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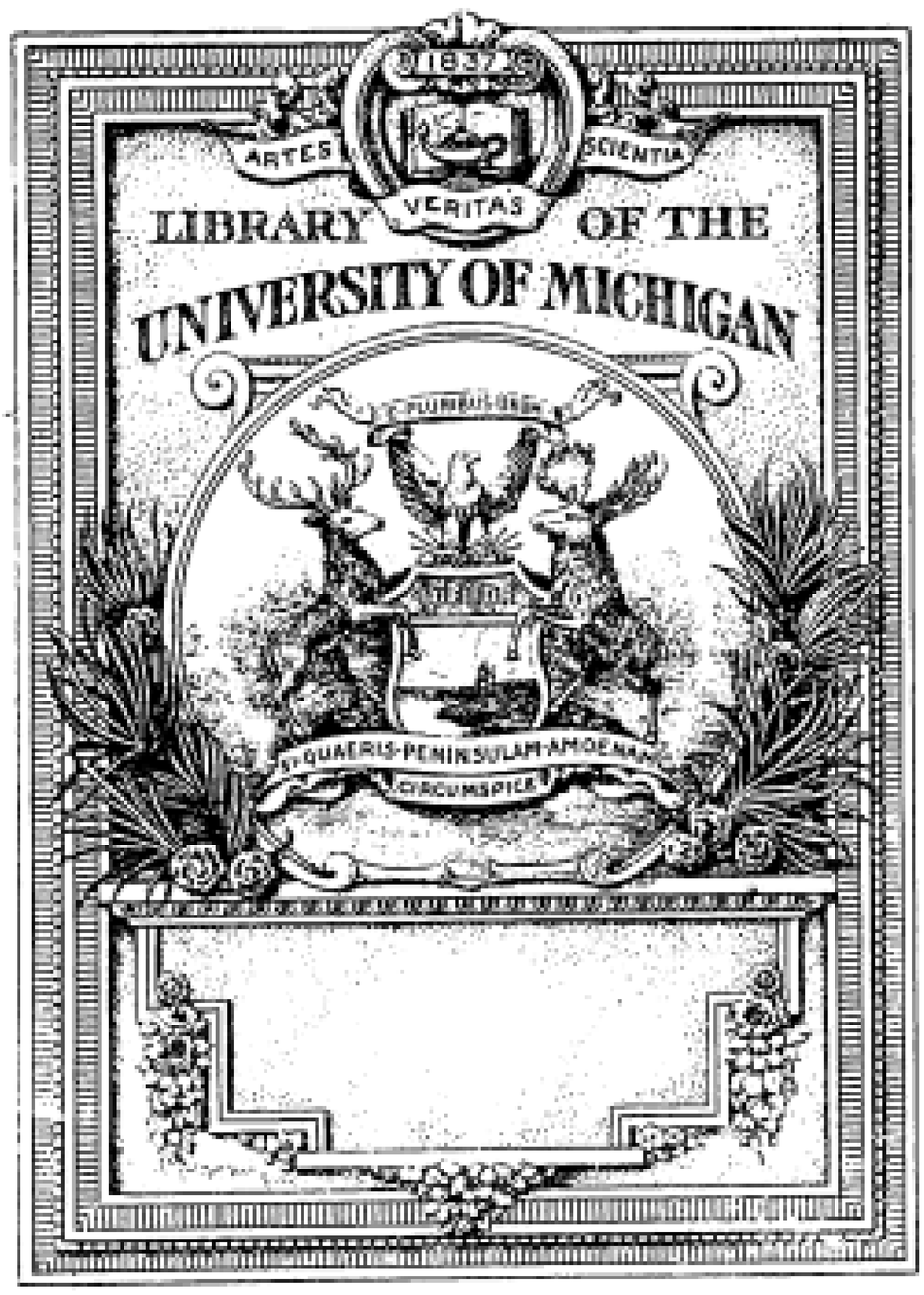

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REMARKS

ON

THE ABRACADABRA

OF THE

Nineteenth Century;

OR ON

Dr. SAMUEL HAHNEMANN'S

HOMŒOPATHIC MEDICINE,

WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO

Dr. CONSTANTINE HERING'S

"CONCISE VIEW OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF HOMŒOPATHIC MEDICINE,"
Philadelphia, 1833.

BY

WILLIAM LEO-WOLF, M.D.

When thus ripe lies are to perfection sprung,
Full grown and fit to grace a mortal tongue,
Thro' thousand vents impatient forth they flow,
And rush in millions on the world below.—Pope.

NEW-YORK:

1835.

PUBLISHED BY CAREY, LEA AND BLANCHARD, IN PHILADELPHIA.

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PREFACE.

The only probable reason for the long continuance of those prejudices and superstitions which are not sustained by the interests of large privileged classes of society, is, that when intelligent men know the tenets of a doctrine to be inconsistent and false, they do not think it worth while to examine it minutely, but leave the subject to the weak-minded and credulous, who, considering silence or mere satire as an indirect admission of their extravagant and fanciful conceptions, generally become firmer in their belief and bolder in their public conduct. This appears also the principal reason why homœopathia has existed so long.

Adverse to controversy, the author of these remarks never thought of expressing publicly his opinion of homœopathia until towards the end of the last year, when he accidentally became acquainted with Dr. Hering's "Concise View of the rise and progress of the homœo-" pathic doctrine." He then clearly saw that the votaries of this medical superstition had selected the United States as the most propitious field for its propagation, and that they would leave no stone unturned to prepossess the public in their favor.

