

Let us now inquire what has been accomplished for medical science by the elaborate provings of the homœopaths; for the *raison d'être* of a proving has not been explicitly given in the preceding pages. Hippocrates, Hahnemann, and Sydenham hypothesized, and finally taught, that the proving or testing of medicines upon the healthy would show the exact curative power of each remedy in disease. This doctrine was formulated by Hippocrates in the aphorism or axiom *similia similibus curentur* ("cure by similars"). Jenner by vaccination, and Pasteur and Koch by their inoculations, have more recently illustrated the effects, under this hypothesis, of a limited class of remedies; but to Hahnemann and his successors alone, with their elaborate system of full descriptive provings of nearly every known medicinal agent, is due the gradual establishment of a law deduced from the original working hypothesis of Hippocrates.

That the law of similars cannot be explained *a priori* (i.e., upon any material or mechanical grounds) is, to my mind, at once to be admitted before we can accept it as a fundamental principle or starting-point, exactly like that of electricity or chemical force. The law is, that disease is cured by an influence similar to that which produces it. However daring the first assumption of this law of similars, it has now passed through the stages recorded in the history of every established science; i.e., it has been submitted to induction, deduction, and verification.

Mere observation of instances is not inductive, and does not lead to science until, through the study of instances, we rise to fixed law. With such a law, prophecy or deduction must be possible; and the accuracy of this prophecy or verification will be a fresh test of the original law. The homœopathic law, being tested in reference both to normal and the diseased conditions of the human body, has the logical advantage of a double verification, and may thus be said to be rediscovered every day in the practice and provings of each homœopathic physician.¹

It is, then, law, not luck, which has enabled the homœopaths to reach their very consistent results. Their remedies in common use are an emphatic demonstration of the practical value of the law of similars: such as mercurius, which causes eruptions, salivation, and diarrhoea, and is undeniably curative in these forms of disease; quinine, which, causing ague symptoms, relieves them; nitroglycerine, which removes the form of congestive headache inevitably produced by it in a healthy person. And if the imperfect discovery of Koch be, indeed, a conspicuous and brilliant blossom of medical science, it is the startling fact that this law of similars plucked the flower long ago, and, aided by its accessory of safe dilution or attenuation, has made intelligent use of its discovery.

To confine our attention to testimony bearing directly on the treatment of tuberculous disease. The proving of tuberculinum shows, as its primary effect, evidence of a deposit of tubercle at the base of the brain. Severe and unbearable headaches are a prominent symptom, with local congestion, delirium, and insanity; more remotely and as later manifestations, cough, purulent sputa, and diarrhoea. The remedy tuberculinum has been for years helpfully given in meningitis, hereditary and inveterate headaches, hectic fever, night sweats, cough with tuberculous expectoration, and all early stages of phthisical disease.

It would thus appear, that, in those first stages of consumption which alone are claimed to be curable by the injection of Koch's fluid, the homœopaths have made safe yet effective use of the same materia morbi as Koch's.² Instead of protection by boiling, cultivation, etc., a high attenuation has been efficient.³ This attenuation, made chiefly by means of dilute alcohol, is claimed to accomplish something beyond the mere subdivision of material.

¹ "Science presents itself as exact and verified knowledge; . . . if observation and verification cannot demonstrate the real existence of the genus, philosophy itself, in any sane sense of the word, is annihilated" (Dr. F. E. Abbot, *The New Ideal*, May, 1889).

² See *New Organon*, July, 1879, pp. 342, 439, 449; Dr. Swan's *Morbific Products*, 1896; Burnett's *New Cures*, 1885 to 1890; J. A. Biegler's Report; C. Hering's *Guiding Symptoms*, vol. x. (now in press).

³ Attenuations thus far made by the French experimenters have been unsatisfactory, both on account of the uncertain strength of the dilutions, and also by reason of changes of quality wrought by cultivation of the original material. The writer is aware of Koch's statement that the albuminoid principle of parataloid is insoluble in alcohol. The simple dilution of the latter avoids this difficulty, chiefly by checking its coagulative effect.

The irritant particles are mechanically detached, while the curative principle is separated and developed. The degree of attenuation used always ranged as high as a so-called thirtieth potency. After Darwin's statement of the minuteness of the spores of *drosera* capable of producing their characteristic action, the efficiency of a potency or attenuation does not to many persons seem improbable; and we will leave, for the present, the mathematics so frequently discussed.

It will readily be seen, however, that treatment by nosodes might soon degenerate into an enthusiastic, thoughtless, and empirical use of these remedies, to the exclusion of others, if the inference were drawn that each microbial disease could be annihilated by its own potentized product; and it has naturally been found impossible to remove, by the administration of its nosode alone, the whole ultimate disturbance, in the form of secondary symptoms, sequences, and diseases of distant parts of the body. Indeed, other remedies might, even from the beginning of treatment, be more serviceable than these. Thus, in faithful treatment, it is sought to accomplish an end far more subtle than the mechanical removal of bacilli. Holding them to be merely parasites, among which may exist many forms not inimical to health, but even fulfilling protective service in the body, the homœopath does not consider it essential that its bacillus be seen in the atom of diseased material which he prepares for medicinal use (the bacillus would almost necessarily be there, for each characteristic parasite is the carrier of the disease in which it dwells); but it is the deadly material¹ in which the microbe-parasite feeds which alone is desired for proving, finally for prophylaxis and therapeutic use.²

The ancient school attacks the new, having known but little of its large work; but the time has gone by for dismissing without a hearing such claims as led Wilson, the anatomist, to employ homœopathy for himself, and Sir Sidney Ringer to incorporate, *verbatim*, large sections of its materia medica in his authoritative work.

These are the stars in the firmament of homœopathy, — men of affairs, men of business, scholars, warriors, poets, statesmen, whose practical wisdom has moulded the destinies of the world, — Sir William Hamilton, Archbishop Whateley, Carl Wilhelm Siemens, Lord Lyndhurst, Augustus de Morgan, Secretary Seward, Lord Lytton, Charles Reade, Wendell Phillips, Theodore Parker, Helen Jackson, Miss Phelps, Balzac, Gambetta, D'Israeli, Bismarck.

Instead of such awkward use of its weapons that the force powerful enough to combat the disease must destroy also the invalid, homœopathy, *die milde macht*, has quietly employed its methods, "strong enough," as Wendell Phillips once remarked to the writer, "to wait until its accumulating facts would speak for themselves."

C. F. NICHOLS.

Boston, April 15.

Iroquoian Etymologies.

I WISH to make a correction. In my article (*Science*, April 17, 1891), instead of the word *ratikowanên*, on p. 219, second column, at the end of the first paragraph, read *ratikowanên's*. This error was perhaps due to an oversight of the copyist in transcribing with a typewriter from my script notes, and overlooked in revision.

J. N. B. HEWITT.

Washington, D.C., April 19.

BOOK-REVIEWS.

Power through Repose. By ANNIE PAYSON CALL. Boston, Roberts. 16°. \$1.

THE tone and object of this book are thoroughly good. The warning that it sounds is similar to that which Dr. Weir Mitchell so earnestly voiced in his "Wear and Tear." We are wearing and tearing too much and too fast. We are losing the faculty of

¹ The bacillus not only maintains its own parasitic life in the body, but appears itself to manufacture, or subverts the nutrient function to produce various toxic substances which are poisonous, though separated from the bacillus (see *Popular Science News*, March, 1891, p. 43, quoted from *Edinburgh Medical Journal*).

² See Swan's *Nosodes*; Burnett's *New Cures*.