

Letter from Dr. Wanless, in reply to Sir Benjamin
Brodie's attack on the Homœopathic
School.

(To the Editor of the *Free Press*).

SIR,—I have observed a letter in your daily on the subject of Homœopathy, written by Sir Benjamin Brodie, which was represented as being copied from *Fraser's Magazine*.

Sir Benjamin Brodie has long occupied a high position in the medical profession, and anything which he writes for the public will have, on that account, great weight for good or evil amongst all who speak the English language; but as I conceive that the opinion of Sir Benjamin Brodie, however high he may stand, is founded on a wrong basis, I hope you will afford me some space to show why I have formed this opinion, as there can be no subject of greater importance to the people than a knowledge of what is true and false in the department of medical education, called by medical men the practice of physic. Sir Benjamin, in his opening remarks, makes mention of young men being generally more fond of new theories than old men. He might have added that apprentices of all kinds generally presumed to know more than their masters and a first year's student is generally bolder in his assertions than when he becomes maturer in years. These remarks are immaterial as to the truth or falsehood of homœopathy, but it is very important to know how Sir Benjamin Brodie has examined the subject, which he takes upon himself to denounce with so much assumed love of science. Sir Benjamin says: "I have made myself sufficiently acquainted with several works which profess to disclose the system of homœopathy, especially that of Hahnemann, the founder of the homœopathic sect, and those of Dr. Currie and Mr. Sharpe, &c." He then refers those who have *good sense* to the same books, and anticipates that those who have *good sense* and *caution* in scientific investigations will arrive at the same conclusion as he himself has done, but of course those who do not arrive at the same conclusion as Sir Benjamin will neither have good sense nor caution. This inference is very apparent.

Sir Benjamin Brodie, from having read those books only, and not having tested their truth by experiment, concludes that homœopathy is of no value. In chemical science, Fowne, for instance, states that a white salt, such as iodide of potassium, dissolved in distilled water, and poured into a vessel containing another white salt, bichloride of mercury, will produce a red salt, per iodide of mercury. Suppose Sir B. Brodie to be rather credulous in chemistry too, and anxious to know whether Fowne's statement, that two white salts would make a red one or not, would, without first putting the statement to the test, simply pronounce Fowne to be an impostor, and that Fowne's statement was of no value. It would be said at once that Sir Benjamin's assertions were of no value as to whether the two white salts would make a red salt or not, because he had neglected to fulfil the condition implied, *viz.*, to demonstrate to his own senses, independent of any foregone conclusion, whether the two white salts would make a red one or not. This is precisely the condition Sir Benjamin occupies with regard to homœopathy; Hahnemann, Currie and Sharpe state that there is a principle of cure of as wonderful results as that two white salts would make a red one. Sir Benjamin has not put this principle of *similia similibus curantur* to