Williams (C. D.)
E Sterling

A REVIEW

OF

PROFESSOR C. B. COVENTRY'S

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Class of Medical Students of Geneva College,

SESSION OF 1843-4.

BY DR. C. D. WILLIAMS.

SURGEON GENL'S OFFICE
67.
LIBRARY

Surgeon Genl's Office
LIBRARY
23364.
Washington, D.C.

GENEVA:
IRA MERRELL, PRINTER: SENECA-ST.
1844.

REVIEW.

In a subject so important as that of seeking the best means for the preservation of human life, it is not surprising that all should feel a deep interest; and when any discovery that promises a melioration of the "ills that flesh is heir to," is offered, that we should, each and all, examine whether the promises that are made, are founded on truth and reason; and if found so, it is not strange that we should seek to avail ourselves in the best manner of such discoveries. This desire to meliorate our condition, and neutralize more or less the evils that surround us, as regards our health, extends also, in a degree adequate to their relative importance, to the other relations of life; so that when any discovery is made, offering a mitigation of physical labor, it is met by an examination and experiments; and if found practicable, is at once adopted, and we profit by its advantages. In matters so nearly and so deeply affecting our peculiar interests, it is to be expected different modes will be offered, and different means advocated of gratifying these interests; and it is also expected, that the champions of each particular plan should be ardent in the advancement of the one they have themselves adopted; and this difference and warmth can well be tolerated and even approbated, when we suppose the advocates themselves, after examining, by every means in their power, the opposite or different modes, are actuated by candor in still supporting their own. But what words can sufficiently express our contempt, our detestation of one, who, merely

because he has been accustomed to any particular plan, still adheres to it, obstinately refusing to examine a new doctrine, although it may have received the sanction and approbation of wise and good men; more especially, when this one occupies a station to which men are accustomed to look for information and advice, and to judge, more or less, of the truth of new doctrines, according to the views of them emanating from this station? When we behold men possessing age, knowledge and wealth, and with these, the ability, to a certain extent, of guiding the minds of men, we accord to their opinions respect and esteem; but when these powers are prostituted to the accomplishment of wicked or sinister designs, the possession of these high qualities, instead of shielding them from disrespect, should rather heighten the contempt with which we view them.*

These remarks are particularly, at present, excited by the fact of the recent publication of a lecture, delivered by Professor C. B. Coventry, of Utica, before the Students of Geneva Medical College, during the present term, upon the subject, principally, of Homœopathy. By this lecture, it appears that he is one of that strange class, who, acknowledging, as every one does, the want of improvement in medical science, not only refuses to examine Homœopathy, but has even proceeded so far as to vent his spleen upon it, subjecting it to all the low phrases of contempt, that small minds ever employ, when looking at things above their comprehension. As a general thing, missives, such as these, are hardly worth other notice than the contempt of silence; and this indeed, would have been the fate of the "Lecture," had it not been that, from the situation of the author, as a professor in a respectable Medical College, and as he is pleased to style himself, "one of the guardians of the profession," he might really be supposed to know something of the subject of which he is speaking, beyond the common report of its enemies,

* Dr. Samuel Johnson.

and to have submitted its principles to the test of something like experiment. But we do not find in the 'Lecture,' even the pretence of having ever tried them, in any manner whatever; and we can only account for his having dismissed the subject so summarily, with hardly an attempt at an argument against it, by supposing that "the knowledge he was born with," on the subject of Homœopathy, is greater than that of most men, and hence his more eminent ability to decide upon it without an examination. It has been well said, by Everest, a distinguished English clergyman, that after having sought faithfully for the arguments advanced against Homœopathy, he had found four, "pithy, terse, that might be carried about in a jacket pocket," and these four were, 1. fool; 2. knave; 3. quack; 4. charlatan: and had he written since the production of the "Introductory Lecture," he would hardly have had reason to extend his list; for, after having searched thoroughly through the Lecture, I can find little besides these four—though of them all the last division, "charlatanism," is the one on which he seems most to rely to strike with terror the luckless abettors of Homœopathy, and to decide at once the wavering and the faint-hearted. In attempting a review of a work so manifestly devoid of argument, the intention to reduce to any thing like order his animadversions, would be useless, and we shall therefore take the liberty of examining them in detail as they occur. He commences in a manner so desultory, that a "school boy," in his first composition, might well envy him; and informs us of some general facts, which might or might not, according to the opinion of the reader, be regarded as necessary to a proper understanding of the matter, and then at once "wanders" into the subject. After telling us that he esteems it his duty, as a "guardian of the profession," to caution his pupils against "the temptations to empiricism" that surround them; which empiricism attacks, as he says, "the very citadel of the profession, by open foes without and

