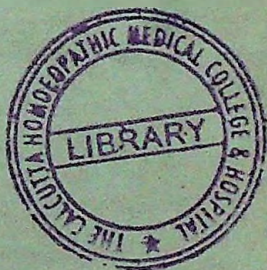


HOMOEOPATHY

BY :

SIR JOHN WEIR, G.C.V.O., M.B.



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HOMOEOPATHY

A SCIENCE OF DRUG THERAPY

By SIR JOHN WEIR, G.C.V.O., M.B.

Physician to H.M. The King.
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Homoeopathy is no System of Medicine. It concerns itself solely with the discovery, the study, the preparation and the administration of remedial agents. It is only here that it parts company with medicine as taught in the schools. All else we have in common. Every homoeopathic doctor in this Country has graduated in the same schools as his medical brethren. We start alike. But some of us, having accidentally come across this science of drug-therapy, have discovered therein new powers of dealing with sickness.

The appeal of Homoeopathy has always been to *experiment*. It is a science, because based wholly on experiment. "Do the works if you would know the truth"—or, as Hunter said to Jenner, "Don't think—TRY!"

Knowledge of diseases, knowledge of drug-action; what are they? Nothing practical, lacking the essential information—how to apply the one for the relief of the other. There must be a co-ordinating principle—LAW—if power is to result: i.e., the power to deal curatively, with not only assurance, but foreknowledge, with the sick individual.

It is stagnation not to be striving incessantly for wider knowledge. Progress must cease where we are content with tradition and authority. And changes are so rapid in

our day that it has been said, "If a doctor who dies to-day should come back in 50 years time and attempt to take up his profession, he would have to graduate all over again."

And yet, one great physician of the past, were he to come back to-day, could take up his work as he left it. He would find new possibilities—developments—confirmations—and, above all, new implements. But all the essentials would be the same—*because based on Law*. And he would exult to find thousands of doctors, all the world over, treating their patients on his lines, and thereby experiencing his astonishing results.

Human history has its landmarks, each connected with some towering personality. "That man," we say—but only when we have travelled far enough ahead to appreciate his work—"That man was born 100 years before his time" Genius, instead of plodding the beaten path, leaps always far ahead. One such genius was Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843). Diligently seeking that which he was confident must exist—*A Law of Drug Action*—it was revealed to him in a flash of realisation; and to the elucidation of that Law he devoted his long life. Poverty—enmity—scorn—banishments moved him not. His unwavering appeal was to *experience* and to *posterity*.

Quinine has a historical value for the homoeopath, as the drug that revealed to Hahnemann the Law of Cure, and enabled him to establish Homoeopathy as a fixed science.

It was in this wise. Since the bright spot in the medicine of his day was Peruvian bark for ague, it occurred to him to test its effect on a person in health—

himself. That was the first homoeopathic Proving. It revealed that Bark, which cured ague, could develop ague symptoms in a healthy person "*How did other drugs act ?*" Multiple exhaustive experiments gave the undeviating answer that, *what a drug can cure, that it can cause ; and, conversely, what a drug can cause, that, and that only, it can cure.*

Homoeopathy maintains that there is a constant relationship between the subversive effects of drugs on the healthy and the benign reactions they call forth in the sick. *That sickness can only be cured by a drug whose action shows a selective effect on exactly the same organs, tissues and functions affected.* Or again, Homeopathy means the cure of disease by exciting the reactive powers of nature by a similar irritant. But in the use of such agents, manifestly the dose must be that of stimulation only : not of aggravation, or destruction.

Genius is defined as "an infinite capacity for taking pains," and Hahnemann had this in a very high degree. He became pre-eminent in intuition, in deduction, in research, and in absolute devotion to Truth and Humanity. A great linguist, scholar, chemist, sanitarian, physician—in all these far ahead of his age, he takes special rank as one of those to whom Law reveals itself. It is interesting that, his eyes once opened, he found the enunciation of his law in "the remarkable words *Similia similibus curentur* in one of the books attributed to Hippocrates," and also its foreshadowings in solitary remarks of a few writers, "but," as he says, "no one had taught this manner of cure, or put it into practice."

