How Homeopathic Myths Are Born: Thoughts on Hering’s “Inauguration Speech”

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“Once again, history repeats itself. One states it, another quotes it, in the end many state it, and in a matter of years it becomes public opinion – this fearsome power, void of intellect, crushing, inaccessible to all arguments of reason.”

—C. Hering

Myths sometimes develop from inadequate research or from unfounded assumptions. Take, for example, the recent claim that Hahnemann was a “Grand Master of Freemasonry.”

The article Quiet at Köthen by Dr. Jurj (Simillimum, Vol. X) cites Hahnemann’s alleged return to Freemasonry and surmises that Hahnemann had become interested in metaphysics at Köthen. Jurj advances that Hahnemann’s later work represented a change from his earlier “radical empiricism” to more “speculative, theoretical assumptions,” which included a “spiritual conception of disease” and an interest in “metaphysical philosophy.” He concludes with speculations that Hahnemann must have been a “Grand Master Freemason.”

A homeopathic myth is born…

Dana Ullman quotes Jurj’s assumptions as fact in his recent book, The Homeopathic Revolution: Why Famous People and Cultural Heroes Choose Homeopathy. “It is not surprising to know that Hahnemann was a Freemason as early as 1777; he was later granted the title of Obermeister, or Grand Master (Jurj, 2007). In this esoteric fraternal organization and secret society, men shared certain moral and metaphysical ideals.”

These claims of a descent by Hahnemann into esoteric beliefs and “metaphysics,” as well as of an advanced status in speculative Freemasonry, fall apart under closer investigation. Jurj bases his theory on a comment by Dudgeon, who concluded that the letters Obr. appearing behind Hahnemann’s name designate a “title of freemasonry.”

Jurj makes several unfounded assumptions: “What is the meaning of Obr.? Probably, it is an abbreviation of the title ‘Ober,’ which means superior, which means Great Master. If our suppositions are right, when this letter was written, Hahnemann was not a complete apprentice anymore, but he became a Great Master, a respectable title in Freemasonry, while he lived in Köthen.”

A perfunctory review of Masonic literature shows that there is only one Grand Master in charge of a Lodge at any given time. The Duke was the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the Duchy of Köthen-Anhalt when Hahnemann treated him and stayed there as a guest. Jurj’s suppositions turned out to be incorrect, for how could Hahnemann have been a Grand Master there at the same time as the Duke?

The myth begins to unravel…

Upon further investigation we find that the term Obermeister has apparently never been used as a title in German Freemasonry except to denote the Supreme Master of the Order – Jesus Christ. In addition, the letters Obr. are never used to designate Obermeister. Finally, the proper German word for the title “Grand Master” would be Grossmeister, not Obermeister.

That leaves the question, what does Obr. stand for? The true meaning of the abbreviation Obr. is made plain in Haecll’s biography of Hahnemann entitled Samuel Hahnemann – His Life and Work, the English edition published by Homeopathic Publishing Company, London, in 1922. It contains the definition of Obr. in a footnote on page 125: “Obr. – Ordensbruder – Member of the Masonic Lodge.” Jurj quotes extensively from this book, yet he somehow overlooks this important detail. Hahnemann had joined freemasonry as a young man; however, it turns out, Jurj has offered no proof that Hahnemann ever had an interest in esoteric philosophy or had become a Grand Master freemason.
The end of a homeopathic myth.

Some erroneous claims in homeopathy undoubtedly constitute innocent mistakes. Others, according to Constantine Hering, are deliberately falsified with the intent to harm homeopathy. If left uncorrected, they will keep being promoted, and may one day become a chapter in an age-old disinformation campaign that has defamed and maligned the homeopathic contribution to science.

In his *Inauguration Speech*, the last of a collection of *Medical Writings* published in Germany thirty years after Hahnemann’s death, Hering writes on the problem of myths, errors and even falsifications that intend to malign, *intra et extra muros* (from within and without [of homeopathy]), Hahnemann’s scientific accomplishments. Hering implies that, since its inception, attacks on homeopathy have come in the form of fabrications that date back to past falsifications employed against another medical genius, Paracelsus, as far back as the sixteenth century.

In this text, Hering reveals that Hahnemann “was an enemy of all mysticism, even in religious matters.” Through a fictitious character, Professor X, Hering shows that Hahnemann was a materialist and experimental scientist in the modern sense of the word and had no interest in metaphysics. Hering exposes a fabrication that has persisted to the present day, that homeopathy’s origins are to be found in the so-called hermetic traditions, the occult, alchemy, mysteries and magic.

