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# THE DIVINE ART OF HEALING

*Being an Essay upon  
an Essay*

"ÆSCULAPIUS IN THE BALANCE"

BY ROSA HOBHOUSE

With Preface by

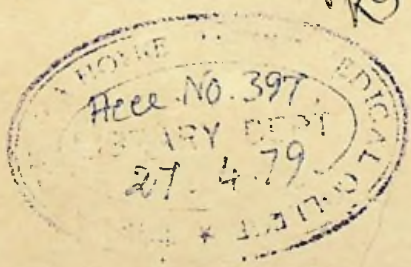
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## PREFACE

When, having read this essay, I was asked to write a few words of introduction to it, I grasped the opportunity, not because the work, in my judgment, requires any preface at all, but because it is a privilege to commend it to a widespread audience. My only criticism of the essay would be that the authoress has effaced herself unduly and might have been less sparing of her comments. On the other hand there is, no doubt, a special value in allowing the master himself to develop his argument and answer objections, and I am full of admiration for the way in which the Organon has been used to supplement the original essay.

Readers may be inclined to think that all this controversy is out of date and of no significance to-day. That, however, would be an error. The medical profession as it now exists is infinitely better equipped than that of a century ago—and its greater knowledge is much more wisely used—as

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witness the wonderful success in the realm of public health, where, by the way, Hahnemann was again a pioneer. But in all that pertains to the use of drugs for the cure or relief of disease, while there is much greater caution and consequently less doing of harm than when "Æsculapius" was published, while the hand of the apothecary is less heavy on the art of medicine, there is still little certainty and less confidence among the bulk of the profession. There is a vastly increased knowledge of chemical structure and of physiological activity in regard to drugs, but as to the use of them safely and effectively to cure disease, only the follower of Hahnemann speaks with much confidence. A text-book of medicine to-day is a miracle of labour and thought and patience and ingenuity in all that pertains to diagnosis and pathology—but the sections on treatment mostly strike a dubious and hesitating note.

Now, it cannot be too often said that all that the followers of Hahnemann believe, they believe as the result of their own observation and experiment, while their opponents are content to repeat the prejudices and negations of their predecessors without any independent enquiry. To any fair-minded person there can be no hesitation

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as to which is the more scientific method of approaching the question. The homeopathist only asks for experiment and opinion founded on experiment, and any work which, like this essay, stimulates interest in such investigations is welcome to him. Nor is the matter without interest, and more than interest, to the public. For if the homeopathist, trained and qualified in all the knowledge of his colleagues, has also at his command another weapon of power for the battle with disease, the public has a right to ask that knowledge of that weapon should be widespread and its use available for all. In this way the truth or falsehood of Hahnemann's teaching becomes a public matter, and the sooner it is settled (as only can it be settled) by manifold and repeated experiments, the sooner the balance will tip in favour of "Æsculapius."

C. E. WHEELER, M.D.

TO MEDICAL STUDENTS IN ALL  
LANDS

“ He that knows the secrets of nature with Albertus Magnus, or the motions of the heavens with Galileo, or the cosmography of the moon with Hevelius, or the body of man with Galen, or the nature of diseases with Hippocrates, or the harmonies in melody with Orpheus, or of poesy with Homer, or of grammar with Lilly, or of whatever else with the greatest artist ; he is nothing, if he knows them merely for talk or idle speculation, or transient and external use. But he that knows them for value, and knows them his own, shall profit infinitely. And therefore of all kinds of learnings, humanity and divinity are the most excellent.”

(“ Centuries of Meditations,” Traherne.)

## AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

Attached to "THE ORGANON OF THE RATIONAL ART OF HEALING," by Samuel Hahnemann, in the Everyman Library, is to be found an essay of interest and beauty under the title "Æsculapius in the Balance."

Having wended my way through various sections of the Organon with its unornate wisdom, I turned to this essay chiefly, perhaps, in order to read more "at a run" than a work under numbered sections, in the nature of things, allows. On doing this, so great was my satisfaction, that immediately a desire to see it reproduced separately sprang into my mind. And this for several reasons, but especially I was impressed with the wide variety of mind to which the little work in certain of its passages would appeal. I have therefore endeavoured, with some running commentary introduced into the course of my quotations, to present most of its treasures, weaving these together also with some extracts from the larger work. My aim has been through

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the medium of an essay upon an essay to elucidate some of the circumstances under which the original work was produced and further to relate individually its ideas to the larger spheres of thought to which they belong, whether of Science, Poetry, Religion, or Art. When I first set my pen to the task, I had no certainty that there would be found a Publisher willing to aid me in this design, and no idea that the small work would be privileged to have a Preface by the translator of the Organon in the above named Series. There has been no desire on my part for originality, but only a wish to give currency to ideas containing the promise of blessing for mankind.

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For the name of Æsculapius, Mythology and History<sup>c</sup> still seem to contend. Whilst being known to most of us as the god of the healing art amongst the Greeks, he is at the same time remembered by the scholar as the "blameless physician" of human birth, spoken of in Homer. Our Essay by Samuel Hahnemann might indeed have been called "Asclepiades in the Balance," since it is the followers (known by this name) of the great shadowy figure, rather than Æsculapius himself who are, in its pages, weighed in the balance and found wanting. Amongst these inheritors of the medical traditions of past ages, Hahnemann in comparatively recent times found himself, and just as he was rising into favour with the medical opinion of his day, paused, and looking round declared against the errors and ignorances that were obscuring "the divine art of healing." The opening paragraph of "Æsculapius in the Balance" only partly discloses the fact that its author actually abandoned the

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practice of medicine because of his profound dissatisfaction with the methods employed by the medical profession of his day:—

“After I had discovered the weakness and errors of my teachers and books,” he writes, “I sank into a state of sorrowful indignation, which had nearly altogether disgusted me with the study of medicine. I was on the point of concluding that the whole art was vain and incapable of improvement. I gave myself up to solitary reflection, and resolved not to terminate my train of thought until I had arrived at a definite conclusion on the subject.” How few, alas, there are who for a “scruple,” as some would have called it, are courageous enough to withdraw from the pursuit of a profitable occupation in which they have already gained distinction. By Hufeland, the leader of the medical profession in Germany, Hahnemann at the age of thirty-five, was spoken of, we are told, as one of the best physicians. It was also said of him by another authority that “the man might have been a great chemist.”