by secret enemies within;" we very naturally wish to inquire, why it is that *he* especially, should hold the station of one of the "guardians;" what and where this "citadel" may be; and who are the "open foes without and secret enemies within?" And knowing no other reason, why he should be one of the "guardians," than because he is a professor in Geneva Medical College, we must hence conclude that he is guardian *ex officio*, and that the "citadel" is none other than the college itself; and as it is the Homœopaths he subsequently "attacks" so fiercely, we are to suppose those Homœopathic physicians, who happen to be practicing in Geneva, are the "open foes without;" and that whatever Homœopathic students are attending lectures must be the "secret enemies within." After having fully understood this matter, we next learn that the "humble followers of Thompson," and "the visionary advocates of that most sublimated of all humbugs—Homœopathy, have all united in their efforts against the regular profession;" so that it has now "become a serious question whether the profession [par excellence] is to retain that rank among the liberal professions to which its vast importance and deep responsibilities entitle it;" for although Homœopathy can never be established as the accustomed practice of the land, except by its superior success in curing disease; yet such an event would of course be regarded as removing the "profession" from its "rank among the liberal professions. And this consummation he seems much to fear; for, in the most *moving terms*, he appeals to "the venerable clergy, to the legal profession—the sacred guardians of the temple of justice"—to pause before they take from him and his profession "the influence of their bright names and unsullied ermine," to place them in the scale of Homœopathy; for, having hitherto been "the most strenuous opposers of empiricism," they have now "been beguiled by the pretensions of Homœopathy—the assertion that it is founded on the inductive philosophy; and, incompetent to judge from

their very ignorance [forsooth !] of the fundamental principles of the profession, [and he might have added from the success of Homœopathy in curing themselves and families,] they have too often given their countenance and support to this sublimated humbug." And so, although, after having been treated in disease by both Allopath and Homœopath, and finding cures effected, uniformly, with more certainty, quickness and ease, by the latter, they are called upon by Dr. Coventry, because they do not understand the "fundamental principles of the profession," to pause ere they lend their influence and support to that which reason and experience demonstrate to them to be truth. Truly, I fear they will not hear him, or if hearing, will not heed him. Then again, he makes the Homœopaths give what he *calls* "Allopathic doses and medicines;" as though Allopathy or Homœopathy consisted either in the "doses" or "medicines" made use of, instead of the PRINCIPLES on which these doses are given. And for giving these Allopathic doses, (or, as we suppose he means, *large* ones,) even though in accordance with the very principles on which Homœopathy sets out, he (Dr. Coventry) considers "him morally as guilty as the man who obtains money under false pretences, a crime which the laws of this country punish with imprisonment in the state-prison;" though, in the very next sentence, he declares "the law prescribes no particular mode of practice: a physician has a right to give infinitesimal doses, or no medicine, if he pleases."

Then, after having consigned every Homœopath to a state-prison, though confessedly without a cause, he thinks that every physician, if truly honest, will trust to his success for his reputation, without publishing to the world that he has some new and more successful mode of practice than his professional brethren, even though by publishing the principles and success of his practice, he might seek to avoid the imputation of quackery that is attempted to be fastened upon him by Dr. Coventry; and if he does so, *he* considers him resorting

to the arts of the "charlatan," instead of relying on the merits of his pretensions. If this be true, why, let me ask, has a medical book ever been published? Why does every physician, after having discovered any means of treating his own patients, more successful than that followed by his professional brethren, at once publish it, "if he be honest," and sustain his view of the subject by every argument in his power? Can we suppose it for any other reason, than because he is influenced by the desire of benefitting his race and of meriting the best wishes, the gratitude and esteem of the thousands who are suffering under disease? And instead of his being consigned to a companionship with felons, we see honors, wealth and every earthly blessing showered upon his head. "But, it is said that regular physicians have become Homœopathists, and, having tried both systems, should be competent to judge. Some have asserted, and I doubt not with truth, that they have been more successful than when practicing on their former principles." For once in his "Introductory," the Doctor has confessed that he does not doubt what is really true. For the large majority of practicing Homœopaths are, not those who from their incompetence to practice in the old school have left it; but men who, after seeking every advantage of medical schools, and receiving from them diplomas, some even in the very school in which the Doctor himself graduated, and finding how unsafe a guide were the principles on which these diplomas certified they were qualified to practice, have abandoned them, and adopted a system whose principles they may follow without being led continually into a labyrinth of error. But these are not the reasons assigned by Dr. Coventry: these are not the cases he cites. To escape the unavoidable conclusions which the admission of the above facts would lead to, he affects to explain the manner in which they may be converted. And, first, he supposes the case of a physician whose business has been engrossed by a Homœopathist

