

A SHORT LIFE SKETCH OF  
**DR. CONSTANTINE HERING, M.D.**

(1st Jan. 1800—23rd July 1880)

By : H. SHANKER RAU, B.A., C.I.Z.

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## CONSTANTINE HERING

By : H. Shanker Rau, B.A., C.I.E.

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A veritable Hercules of Homoeopathy ; one whom Hahnemann himself called his John, whom Aegidi styled Saul converted into Paul, whom stalwarts like Lippe, Guernsey and Raue affectionately referred to as Father or Papa ; who, by dint of his unrivalled work in the spheres of homoeopathic research and practice, education and literature, is deservedly known as the Father of Homoeopathy in America—such was Constantine Hering, whose life of eighty years was, and should still continue to be, a blessing and an inspiration alike, to the world of science and the world of suffering.

And yet, an account of his like and work, like Haehl's and Bradford's standard books on Hahnemann, has yet to be written. With one exception, such accounts as have so far appeared have been in the nature of short magazine articles. The one exception is Knerr's *Life of Hering*, which is a collection of notes—from Knerr's diary—of Hering's table-talk during some nine out of the eighty years of the Master's life, seven letters penned by him in 1827, a list of his literary works, and proceedings of memorial meetings held by about 22 Homoeopathic Societies in the years 1880 and 1881. The work is valuable, but is far from being either connected or complete. It is the purpose of this article to present, within a reasonable compass, and on the basis of the material available, a fairly detailed, connected and complete account of Hering's life and work which should serve as an inspiration to homoeopaths in the difficult years still ahead of them.

Hering was born at Oschatz in Saxony on the 1st January, 1800. His father was headmaster at the local school and also an organist, second to none in Germany ; he was actually playing in the New Year on the church organ at the moment of Hering's birth. When he heard the good news, he burst forth in a song of praise, the song of Luther : "Let all give thanks to God." Verily, the birth heralded the ringing out of much that was old in medicine and the ringing in of much that was new.

Hering was an apt scholar, and he mastered his early studies under his father's care. When Oschatz was destroyed by fire, the

family moved to Zittau, also in Saxony. Here Hering continued his studies at the Classical School from 1811 to 1817. From the earliest childhood, he had a passion for investigating things. At school, he was nicknamed "Buffalo", meaning one who studied very hard. Indeed, he soon became very familiar with the classics, proficient in mathematics and interested in botany, and his accumulation of knowledge was altogether beyond his years. After 1817, he turned his attention towards medicine, and whenever opportunity occurred, he pursued his studies in that direction, first at the Surgical Academy of Dresden, and later at the University of Leipzig, where he was a pupil of the eminent surgeon Robbi.

Now, this was the very time when Hahnemann himself was undergoing severe persecution. He had published his *Organon* in 1810 and the third of his six volumes of the *Materia Medica Pura* in 1817; was lecturing to a small group of students on two days in the week at the Leipzig University, and conducting provings of drugs either by himself or with their help. But vested interests joined in an absolute war of extermination, persecuted his students even in examination, and tried to hound him out of Leipzig by ridicule, by processes of law and even by force. Ultimately, in May, 1821, Hahnemann had to leave Leipzig and to seek shelter in Anhalt-Coethen, where the Duke, who had himself tasted the benefits of Homoeopathy, welcomed him and extended to him all the facilities he needed.

Surgeon Robbi belonged to the tribe of Hahnemann's persecutors. He tried to ingratiate himself with Hahnemann by feigning respect and admiration for his genius, but Hahnemann was a good judge of men, found out his real intentions and gave him little encouragement. Robbi then became one of the foremost in openly ridiculing him. Robbi's students naturally caught the infection. Later in life, Hering admitted that he had, at this stage, written a skit against Hahnemann, a burlesque, but that the theatrical manager of the town could not get his company to play it: they were such staunch homoeopaths!

But this was not the end of the matter. In 1821, when the campaign against Hahnemann was at its worst, C. Baumgartner, the founder of a publishing house in Leipzig, wanted a book written against Homoeopathy, a book which would quite finish the system. Robbi was asked to write it, but he declined for want of time, and



recommended his young assistant Hering who, pleased with this mark of confidence, set about the work in right earnest and nearly finished it in the winter of 1821-22. But, going through Hahnemann's works for the sake of making quotations, he came across the famous "*Nota Bene* for my Reviewers" in the preface to the third volume of the *Materia Medica Pura*, which said, among other things:

"My respectable brethren on the opposition benches, I can give you better advice about overthrowing, *if possible*, this doctrine which threatens to stifle your art which is founded on mere assumption, and to bring ruin upon all your therapeutic lumber. Listen to me !...The doctrine appeals not only chiefly, but solely, to the verdict of experience—'repeat the experiments', it cries aloud, 'repeat them carefully and accurately and you will find the doctrine confirmed at every step'—and it does what no medical doctrine, no system of physic, no so-called therapeutics ever did or could do, it *insists* upon being judged by the result."