There are many elements of a speculative nature within the field of homeopathy. The question arises of whether these are an inherent part of homeopathic inquiry or were some of them introduced to harm it. The renowned Argentinean homeopathic physician Francisco X. Eizayaga, in his *Treatise on Homeopathic Medicine*, comments on how esoteric theories within homeopathy, especially the doctrines of American homeopath James Tyler Kent, have obstructed homeopathy’s acceptance by medical scientists.

According to Eizayaga, Kent’s inspiration came from Swedenborg, who “applied certain new doctrines to the problem of the creation …that in each being from the mineral to the human, there exists an original substance (simple substance) which, coming from God, who made it in its fullness, runs like an influx through all created beings. He conceives this formative intelligence as governing the evolutionary process and working out the architecture of all the kingdoms—animal, vegetable and mineral. As regards to mineral substance, all notions of time, of dimensions and of space are erased and no longer to be taken into account.”

“The Kentian school maintains an illuministic doctrine with which an ingredient of a mystical type is added to Hahnemann’s doctrine, identifying matter with spirit, believing in the so-called simple substance or original essence. Generally, Kentians do not believe in contagion, and preach the deductive method from the general to the particular, or from the *a priori* principles to the facts.”

Eizayaga quotes Dr. Starkey, who writes in the prologue to Kent’s *Homeopathic Philosophy*, that “Kent often used the words: ‘All my teaching is based on Hahnemann’s and Swedenborg’s; the teachings of one and the other perfectly tally.’”

But do they?

The noted French homeopathic physician Dénis Demarque writes:

“It is because Kent has applied to homeopathy the Swedenborgian mask of occultism that our method has taken a sectarian slant, especially in Anglo-Saxon countries with strict Kentian obedience.

“*Kentism would gain everything in freeing itself of its theosophic mask that limits it to being widely known and understood due to its character of an esoteric nature reserved to some initiates. For this it would be enough to return to the true Hahnemannian source loosened from all philosophical *a priori*. “

Eizayaga explains why this matters:

“We only propose to put these doctrines into evidence for unaware colleagues who may have only slight philosophical or religious bases and to warn them so that they may not fall into the error of thinking that these have any point of contact with homeopathy or with Hahnemann’s doctrine. When Hahnemann mentions notable physicians who have lived before him, he alludes to various hundreds, and yet among these names Paracelsus does not appear. It is certain that Paracelsus’s existence could not have been unknown to him; however, Hahnemann rejected as absurd the doctrine of the signatures which Paracelsus so vigorously supported.”

Since Hering’s “Inauguration Speech,” the association of homeopathy with esoteric beliefs has only grown stronger. The instillation into homeopathy of concepts entirely alien to it – from Jungian psychology to astrology – has continued to the present. The modern equivalent of 19th-century Swedenborgianism and theosophy are “New Age beliefs,” especially in North America and the U.K.
At the same time, the chief strategy of the modern campaign to discredit homeopathy as unscientific is employed by such modern attackers as Professor Michael Baum. He is well known for his anti-homeopathy tirades, and has maligned it as magic and witchcraft. Others, i.e. Edzart Ernst, are satisfied to decry its “implausibility.”

But is homeopathy also being destroyed from within? A Machiavellian strategy is all too obvious. Those who don’t learn from history are condemned to repeat it. The myths debunked by great minds such as Hering’s keep being resurrected – only to be debunked again.

The “implausibility” myth was recently debunked most eloquently by Professor Rustum Roy during an internationally televised debate at the University of Connecticut. “We don’t have a ‘Law of Implausibility’ in science,” he says simply. “If we did, science and its fruit, technology, would have ground to a halt long ago. Cars would not drive and planes would not fly.”

According to Hering, the inductive method combined with experimentation and rational thought are the sources of Hahnemann’s genius; however, it is apparently not the inductive method of Sir Francis Bacon in his New Organon. The true originator of the inductive method is apparently the much-maligned Paracelsus. Hering advances evidence that certain occultist notions had been falsely attributed to Paracelsus, who in reality had rejected alchemy just as he had rejected the Galenic School.

Instead, Paracelsus had allegedly advocated individualization of treatment, initiating modern (homeopathic) methods of physiology and pathology, and the very strict inductive method. At the same time, Hering makes it perfectly clear that Hahnemann was completely unaware of any of the above and rejected Paracelsus as a “wild mystic” and never bothered reading him.