in his vicinity, becoming one himself, to regain it. Again, a young man is about to commence practice; and that he may obtain patronage, he proclaims himself a Homœopath; hoping, by the rumor of the eminent success which has attended this practice, to detract from the business of those around him. Now, we wish to say, *emphatically*, and *once for all*, that no such Homœopath do we recognize; as it is against the arguments drawn from the mal-success of these *pretended* Homœopaths, that we have most to contend; for that there are such, I, with Dr. Coventry, have no doubt.

No man who is not a believer in Homœopathy, in truth as well as pretence, can ever hope to have success over the old school, more than what he may derive from the benefit of our well-regulated diet rules, and the absence of the injury produced by the enormous quantity of drugs administered by the Allopaths: for, in Homœopathy there is no quackery, and a man's uniform success, or frequent failure, will proclaim him a true Homoœpath and one qualified to practice our system, or one of the supposititious cases of the learned professor. "But," says he, "where is the man in the profession, in good business, of established reputation and sound judgment, who has abandoned the regular practice of his profession for Homœopathy? I know of none."

Very likely: and the gentleman has taken as little pains to seek the truth in this matter, as he has in regard to what are the true principles of Homœopathy; for cases of this kind are not few, but are scattered through the whole state; and their names and standing might here be cited, in proof of his wilful ignorance on this point. But that we may not be charged with mis-stating this fact, we shall hold ourselves in readiness to furnish the Doctor the names of those who will well answer the qualifications he has above specified. From these premises he concludes that those of the profession who have candidly examined Homœopathy have rejected it: but to make confirmation doubly sure, and still

more perfectly to convince them, he tells his intelligent pupils that, "were you *acquainted* with the operation of medicines, I would prove to you that its very first principles were in opposition to some of the best established facts in medicine." The class, then, some of whom he expected to graduate with a diploma from his own hand, were so *ignorant* of the action of medicines, that they would be *incapable* of appreciating his reasoning upon the subject, and therefore it would be of no use to attempt to prove to them the fallacy of Homœopathy. But if the class were so ignorant of the operation of medicines, could he not, in a note, have vouchsafed to the public, whose property the lecture becomes on its publication, and among whom we may suppose there are physicians at least as well qualified to judge of the *action of medicines* as Dr. C., some of the many weighty arguments which he probably has in store, and of which so very few are found in the Lecture? But since he has not done so, we must conclude that, either he has reserved the arguments in question for his own peculiar gratification, or for the head of some unfortunate *Homœo* who may fall in his way. Thus far, we have regarded Dr. C. as good authority in matters pertaining to his own school; as a man whom we might suppose erring through ignorance of Homœopathy, and still have a knowledge of the principles and practice he professes: but the next sentence that occurs may, we fear, destroy not only the reputation of the Doctor of having thoroughly learned the principles of Allopathy, but deprive us of

"The stern joy that warriors feel
"In foemen worthy of their steel."

It is as follows: "They [the Homœopaths] say their knowledge of the powers and properties of medicines is derived from their effects on the system in health; whilst every practitioner of observation knows that the operation of medicines on the healthy system is no sure criterion of their effects in disease."

This principle is one which I had supposed would have been the last to be discussed; one in which I had hitherto supposed every Allopath would admit our superiority; for, if the "action of medicines" is to be learned from the symptoms following their administration to the sick, (who must be the subjects if their action on the healthy afford no criterion for their action in disease,) then I would solemnly ask, Where on the face of the earth is the man, who, of the thousand demonstrations of the effects of disease given by the organism, can separate them on the one hand and on the other, and say definitely, *this* is the effect of the medicinal agent and *that* of the natural morbid action?