Aware of the benefits to be derived by his adopted country, from a faithful exposition of this new medical doctrine, the original works of which are inaccessible to those unacquainted with the German language; the author was instigated to this tedious task by the desire also of vindicating the literary honor of Germany, his native country, so much abused by the false reports of the persecutions which Hahnemann had to suffer there for truth's sake, of the high respect which he now enjoys as a man and as a reformer of medicine, and by

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the wrong statements in regard to the large number of her distinguished physicians, said to have zealously adopted this mode of treatment.

The following remarks were written merely as a review, and were at first intended for an American medical periodical. As they did not appear in that form, the author lately yielded to the repeated wishes of his professional friends, collected the fragments, and now offers them in their present form. The original destination of these remarks, the great difficulties of writing in a foreign idiom, of correcting the manuscript, and many other reasons, will explain the non-observance of a strict logical order, the occurrence of frequent repetitions, the long and numerous notes, and other defects, for which the kind indulgence of the reader is humbly requested. The author must state that a part of these defects is to be attributed also to the hope, cherished to the last moment, of being released from this publication by the abler pen of some American colleague. And indeed, it is difficult to comprehend, why such a pamphlet as the Concise View, could have been circulated for upwards of eighteen months in a populous and enlightened city, possessing a celebrated university, and so many distinguished professional men, without any pertinent public censure; and it must appear still more strange, that in this city likewise, such a disgraceful publication as that contained in the New-York Commercial Advertiser of the 7th of February last, and which will be mentioned hereafter, could also have remained unnoticed.—It cannot be justly expected that well educated physicians and medical authors should be constantly warring against all kinds of charlatanism. Common quackery claims not to be founded on scientific principles, it merely demands implicit belief in its arcana usually recommended for special cases only, and does not, therefore, directly involve misconceptions of a general character in regard to the

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healing art; hence, the injury done by it, is confined to the credulity of individuals who, if they are disappointed, must suffer the natural consequences of all imprudence. But when charlatanism adopts the features of a medical system, and pretends to reform the healing art, by rejecting the fundamental principles of the human intellect and the truths of all experience hitherto acknowledged, by inventing supernatural powers, under the term laws of nature, and by relying on false statements and illusory facts; and when its adherents, either from ignorance and self-deception, or from egotism and self-interest, palm upon the public, under the cloak of philanthropy and professional zeal, the grossest misconceptions, and the most noxious superstitions; then the injury can easily increase to an alarming extent before the public is undeceived, and it then becomes the imperative duty of the profession frankly to state the true facts, and to explain the true bearings of so important a subject.

The author would farther state, that he has never read one of the different German publications in opposition to Hahnemannism, except some few lines of a review of the Pseudomessias Medicus, written by one of his former respected colleagues, Doctor Simon, junior, at Hamburg, and published in the Allgemeine Medizinishe Annalen, (Feb. 1832), of his distinguished friend, Professor Hecker, at Berlin; he has merely seen their titles in the Leipzig book-catalogues, and is therefore ignorant whether he has taken the same ground with other opposers of Hahnemann's, or not. It appears from the title of the work mentioned, and similar ones subsequently published by Dr. Simon, that this learned author has dipped his pen principally in the ink of ridicule and satire. Though this course is almost inevitable to any one who writes against Hahnemannism, a subject of such vital importance should, however, be examined differently; particularly as the discussions which homœopathia, like similar su-

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perstitions, excite, are so intimately connected with the most subtile investigations in the natural sciences and metaphysics, that they offer inexhaustible means for a rational polemic. The author who advocates truth should also remember, that it will never be sufficient merely to ridicule and to despise such subjects, however ridiculous and contemptible they may be. Rational arguments, derived from the impartial scrutiny of experience, are, if any, the only ones, capable of successfully combating the general predilection of man for the extraordinary and miraculous, and of destroying the noxious influence of sophisms and prejudices, rooted in ignorance and extravagant fancy, or in the implicit belief of naked and delusive facts.

The author has also briefly alluded to some topics, which, though not directly connected with homœopathia, appear to him worth noticing as erroneous conceptions and obnoxious prejudices still existing among the profession and the public. He wishes, however, that these remarks may be considered only as the abstract of his individual researches and experience, which he thought his duty not to withhold, as they might, even if he should be in the wrong, call forth an exchange of opinions on these important subjects, which would benefit the public and the profession.

In conclusion, the author will state that he will meet all objections which may be made to his remarks in a scientific and dignified manner; if proffered in any other mode, they will remain unanswered.—" Et refellere " sine pertinacia, et refelli sine iracundia parati su- " mus."—*Cicero.*

NEW-YORK, *December*, 1834.

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EXPLANATION OF THE VIGNETTE.

