ON THE ALTERNATION OF MEDICINES.

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This subject has occupied the profession for some time past, and our attention is again called to it by an article in the Monthly Homœopathic Review, Vol. 9, No. 7, page 430. Considering that this question is one of vital importance, we propose to keep a standing article on the subject in this Journal, until the opposition is silenced, and silenced from the conviction that their conception of the question is erroneous, or from their newly chosen plan of settling questions to their liking by *ignoring* what is said adversely.

In the cure of the sick, we first address ourselves to the symptoms which appear last as the most important guides in the selection of the remedy, and as showing the progressive development of the disease; so, likewise, in trying to cure Homœopathicians of the aforesaid heresy, we take up at first the last article in the Monthly Homœopathic Review of July, 1865. And if no new reasons are advanced in defence of this deplorable perversion of Homœopathy, we will go back to page 278 of the same Review, and to Dr. Quinn's admirable address at the annual assembly of the British Homœopathic Society in June, 1864; later to Dr. Drysdale's previous address on the same subject, and quote what Hahnemann taught on the subject; when the history of this heresy will be finally stated.

The writer* of the article above referred to, says: "In the American Homœopathic Review for February, 1865, is an essay by Dr. Hawley on the Alternation of Remedies, which meets the question in a thoroughly practical spirit." The inference that must naturally be drawn from this introduc-

* The editor's name has not yet appeared, but it can be no other than Mr. Pope who could write in *that* style.

tory remark is, that the American Homœopathic Review by publishing this essay also endorses it. How strange that not a word is said about the very able "*Remarks*" of the editors of said Review. These "*Remarks*" certainly can not have escaped the notice of the reader as they cover double the number of pages of the essay. The editor of the American Homœopathic Review in publishing the essay by Dr. Hawley has been liberal to a fault, and deserves better than to have his remarks "*ignored.*"

The editor says, in his introductory remark, vide Amer. Hom. Review, Vol. V., No. 8, page 341, "We publish with great pleasure articles which, like the above, though they seem to favor a practice which we deprecate, are, nevertheless, honest expressions of the earnest convictions of men of close observation and faithful study."

Could the American editor have shown more courtesy to his contributor? Or could he have more plainly expressed his dissent, than by saying that he *deprecates* such practice?

If the question at issue is to be discussed candidly and openly, why resort to such prevarications? The exposè had to follow speedily, and the candid, observing reader must necessarily conclude that the "*Remarks*" were "*ignored*" at first, because they refuted the essay completely; and, secondly, because they were themselves unanswerable. In controversy the party having truth on its side is always fair and liberal, because it can afford to be so; but, on the other side, the party whose aim is to make the worse appear the better reason, must necessarily resort to unfair means, and so become illiberal. This will not prevent us from exposing error and defending truth.

Dr. Hawley commences his observations with these remarks: "It is the peculiar glory of the Homœopathic system of medicine, that, acknowledging man's inability to trace out or to understand the ultimate processes of nature, it bases itself, not on theories, but, like other natural sciences, on facts as they are observed in the world of man."

This phrase reads very well, but will it bear a critical

examination? The distinction of *fact* and *theory* is only relative. Events and phenomena considered as particulars which may be colligated by induction are *facts*, considered as generalities already obtained by colligation of other *facts*, they are *theories*. The same event or phenomenon is a *fact* or a *theory*, according as it is considered as standing on one or the other side of the inductive bracket.

Theories which are true are facts. Taking the definition of facts as Dr. Hawley understands it, he is correct, and the history of Homœopathy proves him to be so. The first *fact* was undoubtedly Hahnemann's exposition of Cullen's errors in his Cinchona *theory;* the second fact was a proving of Cinchona on the healthy individual; and the third fact was that Cinchona cured *only* such intermittent fever cases as resembled in their characteristic symptoms those caused in the healthy when taking Cinchona. These three facts gave rise to the supposition that the law of cure was dependent on the knowledge of the disease by the characteristic symptoms developed in every individual case; and on a knowledge of the remedy to be applied for the cure of the patient; that knowledge to be obtained by previous provings of the medicine on the healthy. If these facts, then, are true, how can we advocate the administration of Cinchona and Arsenicum in alternation for the cure of intermittent fever, as Dr. Hawley does? Has he ever made a proving of China and Arsenic in alternation? But more of this hereafter. Dr. Hawley continues, "A result of this peculiarity is an entire freedom of criticism and of opinion." Dr. Hawley contends that a system based on facts (theories) gives it freedom of (from?) *criticism* and of (from?) *opinion*.

Criticism is the science of the faculty of pure reason, or the investigation of that which reason, independent of experience, is able to know or effect; and is opposed to dogmatism.

Opinion, vide Edinb. Review, April, 1850, p. 311. It has been proposed to discard from philosophical use these ambiguous expressions, and to divide knowledge, according to

its sources, into matter of *perception* and matter of *inference;* and as a cross division relating to our conviction, into matter of *certainty* and matter of *doubt.* Dr. Hawley continues: "It frees its disciples from all dogmas, and simply asks them to look and see."