"Almost all modern writers on medico-legal toxicology have declared such diagnosis impossible."* True, by this means (the action of medicines on the sick) they have learned that some medicines will produce emesis, catharses, diuresis and diaphoresis; that others are stimulants, sedatives, expectorants, &c. But are these all? Are there no other organs that are especially affected by disease? no medicines that will act on other functions than these medicines are intended for? Or are these functions to be the point of departure for every unnatural action of the system; so that its endless ramifications, its infinitely varied deviations from health, are all to depend principally and primarily on the derangement of these eight or ten functions? If this be true, farewell to the hopes of health of those invalids who are laboring under disease that has its principal seat in any other than these organs. But to show (by authority that Dr. Coventry will hardly dare question) his error, besides the well-known opinion of Haller, the English physiologist, which we wish to refer him to, let us quote from more modern authorities: And first, from Paris' Pharmacologia, where he says, "that observation or experiment upon the effects of medicine is liable to a thousand fallacies, unless it be

*Christison, p. 16 of preface.

carefully repeated under the various circumstances of *health* and disease, in different climates and on different constitutions." Again: Dr. Christison, after having spoken of the uses to be derived from a knowledge of toxicology, or the effects of poisons (on the healthy, of course,) in medico-legal questions, in the treatment of poisoning, &c., has the following: "The information furnished by toxicology, however, is sometimes more direct; the discovery of remedies in particular diseases having been originally derived from the knowledge of their action as poisons. One substance, at least, has been introduced in this way into the practice of physic: I mean nux vomica, with its active principle strychnia; and it is not improbable that, as our knowledge of the operation of poisons becomes more accurate, further additions may be made in like manner."* Again: Dr. Dunglison, in his new remedies, after having confessed "the difficulty of sifting the results of true from those of false observation," says: "To treat disease methodically and effectively, the nature of the actions of the living tissues, in both the *healthy* and morbid conditions, must be correctly appreciated; the effects which the articles of the materia medica are capable of exerting under both those conditions must be known from accurate observation; and not until then, can the practitioner prescribe with any well-founded prospect of success." He further says, under the article of Hydrocyanic Acid, after having given its pathognetic action on persons in health, that, "from the effects produced by the hydrocyanic acid on the *healthy* body, we may infer the cases of *disease* in which it may be indicated." And this idea is continued throughout his work, by his giving the symptoms of nearly all the remedies in the manner above stated. Dr. Martyn Paine, Professor of the Institutes of Medicine and Materia Medica in the University of New-York, in an essay on the "modus operandi" of medicines, published in 1842, speak-

*Christison on Poisons, p. 8 of preface.

ing of the profound impression made by drugs on the system, says: "It is for this reason, therefore, that they produce disease in the healthy organism; and when they contribute to the cure of disease, it is in virtue of that morbific action which they exert on healthy parts."

These quotations, we hope, will convince Dr. C. that there are at least *some* practitioners of observation, who believe that the action of medicines upon the healthy is a "criterion for their action in disease."

In continuation, Dr. C. says: "I do not caution you against Homœopathy itself. Examine its claims: scrutinize its pretensions." "If you become satisfied that infinitesimal doses, or what is equivalent, no medicine, [which he has made synonymous with Homœopathy,] is best for your patients, adopt it; but do not proclaim yourselves Homœopathists or Allopathists, or pretend that you are wiser than your medical brethren." By the foregoing remarks, we can only infer that the learned Doctor is willing his pupils should smuggle into their practice the principles of our science, if they find them beneficial, provided always that *Homœopathy* gets no credit for the same. We make the worthy professor a present of the inference. After this he gives us, what I had hardly hoped for, his reasons for these wholesale denunciations, in the following words: "On the other hand, be not discouraged by the temporary loss of business. I know how trying it is to the feelings, to be deserted by those for whom you have labored." It is pretty well known that a Homœopathist has located at Utica; and we may suppose from the above, that he is drawing largely upon Dr. C.'s business: and to this fact the world probably owes its possession of the Lecture on Homœopathy.

To sum up the whole and give a finishing stroke to the attack, he has given, in a note, the mode of preparation of the Homœopathic medicines, and has set down a long row of sixty ciphers as a sample of the thirtieth dilution. From

this we are to conclude (for we think the conclusion is inevitable,) that he thinks, or would have the public think, that the doctrines of the new school consist only in the administration of medicines, the size of the dose of which, as compared with the primitive drop, is expressed by his long fraction; and that this and nothing but this constitutes Homœopathy. "Verily, if this does not amount to an" absurdity, "it is a near approximation."

And now, having finished our examination of a production which, from the absence of all argument upon the subject of which it treats, has been somewhat difficult to review, otherwise than by showing its absurdity; we may be allowed to present a fair view of the two opposing systems of medicine—the principle upon which one, and the many on which the other, attempts the cure of disease; and allow a public whom we dare not denounce as "ignorant," but whom we believe to be enlightened, to judge of the relative merits of the two systems, and to choose that which seems most accordant with reason and the laws that govern human life.