The "*old philosopher*," sitting in the magic diagram, proclaims to the world the charm of his discovered "*law of nature*" written in the inverse shape of the old *Abracadabra*, (see page 262) and containing the same uneven number of letters,—"numero deus impare gaudet," —Virg. Buccol. He is just engaged in developing *spirits* from a simple drug by trituration, as is clearly seen by a very large and fiery one—"ignea inest illis vis"—which is escaping from the mortar at the command of his magic wand, and which, on account of its size, appears to belong, at least, to the sixtieth potenz.—The negro, thankful for the gratifying prospects of his physical emancipation, which has already happily succeeded with one half of his sooty skin, assists the "*great benefactor of mankind*" in his "*gigantic work*," and develops the thirtieth potenz from table salt, by shaking "*from above downwards*."—It appears his zeal actuated him too much, and that he has shaken, contrary to the directions of the "*great reformer*," too violently and too often, as numerous spirits rush out of the vial. One of them, probably in consequence of his particularly *glorified* antipsoric nature, gets hold of the great cross of the order of the ITCH, which, it is rumoured, has lately been created by the great magician, in spite of the "*bayonets of the kings and princes of Europe*;" and is reserved particularly as a munificent reward for the arduous zeal of his missionaries, in propagating the "*great truth*," in "*Egypt the land of monsters and the sanguinary gold coast*," and particularly in America.—The emblems of all the "*learned lumber*" of the healing art, accumulated for scores of centuries, have "*fallen to the ground*;" the stick of Æsculapius as well as the scutcheon of Minerva are broken to pieces; and even the favorite bird of Athene, which so long has been her faithful companion, is dead;—"nequidquam seros exercet noctua cantus,"—Virg. Georg. It died however, not from the hellebore, which luxuriantly grows around the mysterious grotto, without any remedial effect: but of grief, at seeing the new mathematical principles, and the other marvellous reforms of the competitor of "*Galileo and Harvey*:"

- - - Ille suæ contra non immemor artis,
Omnia transformat sese in miracula rerum.—*Virg. Georg.*

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REMARKS ON HOMŒOPATHIA,

&c., &c.

ALTHOUGH the doctrine of Hahnemann, or the homœopathic doctrine has within the last few years been adopted in this country as the leading principle of medical practice by some respectable physicians; it has, however, remained unknown to the mass of the medical profession, and has been but little noticed by the medical periodicals.

The task of introducing this doctrine to the American public has devolved upon Dr. Constantine Hering, of Philadelphia, who, in his pamphlet entitled "A concise view of the rise and progress of homœopathic medicine," Philadelphia, 1833, has given a brief sketch of this remarkable literary phenomenon of the present age.

So long as any doctrine or practice of the healing art remains the rule of individual practitioners only, no one has a right to criticize it publicly; but if this doctrine is promulgated in such a manner as to mislead, and even to injure, the young medical student as well as the public, it then becomes the imperative duty of every man, who believes the whole doctrine to be founded upon the grossest errors and contradictions, and who knows facts which differ widely from the statements published, not to withhold the truth, and to examine the subject by the tests of reason and experience.

In order to remove any suspicions that the following pages are more or less dictated by personal feelings, we must state, that in our present retirement we are more than ever indifferent what course of practice physicians may pursue to promote the interest of their patients or their own. Had it not been for our reluctance to appear before the public, and more especially in a controversy, we should have vindicated our native country and the honor of its professional men, on a former occasion, when one of our respected colleagues, in New-York, thought proper to honor, publicly, the homœopathic treatment of the Asiatic cholera by camphor with the term "German treatment."

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We regret very much, that the author of the above mentioned pamphlet did not submit the subject scientifically to the profession alone, before addressing it to the public; and also, that he has attempted to forestall public opinion, by blending the moral and intellectual standing of the author of homœpathia with the doctrine itself. Had his course been otherwise, the whole controversy would have been confined within the limits of a free scientific discussion, and it would not have been necessary to divest the subject of personal considerations not belonging to it, nor to dispel the halo cast over Hahnemann by his disciples and followers. As he has done this, however, without due regard to the dignity of one of the most noble and beneficial sciences and of its faithful servants, it is obvious, that studied delicacy cannot be reciprocally expected from any man, who has always been zealously attached to his profession, who is conscious of what mankind owes to the noble exertions of those distinguished in the history and literature of medicine, and who will never consent to receive, in place of the latter, a methodical charlatanism, based upon the most absurd conceptions and the rudest empiricism.

Every impartial reader of the "Concise View" must be gratified to find in the author a man of learning and of professional character. No one could object to his zeal for adopting the homœopathic doctrine, and for introducing it into this country. The pursuit of such high objects as the health and life of his fellow-men, must claim indulgence for every one, and especially for him who devotes himself to the healing art, even if his scientific views, whether original or embraced from other sources, should be contradictory to common sense and to the experience of the most eminent men of this and former ages. How many men of the greatest attainments in particular sciences and arts, and of the purest moral character, have believed and even now admit things incompatible with the laws of human intellect, and contrary to all experience! How numerous the confirmations of Cicero's remark, "Nihil tam absurde dici potest, quod non dicatur ab aliquo "philosophorum!" But if a man is so led away by his zeal, or by any other motives, as to publish for facts, statements which are erroneous, and by which the public mind may easily be misguided, concerning such valuable and irreparable objects as life and health; then, the most charitable conjecture is his want of true information on the subject.

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It is a very remarkable, and in fact a characteristic feature of the homœopathic doctrine, that most of its followers, and also the author of the concise view, are obliged, in its support, to disregard not only all medical knowledge hitherto considered as highly valuable by the profession; but to proclaim its inventor, Samuel Hahnemann, the greatest philosopher, the first medical genius of every age, and almost a saint. It appears as if they felt their doctrine to be inconsistent with every law of the human understanding, and endeavored to compensate for its contradictions and defects by representing Hahnemann as a martyr for truth, by canonizing him though yet alive, and by making his suggestions and tenets the objects of implicit faith and worship.—But what has a medical doctrine, or any other scientific hypothesis, to do with the character of its founder? Francis Bacon says very correctly in his Organon: "Pessima enim res est errorum apotheosis, et pro "peste intellectus habenda est, si vanis accedit veneratio." Kepler's and Newton's immensely valuable discoveries would be equally esteemed, had their characters as men been less pious and moral. The life of Francis Bacon, whom we have just quoted, was by no means pure, still *his* Organon and his other writings have lasted for centuries; and will ever be known as the master works of the human intellect.* John Brown's intemperate habits were known to all his followers, yet this did not prevent the adoption and extension of his doctrine.