This, of course, begs the question: If Paracelsus was the real source of the inductive method, and if Hahnemann was completely unfamiliar with his work, from where would Hahnemann have derived his methodology? Hering gives us a hint by revealing Hahnemann’s true philosophical mentor — and it was not Paracelsus.

Hering points out that Paracelsus’s real name was Theophrast von Hohenheim. What may come as a surprise is that he also presents evidence, based on extensive research, that Hohenheim, like Hahnemann, had been a subject of a merciless disinformation campaign. Hering possessed an impressive library of works attributed to Hohenheim, including 89 books and 18 bound volumes of pamphlets. His estate also contained several unpublished manuscripts he authored on Hohenheim. His private collection became later known as the Constantin Hering Collection and was housed in the Archive of Hahnemann University. In spite of Hering’s best efforts, all references to Hohenheim are still under the name Paracelsus, and Hahnemann University, in 2002, was renamed after the financier Drexel.

Ironically, despite his vocal defense of Hahnemann’s enmity towards all things mystical, Hering himself, like other North American homeopaths, eventually joined the Swedenborgian sect headquartered in the nearby Philadelphia suburbs. Yet his medical writings remain free of mystical and metaphysical concepts. His introduction into medicine and later proving of the remedy Glonoinum, which was later adopted by the “Old School” under the name nitroglycerin, has assured him a permanent place in medical history, whether or not he is officially credited for it.

Hering appeals to his fellow Germans’ consciences, encouraging them to speak up about obvious falsehoods, appealing to their sense of responsibility as a people. In other writings, he is very concerned about the conscience of the homeopathic community of Germany – the birthplace of homeopathy. As an expatriate living in Philadelphia, Hering was in a unique position to observe the impact of various cultural movements on German homeopathy. He always kept up with the latest news from his homeland and had regular discussions with noted cultural figures and colleagues, such as Lippe and Raue on the philosophy of Hegel, Kant, Schopenhauer, and Plato.

Hering chose Strasbourg for the location of his drama. It is the capital of the embattled Alsace region located between Germany, France, and Switzerland, where Hohenheim had been forced to leave the medical university he taught at. It is also the region where Hahnemann’s true philosophical mentor, Johann Heinrich Lambert, originated. Lambert, a brilliant Alsatian mathematician, astronomer, scientist, and philosopher, is better known for his proof of the irrationality of π. He introduced probability calculation into mathematics, and was the first to introduce systematic phenomenology (New Organon, volume 2 Part B) into philosophy. Very few are aware of this, or that Lambert is also the father of semiotics (New Organon, volume 2 part A).

In 1764, Lambert wrote the seminal work Neues Organon (New Organon), a treatise on philosophy and the scientific method. Part IV of this 1,107-page tome is entitled “Phenomenology.” It is highly probable that Hahnemann modeled his Organon after it, and not, as some textbooks claim, after Bacon. The ground-breaking book’s full title is: New Organon: Thoughts on the Investigation and Designation of the True and its Distinction from Error and Illusion.
Lambert, with the razor-sharp precision of a mathematician and astronomer, slowly, patiently explains how not one, but several different categories of induction, used singly or in combination with others, will lead to truth, or may yield errors or illusions, depending on how one makes use of these. Lambert’s phenomenology is pure applied reasoning. It settles the question of why and how homeopathic myths are formed: It is because most homeopaths have never studied the application of reason. In his Organon, Hahnemann made masterful use of the tools detailed in Lambert’s treatise. Curiously, I have not yet been able to find any English translation of this brilliant and noteworthy book.

Hering’s death in July 1880, seven years after this speech was published, left a huge vacuum in the international homeopathic community. According to Gypser, the compiler of the Medical Writings, it caused a “consternation among homeopathic physicians worldwide, to even a greater extent than Hahnemann’s death.” Was it because the voice of “conscience” was now silent?

At a time when homeopaths themselves relegate entire sections of Hahnemann’s Organon to the trash heap, when errors and false notions abound in all branches of homeopathy and have even become incorporated into homeopathic research and pathogenetic trials, when variations of the doctrine of signatures seem to predominate many of its methodologies, when orthodox scientists declare homeopathy to be implausible and medical journals proclaim its premature death, Professor X’s inaugural speech should take on new significance.

