

Facts and Fallacies

ABOUT

HOMŒOPATHY.

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Fallacies and Claims:

A WORD ON HOMŒOPATHY.

FALLACIES.

The following are some of the most common fallacies and objections prevalent in regard to Homœopathy. An attempt is made to state them fairly and meet them fully, in the hope that conviction of the truth of Homœopathy may result:

1. "*Homœopathic Medicines are do-nothing remedies* : they do neither good nor harm: bread-pills would do as well; in fact you cure by *diet*." To the professional man who makes this statement I say, "Then go you and do likewise." But first tell me what diet it is which cures Asiatic cholera? and what system of hygiene is it that cures croup? And, once more, tell me also, when you lose a case of rheumatic fever, is it because you do not pay attention to diet and hygiene?

should he happen to be ill, in spite of his utter unbelief! In other words, it is wholly independent of the patient. Its innumerable cures are not the result of faith, but solely of valuable medicines applied by skillful hands.

3. "*Homœopathy means small doses.*"

Such an assertion is a great blunder. Homœopathy is no more a pilule or globule than Allopathy is a pill. Were the Allopath to use drops and grains instead of scruples and drachms, he would be still an Allopath. Or, on the other hand, let the Homœopath give ounces instead of drops, and he still would remain a Homœopath. Why? Because Homœopathy is not quantity, but a particular *principle of selection*. Obviously, when a work is to be done, the most important thing is to use a proper tool; hence the common maxim, "The right man in the right place." A drayman may be a big fellow, but no one would think of making him a cabinet minister on that account. A first-rate hand amongst the barrels, he would be a poor one in parliament. Just so, the grand aim of every doctor should be to find the medicine suited to the disease. He may make his choice on one of two principles: either he may choose a medicine which, in a healthy person, would

produce symptoms contrary to or different from those which his patient has, or else one which in a healthy man would produce symptoms like them, if given in large doses. The first plan would represent Allopathy; the second Homœopathy. The difference between the one and the other is not, as some think, in the use of different medicines; but in selecting the medicines on a different plan—the two plans being as far as the poles asunder.

Homœopathy learns how to restore the diseased by experimenting on the healthy. Now, Allopathy does the very contrary to this; and hence, by experimenting on the weak, it often — kills them!

Observe, too, this further consequence. The Homœopathic doctor gives but one medicine at a time. But the Allopath may, and (witness his prescriptions) often does, give you half a dozen; hoping that, out of the number, one, at all events, will do! Thus, as a late physician to the Queen—Sir John Forbes—aptly expressed it, a number of drugs are left to "fight together in the dark;" some *may* hit the disease; but it is not to be wondered at if some hit the patient also. Experience will teach you which system is best; is it, then, too much to ask you to put them to the proof?

4. "*Small doses can not work great cures.*" You think so, do you? Hence you laugh at a pilule, but praise a pill, and, forsooth, prefer a black-draught to either. Hence, too, the stronger the dose, the better the doctor, and the greater the hope.

And so power depends upon size! the bigger the bulk, the surer the success. Perhaps it is this principle which actuates those people who give a half-crown to a collection when they might give a half sovereign. It looks larger and weighs more!

But you are mistaken, friend! The smallest things are often most remarkable for force. The tiny wood-worm will eat up a man-of-war quicker than a whale would. A spark will destroy a score of lives, or shiver a rock to atoms! Eighteen centuries ago, a wise man, noticing the remarkable power of little things, wrote these striking sentences: "Behold the ships, which, though they be so *great*, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very *small* helm. . . . Behold how *great* a matter a *little* fire kindleth!

And in this we have a practical illustration of the truth that results depend less on bulk than on the *adaptation of means to the end*. You would ridicule the mechanic who, when a small

hole only was required, should use an instrument that would make a very large one; or when a small nail was needed, should require a steam-hammer with which to drive it. Is not your folly equal to his, if, when a small dose would cure you, you insist upon a larger one, simply because you *think* a large one would be more powerful, and hence more likely to rid you of your complaint?