That is, a system based on facts frees its disciples from all dogmas.

If, by facts, Dr. Hawley understands phenomena, the phrase has no meaning, as phenomena cannot form the basis of a system; but events and phenomena, considered as particulars which may be colligated by induction, are facts; considered as generalities already obtained by colligation of other facts, they are theories. Dr. Hawley contends for freedom from all "dogmas."

Lord Bacon says: "Philosophers may be divided into two classes, the *empirics* and *dogmatists.* The *empiric,* like the ant, is content to amass, and then consume his provisions. The *dogmatist,* like the spider, spins webs of which the materials are extracted from his own substance, admirable for its delicacy of workmanship, but without solidity or use." If we further generally understand by *dogmatism* both all propounding and all receiving of tenets *merely* from habit, without thought or examination; or, in other words by the authority of others, in short, the very opposite of critical investigation; and if this definition of dogma is correct, I cannot see where or when Homœopathy was ever burdened by it. But if Dr. Hawley wishes for the opposite, *i. e. empiricism,* he cannot be a Homœopathist; neither empiricism nor dogmatism being part of or belonging to Homœopathy. The above phrase might be more correctly stated in this manner. A system based on facts, which have passed criticism and have led to the discovery of unalterable natural laws and principles (upon which Homœopathy was founded) does not free its disciples from the necessity or duty of discussing the facts or the natural laws deducted from them, but does exclude those who claim the name and reject the principles.

Further, Dr. Hawley says: "A system based on facts simply asks its disciples to look and see." Look at what? and see what? Facts? What facts? Facts upon which are based the principles of the system? Or, assertions (observations) to the full number of two, with which we are to controvert the fundamental principles of a system based on thousands of observations, and on the facts established by them?

Dr. Hawley continues, "It takes as its principle, the principle of all true science—*first establish the facts.*" This phrase means, no doubt, that the principle of all true science is to *establish first the facts.*

Dr. Hawley may have intended to say that the foundation of all true art depends on first establishing facts, but the establishing of *facts alone* does not constitute true science. Furthermore Homœopathy is the healing *art.* Science and art differ; *science* is never engaged, as *art* is, in productive application. *Science* is a collection of truths; art a body of rules, or directions for conduct. Science takes cognizance of a *phenomenon* and endeavors to discover its law.

Further, Dr. Hawley says, "These (the facts) once fixed, any *theory* which will perfectly account for them is good." Dr. Hawley will discover by the above definitions that he is in error; and if he were not, the phrase would not be applicable to the case, as he only relates two observations, and they certainly do not constitute fixed facts. What, then, is *his* theory and how does he perfectly account for them to make it good.

The Monthly Hom. Review continues, on page 431. "Dr. Hawley then proceeds to state certain facts which have occurred in his practice, and which have proved to him that the alternation of medicine is not only admissible, but that cases now and then occur which *can only be cured by such alternation.*" The Review *wishes to show,* by admitting the statement of the two observations, that alternation must be resorted to *now* and *then,* and that by such alternation *alone* can a cure be accomplished. But it fails to

do this, as all that the facts in the case show is that Dr. Hawley deviated from the Homœopathic *principle* of simplicity and of the single remedy, and that his patients (two) recovered. Supposing that a physician should state that he treated a case of pneumonia by administering Bismuth, Selenium and Crocus sativus in homœopathic doses, and that his patient growing gradually worse, it was thought *by him* admissible to resort to venesection and Nitrum, would it be good logic in him to proclaim that cases occur which can only be cured by the treatment he was obliged to fall back upon?

Dr. Hawley then proceeds to state certain facts. In the first case he mentions one of phthisis and chronic metritis. He gives no symptoms. He treated this case with Sulphur, Calcarea carb., Silicea, Graphites, &c., but gives no indications for the choice of either remedy. The case did not improve. At length he gave Belladonna and Bryonia in alternation. The *relief* of all the symptoms was prompt, decided and continued. Is this a cure?

In another case, of intermittent fever, in which neither *Arsenicum* nor *China*, given singly, did good, the alternation of the two medicines induced an immediate cure. Dr. Hawley asks, "Now, how shall we dispose of such facts?"

Before facts can be disposed of we must have them; what Dr. Hawley gives us are mere outlines. He must oblige the profession by giving them some insight into this rare case of intermittent fever, and state the symptoms accurately as Homœopathicians are accustomed to do. If he would point out with precision why he could not decide whether to give Arsenicum or China, we might be allowed to draw our conclusions and be enabled to dispose of the case. The choice between Arsenicum and China is so very easy, and their characteristics so well known, that the most vivid imagination cannot picture a case in which both remedies were called for.

