

HAHNEMANN'S "NEW SYNTHETIC PRINCIPLE"

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Hahnemann, in all his efforts toward the inculcation of the basic principles of homœopathy, made very few references to actual clinical experiences. Perhaps, however, if the sizable volumes included by Dr. Richard Haehl, in his Museum, had not been destroyed (as they undoubtedly must have been) in the terrific blasting of Stuttgart—attest the letter of Dr. A. Vinyals of Barcelona, to the writer, published in the *Journal* of the American Institute for May 1946—probably the world might have been enriched by the publication of these valued case reports. But that is another story.

In the *Lesser Writings*, Hahnemann cites the case of L . . . , a compositor, with the dull, disagreeable sensation in the left hypochondrium, accompanied by intolerable, pinching pain and borborygmus, extending to the cervical region, with constriction of the chest, suffocation, dyspnoea, cold sweat and exhaustion, in which *Veratrum album*, the very evident remedy, was given "four powders each containing four grains, to be taken one powder daily." The patient, instead of taking one daily took two powders, and after taking two, there followed an attack of the old colic, and when the whole sixteen grains had been taken, in less than two days, this "artificial colic," as Hahnemann spoke of it, "increased to such a dreadful extent that he . . . wrestled with death, covered with

sweat, and almost suffocated." This "imprudence," in the form of such a severe aggravation, and this without any other medicine, resulted in the loss of the pain at the hypochondriac region, and for six months following the patient had had no further attacks.

Here was a typical example of the aggravation following the action of a remedy, the pathogenetic action of which, to quote the illustrious author of *The History and Heroes of Medicine* (Dr. J. Rutherford Russell), page 398: "This is the first example we have met in the history of medicine, of the direct cure of a disease by a medicine selected with reference to a rule arrived at by induction, not in accordance to tradition or analogy."

When Hahnemann had arrived at this critical experiment with cinchona, he reasoned that if bark had the power of curing ague, which it has the power of simulating in its action on the healthy, other drugs must carry with them their own signatures. In other words, as Dr. Russell reasons:

Having satisfied himself that cures all agreed in this feature, while differing in every other, he made the *induction* that the diseases so cured by the medicines were cured in virtue of the same power in the medicines which produced symptoms like those they cured. He then converted the *induction* into a *deduction*, and said, Medicines will cure affections like those they cause.

In the case of *Veratrum* mentioned above, the result was "a rapid permanent cure, without any critical discharge—but with a frightful temporary aggravation." Not long thereafter, Hahnemann had

an opportunity of testing this rule of the single remedy, based on the law of similarity, with the added condition of its administration in a minimum dose. This came about somewhat as follows: In the year 1799, when scarlet fever was fatally epidemic in Könnigslutter, the daughter of a large family developed the contagion, with pressive headache, dimness of sight, tongue coated with mucus, some pyalism; submaxillary glands hard, swollen and painful to the touch, shooting pain in the throat, both when swallowing and at other times; no thirst; pulse quick and small; respiration hurried and anxious; although pale, the skin was burning hot; she complained of a sense of fatigue and of dejection; her eyes had an odd expression, being wide open and staring, but dull; her face was pale, with sunken features.

I sought (wrote Hahnemann) in accordance with my new synthetic principle, a remedy whose peculiar mode of action was calculated to produce in the healthy body most of the morbid symptoms which I saw combined in this disease. My memory and my written collection of the peculiar effects of some medicines, induced me to select belladonna as the substance which, more than any other I knew, produced the counterpart of the symptoms presented by this formidable disease.... I gave this girl of ten years old, who was already affected with the first symptoms of scarlet fever, a dose of this medicine.

The dose of the remedy was the 1-432,000 of a grain of the extract (a dose somewhere between the 3rd and 6th decimal potency) with the result that "she slept tranquilly, and on the following morning

most of the symptoms had disappeared without a critical discharge. The sore throat alone remained, and it, too, gradually went off." A second dose on the second day, and a permanent recovery was the result. As an outcome of this experience, Hahnemann was led to the use of *Belladonna* as a prophylactic; and in turn he states that "a number of other opportunities presented themselves to me to try this specific preventive, and I never found it to fail."