Inauguration Speech by the Chair of Homeopathy at the University of Strasbourg

Presented for publication by Dr. Constantin Hering.

Translated from the German by Manfred Mueller, RSHom (NA), CCH

The auditorium is packed. The teacher enters, ascends the steps, pauses, and wishes to speak before taking his chair, when a loud turmoil erupts, with knocking, whistling and yelling.

When it seems to die down, he says,

“Meine Herren... Gentlemen! Students!”

Renewed eruption of horrific turmoil, cries: “Get out! Get lost! Go away!”

The new teacher pulls out his pocket watch, counts one second after another, and one minute after another, indicating this with his hand. He stands calmly; however, with each minute he makes a chalk mark on the black board. His composure, it seems, escalates the noise level to a perfect “Great Beat” [Zapfenstreich – Prussian military drum beat].

When finally a small pause arises due to fatigue, he speaks:

“Well, you are gentlemen; however, if you continue like this, I will have to leave, indeed.”

Laughter, renewed calls:

“Out, yes, get out!” Yet several voices of approval.

“I wish to extend a gesture of goodwill to you – an American compromise, if you will.”

Renewed yet diminished raging; several voices: “Listen! Listen!” Finally, there is silence.

“Just a few words, gentlemen! You have expressed your displeasure now for nearly ten minutes. Would you now give me ten minutes in turn, and let us take turns in this way, until the hour is up, which has been ordered by our superiors?”

A hodge-podge of pronouncements follows; several bass voices penetrate, “Okay – deal. Ten minutes, but not one minute longer!”

“It has been 350 years now since a man wandered from Basel to Straßburg, a physician, unseemly clad, with a small band of migrating students, whose appearance was not much better than his. He had left Basel, where he taught medicine at the university, and in German, no less – the first, the very first, who had the moral courage to do this. Rumor had it, that he had ‘sent off malicious pamphlets,’ after a cleric had cheated him for his physician’s pay. However, that wasn’t it, because in those days, such things were not taken so seriously.

“Yet it was a turbulent time, when the majority of Germans had drifted away from the Mother Church, and when many sects were formed which hated each other bitterly. Those who refused to take sides, everyone persecuted. Someone like our aforementioned professor, who did not believe in the trinity, who proclaimed, ‘The faith in unity keeps my soul alive,’ who said about predestination, ‘It turns God into a Devil,’ could not remain in Basel. By the way, he had taught a new healing art there; he rejected the predominant Galenic school entirely. He had also once marched with his students and had thrown the *Pocketbook of Recipes* by Platerarius and other trash into the St. John’s fire! This Galenic Platerarius should be made available to you; however, it is impossible to locate, even as an antique; doctors have used up all printed copies like children use up their ABC books.

“But what was his new doctrine? Thou shalt – so he taught – observe and investigate in each case of disease the nature of things and be guided by it and not by names taken out of books from foreign countries, and not act according to preformed conclusions. You should always grasp the individual case; don’t be led by invented disease names. After all, every pestilence is different. Accordingly, take each as it is.

“In short, the same man was not only the founder of our contemporary physiology and pathology, but also of a new research methodology we call today the inductive method in general.

“It was not Lord Bacon, that contemptible Court toady, as the Germans have allowed themselves to be misled into believing by the English! Once again, history repeats itself. One states it, another quotes it, in the end many state it, and in a matter of years it becomes public opinion – this fearsome power, void of intellect, crushing, inaccessible to all arguments of reason. Regarding Bacon, we may thank our Liebig for this insight, who had the high moral courage to investigate this three-hundred-year-old scarecrow more closely, to uncover its plumage, and to present clear evidence for the above. Should Liebig’s speech not be currently found in your local library, it shall be there from now on – here it is. The same man who walked from Basel to Straßburg, and who took up his walking stick again to move on after two or three years, was, according to Liebig, the founder of the inductive method. He never signed his name any other than Theophrast von Hohenheim. However, he is more renowned under the pseudonym of Paracelsus.

“Three years after he had left Basel, he published a booklet in Nürnberg, 115 pages in small quarto, entitled, *On the French Disease*. Had he not left anything other than these 115 pages, printed in the year 1530, and if we knew nothing else of him, we would still have to recognize him as one of the greatest physicians of all times and of all nations in recorded history.