On the first page of his pamphlet, we read with the greatest astonishment the following: "Het who had himself never assumed "an offensive attitude, and the truth of whose doctrines only could "with propriety be combated, ought to have been treated with due

* As Dr. Hering seems to compare, also, the absurditics and ravings of his "great medical genius," with this master work of Francis Bacon above mentioned, (see l. c. p. 6.) we shall quote many passages of this and the other works of this truly great reformer of all natural sciences, who so gallantly combated the scholastic philosophy, this mother of doctrines equally superstitious, and similar to those of Hahnemann. If homœopathists had ever read and understood *one* page of Bacon's Organon, they would never have been so childish as to believe, that Hahnemann's Organon must be equally valuable, because he was bold enough to give to his miserable patch-work the same title, under the foolish impression that it will reform medicine; they would then also know, that no man was more cautious against all delusions of the senses, and all the mistakes and false conclusions, arising from false conceptions, than Francis Bacon; and that he was always particularly anxious to recommend the minute investigation of the *causes* of phenomena, saying, "recte ponitur: vere scire esse per causas scire." A maxim so much ridiculed and despised by Hahnemann and his followers!

† He, in the language of homœopathists, always refers to Hahnemann; like the disciples of Pythagoras, they think to prove the truth of any thing, by saying "αυτος εφα." "He has said it."

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" respect; which I regret to say, he did not receive at the hands of " some of the physicians in Germany." Now these things may well be stated in a country, where this whole controversy is little known, and will never be fully understood ; for it is not probable that any American would undertake the tedious task of perusing all the essays published pro and con, in Germany, on this subject. Every German, however, who is well acquainted with the literary history of the age, and with the origin and progress of the homœopathic doctrine in his native country must admit, that since the time of Paracelsus, who was in many respects truly distinguished as a great medical genius, no professional author has treated the greatest physicians and medical authors of past and present ages, with less respect and more unblushing impudence than Samuel Hahnemann, though he was guilty of the grossest and repeated impositions upon the public. About the year 1800 he advertised, extensively, a new salt, the discovery of which he claimed and which he offered for sale, under the name of *alkali pneum*, at the moderate price of one louisd'or (about $4) per ounce. The society for the promotion of natural sciences at Berlin desired to become acquainted with this new substance, which, as Hahnemann stated, would exercise a great influence upon chemistry. They procured an ounce of it from his agent at Leipzig, which was analyzed by some of the greatest chemists of the age, Professors Karsten, Hermbstaedt and Klaproth ; and these men pronounced it, in the transactions of that society, as nothing but *common borax*, a pound of which costs but a few cents.* Shortly afterwards, he advertised his " infallible preventive of scarlet fever," as he termed it ; the price of this, also, was a louisd'or ; but being disappointed in the sale thereof, he afterwards confessed it to consist of nothing but a few grains of the extract of belladonna dissolved in water ; also, worth about a few cents. Who, now, we ask, would consider a man trustworthy and honorable, particularly a physician, distinguished for some knowledge and talents who, from the basest interest becomes a public impostor, and withholds from his fellow-men, even for a single hour, what he considers to be a preventive of a dangerous and frequently fatal disease, merely because poor people are unable to pay him four dollars for what costs him but a few cents? The able Professor Joerg, at Leipzig, has proved by laborious

* See the celebrated German Literary Gazette, the Jenaer Literatur-Zeitung Beylage fur 1801, No. 1.

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investigations that many of the quotations from old medical authors, made by Hahnemann in support of his doctrine, are adulterated and false. Can any one confide in the veracity of such a man without the most unquestionable evidence?

The eminent talents and merits of Hahneman before he wrote upon homœopathia, are also held forth to the public, with a view to prejudice them in favour of this "new Art of Healing," as we read on pages 1 and 2 of Dr. Hering's pamphlet: "Nor were his ex- "traordinary talents, which in riper years rendered him one of the "greatest medical geniuses, unknown at that time." We are really at a loss to express the just indignation which every one, even but slightly acquainted with the history of medicine, must feel at hearing such humbuggery! About thirty-four years ago we had the good fortune to become acquainted with this "greatest medical genius," shortly after we had settled at Altona, a Danish city near Hamburg. Hahnemann intended to practise his profession at the latter place, which, being at that time without a regulated medical police, offered a large field for his arcana and other quackeries, on account of which he had already been obliged to leave several places, and to wander about in his native country, even when nearly forty-five years old. Unable to succeed at Hamburg, he left this place also, after a short stay. We well remember some conversation held with him on different professional subjects, especially on John Brown's system then in vogue, in which, however, he not only displayed no extraordinary acquirements or talents, but without mentioning any results of his homœopathic doctrine, the same shallowness of judgment and propensity to mysteries and absurdities, which have distinguished him through his whole life. Although at that time he had been known for upwards of twenty-four years as a good scholar, as the translator of several works from foreign languages, and also by his discoveries of the adulteration of wines by lead, the detection of poisoning by arsenic, and his mercurius solubilis, still he was never, to our knowledge, appointed a professor in any medical institution, nor was he engaged in an extensive practice; probably because he was not qualified; for at that time Germany was by no means as well provided with physicians as at present; and now there are still wealthy provinces in Prussia, where the ratio of the physicians to the population is as 1 to 7000, and in several provinces of Bohemia, as 1 to 60,000 inhabitants.* Every