Hering was nothing if not bold and logical. He decided to accept the challenge, to repeat the experiments and judge Homoeopathy by the result. As a first step, he asked his druggist for tincture of Cinchona—to repeat in 1822 the experiment which had opened Hahnemann's eyes in 1790; was warned that he was treading on dangerous ground; but pursued his quest of truth without the least fear of facing it when found. The result was what Hahnemann had predicted. Hering began to see the truth in Homoeopathy, and continued his study of the Homoeopathic *Materia Medica* and his experiments with increasing vigour—only to see that Hahnemann's conclusions were confirmed at every step. The book against Homoeopathy thus never saw the light of day, and Hering was very thankful for this unexpected outcome.

But his material position deteriorated in consequence. His erstwhile friends began to avoid his company; when he went to his bank to collect his monthly stipend of 5 dollars, he was gruffly told to discontinue his experiments: the money could not be used to salvage a homoeopath! Hering promptly threw the silver on the counter and would not take a penny of it. Until then he had often come very near starving and had sometimes to barter medical treatment for food; but, after this incident, he did not suffer for lack of it. He worked hard as assistant to Dr Hartlaub, and was content with the pittance he got.

In the winter of 1823-24, an incident occurred which had the effect of making Hering one of the ablest of Homoeopathy's champions. The forefinger of his right hand was injured while making a dissection on the exhumed body of a suicide, a job which others avoided, but which Hering did with his usual fearlessness and in his usual thorough manner. In those days accidents like this one were the death of many a physician, and it looked as if Hering had no better fate in store for him. The usual remedies then in vogue, namely, leeches, calomel and silver nitrate, were recommended by allopathic physicians, but the wound rapidly became gangrenous; amputation was then advised as the only course possible. Hering, who had ambitions of becoming an obstetrician or surgeon, would not hear of it; he would rather die than live a cripple.

Luckily for Hering and for Homoeopathy, however, one of Hahnemann's earlier students, Kummer by name, persuaded him to try Arsenicum in ridiculously small quantities to be taken by the mouth. Hering had no belief, at this stage, in the efficacy of internal medicine—particularly very small doses of such medicine—for what seemed to be purely external maladies, but he agreed with some reluctance, under great pressure and as a last resort. After a few doses taken on the tongue, he had a sense of relief from the horrible affliction which was already spreading; in three days he was out of danger; and he was well soon thereafter. His lingering doubts about the efficacy of small doses of internal remedies disappeared for good. The last veil which had made him blind to the rising sun of Homoeopathy was rent asunder. Hering retained his finger and his life, and was so enabled to give to the world his great literary works, his priceless provings, his invaluable teachings and his miraculous cures. Indeed, he devoted his hand, body and soul to the one cause which Hahnemann had so much at heart. Hahnemann's teachings not only restored health to his body, but gave him a new purpose in life. The test of experience converted the erstwhile Saul into a confirmed Paul. Hering, who was gifted with a fine sense of humour, once observed that Saint Paul was the first homoeopath—*vide* Acts, Chapter 14, verse 15, wherein he says "We are *homoeopatois*", that is, of like passions, of like suffering.

His enthusiasm grew. Though still without his medical degree, he succeeded in making many cures; and almost thought that he

could raise the dead. He wrote an essay on what might come true in hundred years, and sent it to Stapf. He was also in correspondence with Hahnemann about his own researches. Hahnemann's letter from Coethen, dated the 9th July, 1824, contains an appreciation of Hering's zeal and a prayer for his future :

"Your active zeal for the beneficent art delights me, and I believe that every one who desires to render valuable services to it must be animated by equal enthusiasm . . . . . I would like to become better acquainted with you, and I pray you to continue to be a right, genuine, good man, as it is impossible without virtue to be a true physician, a godlike helper of his fellow creatures in their distress".

Hahnemann's further letter from the same place dated the 31st December 1824, conveys a well-meant, fatherly warning about Hering's conduct at his forthcoming examination for the Master's degree ; a feeling of confidence in him as a true follower ; and good wishes for his success as a physician in the nobler sense of the term :

"As you wish to procure a master's degree in the old system of medicine next spring, I beg and counsel you not to allow your homoeopathic opinions to be known by the allopathic physicians of Leipzig, least of all by that most implacable of all allopaths, Clarus, if you do not wish to be grievously tormented at your examination or even rejected.

Yet, when you have got your degree, and have pitched upon the place of your future practice, then fear nothing more from the obstacles which the corporation of apothecaries will be able to put in your way. Some escape will open by which you will be able to put the good method into practice.

I have confidence in you and am not afraid of being wrong in regarding you as one of the few of my followers, who, in a higher sense than the common (inspired only by desire of gain and reputation), will practise the divine art among your afflicted fellow-men under the eye of the Omnipresent. Then while you will not miss obtaining the so-called temporal gain, you will also secure the approval of your conscience, without which kingdoms cannot give happiness.

