

THE EVOLUTION OF HOMOEOPATHY

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Hahnemann's happy observation of the action of bark illuminated, as by a flash the crude idea of similia that had tinged ancient and furtively pervaded medieval medicine, as well as opened up a new vista of untold possibilities. This was the real birth of homeopathy, which grew in efficiency as experiment uncovered the pure effects of drugs. The methods and rules thus evolved were formulated in the canons of the Organon, and being distinctly revolutionary were a direct challenge to traditional medicine, which then was and is now clannish and intolerant of apostasy.

The result was that all who were convinced of the truth of Hahnemann's demonstrations and who dared to say so, soon felt the heavy hand of entrenched privilege in an ostracism and persecution only exceeded by the religious fanaticism's of the reformation. But human enlightenment was soon to penetrate even the medical profession, hitherto the most hidebound and conservative of all association, but the process was most painful, finally giving birth to homeopathy which perforce became militant, even during the lifetime of its expounder.

The collateral sciences later also did much to undermine the rationalistic basis upon which regular medicine professed to find a point of rest. Not the least of these being the cellular pathology of Virchow, which, while it made a profound and lasting impress upon medicine in general, was also most powerfully felt by the professed followers of Hahnemann, the larger portion of whom were drawn aside into an effort to reconcile its principles with the homeopathic healing art, but those who made the faux pas of bowing the knee to such a materialistic idol were doomed to the bitterest of disenchantment, for by and by science in general and even pathology has ventured more and more into the sphere of dynamics until today we behold its experimenters trying even higher and higher dilutions of Tuberculin in the hope of getting rid of inherent dangers. So near have they come to actual potentization.

That the application of similia, for the purpose of cure, is the art of adjusting certain correlated human reactions is dawning upon the scientific world, and old medicine having partly accepted the principle of its curative value, is trying very hard to find its own way of applying the facts, but the effort has led it into serology, which is really a chemical isopathy therefore false, as Hahnemann clearly points out in his remarks upon Psorinum; for only potentization can enable the vibration rate of any substance to closely approximate that of the disturbed vital force and thus make it homoeopathically curative in the highest sense.

Real cures are never made chemically, nor do the effects of serum look very like the parent disease. It is a strange reasoning that tries to provoke an early crisis by loading into the sick body the very things that it must later so laboriously cast out. Reaction, thus induced, doubtless often brings about recovery, but never really cures. The premises are false and the results can not be other than a strained effort to cast out both poisons, a thing that differs as day and night from the prompt, painless and perfect action of the similimum.

How soon a truly curative reaction may be started is hard to estimate, but the feelings of the patient, his behaviour and appearance combine to show that the similimum acts instantly, although improvement may not become strikingly evident before the fourth day. As every cure is begun by harmonising disordered vital action and as such processes necessarily begin within the central nervous system, it is easy to comprehend how a cure in the best sense is instantaneous and for all practical purposes shows itself to be such

Hahnemann advises us to know disease in order that we may better grasp what is in need of being cured. While the latter should be evident enough, it is in reality not so plain because we are in the habit of noting only the coarser aspects of sickness. This is especially true for

all who still hold somewhat to the older pathology, as well as is strongly exemplified in acute diseases which are more easily discerned than chronic affections; the latter requiring a more minute scrutiny from every standpoint, a circumstance which has naturally led many men into using high and higher potencies.

Crude drug effects resemble acute sickness most markedly, particularly in their forceful character, but as the potency rises its action dips deeper and deeper into the life processes and brings forth symptoms which increasingly simulate chronic disease. This general rule has led to the belief that the former is best treated with low potencies, frequently repeated, while chronic symptoms are better met with the higher preparations at longer intervals, all of which overlooks the fact that the extent and force of the induced reaction is the sole guide in such matters. Incidentally it may be remarked that a violent reaction, unless it be of very brief duration, indicates that the remedy has only irritated the life force and is not capable of curing, hence must be replaced by a more fitting similar.

Success in finding the truly curative remedy depends largely upon the ability to see either marked general or particular resemblances. The former are more apparent in acute affections because the life forces, then being in greater immediate danger commonly display more violent distress signals, which bear such a wonderful resemblance to the coarser drug effects. Hahnemann clearly saw this, but did not specifically say so, but does say that his treatment of acute diseases, which by the way was carried out by the aid of symptoms obtained largely from the lower potencies, failed him or gave but indifferent results in chronic affections until the miasms were searched out and coincidentally the higher potencies experimented with and applied to their cure. This experience of the masters has been confined over and over again by his followers and seems to imply that the larger part of our progress is dependent upon experiments with the high and highest potencies. We have not yet ventured very far with similia, but the time is near at hand when longer voyages of exploration will be made.

If homeopathy be so great a discovery and boon why does it languish? In its earlier period when adherents were necessarily converts from conviction the new idea spread rapidly enough, but as allopathy realised its subversive nature, opposition and finally intolerance arose, resulting in the founding of exclusively homeopathic teaching institutions mostly manned by able recruits who did much good work, giving the new school a great impetus. Gradually however men of small mental caliber were admitted to the faculties; men who did not and could not grasp homeopathic fundamentals and whose teaching was poor or openly disloyal and to-day we are reaping the harvest, our own graduates being only too often the poorest of homeopaths.

That the law of similia will always find exponents can not be doubted, but that homeopathy as now constituted will endure may well be questioned, for the mixed teaching of her schools too often only excites derision and makes no converts worth while; nevertheless there is more or less silent coming over into real homeopathic practice of old school men who have seen some good work or other done by careful prescribers.

History teaches that reforms have sometimes arisen within, but oftener brought pressure from without before real progress has come. The latter may be a bit iconoclastic, but it has done the best work. So far it does not look as though homeopathy would show itself an exception to this rule unless it can bring itself to teaching the law of similia in its purity from every chair in every faculty from the time the student enters college until he leaves it; then and only then can some real homeopaths be turned out, for it must be admitted that there are a few minds that can never grasp this truth under the prevailing system of general public instruction. Teachers of homeopathy should also never miss an opportunity to point out how homeopathic science dovetails with all the sciences and advances along with them.

The day for making converts by polemic has passed long ago. To-day every one wants to be shown a better way than the one he already knows. It is an unparalleled opportunity for purely homeopathic demonstration but one that many are not fitted to make hence all who

feel their weakness should eagerly seize every chance to learn more and more about the beautiful and beneficent art of homeopathic healing which is so truly nature's way and is grounded so firmly in every science.

Although the vast array of modern data is often very confusing every thing that takes the searcher away from pure observation should be laid aside and all individual experience read by the light of the Organon before final conclusions are drawn. Here Hahnemann shows what a genius for observation he had. His insight into the action of that most subtle and mobile of all fluctuating forces, the vital force, is extraordinarily keen and leaves us no room to doubt the greatness of his intellect.

Medicine never will or can advance along true lines until it learns the lesson with which Hahnemann's philosophy is bound up. At present it is still stumbling almost as of old, but we should not blame it too much for basely materialistic ideas have obsessed and sterilised men's minds for half a century; only of late are there signs that make us suspect that perhaps this man made god of science is after all only a hideous idol with feet of clay.