*See Dr. Streintz in Medicinische Iahrbuecher des K. K. Oesterreichischen Staates

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German physician, therefore, who has no particular religious or political objections to a stay in his native country, has many more chances of obtaining a large and profitable practice there, than in any other, provided he can pass the rigorous state-examinations, now established by law, independent of the academical graduation, because many medical faculties did confer the degree of Medicinæ Doctor upon ignorant individuals. Our author is, therefore, very much mistaken in saying, on p. 1, "previously to his appear-"ance as the reformer of medicine, he had been known and esteemed "as one of the most learned, accomplished and meritorious physi-"cians in Germany." Hahnemann excepted, we cannot recollect a single instance, for upwards of thirty years, where a physician of but moderate talents was obliged to travel about in search of practice; and it would require but very little knowledge of practical medicine to prove, as we shall attempt hereafter, by many passages from Hahnemann's works, that he could never have been engaged in extensive practice, although, we believe, many of his false assertions are made not from ignorance, but from his egotism and his contempt for the opinions of others. Exclusive of Hahnemann's works upon his doctrine, his other medical productions are very trivial, and composed chiefly of compilations and translations, not worthy of a "great genius," who should certainly have found other subjects in the vast extent of the natural and medical sciences to engage his elevated mind! In regard to the distinguished discoveries in chemistry, which our author claims for his master, the learned professors of this science can name no discovery or improvement, suggested by Hahnemann, except those above mentioned; two of which, the ascertaining of the adulteration of wine by lead, and of poisoning by arsenic, have proved insufficient from the progress made in analytical chemistry; and the third, his mercurius solubilis, (the very name of which is incorrect, because it is soluble neither in water nor alcohol,) is nearly the same as the mercurius cinerius Blackii or Edinburgensium, known long before his time, and proved to be a very unsafe preparation; yet, about forty years

Vol. VII. No. 1, 3, 4, for 1832. The ratio of well educated, examined and licensed surgeons, who are permitted to administer medical aid in urgent cases, is about 1 to 1500. The governments of Austria and Prussia, convinced of the importance of thoroughbred physicians, whose education embraces also a minute knowledge of all the philosophical sciences, wisely enforce the strictest qualifications for medical practitioners of a higher order, and prefer to leave many districts but scantily provided with them, rather than to entrust the lives of their people to men who, in times of extreme danger, might prove incompetent.

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ago Hahnemann, with his accustomed charlatanism, asserted not only that it would destroy the very existence of all syphilitic and many other diseases, but also, that it would never salivate, which it does more than any other preparation of mercury. His causticum, which the author of the concise view is pleased to term on page 23, "a new substance discovered by Hahnemann," has proved to be a discovery something like that of his alkali pneum—nothing but an impure alkali.—Indeed, it must appear strange to every scientific man, that in our time a new substance, and especially a valuable remedy, should have remained so long unnoticed by all the chemists, and not mentioned in the large and valuable works of Thenard, Berzelius, Gmelin, or any other author on chemistry. Hahnemann is, on the contrary, so ignorant of the great progress in chemistry during the last half century, that he appears to the reader of his works, who is acquainted only with the elements of this immense science in its present state, more ignorant than an author of ages long past, who had, at least, a clear conception of Stahl's phlogiston, Meyer's acidum pingue, or of similar hypotheses and technical terms then used. Thus, in explaining his preparation of silicea (see Chronic Diseases, Vol. III. p. 208), he speaks of a "causticum" (phlogiston probably), which the natrum acquires while melting with flint, and which, combined with the oxygen of the atmosphere, generates carbonic acid, which is evidently nonsense, even according to the old phlogistic theory. He considers further the precipitated silicea to be soluble in alcohol, although it is regarded as insoluble by all other chemists. He also states that sulphur is very soluble in alcohol, while according to all chemists, it is but slightly soluble in its gaseous state, in the vapour of water, and is perfectly insoluble in alcohol or liquid water. With all this he had the unparalleled boldness and impudence to say (Chronic Dis. Vol. I. p. 183), in regard to the present state of chemistry, "The over refined chemistry of our time is yet "ignorant of the easy solubility of sulphur in alcohol, and also of "the solubility of metals and earths in the same, after they have been potenzised* ten thousand or a million times by trituration." All this nonsense is, nevertheless, considered by the infatuated

* The term "potenzised" is correlative to the expression "developed drug-virtue;" and though not often used in the English language, we are obliged to adopt it to express briefly the power alledged to be developed from the atoms of simple drugs by homœopathic manipulation, and which may be considered similar to the powers of numbers or of other signs used by mathematicians

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followers of Hahnemann, as more wise and true than the results of the minutest chemical investigations of a Humphrey Davy, Berzelius, Faraday, Gay-Lussac, &c. This "great genius" and his followers have a natural philosophy, chemistry, a materia medica, therapia, etc.; nay, even an arithmetic of their own, as we shall prove hereafter more minutely.