From this brief recital may we not assume that Hahnemann deserves to rank among the first of all physicians in the advocacy of preventive medicine? If time permitted it might be of interest to transcribe here the account of this experience in more detail. Vaccine therapy in the Old School, the plusing of potencies according to its suggested revival by the late Dr. Blunt, and the giving of remedies in ascending potencies, according to Kent's well authenticated series in degrees, have long since established the value of the single dose administration.

The grouping together of pathogenetic data upon this "new synthetic principle" of Hahnemann constitutes the methodology of homœotherapeutics, as expressed in the terminology of Dr. William W. Young of Philadelphia. Synthesizing is said to be the combining or grouping of separate elements to combine them in a new form. In this sense, then, Hahnemann is correct in his use of the term—a new synthetic principle. It is interesting that Dr. Guy Beckley Stearns has made use of this term in his recent brochure on the phenomena of Boyd, in its

relation to his studies in remedy selection, as it is being worked out at the Foundation for Homœopathic Research in New York.

Hahnemann calls attention in his various writings to the fact that, rather than to label diseases with a definite ætiological or nosological designation, it is more to the point of accuracy to speak of them, as for example, as a kind of fever, a kind or form of rheumatism, etc., etc., much in fact as he considers "vaccinia" as "a little small-pox;" but not so is "*Belladonna*, to coin a word," a little scarlet fever, but "the morbid action of *Belladonna* includes a little scarlet fever"—that is all. Thus we might say that this method, with its assumed synthesis, would cover the contentions of Hahnemann's detractors when they question the validity of the cinchona experiment, by reason of the fact that in this first rational proving in the history of medicine the characteristic fever of ague was not produced (yet how could we be sure of this in the absence of the clinical thermometer?); yet Hahnemann does not state that the bark produced the identical fever of ague, but a kind of fever or rigor closely resembling the fever of ague. This might well be borne in mind in reference to recent reports regarding the use of quinine, and its substitutes recently advocated, such as atabrin, and the different synthetic preparations used in recurrent tropical malaria in ex-service men, which are given with the avowed intention of suppressing the paroxysms.

When we speak of suppression in homœopathy,

we assume that such open or even overt assaults upon the vital reaction of the body can end only in one result—failure. Hence our pains-taking efforts to treat not the disease but the patient himself, with what we believe is much more promise of success.

Analysis and synthesis : induction and deduction ; it is by a combination of these methods that homœopathy arrives at its superlative therapeutic results, for when these two methods of procedure are placed in juxtaposition, we may hope to reach the goal of the Hahnemannian hypothesis—the patient's cure.

Let us ask Nature (writes Hahnemann) what effect has 1-100,000th of a grain of belladonna?...A hard dry pill of extract of belladonna produces in the strong and perfectly healthy labourer no effect. But it does not follow that a grain of this extract would be too weak a dose to affect the same man, if, instead of being in health, he were ill, and if the grain, instead of being given in the form of solid extract, were dissolved...in two pounds of water, with a little alcohol to prevent its decomposition. These two pounds will contain about 10,000 drops; now, if one of these drops be mixed with 2000 drops (six ounces) of water, and a little alcohol, one teaspoonful of this mixture, given every two hours, will produce manifest effects in the same man, if, instead of being in health, he is in a state of disease, and has a morbid sensitiveness to the action of belladonna.

The exposition of the *modus operandi* is continued thus :

To the ordinary practitioner it is incredible that a person when sick is violently affected by a millionth part (the sixth decimal potency. W.) of the same drug that he swallowed with impunity when he was well. Will physicians ever learn how infinitely small may be the dose that is sufficient for

cure, when the system of the patient is raised to a condition of intense and morbid sensitiveness? So powerfully do such small quantities act then upon the over-sensitive frame, that the most serious disease is sometimes quenched in a few hours.

To this remarkable estimate, Dr. Russell makes the following answer :

Although it is now sixty years since this paper was published by Hufeland, during which period a multitude of treatises upon the subject has appeared, yet the observations of Hahnemann contain the cream of the whole matter. For the effective operation of minute doses on the animal frame two conditions are requisite—the one, the mechanical subdivision of the substance; the other, the exalted sensitiveness of the patient...Hence, in reference to medical action, we encounter at the threshold of our enquiry the question, Does a medicine act on the frame by its ponderable quantity, or by its superficial extent? If the latter, then Hahnemann may really in his millionth of a grain have given a larger dose than his colleagues, who prescribed whole grains. A cubic inch of sulphur, broken into a million of equal pieces, each as big as a grain of sand, instead of exposing six square inches, exposes six square feet of surface; and if the operation be continued, at the third stage the surface of this inch will be two square miles; at the fifth, the size of Austria; at the ninth, the size of the sun and all its satellites. (On the *Theory of Small Doses*. In the second volume of *Essays Scientific and Literary*, by Samuel Brown. Edinburgh: Constable. 1858).

