The true and the false sciences : a letter on homoeopathy.

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4

THE

TRUE AND THE FALSE SCIENCES.

A Letter on Homœopathy.

"When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face."

St. Paul, I Corinth., xiii, 10—12

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TO THAT TRUE HATER OF SHAMS,

Thomas Carlyle,

THIS LETTER IS INSCRIBED,

BY ONE WHO HAS LEARNT FROM HIS WRITINGS,

TO HATE SHAMS ALSO.

PREFACE.

THIS Publication is honestly what it professes to be. A medical friend met in the course of his practice with some of the results of Homœopathic treatment, and being at a loss to explain them, applied to the writer in his perplexity. A copy of the letter which followed came into the hands of another friend, who was of opinion that it might be of use to others similarly perplexed respecting Homœopathy, or possibly respecting other things as well. The scruples of a writer readily yield in general to this line of argument, and the present case has formed no exception to the rule. It may be thought that much useless labour has been expended on self-evident absurdities, but it should be recollected that the difficulty has been, not to show that they are absurdities, but to bring them into the field of vision at all. When once seen, they carry their own refutation. Error is a "child of the mist"; it is its envelope that renders it imposing. Once brought into the light, its true form is apparent. Moreover, the fact of doctrines

so opposed to reason and common sense having obtained with a large portion of the public the reputation which those of Homœopathy unquestionably have, is in itself deserving of attention and investigation. If this letter should succeed in throwing any light on the mysteries of Homœopathy, and in enabling its votaries to discern what sort of deity it is at whose shrine they worship, then its appearance will be justified; if not, then let it go to swell the spoils of those wreckers, the traditionary pieman and trunkmaker, who are supposed to prey on lost literary ventures.

THE

TRUE AND THE FALSE SCIENCES.

A LETTER ON HOMŒOPATHY.

My Dear J.,—You invite me to a discussion on homœopathy. I have no objection, and will begin at once: but first, let us define what we are going to discuss, for, from want of attention to this point, discussions are apt to degenerate into controversies. When premises are agreed upon, some conclusion ought to be arrived at; whether a positive one, deduced from the facts and demonstrable, or a negative one (it being equally demonstrable that no conclusion is possible): in either case the discussion ceases; the question being either settled, or remaining mere matter of opinion, about which it is idle to argue.

Health is a name applied to the phenomena which a living being presents when conditions exist favorable to the perfect performance of all its functions.

Disease is a name applied to the phenomena which a living being presents when these conditions are altered, and more or less imperfect.

Health, therefore, is *one;* for there is but one best: disease, on the other hand, is manifold; for there is endless variety and degree of departure from the best.

Medicine is the art by which we seek to restore the diseased living being to the state of health.

Remedies are substances possessed of properties capable of modifying the functions of a living being, and consequently of producing changes which tend to health or disease, according to circumstances: they are, therefore, implements or tools supplied by nature, and available in the practice of medicine.

On the study of the parts or organs which a living being possesses, and of the functions which such parts discharge when in health, and of the conditions necessary for the healthy discharge of such functions, is based the science of *Physiology*.

On the study of the parts of a living being, when altered by disease, and of the functions performed by such altered parts, and of the conditions on which such alteration depends, is based the science of *Pathology*.

On the study of the substances used in medicine as remedies, or capable of being so used, of the changes produced by such substances on the living body, whether in health or disease, and of the modes in which such substances act in producing such changes, is based the science of *Therapeutics*.

If the sciences of Physiology, of Pathology, and of Therapeutics were thoroughly understood, the art of medicine would be simple, its rule of practice plain, and its results certain; but this is not *yet* so.

Medicine is one of the Inductive Sciences, and is dependent for its successful cultivation on the same method which governs the rest, namely, the collection of facts by observation and experiment, the verification of such facts, the evolution of principles or "laws" from such verified facts by the process of generalization or "induction," the deduction from such principles of other principles by the process of reasoning or "logic," and lastly, the utilization of such deduced principles, or their application in various ways for the purposes of man. Every inductive science must, therefore, have two stages of existence: first, an empirical or experimental one, during which facts are obtained and principles evolved; and secondly, a rational or scientific one, in which the reason is constantly

engaged in deducing from the principles which have been obtained in the first stage conclusions capable of being practically applied. The characteristics of the first of these stages are uncertainty, conjecture, opinion, dispute, and wrangling; men grope about in the dark, and do not know what things are around them, but they mistake one thing for another, and neither know what a thing is nor whence it comes, nor whither it leads; but following it blindly, fall into all sorts of errors; and it is only by much pain and suffering, and by the exercise of much patience and perseverance, and by much labour and watchfulness, and after much stumbling, that they at last attain to firm principles. But the second stage is different; its characters are law, order, calculation, certainty: men walk therein by the light of reason, and as long as they are true to that light their progress is safe: but in every department of human knowledge the first of these stages must be gone through before the second can be entered upon. Now the different sciences pass from the first of these stages to the second with varying degrees of rapidity, the variation depending on the greater or less complexity of the subject-matter of each; the rule being, as we should *à priori* have supposed, the greater the complexity the slower the growth. Thus the most simple of all the sciences as far as the subject-matter is concerned, are the *pure mathematics*, all the knowledge required to start with being certain elementary ideas of number, space, and quantity; mathematics therefore was the first of all the sciences to enter on the rational stage. The next science in the order of simplicity is *Astronomy*, all that it requires, as data for calculation, being mathematics, and a knowledge of the law of gravitation; accordingly astronomy was the second science to emerge from the empirical form. *Physics* stands next on the list; and this demands, besides mathematics and the law of gravitation, a knowledge of the laws of all the forces which belong to matter generally, as the cohesive and repulsive molecular forces, mechanical force, whether in equilibrium or in motion, whether exercised on solid, liquid, or gaseous matter, &c.; and consequently Physics was

later than astronomy in becoming an exact science. And that branch of Physics which deals with imponderable matter, with heat, with light, and with electricity, is later still in order, for to understand it, a right conception of its subject-matter, the invisible ether, is necessary, and this exists rather as an inference of the reason than as an object of sense; *imponderable Physics* is therefore still in a transition state between the two stages, and although in each of its branches important laws are known, and the mathematical method may be applied, yet doubtless much remains to be done before deductions can be made with absolute certainty. And next comes *Chemistry;* this science requires, in addition to all the foregoing, a knowledge of the laws of elective affinity and combining proportions; and consequently chemistry has been longer than any of the preceding in attaining its rational stage. And that department of chemistry which deals with the very compound elements of the kingdom of Life is still in the empirical stage, but bidding fair soon to emerge. And *Physiology* is waiting for organic chemistry, for, until the elements which compose the structures of living beings are understood thoroughly, it is impossible that a perfect knowledge of the structures themselves can exist; just as the construction of a house cannot be comprehended, until it is known of what materials it is formed. *Pathology* necessarily follows Physiology, for healthy action must be understood, before diseased action can be made out;— and last in the list of the three sciences, which combined constitute that of medicine, is *Therapeutics,* and as this requires, superadded to Physiology and Pathology, a knowledge of the action of medicines, is it astonishing that it occupies that position, requiring as it does for its perfection the previous perfection of all the sciences which deal with matter, with life, and with mind, (for Psychology is a branch of Physiology) ? Yet there are persons who never having given an hour's serious consideration to the subject, and perhaps not very many to any other subject than pleasure and money-getting, taunt the Medical Practitioner with the imperfection of his art! And Physiology brings us to *Psychology* (just as our

thoughts pass from the house itself to its tenant). And when Physiology is rightly understood, then will those phenomena which are called mental, become intelligible; for all mental manifestations depend upon a mysterious relation between the elements of matter united into organic compounds, and built up into organised structures, and a conscious existence; and until the material element of that union has been reduced to law, it is impossible that the laws of the immaterial one (metaphysics) can be known to us.