If you wish to become a physician in this nobler sense (that is a pure benefactor of men), standing on earth a representative of God, our highest benefactor, and to be a right good man, then will

you be one of the few, a truly happy, joyful man. This I wish and hope for you".

Thanks to his precarious financial position, however, Hering had to postpone taking his degree. And in 1825, he chose, out of Germany's thirty Universities, the one University where he could get his degree cheapest—the University of Wuerzburg, where, incidentally, the lectures of Schoenlein, the celebrated pathologist, were a great attraction.

But, even there, he would not deny his allegiance to Homoeopathy, and, after nine months of close study he was obliged to undergo a most rigorous examination. As a matter of fact, he completely disregarded Hahnemann's warning. Armed with the motto "I can do nothing unless God helps me", he risked his career, and before a Faculty which did not permit students to grow moustaches, he appeared unshaven; and to a Faculty which was to decide his fate, he presented a thesis on *De Medicina Futura* (the Medicine of the Future) which was a vigorous defence of the new system. Indeed, he even went out of his way to make the following points amongst others :

1. "Materia Medica is to Hahnemann what Pathology was to Hippocrates".
2. "Any disease may be removed at any stage".
3. "No one has yet appeared to refute Hahnemann".
4. "The resurrection of the dead is the highest ideal of medical art."
5. "Not to deliver individual men from particular diseases, but to deliver the whole human race from the cause of disease is the ultimate goal of medical science."

The manner in which the examination was conducted showed the determination of the Faculty not to allow a homoeopath, and particularly one like Hering, to graduate from the institution, but such was Hering's thoroughness in every detail that he graduated with the highest honours in all departments and got his degree of M. D. on the 23rd March, 1826.

For a few months after graduation, he taught Natural Sciences and Mathematics at Blochmann's Institute at Dresden. Next he was appointed by the King of Saxony to accompany the Saxon Legation to Dutch Guiana in order to make scientific research and prepare a zoological collection for his Government. Hering started on his



journey on the 10th October, 1826. A stage-coach took him from Dresden, *via* Oschatz and Leipzig, to Naumburg. Here he met Stapf for the first time and was happy to receive from him a packet of homoeopathic medicines as well as a message from Hahnemann conveying his heart-felt greetings and blessings, a message which, to Hering, seemed a benediction. The coach then proceeded to Frankfurt, whence a sailing boat took him down the Rhine to Amsterdam where he arrived on the 22nd October. After some waiting here for a favourable wind, he sailed for Dutch Guiana where he found himself on the 18th January, 1827.

Here he was to spend the following six years of his precious life. He plunged into his new work with his usual energy and zest and conducted research and made collections in accordance with the terms of his appointment. At the same time, his love for Homoeopathy impelled him to further study and research in this line and occasional writing and practice. He now contributed to Stapf's *Homoeopathic Archives*, for which he had written as a student as early as 1825. The authorities in Saxony thereupon sent him a notice directing him to confine himself to the duties of his appointment and to leave medical matters alone. Hering, who had rejected a stipend in similar circumstances even as a poor student, promptly threw up his job and devoted his entire energies to the cause of Homoeopathy. He gained great favour with the Governor of the Province whose daughter he was able to cure of an affection which the resident physicians had pronounced incurable. He also cured Dr. George Bute, a Moravian missionary, of spotted fever—a very dangerous illness in those times in that climate.

In the result, Bute became a pupil of his preserver, and was later instrumental in drawing him to the U. S. A. Dissatisfied with life in the tropics, Bute removed to Philadelphia; began to practise Homoeopathy there in 1831; and distinguished himself in one of the hospitals by curing cholera which had been raging in the city in 1832 with frightful mortality. Unable to cope with the work singlehanded, he urged Hering to come to Philadelphia which offered a wide field for medical work.

It was very hard for him to leave Paramaribo, the Capital of Surinam, Dutch Guiana, where he had done wonderful work. A little incident determined his decision. At one time, he had met a German farmer who complained that his grape vines were not giving

the expected yield. They would not blossom, because, as the farmer put it, the vine must have a winter. Hering felt that, after living six years in a winterless country, he too must have a winter. The Moravians, his friends and patients, would not think of being thus separated from their benefactor. When they saw that he was determined, they brought out their lottery-machine which was provided with acorns cut in half. On these were printed numbers which indicated verses in the Bible. The reading of the verses was to settle the question. Hering drew a number, and the corresponding verse read: "Depart in peace, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over little and shall be placed over much". All abided by the decision, agreed to let Hering go in peace, and got everything ready for his journey.