This however is no reasonable objection to the intrinsic value and truths of the homœopathic doctrine, since many highly interesting discoveries in almost every science, and particularly in medicine, have been made by men of inconsiderable talent, whimsical conceptions and doubtful character. An extensive practice of more than half a century often fails to promote the science; while the minute observation of a few cases only may richly enlarge it. Statements, however, unconnected with the objects in view are uncalled for, and should not be perverted in order to forestall public sentiment. This course has been pursued by Hahnemann and most of his disciples, and his opponents are therefore also compelled to tear the unmerited laurels from the head of the man, before considering the falsehood and inconsistency of his doctrine.

On page 15 of his pamphlet, Dr. Hering says, "Among the "contemporary professors of medicine, of which there were more "than two hundred, who received salaries in Germany, among all "the hospital physicians, there was not one who was induced to study "it." This assertion, supposing that Dr. Hering knew by inspiration exactly, the course of reading pursued by all these men, corresponds but little with his remarks a few lines previous: "The labors of the "Germans, who constantly and eagerly borrow all that is most "valuable in the arts and sciences from the available sources of all "times and of every nation, &c.," nor with his emphatic expressions of "the depth and solidity of the Germans," of "the worth of "German science," &c., nor even with his statement on page 15. "The German savans appeared sensible, that if both these propo- "sitions were established, &c., then all the learned lumber which "theorists had been accumulating for two thousand years must fall "to the ground." Foreigners, unacquainted with the character and standing of the German professors, might suppose these assertions, although contradicting each other, to proceed not only from prohibitory measures of the government, but also from party spirit and the fears entertained by the German practitioners, that this new doctrine might injure their practice. This mistake we feel

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it our duty to rectify. No pamphlet or larger work in any language would long remain unnoticed or uncriticised in Germany, if it should contain a single important scientific idea or experiment. The German literary institutions publish upwards of sixty periodicals devoted to natural sciences only, more than one half of which are appropriated to medical essays and reviews. Most of these periodicals are issued in protestant states, where men possess, even on religious topics, an independence and liberty of discussion which, when we reflect upon the intimate connection between church and state still existing there, may justly be considered as unparalleled in any part of the civilized world. It must therefore be evident that such objects as are but distantly connected with the prerogatives and interests of monarchical governments, as for instance all the natural sciences and particularly medicine, are open to free discussion all over Germany. Most of the professors of medicine in the German universities are ardently attached to the sciences, and are also perfectly independent in their circumstances.* Hence they are generally quite indifferent about obtaining private medical practice, and those particularly who are engaged as physicians of hospitals and dispensaries, feel themselves in duty bound to subject every new method of treatment and every newly recommended drug to the test of experience in the presence of their students. In no other country therefore have new medical theories or modes of treatment spread so rapidly and so widely among the greater part of the profession, as in Germany; and in no other country have the oldest professors and practitioners so publicly avowed their long cherished errors and mistakes, and have received, upon the slightest appearance of truth, a new doctrine with greater candor or with more perfect disinterestedness. This was the case with John Brown's theory, which was zealously adopted by one of the greatest physicians of the age, John Peter Frank, when he was nearly seventy years old; and this was the case in our times also with the no less erroneous doctrine of Broussais.† But in every instance some appearance of reason, some consistency, is required.

* Their salaries are from one to upwards of ten thousand dollars per annum, besides their tickets for their lectures, and their shares as members of medical faculties, as examinators, &c., which, in some cases, increase their income to more than twenty thousand dollars per annum.

† It is not our object to lessen the respect due to this distinguished physician and author, though we deny the propriety of calling his doctrine pre-eminently "physiological medicine," and also, that he deserves the name, "father of modern medicine,"

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Perhaps, the Germans generally appreciate the merits of their own countrymen less than those of foreigners, and are rather too much disposed to listen readily to scientific suggestions from abroad. This fault is owing to their natural want of petty literary egotism, which always exists in an inverse ratio with the extent of learning and acquirements; and to a want of national pride, arising from the political condition of that country. We may partly ascribe to this predilection for foreign suggestions the fact, that the practice of medicine has there also rather declined than improved for the last thirty years, although all the branches of theoretical medicine and surgery have attained a degree of perfection unsurpassed, if not unparalleled, in the literary history of all countries and ages. But, without the elevated self-respect of her literary men in scientific pursuits, the immense medical literature of Germany could not exist; many indispensable branches of the profession, for instance, medical jurisprudence, political, and especially psychical medicine, could not have originated in Germany, or attained there a perfection unheard of in other countries; nor would discoveries of their own medical men have been acknowledged for their intrinsic value, and pursued with perseverance, however little they have been noticed abroad. Thus animal magnetism, first mentioned about three centuries ago by Paracelsus, a German, and introduced as a remedy about sixty years since, by Mesmer, also a German, remained almost unnoticed by all other nations, the French excepted, although many professional men in Germany still apply this great agent as a remedy which, hereafter, will be so emphatically bestowed upon him, particularly in the medical works of this country. Depending almost entirely on the evidence of post mortem examinations, and neglecting all higher philosophical conceptions, he directed his mind only to the palpable results of his investigations, and easily found by them what his favorite opinion had sought for. Like all those who pretend to be reformers in medicine, he cherished his hypothesis more than impartial scrutiny, by rejecting indiscriminately the truths contained in former medical doctrines. Partially opposed to abstract ideas, called by him "ontological abstractions," Broussais, however, introduced in his "irritation" an abstract conception, more vague and narrow than many similar ones before him, and which is also discordant with the gross materialism so much advocated by him in his writings, and particularly in his work "On Irritation and Insanity," in a manner which we must consider unworthy of an elevated mind.—A systematic doctrine of practical medicine, without regard to physiological principles, could be nothing but rude empiricism; and as every meritorious work on practical medicine must necessarily be founded on physiology, we cannot acknowledge that his system has any special claim to the term physiological system. We know of no important anatomical or physiological discovery for which the profession is particularly indebted to him, as it is to so many of his highly distinguished countrymen, who, like Bichat, Magendie, and many others, have in past and present times, so brilliantly enriched and improved the healing art.—"Palmam qui meruit, ferat."