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Medicine has always experimented on the sick. Hahnemann experimented only on healthy humans (recording also the effects of poisonings) in order to determine the actual subversive properties of various drugs, so that they could be applied, at need, to the sick of a "like" sickness.

He presently gathered an enthusiastic band of followers, mostly medical men, and he and they tested or "proved" drug after drug, with all precautions to eliminate error: and these Provings faithfully recorded, form the nucleus of Homoeopathic Materia Medica. The reason that his "*Materia Medica Pura*," best known among his numerous works, is as alive and up-to-date to-day as when penned, and has survived the works of all his contemporaries, is because, as he laid down, every such materia medica should concern itself only with the actual effects of simple drugs, excluding mere assertions and theories; its content being given in the simple words of simple people, in answer to careful and faithful enquiry.

Hundreds of valuable medicines have, since his day, been added to the homoeopathic materia medica: but all subsequent work has been done on his lines. It has never been found necessary to eliminate, or modify. Recorded in the simple language of plain folk, free from theory, safe from the transient technical language of succeeding generations, it stands for all time: while science, in discovering new truths has never been able to touch Hahnemann's postulates—except to confirm: since they are based on Law.

But beyond his basic law, "*Let likes be treated by likes*," Hahnemann, during years of experience, was able

to lay down the conditions under which it worked most surely and precisely in his *Doctrines* which, not to observe, is to render much of our work inferior, if not futile. And it is emerging that these subsidiary laws of Hahnemann apply equally to all such homoeopathic measures as vaccines, X-ray and and radium therapy, where better and more reliable results might have been obtained, with a minimum of disaster, had they been observed from the beginning.

For he teaches not only the "like" remedy, but—

The single drug, without which no scientific data can be obtained, whether proving or in treatment ;

The single dose : repeated according to the acuteness or chronicity of the case :

The small dose that merely initiates reaction ;

The infrequent dose which means non-interference with vital reaction, once established ;

The possibility of *initial (temporary) aggravation* ;

Potentiation : yet unrecognised outside his School: but an important factor in the success of the prescription.

VITAL FORCE. We are realising, in these days, what Hahnemann insisted on, that cure can only come by the reaction of what he calls *vital force* against disease or remedy. We know a little more about the mechanism of such reaction : but it is no longer absurd to teach, as he taught, that vital reactions are evoked by disease, and that such reactions are curative in purpose : and that the utmost we can do, *curatively*, is to stimulate such reactions. He shows that hundreds of substances subversive to health, simulate, disease conditions, and can therefore be employed to stimulate curative reaction.

Who will diagnose between belladonna poisoning and scarlet fever?—they have often been mistaken; or between dysentery and poisoning by corrosive sublimate? or between ptomaine and arsenical poisonings? And the most striking homoeopathic curative results can be seen when *arsenic* (in finest sub-division) is given for ptomaine poisoning, *corrosive sublimate* for dysentery, or *belladonna* for scarlet fever. Anyone who desires to put Homoeopathy to the test cannot do better than start with one of these.

In regard to the small dose, that ancient bug-bear, and subject for endless witticisms:—no need to apologise for that now! It has been vindicated by the study of radium, vitamins, etc.

By minute subdivision (performed always by macerating one part of the drug in 99 parts of some inert material, and repeating the process again and again till the result is, perhaps, one in a decillion—Hahnemann's 30th potency), he showed how energy is liberated from inert mass—bulk—weight, from things palpable and manifest to our grosser senses. We are beginning to realise the "intangible" and the "imponderable." But *the most sensitive thing in the world is diseased tissue for the remedy of like symptoms, in infinitesimal subdivision. It is with this we have to deal.*

But Hahnemann's Infinitesimal doses present no difficulty to modern biology. "Thyroxin influences growth and development in tadpoles in dilutions of 1 in 5,000,000,000," (1) "Acetylcholine in the strength of a milligram in half-a-million gallons of blood causes a distinct fall in blood pressure." (2) "The uterus of a

virgin guinea-pig responds to such dilute concentration of Histamine as could not be demonstrated by most the refined micro-chemical methods" (3) . . . and so on.