Three principles have been recognized by physicians, from time immemorial, on which to treat disease. These three are, Allopathy, Antipathy and Homœopathy. Allopathy and Antipathy are those which the old school especially view as the true ones, though they make use of another class of remedies, which they apply in disease, generally called specifics, and which, from every thing we can gather from their books, they suppose to act *without any principle*, merely because they are good; or, as a learned professor in Geneva Medical College lately said, because "they excite an action *incompatible* with disease:" while, believing the laws of life are ever the same, that they do not change while vitality remains, Homœopathy is *the* principle, and the only one, on which the new school act, in the application of remedies.

First, Allopathy, (from two Greek words signifying fo-

reign disease,) the principle of which is, the excitation, in parts more or less remote, of another disease, to cure one already existing. It is also called the derivative or revulsive method. The remedies made use of in this system are, blisters, rubefacients, setons, moxa, tartar emetic, ointment, &c.; and cathartics and emetics, when used with the intention of producing what is called counter irritation. This mode is objected to, because, in its use the unity of vital action is not sufficiently regarded; for, considering disease of any organ as a mere local alteration of the part, they think they may, with impunity, produce a morbid change in a less important organ; or, the injury of which would be less dangerous, without being detrimental to the first; and by this means remove the disease from its original seat. But if it be true, as is believed and contended by every enlightened physician of the age, that the organism, though composed of many parts, is connected by the vital union as a harmonious whole; that whatever injurious or other impression is received by any one part, is reflected, in a greater or less degree, upon the rest; and that the symptoms of disease are but the manifestations given, by all the organs, of the affection of any particular one: then must we believe that this vital union will not permit a separation of its component parts, in obedience to the will or imagination of the physician; and that the irritation, the morbid state that is produced, though it may at first procure some alteration, will, in proportion to its severity, be reflected upon the original disease, which it will complicate and aggravate without curing: and their fear of an occurrence of this kind is continually manifested by the practitioners of the old school, in the use of these remedies, by their always premising venesection or some other depletion, when a state of excitement exists, (which is almost the only case in which this mode is made use of,) for the avowed purpose of escaping the ill effects which we have just anticipated. So that when

a patient is treated upon the Allopathic mode, the *obstacles* to his restoration to health are three: first, the original disease; second, the depletion; third, the newly-excited disease. For these reasons, we regard the system as not only inefficient, but often highly injurious.

Second, Antipathy, (from two Greek words signifying opposite affections or feelings,) in which it is intended to remove disease, by exciting, in the part already affected, a disease opposite to that it is intended to cure. The same idea is expressed by the phrase, "contraria contraris curanter"—diseases are cured by their opposites. The objections to this mode are both practical and theoretical; for, should we admit its truth in theory, the obstacles to its reduction to general practice we regard as absolutely insuperable. And this impracticability consists in the *impossibility* of finding in each case the opposite of any particular disease. We aver positively, that it cannot be found; that no man can say, of the innumerable variety of symptoms that occur, what are the opposite of more than an infinitely small number; and we fearlessly challenge the attempt to point them out, without any expectation that our challenge will be accepted: for, in every day's practice, we meet symptoms that are not only analagous, but at the same time absolutely contradictory to each other; as the sensation of heat immediately followed by cold, or that of cold immediately followed by heat; or both at the same time: and in like manner hundreds of others. But, so well aware are the practitioners of the old school of the impossibility of taking all they absolutely know of disease, the totality of symptoms evolved during the action of that disease, and treating them by the application of remedies that they know will produce a totality of symptoms (on the healthy) the direct opposite of these; they assume, from the symptoms, what they call "general indications," and direct their remedies to the marks they have thus set up, although the disease, having its seat

in any one organ, may also have deranged the functions of a large number as much as those of the three or four from which they have derived these "indications;" and finding this treatment by indications unsuccessful, as well as the attempts to cure the disease by the use of blisters, or something of that kind, (Allopathy,) recourse is usually had to the use of some of that class of remedies which are applied in disease, on no other principle than because they are good, or, (more scientifically,) "because they excite an action incompatible with the disease;" and if, of all the medicines that have been known to be good in this disease, they happen to select the right one, and do not overpower him by the size of the dose, the patient may recover. Now, we think that no one who has carefully examined the course pursued by the old school, in the treatment of disease, will say that we have either misrepresented or distorted the facts in the case; and yet all this absurdity arises from the attempt to reduce to practice this absolutely impracticable theory: and did this impracticability not exist, it is false theoretically, that diseases are cured by those drugs that produce an affection opposite to them; and for this reason, that there is in the organism a vital principle, or power, which is continually opposing the action of those agents foreign to it, that tend to the excitation of an anomal state of the system, and by this reaction, a state is produced exactly the reverse of that to which these foreign agents tend, those of course excepted that by the intensity of their action at once destroy life. In proof that this assumption is sustained by facts, witness the effects of cold upon the system. This agent, it is universally understood, is a sedative; yet, when applied to the system within conservative limits, i. e. in such a degree as the system may bear without being overpowered, instead of the depression that should ensue were the Antipath's theory true, the result is that of stimulation. Again: in the effect produced by the action of mechanical causes on the body, we see another expression of this principle. The cuticle on the hands of the rower, in-