Instead, Hahnemann for some time earned his living for himself and his family by the translation of scientific works in the various languages of which he was a master. These included besides his native German, English,

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French, Italian, Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Arabic and Spanish. As a result, in all his studies he was able to consult each author of the medical records of previous ages in his own tongue.

The philosophic passages that follow the opening thoughts, quoted above, are not without their sense of the age-long struggle for subsistence scattered with its "dear-bought joys" that has beset the generations of the inhabitants of this earth. These culminate in an impassioned questioning tinged with poetic imagination. "And yet, O man! how lofty is thy descent! and God-like thy destiny! how noble the object of thy life! Art thou not destined to approach by the ladder of hallowed impressions, ennobling deeds, and all-penetrating knowledge, even towards the Great Spirit whom all the inhabitants of the Universe worship? Can that Divine Spirit who gave thee thy soul, and winged thee for such high enterprises, have designed that thou shouldst be *helplessly* and *irremediably* oppressed by those bodily ailments which we call diseases?"

Having assured himself that the Author of all-good must not only have made a healing art possible, but that such an art must already exist, the writer proceeds through

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several pages to give some more or less purely medical considerations. Amongst them we find the suspicion expressed that some of the most brilliant cures in the past were ascribable rather to "the force of youth overmastering the disease, or to the unreckoned influence of various fortunate circumstances, than to the medicines employed! . . ."

VIS  
MEDICINÆ  
NATURÆ

"Often—the thought is saddening!—patients recover as by a miracle when the multitude of anxiously changed and often repeated nauseous drugs prescribed by the physician is suddenly left off or clandestinely discontinued. For fear of giving offence, the patients frequently conceal what they have done, and appear before the public as if they had been cured by the physician."

The undue claims made by the profession are not alone exposed, but a severe censure is given to their refusal to acknowledge their own measure of responsibility for their ignorance, ascribing, as they were prone to, the comfortless word "incurable" to any complaint for which they did not happen to have discovered a remedy.

" 'Yes,' I hear the medical school whisper with a seeming compassionate shrug, 'Yes, these are notoriously incurable evils; our books tell us they are incurable.' As if it

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could comfort the millions of sufferers to be told of the impotence of our art! As if the Creator of these sufferers had not provided remedies for them also, and as if for them the source of boundless goodness did not exist, compared to which the tenderest mother's love is as thick clouds beside the glory of the noonday sun!"

THE COM-  
FORTLESS  
WORD  
"INCUR-  
ABLE"

Hahnemann then enunciates the defence that his opponents will seek in the grievance that the "thousand defects in our civic constitution" are answerable for the incurable character of these evils. His own answer follows:—

"Can you then believe that the Preserver of our race, the All-wise, did not design these complexities of our civic constitution and our artificial mode of life to increase our enjoyment here, and to remove misery and suffering? What extraordinary kind of living can that be to which man cannot accustom himself without any great disturbance of his health?"

DIVINE  
INTENTION  
IN  
CIVILISATION

The writer then casts his eye over the whole earth and reviews the varied conditions to which man has, in point of fact, adjusted himself with tolerable success. "The fat of the seal and the train oil eaten with bread made of dried fish-bones as little prevents the Greenlander from enjoying health in general, as does the unvaried milk-diet of

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the shepherds on the Swiss mountains, the purely vegetable food of the poorer Germans, or the highly animal diet of the wealthy Englishman. Does not the Vienna nobleman accustom himself to his twenty or thirty covers, and does he not enjoy as much health as the Chinese with his thin rice soup, the Saxon miner with nothing but potatoes, the South Sea Islander with his roasted bread-fruit, and the Scottish highlander with his oatmeal cakes ? ”

“ I am ready to admit that the contest of conflicting passions and of many enjoyments, the luxurious refinement, and the absence of exercise in fresh air that prevail in the labyrinthine palaces of great cities may give occasion to more numerous and more rare diseases than the simple uniformity that obtains in the airy hut of the humble villager. But that does not materially alter the matter. For our medical art is as impotent against diseases prevalent among the simple peasantry of various countries, as it is against the more aristocratic disorders of high life in our large towns. Must there be one kind of medical art for the former and another for the latter ; or if it were only once discovered, would it not be equally applicable to both ? I should think so ! ”

In the above passage we observe that the

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luxury of palaces is contrasted with the greater wholesomeness of the "village hut." This must not be taken as a sign that the village hut was the writer's only acquaintance with the condition of poverty. No one could have better appreciated the life-destroying conditions of the poor in great cities.\*

THE  
DISASTER  
OF  
POVERTY

After having thus given tribute, as we have seen above, to the force of youth or the "vis medicatrix naturæ," and further, having shown that the impotence of the healing art should not be mistaken for a limitation set by the Creator (of the kind "thus far shalt thou go and no farther"), Hahnemann allows that it is nevertheless undeniable that "occasional, but rare cures occur, effected obviously by medicine, of so striking a character, that one is astonished at so daring a rescue from the very jaws of death"; these being, he tells us, "hints afforded by the Author of Life 'THAT THERE IS A HEALING ART.'"

"Such cures," he continues, "stand isolated in the history of the human race, and they can but very seldom, if at all, be reproduced as they were at first occasioned. All we see is, that great cures are possible; but *how* they are to be effected, what the

\*See Appendix: Extracts from "Epidemics in General."

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power, and the particular circumstances by which they were accomplished, and how these are to be controlled so that we may transfer them to other cases, is quite beyond our ken."