But, one may ask, why, this ultra-refinement in the dosage of homoeopathic remedies? Why, when all medicine is concerned with the maximum, should Homoeopathy teach the minimal dose?

The reason is plain. Medicine is concerned with *direct action*, and does (so to speak) violence to the organism: as when it has been directed to cause sweating, purging, vomiting; to paralyse the action of the bowels; to deaden pain; to induce a drugged sleep; to modify the action of the heart; to depress fever; to excite appetite. In these cases we are doing something subversive to the patient: hence the dose must be a material, but non-lethal, one. For this reason the dosage of official medicine is apt to be the largest one dares to give.

But when a remedy is used in the opposite way, croton oil for diarrhoea, apomorphine to control vomiting, opium for the coma of cerebral haemorrhage, rattle-snake poison to control bleeding, it is imperative to use, not the largest, but the smallest amount that will evoke the desired *reaction*. Anything more than this would increase suffering. One sees now why Hahnemann, in his endeavour to evoke curative reaction, was compelled to reduce his doses.

As a matter of fact, this is becoming the modern aim in treatment, i.e., the stimulation of the various defence mechanisms. Ehrlich's dream of *therapia magna*

sterilans is now abandoned : because you cannot annihilate the invading organism without wiping out, or at least crippling, the host. As the late Sir Walter Fletcher said, "The search for specific remedies for specific illnesses is bound to fail." And the leading pharmacologists believe now in an indirect rather than a direct effect from drugs : and that the tissues and fluids of the host are the important factor in restoring health.

An Important point :—Hahnemann insisted that provings must be made on healthy humans, not on animals. And we know that different animals react so differently to poisons, even to diseases, that their value as provers would be nil. To some, poisons are nutriment, as with rabbits and belladonna. Cats and dogs react differently to morphia. Rats are said to be immune to diphtheria, cats to tubercle ; while monkeys and guinea-pigs are highly susceptible to the latter ; in fact, all that can be said is, that by experiments on animals it is found that certain drugs affect certain tissues—of certain animals.

Moreover, the most important symptoms, distinguishing drugs from one another, are mental symptoms : and these can only be given by humans. For instance, the suspicion and insane jealousy of *Lachesis* (a snake venom, in constant use with us for a hundred years), the frantic irritability and intolerance of pain of *Chamomilla*, the sensation of two wills of *Anacardium*, a sort of devil and angel tug-of-war, have proved again and again a straight cut to the curative remedy in various conditions. No animal provings could give us these.

A point, more or less germane, is the opposite effect

of large and small doses : as for instance, when *Ipecacuanha* is given in material doses to produce emesis, and in small doses to cure the vomiting of pregnancy. Here, of course, the Arndt-Schulz Law comes in to support, Hahnemann. *Where large doses of a poison are lethal and smaller doses inhibit, minimal doses of the same poison activate the self-same cells.* Or, as Bier says, "The same remedy may stimulate a function when given in small doses, but destroy it if larger doses are administered."

And here it is interesting to record that a recent Medical Research Council Report on Radium speaks of "The general principle that has been established with so many drugs that large doses and very small doses act in opposite ways." (4) And Taylor has shown that "Irradiated Ergosterol, in small and medium doses, favours the deposition of calcium from blood to bone : but large doses have a reverse effect, and cause calcium to be absorbed from bone into the blood stream" (5)

This leads on to the question of diseases. Disease means cells in need of a stimulus. Relief, or cure, means bringing a stimulus to the cells that need it. It is the symptoms of the disease that betray the plight of certain cells : and it is the symptoms of the like-drug that reveal the remedy.

As will have been seen, Homoeopathy concerns itself with the individual ; his personal reactions to environment, physical, mental and moral ; his deviations from the normal, especially his own normal, due to sickness. With Hahnemann, when it comes to prescribing, "we know no diseases, only sick persons," whose sickness has to be matched in *Materia Medica*.

For him, disease was no entity, but the reaction of the organism to some harmful stimulus, physical, chemical, bacteriological : for Hahnemann already sensed and taught the agency of micro-organisms in disease.

And now Devine, in 1929, writes :— ‘The micro-organism provokes the organism, but it is the organism which makes the malady. There are no local illnesses’ : there are only general illnesses with manifestations more or less local illnesses; there are only general illnesses with manifestations more or less localised” and again, “It is not an illness we treat, but an individual who is ill.”