stead of being gradually worn off by the pressure and friction of the oar, (unless too severely applied at first,) becomes thicker and thicker, until it finally may resist every injury by this cause. The feet, pressed and rubbed by tight boots, have, instead of an abrasion, greater strength of cuticle. And again: the habitude of drugs with the system affords a still more convincing proof of the existence of this law. Whatever effects are produced by the reception of drugs into the system, by the repetition of these drugs, they gradually lose the power of at all affecting the system, although the largest doses may be given of that of which at first, a very small quantity would suffice to produce death.

The principle, of which these examples are a few instances only, we believe to be as universal as life, and as absolutely essential to the preservation, for more than a short time, of our bodies from total destruction; for, without its existence, we should be subjected to injury from every external impression, however slight: a breath of air, a flake of snow, the lightest touch in nature—all would have the same tendency, the removal of a portion of our frame, without our having the power to replace it, until, from the gradual loss of its parts, the corporeal machine should cease to move.

Having learned the existence of this principle of reaction, let us see what phenomena will occur when medicines are applied to disease according to the Antipathic method. From what has been said, we may suppose, that in every case of disease the system is endeavoring to throw it off; and the violence of the symptoms are generally in proportion to the extent of this attempted sanatory action; but having found the drug which will produce symptoms opposite to those of the disease, it is applied, and a veritable contest ensues between that and the disease, when the drug proving the stronger, (as it must be to overcome the disease,) induces a state opposite to that which before existed. But the state produced by the medicinal agent, although unlike the former, is still not health, but is now itself the disease, the effect of

a foreign agent; to remove which the vital power now turns its action; and as the effect of the medicines gradually subsides, we have the system producing a state the reverse of that to which the medicinal agent tends—the original disease, or one analogous to it. So well aware are the practitioners of the old school of this fact, that, to the state thus produced, they have applied the term "secondary effects of medicine;" though they must be equally well aware, that this secondary effect is never produced until the drug itself has ceased to act; and it must therefore be in consequence of the reaction of the vital forces. That this is true is proved by the facts already adduced, and by what often takes place in the treatment of the sick, and among the many instances that occur, we may remark the increased constipation after the use of purgatives; the return often more violent, of diarrhæal affections after the use of astringents; the increased diuresis after the use of medicine intended to diminish this secretion; the greater severity of neuralgia after the use of opium, or other narcotics, &c. &c. For this reason, the fallacy of the theory of Antipathy, besides our inability to reduce it to general practice, we reject it as a principle in the treament of diseases.

Third: Homœopathy, (from two Greek words signifying similar affections or feelings,) the principle of which is, the excitation in the part affected, of a disease similar to that already existing; or that medicines cure disease by virtue of their power of exciting a similar disease. The same thing is expressed by the phrase, "similia similibus curanter," like cures like. As this is the mode which, after mature examination and deliberation, and a close observation resulting from the treatment of disease according to each of these different principles, we have candidly and earnestly adopted, we may be allowed to examine a little more in detail, its advantages or disadvantages, and the result to which the practice of its principles lead. And first, something of its history:

To Samuel Hahneman, a German, the world owes the conception of the possibility of reducing this principle to a science; though its existence in some isolated cases had been before asserted. This event occurred in 1790, while he was engaged in some investigations with regard to the action of Peruvian bark. Knowing that this remedy, which was then as now, regarded as a specific in intermittent fever, while it cured many cases, not only did not cure others but produced absolute injury, he conceived that it must have some other than the received mode of action in disease; since this one could neither account satisfactorily for its failures, nor determine beforehand in what cases it would prove beneficial; and knowing too the fallacy of that knowledge of medicines derived from their action in disease, he resolved to seek some clue to the facts, and the laws that governed them, in the effects they produced on the healthy. Being at that time in perfect health he took large and successive doses of the bark with the intention of bringing his system completely under its action. The result was, a train of symptoms resembling a paroxysm of fever, chill, heat and sweat, with concomitant symptoms. The experiment was repeated on others, and all the symptoms evolved during its action were carefully noted down. He next collected from those who had been cured of intermittants by the bark, a detailed account of the symptoms in their cases, and compared them with the symptoms produced by the bark. The striking similarity between them, and especially in their relative order and succession, convinced him that, with regard to this remedy at least, and this disease, it would cure the same symptoms and groups of symptoms that it would produce.