Sociology is so young a science, that it has scarcely yet received its name, (it being impossible to recognise under this designation our old friend "Politics"); for until the individual man has been investigated, the compound man (Society) must wait. Yet one branch of Sociology, Political Economy, is flourishing, appealing as it does to men's interests; and judging from recent symptoms, another branch, Law, is advancing; but far behind Political Economy; for men's eyes are quicker at discerning interest than justice: yet sooner or later, when the laws of life and mind have been ascertained, the conditions, which govern the actions of men collectively and determine the result, will also be known: but how many generations will pass away before this age of pure reason arrives, or even how many geological epochs, is more than I can say: perhaps all the existing varieties of the genus *homo* will then be fossils, and a new species, evolved by the Darwinian process, will be lecturing on them and their vestiges, and marvelling at the state of things which existed in the "Folly and Delusion Period." If *Meteorology* seems to be an exception to the rule, it is because its facts are of so fleeting a nature and so remote from our grasp, that they cannot be seized and subjected to the tests of observation and experiment. *Geology* too is equally removed from us in space, its facts lying as far beneath our feet as those of meteorology do above our heads; and they are also separated from us by the immensities of Time, as well as of Space; and to decypher them the languages of both inorganic and organic nature must be known: meteorology and geology therefore are, consistently with the law laid down, still empiri-

cal sciences. And if we choose to indulge our fancy, and look forwards in thought to a time when, this world and its material structure being known, men will speculate yet further, and investigate the materials and structure of the other worlds which move in space, such indulgence will be quite legitimate: the path of knowledge is from the known to the unknown, and each step firmly and truly planted serves as a ground or fulcrum for a further spring. Nor need we be deterred by the "Cœlum ipsum petimus stultitiâ" of Horace, when a greater than Horace, his own Phœbus Apollo, beckons us on: "Spectrum Analysis" is already lighting the way, and none can set limits to our progress, or say whither it will lead us, if we follow its light. Lastly, as our knowledge expands, and as each department of Science is successively unfolded to us in all its order and beauty, so in like proportion does our conception of the unseen author of that order and beauty also enlarge; and therefore, last of all the Inductive Sciences in their order of development necessarily stands *Theology,* (Theology, not religion—the explanation of the thing, not the thing itself): for it is impossible that God's revelation to man can be completed until *all* His laws are known: then, "when that which is *perfect* is come, that which is *in part* will be done away."

The several sciences then hold to each other certain definite relations, constituting in fact a series of departments which united form one whole: each department furnishing the key which enables us to unlock the one standing next in the list. And it would be easy to show that the same law holds good with regard to the several *Arts,* which are the products or representatives, each of its respective science: that empirical science produces empirical art, and rational science rational art: and that, although no exercise either of the Understanding or of the Reason can create a taste for either beauty, or fitness of design, or pleasing and noble sentiment; or supply that faculty of gratifying these tastes which constitutes what is called "Genius," and which seems to be the gift of nature alone; yet it is certain that in every art which is regulated by rules deduced from principles firmly based on fact,

the aim of the artist is more clear, his methods more perfect, and his materials more abundant. And if this rule seems to be less true with regard to the *Fine Arts,* and to those which minister to the pleasures of sense, than it does when applied to the *Useful Arts,* it is because the canon of criticism is not yet laid down on these subjects: if the principles, on which the enjoyments derived from the senses of taste and hearing, and from the excitement of the emotions, were fully understood, the cook, the musician, and the poet, when instructed in such principles, would each become more correct, and therefore better artists.

Ignorance then is intellectual darkness; knowledge is intellectual light: and the only process, by which the mind can pass from darkness to light, is *Induction.* In intellectual, as in physical darkness, men dream and beasts prey; wherever science is not, there we find the mystic and the charlatan. The former invents his artificial lights, and gratifies his vanity by the temporary eclàt which he borrows from their brightness; the latter utters his audacious falsehoods and takes advantage of the darkness to rob his dupes: and the supply of victims and votaries never fails either, for the mind asks for something to satisfy its cravings, and in the absence of the bread and the fish, it accepts the stone and the serpent. For every true science a corresponding false one has existed: it maintains its place until the true one appears, then its nature is revealed, and it vanishes. Hence a long list of pseudo-sciences: some have long ago departed, some are still struggling for existence in the dawn of advancing science, and some are in full life and vigour: all have this in common, that they evade the critical process; and all will ultimately disappear: creatures of the night, they shun the light of day. There was a man in Greece once (Parmenides), who taught that all which our senses tell us is unreal, but that under all there was unity; that was his universal principle: but from it was deduced that all things were therefore hopelessly stationary, and that striving after progress and improvement is of no use; so the upshot was stagnation. There was another man (Heraclitus), whose doc-

trine was, that perpetual change existed, and that, by the universal conflict or antagonism of phenomena, things were preserved in equilibrium, and a central harmony maintained; his universal principle led to the conclusion that it is therefore useless to attempt to realise any fixed condition: a conclusion equally fatal to progress. Once men were content to ascribe all phenomena and all events to the direct interposition of a god, first each individual thing having, or perhaps being, a distinct God (Fetish Worship), and then groups of similar things came to be directed by a common deity (Polytheism); and that explanation sufficed. Then "Nature" was substituted; things exhibited certain phenomena because "it was their nature so to do;" it was the "nature of flame to ascend," "nature abhorred a vacuum;" there was a "heavy principle," and a "light principle;" a "principle of warmth," and a "principle of coldness:" physics abounded with these word-formulas. So also the ground of Astronomy was occupied by *Astrology;* of Chemistry by *Alchemy,* with its "Philosopher's stone," "universal solvent," "four elements," &c. Physiology had its "vegetative soul," its "plastic force," its "vital principle," and this last still lingers in the minds of men. And inasmuch as mental science is weak, its territory is even now occupied in force by the two pseudo-sciences, *Phrenology* and *Mesmerism;* to the last of which the term entirely applies, but to the former in a qualified sense only. For Phrenology started with a great truth, rightly arrived at by the inductive method; and had its cultivators adhered to that method, all would have been well: but in their impatience they would not wait, and they committed the mistake from which all scientific error springs; they *invented* instead of *discovering;* and by the aid of a false anatomy and physiology, and a shallow psychology, Phrenology has developed into a system rejected by all men of any eminence, either as Physiologists or Mental Philosophers, and only fit to be one of the items in the stock-in-trade of the itinerant wonder-monger.

