

**ON THE SOURCES OF  
THE HOMŒOPATHIC  
MATERIA MEDICA**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649235025

On the Sources of the Homœopathic Materia Medica by Richard Hughes

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Cover @ 2017

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ON THE  
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HOMŒOPATHIC MATERIA MEDICA.

THREE LECTURES

DELIVERED AT THE LONDON HOMŒOPATHIC HOSPITAL  
IN JANUARY, 1877.

BY

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HENRY TURNER AND CO.,

OF  
LONDON: 77, FLEET STREET, E.C.

1877.

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LECTURE I.

THE FRAGMENTA DE VIRIBUS.—THE MATERIA MEDICA PURA.

GENTLEMEN,—In the two previous courses of lectures which I have had the honour of delivering from this place, I have discussed the principal constituents of the *Materia Medica* of Homœopathy. I do not propose, in the limited time allotted to me in the present session, to go over any of that ground again. But there are certain points on which, in my survey of the materials of homœopathic practice, I feel that I touched but lightly, which nevertheless would amply repay a longer consideration. Such consideration I propose, on the present occasion, to give to two subjects connected with the Homœopathic *Materia Medica*,—the first being the Sources of that *Materia Medica*, the second the Nature and Laws of Drug Action. I gave a brief account of the former in my introductory lecture, but am glad of the opportunity of setting it forth more fully: the latter involves questions continually arising in my discussion of each drug, but which I found no place for considering separately and generally. The present course, therefore, will be, in these two respects, supplementary to those I have already delivered.

That which Homœopathy calls its "Materia Medica" is a collection of the pathogenetic effects of drugs—of the derangements they are capable of causing in the healthy body, on the basis of which it works its principle, "let likes be treated by likes." Some of these pathogenetic effects are observations of poisonings and over-dosings, as recorded in general medical literature; but the great bulk of them are the result of "provings" of the various drugs on the healthy human body, or of their side-effects (so to speak) when administered as medicines to the sick. Such collections of drug-symptoms are called "pathogenesies;" and they have been appearing from time to time in the school of Hahnemann ever since 1805. The history of the several publications containing them, and an analysis of the material presented in each, will constitute the account of the Sources of the Homœopathic Materia Medica which I design to bring before you.

1. The earliest volume of the series is that of Hahnemann's entitled *Fragmenta de viribus medicamentorum positivis, sive in sano corpore humano observatis*. It was written in Latin, as its title implies, and published at Leipsic in 1805. A copy of the original edition, and another of the more elegant form in which Dr. Quin edited the work in 1834, lie on the table before you.

The *Fragmenta de viribus* contains pathogenesies of twenty-seven drugs, which you will see enumerated in the list I now hand round, with the number of symptoms in each.

I.—*Fragmenta de viribus.*

	Hahnemann.	Obs. of others.
Aconitum napellus . . . . .	138	75
Acria tinctura (Canstium) . . . . .	30	0
Arnica montana . . . . .	117	33
Belladonna . . . . .	101	304
Camphora . . . . .	73	74
Cantharides . . . . .	20	74
Capsicum annuum . . . . .	144	8
Chamomilla . . . . .	272	3
Cinchona . . . . .	122	99
Cocculus . . . . .	156	6
Copaifera balsamum . . . . .	12	8

	Hahnemann.	Obs. of others.
Cuprum vitriolatum . . . . .	29	38
Digitalls . . . . .	23	33
Drosera . . . . .	36	4
Hyoscyamus . . . . .	45	290
Ignatia . . . . .	157	19
Ipecacuanha . . . . .	70	13
Ledum . . . . .	75	5
Melampodium (Helleborus) . . . . .	32	25
Mezereum . . . . .	62	34
Nux vomica . . . . .	237	51
Papaver somniferum (Opium) . . . . .	82	192
Pulsatilla . . . . .	280	29
Rheum . . . . .	39	13
Stramonium . . . . .	59	157
Valeriana . . . . .	25	10
Veratrum album . . . . .	161	108

You will notice that some of the symptoms of each drug are "observations of others." This does not mean that Hahnemann had as yet any fellow-observers. The "others" are in every case authors from whose writings he has cited. The symptoms for which he himself vouches are such as had come under his own observation as effects of poisoning or excessive dosing, and (in far larger proportion) those which he had obtained by provings on himself and others. "I have instituted experiments" he writes in the preface "in chief part on my own person, but also on some others whom I knew to be perfectly healthy and free from all perceptible disease."

He gives no information as to his doses or mode of administration. We can shrewdly infer these, however, from the remarks on the proving of medicines made in his essay entitled *The Medicine of Experience*, which was published later in the same year (1805). "In order" he writes "to ascertain the effects of medicinal agents, we must give only one pretty strong dose to the temperate healthy person who is the subject of the experiment; and it is best to give it in solution. If we wish to ascertain the remaining symptoms which were not revealed by the first trial, we may give to another person, or to the same individual, but to the latter only after the lapse of several



days, when the action of the first dose is fully over, a similar or even a stronger portion, and note the symptoms of irritation thence resulting in the same careful and sceptical manner. For medicines that are weaker we require, in addition to a considerable dose, individuals that are healthy, it is true, but of very irritable delicate constitutions." It would thus appear that the symptoms of the *Fragmenta* obtained from provings were the results of single full doses of the several drugs.