It was in the year 1805 that the essay, "Æsculapius in the Balance" was written—the opening sections of the "Organon" published five years later define the art which is only here described:—"The physician has no higher aim than to make sick folk well, to pursue what is called the Art of Healing . . . . If the physician clearly perceives what it is in disease in general and in each case of disease in particular that has to be cured: . . . . if he clearly perceives what is the healing principle in medicine generally and in each medicine in particular: . . . . if in the light of clear principles he can so adapt the healing virtue of the drug to the illness that is to be cured that recovery must follow, and if he has the ability not only to select the particular remedy whose mode of action is most suitable for the case . . . . but also to choose the exact quantity of the remedy required . . . . and the fitting period for its repetition, if, I say, he knows all these things and in addition recognises in every case the hindrances to lasting recovery and can remove them, *then truly he understands how to build*

REQUIRE-  
MENTS IN A  
PHYSICIAN

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*up his work on an adequate basis of reason, and he is a rational practitioner of the healing art."*

In the section which follows we find further reflections on the physician. "He is also a maintainer of health, if he knows the causes that may disturb health and excite disease and how to remove them from healthy persons." Beyond the Art of Healing Hahnemann perceives the still more glorious Art of Maintaining Health. This it may be hoped will finally be regarded as the chief function of the doctors, a practical recognition of which would not only enlarge their sphere of influence and render them more beloved, but would assure them a greater permanency in the scheme of an increasingly rightly ordered society, where diseases are decreasingly prevalent.

His  
LARGER  
SPHERE

We shall have noticed in the definition of the abilities required in the true physician a constant endeavour to balance "the general" and "the particular," which is pre-eminently characteristic of the school of medicine which Hahnemann founded. The individual mental and physical temperament he closely studied, and discoveries made under these heads actually affect the choice of the remedy chosen. The practising homeopath, for instance, finds it

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important to know whether his patient responds with most pleasure to a hot or cold temperature, and in one of the Author's "Notes" in the "Organon" we find: "Thus aconite will never bring about a speedy and lasting cure in a patient of quiet, equable disposition, nux vomica is as little serviceable to gentle phlegmatic patients, pulsatilla as little to the gay and happy, ignatia as little to those who are imperturbable and disinclined either to fear or vexation." This is preceded by the reflection that "the creator of medicinal virtues has had particular regard to this important feature of disease, namely, alterations in the moral and mental condition . . . ." We may notice here that not only the usual trend of the disposition is to be taken into account, but further, any modification of it caused by the illness. In sections 197-8 we further read: "There are certain diseases of the disposition which have not simply developed out of bodily diseases; but, on the contrary, with but slight implication of the body, originate and endure from emotional causes, such as continued anxiety, worry, vexation and exposure to terror or fright. In time this kind of emotional disease affects the bodily health, often very adversely. Emotional diseases of this order, originating in the mind, are

PSYCHOLOGICAL MEANS

## THE DIVINE ART OF HEALING

precisely those which can be rapidly transformed into health, both of mind and body, by psychical means, such as a display of confidence, friendly remonstrance . . . .”

Besides emphasis having been put on the necessity of supplementing an acquaintance with generalisations in disease with an intimate knowledge of its particular manifestation in the individual case, we have been told that the remedy must be prescribed “in the light of clear principles.”

One of the first of these principles that emerge in the ensuing paragraphs of the essay is that each medicine “must be administered in a perfectly simple and unadulterated form . . . . so as to procure only individual effects of each substance”; the second, that doses should be small, in order to create the least disturbance possible to the human organism in the process of effecting a cure:—“One of the chief laws of homeopathic therapeutics is the following: the counter-force chosen as exactly as possible for the removal of a natural disease-force should be so calculated that it will only just attain its object and will do the body no harm in any way through unnecessary strength.” The phraseology here is that of the larger work. One complaint after another is uttered against the heterogeneous

THE USE OF  
PURE  
SIMPLES

## THE DIVINE ART OF HEALING

prescriptions of his day—to which, incidentally, we are still more or less liable to be subjected. If in those instances of extraordinary cures referred to already, the questions are asked—"What medicine did the real good? What were the minute particulars of the disease, in order that we may imitate the procedure when such a case recurs? Alas! these particulars are and must remain unknown; the case was either not particularly observed or not reported with sufficient exactness. And the medicine? No; a single medicine was not given; it was, as all learned recipes must be, an elixir, a powder, a mixture, etc., each composed of a number of different medicinal substances. Heaven knows which of them all did good."

CONFUSION  
CONFOUNDED

We may note the words, "as all learned recipes must be"—suggesting to us the fact that the medical profession has tended to do what has been done by the priest-hoods of the various religions of the world, i.e., reserved knowledge for the most part to itself and divulged the deeper things only in that form which is more or less beyond the common understanding. This is what William Blake refers to so often as the "mystery" in such passages as:—

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“ And who shall mourn for mystery, who never loosed her captives ? ”

In the School of Medicine founded by Hahnemann alone (men, it must be remembered, who possess full orthodox degrees as well as their distinct philosophy of medicine) has been found a willingness to entrust the laity with such measure of insight as they are capable of, and such practice of medicine as may, after diagnosis, be allowed to them.\*

FREEDOM  
FROM  
“ MYSTERY ”

Of the importance of a true diagnosis the author of “ Æsculapius in the Balance ” was fully aware. In section 62 and the subsequent section of the ORGANON he shows the need of a subtle wisdom in order that an “ exact knowledge of each symptom ” both physical and psychological may be obtained.

This readiness to trust the ordinary person under direction with a measure of prescription in medicine is of course largely due to the fact that medicines, as has already been shown, are given as simples and not in confusion, and in small doses.

In further passages of the essay we find

\*This is borne out by the publication of such a work as the “Vade Mecum,” by E. H. Ruddock, M.D., F.R.C.P., M.R.C.S., which was revised in 1925.

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the severest condemnation of the strong dose. Speaking of one treatment used in his time, he describes it as "by no means inferior in severity to the helleborism of the ancient Greek and Roman physicians," adding, "Such modes of treatment are not very unlike murders, the result alone (Nature having given the fortunate 'turn' to the case) renders them uncriminal, and almost imparts to them the lustre of a good action, the saving of life." Then follows the beautiful reflection: "This cannot be the divine art, that like the mighty workings of Nature should effect the greatest deeds simply, mildly, and unobservedly by means of the smallest agencies." Here we touch yet another of the chief characteristics of Hahnemann's philosophy of medicine. As he puts it elsewhere:—"The highest ideal of cure is the speedy, gentle and enduring restoration of health, or the removal and annihilation of disease in its entirety, by the quickest, most trustworthy, and least harmful way, according to principles that can be readily understood."