Medicine is still as ever the science of the Charlatan. To the vulgar he presents the "universal remedy," to the more

educated the "universal formula;" the one he supports by the ready lie; the other, by the specious rhodomontade decked up in the garb of reasoning, "which lies like truth, and still most truly lies," and flavoured with the spice of mysticism which makes it so attractive to some minds. *Spiritualism,* in all its varied inanities and insanities, is our sham Psychology; and if I do not pursue the inquiry into the provinces of Sociology and Theology, it is because I bear in mind the poet's caution,—

"et vitia, et modos,
Ludumque fortunæ, gravesque
Principum amicitias, et arma
Nondum expiatis uncta cruoribus,
Periculosæ plenum opus aleæ
Tractas; et incedis per ignes
Suppositos cineri doloso."

Yet a moment's glance given to the history of the past, or thought to the present condition of the human race, will satisfy us that neither of these sciences would be wanting in its fair quotum of illustrations to the argument.

But enough of the Pseudo-sciences. They exist almost of necessity, for men will seek after knowledge, either for its own sake, or for the fruits it bears;

To some she is the Goddess great,
To some the milch cow of the field,
Their care is how to calculate
What butter she will yield.

And if they cannot have the real, they will put up with the counterfeit. Possibly too these sciences may have their uses; just as innutritious substances may stay the appetite while the food is preparing, or materials otherwise worthless may ballast the ship while bound for a more valuable cargo.

Seeing then that medicine is an inductive science, and that it is at present in that empirical stage through which all such sciences have to pass, and that when in that stage it is liable to take a wrong direction and become a false science, the next thing we have to do is to enquire what that wrong direction is which sciences are liable to take, what the causes are which

lead enquirers to take that wrong direction, and lastly, what are the marks which distinguish a false science from a true one. Now the false and the true sciences have this in common, that they both profess to consist of and to depend for their truth upon certain facts, and certain principles based on such facts; it is necessary therefore in order to distinguish them from each other, to ascertain by what criteria we judge of the truth of a fact, or of a principle. A *fact* is an occurrence which has taken place under certain circumstances: it follows therefore, as nature is consistent with herself (a postulate always understood in scientific enquiries), that under similar circumstances such occurrence will again take place. What we require therefore to enable us to test a fact is; 1st, a *complete* statement of all the circumstances relating to what is said to have taken place, and 2dly, an opportunity of repeating the experiment under precisely similar circumstances. If the statement given us is incomplete, we cannot test its truth, because we do not in that case know what it is that is said to have happened. Also if the circumstances from their nature are such that they cannot be repeated, we are equally incapacitated from testing the truth of the fact. In either case the so-called fact is worthless for scientific purposes. The above conditions being complied with then, the recurrence or otherwise of the phenomena under similar circumstances is the criterion of the truth or falsehood of the fact. And a *principle* or "law" is a general statement of some property belonging to a certain class of facts. Every principle must therefore be based on *verified* facts, from which it has been obtained by generalization or "induction." The conditions to be required of a principle before it can be accepted as true, are; 1st, that the proposition stating it should be clear and definite, distinctly stating what that is of which something is said, and what that is which is said of it: and 2dly, that *every* fact within our knowledge agree with such statement. If the first condition is wanting, the proposition is ambiguous, and the principle worthless: if the second condition fail, the principle is false; it is wanting in the essential character of a law of nature, "quod nunc, quod semper, quod ubique."

Principles which are true, serve as premises from which by the logical method true conclusions are deduced: they are the foundation stones of the true sciences.

Principles which are false, or ambiguous, serve as premises or stepping-stones which, whether by the logical or by any other process, lead to nothing but error and grief: they are the foundations of the pseudo-sciences. A true science is therefore to be distinguished from a false one by applying the criteria that have been mentioned to its principles and facts. And the wrong direction, which leads to false science, is taken when the inductive method is departed from; when fancy is made use of instead of observation, imagination instead of investigation, passion instead of reason; when fictions are invented, instead of facts discovered; when the synthetic (combining) process has been commenced, before the analytic (discerning or separating) process has been completed; and when, by this premature synthesis on invented fictions or imperfectly-observed phenomena, a structure has been erected, which, however brilliant it may appear, falls to pieces the instant its stability is tested practically by the weight of one well-ascertained and verified truth.

And the mental causes which lead men to depart from the inductive method are, the vices of impatience, vanity, and cupidity.

Having defined the criteria by which the truth of scientific theories is to be determined, it now only remains to apply these criteria to the matter which we have in hand, and to test the homœopathic facts and principles. "*Similia similibus curantur*," "like is cured by like"; that is the great homœopathic principle. And it is put forwards as opposed to another formula, *assumed* to be recognised by the medical profession as a principle, and to be adopted by them in practice, viz., "*contraria contrariis curantur*," "unlike is cured by unlike," and this last principle is called the principle of "Allopathy," and the members of the medical profession are called accordingly by those who practice homœopathy, "Allopathists." Now the first

remark that I have to make on the above is, that the statement respecting the "contraria contrariis" principle, and all that relates thereto, is simply a fiction; no such principle is, or ever has been, acknowledged by the medical profession as a rule of practice. "Allopathy" is a mere fabrication of the Homœopaths; they put up an antagonist in order to knock him down again; a common, but not very candid trick of those who wish to make a hit. Medicine does not seek to impose formulas of any kind: it is Homœopathy that seeks to impose. And my second remark is, that the formula of Homœopathy fails to fulfil the first condition laid down as belonging to a true principle; for instead of being clear and definite, it is altogether vague and misty, very much resembling some of the word-formulas already alluded to when treating of the pseudo-sciences. It seems to say something, yet the more we enquire into it, the more we wonder what it actually does say. Keeping "the word of promise to the ear, it breaks it to the hope," or rather understanding. That this quality of vagueness may recommend it to the lovers of the mystical and the transcendental is probable, but to the seekers for plain truth it is not an attractive feature. But, waiving these objections, let us attempt the analysis of this mystic formula, and try whether, by any method, truth can be extracted therefrom. "Like" is an adjective, and therefore some substantive must be inserted to complete the sentence. That substantive I presume should be "disease;" that is the word generally supposed to be intended: and indeed if it is not that, then I am altogether at a loss to know what word it can be. "Symptoms" would be an equivalent word to "disease," for every disease is only a group of symptoms or appearances; whether therefore the word to be inserted is "symptoms" or "disease" amounts to precisely the same thing. Assuming, then, that the formula extended to its full length means "*Diseases are cured by remedies capable of producing like diseases,*" let us test it by facts. But immediately we are met with by another ambiguity; for what is understood by the word "like?" All things are like each other in some points, and differ in others. Thus all things resemble each