Of the twenty-seven drugs which this volume shows to have received Hahnemann's earliest attentions, twenty-two were carried on into his *Reine Arzneimittellehre*. Two—Cuprum and Mezereum—did not reappear till the second edition of his *Chronischen Krankheiten*; and three—Cantharis, Copaiba, and Valerian—were not again taken up by himself.

2. Five years now elapsed before Hahnemann published any more pathogenesies. But all this time he must have been diligently working, both in provings and literary researches; for in 1811 appeared the first volume of his *Reine Arzneimittellehre*, containing twelve medicines, six of which were new, the pathogenesies also of those which had already appeared being considerably increased. In 1816 a second volume was published, containing the pathogenetic effects of eight medicines, together with those ascribed to the magnet. This was followed in 1817 by a third, with eight medicines; in 1818 by a fourth, with twelve; in 1819 by a fifth, with eleven; and in 1821 by a sixth, with ten.

The first edition of the *Materia Medica Pura* (so we render *Latiné* Hahnemann's name for his book), which I have now described, is a very rare work. By the kindness of my friend Dr. Carroll Dunham, of New York, I am able to lay a copy of it before you to-day; and the table which I now put into your hands will show you its contents as I have done those of the *Fragmenta de viribus*.

II.—*Reine Arzneimittellehre.* 1st ed.

## Vol. I. 1811.

	Hahn.	Others.
Belladonna . . . . .	176	474
Dulcamara . . . . .	31	93
Cina . . . . .	23	15
Cannabis sativa . . . . .	15	54
Cocculus . . . . .	234	6
Nux vomica . . . . .	908	53
Opium . . . . .	114	464
Moschus . . . . .	0	39
Oleander . . . . .	10	18
Mercurius . . . . .	232	110
Aconite . . . . .	206	108
Arnica . . . . .	175	55

## Vol. II. 1816.

Canstium . . . . .	99	176
Arsenicum . . . . .	294	368
Ferrum . . . . .	228	36
Ignatia . . . . .	570	54
Magnes . . . . .	243	51
"    , North Pole . . . . .	236	14
"    , South Pole . . . . .	237	48
Pulsatilla . . . . .	971	102
Rhenum . . . . .	79	115
Rhus . . . . .	409	384
Bryonia . . . . .	408	102

## Vol. III. 1817.

Chamomilla . . . . .	448	83
Cinchona . . . . .	331	691
Helleborus . . . . .	90	108
Asarum . . . . .	14	254
Ipecacuanha . . . . .	144	87
Scilla . . . . .	85	201
Stramonium . . . . .	83	483
Veratrum album . . . . .	307	404

## Vol. IV. 1818.

Hyoscyamus . . . . .	103	486
Digitalis . . . . .	63	355
Aurum . . . . .	110	203
Guaiacum . . . . .	26	116
Camphor . . . . .	104	240
Ledum . . . . .	182	130
Ruta . . . . .	23	201
Sarsaparilla . . . . .	34	111

	Hahn.	Others.
Conium . . . . .	87	286
Chelidonium . . . . .	23	128
Sulphur . . . . .	112	49
Argentum . . . . .	48	152

## VOL. V. 1819.

Euphrasia . . . . .	26	90
Menyanthes . . . . .	28	269
Cyclamen . . . . .	8	197
Sambucus . . . . .	19	97
Calcarea acetica . . . . .	0	255
Muriatic acid . . . . .	57	217
Thuja . . . . .	222	287
Taraxacum . . . . .	0	209
Phosphoric acid . . . . .	160	411
Spigelia . . . . .	95	543
Staphisagria . . . . .	210	398

## VOL. VI. 1821.

Angustura . . . . .	93	209
Manganum . . . . .	89	242
Capsicum . . . . .	277	69
Verbascum . . . . .	32	143
Colocynth . . . . .	17	210
Spongia . . . . .	89	227
Drosera . . . . .	124	155
Bismuth . . . . .	4	97
Cicuta . . . . .	36	205
Stannum . . . . .	95	467

There are, you will see, sixty-one medicines contained in these volumes, besides the magnet. Twenty-two of them are, as I have said, transferred from the *Fragmenta*, but always with their pathogenesies enlarged: the remaining thirty-nine are new. There is an important change now manifest, moreover, in the "Observations of Others." These had hitherto consisted entirely of citations from authors; and the description still holds good of them as they appear in the first volume of the *Reine Arzneimittellehre*. In the five years, however, which elapsed before the second was published, Hahnemann—now in Leipsic, and at the zenith of his fame—had gathered round him a band of disciples, and enlisted them in the task of proving. Of the eight medicines which appear in