The result in this case, stimulated him to similar trials with other remedies, which were, like the bark, considered as specifics, and the consequences were, the conviction in his mind, from its holding good in all these cases, of the existence of the principle of Homœopathy as a universal law in medicine, and his high success in the subsequent treatment

of disease on this principle amply confirmed the truth of these convictions.

Though Hahneman was the first to prove the universal existence of this law, yet the honor of its first discovery he does not claim; suggestions with regard to it are found in the earliest annals of medicine.. In the works ascribed to Hippocrates, the passage vomitus vométum emat, occurs—a vomit, (or emetic,) cures vomiting. At a later period, Paracelsus hinted at its truth. Later still, Boulduc discovered that rhubarb would cure diarrhea because it would produce the same state: Detharding supposed that senna would cure colic because it would produce colic in the healthy. Stouck thought that as stramonium would derange the intellects and produce delirium, it would cure those who were already maniacs. In the works of Stahl we find the clearest avowal of the principle, as follows: "The received method in medicine of treating diseases by opposite remedies, that is to say, by medicines which are opposed to the effects they produce, is completely false and absurd. I am convinced, on the contrary, that diseases are subdued by agents that produce a similar affection; as burns by the heat of a fire, to which the parts are exposed, frost-bites by snow or icy water, inflammations and contusions by spirituous applications." He remarks, in addition, that he had often cured the most obstinate cases on this principle.

It is hardly to be supposed that these physicians, distinguished as they were for their sound judgment and extensive experience, had, with the exception of Stahl, any clear idea of the law which governed the operation of the remedies in these cases; and they must have regarded them as anomalies that could not be explained according to the rules that governed their accustomed practice: though for some reason that we do not learn, Stahl even did not make an attempt at the reduction of this law to practice, which would have covered his name, instead of Hahneman's, with unfading honors. If we have sufficiently proved, as we believe we have, the universality of the principle of re-action, instead of regarding these cases as exceptions to Nature's laws—whose laws are without exception—we shall see them but as phenomena resulting from the operation of one of the most extensive.

Besides the evidences that we have from analogy and theory of the truth of similia similibus, we have a most positive confirmation of it in the practice of the old school them-

selves. In the treatment of a large number of their cases of disease, remedies are applied whose curative action can only be explained by admitting the truth of this principle. Among these are specifics, a class of remedies, as I have already said, of whose pathogentic [disease-producing] effects they know nothing; but after careful experimentation these remedies are found to have the power of producing on the healthy the very same affections to which, by the old school, they are applied as curative.

Among the many examples which might be cited, we give only the following: The common use of cold applications in frost-bite, of stimulating applications in burns and in ophthalmia, and the use of rhubard and other cathartics in diarrhea. Again, Eberle advises the use of balsam copaiva and spirits turpentine in chronic enteretis; and to fill up the monstrous gap between the well known pathology of disease and his prescriptions, remarks, that whatever may be the conclusions of reason, experience is always a better instructor.* The same author, in his Therapeutics, recommends the use of small doses of ipicac in vomiting of the most obstinate character: he also says that calomel, "when given in very minute doses, has a direct anticathartic effect;" and that satisfactory testimony is adduced of "the utility of small doses of this remedy in cholera, diarrhea, &c." Hufeland and Pittscraft laud mercury in epilepsy; yet we find in Christison on Poisons the fact that it will produce this disease. John Hunter tells us that it is a specific in ill-conditioned ulcers, while common experience as well as the testimony of Christison and other authors prove its power of producing the most extensive ulcerations. Strychnia is praised in the journals of the day for its curative powers in paralysis; Christison again informs us of its powers of exciting like symptoms. Belladonna is recommended as beneficial in amaurosis: the author last quoted gives us the symptoms of this disease produced by belladonna: it is also celebrated by Hufeland, Cazenave, Maisier and others, for its prophylactic, and by Gilbert (Boston Med. and Surg. Journal, p. 188,) for its curative, powers in scarlatina. On the authority of Christison, we learn that it has the power of producing aphthous inflammation of the throat and the other prominent symptoms of the most ma-

* The recent admission, on the part of one of the Professors in Geneva Medical College, that diseases are, among old school practitioners, occasionally cured by the administration of medicine according to the Homœopathic principle, augurs well for his candor.

lignant form of scarlatina. A case is reported in the Boston Med. and Surg. Journal, p. 178, of vertigo, loss of consciousness, beating of carotids—in short, all the symptoms of approaching apoplexy, in which Prussic acid was prescribed with almost immediate relief and the final cure of the patient. The symptoms produced by Prussic acid, according to Christison, are decidedly of an apoplectic character; and he says that death by apoplexy has been produced by a quantity of this article taken by accident.