other in the common quality of *existence,* and differ in that some things exist spiritually, and some materially; that is the first difference. Again, all *material* things resemble each other in possessing the common properties of matter, but differ in that some are inorganic, some organic. Again, all *organic* things resemble each other in possessing what are called vital properties, but differ in that some are vegetable, some animal. Again, all *animals* resemble each other in possessing a nervous system, but differ in that some are vertebrated animals, and others belong to the other divisions of the animal kingdom. Again, all *vertebrated* animals resemble each other in the possession of a spinal column, and differ in that some are quadrupeds, some birds, some reptiles, and some fishes. Again, all *quadrupeds* agree in the special characters of the quadruped, but differ in that some are horses, some oxen, some sheep, &c. Again, all *horses* agree in the common characters of the horse, but differ in that some are race-horses, some cart-horses, some ponies, &c. And, finally, each *individual* horse, whether race-horse, cart-horse, or pony, has some peculiarity which distinguishes him from every other existing thing. Everything, therefore, has a number of *generic* properties, common more or less to it and other things, and certain *specific* properties or qualities, distinguishing it more or less from other things; the extreme point of generality including every existing thing, the extreme point of speciality excluding everything but the individual itself. All things, then, are like or unlike according to the points in which they are viewed, and the terms "homoios," or "allos," (like—different) are applicable to them accordingly. And if all things, of course disease, as may be easily shown. Thus all *diseases* resemble each other in that they are departures from health, but they differ in that some are "Parasitic" (deriving their existence from the presence of an animal or vegetable parasite), some "Miasmatic" (caused by the presence in the system of a certain infecting miasm), some "Diathetic" (due to the existence of some morbid constitutional tendency), some "Dietic" (caused by inappropriate food), &c., &c. Now the members of each one of these groups resemble each other in

those qualities which characterise the group, and differ in others. The "*Miasmatic,*" for instance, resemble each other in that they all owe their existence to some poison (miasm) diffused through the air or water, and producing certain fevers; but they differ in that some of these fevers are intermittent, some remittent, some continued, and some eruptive. The members of one of these classes again, the *eruptive* for instance, resemble each other in the fact that they possess an eruption on the skin, but differ in that some possess the measles eruption, some the scarlatina one, some the small-pox eruption, &c.; and, lastly, each individual case of either small-pox, measles, scarlatina, or any other disease, has its own peculiarities, which distinguish it from every other case. It is necessary, therefore, before we can judge of the truth of the Homœopathic Formula, as above expressed, to enquire wherein the likeness said to exist between the curing disease and the diseased cured must consist; whether the "*specific*" features distinguishing the disease in question from every other disease must constitute the resemblance, or the "*generic*" features only; and if the latter, then "*generality*" in what degree? For instance, supposing scarlatina to be the disease or "*pathos*" to be cured, must the curing "pathos" resemble it merely in being a departure from health —a disease—or in being a febrile disease as well? And if *febrile,* does this symptom suffice to constitute the likeness, or must the type of the fever—the symptoms which mark it as an *eruptive* fever—be apparent in the resemblance. And lastly, if the type must be present, must the *special* features of scarlatina—those which distinguish it from the other eruptive fevers, and from every other known disease, be also present? I presume that the reply to this question will be that the curing disease must resemble the disease to be cured in its "*specific*" symptoms — that scarlatina must be cured by remedies capable of producing a disease resembling scarlatina; measles by remedies that can produce measles, &c., &c.; for manifestly unless this were so, unless the characteristic and distinguishing symptoms of the disease were present, the curing disease, or "pathos," would be "allos," and not "homoios." The like-

ness of the curing disease to the disease cured must be *specific* then, and not merely *generic;* and the distinguishing symptoms must be present therein. But one more difficulty still remains, for what is a symptom? Symptoms are the phenomena or appearances which diseases present to our senses. But "appearances are deceitful," "the senses deceive." That I deny. The senses are not deceitful—appearances never deceive; for all knowledge is founded on appearances (phenomena), and on appearances only. It is *inferences* hastily drawn from superficial and incomplete observation of the appearances, which deceive. Ex. gr. An incomplete observation of the appearances led men to believe that the sun went round the earth; a more complete observation taught them the reverse: both conclusions were drawn from the appearances, but the false one was drawn from the superficial appearances only, the true one from a more profound investigation of the phenomena. To take another illustration. A person is the subject of a "spectral illusion"; he sees an "apparition" as it is called, and believes it, i.e., believes that it represents an actual external thing. Well, he is deceived; but not by his senses, for the information so communicated, *as far as it goes,* is correct. What he sees is, the image in his brain, and that is really there, not a fiction, but a fact, as much so as if the external object were there also. It is the *incompleteness* of his information which leads him astray: had he by the exercise of his other senses, or through the instrumentality of the senses of other men, collected more information, he would have avoided the error. Another man also sees an apparition, and making use of his other senses discovers that their evidence does not confirm his first inference (instinctively drawn) of an external material existence. He therefore, *having more information,* does not fall into the same error as the first man, but not being acquainted with the physiology of the senses, and the explanation of spectral illusions, he falls into one probably of a far graver kind, and believes the apparition to be supernatural. A third person, *still better informed,* seeing a similar apparition, knows that the phenomena is due neither to an external object, nor to a

supernatural cause, but to some material condition operating within the body (subjective in fact), in accordance with the laws of cerebral organisation: but the information which enabled him to escape the errors of the former two was derived like theirs, either directly or indirectly, from the senses. So also a superficial observer would set down a bat as a bird, a whale as a fish, but more profound observation would force him to classify both these animals with mammals. It is not then the information that appearances supply which deceives, but that which is wanting, that which they fail to supply; it is the absence of appearances which leads men wrong. He therefore who is in the possession of the greatest number of appearances or phenomena,—in short, he who has the most knowledge on any subject is the least likely to be deceived: people fall into errors about the course of the sun, spectral illusions, objects of natural history, &c., from their want of knowledge of astronomy, physiology, or zoology. It appears, therefore, to go back to the matter in hand, that the judgment formed on the resemblances or differences of things must depend much on the qualities of the observer. As probably no subject is thoroughly known, there is no subject on which anyone is not liable to err; but the best informed man is the least likely, or as it is customary to put it, "the more information a man brings to a subject, the more he is likely to take away." The infant classifies all men together under the word "man," viewing them indistinctly; to him they are *homoios*: as he grows up, he distinguishes them; they are then *allos*. Science too has its infancy, and "speaks and understands as a child"; as it grows to maturity it "puts from it childish things," and distinguishes. Phenomena which were classified together by the learned of a former day, are distinguished by the learned of to-day—knowledge is in fact the art of distinguishing, and consequently he who knows most will distinguish best. Let us apply this argument now to disease. A person observing disease for the first time takes a confused view of everything; he does not know to what points to direct his attention; things utterly dissimilar are confounded

together, and the impressions he takes away with him are altogether incomplete and indistinct. Another person who is familiar with the aspect of disease at the bedside, but who is ignorant of Pathology, is in a different position. The superficial features of disease are familiar to him; he distinguishes in many cases the one from the other, and when the cause is not too remote, is able to say what it denotes: but he too is often in error, for very often the same surface symptom belongs to two or more utterly distinct conditions of the body, while the symptoms which distinguish these conditions do not lie on the surface, and can only be ascertained by more profound research. And, lastly, there is the Pathologist, who brings to his aid all the resources of science (the stethoscope, the microscope, the speculum, the test-tube, the dissecting-knife, &c.), and thus sees not only all that the others do on the surface, but all that lies beneath the surface as well; and he can distinguish where they could not; and the *homoios* to them is the *allos* to him, and where he fails, it is on account of the imperfection of Pathology; for if Pathology were perfect, he would be in possession of all the appearances, and would have the complete knowledge. It seems then that before a resemblance can be affirmed to exist between two diseases, they must be compared with reference to their deeper features as well as their superficial ones, and that the judge must be the man acquainted with such deeper features, in other words, the Pathologist; for otherwise, if the judgment is formed on the comparison of superficial features only, perceptible by an ordinary observer, we might go on selecting for comparison features more and more superficial, and judges less and less informed, until we arrive at hopeless absurdity and confusion. The specific features then of the disease must be visible in the likeness, and the likeness must be recognised by the man well informed on the subject, able to distinguish, and least likely to be deceived.