Bulk has less to do with the power of medicines than the patient's condition. And this is the best reply to our objector. In a diseased state the whole system is highly sensitive; and what in health might be taken with impunity or with little effect, in time of sickness operates with aggravated force. For instance, a healthy man may eat several apples, and not only be none the worse, but perhaps all the better for them. But then a single apple might convulse the same man with spasms if he were suffering from diarrhœa. To a person with brain-fever, a glass of wine might prove fatal; while that same individual, when in health, might perhaps take two or three without any perceptible injury. It is hence very plain that medicines may be more potent to the sick than to the strong, and, therefore, that a much-diminished dose may suffice. It is upon this principle we regulate the dose;

it is found by experience that in most cases comparatively small doses *have* curative power; and *experience is the proper test.*

A word or two here on minute doses, apart from any system of medicine. Professor Taylor would tell you that the quantity of carbonate of lead which produces *colic* and *paralysis* in workmen in white-lead factories is not appreciable. Herapath also states that water containing the five-thousandth part of lead could not be used with impunity: while we have continued testimony to the fact that the emanations of arsenic from green paper-hangings are highly injurious. Why, then, should not the *curative* power of equally unappreciable quantities be as great?

"A celebrated chemist tested some pilules of a dilution of *Nux Vomica*, and was unable, by his most delicate tests, to discover the presence of the drug with which they were medicated: *ergo*, the fact was accepted by many as proof positive that in Homœopathic medicines there was no medicinal property! But the most searching chemical analysis, we opine, would not detect salt in a solution of one part of the drug in a million times a million parts of water: yet we find that a solution containing only '000,000,000,000,000,455 of its weight of this salt (*Chloride*

of Sodium) nevertheless gives the characteristic line when tested by the *spectrum!*"* In like manner, nature is the best test for the efficiency of small doses.

5. "*Homœopathic medicines make no impression on the system, and therefore cannot do any good: they never purge, and, therefore, cannot effect that thorough clearing out of the system which is so frequently necessary.*" Then you suppose that the purgative runs up and down the system, catches up every particle of "humor," "bad blood," and the various agents which are supposed to make a man ill, dispatches them hastily into the bowel, whence they are promptly discharged! Well, if this were not less than moonshine, it might be a beautiful idea. But what is the fact? Why, we find that those who, as they think, most need, and therefore practice this clearing-out system, so far from having purity of blood, freedom from humor, and perfect health, have the reverse. Homœopathic medicines make no impression on the system! It is quite true in that sense; mercury, given Homœopathically in curative doses does *not* impress its destructive element on the tissues of the body. And, pray, what

*From *The Homœopathic World*, March, 1869.

impression does the body need? None! It is the *disease* which needs to be acted upon and exterminated, not the organism which is so fearfully and wonderfully made. Here is the mistake which you have learnt from your doctors, who learnt it from their teachers, and they again from theirs. Allopathy has to weaken the patient in order to weaken the disease; to reduce the patient before it can reduce his fever; and, alas! in too many cases has had to kill the patient before it could kill the disease. Is not this true? Is not the same principle acted upon daily. You know it is. And do not such tactics remind you of the man and his horse, whose cure of hunger was simultaneous with the death of the victim of his experiment? Homœopathy does not affect the integrity of the body; but it does "make an impression" on the *disease*. Its medicines are so prepared, and prescribed on a principle which is proved in every-day practice, and which you may any time prove for yourself to be sufficient to effect the good without harm.

