

**HAHNEMANN AS A MEDICAL  
PHILOSOPHER: THE ORGANON;  
BEING THE SECOND  
HAHNEMANN LECTURE, 1881**

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Hahnemann as a Medical Philosopher: The Organon; Being the Second Hahnemann Lecture,  
1881 by Richard Hughes

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**RICHARD HUGHES**

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# HAHNEMANN

AS A

MEDICAL PHILOSOPHER—

THE ORGANON.

*Being the Second Hahnemannian Lecture, 1881.*

BY

RICHARD HUGHES, L.R.C.P. ED.

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E. GOULD & SON,

*Chemists by Appointment to the London Homoeopathic  
Hospital,*

59, MOORGATE ST., CITY, E.C.

*And all Homoeopathic Chemists and Bookellers.*

1882.

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## P R E F A C E.

THE portions of this Lecture treating of Hahnemann's doctrines regarding a vital force, the psoric origin of chronic disease, and the dynamisation of medicines, were omitted in delivery for lack of time. In other respects, it stands here as its auditors heard it.

BRIGHTON,  
*December, 1881.*

65641



HAHNEMANN  
AS A MEDICAL PHILOSOPHER.

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THE ORGANON.

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GENTLEMEN,

My predecessor in this Lectureship, Dr. Burnett, conducted you through the life and work of Hahnemann up to 1821, when, in the sixty-seventh year of his age, he retired from Leipsic to Coethen. It would have been natural and fitting if I had taken up the story from this

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point, and showed you something of our hero during the two decades of active life yet granted to him. Circumstances, however, have otherwise determined my subject. During the last Summer Session of our School, I have been able to carry out a long-cherished project,\* and to read with my class the Master's great exposition of his method—the "Organon of Medicine." The study which has been necessitated for such a task—that I might criticise, illustrate and expound aright—may well, it seems to me, be utilised for our present object.

\* In my Introductory Lecture to the first Winter Session of the London School of Homœopathy, delivered October 2nd, 1877, I said—"There ought to be a place where those interested in the matter could hear the *Organon* read and examined."



I propose, therefore, to go back somewhat upon Hahnemann's life, but to survey him in another aspect. Dr. Burnett has cried "Ecce Medicus!" and has exhibited to you the man and the physician. I would ask you to consider with me the medical philosopher, as displayed in his cardinal treatise—the *Organon*.

I. The *Organon* was first published in 1810. A second edition appeared in 1819; a third in 1824; a fourth in 1829; and a fifth and last in 1833.\* Each of these is described as "augmented" (2nd), "improved" (3rd), or both "augmented and improved" (4th and 5th):

\* Materials for a sixth are said to have been left behind by the author; but the custodians of his papers have not yet received adequate temptation to publish them.

and, in truth, all, save the third, shew considerable changes as compared with their immediate predecessors. These editions, together with a few of the numerous translations the work has undergone, lie on the table before you. Let me say at once, that it is quite impossible to form an adequate estimate, either of the *Organon* or of its author without some knowledge of the changes it has undergone in its successive stages. Without this neither foe can criticise it nor disciple learn from it aright. For instance, the hypothesis of the origin of much chronic disease in psora, which not long ago was authoritatively stated to be one of the fundamental principles of homœopathy, first appeared in the fourth edition, i.e. in 1829. The theory

of the dynamisation of medicines—*i.e.* of the actual increase of power obtained by attenuation, when accompanied by trituration or succussion—is hardly propounded until the fifth edition. On the other hand, there is the doctrine of a "vital force," as the source of all the phenomena of life, as the sphere in which disease begins and medicines act. This has been regarded by many of Hahnemann's followers, especially in France and Spain, as an essential part of his philosophy. "Voici donc," exclaims M. Léon Simon the elder,\* "la pensée fondamentale de Hahnemann, la pierre angulaire du système." But

\* "Exposition de la Doctrine Médicale Homœopathique, par S. Hahnemann, augmentée de Commentaires par M. Léon Simon *frère*." Paris: Baillière. 1856.