

dice, and which derive no support from the enlarged experience that we have now within our reach.

There are but two methods by which we can hope to arrive at anything like unanimity in our dietetic creed; the one is to assume Hahnemann's writings as our Leviticus, and to ban all he banned, and admit all he admitted, or to inquire into the principles by which he was directed in the rules he lays down, and to follow out these principles, if they be sound, into their full development by all the lights which modern science and observation have shed upon the subject.

As Hahnemann did not assume the infallibility of inspiration, we may safely decline accepting any Leviticus at his hands, and examine with that care and respect which all his writings deserve, what they contain on the subject of diet, and we shall be satisfied that if in some instances he was led into extravagance and error, yet that the principles of his doctrine are eminently sound and sagacious.

In endeavoring to form a just valuation of Hahnemann's dietetic rules, we must bear in mind that before he had discovered his grand formula for the selection of medicines, he had already written extensively upon various topics connected with diet and regimen, and that he carried over into the new province of homeopathy where he so long ruled supreme, some of the old adopted notions which he had already too vehemently expressed to admit of his recanting them. The most striking illustration of this was his antipathy to coffee. "The cold considerate earnestness of our forefathers," such are Hahnemann's words, "the firm steadfastness of will, of resolve and of judgment, the endurance of continued and yet powerful exertions of the body, adapted to the object in view, that used to constitute the original national character of the Germans, the whole sublime stamp of our descent disappears before this medicinal beverage, and changes into over-hasty dislosures, hurried resolves, immature judgments, frivolity, changeableness, talkativeness, irresolution, too easy mo-

bility of the muscles without any endurable result, and theatrical behaviour."

The extravagance of this passage makes it read like a temperance lecture. In fact, what truth is in it is certainly applicable to the abuse, not the use of coffee. It would be interesting if we could discover the origin of this excessive hostility to coffee, which belongs to the family of narcotics, and is a sort of foster brother of tobacco, that "foul and loathsome weed," as an irreverent lecturer calls it, which Hahnemann is said to have loved, if not wisely, at least too well. It may have been an idiosyncratic dislike, or more probably he fell into a common opinion of the time in which he wrote, and which was strongly shared by the philosopher Kant,\* and by many French physicians, that coffee was an injurious beverage, and he afterwards rested his opinion upon the basis of unsound experiment. That it was an unsound deduction from the effects which follow the use of coffee when taken in a way to produce derangements in the system, to forbid its use in all circumstances, is obvious, if we reflect that we could all make ourselves as ill as any of our patients, if we were only to take dinner at time of breakfast, and tea at dinner time for a few days.

We cannot however dismiss the subject of experiments in diet, without some further remarks. And the first is, that although in the particular example we have quoted, Hahnemann committed a great mistake, yet that on the whole he is perfectly sound, and does not seek to lay down any positive rules about diet, but acknowledges that food must be regulated by the special appetites and instincts, as well as circumstances of those who take it; and he gives, in his "Friend of Health," several illustrations of the superiority of the popular over the scientific judgment upon this point.

In the whole of his intellectual career he seems to have been looking for some law of relation between diseases and their curative specifics, but nowhere does he hint that there can be any such law

\* See De Quincey's Last Days of Kant.