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more generally appreciated, when likewise divested of the mystery which fancy and credulity have so long combined with it.

Why, then, should Hahnemann's works have remained so long unnoticed in his own country, as Dr. Hering states? They were not; they have been frequently reviewed in the German periodicals. But the darkness of the middle ages had, at least in regard to the natural sciences and medicine, fortunately been dispersed in Germany too long for a favorable reception of Hahnemann's works. His disciples and adherents excepted, most medical authors and physicians, from the first promulgation of his doctrine down to the present time, have agreed that no apology could be offered for a man who boldly endeavours to destroy all that is rational in medicine, in order to substitute for it the rudest empiricism ever practised, and who had made, in his Organon and other works, a multitude of assertions and suggestions, totally at variance with common sense and with all the laws of nature, confirmed by the experience of centuries. We remember a review, published many years ago, in which the author asserted, that Hahnemann could have written his Organon only to revenge himself on the whole profession in return for their contempt of his Arcana.* The fact is, that we know of no work pretending to be scientific, and published within the last or present century, which is more crowded with contradictions, falsehoods and absurdities than Hahnemann's Organon, this treasure of the homœopathists, this "great result of twenty years investigation," which Dr. Hering compares (see page 9,) with the discoveries of a Galileo, a Harvey, a Columbus! This is obvious, not only to every well educated and judicious physician

* We candidly confess we believe it to be so, particularly since he published his last work on chronic diseases; though there are some pathognomonical symptoms of craziness observable in him, especially in those passages where he really speaks of his doctrine as a fanatic false prophet does of his new revelation. Thus, he says of his doctrines, on page 7, vol. iii., of his materia medica, "ignea inest illis vis et cœlestis origo," "they possess a fiery power, and come from heaven." In a scientific view no regard should be paid to his motives; and his expressions are interesting in a moral view only, as being or not being a part of his old public impositions. "Multum inter-
"est utrum peccare quis nolit aut nesciat."—Seneca.

Hahnemann was too good a scholar, too well educated in his profession, his doctrine originated at too mature an age, when such fancies as his are generally no longer the product of an exalted imagination, and last not least, his whole life was too much calculated for the promotion of his own interest, to reject entirely the conjecture of the reviewer mentioned. Should it be true, and should he, feeling his departure from this world of vain deception to be near, be conscious of his entering the world of bright unclouded truth, we would wish that he might secure to himself a better place in the history of medicine, by informing posterity of his true opinion, and of the steps which he took to prove to what extent the grossest errors and illusions can still be palmed upon so many. We sincerely wish that he may still live long, but a confession of this kind would be of much more value to the profession and to mankind, than if even the tenth part of all his suggestions were true.

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who has practised any length of time, but to any one who knows how to read a book with attention, and can judge impartially. We hope that the time is near when that book, at least, will be accessible to the enlightened part of our professional brethren in this country ; although it would be difficult for any faithful translator to preserve the vulgar style and tone which characterize this and all Hahnemann's works. Even those who think well of some of his tenets and suggestions, will admit the propriety of these remarks on reading some of our faithful quotations from Hahnemann's books ; to quote all his nonsense, we should be obliged to translate almost all his works.

Many entertain the erroneous opinion, that the homœopathic and other doctrines of Hahnemann affect only practical medicine; and that they merely teach a new method of curing diseases, which, like other medical methods, may sometimes be right, and sometimes wrong. We shall endeavor to prove, that in adopting this doctrine in its whole extent, the very foundation of the human intellect would be shaken ; and that all experience in the whole range of natural philosophy, scarcely excepting that which admits of a mathematical demonstration, would be much more unsafe now than it was in the darkest ages of superstition.

The debasement of the healing art, by Hahnemann and his followers, is obvious when we consider that they themselves state, that homœopathia is not only totally independent of, and incompatible with all other medical theories ; but explicitly declare war against all reason and experience, saying, (see C. V. page 15,) that " all the learned lumber which theorists have been accumulating " for two thousand years must fall to the ground." Indeed, if these propositions be correct, and the medical profession, rejecting all theoretical expositions, should rely only upon naked facts, this noble science would soon be carried back far beyond the age of Hippocrates, when medicine was practised only by priests in temples, and when after a person was cured of a disease, besides the offering made to the deity, and the presents given to the priests, tablets were hung upon the walls of the temples, containing only the two requisites of homœopathia ; the symptoms of the disease, and the simple remedy which proved successful, a time about which an able medical author, two centuries ago, (Meibom. in Diss. de incubat. § 2,) very correctly says, " tunc non sanabat medicina, sed " quidquid videbatur sanasse erat medicina," " at that time medi-

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" cine did not cure, but whatever appeared to have cured was con-
" sidered to be a remedy."