At last then we have succeeded in reducing the Homœopathic proposition to a form in which the first of the conditions already laid down as necessary for a scientific principle is complied with (see page 16 at bottom). The formula will now

stand thus: "Diseases are cured by remedies capable of producing diseases which in the eyes of *competent observers* shall present all the symptoms, both superficial and deep, which essentially characterize and distinguish the diseases so cured." That is what the formula must mean, if it mean anything; and as by "competent observers" Pathologists are understood, there is now supplied us a tribunal recognised by the reason as qualified to test the truth of the proposition by the criterion laid down. Now this being admitted (and I do not see how we can escape from admitting it), the question is already decided; for in Hahneman's day Pathology could hardly be said to exist as a science (what sort of Pathologist he was will presently be shown); and from his time to the present hour not one Pathologist, or Physiologist, or indeed to the best of my belief, any man of any proved eminence in anyone of the inductive sciences, has come forward, and asserted his belief in this Homœopathic principle. Not only do Pathologists unanimously deny that diseases are cured by remedies capable of producing similar diseases, but *they deny that any such remedies exist.* No substances exist in nature, as far as we know (excluding the actual miasms or specific causes of the diseases themselves), which are capable of exciting in the human body symptoms similar to those groups of symptoms which we call disease; although no doubt certain substances may produce isolated symptoms resembling some one or more individual constituents of such groups. And further I believe all Pathologists will agree that the efficacy of medicines in the cure of disease bears no constant ratio to the similarity or dissimilarity of the symptoms it is capable of producing, to any of the symptoms present in the disease under treatment. That is how the matter stands between the Pathologists and Homœopathy. It is impossible to prove a negative: the burden of proof in every proposition rests with those who advance it. It is for the Homœopathists to prove their case, and this they have failed to do: their theory is, in the eyes of the only competent tribunal which exists, inconsistent with known facts. As, therefore, I deny the existence of the so-called Homœopathic remedies,

I cannot test their action by experiment if I would; but I would not if I could. Our reason is given us for our guide; if by *mistake* I follow instead of it some will-o'-the-wisp, I deserve some pity when I founder in the inevitable swamp into which it will lead me; but if I *knowingly* follow the will-o'-the-wisp, I deserve none. *My* reason tells me that Homœopathy is a will-o'-the-wisp, and that in dealing with disease, as with any other difficulty, there is but one method to be pursued, viz.: 1. Endeavour in every possible way to understand what is going on, distinguishing action tending to health from action tending to destruction: 2. In like manner gain a knowledge of the capabilities of the remedies or tools available; and, lastly, having chosen a tool proper for the matter in hand, use it in the most effectual method, without wasting time in arguing whether that method is homœopathic or allopathic. In fact watch nature, interpret the phenomena, and act accordingly. That therefore is the only method that I shall follow, but this offer I will make to the Homœopathists, and it is all that they have a right to expect. If any Homœopath will produce any remedy which in any dose will produce any disease, which any Pathologist of any eminence shall pronounce to be either identical with, or to differ so slightly as in the usual acceptation of words to bear a real resemblance to any well known disease, then, and not till then, will I reconsider the subject.

But there remains yet another Homœopathic Formula to discuss before my task is completed; for it is by the interweaving of two threads that this sophistical web is held together; and this second principle, I observe, seems to possess some value in your eyes. I will therefore proceed to say all that occurs to me on the subject, which is not much. This principle expressed in your words is the following: "Medicines in infinitesimal doses have a wonderful efficacy when the medicine used happens to be in specific relation to the case." I assume that by "specific relation" homœopathic relation is meant; for there are all kinds of specific relations—relations of opposition, contrast, cause and effect, part and whole, contiguity in space, coincidence in time, &c. Putting the

matter, then, in as simple words as possible, and divesting it of all mysticism, the proposition means simply this—"When the body, or any portion thereof, is either prone to take on, or is actually taking on, any special action, any very small thing *tending in the same direction* is felt." No doubt that is true. It is the last drop that makes the full glass overflow; it is the last straw that breaks the camel's back; it is the last indignity that breaks the overwrought heart; it is the last sorrow that dissolves it in emotion; in old age "the grasshopper is a burden"; to the wearied man one ounce is more weighty than one pound to the same man when fresh, &c. All these are cases of *unstable equilibrium*. The rope-walker is in a state of unstable equilibrium, and the *least* addition to either side tips him. It might be said of him that the slightest touch "has a wonderful efficacy when it happens to be in specific relation to his case;" in short, when he is already inclining in the same direction as that to which the touch tends. He carries his long pole in order that he may readily apply *infinitesimal doses* to his condition; but I observe that *his* infinitesimals are not applied *to* the side to which he is falling. His principle is *allopathy*. So, also, some persons are constitutionally in a state of unstable equilibrium with regard to certain medicines, and diseases also modify much the action of medicines, so that in very many cases medicines are borne not only with impunity but *with advantage*, in doses so large as to be dangerous to life in persons in health, and in such cases the word "tolerance" is applied with reference to such medicines. There are also cases which are *intolerant* of even exceedingly small doses. The "tolerance" or "intolerance" manifested by the system towards the medicine depends on whether the action of the medicine tends or not in the same direction as that to which the action going on in the body (the pathological action) is tending. And the grounds on which we decide which of the two classes of medicines in question are to be given (whether the one of which the system is tolerant, or that of which it is intolerant) are, not whether the two actions (pathological and medicinal) do or do not resemble each other; but whether the

pathological action which is going on does or does not tend to the restoration of health; a question which clearly a Pathologist, and only a Pathologist, can settle.

Again, with regard to that absurd word, "infinitesimals." Largeness and smallness are relative terms. A very large diamond would be a very small nugget of gold, and a very large nugget of gold would be a very small lump of coal. So with regard to medicines: a small dose of rhubarb would be a large dose of calomel, a small dose of calomel a large dose of strychnine. "Medicine is exceptional food:" air, water, bread, meat, common salt, spices, alcohol, tea, coffee, tobacco, opium, belladonna, strychnia, soda, potash, lead, mercury, copper, arsenic, &c., all agree in this, viz., that they are all substances taken from the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms of nature, and endowed with properties capable of modifying action already going on in the body; according to the principles of vital chemistry. They are all injurious or beneficial according as they are applied. Some are requisite to the body when in health, others in abnormal conditions of the same, from the slightest debility to the most deadly disease. If the homœopathic principle is true of some of these, it should be true of all. For the same laws exist everywhere: there is no special "Vital Principle."* "Life" is only an organised "microcosm" of the forces which regulate the equally organised "macrocosm" of the Universe. Such forces limited by the smaller sphere, become more concentrated, exist at a higher tension, and manifest themselves in higher forms. All Science is one: nature is an unity, though our limited faculties can only view it in detail; and when a set of men endeavour to set up in one department of knowledge a system based on principles opposed to all those principles which we know to hold good in other departments, that system may be pronounced with certainty to be untrue. I reject, therefore, utterly both the principles on which Homœopathy rests; but I will accept facts, cut how

