps, and chronic cases, but would be utterly useless in acute diseases, especially when the patients were adults.* That homœopathy is pre-eminently adapted to children is a fact. The absence of occult, complicated drug diseases, of long standing, leaves a fair field for the operation of specific remedies; and most beautifully do the delicate organisms of children yield to medicaments exhibited even in the two hundredth potencies. But amongst the multitudes who have sought the aid of homœopathy in their distress; tens of thousands have been men and women of full growth, and they have not been disappointed. The untenable nature of this objection may be proved any day, by a visit to any one of the four thousand offices of homœopathic physicians at present practicing in the United States, where you will find, calling, persons of every age and rank, and of either sex. It is a grand mistake, and the fruitful

source of many an error, that medicinal power consists in bulk, whereas it consists, first, in natural adaptation, and then in separation from all gross admixture or incrustation. The essence, the virtue, of a drug, is often not reached until the material particles are so broken up as to become invisible to the naked eye. By trituration, carbonate of lime, sulphur, flint, animal and vegetable charcoal—(all naturally almost inert)—become very powerful and unspeakably important remedial agents. In reference to the statement that homœopathy is only adapted to chronic diseases, we would ask the enquirer to look at the statistics of our cures of Asiatic Cholera, Cholera Morbus, Dysentery, Pneumonia, Enteritis, (Inflammation of the bowels,) Phrenitis (Inflammation of the brain,) Inflammatory fevers, &c., &c. They not only compare well with the statistics furnished by any other practice, but our losses by death are many per cent. fewer. All medical men with whom we have ever conversed, consider chronic diseases more difficult to cure, as a rule, than acute attacks, and if a medicine will cure a disease when it has assumed a chronic form, the acute manifestation is generally quite controllable. The homœopaths find this great advantage in treating chronic cases. They can continue administering the same remedy for weeks, and even months, without detriment to the general health, whilst remedies given in a crude state, and in large doses, often repeated, would soon find no organs to work upon at all.

And lastly. We have known persons who, when disposed to test homœopathy in their families in time of sickness, were warned by some sapient M. D., (who had a little before treated homœopathic sugar pills as worthless playthings,) that they would all most assuredly get poisoned with their Arsenic, Aconite, Belladonna, &c., all of them fatal drugs, which none but authorized, thoroughly educated, and regular medical men, should be permitted to handle. This poor attempt to frighten the timid and the credulous needs no serious reply. We would ask of such a medical objector,—Pray, Doctor, where did you learn the true pathogenetic symptoms of unadulterated, unmixed, uncompounded drugs? Were provings of poisons on healthy subjects ever instituted before Hahnemann set the example? Who is most likely to administer medicines safely—the homœopathist, who takes his medicines himself, before giving them to the sick, or the man who merely gives a certain dose because it is according to authority? Which is more likely to prove poisonous, the ten thousandth part of a grain of a single medicine, the properties of which have been fully tested in health or disease, or a conglomeration of drugs in mass, about which no man can tell whether it has formed a chemical combination or a mechanical mixture? Let common sense and common honesty decide the question.

We have seen that the ordinary objections urged against homœopathy cannot stand the test of reason and experience. The spirit that prompts them is like the animus contained in the lines—

“I do not like thee, Doctor Fell;
The reason why, I cannot tell;
But this I surely know full well,
I do not like thee, Dr. Fell.”

Again we say, prove Homœopathy by the fair test of experiment, and if the system should be found weak, or even false, you will have suffered no harm. If you prove it and find it true and beneficent, you will be saved the condemnation of having thoughtlessly and recklessly trodden under foot a boon from heaven.

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