Hahnemann, as early as 1825, says, in the preface to China

in the third volume of the Materia Medica Pura, page 119.*

Every medicinal substance which is recommended for the cure of intermittent fever has its own especial effect on the human organism, differing from all other known medicinal substances, according to eternal, unchanging, natural laws. By the will of the Creator it was ordained that each individual medicinal substance should differ as well externally (in appearance, taste and smell) as also still much more in its internal dynamic properties; so that we might be enabled, by this difference in effects, to obtain all possible means of cure in the innumerable and among-themselves-differing cases of disease, etc." On page 147 Hahnemann points out clearly and distinctly the characteristic intermittent fever symptoms of China, vide his foot note, where he says: "The thirst comes only after the chill, there is also no thirst during the hot stage, the thirst is present after the hot stage.

On page 148, Hahnemann continues to enumerate the characteristic Cinchona fever symptoms, which our limited space prevents us from again repeating; we also abstain *for the present* from drawing a parallel between the China and Arsenic fever symptoms; but shall do so by and by when our space will admit. Suffice it to say that they differ so much that we can only call the attention of the reader at first to the thirst accompanying the fever and characterized by Hahnemann under China. Arsenic differs in that particular already so much that this concomitant condition *alone*, draws a distinct line between them. Then, at least, as far as the thirst is concerned, we would require to be enlightened. The Review continues, "We agree with him (Dr. Hawley) that we must accept facts when we meet them, and must adjust our theories to the facts rather than attempt by "special pleading" to dispute the validity of the *cures;* because they have happened under circumstances which shake our preconceived opinions."

It would be well if the Review would answer a few plain

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* Page 30, et seq., Vol. II., Am. Ed. 1846.

questions. Do preconceived opinions form the foundation of Homœopathy?

Do fundamental principles accepted by Homœopathicians allow of any doubt?

Are fundamental principles theories?

Does Homœopathy rest on fundamental principles (natural laws) or on theories?

The British Review further continues: "Those who combat it (*i. e.* alternation) on the ground that it is opposed to the *practice* of HAHNEMANN, fall into grave error. In the introduction to *Belladonna*, in his Materia Medica Pura, he advises the *alternation* of *Aconite* and *Coffea cruda* in purple-rash in these words, Aconite and Coffea should be alternately given every twelve, sixteen, or twenty-four hours in proportion as one or the other remedy is indicated.

The above quotation is overstrained to suit the author and excuse his errors. Can nothing else be found in Hahnemann relating to the single remedy? And if he *is* an authority in *one* sense, why not in *every* sense; why torture him to say what he never intended to say, what he abhorred, detested and denounced? What Hahnemann does say on that occasion can be found in the first volume of his Materia Medica Pura, on the fifteenth page, in a foot note which reads thus: "The red-rash (Roodvonk) is an entirely different disease and requires a different treatment. In this case Belladonna is very naturally of no benefit, and the other off-hand quackery must cause the death of most of the sick, while they might all be cured by the alternate administration of Aconite and the tincture of the crude coffee; the first for the heat, increasing restlessness and agonizing anxiety, the latter for the very acute pains with peevish disposition. The aconite in the thirtieth potency of the juice, and the tincture of the crude coffee in the millionth dilution, both in the smallest portion of a drop as a dose, every twelve, sixteen, or twenty-four hours, the one or the other, *just as the one or the other is indicated.*" Hahnemann published this note in 1830, and it is to be supposed that he never for a moment expected

that any one would be so arrogant as to omit the *characteristic* indications for Aconite and Coffea, and above all torture that note as an evidence that he meant or could mean to sanction the reckless practice of alternating medicines, *a priori*, so entirely opposed to the fundamental principles of Homœopathy, as well as to his general teachings. The Review further says: "*Experience* has proved abundantly that the alternation of remedies increases the rapidity of cure." Where are the statistics? And has it not been admitted by the great lights in Great Britain that the present mode of homœopathic practice is much less successful than the practice of Hahnemann and his first followers?

Experience on this side of the water has proved abundantly that the alternation of remedies decreases the number of cures, and wherever practiced brings Homœopathy into discredit. Furthermore the practice of giving a single remedy in a single prescription has been firmly and permanently established by men who strictly adhered to the teachings of Hahnemann, and *never* alternated *a priori*, not only here but everywhere; and in the same proportion as this practice is properly followed the adherents of Homœopathy increase, and *vice versa*.

The British Review, in concluding these few remarks, directs the attention of the reader to the admirable paper on the "Alternation of Medicines," in the third volume of the annals of the Homœopathic Society, where Dr. Drysdale very *caustically* remarks that "nearly all Homœopathists object to alternating, but they all, without exception, do it in practice under some name or other."

The first portion of the sentence is correct, the second is false in fact. All who alternate *a priori* are *de facto* no Homœopathicians at all; they violate the fundamental principles of the system; I will prove this proposition when I return to Dr. Drysdale's caustic remarks. In our next number we shall first dwell on a more pleasant and instructive theme, the very able, but not caustic address of Dr. Quin on the same subject, before the same Society one year later.