The examples given might be very much extended; but it is believed that, given plainly and without comment as they are, these will be sufficient to satisfy an unprejudiced public of the practical as well as theoretical truth of Homœopathy.

Having finished our exposition of the principles of the science, a few words upon the subject of the medicines and doses made use of, may not be unappropriate, as there seems to be, in the minds of many, some misapprehension on these points. Dr. Coventry, in his Lecture, remarked that Homœopathists give, on particular occasions, Allopathic medicines and doses. The medicines made use of in Homœopathy are, to a great extent, the same as those used by the old school, though many others have been added. All substances capable of producing a change in the action of the organism, after being tried upon the healthy and the effects they produce fully ascertained, are regarded as proper remedial agents: so that our researches in materia medica are without limits, except those which bound the three grand kingdoms of nature.

With regard to doses, we may remark that the only rule for their size, recognized by Homœopathists, after having selected their remedy in accordance with the rules already laid down, is, to administer such a quantity only as will excite the reactive force without producing an aggravation of the disease. It will be perceived that our range in the size of dose is most extensive, from the grain, dram, or ounce of any particular drug, up to what the professor very wittily calls "the near approximation to nothing." They are almost always, we may say invariably, very much smaller than those used by the old school; and for the simple reason that when diseased, the organism, or any part of it, is far more susceptible to the action of similar irritants than when in health.

Familiar instances of this truth are every day presented to us. The eye, when highly inflamed, becomes so exquisitely sensible to light, that the slightest degree causes the severest

pain; while in health it may bear the full blaze of the sun with impunity. The bones, though in health insensible, become, when diseased, the seat of the most racking torture. The greatly increased sensibility of the ear to sound, of the stomach to its contents, produced by disease, as well as some other instances, might be adduced, but these are regarded as sufficient to illustrate the principle.

It only remains to me, before closing what has extended to far greater length than was at first intended, to remark that, whatever may be our deductions from reason, the results of the treatment of disease according to each mode will best show whether we are to regard the imputation of "quackery" as most applicable to that system whose practice is founded on the belief in *one* principle, and on the results derived from pure and unbiassed experimentation; or to that whose practice consists in an indiscriminate application of two or three principles without a definite idea of either, and whose experience is filled with errors and contradictions. And we may, perhaps, at the same time, decide whether, on the domineering assumption of one man, a whole class, while seeking by every means in their power to improve a science confessedly so imperfect as medicine, for so doing are to be branded with the epithets of knave, felon and fool, merely because our observation and reason have not led us to the same point to which he has arrived without either reason or observation.

NOTE.—We may remark, for the information of the public, that in addition to the proofs adduced in the body of the work, of the necessity of a knowledge of the effects of drugs on the healthy, to their application to the sick, that a still more convincing one, of the opinion of Christison on this point, is found in the following quotations from the 3th and 9th pages of the preface to his work on Poisons:

"I have likewise said that the science of toxicology [the effects of drugs on the healthy] aids the physician in his inquiries into the action of remedies. Many of the most valuable remedies for combatting disease being, in large doses, violent poisons, their action as poisons, in some instances, though certainly not in all, throws light on their action as remedies. Thus the direct paralysis which is produced by opium in the muscular fibres on which it is applied, furnishes an explanation of its influence in spasmodic affections of the bowels. The same paralyzing property of sugar-of-lead appears to account for the beneficial effects of that substance in dysentery. The peculiar influence of cantharides to excite, in poisonous doses, inflammation of the urinary organs, accounts for its power as a therapeutic agent in stimulating the bladder. The property possessed by the acrid vegetables, of exciting, in poisonous doses, violent inflammation of the bowels, explains their purgative qualities when they are given in smaller doses," &c.

"There is yet another reason which renders toxicology, in reference to the action of remedies, a subject of primary importance to the physician. The most energetic articles of the materia medica being, as already observed, poisons in large doses, it is indispensable to be well acquainted with their deleterious effects before they can be safely employed in the treatment of disease; and this knowledge is particularly called for in regard to those remedies (probably not few in number) whose therapeutic effects are not developed till their physiological [pathogenetic] effects have begun to manifest themselves."