Although our author, in accordance with Hahnemann in some passages of his works pretends, that great knowledge is requisite for the homœopathic practice, we appeal to any one whose judgment is sound and not prejudiced by party spirit or interest, whether he can conceive that any science whatever is indispensable or particularly useful to the homœopathic practitioner, since a minute knowledge of the symptoms of diseases, and of the properties of drugs are amply sufficient to constitute a homœopathic Doctor, and no faculty of the mind is required except a good memory aided only by perfect external senses. The faithful homœopathist may also possess all the great advantages of an accomplished education, if this is compatible with homœopathia, may be a great chemist, anatomist, botanist, &c., in short, may be a true polyhistor; but all his knowledge is quite useless in respect to his vocation. To an allopathist, a name applied by Hahnemann to all physicians who are not in favor of his doctrine—even the knowledge of a common trade* would be more useful for his practice, than a familiarity with anatomy,† physiology, chemistry, &c. is to an homœo-

* It is often highly important for the rational physician, relying more on the causes of the diseases than upon their delusive symptoms, to know to what particular injury an individual is exposed by his trade. The profession is much in need of a work similar to that of Ramazzini, "de Morbis Opificum," 1718, which shall detail those particulars, not only in respect to the new trades brought into existence during the last century, but also to the changes produced by machinery, &c. in the old trades.

† It would appear almost incredible that in the nineteenth century there should be Christian countries where the study of anatomy is restrained by laws, more worthy of the superstition of the middle ages than of our times, while we see even the Turkish Sultan and the Pacha of Egypt encourage its study, however much it is opposed to the tenets of the Koran. There are some eminent men who can overcome those restrictions by their diligent study and extraordinary talents; but the profession at large can never attain the requisite perfection without the most liberal provisions for this science, which must be considered as the key-stone of all medicine and surgery. The opposition of the public to post mortem examinations in private practice, particularly in rare cases, where examinations may be useful for the treatment of similar cases, tends to retard the advance of science, and is also unworthy of the present age. The corpse should justly be considered as a mere substance, doomed to decay, and as the property of the human society at large, and not as a person. "Curatio funeris, conditio sepulturæ, pompa exequiarum, magis sunt vivorum solatia, quam subsidia mortuorum," (Augustinus de Civ. c. 12.) It may here also be not improper to allude to the prevalent prejudice, that the healing art rests mostly on its practical branches, and that, if sufficient provisions are made for these, the profession and the public will be more benefited than by promoting its theoretical sciences. It is a prejudice by which the most talented young students of medicine lose the best opportunity of really attaining a high standing in their profession, and are forced to remain, for ever, common routiniers. A country which provides in the best manner for the study of anatomy, physiology, chemistry, and for the other branches of theoretical medicine, without the least provisions for observing the treatment of patients, would soon possess ten times as many distinguished physicians and respected medical authors, than another country which provides amply for the premotion of practical instruction in hospitals and almshouses,

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pathist, although Hahnemann in his Organon (see p.p. 184 and 185, 4th edit.) urges particularly a due regard to the pursuit of the patient, more however with a view to promote the interest of the physician by making him intimately acquainted with family secrets, than with the intent of influencing a treatment, which, according to his doctrine of the origin and treatment of all chronic diseases, must always depend upon the removal of one and the same cause. But we wish seriously, that any homœopathist would explain to us of what use anatomy is to him, since, if he confines himself to medical practice, he can observe all the imaginable symptoms of the diseased state in the sense of his doctrine, without even the first rudiments of that science? Physiology, a science of which Hahnemann himself could never have had any sound conception, is so much crowded with hypotheses, conjectures, and "learned lumber," that it must appear to a homœopathist very fanciful and useless. Chemistry, in the eyes of the great genius, so "over-refined "in our age," and so defective, that the properties of the most common substances, the solubility of flint and sulphur in water for instance, or their transmutation into infinite spirits by their removal "from place to place in a fluid state," remained hitherto unknown to all the chemists of both hemispheres; mineralogy, botany, &c. are still more unnecessary to him, because others may collect the plants and simples, he himself being only obliged to dilute and rub them down, "secundum artis magicæ leges," and he must indeed do so if he attends but a few patients daily, as so many hours are required to learn all the symptoms and all the minutiæ of the patient's whole life, and as (see p. 25 C. V.) "the advantages of short visits and quickly writing a recipe," "cannot be "reconciled with homœopathia." Although the author of the concise view tells us (page 21) that his master recognises the anatomical and physiological sciences as by all means indispensable,

but pays but little regard to the theory. This may easily be proved by the low standing of the original medical literature of such countries, and by their necessary dependance on foreign literature. It may be asserted with the greatest propriety, that no science requires more the minutest study of its theoretical branches than medicine, since none admits of a greater variety of individual cases, the proper treatment of which depends mostly on general principles; for otherwise the old intelligent nurse would be the best physician, and the oldest herb-collector the greatest botanist. Practical acquirements are easily and quickly obtained in all scientific pursuits, where sound principles previously derived from a close study of their theory, are combined with natural talent, but not the reverse. Thus a man, thoroughly acquainted with geometry, trigonometry, and the other branches of pure mathematics, will learn in a few weeks, by himself or by a practical teacher, to be a good surveyor, whilst a merely practical man, without such acquirements, will never become eminent in his vocation, and will never be able to compete with the other in extraordinary cases.

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