Nor is the strong dose inveighed against solely on the ground of its capacity to kill, but also upon that of its capacity whilst curing in some respects, to effect incalculable harm in others. "And thus the so-

DESPERATION IN  
MEDICINE

THE  
DIVINE  
ART OF  
HEALING

called cures go on like the shifting scenes of one and the same tragedy! . . . . By treatment the ordinary physician often understands nothing more than a powerful, violent attack upon the body with things that are to be found in the chemist's shop, with an alteration of diet, *secundum artem*, to one of very extraordinary, very meagre character." There follows here a deep questioning as he glances over the seekers after a superficial renown in the art of healing throughout the generations of mankind:—"How does it happen that, in the thirty-five centuries since Æsculapius lived, this so indispensable art of medicine has made so little progress? What was the obstacle? For what the physicians have already done is not one hundredth part of what they might and ought to have done."

THE  
SHIFTING  
TRAGEDY

"All nations, even remotely approaching a state of civilisation, perceived, from the first, the necessity and inestimable value of this art; they acquired its practice from a caste who called themselves physicians. These affected, in almost all ages, when they came in contact with the sick, to be in perfect possession of this art; but among themselves they sought to gloze over the gaps and inconsistencies of their knowledge by heaping up system upon system, each

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made up of diversified materials of conjectures, opinions, definitions, postulates, and predicates, linked together by scholastic syllogisms, in order to enable each leader of a sect to boast respecting his own system, that here he had built a temple for the goddess of health—a temple worthy of her—in which the inquirer would be answered by pure and salutary oracles.” Then, to rest his mind, the writer pauses to contemplate a great man amongst the many charlatans his studies had brought him into contact with. “ It was only the most ancient times that formed an exception to this rule. We were never nearer the discovery of the science of medicine than in the time of Hippocrates. This attentive, unsophisticated observer sought Nature in Nature. He saw and described the diseases before him accurately, without addition, without colouring, without speculation. (A footnote here tells us that in Hahnemann’s view the speculative writings under Hippocrates’ name are not his.) In the faculty of pure observation he has been surpassed by no physician that has followed him. Only one important part was this favoured son of Nature destitute of, else had he been completely master of his art : the knowledge of medicines and their application. But

THE  
SYSTEM  
BUILDERS

A GREAT  
OBSERVER

## THE DIVINE ART OF HEALING

he did not affect such a knowledge—he acknowledges his deficiency in that he gave almost no medicines (because he knew them too imperfectly), and trusted almost entirely to diet.”

That Hahnemann recognised the<sup>3</sup> great attainments that are possible under diet alone should be a close point of contact between him and the modern dietetist, though those dietetists who reject all “ medicinal virtues,” which Hahnemann regarded as a gift of the Creator, would have seemed as mistaken, in their own less harmful way, as those who misused them. With their mistake, however, he would have had more sympathy. In another part of ‘ Æsculapius in the Balance ’ we find the following:—“ In

THE PART  
OF DIET

numerous instances, many a prostrate patient has effected a miraculous cure upon himself not only by refusing the physician’s medicine, but by secretly transgressing his artificial and often mischievous system of diet, in obedience to his own caprice, which is in this instance an imperious instinct compelling him to commit all sorts of dietetic paradoxes.”

On this question of an instinct awakened to especial needs as regards food, Hahnemann has more to say in the “ Organon ” :—“ In acute diseases . . . . (except in conditions of

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actual delirium), the subtle and unerring perceptions of the life-instinct which are then aroused speak so clearly and definitely that the physician need only warn nurses and attendants to offer no opposition to this voice of nature either by refusing the patient anything that is strongly desired, or by persuading him to take anything that his instinct may reject. Certainly the desires of the patient suffering from acute disease are chiefly for such food and drink as give palliative relief; they are not, as a rule, of a medicinal character, and they merely supply a kind of need. Any slight hindrance to the radical removal of the disease which the moderate gratification of these desires might cause is easily counteracted and overcome by the suitable homeopathic remedy and by the life force thus liberated." Some of the later sections touch on the "deceptive improvement" gained by palliative treatment, emergencies being instanced in which palliatives may be given, so as to gain time, until a remedy can be chosen for the condition.

After its reflections on Hippocrates, the essay continues:—"All succeeding ages degenerated and wandered more or less from the indicated path . . . . Sophisticated whimsicalities were pressed into the service

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Some sought the origin of disease in a universal hostile principle, in some poison which produced all maladies, and which was to be contended with and destroyed . . . . In this great period of nearly two thousand years was the pure observation of disease neglected. The wish was to be more scientific, and to discover the hidden causes of diseases. These once discovered, then it were an easy (?) task to find out remedies for them. Galen devised a system for this purpose, his four qualities with their different degrees; and until the last hundred and fifty years his system was worshipped over our whole hemisphere, as the *non plus ultra* of medical truth. But these phantoms did not advance the practical art of healing a hair's breadth; it rather retrograded."

In the paragraphs that follow, complaint is not alone made against the "system-builders" who delighted in "metaphysical heights where it was so easy to win territory"; but also the anatomist and the chemist are shown to have claimed for their undeniably useful functions far too wide a sphere of influence. "None of the preliminary sciences has assumed so arrogant a place as chemistry. It is, indeed, a fact that chemistry explains certain appearances of the healthy as well as the diseased body,

THE PRE-  
LIMINARY  
SCIENCES

and is a guide to the preparation of various medicines ; but it is incredible how often it has usurped the right of explaining all physiological and pathological phenomena, and how much it has distinguished itself by authorising this or that medicine. It is a matter for most serious reflection, that while these accessory sciences of medicine (in themselves most commendable) have advanced within the last ten years to a height and a maturity which seems not to be capable of much further advancement, yet, notwithstanding, they have had no marked beneficial influence on the treatment of disease."