Hering arrived at Philadelphia in January 1833, but remained there only for a short time. In 1835, he helped in the establishment of a homoeopathic school at Allentown, Pennsylvania—the North American Academy of the Homoeopathic Healing Art, commonly known as the Allentown Academy. A sum of 7000 dollars was raised in one day, four acres of land were bought, and two handsome buildings put up. Hering was President and principal professor, and laboured hard in this new field for over two years. A Faculty was appointed, students were taught and they graduated and a great deal of good work in the cause of Homoeopathy was done. Ultimately, in 1842, financial embarrassments, caused by the dishonesty of a local banker, wrecked the Academy. Incidentally, it was the first institution of its kind chartered by a liberal Government, and Hering the first physician who taught Homoeopathy publicly.

After his work at Allentown, Hering returned to Philadelphia and set up practice. His education, abilities, character and pioneering work secured him an easy entrance into scientific, literary, and even political circles. But, in the earlier years, his financial position was by no means comfortable, and, indeed, he once thought of going to London and practising in a new field altogether. He sought Hahnemann's advice on the subject in a letter dated the 10th April 1838. The advice, if received, is not on record.

The fact remains that Hering stuck to Philadelphia for the rest of his life, except for a short period—about 1845—when he visited Germany, his Fatherland. He loved his Fatherland much, but he loved liberty more. Indeed, he felt that no German who had lived

in the U. S. A. for long could exist thereafter in Germany for any length of time ; that the former was the land of progress and Philadelphia the place from which many important things emanated, for example, the first library and the first college.

Hering led a very strenuous life ; rose at 3 A. M. and studied and wrote till 9 A. M. After breakfast he attended to his professional duties till evening. His office hours were 10 to 12 and 4 to 6. In the evenings, he either studied or conversed with those who sought instruction till 9 P. M. and then retired unless, again, he had either colleagues or students who desired to discuss with him or other work which demanded his attention. Indeed, his hours of sleep were generally nearer 3 than 6. To him, in reality, change of occupation itself was rest.

In one of the larger rooms in his house, Hering's friends used to gather on Sunday afternoons for long conversations about Homoeopathy and other subjects, conversations which Hering led and reminded one of Addison and the Round Table. Here it was that he also received his visiting colleagues and gave talks to students and younger practitioners on Saturday nights—talks which were intellectual feasts, from which none could possibly return empty, and which were consequently highly prized.

On the 23rd July, 1880, Hering attended to his duties as usual ; supped with his family under the elm tree in his garden ; conversed in his lively manner for about an hour ; and went to his study and engaged himself in his work on the fourth volume of *Guiding Symptoms*. At about 9-40 P. M., he had an attack of *angina pectoris*. At 10 he expired before any help could be rendered. "I am dying now" were his last words. The end was sudden, and, until he uttered those words, it was unexpected.

He married thrice—first, in South America, a member of the Von Kemper family who died soon after the birth of his first child John, as a result of her mother's mischievous interference— a fact which made him vow that he would never again marry a wife who had a mother ; next, at Philadelphia, in 1833, Marianna Husmann who bore him two children, Max and Odelia, and died in 1839 ; and last, at Bautzen in Germany, in 1845, Theresa Buching, who bore him eight children and survived him. One of these children, Melitta, later became the wife of Dr. Calvin B. Knerr, M.D., who was Hering's pupil during the years 1867-69, became his assistant thereafter, his son-in-law in 1873, and his biographer in 1939.

Hering was a man of athletic build, fashioned like a wrestler; of indomitable courage and yet a benevolent countenance which inspired one with confidence and sympathy; of gigantic intellect, retentive memory and untiring industry—features which made all his great works possible, work which will be presently set out in some detail.

Hering's connection with the North American Academy of the Homoeopathic Healing Art at Allentown, has already been mentioned. While at Philadelphia, he was connected, in one capacity or another, with quite a number of institutions.

He was an active member of the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, and presented to it his large and valuable zoological collection, including the original *Lachesis trigonocephalus* from South America, the snake with whose poison he had made the first provings of his celebrated Lachesis. He was one of the founders and the first President of the American Institute of Homœopathy, which was the first medical association in America, having been established in New York on the 10th April, 1844, the anniversary of Hahnemann's birth. He was also one of the founders of the American Provers' Union which was established on the 10th August, 1853, and greatly helped to enrich the Homoeopathic Materia Medica. He was again one of the founders and members of the first Faculty of the Homoeopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania, which started work in 1848. In 1864, however, its then Faculty felt that it could not bear the burden any longer, and the charge was accordingly offered by the trustees to Hering who, with some of his friends, formed a new Faculty and reorganised the institution under the name and style of the Hahnemann Medical College of Philadelphia. The first course of lectures commenced in the winter of 1864-65; Drs. Hering, Lippe, Guernsey and Raue were among the professors at the start, and Drs. Carroll Dunham and Timothy F. Allen joined them later. It was a brilliant batch altogether. Hering held the Chair of Homoeopathic Institutes and Materia Medica, being Emeritus Professor of the same at the time of his death.

