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SIMILIA SIMILIBUS CURENTUR

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

The principle of Similia ever since its adoption by Dr. Samuel Hahnemann has been over-emphasized. But, as in many things, its over-use could not safeguard it from the controversy that raged over it.

It is queer that the controversy originated in the terminology of the Latin aphorism that embodies the principle of Similia. There had been some people who would write: SIMILIA SIMILIBUS CURANTUR, while others would object to it and write: SIMILIA SIMILIBUS CURENTUR. You wonder what is the difference? The difference is only in one vowel "e", which replaces "a" in the last word, "Curantur". It is like the raging of a storm in a cup of tea. But, probably, if you know the history of Homœopathy, you will see that the petty quarrel became important and led to a major conflict in the arena of the homœopathic doctrine itself.

We claim no Latin scholarship. Naturally, we can at best set forth the grounds of the controversy as concisely as possible. The objectors to the "a" in "Curantur" claim that the aphorism with "Curantur" can not be so used as to mean "likes are cured by likes". For, "Curantur" comes from Latin "Curare", which means "to take care of" i.e., "to treat", and never implies "Cure". Hahnemann was too good a Latin scholar to commit such a mistake. How the English word "Cure", derived as it is from Latin "Curare", came to mean "to take care of" or "to treat" successfully, so as to imply what it does

in modern English, is a problem that asks solution from a philologist, but this is certain that Latin "Curare" can not be made to imply English "Cure". Further, the aphorism, as is evident from the inflexion of the word, "Curantur", can not be understood to have been stated in the affirmative sense, as in "likes are cured by likes". It is obviously in the subjunctive mood with an imperative force, and is correctly paraphrased as "let likes be treated by likes".

Historically, "Curentur" is correct, is the opinion of the objectors. In the Essay On NEW PRINCIPLES (Lesser Writings : p-311), there is an incomplete reference to the maxim, namely, "Similia Similibus". But in all the successive editions of the Organon, as well as in the letter written in 1835 to the French Minister of Public Instruction (vide. British Homœopathic Journal Vol. XXXVIII, page-64), Hahnemann clearly and completely puts the maxim with "Curentur". Mr. Everest, the faithful English pupil of Hahnemann, is stated to have said that Hahnemann was much annoyed by the substitution of "Curantur" in the place of "Curentur". Finally, the homœopathic world was led to recognize "Curentur", since it is indelibly carved in the fitting tomb-stone of Hahnemann at Pere Lachaise Cemetery in Paris, and in the magnificent cenotaph erected in his honour at Washington,—an emblem of grandeur and repose.

The supporters of "Curantur", probably, drew its substitution, at the out-set, from usage. On many occasions, "Curantur" had been found to have been written wrongly or rightly. The British Homœopathic Journal, on its appearance in 1843, adopted the aphorism with "Curantur", and the Editorial Board strongly defended the later form against the weighty arguments of the renowned classical scholar, Dr. Ryan, in 1862 (Vide. The British Homœopathic Journal : Vol. XX, p-314). Probably, Hahnemann himself did not mind the change in his later years. For, among the articles found on his body, when it was disinterred to give it a more worthy burial, was a gold medal, presented to him by the French Homœopathic Society, on which was engraved the maxim in the later form.

From mere usage, "Curantur" led its supporters to the field of Philosophy. So, Usage gave place to Doctrine. They argued: While, "Similia Similibus Curentur" means "Let likes be treated by likes" and stands only for a therapeutic method or technique, "Similia Similibus Curantur" means "Likes are cured by likes", and is the statement of a generalized, inductive truth, which takes the place not merely of a curative rule or maxim, but of a Therapeutic Law, as universal, eternal and immutable as the Natural Laws of Gravity, Electricity, Magnetism and the Tides. One of the staunch supporters of "Curantur", as it is expressive of a Law, vehemently defended it, when he characterized the reduction of Similia to a mere therapeutic rule "as a crime for which our language fails to give a designation sufficiently condemnatory" (Vide. North American Journal of Homœopathy, August, 1878).

The storm in the tea-cup did not rage futilely, as it ultimately swept over the vast sea of the scope, utility and ultimates of the homœopathic doctrine itself. This is manifest again, when we go through a paragraph by one of the best defenders of "Curentur" and the "rule" theory:

"In the fifth edition a different arrangement is adopted. The Latin formula is no longer in conjunction with its paraphrase, but occurs in the preceding paragraph, and is there termed "the only therapeutic law conformable to nature" (*das einzig naturgemasse Heilgesetz*). The German paraphrase is still, however, "maxim" (*Satz*). By the dislocation of the Latin formula from its German equivalent, and by its being no longer termed *Satz*, i.e., "Maxim", but *Heilgesetz*, literally, "law of healing", it would seem as though Hahnemann was inclined to adopt the idea conveyed in the innovation of "Curantur" with its incorrect rendering by the phrase "likes cure likes". In the aphoristic portion of the work, however, he teaches that the homœopathic therapeutic rule is the outcome or corollary of the law of nature that *a weaker affection is extinguished by a stronger similar one* (Secs. 24-26). From this the therapeutic rule "treat likes by likes" is an obvious logical deduction."

You readily recognize that while the supporters of the "e" had been no less personalities and classical scholars than Drs. Ryan, Hughes and Dudgeon, the defenders of the "a" had been the first editors of The British Homœopathic Journal, Dr. Reinke of Jamaica, and the philosophers led by Dr. P. P. Wells of "Intermittent fever" fame.

Of late, the "Curantur—Curentur" controversy has ended with the homœopaths, and "Curentur" has been universally adopted, but the "law"—"rule" controversy is raging still and divides the school into two camps.

However, our universal adoption of "Curentur" has had no influence upon those,—mostly scholars and great compilers, out-side our ranks. Don't you find the general dictionaries like Websters', Chambers', and the medical dictionaries like Dorland's, still quoting : Similia Similibus Curantur, with its common paraphrase "likes are cured by likes" ?

REFERENCES

1. The British Homœopathic Journal : Vol. XXXVIII, p.-64.
2. The British Homœopathic Journal : Vol. XX, p-314.
3. North American Journal of Homœopathy : August, 1878.
4. Hahnemann : Lesser Writings : Translated by Dr. Dudgeon, p-311.
5. Organon : 5th Edition, by Dr. Dudgeon, p-206.
6. Dr. Hughes : Principles and Practice of Homœopathy, Ind. Ed. pp-1-3, 9-11.

REGISTRATION OF SAURASTRA HOMŒOPATHS

From the annual report, for the year 1956, of the Saurashtra Homœopathic Medical Association, it is known that the said Association was inaugurated on the 24th of November, 1953. The Association has on its roll 80 members at present, from different cities of Saurashtra. It is commendable that the Association is extending benevolent services to the poor and middle classes of Saurashtra, in the shape of free medical consultations and distribution of medicine.