“Because this first publication of Hohenheim is no longer found in the Straßburg library, it shall be found there once again, starting today. Here it is. Only one reprint from that year is known, that was preserved; it is located in Wolfenbüttel. Everyone should read this little book and judge for himself, but not without preparation! The great critic, Professor Marx of Göttingen, has shown that six out of seven of Paracelsus’ ‘works’ are falsely attributed to him. Here is his treatise. Everyone who wishes to educate himself ought to read it. If we take the trouble, as Dr. Piper did, to compare older and newer editions, even that which was recognized as genuine by Marx turns out more and more falsified with each subsequent reprint and laced with abominations and defilements. And on the basis of this filth this man was judged, and it was even considered a just verdict!

“Max Müller once said in his inauguration speech here in Straßburg, in 1872, ‘a people needs a conscience, just like every individual.’

“When will we Germans finally make it a matter of our conscience to restore justice in all respects and everywhere to the one who has been subjected to defamation and slander for three centuries?!

“*Meine Herren*, the ten minutes are up!”

Various voices: “Go on, go on!”

“But this brings me to Hahnemann.”

Silence. A few knockers are urged by a majority to keep quiet.

“Listen, listen,” some exclaim.

*Meine Herren*! Various alchymists and spagyrics, from whom Paracelsus already distanced himself in the aforementioned little book – his teacher of chemistry was Abbot Trittheim, an opponent of the alchymists – have accused him that he had stolen the bulk of his teachings from a certain Basilius Valentinus. This gentleman, in high probability, is a wholly imaginary person, although his place of birth was assigned to the Alsace; nobody knows where or when. Neither about his birth nor his death the very least is known for certain. He supposedly lived and worked in a Benedictine monastery on Peter’s Hill in Erfurt.
As early as in the year 1515, Emperor Maximillian I searched in vain for this celebrity. Yet his name was found neither in Erfurt nor in Rome. Finally, a chronicler, J.M. Gudenus, an Erfurt cleric, took pity on the alchymists and in 1625 wrote a Historia Erfurti (This is 150 years after Emperor Max had made his search to find the miracle man, and 76 years after the printer Thölden published the first book under the famous name.). He did the alchymists a favor; he mentioned on page 129 that at the onset of the 15th century a Basilius Valentinus lived on Peter’s Hill in Erfurt. To be sure, Gudenus did not know that B.V. had reviewed diseases that did not appear until the end of the century. And, when an investigation was conducted into the monastery’s name rosters, nothing was found.

Almost a century later, after Paracelsus’ first work had appeared in print, the alchymists began to publish books that were supposedly written by a so-called B.V. Nobody has seen a certified manuscript, and there is no record of such a manuscript having been preserved anywhere. Supposedly, they had gotten to Sweden during the Thirty-year War, and the rest was lost. Nobody knows if they were written in Latin or in German. The chief work, the triumphant vehicle for the Antimonii and several others, were only available in German and had to be translated into Latin. Curiously, the German was entirely in the style of the century it was printed, instead of in the style of the previous century, in which the author allegedly lived.

All this would not be worth mentioning, if it did not remind us of a peculiar coincidence. As Paracelsus was accused of having stolen his doctrine from Basilius Valentinus, so it happened once again to Hahnemann. In 1831, Professor C. H. Schulz in a little book of 263 pages accused Hahnemann that he had stolen his doctrine from Paracelsus. In both instances neither knew anything of the other. When Hahnemann was sent the book that covered this subject by a doctor of his school, he sent it back without opening the package with the words, ‘Now, this is the last straw!’

Hahnemann had never read as much as a single line of Paracelsus, since he was, along with Haller and Sprengel, both of whom he regarded highly, of the preconceived notion that Paracelsus was an alchymist, astrologer, wild mystic and fanatic. Hahnemann deemed his writings ‘incomprehensible gibberish,’ as he puts it in the aforementioned letter. He never read anything like that. He was an enemy of all mysticism, even in religious matters. He was highly interested in the infamous book de tribus impostioribis [translation?].

Through his upbringing and by his earliest outlook, Hahnemann belonged to the material school of thought, like his teacher Quarin of Vienna. We have definite proof of this. When in 1790 he translated Cullen’s Materia Medica, and got to the place where Cullen mocked the Germans as supporters of Stahl’s School, his German heart rebelled and he stated in a footnote, ‘The few remaining bearers of arms for the Stahl knighthood have become extinct, that one would have to be very ignorant of our state of affairs if one wishes to accuse German physicians of favoring Stahl’s remedies.’