Hering's literary efforts were many and varied. In the earlier years, he wrote light prose and verse—fairy tales and satires, oratorios and novelettes—generally in a satirical vein. The products of his maturer years were mostly in the medical line. A list of the medical works is given in Appendix I. They are a detailed record of scientific



research which Hering so dearly loved and conducted over a period of more than half a century.

Of the larger works, *The Domestic Physician* is easily the most popular. It was meant by Hering not only to serve as an adviser when one would not or could not consult a physician, but also to drive from common use domestic remedies, nostrums and patent medicines the habitual use of which was a prolific cause of numerous drug-diseases. The book has undergone numerous editions and has been translated into a number of other languages.

*The Guiding Symptoms* is a monumental work of 10 volumes, covering some 6,000 pages and 3,00,000 symptoms. He spent 40 years on the work. As stated earlier, Hering was engaged on the fourth volume at the time of his death, but the manuscript of the unpublished volumes was practically ready; the walls of his study, from floor to ceiling, were filled with these and other manuscripts—all in his own handwriting and in perfect order. The publication of the last seven volumes was accordingly attended to by his literary executors, Drs. Raue, Knerr and Mohr, and was completed in 1891.

Hering possessed, in a remarkable degree, the rare faculty of detecting the individual characteristics of each drug, the finer points of difference which are not to be found in the provings of any other. And it is this faculty which has made his works in general, and the *Guiding Symptoms* in particular of such lasting value to the homoeopathic world.

The numerous essays and monographs on different remedies are an heirloom to posterity. Over and above these, there was his editorial work in connection with the *North American Homoeopathic Journal* (1851), the *Homoeopathic News* (1854) the *American Journal of Homoeopathic Materia Medica* (1867-71), and the journal of his own College. On the whole, it may safely be said that Hering's contribution to the Homoeopathic Materia Medica is almost unrivalled, being second only to that of Hahnemann. It should also be remembered that it was instrumental in inspiring Carroll Dunham and others of his faithful band of co-labourers to enrich the Materia Medica on their own account.

It is in the sphere of drug provings, however, that Hering's daring shows at its best. It has been remarked by Nash and others that, if Hering had done nothing else for medicine but the proving of the single drug Lachesis, the world would owe him an everlasting

debt of gratitude: that alone would immortalise him. Here is a graphic account of it from an admiring doctor who spoke at one of the memorial meetings soon after his death:

"Friends, it requires the highest order of both physical and moral courage to risk life calmly in trying to succour others. Witness the heroic act of a man, alone in a room, whence all the attendants have fled, with a box he has just opened, containing the most venomous serpent, the largest of its species, from whose glands, after the most mature deliberation, he is about to extract the deadly poison. See the nerve of the man, who, alert as is the snake, seizes it just below the head with firm grasp, when, with folds uncoiled, with reared head and flaming eye, forked tongue and naked fang, it is poised to strike the intrepid soul, who, at the risk of his life, seeks from its venom the healing balm for earth's sufferers. Watch him adjust the pointed stick between the opened jaws of the serpent whose bite is certain death, and whose impotent rage secretes the deadly saliva, while he tantalises it till it can distil no more poison, when, into a jar of alcohol he thrusts the monster nor relaxes his grip of steel till life is extinct. The poison, caught in a watch-glass, is transferred to a mortar and rubbed with sugar of milk, till his purple and bloated face and swimming brain suspend his eager operation. He swallows the preparation with measured regularity, to produce upon himself the effects of the venom. Observe him toss in his fever, note the loquacious delirium as he flits from subject to subject, note the suffocation, the frantic struggle for breath, while he clutches and tears from throat and breast all clothing; mark his mental condition, the anguish and apprehension, and ask yourselves for whom, for what purpose, he does this, and then answer—is he not a hero?"

Another doctor friend observed, on a similar occasion, that Hering's only suffering was from the seal set by Lachesis, from which he never fully recovered, and that that suffering was his crowning glory. Be that as it may, the proving of Lachesis opened the door to the other serpent and insect poisons—Crotalus, Naja and the rest. A complete list of the drugs proved by Hering is not available, but a somewhat incomplete one, taken from Bradford's *Pioneers of Homoeopathy*, has been added as Appendix II. Even this is formidable and covers 71 items, including, besides Lachesis, such obviously dangerous ones as Crotalus, Hydrophobinum and Psorinum. Hering was prepared to prove any drug on himself when in health, and to face

the consequences, for the love of Homoeopathy, for the love of his suffering fellowmen. With apologies to Addison, one may truly say :

“Unbounded courage and compassion joined,  
Tempting each other in our Hering's mind,  
Alternately proclaim him good and great,  
And make the hero and the man complete.”

Now a few words about his medical practice. There are certain features of it which all physicians, at any time and in any clime, might copy with advantage.