Of chemistry he declares that "it is altogether out of its sphere of vision to determine what is properly healing or hurtful, and it possesses no principles and no standard by which the healing efficacy of medicines, in different diseases, can be measured or judged of."

"Thus has the healing artist forever stood alone—I might say forsaken—forsaken by all his renowned auxiliary sciences—forsaken by all his transcendental explanations and speculative systems."

The dilemma of a situation in which an intermittent fever will not yield to a recognised medicine is here described somewhat

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at length till the perplexed physician is represented as turning to the works on "Materia Medica." "But whence," asks Hahnemann, "is their knowledge obtained? Do the authors of these books anywhere assert that they themselves have given each of these substances alone and uncombined in intermittent fever?"

"Oh, no! Some give authorities, or quote other works on Materia Medica; others make the statement without any reference to its source." Turn up the original authorities! "The most of these have been convinced not by personal experience; they again refer to some antiquated works on Materia Medica, or to such other authorities as these: Ray, Tabernæmontanus, Rajus, Fuchs, Tournefort, Bauhin, and Cæsar." And these? "Some of them refer to the results of domestic practice—peasants and uneducated persons, in this or that district, have found this or that medicine useful in a particular case." And the other authorities? "Why, they aver that they did not give the medicine by itself, but, as it became learned physicians to do, uncombined with other simples, and found advantage from it. Still, it was their impression that this drug, and not the other simples, was of service." A fine thing

THE MANY  
WORKS ON  
"MATERIA  
MEDICA"

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to rely on, truly, a most delightful conviction, grounded upon opinions destitute even of probability! In one word: the primary origin of almost all authorities for the action of a simple medicine is derived, either from the confused use of it, in combination with other drugs, or from domestic practice, where this or that unprofessional person had tried it with success in this or that disease (as if an unprofessional person could distinguish one disease from another). Truly this is a most unsatisfactory and turbid source for our proud *Materia Medica*."

After giving some further reflections upon the illusion and deception which are more than likely to accrue from the practice of mixing drugs (giving the names of certain distinguished men who acted otherwise), Hahnemann continues:—

"The *Materia Medica* of remote antiquity was not worse furnished. Its sources were then the histories of cures effected by simple medicines, recorded in the votive tablets; and Dioscorides and Pliny have manifestly derived their account of the operation of simple medicines from the rude observations of the common people. Thus, after the lapse of a couple of thousand years, we are not a step advanced! The only source of our knowledge of the powers of medicines, how treasured

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bled it is! And the learned choir of physicians in this enlightened century, contents itself with it, in the most serious contingency of mortals, when the most precious of earthly possessions—life and health—are at stake! No wonder that the consequences are what they are."

If we would know what was the writer's conception of the true basis upon which a Materia Medica should be built, we must turn to Section 118 of the "Organon" and read on until 122:—"The weightiest experiments in drugs remain those conducted by the closely observing and unprejudiced physician upon himself . . . If we have thus tested on healthy persons a number of medicines, and have carefully and faithfully recorded all the disease elements and symptoms which as artificial disease-producing forces they are able to arouse, then we possess a Materia Medica, a collection of the genuine positive mode of action of simple medicines, a codex of Nature wherein is registered a considerable list of the individual symptoms and disease-elements of each powerful and tested drug just as the observation of the experimenter discovered them. . . . In such a Materia Medica there is nothing conjectured, asserted without proof, imagined, invented; but all is

A TRUE  
MATERIA  
MEDICA

## THE DIVINE ART OF HEALING

the pure reply of Nature to careful questioning."

We have here arrived at the central principle upon which the healing art of the homeopath turns:—*"The healing power of medicines depends on the resemblance of their symptoms to the symptoms of disease: or, in other words, every medicine which, among the symptoms which it can cause in a healthy body, reproduces most of those present in a given disease, is capable of curing that disease in the swiftest, most thorough, and most enduring fashion."*

This (passage and the same thoughts are even more pointedly expressed in Section 31, that "a disease can only be destroyed by a remedy which has the tendency to produce a similar disease, for the effects of drugs are in themselves no other than artificial diseases,") seems to suggest a strong affinity between this law of cure and the old teaching that "a house divided against itself cannot stand." The principle behind the above may further be elucidated from another section:—*"As certain symptoms of medicines, when tested on healthy human beings, appear several hours or even several days later than other symptoms, so they cannot remove the corresponding symptoms in*

## THE DIVINE ART OF HEALING

disease except after a corresponding lapse of time, however speedily they destroy symptoms of a different order . . . . Thus the tendency of mercury to cause deep circular ulcers with inflamed and tender margins does not show itself in the provings (i.e., testings on healthy persons) for some days, or even weeks. Similarly, it will not cure such ulcers in the first few days." This is known as the great law of *similia similibus curentur*! The story of how it was discovered by Hahnemann is told by the translator of the "Organon" in his Introduction:—"By 1790 he had almost withdrawn from practice and was earning his living translating medical works. At this time he was engaged on translating Cullen's *Materia Medica*, and being dissatisfied with Cullen's explanation of the action of cinchona bark in relieving and curing ague, he took the scientific and rational course of personal experiment in order to test the matter. It is needless to state that the treatment of ague by cinchona was one of the few really satisfactory pieces of treatment in Hahnemann's day, and, not unnaturally, speculation was rife as to the reason of this definite curative relation between drug and disease. Hahnemann's experiment consisted in taking a large dose of cinchona bark while in good

A RAY  
OF  
LIGHT

## THE DIVINE ART OF HEALING

health and noting its effects on his own healthy body. To his surprise he found reproduced upon himself all the chief phenomena (and even many of the minor symptoms) of a paroxysm of ague. When the attack passed off, a second dose produced a second paroxysm, and Hahnemann was presently face to face with the fact that this drug, which so often cured ague, was capable of reproducing in his own healthy body the phenomena of ague . . . . This experiment was a ray of light to Hahnemann, for it suggested a possible clue to curative relations between drugs and cases of disease, a clue which he eagerly followed up."\*

It is interesting to note that Hahnemann, so to speak, immediately set himself to work to destroy any claim to originality of that kind which obscures the work of predecessors. He immediately searched past records to find instances in which the operation of this principle in medicine had been evident, even though unrecognised, and we are told that "over and over again Hahnemann found that a drug prescribed empirically had proved itself capable of curing con-

\*By the same writer, commenting elsewhere on this incident, we are told that not every healthy person will respond to cinchona in this way, since there are 'idiosyncrasies to drugs,' some individuals being more highly susceptible than others.

