REVIEW.

On the Chemical Treatment of Disease.

We have received the September (XXIst) number of the Annals of the British Homœopathic Society, and recommend our colleagues to read it. It is an alternation of comedy and tragedy, of the ludicrous and of earnest instruction; and will cause the reader to laugh and to shed tears, to despair and to hope: but by reading to the end this last venom against Hahnemann and his followers, who contend for Homœopathy as it was created and developed by him, the hope, nay the certainty will prevail that it will only tend the more firmly to establish the truth, and to hurl back into the dark ages of calomel and jalap, bleeding and hot water, these pretending hangers on to the great body of consistent Homœopathicians: while the latter must become more and more convinced that every effort should be made to prevent compromises, to resist inconsistencies and to adhere unwaveringly to the standard of accepted principles.

For the present it will suffice to review the position of the most outspoken representative of the quasi Homœopathicians.

Dr. Richard Hughes read a paper before the British Homœopathic Society, "On the Chemical Treatment of Disease." The proposition on which he rests his argument is: "The "agents, at the command of medicine, affect respectively the "mechanical, the chemical and the vital functions of the "Organism." And the conclusion drawn from this proposition is: "Therefore we have recourse to mechanical, "chemical and dynamical means to cure diseases."

In strict logic, Dr. H. thus says, because agents at the command of medicine affect the chemical functions of the Organism, therefore we have recourse to chemical means to cure disease. It is evidently assumed, *a priori*, in this argument, that

diseases are caused by the influence of chemical agents on the chemical functions of the body. Let us for the moment suppose, for argument's sake, that these chemical agents do in such a manner affect the so-called chemical functions of the organism, as to produce disease in general. *How* does Dr. H. propose to cure, by chemical agents, such forms of disease? As *chemical agents,* they must of course be given in material if not in massive doses. And if given in accordance with the law of the similars, they would but add fresh fuel to the fire, pathological insult to the original pathogenetic injury.

But if they are to be given in accordance with Dr. H.'s *chemical* theory, which is thus seen to be identical with the law *contraria contrariis,* does not the advocate of such modes of treatment do all in his power to lay the axe at the root of the Hahnemannian *law of the similars,* which he professes to respect? And in what does he differ from an open and avowed enemy of the true principles of medical science, except in having assumed the Homœopathic livery of Heaven to serve the Allopathic Devil in? As the mighty Cæsar fell wounded in the midst of his friends, so the glorious system of Homœopathy cannot but be seriously threatened, when its fundamental principles are being secretly undermined by its professed supporters.

But to return to Dr. H.'s proposition; if he intends natural diseases (as the result of chemical influence) he is manifestly in error. While if he means poisonings,—voluntary or involuntary,—he may be right to a partial extent. In the course of his argument, however, the doctor shows that he does mean natural diseases. He contends that the disturbed chemical functions of the body find their curative remedy in chemical means. He admits that pure Homœopathy allows only dynamical and mechanical means. But states, page 216, "I have to submit humbly to you to-night, whether we, "at the present time, may not be physicians rather than "Homœopaths, and bring not only mechanical, but also

"chemical agencies to bear upon disease, in addition to the "dynamic remedies given us by Homœopathy."

It is tacitly admitted that Homœopathy gives only dynamic remedies, and if Homœopathy, for good reasons, excludes chemical agencies, not only considering them superfluous, but absolutely injurious, what can "the present time" demand? We must either show that the dynamic agents are inadequate to cure diseases, doing less good at the present time than formerly, or that they have always been inadequate and the whole system of Homœopathy of no account. There has been no proof offered that the dynamic means are insufficient for the cure of all curable diseases; and if such proof were offered, the witness must be known to possess the necessary qualifications for properly and effectually applying the dynamic remedies: he must be a Homœopathician. If "we," at the present time, be rather physicians than Homœopaths, then "we" cease to be Homœopaths, in the special sense, and become physicians in the general sense of the term. If "we" accept something of Homœopathy and add something else foreign and heterogeneous to it, "we" are no longer Homœopathicians, but physicians of what school? I think such physicians should be deemed Syncretists or Syncreticians, to all intents and purposes.

The progressive physicians of the Old School are adopting the fundamental principles and practical rules of Hahnemann one after another, and thereby demonstrate a desire to become rather Homœopathicians than physicians. What they accept, Dr. H. rejects; what they reject, Dr. H. accepts. Whether the garbled, unharmonious composition proposed by Dr. H. will be better or worse than Homœopathy, is quite a different question, and has nothing to do with our present purpose. The Homœopathicians of the present day are progressive in another direction, and cannot stop to pick up old arms, abandoned ammunition chests and other rubbish, left by the enemy on the battle-field; their cry is—forward and to victory.

On page 218, Dr. H. says: "I think the *onus probandi*

"here rests with objectors. I know of no evil having "resulted from the saturation of the system with alkali which "forms the modern treatment of acute rheumatism. And I "see no reason why chemical remedies should interfere with "our dynamic agents any more than do the salt of our food, "or the cod-liver oil of our daily prescriptions."