Firstly, he was, as Hahnemann wished him to be, a physician in the nobler sense, a benefactor of humanity. Naturally, monetary considerations never prevailed with him; he never made a visit to a patient unasked; and when he did make one or a patient came to see him, time was no consideration. He was very thorough and painstaking and went on with his examination as if he had no other case to attend to and no other interest in life at the moment.

Secondly, when in doubt, he did not hesitate to consult books in order to be able to select the proper remedy. He had devoted most of his lifetime to the study, the verification, the amplification and the elucidation of the Homoeopathic Materia Medica, and yet, he was humble enough to feel that no one could carry it all in his head, that every case was a subject for study, and that the interests of the patient demanded that the physician should be clear and exact: there was nothing lazy or slipshod about him.

Thirdly, he kept accurate records of every case. Despite the initial trouble, this was trebly useful—from the point of view of the physician who saved time thereby at subsequent consultations and in other more or less similar cases; of the patient who felt confident that his doctor knew his medical history in every detail and did not need to be told the same things on each occasion; and of posterity which had the advantage of priceless reference books in which Hering stored the vast experience he had gained in this manner.

Fourthly, coupled with his vast knowledge and his thorough manner, he had a look of quiet dignity about him which was maintained even amidst the sneers of allopaths called in consultation, a look which was reassuring to the patient; a calm arising from the conviction that Homoeopathy was essentially sound, that God ever guided him, and that God was great.

Fifthly, he never expected any gratitude—even when the case was a most difficult one and the cure bordered on the miraculous. Never expecting gratitude, he had never any reason to feel disappointed. He once observed that the word “gratitude” was mentioned by Shakespeare only four times in all his works. while the word “ingratitude” came in twentytwo times.

It is no wonder that a physician so gifted was able to snatch thousands from the jaws of disease and death; that his patients generally trusted and loved, venerated and almost worshipped him. He was their apostle of the Gospel of Health: he did for them what few others could do.

And this apostle of health was ever so kind and considerate to his colleagues, and, indeed, to all members of the profession who showed the least inclination to learn anything about Homoeopathy. They were welcome to his study and to his table, and his simple hospitality charmed them quite as much as his anxiety to enlighten them. Not unoften, he would go further and turn over his own good cases to them. Naturally, when he died, they felt like children who had lost their father. There was not a trace of jealousy or selfishness about him. Indeed, such was his love of the new science and art that his notebook was ever by his side, and he would not hesitate to jot down any new results which even the juniormost amongst the physicians might bring to his notice. Not until he had verified them, however, would he enter them in his more permanent records.

Not the least interesting aspect of Hering's life is that which concerns his relations with Hahnemann. It is clear that the two had been in correspondence at least from 1824 and at any rate till 1842. Hahnemann's two letters of 1824 and his message to Hering on the eve of the latter's departure for South America, have already been referred to. In a subsequent letter from Paris, dated the 3rd October, 1836, Hahnemann addresses Hering as the “Dearest and keenest furtherer of our Science”; repeats his thanks for his election as Honorary President of the Hahnemann Society of Philadelphia and for the Diploma of Honour sent to him; asks for “the third trituration of Lachesis and Crotalus for the knowledge of which we are indebted to America and to you”; suggests that the students' time should not be too much wasted by the study of anatomical details; and concludes with the wish: “May you continue to enjoy good health for the sake of humanity!” In the letter of 1838, asking



for Hahnemann's advice about his proposal to set up practice in London, Hering subscribes himself: "Proud to be your pupil." When Hering received the news of Hahnemann's death in 1843, he cried like a child. It is clear that they dearly loved each other. And yet, they never actually met! As stated before, Hahnemann had to leave Leipzig in 1821 when Hering was a medical student at that place, but in the opposition camp; and Hering himself left Germany in 1826. He had doubtless often seen Hahnemann and his first wife and daughters upon the promenade at Leipzig, their favourite walk, but, being an allopathic student, he had never spoken to Hahnemann! The two were so alike and yet so different. Indeed, Hering did not hesitate to express frankly his opposition to some of Hahnemann's theories, though he was in perfect accord with him on the soundness of his practical rules. So here was a John who faithfully imitated his Christ in practice, even though he disagreed with some of his theory.

And what were the main principles which guided him in the course of his imitation of the Master?

First, to be able to cure a man with a toothache is worth more than the study of natural history and the like; in other words, an ounce of useful practice is worth a ton of useless theory.

Second, the physician never cures diseases, only sick individuals; he has to individualise cases as well as drugs. Symptom totality and the single remedy corresponding to such totality should be his watch-words. Pathology may be of some use in the study of the *Materia Medica*, but less so than Physiology. The most important considerations in the treatment are those which are beyond the sphere of both Pathology and Physiology, namely, the mental states.

Third, for all practical purposes, the triangular test is the most useful for the selection of the appropriate remedy. If there are three important or characteristic symptoms pointing to one remedy, it can be prescribed with almost unerring certainty. By the sign of the triangle, the trinity of characteristic symptoms, homoeopaths conquer.