* Or at least there is no evidence of any, and "de non apparentibus et non existentibus eadem ratio est." (See "Westminster Review," Article, "Herbert Spencer's Principles of Biology.") A most suggestive article.

they may—and this brings me to your fact. Your case of dysentery is an interesting one; let us analyse it. "Dysentery is endemic in every country in which paludal fever exists. The connection is so intimate that a given number of persons being exposed to the action of the paludal miasmata, the probabilities are that part of them will be seized with dysentery, and part with paludal fever." (Aitken's "Practice of Medicine.") Dysentery produces diarrhœa, tenesmus, bloody mucus, exudation shreds, &c. Its morbid anatomy presents lymph exuded in the rectum and colon on the surface of the mucous membrane, in the tubular follicles, and in the solitary vesicular glands; and this exuded material becomes an organised structure, which finally ulcerates; and the mucous membrane itself also frequently ulcerates. Paludal fever presents altogether different symptoms, and the rectum and colon are not involved. Arsenic is known to be of benefit in the treatment of paludal fever; "but," Martin says, "it should be given in *small* doses, and not persevered in for more than 8 or 10 days; when it is given in large doses, and its use prolonged, it permanently injures the mucous membrane of the stomach and bowels." Arsenic is a substance which produces irritation and inflammation of the whole alimentary canal, especially of the *stomach and upper portion*. Its symptoms, therefore, differ altogether from those of dysentery, nor do I find that the post-mortem appearances of the rectum and colon are those of dysentery. You say that your case was cured by 2 or 3 doses of ½ a drop of Liq. Arsenicalis (the usual dose being from 2 to 5 drops), but that even this dose caused a "temporary aggravation of the symptoms." Is not this just what we should have expected? I see nothing marvellous. Dysentery and marsh-fever have a common origin, and no doubt a common element; but their symptoms are dissimilar, as owing to constitutional peculiarities the poison has taken a different direction. Arsenic is a medicine which produces symptoms which are in reality utterly dissimilar to both, but in *some* of which an uninformed spectator, or even the mere bedside observer, might see a resemblance to those of dysentery. This medicine cures marsh-fever, but care must be taken

lest it should bring on irritation of the stomach or bowels. You find that it also cures dysentery, but that greater care still is here necessary, as the patient is more prone to the bowel irritation (is already in a state of unstable equilibrium, and something more, in that direction). The case, as far as it proves anything, tells directly against Homœopathy, as it shows how careful we should be in giving anything where a "special relation" exists. The arsenic does not cure the dysentery in virtue of its specific action on the mucous membrane, but by some other property, which enables it to cure the marsh-fever as well, in which no tendency to intestinal irritation exists. Its specific action renders it a dangerous remedy in marsh-fever, and a still more dangerous one in dysentery; being what might rationally have been expected.

I have now discussed the principles of Homœopathy as fully as I am capable of doing. I hope also I have discussed them fairly. If I have failed in comprehending them, all I can say is, I have honestly tried. It will perhaps be said that I have been misled by scepticism; but faith too may mislead. I have in my investigation consulted Hahnemann's own writings, thinking that he ought to be the best exponent of his own system. They belong to that class of literature which is to me most offensive; unsound science and unamusing romance, objectionable alike to the understanding and to the imagination; compared to them, I find the "Spiritualist Magazine" almost intelligible, and "Zadkiel's Almanack" absolutely luminous. I send you a specimen or two of his statements, in order that you may judge what kind of man this was, who set himself up as a medical regenerator. He tells us that diseases do not depend on changes in the material substances of our bodies; they result only from dynamical or "spiritual" alterations of the vital force. (I need not say that the tendency of all modern science is to show that all dynamical change is necessarily associated with material change). Medicines also, according to him, act entirely by changes which they induce in the spiritual or dynamic condition; in the minute state of division in which they are given by the Homœopath, and after the friction and

shaking to which they have been subjected, the material element of the medicine disappears, and there only remains a dynamic force. "Medicines can act in no other way than allopathically, antipathically, or Homœopathically: but allopathic remedies make worse disorders than those they cure; antipathic remedies palliate the disorder only, which returns afterwards; therefore Homœopathic remedies are the only ones left, and Homœopathy must be the plan." (Most triumphant logic! invent your premises, and you can deduce any conclusion you desire.) He evidently judges of diseases and of the action of remedies chiefly by the *subjective* symptoms (i.e. the feelings of the patient); when every medical man knows that the feelings of the patient bear no relation whatever to the pathological condition. Some of the most formidable diseases present scarcely any subjective symptoms, while these again are often abundantly experienced when the pathological condition accompanying them is so slight and so transient as not to be cognisable. Then mark his great pathological discovery! "The chronic miasm of psora, or *itch*, is the only real, fundamental cause of all the numerous, one might say innumerable, forms of disease which have been described under the names of 'nervous debility, hysteria, hypochondriasis, mania, melancholia, imbecility, madness, epilepsy, convulsions, rachitis, caries, cancer, fungus hæmatodes, malignant organic growths, gout, piles, jaundice, cyanosis, dropsy, &c., &c., &c.'" And again: "Itch lies at the root of almost all mental diseases" (no doubt, but not original; for Brutus (*vide* Shakespeare) discerned that Cassius had an "itching palm"). Then there is another grand discovery; one does not know which to admire most, the greatness of the discovery, or the modesty of the man. "It is certain that remedies, at each dilution or division, acquire a new degree of power from the friction or from the shock communicated to them." "This means of developing the inherent virtues of remedies was unknown to any one before me." "This exaltation of the dynamic virtues of remedies should be placed amongst the grandest discoveries of the present age." (Of course it should; yet although this was written at least fifty years ago, scientific men obstinately refuse to believe

in this great discovery, when one would have thought daily observation of the effects of very weak tea, after long stirring, on the nerves of poor old women, or of compounds of mixed spirits, after the same process, on those of persons not members of a temperance society, might convince them of the truth of the same). Again; I knew that gold frequently cured melancholy, although in my own case infinitesimal doses of that metal have proved inefficient, but I was not prepared for the following statement:—"If you rub up one grain of gold with one hundred grains of sugar for one hour, you have a preparation of much medicinal value; if you continue the same way until each grain of the last powder contains a *quadrillionth* of gold (1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000), you have then a medicine of such power that it is enough to take a grain, enclose it in a bottle, and allow a man labouring under melancholia to smell the bottle; in an hour afterwards the unfortunate man will be cured." When I came to that paragraph I shut the book. I wish to retain a few grains of self-respect. If the Homœopaths believe these things, they may do so if they like; but I decline to argue with them: reason is no longer of any use: let us worship fetiches with the savage, and return as fast as we can to the brute condition, I was about to say; but the instinct of brutes would save them from Homœopathy. "The corruption of the best is the worst," and it is only reason that could yield in its degradation such results. By what process Hahneman arrived at these conclusions, I shall not speculate; but it certainly was not by the inductive method. But I wish to be just to Hahneman. I do not think him a fool, and still less a knave; nor do I think he was mad; but I believe him to have been a solemn fanatic, unendowed with the sense of the ludicrous, and quite impervious to the "reductio ad absurdum" argument. Such men are so wedded to their idea, that they follow it wherever it may lead them, inaccessible to ridicule and regardless of consequences. Swedenborg and Comte seem to have been similar men. Both of these men were of superior intellect; and if you read the Westminster Review, you will find from Mr Mill's recent article on the

Positive Philosophy of M. Comte that all which I have written about the development of the sciences (being in fact all that gives to this letter any value) has been borrowed from the writings of the latter of the two; and you will also learn from the same article how miserably this same M. Comte failed, when, in his haste to complete his system, he abandoned the inductive method, and rushed to his conclusions before he had mastered his facts. In short, no amount of genius will save a man from folly, when he surrenders himself in scientific investigations to his imagination; and the greater the genius, the more glaring will be the folly.