Apropos to the roundabout method we are just considering, I will give you a story by Charles Lamb, from which it appears that it used to be thought necessary to burn a whole house down to produce "roast pig!" The narrator affects to have derived his information from a

Chinese manuscript, wherein it is related that the son of a swineherd having accidentally set fire to their cottage, a litter of pigs perished therein. In handling one of these untimely sufferers, the boy burned his fingers, and to cool them applied them to his mouth, and for the first time in his life—in the world's life, indeed—he tasted—"cracklings." The father met with a similar experience, and being also delighted with the taste of the new roast, kept it secret; but as often as the sow farrowed, his house was burned. Finally he was watched, arrested, tried, and—the jury getting a taste of the roast pig—acquitted. But the secret was divulged, and nothing but fires were seen in every direction, until at length a sage arose who made the discovery that the flesh of swine, or indeed of any other animal, might be cooked without the necessity of consuming a whole house! "And so long," says Dr. Clarke, "as *ipecacuanha* and *tartar emetic* are given in doses that vomit; mercury, till its poisonous influence is seen in the mouth; quinine, till there is vertigo or delirium; strychnine, till there are spasms; arsenic, till the eyes are blood-shot, and so on, as allowed by the regular practice, we may assume the Allopathic art of cure to stand at an epoch

corresponding to that marked in the art of cookery, by burning the house to roast a pig!"

But it is gratifying to find that the old plan is getting out of date; its advanced practitioners feel it to be so, and are *seeking* a better way, and many are, confessedly or not, adopting Homœopathy.

6. "Homœopathy uses deadly poisons, such as Arsenic, Deadly-nightshade, and Strychnine, and is an extremely dangerous system." By using this argument you mean to say that Allopathy is safe compared with Homœopathy. But what does Allopathy use? The very remedies it chiefly relies upon are such as those you have mentioned. And how do its practitioners use these virulent poisons? Take mercury for instance. Refer to any manual of the practice of physic, and you will find that mercury is generally to be given until salivation is produced. But remember this, that before mercury reaches the salivary glands it has to enter the blood, and course through the whole system, a portion of the subtle poison being left in various parts of the body, while the remainder rushes along with the circulation as if to be speedy in its destructive work: and all this—for what? To irritate

the salivary glands till they pour forth their secretion profusely, poisoned as it is, in order to suit some theory about "counter irritation." Well, now, Homœopathy uses the same drug, but in such diminished doses that, while potent to cure, slow poisoning is impossible. Which, then, is the most dangerous? Let the numbers of people who are now suffering from chronic indigestion from the loss of their teeth, from mercurial tremor, paralysis, eczema, bone diseases, etc., which mercury has wrought for them, answer the question; and we will let this drug answer for the rest.

7. "But your medicines are so long in taking effect." Mistaken again, friend, for our treatment is quick in its effects, safe in its adoption, and pleasant to the patient.

As to a small dose being longer in taking effect than a large one, if it be a *curative* effect you mean, then, I answer, Homœopathic medicines act most quickly. And it is a grand consequence of the principle on which we prescribe our drugs, that the more acute the disease, the more readily is the medicine appropriated by the suffering organ; on the other hand, when the malady is chronic, the cure is proportionally slow; but under both conditions, is more rapid

under medicines prescribed Homœopathically than Allopathically. For instance, did you ever see Allopathy permanently relieve the spasm of infantile croup in less than an hour, convalescence rapidly following, so that in a few hours the babe was as well as before? No, you never did, for there is nothing in the system to do it: but you have seen the struggles, and touching look of appeal of the helpless innocent, and heard its screams of terror, while nauseous drugs and torturing blisters have been administered in the attempt to relieve what I have repeatedly seen cured by one or two drops of medicine Homœopathic to the condition, given at brief intervals. Look on this picture and on that; and be assured that other acute diseases, not only of infants, but of stalwart men, are equally amenable to Homœopathic treatment.

8. "*But Homœopathy does not cure everybody.*" No, it does not prevent people from dying. "I know that," say you, "for I had a friend who was given up by the Allopathic doctor and went under Homœopathic treatment, but he died." Likely, very likely; and I had a friend who, not being cured by Homœopathy, tried an Allopathic doctor and was not cured by him, but died. Your argument might have

some force if death were rare under Allopathic treatment. But though such is not the case, people do not give up Allopathy because their friends die under it; they say, "everything was done which could be done, but the disease was so deep-seated, or so complicated, that recovery was impossible." Yet when recourse is had to Homœopathy at the last moment, too late for the organism to respond, even to the gentlest treatment, *then*, forsooth, it is said, "Homœopathy was tried, but proved a signal failure!" Of this, however, be assured, that the Homœopathic treatment is more favorable to the prolongation of life and the alleviation of suffering, and in curable cases is more effectual in its results, than any other.*

Another advantage is, that the Homœopath suffers less frequently from acute diseases—upon the old principle that a stitch in time saves nine—and he knows the right kind of stitch too.