Fourth, an ideal homoeopathic cure is the one which shows the following features:

- "1. Limitation of the usual course of the disease to a shorter space of time.
2. Perceptible moderation, or total prevention of pathological products, without arriving at what is usually understood by a crisis.

3. Rapid recuperation of strength and bodily vigour; marked shortening of the period of convalescence.
4. Removal of a tendency to recurrence of the disease. prophylaxis against relapses, even where exciting causes are unavoidable.
5. Improvement in the mental condition of the patients apparent to the skilled observer from the moment he enters the sick room, by the attitude and demeanour of his patient".

Fifth, it is no use grumbling about the low dilutionists. They are the bark to the tree. The high dilutionists are the splint, protected by the bark.

Sixth, discoveries which would be of benefit to the world should never be kept secret, but should be given the requisite publicity. This applies to new remedies as well as to new processes.

Among the anecdotes narrated by Hering there are two which justify the ways of the new school and should be of lasting interest.

One of these relates to the year 1826 when Hering had got his medical degree and was about to commence his travels. The proprietor of a German village inn had invited him to his house, and incidentally expressed the view that he would sooner see his son a hangman than a doctor. In support of his statement, he produced a huge ledger-like book, containing, in tabular form, the results of his consultations with physicians of repute and less known ones as well, on a single case, namely, his own. He had made up his mind to be treated only when he found three doctors who perfectly agreed in the matter, and not till then. Twenty years had thus been spent in consultations, and 477 doctors consulted. The number of diseases diagnosed was 313, the prescriptions numbered 832, and the remedies prescribed 1097. As no three doctors had yet agreed, he had not taken any treatment, and, although he was an invalid, he was still luckily alive! The man coolly requested Hering to add his prescription. When asked whether Hahnemann had been consulted, the man replied that he had been and that he was the wisest of the lot; that he had expressed the opinion that neither the name of the disease nor the remedy, but the cure alone, was what concerned the patient; but that Hahnemann had not been asked to treat him because he was the only one who held that view and two others of the same

view had yet to be found ! The man had doubtless spent a considerable sum of money on his 20-year experiment. Hering suggested a further trial and made out a description of the symptoms. The patient sent a copy to 33 homoeopathic practitioners named by Hering with a letter requesting each of them to prescribe the appropriate remedies. Replies were received in due course : as many as 22 of the practitioners agreed upon a single remedy. The man was delighted, and placed himself under the care of the one who was nearest to him, and his health improved from day to day.

The second anecdote points to the harm caused by needless operations. An old lady in Philadelphia had wens on her head. A prominent surgeon advised that they must be cut, and ridiculed Hering who was against the course. The surgeon had his way. Later, the patient developed dropsy and died. At the *post mortem*, the allopathic doctors found nothing wrong. Hering asked them if they had examined the kidneys. When these were removed, they found the wens in the form of ulcers ; the ulcers caused the dropsy ; and the dropsy caused the death. The doctors were crest-fallen.

Hering was a man of sterling character. Mention has already been made of his untiring industry and consistent thoroughness, graceful humility and quiet confidence, remarkable independence and unflinching courage in the most trying conditions. There were also other traits in his character which are worth emulation. His was a life of great self-sacrifice. He lived for a cause—the cause of Homoeopathy, the cause of relief of the sufferings of his fellowmen, of curing them rapidly, gently and permanently. And yet, he was wont to say that his sufferings were nothing compared to those of Hahnemann. Poverty, hunger and starvation did not deter him, and even the prospect of death had no terrors for him. In 1869, in view of the problems connected with the Hahnemann Medical College and Hospital at Philadelphia, he spoke of placing a mortgage upon his property for the benefit of the institutions. He did not want his family to have his money in the event of his death ; it was for the cause. Not that he did not love the family, but he very dearly loved the cause, and had the greatest confidence in his Creator who, he felt, would certainly look after the family if he gave his all to the cause.

His attitude towards unfair criticism was a perfectly healthy one. He himself would not stoop to judge or to malign. If others did, he

would just ignore them. In the rare cases in which he felt compelled to take notice, he would treat the affair with a certain amount of ridicule. He did not mind others stealing his thunder so long as he was left the lightning. In any case, he would not allow his own mental balance to be upset by people who seldom knew what they were talking about.

Behind the marvellous work and sterling character, there was an essentially spiritual background. Hering strongly held that all things came from God and through Him ; that God was eternal, true wisdom was therefore eternal, and all science was a state of growth ; that man's duty was to work and to let providence rule ; that nothing should be done without the thought "Thy Kingdom come" ; that Christianity consisted in leading useful lives, for the good of the race and from unselfish motives ; and that the future life would be only another step in progress and would enable one to carry forward the work done in the present. Indeed, it has sometimes been wondered why Hering attempted to do too much, as if life would last for ever. This explains it. Nothing is lost, nothing wasted. Everything will bear fruit in due time.