Hahnemann had received his mental preparation from the daily thinking lessons his father gave him during his childhood, as we have learnt from an old friend of his father’s. There were only very few fathers in the year 1760 who did this. Hahnemann developed his philosophical point of view through Lambert and not through Kant. Since the Kantian School with Schopenhauer has ascended to its highest point – the point of nothingness – philosophers have begun to turn to Lambert once again as an unused source, as one of the most noteworthy minds active in German science.

In the same aforementioned book, in Cullen’s Materia Medica, Hahnemann remarks in a footnote that he could not agree with Cullen’s theory that China bark was a combination of bitter and spicy, because many far more bitter drugs mixed with far spicier ones did not cure the fever that China cured. However, he did not turn this into another dogma, as was so commonplace in those days. Instead, he performed an experiment applying the strictest possible method in the field of pharmacology.

He reports about it as follows:

It is possible, by combining the strongest bitter and the strongest astringent substances, to arrive at a compound which contains, when administered in a small dose, far more of both those properties than the bark, and yet this will never, in all eternity, evolve into a specific for the fever. This should have been answered by the author. The still-missing principle that could explain to us the effect of the bark will probably not be easy to find. However, one may consider the following: Substances which can cause a fever, such as very strong coffee, pepper, leopard’s bane, St. Ignatius bean, and arsenic, extinguish this type of intermittent fever. I took as an experiment twice daily four parts of good China bark for several days.

The feet, the tips of the fingers, etc., became very cold. I became weak and sleepy. Then my heart started beating, my pulse was hard and fast; unbearable anxiousness, trembling (yet without the chills), prostration throughout the limbs; then pounding in the head, redness of cheeks, thirst. In short, all symptoms common for me in intermittent fevers appeared, one after another, however without the actual febrile chills. In short, additionally, the characteristic symptoms common for me in intermittent fever – insensibility, the sort of stiffness in the joints, however, especially the numb, offensive sensation which seems to have its seat in the periosteum of all the bones of the body – all of these appeared. This paroxysm lasted two to three hours each time, and renewed itself when I repeated the dose, not otherwise. I stopped and was back to health.
"This report has been dealt with in the most hideous way, not only by opponents full of bias, but even more vehemently by the opponents of Hahnemann within the Homeopathic School. In a footnote to the prologue of China in the third part of his Materia Medica Pura, Hahnemann remarks on this experiment as follows: ‘With this, a dawn arose in me for the first time,’ an insight, which was followed by the light of the day! Nowhere in his report did Hahnemann assert that China had produced intermittent fever in him; he said expressly ‘without the chills,’ he says, ‘all the characteristic symptoms common for me appeared, one after the other, however without the actual febrile chills.’ He continues, ‘Additionally, the characteristic symptoms common for me during intermittent fever appeared.’ He had had intermittent fever about twelve years prior and had cured it with China.

“He prudently does not talk of intermittent fever here as a disease, which is the subject of pathology, but he mentions ‘characteristic symptoms’ that were not only characteristic to his particular case of illness, but that were later shown also as the characteristic symptoms of the drug effects of China. He never forgets to call them ‘the symptoms usually encountered in me during intermittent fever;’ that is, he refers to all phenomena as peculiar to him individually, produced by the China bark.

“Later, it became popular to mention, in opposition to drug provings, that many of the symptoms that develop are not signs of the drug, but belonged to the idiosyncracies of the provers. It was forgotten that besides the medicine proven by a healthy subject, this subject must necessarily also be physically present, and that one must consider both, not merely the drug or the prover by themselves. Finally, against all common sense, they wanted to throw out these idiosyncratic symptoms, as if there existed other symptoms! As if it were even possible that there existed other symptoms! As soon as you pay attention to what he above calls characteristic symptoms – those that differentiate one case of disease from another, and also one drug from the other – you will only find idiosyncracies of the patient and also of the drug that are worth considering.

“In this case, China cured certain symptoms, and now, twelve years later, it brought them on, and repeatedly, ‘whenever he repeated the dose, after discontinuing it, the same paroxysm returned, not otherwise.’ Now, a thought flashed through his soul: Similar symptoms that a drug produces could become an indication for those cases it is capable of curing. What if it was possible to arrive at specific indications through this? That was the thought which he referred to as ‘red dawn.’ It was here, he decided, where further research must be conducted.