## THE DIVINE ART OF HEALING

ditions similar to those which it could produce. The records of medicine, in fact, gave plenty of encouragement to his now dawning belief that *similia similibus* was a genuine law of cure . . . .” We are then shown a little band of followers who were before long brought together in the search for a confirmation of the universality of the discovery. “ In order to gain a knowledge of pure drug action, ‘ provers ’ had to be enlisted—healthy and devoted persons who would take drugs in sufficient quantities to produce clear symptoms, and by recording these symptoms would begin the task of constructing clear symptom-pictures of remedies for comparison with the symptom-pictures of cases of disease . . . . In research and in experiment six years passed, and in 1796 Hahnemann felt justified in publishing a first statement of his beliefs.” To return to his own words as found in an “ Author’s Note ” in the larger work :—“ When thousands of exact and tireless observers, instead of one as hitherto, have laboured at the discovery of these first elements of a rational *Materia Medica*, what will it not be possible to effect in the whole extent of the endless kingdom of disease ! Then the art of medicine will no longer be mocked at as an art of conjecture lacking all foundation.”

FURTHER  
EXPERI-  
MENTS

## THE DIVINE ART OF HEALING

It may be remarked here that since Hahnemann's time to the present day experiments have been continuously made, confirming and adding to his 'provings,' and it is the plea of his followers that their teaching shall be tested, and judged, like every other tree, by its fruits. Nothing more than this is asked, and it is to be hoped that the medical students of to-day and to-morrow will at least demand that, in the course of their studies, time shall be given to make clinical research into the work of this now world-wide school of medicine.

Some may have already read between the lines as to who were the chief opponents to the new school of medicine here foreshadowed, with its extreme care in the use of drugs. Like those who cried, "Long live Diana of the Ephesians!" the apothecaries recognised in this exposition of medicine an enemy to their own prosperity. These, we are told, "were a highly privileged body of citizens," and in "Æsculapius in the Balance" they are not spared. "To fill to the brim the measure of deception and misapprehension attending the administration of medicine to the sick, the order of apothecaries was instituted—a guild which depends for its existence on the complicated mixtures of drugs. Never will the com-

ANGRY  
APOTHE-  
CARIES

## THE DIVINE ART OF HEALING

plicated formulæ, cease to prevail, as long as the powerful order of apothecaries maintains its influence." Again, referring to the former medical laws, such as the *Constitutiones Frederici II. Imperatoris*, which restricted the compounding of the mixtures to the apothecaries, the writer asks whether these laws were due to the notorious ignorance of the physicians of his day, or were they made to enrich the apothecaries? Or, his third question runs, were these laws passed "for the benefit of the patient"? This he shows cannot be the case, as "by not himself dispensing, the physician loses all dexterity, all practice in the manipulations necessary . . . ." till at last he tends to the use more and more of copied prescriptions from some well-known prescription manual, in order to avoid the danger of committing pharmaceutical blunders and contradictions.

But we do not see the true man until he has done with the flail of criticism—until, in what he has called his "sorrowful indignation," he has become less indignant than sorrowful. Then we see clearly that it is because of his intense love of the true and beautiful in all creation that he is making his severe complaints known. It is literally because of the artist in the tem-

THE  
ARTIST  
REVEALED

## THE DIVINE ART OF HEALING

perament of this advocate of a pure healing art that he is demanding at once a more inspired and practical sense of responsibility from the physician in regard generally to all his work and in respect to this particular matter of the mixing of his own medicines—a demand almost lost sight of to-day.

“ From the very nature of the thing—it concerns the cure of the noblest of created beings, it concerns the saving of human life, the most difficult, the most sublime, the most important of imaginable occupations!—from the very nature of the thing, I repeat, the physician should be prohibited, under the severest penalties, from allowing any other person to prepare the medicines for his patient; he should be required, under the severest penalties, to prepare them himself, so that he may be able to vouch for the result.

“ But that it should be forbidden to the physician to prepare his own instruments for the saving of life—no human being could have fallen on such an idea *a priori*. It would have been much more sensible to prohibit authoritatively Titian, Guido Reni, Michael Angelo, Raphaël, Correggio or Mengs from preparing their own instruments (their expressive, beautiful and durable colours), and to have ordered them to purchase them

## THE DIVINE ART OF HEALING

in some shop indicated ! By the purchased colours, not prepared by themselves, their paintings, far from being the inimitable masterpieces they are, would have been ordinary daubs and mere market goods. And even had they all become mere common market goods, the damage would not have been so great as if the life of even the meanest slave (for he, too, is a man ! ) should be endangered by untrustworthy health-instruments (medicines) purchased from and prepared by strangers."

If any should think Hahnemann is here exaggerating the importance of an artist preparing his own pigments, let him study such a work as the *Book of the Art of Cennino\** to discover the value set by artists in olden days upon an intimate understanding both in the selection of substances and the way to prepare them for use. As regards a certain red pigment, called cinnabar, for instance, we find the following instructions :—" Always purchase the whole cinnabar, unbroken and unground. The reason ? Because it is often adulterated with minium (red lead) and with pounded brick-dust. Examine the whole lump of

\*Translated from the Italian, with Notes on Mediæval Art Methods, by Christiana J. Herringham (George Allen).

## THE DIVINE ART OF HEALING

cinnabar, and at the top, where the veining is most extensive and finest, it is the best. Put this then upon the slab above mentioned, grinding it with clean water as much as you can ; if you were to grind it every day for twenty years, it would be but the better and more perfect."

Soon after the above protest, the essay closes on a note of intense discouragement, or rather, it may have broken off, unended. At all events, we will conclude instead with several extracts from the larger and later work, showing the sincerity and subtlety of Hahnemann's vision both of the virtues of medicines and the sensitiveness of the human organism, which it was his desire to see restored to that perfection of health which the Creator intended.