Hering established the new system to which he had been converted by experiment, in a new world to which he had been called as if by accident. His death on the 23rd July 1880 synchronized with the 52nd anniversary of the introduction of Homoeopathy into the State of Pennsylvania ; and his funeral on the 28th idem with the 52nd anniversary of his own discovery of Lachesis.

One of his last acts was the signing of a paper which appeared in the *North American Journal of Homocopathy* for August 1880, in which he declared his unswerving faith in the essential principles of Homoeopathy and sounded a useful note of warning :

"If our school ever gives up the strict inductive method of Hahnemann, we are lost and deserve to be mentioned only as a caricature in the history of medicine."

May it be given to homoeopaths in all lands to heed the warning and to follow in the footsteps of this noble, daring and steadfast apostle of Homoeopathy ! May the great cause to which he devoted his life with such conspicuous success increasingly prosper ! May the name of Constantine Hering be remembered with gratitude for ever !

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APPENDIX I

MEDICAL WORKS

1. American Drug Provings (1857)
  2. Analytical Therapeutics (1875)
  3. Characteristics, or Memory Cards (1866-67)
  4. Complete Materia Medica (1873)
  5. Domestic Physician (1835)
  6. Gross's Comparative Materia Medica (Translation, 1867)
  7. Guiding Symptoms of Our Materia Medica, (10 vols., 1879)
  8. Introduction to Jahr's Manual (1838)
  9. The Condensed Materia Medica (1877)
  10. 266 Essays and Monographs, published in 15 different Medical Journals.
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## APPENDIX II

## DRUGS PROVED

I. 21 in Germany (*in the case of drugs marked with an asterisk, the provings were fragmentary*)

Antimonium tart.*	Colchicum	Paris quadrifolia
Argentum met.*	Demantium*	Plumbum aceticum
Aristolochia*	Geum rivale*	Ruta*
Belladonna*	Iodium	Sabadilla
Caltha palustris*	Mezereum	Sabina
Cantharis	Nostoe*	Tanacetum*
Clematis erecta*	Opium*	Viola tricolor*

II. 13 in South America (*observations and provings*)

Alumina	Jamboo	Psorinum
Askalabotes	Jatropha	Solanum mammosum
Caladium seguinum	Lachesis	Spigelia
Curassivicum	Phos. acid	Theridion
		Vanilla

III. 37 at Philadelphia (*provings either made or superintended*)

Aloes	Formica	Nicandra
Apis	Gelsemium	Niccolum
Baryta carb.	Glonoine	Nux moschata
Bromium	Gymnocladus	Osmium
Brucea	Hippomanes	Oxalic acid
Calcarea phos.	Hydrophobinum	Oxygen
Castor equorum	Ictodes foetida	Ozone
Cepa	Kalmia	Palladium
Chlorine	Kobalt	Phytolacca
Crotalus	Lithium	Platinum
Ferrum met.	Mephitis	Tellurium
Fluoric acid	Millefolium	Thallium
		Viburnum





## MME. WURMSER'S FINDING

Mme. Lise Wurmser's fascinating finding that when potencies of certain substances, material doses of which have first been administered to guinea pigs, are given later by mouth, the excretion of the substances is initiated or increased at certain points in time thereafter: in other words, the potencies or microdoses have stimulated mobilisation and excretion of specific substances previously stored in the body. Following from this experiment, would one not expect the same sort of thing to happen in the human patient ?

A patient manifesting symptoms suggesting the need for *Zincum metallicum*, i.e., skin rash, with fidgety feet, extreme fatigue, worse at 4 p.m. was tested for the presence of zinc in the urine (not found in normal subjects). None was found before treatment, but after *Zincum met 30 c* was administered, the patient improved in health clinically, and at the same time i.e. 10 and 21 days after the dose was taken, was found to be excreting minute amounts of zinc in the urine. It looks as though this must have been stored and excreted as a result of stimulation by the homoeopathic dose of the prescribed medicine.

In the same way, but this time dealing with a substance normally present in the urine, a patient who was tired, sleepless, with swelling of ankles, dimness of vision, and so on apparently needed *Natrum muriaticum*, which can cause these symptoms in a healthy sensitive person. Her urinary excretion of this substance was 20 units before treatment, but gradually and steadily increased to 67 units *pari passu* with a steady and marked improvement in general clinical condition. At the same time her urinary excretion became greater and more dilute. She also appeared to be excreting previously stored substances.

These experiments suggest that homoeopathic potencies may act by mobilising and excreting retained products, which have been producing signs and symptoms of their own poisonings. This might mean that homoeopathy antidotes a true poisoning from accumulated stored materials, and that when we prescribe the *similimum* we are really administering the *idem*. changed only by potentising as in *tautopathy*.

—*The Torch of Homoeopathy, October, 1965.*