“He did not jump out of the bathtub after the above experiment and run naked through the streets of Syracuse yelling, ‘Eureka! Eureka!’ as Archimedes had done, but he investigated further, slowly and with great caution. He first compared other drugs that caused a type of fever with cases that were cured by that drug. He then, with untold diligence, collected all the known effects of any and all drugs, even though there was desperately little use for them in medical practice. Above all, he tested one drug after another on himself and on a few other healthy subjects. He slowly began to realize that the difference in the effects of various drugs manifested itself chiefly in symptoms that had been deemed insignificant and were hardly mentioned previously, especially in the widely neglected modalities of their effects.

“He further noted occasional vehement aggravations, since he gave medicines in the same doses that were customarily used by doctors, or perhaps slightly smaller. These aggravations were followed by an even more certain cure. One such cure he had already communicated publicly, with Veratrum in a case of colicodynia, in Hufeland’s Journal. Later, he observed a case of poisoning with Belladonna. The affliction happened to greatly resemble those of the scarlet fever of his time. Because he had to give this strong medicine to children, he diluted it by placing one grain in ten thousand drops of alcohol, but even that he dared to give only as a preventive in drops, since he observed side effects from it, although he referred to them as harmless. As a result of this observation he, in 1800, had the idea to drive up these dilutions even further in successive steps in order to be able to also use Belladonna as a treatment for scarlet fever.

“This marked the end of the first decade following the first experiments with China bark. One should not forget what this means—ten years of work by a talented, skilled, tirelessly active scientist. Now, in 1800, for the first time, there was progress in great leaps. The successes in treatment became increasingly consistent and promising. After an additional ten years of diligent research, he tendered to the world his Organon. This book is a fruit of Lambertian philosophy, strict inductive method and twenty years of observations. It represents a notable event – the most magnificent of this century.

“Because Hahnemann’s opponents intra et extra muros have blathered such horrendous nonsense about the so-called small doses, I must insist on distinguishing adequately and strictly between the three steps of his doctrine. Three theorems were necessary to make the new medical practice possible.

“The proposition that similars cure similars is ancient. Already, Lykos quarreled with Galen over it, who demanded the contrarium. However, he wanted to impose it in a horribly foolish way on both the diseases as well as the drugs. Yet the similia similibus did not fare much better. We have comments on it from every century, medical and otherwise. Even Tycho Brahe, the
astronomer, speaks in its favor, as did Shakespeare on several occasions; but what did they do with it? These were all empty husks.

“The alchemists and spagyrics had arrived at the proposition much earlier: Poison against poison, heat against heat, cold against cold, but what did they accomplish with this?”

“You may touch on the *signatura rerum* to begin with – certainly the oldest of all indications, for even the indigenous people all over the world take their bearings from it. Recently, *Saracenia* was recommended for smallpox, after a French physician became acquainted with the remedy through the Indians in Canada, and they both had observed plenty of cures with it. Silly imitators were of the opinion that it was worthless. But it works quite often, especially during convalescence, accelerating the expulsion of the pox and preventing scars. However, this is the case only from a decoction of the root, never in any other form, nor even from alcoholic tinctures.

“How did the natives come upon this peculiar swamp plant whose leaves are shaped like pitchers? It was the brown raised areas so commonly appearing on the epidermis of this plant that resemble pock scurfs! One species was even named *Saracenia variolaris* by Michaux. It was the *signatura rerum* that guided these natives. Even the first introduction of iron oxide by the Oracle of Delphi for the cure of impotency was guided by the *signatura*. The rust scrapings had to be derived from a sword. We only need to look at the bas-reliefs to see how the Greek soldiers hold their short swords!”

“However, all of these paltry attempts do not make a science. Even in the arts it is often coincidence that must do most of the work. And what was termed the Law of Cure, *similia similibus*, falls short of any scientific exactitude whatsoever. What exactly is ‘similar?’ The mathematicians speak of it quite definitively and mean with the term ‘equal’ a quantity, and with ‘similar’ ‘the same conditions.’ So long as physicians do not know at least with approximate certainty what is similar, they ought not speak of science at all.

“It is highly remarkable that Hahnemann, long before he was interested in the great chemical similarity between *Nux vomica* and *Ignatia*, said nevertheless already in 1812: They are too similar, therefore they do not follow each other well, and are also not antidotally.” Please refer to the letter to Stapf in the year 1812. Here it is, for anyone interested in reading it, in form of a copy. You see, Hahnemann learnt by experience. For the careful observer, however, our rule of cure is sufficient until we develop better indications through science.