But it is not enough to have confuted by argument the doctrines of Hahneman, to have shown that his principles will not bear the test of fact, and that his writings are folly. People in general, and especially English people, are practical, not logical; and unless it can be shown that the results of Homœopathy are worthless, nothing has been done. These questions are asked, and must be answered: Do people, or do they not, get well under Homœopathic treatment? And if they do, how does this happen? Our reply to the first question must be in the affirmative; unquestionably people get well under homœopathic treatment. The answer to the second question is more difficult, for although the reason seems very perceptible to those who are conversant with disease, yet it is not easy to make it equally perceptible to those who are not so conversant therewith. I do not propose to discuss the question fully here; the subject is too wide a one, and as I am writing to one who is familiar with disease, it is unnecessary. To any one, however, who is desirous of instituting a comparison between the results of Homœopathy and of the regular medical practice, the following considerations may be of use:—1. All forms of quackery have their lists of cures, and no doubt many patients get well under every form of quackery. 2. Homœopathy is a very peculiar form of quackery, in that (assuming the infinitesimal system to be carried out) no *material* remedial substance—no drug—is given. 3. Many diseases, in short most disorders of the body may get well without the use of drugs. 4. Drugs wrongly

administered do harm. 5. The nature and treatment of many diseases is not understood, and therefore, owing to the imperfection of science, the wrong drug may be given. 6. The difficulties of distinguishing diseases that *are* understood from each other are sometimes so great, that even a well-informed and careful practitioner may make a mistake. 7. Medical practitioners are sometimes not careful, and sometimes not well-informed. On the other hand, it must be remembered that:—1. The nature and treatment of very many diseases are understood, and that *by the use of drugs* not only much pain and suffering is relieved, and persons are restored to health more quickly than they otherwise would have been, but many lives are actually saved. 2. Our knowledge of disease is daily advancing, under the use of the inductive method; and 3. The education of medical men is also daily advancing. There is also one very important consideration which must never be lost sight of when estimating the results of medical treatment. The brain is the receptacle of our ideas, just as the central organs of the senses are of direct impressions from external things. What a sensation is to the organ of sense, that an emotion is to the brain (the cerebral hemispheres). Just as we are the subjects of agreeable and disagreeable sensations, so are we of elevating and depressing emotions. Our ideas are called forth by the perception, through the instrumentality of the senses, of external things with which they are related by the laws of mental association. Ideas concerning that which we most value, excite the most powerful emotions, either elevating or depressing, according to the nature of the circumstance. Whether, then, an idea moves us much or not, depends on the estimation which the thing to which it relates has in our minds. To a highly conscientious man, probably, one hour of remorse would occasion more torture, one hour of self-approbation more exquisite pleasure, than any bodily sensation could produce; the emotions of another man, one dead to remorse, but alive to shame—valuing the *seeming*, but indifferent to the *being*—would fluctuate with the probabilities or otherwise of being found out and disgraced in the eyes of others; while those of a third man—

one more degraded still, and insensible to both remorse and shame—might only be roused by considerations of corporeal punishment. Emotion, then, is an entity like sensation, but of a higher nature, the product of a higher organ, and touching us more nearly and more exquisitely. That its perpetual ebb and flow is an actual physical condition cannot be questioned by anyone who reflects on the physical changes occasioned by it in the body. When things go well with a man, when outward circumstances call up exhilarating ideas, what a difference in the bodily condition!—what springiness is imparted to the step—what brightness to the face—what vigour to the thought—what energy to every action! The appetite is quickened—the sensations are keen and susceptible to every pleasant impression. The effect is felt in every part of the system—the nutrient, the secretory, the circulatory, and the nervous. But let one change in the outward circumstance produce a different set of ideas, and an opposite bodily condition in all these respects appears: the countenance is dejected, the step heavy, the thought languid, the senses dull, the appetite gone, and the activity of every function depressed. Now in every disease in which the nervous system is much involved, whether primarily or secondarily, the disease and everything relating thereto becomes the one subject of importance in the patient's mind; often unduly so, for it by no means happens that the real ground of anxiety has any constant ratio to the presence or absence of this nervous element. To his doctor he looks for aid in his difficulty; that is the staff on which he mainly rests. Faith in him and his system confers hope and confidence; doubt in him, whether moral or intellectual, suggests ideas of insecurity and apprehension; and these several influences are felt throughout the frame, wherever there is a nerve to convey them, increasing or diminishing his powers of resistance to the disease accordingly. Faith then implies emotion acting on the side of the doctor; doubt, emotion on the side of the disease. Now there is not a question that in many disorders which have their primary seat in the nervous system, this element is sufficient alone to determine the cure; and in a very large proportion of

the list of diseases it exercises an appreciable influence on the treatment. Every doctor knows how much his chances of success are diminished when, to the difficulties of the disease, distrust and consequent antagonism on the part of the patient are added. Now in the exercise of this weapon, faith, the quack has a manifest advantage over the regular practitioner. The latter can hold forth no greater promises to his patient than the laws of disease justify him in doing, while notoriously the essence of quackery is in *large promising*. The patient goes to the regular practitioner in many cases only because it is the custom of society so to do; he usually goes to the Quack because he has faith and hope in his system or remedy. But if faith is an agency on the side of every kind of quackery as compared with rational medicine, it is in like manner and especially an agency on the side of Homœopathy as compared with other quackeries. For that very class of persons whose nervous systems are most impressible, and who are therefore most prone to emotional conditions and to those disorders which such conditions act upon, are the class most likely to be worked upon by the doctrines of Homœopathy. Their quickly-moved minds are more likely to be attracted by resemblances than by differences, and to be approached on the imaginative rather than the critical side. To them the mystic formula and subtle paradoxes of Homœopathy are infinitely more attractive and suggestive than doctrines deduced by the logical methods of the inductive reason (the very contradictions of the system have the charm of novelty and audacity—the sense of the wonderful is roused—and, like the theologian, they believe "quia impossibile") ;—while the seemingly-refined and delicate globule commends itself to their senses, and advantageously compares with the grosser forms in which remedies of real power are often necessitated to be exhibited. Moreover the peculiar organisation of these persons renders them specially liable to subjective sensations and modes of feeling, and subjective sensations are the very staple of Homœopathy; and, lastly, as the infinitesimal system is the only form of quackery in which no drug is given, no error of the prescriber can

interfere with the result, and therefore whatever virtue the sentiment of faith possesses as a remedial agent operates with full force.

