

meopathic treatment, we may easily understand, that during the treatment everything must be removed from the diet and regimen which can have any medicinal action, in order that the small dose may not be overwhelmed and extinguished, or disturbed by any foreign medicinal irritant." In a note he adds, "Coffee, fine Chinese and other herb teas, and many other things ought to be avoided by patients, as they should avoid excesses in eating and drinking, sitting up long at night, damp rooms, penurious living, and so forth." The note concludes with the following remark: "Some of my disciples seem needlessly to increase the difficulties of a patient's dietary, by forbidding the use of many more tolerably indifferent things, which is not to be commended." Here we have the common sense rule laid down, that patients are to avoid things hurtful to themselves, and likely to interfere with the operation of a minute dose of medicine.

On this note of things to be avoided have been built, with a somewhat slavish adherence to the text instead of the spirit, the majority of those homeopathic diet tables, which are in such large circulation, although some of the most acknowledged authorities have expressed an opinion in favor of a more liberal interpretation of Hahnemann's doctrines upon this subject. Thus Hartmann remarks: "Every intelligent physician will at once perceive, that every patient cannot be subjected to such a rigorous diet, and that a man of sixty years old, for instance, who had been in the daily habit of taking coffee, tea, wine, brandy, or of smoking tobacco or using snuff, cannot be suddenly deprived of those things without detriment to his organism. Hahnemann allowed smoking and snuffing; he forbade wine, brandy, and coffee with great severity. This seems inconsistent, and leads to suppose that in a more advanced age we may except some other things from the general rule of abstinence." While in this country there

is undoubtedly a disposition to enlarge the table of our patients, in America our energetic friend Dr. Hempel seems inclined to transcend Hahnemann in the rigor of his rules of life—one of his golden rules, as he styles them, running thus: "Avoid all stimulating drinks, brandy, beer, and wine, and content yourself with cold water, milk, unsweetened chocolate, weak black tea, and syrups made of currants, raspberries, strawberries, or other kinds of wholesome and unmedicinal fruits. Never use tobacco in any shape, except for medicinal purposes."* We suspect that beyond the confines of the State of Maine Dr. Hempel's gospel will hardly find believers in the land of liberty and tobacco. Setting aside all extravagances, the subject assumes a very simple form, and may be divided into two questions.

1st.—Is it possible for our patients to avoid all medicinal substances in their diet; and

2nd.—Is it conducive to the better action of the medicine to enforce a very rigorous diet.

At present, let us observe, we are considering the question solely in the view of its relation to homeopathic medicine, not to general health.

1st.—Is it possible to confine our patients to a non-medicinal diet? Suppose we restrict them to a prison fare, and desire them to drink a tumbler of water, and eat four ounces of bread for a meal, and repeat this three times a day. This would appear simple enough with a vengeance. We shall suppose the scene London, and just inquire into the character of the bread and water diet we had prescribed. To begin with the water, it is an incontestable fact, that, in the words of Dr. Hassall, "The waters at present in this metropolis are all hard, and have all the disadvantages of hard water; they are moreover river waters, and for the most part contaminated to a great extent with organic matter, dead and living; add to these points the fact of their further deterioration by contact with lead cisterns, and by the accumu-

* p. 82, Acute Diseases, vol. I.

† See Laurie, Chepmell, and others.