*Several life insurance companies now insure at a discount of 10 per cent. from their usual rates, persons who employ Homœopathic practice—and it is proved that they can well afford it.

9. "*Homœopathy may do for women and children, but it is not adapted to the acute maladies of robust men.*" How do you know? Have you tried it fairly and honestly? giving to it a fraction of the space of time you have spent in trying Allopathy? No, you have not. Suffice it to say that there is no curable disease, however serious or complicated, in man, woman, or child, under whatever circumstances, which is not more amenable to Homœopathic treatment than to Allopathic.

You regard it as a sort of pleasant fancy suitable to amuse and interest those who are weak enough to believe it; its medicines being tasteless, or sweet and harmless, children are pleased to take them. True; and these are advantages not to be despised. The instinctive dislike of children to Allopathic drugging is in itself a significant fact.

10. "*But if all that you say be true, how is it that the profession as a body does not adopt Homœopathy?*" "I will answer you this question," says Dr. M. Granier, of Nîmes, in his admirable *Conferences upon Homœopathy*, "when you have told me why truth is always persecuted, and every discovery

met at its birth by the monster of opposition, seeking to devour it.

"Homœopathy is repulsed by the Academies; so much the better. It does but accomplish its destiny. If the Academies were the just protectors of discovery, the simple fact that they condemn Homœopathy would show that our doctrine ought to be considered the most barefaced error. But as they endeavor to check *all* new ideas, and are the antagonists of scientific truth, it is an honor to be condemned by them.

"There is no condemnation so terrible as silence. Nothing develops our strength like action. The footsteps of Homœopathy outstrip the age—its portion is with the persecuted *now* (1858), but the triumph of the future will be its reward."

Since Dr. Granier wrote the above lines, our science has made great progress; many eminent physicians have enrolled themselves under its banner; thousands upon thousands of sufferers have accepted it as their exclusive method of treatment; and in the very country of whose Academies Dr. Granier had so bitterly to complain, the government has lately appointed Dr. Leon Simon lecturer on Homœopathy at the Sorbonne.

Societies, and especially Medical Associations, only receive new doctrines, however true, when they can no longer be opposed to them without running counter to public feeling.

In a few words I will now point out some of the claims of Homœopathy on your confidence.

CLAIMS.

Homœopathy is a true guide to correct treatment. The meaning of the word, embodied in the formula *similia similibus curantur*, is—"likes are cured by likes." Thus, if ipecacuanha in a large dose produce simple vomiting, it will cure when given in small doses, a similar simple vomiting arising from other causes. To know what drugs are capable of doing, Homœopathic physicians take them in large doses while they are in perfect health, and note their poisonous effects. When a disease comes to them for treatment, they select from amongst the drugs they have thus tested or "proved," one which simulates the action of the disease; and they find, by every-day experience, that this is the rule which leads them to the most successful practice that was ever yet attained in medicine. It is not my place to ask *how* this is; it is enough that such is the *fact*. You may any day prove it for yourself. Hahnemann was the first to propound this rule

or principle of drug-selection as adapted to universal application in all curable diseases.

The advantages accruing from the use of this therapeutic compass are immense; the physician is enabled to steer safely into the harbor of health without misgivings as to his course. It renders the practice of medicine more scientific than it could otherwise be. It is at once *precise, effectual, quick, pleasant, safe, and leaves no ill effects.*

Compare this with Allopathy. Allopathy is a ship without compass or rudder; its officers are divided in their tactics; its crew is unanimous only in its allegiance to the uncertain opinions, whims, and fancies of the superiors, while the ship itself founders, leaks, is tossed about by billow after billow, and *chances* occasionally to run into harbor.

