

THE HAHNEMANNIAN GLEANINGS

Vol. XXIV

OCTOBER 1957

No. 10

NOTA BENE FOR OUR READERS

ZUFÄLLE (Pr. Zōōfaylle)

DR. S. M. BHATTACHERJEE, M.A., P.R.S.M., BERHAMPORE

It recent years, a good amount of discussion has been centered round the interpretation of the German word, *ZUFÄLLE*, translated as *PERCEPTIBLE PHENOMENA* in the 4th line of Section 8 of the Organon, 5th or 6th edition. A specimen of this is found in an article of Dr. Philip Rice M.D., entitled : The Cause and Cure of Homœopathic Ills, published in the August, 1952 issue of the Journal of the American Institute of Homœopathy. We quote below a portion from the said article :

"In the 4th line (Dudgeon's Translation) the word 'Phenomena' is used ; and this is used in every other translation we have. Had Hahnemann meant 'phenomena' he would have used the word '*erscheinungen*', meaning phenomena. He used instead the word '*ZUFÄLLE*' meaning *Causal events*. Read the section but put the words *causal events* in place of *phenomena*, and see what a different meaning is given to the content of the section. Then try and conceive what a different trend the whole movement would have taken had the full implications of these words been grasped. But they were not grasped ; indeed they were entirely disregarded, and another word, by no means wholly synonymous, was put in their place. While symptoms of disease are phenomena, phenomena com-

prehend a vast number of things that are not symptoms of disease. Causes and events preceding and bringing out effects can not be the same as effects. And it was undoubtedly these that Hahnemann had in mind when he used the word 'Zufälle', meaning *casual events*. In the mistranslation of this word in Sec. 8, in my opinion, an error was committed as great as it has proved fatal to the cause, great because it led the mind of all who became interested in the new movement in medicine away from fundamentals and fixed them upon incidentals, led them away from root causes and centered them upon results."

Here, Dr. Rice clearly contends that by the mistranslation of the German word *Zufälle*, by the English words *perceptible phenomena*, a great disservice has been done to Homœopathy. For, while the teachings of Homœopathy, as generally understood, enjoin that the *totality of symptoms and symptoms only* are to be eradicated, Hahnemann by using the term, *Zufälle*, wanted that not only symptoms, but *causes of symptoms*, as for instance, bacteria, bacilli and viruses, are also to be destroyed or eliminated. Probably, Dr. Rice regrets that by the wrong rendering of the said word, Homœopathy could not be led where General Medicine had been by Pasteur, that is, into Bacteriological and Pathological activities. But, everything depends upon the accurate interpretation of the word, *Zufälle*.

Zufälle is not a new term in Sec. 8 of the Organon. It has been used once again in Sec. 6 where it has been translated as 'accidents' by all the translators, save and except Dr. Hering who translated it as 'casualties'. In the 6th line of Sec., 6, we find in the 5th & 6th editions of Dudgeon and Boericke, respectively, (morbid phenomena, *accidents*, symptoms)", for which the original German text had 'Krankheitszeichen, *Zufälle*, Und Symptomen'. Dr. Pierre Schmidt M.D., of Geneva, whose mother tongue is German, when clarifying the meanings of these terms, supports the translation of 'Zufälle' as 'accidents' or 'casualties'. Are we then to reject the sense given by the said translators, who had been good German scholars, and accept the one (of causal events) given by Dr. Rice? Or are we to

accept the term in two different senses, in the two different paragraphs ?

In fact, *Zufälle* could not have two different meanings in the two different sections. For, Hahnemann could not have given two quite different ideas in those two sections, so close to each other. Actually, Sec. 8 is an extension and a corollary of Sec. 6. The reasoning may be stated this way :

Since the physician has to take note of 'morbid phenomena, accidents, (and) symptoms' only (Sec. 6), after the removal of the *same* [morbid phenomena, *accidents* (and) symptoms] nothing else than health can remain or result (Sec. 8).

But, whereas in Sec. 6 we have three distinct ideas, expressed by the terms, 'morbid phenomena, accidents, symptoms', in Sec. 8 we have only two, as conveyed by (1) 'all the symptoms of the disease' and (2) 'perceptible phenomena'. The conceptions of 'morbid phenomena and symptoms' (in Sec. 6) might easily be combined in the mind to have an expression in the phrase, 'all the symptoms of the disease' (Sec. 8). And, it is only the idea of '*Zufälle*' or 'accidents' or 'casualties' (in Sec. 6) that remains to be expressed (in Sec. 8) which is somehow, —and not in an entirely wrong way, done by 'perceptible phenomena' (Sec. 8). For, though 'phenomena' is not a synonym for '*Zufälle*', but is for '*Erscheinungen*', '*Zufall*' has one of its synonyms in English 'occurrence', which again is synonymous with English 'phenomenon',—a chosen term in Science and Philosophy, of wider scope and strictly implying 'remarkable occurrence'. So, our translators chose 'perceptible phenomena', though rather incorrectly but in a true English way, to convey the rest of the idea (i.e., in '*Zufälle*', 'accidents') outside of those expressed by 'all the symptoms' meaning thereby 'morbid phenomena and symptoms'.

For the last five years, I have been trying hard, avowedly with the smattering of German that I possess, to find out if '*Zufälle*' can mean '*causal events*', but I regret to confess that I have never been successful. For, all the Anglo-German dictionaries consulted give the English synonyms of *Zufall* as : chance ; fortune ; contingency ; incident ; occurrence ; accident. But, the last of all, though not the least, but the most signifi-

cant synonym given is *CASUAL EVENT*, not 'causal event' as given by Dr. Rice.

Was 'causal event' given for an error of print or an error of vision ?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Organon of Medicine : 5th & 6th Editions. Dudgeon & Boericke.
2. Cause & Cure of Homœopathic Ills : Dr. P. Rice., Journal of the American Institute of Homœopathy, August, 1952.
3. The Hidden Treasure of the Last Organon : Dr. P. Schmidt M.D. The British Homœopathic Journal July-October, 1954.
4. The Concise Oxford Dictionary : Ed. of 1949.
5. Cassell's German & English Dictionary : 5th Edition—1945.

HOMŒOPATHIC REPERTORIES

DR. PIERRE SCHMIDT, M.D., GENEVA

Whenever Homœopaths meet for the first time, there are always three burning questions which each of them longs to resolve :

1. How WERE YOU LED TO HOMŒOPATHY ?

Answer : Usually because of cures experienced either by my own family or my neighbours or myself.

2. HOW DID YOU LEARN IT ?

Answer : With the help of a homœopath or, less often, from books or lessons in Homœopathy.

3. HOW DO YOU DECIDE ON YOUR REMEDY ?

Answer :

a. By intuition—a clap of thunder which comes like that—suddenly without any reflection.

b. From memory.

c. By systematic scientific work which can be undertaken.

There is the great problem ; and it is there that the possession of a good repertory and the perfect understanding of its use become for a good homœopath both indispensable and of