The author wants *us*, (the Homœopathicians,) the doubters of all his multiform assertions, to prove his position wrong. But where does he stand? Has he not left us? Has he not abandoned our school by denying its principles? And is he not assuming our name under false pretences? Or would he not have been more explicit if he had admitted that he and his colleagues had assumed to explain what they understood by Homœopathy irrespective of anything Hahnemann might have declared as fundamental principles or practical rules. And that, therefore, at "the present time," it would be quite proper for these "objectors" (*i. e.*, the guardians of the well-established natural laws, the results of Hahnemann's experiments) to prove his position false.

We again return to the old question which it is time to solve, viz.: What *is* Homœopathy? and who is a Homœopathician. These questions once and forever solved, no further controversy can ever occur. Objectors to universally accepted characteristics of Homœopathy, would find themselves at once—outside.

The learned doctor can see no reason why "chemical "remedies should interfere with our dynamic agents." And thus confesses himself either ignorant of or opposed to Homœopathy; in either case the *onus probandi* does not rest with the Homœopathicians.

One of the great fundamental principles of Homœopathy demands that but one remedy should be administered at a time for the cure of the sick, and that its action should not be interrupted by any other medicinal substance. In order that a good result may be effected from the treatment, it is absolutely necessary to follow this rule. And none know the correctness of Hahnemann's rules better than those who

have strictly followed them. And for this, if for no other reason, we feel much inclined to think that Dr. H. has never truly, honestly and diligently followed this or any other of Hahnemann's rules. If he has never seen any evil result from saturation of the system with alkali, he well defines his own medical position. So there are many very respectable physicians of the Old School, who say they have never seen any bad results from the largest doses of quinine, or from the administration of chloroform in parturition; do such assertions establish facts? Do they not by such blindness or want of power of observation unwittingly prove their own unfitness for the profession? And so with "the cod-liver "oil of our daily prescriptions." Who are meant by "our?" Most certainly not the Homœopathicians, who, true to their principles, will not give cod-liver oil as an "adjuvant;" but administer it, if at all, as *the remedy*, and *alone*. Or is this a "chemical" remedy, and therefore entitled to become the adjuvant of some other and still more powerful drug?

Dr. H.'s further argument is based on the theory propounded in page 219, "In anæmia iron is wanting;" and again in illustration of this he says: "Who of us that has "known anything of Old School practice, does not feel that "the treatment of anæmia by full doses of iron is one of the "brightest spots in its field."

Had this sentence been uttered at the small hours of the night by an undertaker whose custom had been seriously diminished by his neighbor, the Homœopathic doctor, we would at once understand it and give due credit alike for his sagacity and for his wit. The bright spots in the field being of course the new tomb-stones and newly made graves, the smiling evidences of a profitable undertaking. Sly as he is, the druggist around the corner is his friend; and at the "wee sma' hours ayont the twal," they drink their parting glass "to the doctor who gives the most iron!"

Whether iron is wanting,—*i. e.*, exists in diminished quantity,—in anæmia or not, "full doses of iron" will not supply this (imaginary) deficiency. If iron be the Homœopathic

remedy, the full dose may be the 30th, the 200th, or the 50,000th potency. A full dose is certainly the dose which is fully adequate to the cure. Full doses of iron, in Dr. H.'s sense, have done as little good and as much harm as any other medicine administered without principle, or contrary to the true law of cure. If Dr. H. does not know this, has not observed it, he only exposes his lack of opportunity or power of observation. The most distressing cases of incurable illness it has been my lot to attend, have been exactly such abuses of "full doses" of iron for anæmia. If for this pathological condition iron is administered, and to make it worse in "alternation" with Chininum sulph., such chemical treatment causes a poisoning of the system. It is a process of poisoning, and the perpetrator should be tried for the crime, whether he *pretends* to be a Homœopathician or not; the result is inevitable; bright spots indeed are these inevitable results; bright spots in the field—of the undertaker. If with Dr. H. the name of the disease is to indicate the remedy, as in "full doses of iron for "anæmia," we would ask where he finds such teaching in Hahnemann's works? But if compelled to confess that *there* are found teachings positively opposite, he must at the same time confess himself out of place—to have inadvertently entered the Homœopathic ranks. By and by, perhaps, he may see his false position, when he comes to understand how absurdly ludicrous he appears in his dress of *specific* verdure among individualizing observers.

In order to be better understood, we will present to the doctor a picture upon which he may look,—unless, perhaps, he should prefer to gaze only upon "the brightest spots in "the field,"—of the undertaker. But by all means let him see something. Behold then the picture—it is of a woman. Her face is red and hot; she has violent pain in the back and abdomen, and she has hæmatorrhœa,—partly of black clotted, and partly of thin, pale blood. The Homœopathician cures this case of disease with a single dose of Ferrum, probably the 200th. Behold another picture,—of a child, three

years old, and in general quite well, only that acids disagree with him, that he is restless at night when put to bed, the cause of which is an intolerable itching from ascarides within the anus. This one is also restored to quiet rest by one dose of Ferrum 200th. Does the Ferrum cure these cases because it is Homœopathic to them, or because, as Rademacher says, the number of red corpuscles is increased in all cases of provings? And how does Dr. H. accommodate these facts to Rademacher's assertion "that Ferrum is Homœopathic, not "to anæmia, but to plethora?"