So much (continues Dr. Russell) for the influence of the methanical distribution of the particles of a medicine—its preparation. This is, as we see, a calculable power; but the other condition is incalculable. Who can tell the degree to which sensitiveness may be exalted?

It is well for us at this time to take a backward glance to the actual explanation made by Hahnemann regarding this expansive action. It is a well known fact that the early members of our homœopaths in this country understood this hypothesis, for well do I recall the explanation given by my late father, which he had imbibed, I feel sure, from Hering, Lippe and Guernsey at the old Hahnemann in Philadelphia; and it was for this very reason that I have known him to dilute his remedies from the original glass in which he had dissolved a trituration of some such remedy as *Calcarea carb.*, *Sulphur* or *Lycopodium*, that the medicinal influence might be, as he expressed it, "spread out over a larger surface."

Now that the world is confronted with the cleavage of the atom, with its release of atomic energy, it is time that we arrive at some definite understanding of our subject, *i.e.*, "the mechanical subdivision of the substance," as Russell expresses it. If the atom is so minute that it cannot be cut (we now know that it can be broken by the cyclotron. W.), we cannot yet escape the dictum of Michael Faraday that "the atom extends throughout the universe." In a recently published little book on atomic energy (*Your Life in the Atom World*, by Captain John Houston Craige, p. 40) occurs the following statement :

The atom for centuries has been regarded as a fundamental entity of creation. It got its name from the Greek philosopher Democritus who took it from the term in his native tongue meaning "indivisible" and it came down through the ages as the smallest possible unit of any substance,

although at different times conceptions varied as to what may, or may not, constitute an atom. Atomic physics within the last few years came to define the atom as being a unit of matter about one-250,000,000th of an inch in diameter, consisting of a nucleus and a planetary system of electrons which spin around it in orbits of varying diameters.

If the subdivision of particles effected by Hahnemann's method of potentiation actually does proceed beyond the structure of the atom, into the electronic realm, as contended by Abrams and his followers, and later making it possible for Boyd, through the use of his highly perfected emanometer, to detect the emanations, vibrations or radiations, whereby it is possible to detect the energy in the 10m. and 50m. potencies of homeopathic remedies, there must be a realm or plane within which or upon which this energy is released for its therapeutic effects. Or, as our distinguished member, Dr. E. Wallace MacAdam (Editor of the *Journal* of the American Institute of Homoeopathy) has expressed it in a brief paragraph: "However, theory or no theory, the fact remains that highly dilute remedies have an astonishing degree of curative energy." Further than this, or until Boyd or Stearns, or some of our illustrious French colleagues bring forth a more plausible basis for explanation, we cannot go. For us, then, the fact of the necessity of the reduction of the size of the dose, based upon the sensitivity of the organism of the patient, must be the criterion of our study. Herein we can rest our case.

And, furthermore, this has been and forever can be demonstrated through the test of therapeutic

action. This should be our goal ; and herein will be self-explanatory proof of the action of infinitesimals. For thus can we demonstrate the efficacy of Hahnemann's "new synthetic principle."

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TREATMENT OF THE PATIENT WITH SYPHILIS

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Many times the author has been quizzed concerning his own personal approach to the therapy of the syphilitic patient. The answer has always been that he has had no reason to be dissatisfied with the homœo-therapeutic. In every instance he has been asked if he can produce a negative Wassermann. Such a demand he has been in the habit of meeting with a feeling, if not a vocal expression, of defeat. It seems inconceivable that in this day there could be any physician so ill informed that he entertains the idea that the Wassermann reaction possesses any special significance. But such is the case. It needs to be made perfectly plain now that the author's continued use of the homœo-methodology is not based on a long series of cases treated *en masse*, tested for cure by tissue transplants which mean nothing, tested periodically by attempts at reinfection, tested off and on by provocative injections of specifics the results of which would lend themselves to various conflicting interpretations, nor on the basis of statisticized autopsy