

# THE HAHNEMANNIAN GLEANINGS

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## GENERALS OF KENT

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Kent lays more stress upon the generals than upon the particulars. According to him, you cannot expect a radical change in a case, unless its generals agree with the generals of a remedy. Disease starts in the general sphere, i.e., in the vital plane ; cures starts in the general sphere and in the same plane, as evidenced in the symbolic well-being of the patient. But the gap between them is filled only when the two 'Generals', one of the patient and the other of the remedy, agree to conclude an instrument of peace. But how did Dr. Kent strike upon the generals ? What had been his source for them ?

Kent credits all his philosophical conceptions to Hahnemann, and acknowledges Organon as the fountain-head of all his ideas. In the preface to his Philosophy he writes :

They (the lectures) are not intended, in any sense, to take the place of the Organon, but should be read with that work, in the form of a commentary, the object in each lecture being to dwell upon the particular doctrine sufficiently to perceive and emphasize the master's thought.

He recognizes that the generals struck many of his predecessors. The good old C. V. Boenninghausen based his Repertory upon them. Writing on the subject in his preface to the Repertory Kent says :

As is well known to older practitioners, the method of working out a case from generals to particulars is the

most satisfactory. If a case is worked out merely from particulars it is more than probable that the remedy will not be seen, and frequent failure will be the result.

To those who have used Boenninghausen's "Therapeutic Pocket Book" the working out of cases from generals is a familiar method. But for the benefit of the younger men the following suggestions are offered which may prove helpful: After taking the case according to the lines laid down in the "Organon" (Secs. 83—140), *write out all the mental symptoms and all symptoms and conditions predicated of the patient himself and search the Repertory for symptoms that correspond to these.* Then search for such physical symptoms as are predicated of the blood, color of discharge, and bodily aggravation and amelioration that include the whole being, as well as desire for open air, desire for heat, for cold air, for rest, for motion which may be only a desire or may bring a general feeling of amelioration. It should be understood that a circumstance that makes the whole being feel better or worse is of much greater importance than when the same circumstance only affects the painful part, and these are often quite opposite. Then individualize still further, using the symptoms predicated of the organs, functions and sensations, always giving an important place to the time of occurrence of every symptom until every detail has been examined.

A prior comprehension of the sick subject in all his generals, in his entirety and wholeness, before any attempt at grasping the particulars exhibited in him, is all the doctrine that Kent emphasizes. In his lecture on Manganum, he says:

As far as we have gone we see that every thing brings out that very idea and the nature of things that Hahnemann talks about in his first paragraph, that the sole duty of the physician is to pay his attention to the sick, to the patient himself; and who is this patient himself? This is what we have been talking about, this is what we have been trying to bring out here; and all the particulars that I shall take up corroborate these very things.

These particulars are so linked with these generals talked about that they make a grand unity of thought, and we can not separate them.

Really, who but Hahnemann could be the fountain-head of all his philosophies? The Organon supplied all that Kent could want. The first paragraph of it,—though in sharp contrast to the second is not so elegantly worded by Hahnemann as we find in Dudgeon's translation, instilled the basic idea into Kent's mind, e.g., GRASP THE PATIENT FIRST. Faithfully translated the first paragraph reads :

Des Arztes (The Physician's) höchster (highest) und (and) einziger (only, sole) Beruf (mission, vocation, calling) ist (is), kranke (sick) Menschen (men) gesund (healthy) zu (to) machen (make), was (what) man (people, one) Heilen (healing) nennt (call(s)), i.e., **The Physician's Highest and only Mission is to make sick men healthy, which people call Healing.**

But, who is the sick man? How do you define the term "Sick?" The answer is given by Hahnemann in paragraph §5, first of all. Sickness is compounded of the two pre-eminent causes,—Exciting and Fundamental, the physical constitution of the patient and his mental, intellectual, moral and environmental factors, i.e., sickness represents the whole de-ranked self of man. The latter half of the said paragraph, rendered faithfully, gives the following, which corroborates Dudgeon's excellent translation of this paragraph :

wobei (whereby) die (the) erkennbare (discernible) Leibes—Beschaffenheit (bodily constitution) des (of the) vorzüglich des langwierig (especially of the long-standing, chronic) Kranken (sick person), sein (his) gemüthlicher (mental) und (and) geistiger (intellectual) Charakter (character), seine (his) Beschäftigungen (occupations), seine Lebens—weise (his mode of living) und Gewohnheiten (and habits), seine bürgerlichen (his social) und häuslichen (and domestic) Verhältnisse (relations), sein Alter (his age) und seine (and his) geschlechtliche (sexual) Funktion (function), u.s.w. (and so on) in Rücksicht (in

consideration) zu nehmen (to be taken) sind (are). That is :

**Whereby the Discernible Physical Constitution of the patient (especially if chronic), his Mental and Intellectual Character, his Occupation, Mode of Living and Habits, his Social and Domestic Relations, his Age, Sexual Function and so on, are to be taken into consideration.**

So, to ascertain the physical constitution of the patient, the mental, moral, intellectual and environmental factors involved, and the exciting and fundamental causes in his case, Hahnemann formulates a wide questionnaire in very long notes to paragraphs § 88, 89, 90, 93, which every physician must go through in detail. But, even a limited selection from the said notes convinces one to realise what a Constitutionalist—Generalist Hahnemann was, and where the sources of Kent's generals lay :

For example, what is the character of his stools ? How does he pass his water ? How is it with his day and night sleep ? What is the state of his disposition, his humor, his memory ? How about the thirst ? What sort of taste has he in his mouth ? What kinds of food and drink are most relished ? What are most repugnant to him ?

Does he whine, moan, talk or cry out in his sleep ? Does he start during sleep ? Does he snore during inspiration, or during expiration ? Does he lie only on his back, or on which side ? Does he cover himself well up, or can he not bear the clothes on him ?

In women, note the character of menstruation and other discharges etc.

For example, how the patient behaved during the visit—whether he was morose, quarrelsome, hasty, lachrymose, anxious, despairing or sad, or hopeful, calm etc. Whether he was in a drowsy state or in any way dull of comprehension ; whether he spoke hoarsely, or in a low tone, or incoherently, or how otherwise did he talk ? What was the color of his face and eyes, and of his skin generally ? What degree of liveliness and power was

there in his expression and eyes? Whether he lay with head thrown back, with mouth half or wholly open, with the arms placed above the head, on his back, or in what other position? What effort did he make to raise himself? And anything else in him that may strike the physician as being remarkable.

To these belong poisoning or attempted suicide, onanism, indulgence in ordinary or unnatural debauchery, excesses in wine, cordials, punch and other ardent beverages, or coffee,—over-indulgence in eating generally, or in some particular food of a hurtful character,—infection with venereal disease or each, unfortunate love, jealousy, domestic infelicity, worry, grief on account of some family misfortune, ill-usage, balked revenge, injured pride, embarrassment of a pecuniary nature, superstitious fear,—hunger, or an imperfection in the private parts, a rapture, a prolapsus, and so forth.

Don't you feel like hearing and seeing a Kent interrogate and examine a patient of his?

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