And Hahnemann said it all 100 years ago !—every word of it ! He puts it neatly and concisely, when he talks of the “*abnormal functional activity of the body which we call disease.*”

For him, disease was vital reaction against dynamic infection ; and he saw that it was the reaction of vitality against the invasion that produced the morbid symptoms—only to be combated, as he was able to demonstrate, by some agent capable of evoking or stimulating *like* reactions ; thus enhancing resistance.

This aspect of the constitutional treatment of patients is now finding favour under the expression, “Neo-Hippocratic conception” : where every diseased individual constitutes a problem by himself, and we are no longer dealing with diseased organs but a sick person.

Dr. Cawadias claims that the homoeopathic method of diagnosis has given us three principles for modern medical practice ;—the principle of individualisation ; the careful consideration of symptoms ; and the study of the constitution of the patient as a factor in disease.

He states that "Under the influence of other Neophipocratists such as Professor Bier, Professor Hans Much and others, the homoeopathic materia medica has been included for the finding of medicines that act on the whole body," and that "there is a distinct trend in modern therapy (Albert Robin, Bier, Much, Tzanck, and others) to reintroduce Homoeopathy as part of general medical treatment."

In regard to Hahnemann's "We know no diseases, only sick persons," consider rheumatism. Does this ailment affect all persons alike? and can there, therefore, be one remedy for "rheumatism"? Homoeopathy differentiates, and therefore can prescribe for the individual case. One person (*Bryonia*) has pain on the slightest movement: another (*Rhus*) must be continually on the move, to make the pain endurable. But *Rhus* is worse for wet and cold, whereas *Bryonia* cannot stand dry weather. *It is not a symptom, but the symptom-complex that reveals the remedy.*

The constitutional aspect of Medicine is occupying the attention of the Profession. Workers in the realms of rheumatism and gastric crises are paying attention to the antecedent psychological influences. But it is here also that Homoeopathy steps in; and by paying special attention to temperamental symptoms is able to prescribe a remedy (*similimum*) to prevent physiological disturbances becoming organic. *Staphisagria* helps where there is an antecedent psychological distress due to chagrin or thwarted ambition. *Arsenic* and *Phosphorus* prove helpful in gastric conditions due to anxiety. One recollects a case of chronic rheumatism induced by fright—six years previously, a dud bomb had crashed into her house. *Opium*, one of several remedies for the after-effects of shock, proved curative in a few months' time.

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Though Homoeopathy knows no specifics for disease names, yet there are substances which alike in poisonous doses and in provings reproduce so nearly described disease conditions, as to be practically specific for most cases of such diseases.

As :—*Crotalus Horridus* (rattle-snake poison), which produces bleedings from every organ and orifice of the body, is our great remedy for black-water fever. *Latro-dectus mactans*, a spider poison, whose bite, wherever inflicted, occasions symptoms not to be distinguished from angina pectoris, proves astonishingly curative in that disease, and, as said, *Corrosive sublimate*, poisoning with which simulates and has been mistaken for dysentery, in infinitesimal doses cures rapidly most cases of that disease ; while *Arsenic*, with its agony of vomiting, purging, anxiety, restlessness and collapse, mirrors and, in infinitesimal doses, will promptly cure ptomaine poisoning.

This is not the time, nor have we space to enter into the question of chronic diseases, their aetiology and treatment, in which, again, Hahnemann was far ahead of his contemporaries and, indeed, ahead of all but the most modern thought.

I suppose not one of us has approached Homoeopathy otherwise than with doubt and mistrust ; but facts have been too strong for us.

- (1) Romeis. *Biol. Zschr.*, 1923, cxxxv, p. 141.
- (2) Reid Hunt. *Science*, 1930, lxxii, p. 526.
- (3) Macht. *Amer. Journ. Opth.*, Aug., 1931, p. 729.
- (4) Medical Research Council. Special Report, Series No. 150. "Medical Use of Radium," 1931.
- (5) Harris and Innes. *Bio. Chemical Journal*, 1931. Vol. lxxv, p. 367.