“The main point in homeopathy is not to be found in the laws of cure, but in the fact that Hahnemann began with trials on the healthy. There were others who at times experimented on themselves, who have even swallowed something on occasion! Haller even recommended it, which is much easier than to do it. Not one who ingested medicines to find out their effects observed accurately enough. Neither Starke nor Störk thought of the similarity with diseases; they had nothing but the old theories on their minds. Hahnemann was the absolute first.

“Here (in Hahnemann’s work) these two propositions were united – were married, as it were. As a result, they both gained in value and importance and became usable, applicable, worthwhile. And what was the child of this marriage? It is the third and highest axiom which makes Hahnemann’s theory into a complete whole, and without which practitioners would wallow in the rawest empiricism: With decreasing mass of the drug, the effect does not decrease accordingly. Therefore the two, mass and effect, cannot be related.

“Out of this, then, arises a discovery which has already withstood the test in millions of the worst cases of disease in the eyes of all attentive and experienced observers - the greatest discovery of our century: The freer its molecular motion, the greater is the effect of a drug. This is especially the case after organic changes have taken place.

“The stone the builders rejected became the cornerstone! It has also become the stone of contention for a great many who have never learned to think, or who, on certain places in their cerebral cortex, have a cavity where all mental activity has come to a standstill!

“To make such discoveries requires greatness; to acknowledge them requires certainly much less. But even that takes moral courage! And moral courage is a rare thing. It is uncommonly rare. All innovation that is a progressive development of existing theory finds rapid acceptance and is greeted with joy. But innovation that goes against a prevalent bias, people reject. Instead of opening their eyes, they prefer to continue to stagger in a fog.

“Anyone who has ever stood in the high mountains during a foggy morning and seen how, with the approaching dawn, the fog that hung over the whole countryside lifts, remembers that you will first see only the very highest peaks glowing red in the morning light. Afterwards, there appears a mountain here, a hill there, until finally all fog dissipates, lingering in the deepest valleys till last. That is the way it is here also.”
“The time will come when the fog lifts – but when? When all young doctors build their foundation on experiment, on pure experiment alone, without any presumptions of bias! When all have made it a duty of conscience to conduct trials on themselves, and refrain from distorting their successes with speculations, but to take them as they are! Finally, when everyone attempts to treat in accordance with experience!”

“We would like to give an example: When you burn a finger, this is immediately followed by intense pain, and within six hours by the formation of a blister, after which the recovery takes several days. This happens in each and every case without exception. This time, however, you put your finger in water which contains a tincture of *Cantharis* diluted to 1/1000 to 1/100,000 of a drop, or even much less, you will find that the pain stops completely, and no blister will develop, and the upper part of the skin may peel later on at best, so new skin can grow back. One could mention countless other easily conducted experiments which remain untried because of cowardly propensities of the soul.

“Like Hohenheim for three hundred years, Hahnemann has been slandered for nearly a century. And for the past forty years the majority of his students have taken great pains to spoil and distort his doctrine and to rob it of its great triumph, exactly as the followers of Hohenheim did. Forged books they could not foist on him. That would have been against the style of our times! However, they help themselves with twisted reports and misrepresentations of all sorts. When will the conscience of our people awaken? Only when physicians and laypersons learn how to think!

“However, this is very difficult when the parent or teacher fails to give the child thinking lessons. This is, admittedly, a harsh statement, but true nonetheless. Let us listen to what the many authors, especially among physicians, consider to be evidence-based. There is the constant call for evidence, evidence, yet not one of them has the faintest notion what evidence is and what is required for it. Evidence is only possible when certain fundamental propositions, axioms, have been adopted, that either do not need to be supported by evidence, or that are adopted as if they did not need it. If it is shown by strict deduction that a given proposition concurs with these axioms, this is considered proof. Suppose the axioms are false, then all deductions are worthless, and all conclusions nonsensical.

“Assuming we take conscience as self-evident, as something that does not require further proof, then we may consider one thing as proven during this hour. We have not provided proof that any part of Hahnemann’s doctrine is true! That requires much more, very much more. But proof that our own conscience begs, even demands inexorably, that we must arrive at a verdict, a just verdict, on the principal tenets of this doctrine by strict and repeated experimentation, before we reject that with which we are not familiar – that is, that which we have not yet examined.

“‘Replicate it,’ said Hahnemann.”

They cleared the auditorium in silence. Whether they will come back next time to learn more about this is certainly open to question.

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