A DEBT  
TO THE  
CREATOR

Of the excellency that should be required in the substances used as medicines, he writes:—"The reasonable physician must have to his hand the strongest and most genuine medicines before he can have confidence in them as counter-forces (remedies) . . . Metals, salts, and other preparations of this kind, whose purity cannot be recognised without elaborate tests, should only be used when they have been prepared under his own eyes." This demand we note lies a step further back even than the dispensing

## THE DIVINE ART OF HEALING

of the prepared elements, whether these be vegetable or mineral in kind.

As regards the sensitiveness of the body, we are told in another passage:—"The ordinary observer has no conception how extraordinarily sensitive the body becomes to drugs when it is diseased, and especially to drugs chosen homeopathically." And again, "The action upon the living human body of the remedial counter-force which constitutes a medicine is so profound and spreads from those sensitive areas well supplied with nerves, to which it is first applied, throughout the whole organism with such inconceivable rapidity and completeness that this action must be called spirit-like. It is almost as spirit-like as the action of vitality itself, by which its power is reflected on the organism." In Section 42, moreover, we find a further insight into that wonderful unity of the human body which led another great writer to use it as the final symbol of the unity of the Spirit in which we are called, by the faith that is in us, to live:—"The human body is, in its living state, a unity, a complete and rounded whole. Every sensation, every manifestation of force, every inter-relation of the material of one part, is intimately concerned with the sensation, force, manifestations and inter-

THE  
SENSITIVE-  
NESS OF  
THE  
HUMAN  
BODY

## THE DIVINE ART OF HEALING

relations of all the other parts ; no part can suffer without involving all the rest in suffering (greater or less) and in alteration." But this wonderfully unified form is not to be regarded as responsive to immediate treatment alone. It stood for Hahnemann, as it must stand for all thoughtful observers " in the midst of all things " :—" All things that have any individual influence (and their number is legion) can affect our organism and bring about changes therein, because our organism stands in relation to all parts of the universe in a constant action and reaction. And every such influence produces a distinct change of its own in virtue of its own distinct and unique nature."

ITS  
UNITY AND  
RELATION  
TO THE  
UNIVERSE

## APPENDIX

Together with "Æsculapius in the Balance" at the end of the Organon, in the edition from which our quotations have been taken, are three other essays, namely: "Protection against Infection in Epidemic Diseases," "Plans for eradicating a Malignant Fever," and "Epidemics in General." A few extracts from the last of these are given here to show the deep sense of civic responsibility which characterised the mind of the author of "Æsculapius." This sense of responsibility, we shall note, moreover, always bears upon it the touch of personal concern or compassion,—a concern which gathers under its considerations "all sorts and conditions of men," men who labour for their living on land and sea, from the poor and the wretched, including the children of rag-gatherers, to the wealthy citizens who finally fall a prey to the very pestilences which the wrong conditions of the poor engender. To those who bear in mind the fact that the essays were written over a century ago, these selections will confirm

## APPENDIX

the statement made in the Preface to this volume, that Hahnemann was a pioneer in the realm of Public Health. In a translator's note to Section 198 in the Organon, Dr. Wheeler also reminds us that Hahnemann, apart from homeopathy, was one of the earliest advocates of the humane treatment of the insane. An extract from this section dealing with mental and emotional diseases may therefore appropriately appear here.

In the course of this Essay it has been remarked that Hahnemann was familiar not only with the poverty of the peasant, to which in *Æsculapius* he especially refers, but equally so with that of the overcrowded dwellers in large towns. Our first extract shall be from a passage relating to the plight of such :—

But chiefly are the contagious pestilences in towns harboured, renewed, promoted, and rendered more contagious and more murderous, in the small low *old houses* situated close to the town walls, huddled together in narrow *damp lanes*, or otherwise deprived of the access of fresh air, where poverty dwells, the mother of dirt, hunger and despondency. In order to save firing and the expensive rent, several miserable

THE PLIGHT  
OF THE  
OVER-  
CROWDED

## APPENDIX

families are often packed close together, often all in one room, and they avoid opening a window or door to admit fresh air, because the cold would enter along with it. He alone whose business takes him into these abodes of misery can know how the animal matters of the exhalations and of the breath are there concentrated, stagnant and putrefying ; how the lungs of one are struggling to snatch from those of another the small quantity of vital air in the place, . . . and how grief, envy, quarrelsomeness and other passions strive to rob the inmates completely of their little bit of health. If, however, the inmates of them be not without employment, their systems, accustomed to meagre fare and hard work, resist infections tolerably well, but when they are out of work, when *dearness* of the first necessaries of life and *famine* prevail amongst them, then from these dirty sources of misery and woe, diseases of a malignant character and pestilences perpetually issue. In such places it is where infectious pestilences not only smoulder on easily and almost constantly, when a spark falls upon them, but where they take their rise, burst forth, and even become fatal to the wealthy citizens. It is the province of the Fathers of the country to change these birthplaces of pestilence into healthy, happy human dwellings.

In towns about to be built it should not be allowed to build houses higher than two stories; every street should be at least twenty paces in width and built quite straight, in order that the air may permeate it unimpeded, and behind every house (the corner houses perhaps excepted) there should be a courtyard and a garden as broad and twice as long as the house. In this way the air may be readily renovated behind the houses in the considerable space formed by the adjoining gardens, and in front in the broad straight streets.

Many causes conspire in ships to produce destructive diseases. Among these are the mode of feeding the crew so much in vogue, with often half-decayed, dried, and salted meat, with unwholesome fatty substances of various kinds; the want of fresh air when during continued storms they have to pass many days together below deck with the port-holes closed, when the exhalations from their bodies increase to a pestilential foetor; the exhaustion of the sailors when kept at work too long, during which their wet clothes check the perspiration. These causes engender and keep up scurvy, dysentery, and other maladies.

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The risk of such disorders may be avoided by the following measures : supplying vegetable food, brandy for strengthening ; meat-soups boiled down and dried, in place of kept meat ; malt liquor to drink in addition to water ; the division of labour into eight hours' work ; care that the crew have always dry clothes to put on, and that their habits are cleanly ; frequent pumping out of the necessary ; and the purification of the air between decks by means of large braziers of burning charcoal.