Perhaps the above considerations may be of assistance to those who are seeking to explain why quackery in general and Homœopathy in particular seem so frequently to succeed: but to anyone who concurs in what has been said respecting the principles of Homœopathy this question of practical results must appear idle and puerile. It cannot be seriously intended to argue that because workmen are liable to blunder and to be careless, therefore tools should be cast aside. Blundering and error are not peculiar to medicine, but necessarily belong to and are inseparable from every art in its empirical stage; and to argue that on this account all efforts are to be abandoned, and the make-believe, do-nothing system of Homœopathy adopted, would be equivalent to insisting that on account of consequences men should lay aside the noblest attributes of humanity, and betake themselves instead to mental processes not more elevated in their nature than those of the parrot and the mocking-bird.

And now my letter is done, and you cannot be more glad of that fact than I am; for if the reading it has tired your patience much, the writing it has tired mine more. The mere destruction of error is not a very agreeable occupation to me. It usually leads to nothing but endless controversy and moral heartburn; and at the best, and when successful, only leaves a void for some new delusion to occupy. In fact, my main object in writing this letter was, not any weak idea of extinguishing Homœopathy, for about its existence or non-existence I am in truth very indifferent; but what I had most at heart was to show that there is a certain thing called *Truth*, and that there is another certain thing called *Falsehood;* and that there are certain tests by which, if rightly applied, we can with certainty distinguish the one from the other; and that there is a path which, if followed, will lead with certainty, sooner or later, to Truth; and that moreover, any departure

from that path will lead with certainty to some Falsehood; and it was only the accident of your letter which determined me in selecting Homœopathy as an illustration of my argument, for any other prevalent falsehood would have answered equally well. The only effectual way for the suppression of error is the discovery of truth, and that is what we have each of us to do in our generation, as far as lies in our power. On the subject of Therapeutics, I do not think, for reasons already given, that the time is ripe for establishing any general law. If, however, you wish to apply your mind thereto, there is a wide field of inquiry open to you. And you may enter it unfettered by any restrictions but those of reason and conscience; and whatever conclusions you may arrive at, you need join no sect. For medicine is a liberal science. The medical profession is composed of a body of men associated together with one common object. They pursue that object unencumbered by any dogmas; recognising no authority, but reason; no creed, but truth: they admit that their science is in an imperfect form, and gladly accept new facts and new principles, come from what quarter they may; requiring only that the facts stand the test of experiment, and that the principles accord with known truths. The members of that profession are at liberty in their practice to adopt any method of treatment that commends itself to their understanding, subject of course to the pains and penalties that attach to culpable negligence or ignorance. They also may advance any theory, and it will be received with respect, provided that it comply with the conditions already laid down; but if any set of men advance opinions which are not in accordance with facts, and support them by arguments which do not convince the reason, they must not be surprised that their opinions are not received; and if, in that case, they adopt other methods to attract attention and obtain notoriety, writing books full of idle declamation, and unsupported assertion, and misty formula, and ingenious sophistry, raising a cloud of words without meaning, and hoping under cover thereof to advance and surprise the understanding; and if they address these books to those who are incompetent

to detect their falsehoods; and if they adopt new designations, whether Homœopath, Allopath, Hygeist, Mesmerist, Hydropath, or anything else; and use puffing advertisements, or affect singularity in the names and forms of their drugs, &c., &c., then such men receive from the Medical Profession deserved contempt; they present the well-known features of the Charlatan, and bear the mark of the beast. And if you find in your investigation this inductive method a toilsome one, the soil stubborn and difficult to break up, and the crop slow in coming, and perhaps not to be gathered in your day, then call to mind the words of the great Master—that impressive sentence, which commencing as it does the first recorded work on Medicine, might fitly terminate the last—words characteristic of the modesty which always distinguishes the real man from the pretender, and which, true then and true now, will continue to be true as long as any department of knowledge remains to be reduced by the labour of man's brain to law and order:—

"Ὁ βιὸς βραχὺς, ἡ δὲ τέχνη μακρὰ, ὁ δὲ καιρὸς ὀξὺς, ἡ δὲ πεῖρα σφαλερὰ, ἡ δὲ κρίσις χαλεπή."

Or equally impressive, and more generally intelligible, in the Latin form:—

"Vita brevis, ars longa, occasio præceps, experientia fallax, judicium difficile."

Yours very truly,

F. G.

APPENDIX.

SINCE the above letter has been in type, I have received a pamphlet from Auckland, New Zealand, entitled, "The Scientific Character of Homœopathy," by J. Giles, M.R.C.S., &c. The writer is a near relative of mine, and is in fact the "medical friend" to whom allusion has been made in my preface as being in doubt respecting Homœopathy. He had not received my letter when his pamphlet appeared. It is written with much ability, but I regret that the zeal of a new convert should have hurried him into print, because I am sure that so honest and intelligent a man cannot remain long deceived. I feel convinced that he will by-and-by perceive that no absolute law, whether Homœopathic or Allopathic, can be laid down as a guide to our Therapeutics, but that the plan of treatment adopted will be in agreement sometimes with the one sometimes with the other method, according as the abnormal action going on in the system of the patient is perceived to be one tending to the benefit or to the injury of his organism; and that this is a point which can only be determined by the reason of the practitioner, founded on his knowledge of Physiology and Pathology.

The remarks in my relative's pamphlet on the efficacy of very small doses of medicine, and the arguments by which he seeks to combat *à priori* objections to their employment, are ingenious, and coming as they do from a conscientious observer, who appeals to facts, deserve attention. On this subject also the key to the solution of the difficulty probably lies in what

has already been said. If in the treatment of diseases the action going on is one requiring to be checked as tending to injury, then probably a larger dose of medicine should as a rule be given than could well be borne by the healthy organism (just as we know that under certain circumstances very large and even what would be usually poisonous doses of opium, alcohol, antimony, and other medicines, are given not only with impunity but with advantage). If, on the other hand, the abnormal action going on is one tending to health, then probably much smaller doses of medicine than are felt by the healthy organism would have an effect, and the exhibition of such doses might be advantageous. In short, if the above explanation should be accepted the law would be, *if the object is to favour the action going on, doses smaller than usual; if to check such action, doses larger than usual.* This question of the size of the dose is evidently one purely of experience, and the orthodox schools of medicine leave it to experience, and lay down no dogmas on the subject. It is the dogmatic character of Homœopathy, its display of itself before the public as a *sect* separated from the rest of the medical profession by a distinct name, and claiming for itself distinct principles, which gives it its offensive character in the eyes of rational men, and justifies the rest of the profession in calling it a quackery.

I would strongly recommend the perusal of "The Scientific Character of Homœopathy," both for its own merits as a clever and conscientious pamphlet, and because it seems to me to well illustrate what has been said respecting the errors into which an able man may be led by hasty generalization. Also I may be allowed to express a hope that the simultaneous appearance of these two pamphlets at antipodal parts of the earth, may be of some use in enabling impartial inquirers to understand the question at issue between Homœopathy and that which is commonly called Allopathy, but which should properly be named Inductive Medicine.

F. G.