We fully agree with Dr. H. when he says, on page 220, "I think it is time that we all spoke out plainly on this "matter;" and we go a little further and say, it is high time that we all spoke out very plainly on this and kindred subjects.

If anæmia is curable by Ferrum, *i. e.*, if the symptoms of the patient suffering from anæmia correspond with those *which* iron is capable of producing on the healthy organism, the minimum dose will cure that patient; and if that minimum dose fails, no "full dose" can possibly be followed by any other than disastrous consequences.

On page 223, Dr. H. says: "A survey of Homœopathic "literature will at once convince that, in acute rheumatism "at least, they (the lower dilutions) are far superior to the "higher." To be very plain in this matter, we politely contradict this assertion, boldly as it is made; we say it is incorrect, both as regards the literature and in experience. For the present we shall not discuss the question of doses, but content ourselves with a flat contradiction and the refusal to even admit Dr. H.'s opinion on that subjest, as he has given sufficient proof of his utter unfitness as an observer. In the meantime he would do well to ponder over Dr. Eidherr's reports on the comparative results of the various potencies in pneumonia. There can be no deception in figures.

On page 224, Dr. H. quotes from Dr. Russell's clinical lectures the following sentence: "In about every case of "rheumatic fever, which has been under my care in this "hospital, the heart was more or less affected." But the

deductions drawn by Dr. H. from this statement are incorrect. If the doctor decides to saturate himself with alkali, as he says is his intention should he be visited by rheumatic fever, he at least will act consistently; more so than his friend, Mr. Pope, who has not yet tried on himself Dr. Hempel's legitimate dose of arsenic.

To be very plain again: Dr. Russell's statement is indorsed by all modern Pathologists and Allopathic experience; but he did not say that the heart remained affected after the rheumatic fever had been cured by Homœopathic treatment. And since we possess provings of Lachesis, Kalmia latifolia. Cactus grandiflorus and Lithium, we succeed well in such cases; and can entirely dispense with the alkali theory, caring little whether it be modern or not, since it is as fallacious as its predecessor was and as its successor will be.

On page 227, the doctor says: "The body is governed "by mechanical, chemical and vital laws; and is influenced "by mechanical, chemical and dynamic agents." As an abstract assertion, this may be true and admissible; but the conclusion drawn from this proposition,—that diseases are generated by chemical laws,—is unsupported by the evidence. Dr. H. further says: "Homœopathy takes cognizance only "of dynamic agents; it admits, and indeed requires, the full "aid of mechanical measures: why should it not also work "hand in hand with chemical means." For the plain and simple reason that the origin of disease cannot be traced to chemical sources. And when we further read: "Is not the "treatment of anæmia by material doses of iron the best "known to medicine?" we are inclined to regard the whole paper as a satire on Homœopathy.

There are not and never will be specifics for specific diseases. All true homœopathicians will endorse my unqualified contradiction. Material doses of iron are not admissible, because unnecessary; we treat patients and not diseases, select medicines according to the similarity, and administer the similar in the minimum dose.

The doctor will find all his erroneous notions plainly con-

tradicted,—by an authority which he at least professes to respect,—if he will but read the Organon; beginning with the introduction, and then read the 16th and 52d paragraphs.

Those diseases only can be called chemical, which are the immediate result of chemicals acting as irritant or corrosive poisons. In these the treatment, so far at least as chemicals can be concerned, consists not so much in remedying the effects of the poisons as in neutralizing the poisons themselves and in expelling them from the system. For the removal of the consequences of such poisons, as well as for the restoration of harmony in the otherwise disturbed functions of the organism, dynamic means alone will be found sufficient.

Had Dr. Hughes' paper been sustained and endorsed by the British Homœopathic Society, we might well fear that Homœopathy was ill in England; but when we see Mr. Cameron, Drs. Quin, Yeldam, Drury, Chapman, etc., stand out boldly against this new schism, our hope is revived, and we confidently look forward to the day when Dr. Hughes and his friends will try to join hands with Allopathy. They are making that attempt in fact at present, but Allopathy will not shake hands with them, and Homœopathy has been discarded by them; where then are they? They blow hot and cold: they are neither flesh nor fish. They should call themselves *Syncreticians*, men who busy themselves in mixing together things which ought to be kept distinct. We have now Allopathicians, Homœopathicians, Eclectics, Magneticians, Hydropathicians; and shall we not have the pleasure of seeing the Schismatists, who busy themselves in mixing together heterogeneous medical doctrines and practice, establish themselves separately and adopt a suitable name? And could they adopt a better name than the one proposed? Should that name not be acceptable, we will propose another by and by; but we should much prefer that Dr. Hughes would take Dr. Chapman's parting advice, which we heartily second: "It is to be hoped that he will at last realize, to the full, the Homœopathic law—Let likes be treated by likes."

A. L