It is in large well-regulated towns only that I have met with some (although seldom sufficient) attention directed to the *sale of spoilt food*, especially animal food. In districts where fish abound many kinds, especially smaller ones, are brought to market with all the signs of putrefaction upon them. They are chiefly purchased by poor people, because they are cheap—nobody gives himself any concern about the matter,

THE PERIL  
OF SPOILT  
FOOD

NOTE.—Hahnemann does not appear to have questioned the use of alcohol as many of his followers would to-day, though homeopaths, as such, are not committed to one view or the other. In a " Note " to the *Organon*, however, we find him enumerating amongst articles of diet which have " power to injure the body medicinally " wine and brandy, and beer adulterated with more or less harmful herbs, together with impure drinking water, etc.

## APPENDIX

and the labourer when he is taken ill throws the blame of his sickness on any cause but the right one. Nobody concerns himself; the seller of this pernicious food returns home after having pursued his avocation unimpeded. The authorities who may perchance hear of it, say to themselves: "Where there is no complaint, there is no judge." Can such be called the Fathers of the town?

The regulations prevalent in Electoral Saxony should be adopted, viz., that the rag-gatherer should keep in the open street with his barrow or cart, by some signal summon around him those who have rags to sell, and not remain in the town with his collection of rags, but go into the country, and when he puts up at a country inn, leave his cart in the open courtyard, or before the door of the inn; in a word, leave it in the open air. He should be forbidden, under penalty of imprisonment, to pick out from his heap of rags and sell to others for their use any articles of clothing that may still be fit to wear.

They should also be forbidden to wear such articles themselves or put them on their children. . . . The *dealers in old clothes* should only be allowed to carry on their trade in open shops. (Here follow instruc-

## APPENDIX

tions for cleansing). It should only be permitted to the burghers of the town to deal in old clothes.

In large *manufactories* and *workhouses* where the workpeople live in the house, those who fall ill should, whenever they commence to complain, be immediately separated from the healthy workmen, and kept apart until they have completely recovered their health. And even where the workmen reside out of the house, but come to work together in large workrooms, it is the duty of the master manufacturer, especially at the time of the prevalence of epidemics, to send home immediately such of the workmen as begin to complain of illness. Great care should be taken always, but especially when disease is about, to have the workrooms and warerooms well aired and clean.

WORKROOM  
REGULA-  
TIONS

*Public Schools* are generally places for the diffusion of contagious diseases, such as smallpox, measles, scarlet fever, malignant sore-throat, and many skin diseases. If schoolmasters in general were given to attend more to the physical and moral training of their pupils than to cramming their memories, much mischief of this character

SCHOOL  
CHILDREN

## APPENDIX

might be prevented. It should be impressed upon them not to admit any sick child to the classes, whose altered appearance betrays the commencement of a disease. Besides, a sick child can learn nothing.

In times of prevailing sickness the clergy-  
men should publicly warn the members of  
their congregations, not to come to church  
when they are feeling indisposed, and thereby  
expose their neighbours to danger.

ECCLESIASTICAL  
RESPECTABLE  
AND CARE  
OF THE  
INSANE

I cannot here enter into details regarding the power of bad arrangements in *poor-houses, houses of correction, orphan asylums* and *invalid hospitals*, as also of *ordinary hospitals* and *infirmaries* in producing and promoting infectious diseases; and still less can I describe the best plans for such institutions designed for the relief of the most miserable classes of society. The subject is too important, and in many respects much too vast to be dismissed here with a few words.

NOTE.—With regard to the treatment of the insane, Hahnemann elsewhere writes: "To furious mania there must be opposed quiet fearlessness and cool resolution. . . . Destructive acts and injuries must be prevented without reproaches to the patient, and everything must be arranged to avoid any corporal punishment. For as in mental disorders there can be no sense of wrong doing, so by all human justice there should be no punishments. Contradiction, eager expla-

## APPENDIX

nations, violent correction and harshness are as disastrous to the mind and soul of such patients as timid yielding at the wrong time. Above all, contempt, deceit, and fraud exasperate these patients, and aggravate their condition. A semblance must always be maintained of treating them as reasonable human beings. On the other hand, all kinds of disturbing external influences should be removed."

The civic-crown merited by him who improves the *prisons* has been gained from us Germans by an Englishman—Howard. Wagnitz follows in his steps. It is inconceivable how often the most destructive vapours are concentrated in these dens of misery, . . . There are several kinds of prisons. I shall here allude only to those where the imprisonment is for life and to those gaols where prisoners guilty of capital crimes are kept until the termination of their trial (often for several years), the visitation or inspection of which is not unfrequently the cause of infectious diseases.

Now as in the true spirit of laws that are free from all barbarity, even the punishment of death should (and can have) no other aim than to render an incorrigible criminal innocuous, and to remove him from human society, what else can both these kinds of imprisonment be except rendering the prisoner harmless, in the former case for life, in the latter for a certain time pending the duration of trial? None but Syracusan

THE RE-  
FORM OF  
PRISONS AND  
COMPASSION  
FOR DEBTOR

## APPENDIX

tyrants could dream of uniting a more inhuman intention with such prisons.

If then, the gaol, even for capital offenders, can and ought to be nothing but a means of depriving them of all opportunity of injuring society, in that case every torture that is unnecessarily inflicted on them when thus in custody *is a crime on the part of the police*. I only allude here to the pain inflicted on them by unhealthy (disease-producing) prisons. In order to avoid this, prisons should never be raised less than four feet above the ground, and the openings of the windows, while they are sufficiently narrow, should always be so long as to allow the free access of fresh air. Where two windows opposite each other cannot be obtained (which is the best plan) there ought to be at least three windows for each small cell. . . . I scarcely need to remark, that the (often long continued) imprisonment of debtors who are frequently deserving of compassion, ought to be made at least as innocuous for the health of the prisoners, of the turnkeys, and of those who visit them, etc., as that of criminals. Police authorities, be humane!

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