The *safety* of Homœopathy is self-evident. The danger of old physic is also apparent, and need not be enlarged upon here.

The *pleasantness* of Homœopathic cures is attested by the conduct of the veriest infant when the medicines are administered to it; by children, who regard the means of restoration from their illnesses with pleasure; and by thousands of mothers, in the brevity of their children's sufferings, and the absence of the

necessity for any of the scenes so frequently witnessed previously in every nursery in the kingdom, when a little innocent was forcibly held by two or three persons, till some vile draught was poured down its throat by order of the doctor, who ought to have been present to watch the effects of such an outrage on the nature of the child.

It may not be out of place if I plainly put before you another—although a lower—argument in favor of Homœopathy.

It is cheap. Now, I do not argue that the fee of the Homœopath should be lower than that of an Allopath. Circumstances will rule this in many cases; superior skill will always fetch its price; it creates demand, and the demand may swell the fee.

But Homœopathy will affect your purse in this way. You will not be purged, nor bled, nor weakened by any such methods: consequently, your restoration will be quicker, for our system works a swifter cure, and does not leave you with a debilitated frame. This is most important. With most men, time is money. Whatever shortens the duration of disease is therefore so much gain. Let the working man especially think of this! Length of illness is always a serious thing to him. Perhaps his employment

is precarious. Perhaps, too, he has a wife and family to keep. Besides which, no one, even though he may have a fortune, likes to be nursed, and dosed, and stopped longer than he can help.

Lastly, *Homœopathy is a tremendous fact.* True, it has been laughed at, and still is. But what of that? Everything worth much has, and this tells in its favor—not against it. Harvey was persecuted when he proclaimed the circulation of the blood, and Stephenson was ridiculed for the steam-engine. Who does not remember, too, how scientific breath not only tried to stop the locomotive, but also to put out the gas? But for all that the engine moves, the gas burns—and, despite contempt, Homœopathy thrives. Seventy years ago Hahnemann planted the small but vigorous shoot, and now behold its roots spreading into all countries—its branches overshadow the whole earth. It is naturalized in Austria, Switzerland, Prussia, France, Italy, Russia, Germany, Spain, Brazil, America. In New York alone upwards of 400 qualified practitioners dispense it; in France about 300.

In England several hundred medical men openly practice Homœopathically, and the number is daily increasing. "There is also a considerable number of men, of less moral courage,

who are secretly practicing the system, but who hesitate to avow their faith in it while it is only supported by a minority.

"These medical practitioners and their lay supporters promulgate their principles through quarterly and monthly journals. There are also six Homœopathic Medical Societies for scientific discussion; four hospitals; seventy dispensaries for the treatment of the poor—a very large amount of public and gratuitous work, when we consider that it has to be carried on by about three hundred practitioners. It offers a strong testimony in favor of their activity and benevolence."^{*}

In the United States of America there are nearly 5000 Homœopathic physicians; six colleges; several hospitals, and one or more free dispensaries in each of the large cities.

Our system is confided in by all grades, from the cottager to the nobility of the land; cabinet and prime ministers rely on it, and it is patronized by Royalty itself.

In fact, in the words of the fiery orator of Carthage in his defense of the persecuted Christians before the senate of Rome seventeen centuries ago, Homœopaths may truly say:

^{*} From Dr. Bayes' *Homœopathy in 1869*.

"We are a people of yesterday, and yet we have filled every place belonging to you; cities, islands, towns, assemblies, your very camp, your tribes, companies, palaces, senate, forum; we leave you your temples only."

Now, what I want you to do is this: To consider how great this system is; how rapidly it grows; what a mighty array of talent, names, and wealth proclaim its praise; and then just quietly to ask yourself what *you* should do. Well! if you are sensible, I can tell you what. You will be sure *to try it and to try it fairly*. And you will then, and not till then, decide whether it be a truth or sham. That is all that I ask of you. Meanwhile, I am conceited enough to think I have removed some doubts, and laid a strong claim on your attention.

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