

**THE CHRONIC DISEASES;
THEIR SPECIFIC NATURE
AND HOMOEOPATHIC
TREATMENT**

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The Chronic Diseases; Their Specific Nature and Homoeopathic Treatment by Samuel Hahnemann

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SAMUEL HAHNEMANN

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CHRONIC DISEASES:
THEIR
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AND
HOMŒOPATHIC TREATMENT.

BY
DR. SAMUEL HAHNEMANN.

TRANSLATED AND EDITED

BY
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WITH A PREFACE

BY CONSTANTINE HERING, M.D.

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1845.

TO THE
HOMŒOPATHIC PHYSICIANS
OF
THESE UNITED STATES,

THIS PUBLICATION IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

THIS is the first English translation which has ever appeared of Hahnemann's *Chronic Diseases*. It is needless to inquire why this admirable volume which incloses so many important truths, the proper knowledge and appreciation of which is indispensable to the homœopathic practitioner, should never have before appeared in an English dress. As this omission cannot have originated in indifference on the part of Hahnemann's disciples, the presumption is either that those few homœopathic physicians who are really imbued with the spirit of Hahnemann's doctrine, have been prevented by the pressure of business from undertaking the translation of this work, or else, that they were not sufficiently conversant with both the German and the English languages, to accomplish such a translation to their perfect satisfaction.

But for the admirable truths which Hahnemann points out in this volume, it probably would never be read in German. Hahnemann's phraseology is so involved, and bears so little resemblance to the usual modes of constructing periods, either in German or

any other language, that it is utterly impossible to furnish a bare translation of Hahnemann's writings. There is but one way of turning them into another language; this is, first, to master the sense of a period, and afterwards to embody it in the foreign tongue in a free manner. This is the course which I have pursued in translating this volume. I have not translated *words* but *ideas*. And the ideas I have rendered fully and faithfully: on this head I challenge criticism.

Of the merits of Hahnemann's theory of chronic diseases, I have nothing to say. It is not received with the same unbounded confidence by all homœopathic practitioners; but I venture to say that its general principles are fully admitted by all those who have a true perception of the spirit of the homœopathic doctrine.

It cannot be expected that the homœopathic doctrine should be fully understood as long as our knowledge of the nature and operations of the vital principle is deficient. Hahnemann's conception of the action of the homœopathic drug was altogether vague, incomplete, and even erroneous. My own conception of the homœopathic doctrine I have brought before the profession in my inaugural thesis. It is substantially as follows; and I wish it to be understood that I give it not as a mere speculation, but as a *demonstration*, so far, that is to say, as any physical truth can be demonstrated in the present state of our knowledge.

Inductive reasoning leads us necessarily to the admission of two orders of creative forces, one of which may be designated by the term *harmonic*, the other by the term *subversive*. The harmonic forces, by their action upon matter, produce those substances, animals, plants, and minerals, which are necessary to the development of the harmonious or healthy organism; the subversive forces, on the contrary, are those forces which produce the substances adapted to the organism in disturbance, and destined to restore it to its original conditions of health. Both these forces, by their action upon matter, embody themselves in

visible forms, each form representing or typifying a peculiar variety of those forces. The types or results which those forces create by their action upon matter, are united to those forces by that same indivisible bond which unites the effect to its cause.

The idea of a machine, and the machine itself, though they seem to be two distinct things, are nevertheless united to each other in such an indivisible manner as to make it utterly impossible to think of one separately from the other. The idea will at once call up the machine, and on viewing the machine, you are involuntarily reminded of the idea. The existence of a bond uniting effects to their causes, cannot be denied, although the nature of that bond may be totally unknown.

So far I have shown the existence of subversive creative forces and their subversive results, these latter being indivisibly united to the former. These results are the natural bases, or forms, or orders of existence of those forces. The embodying of those forces in their natural physical forms is effected according to order. But it often happens that those forces, instead of acting upon or embodying themselves in matter, act upon, and try to embody themselves in the animal organism. They then endeavour to adapt the animal organism to their own nature. This adaptation can only be completed by first destroying the organism, converting it to formless matter, and then impressing upon this formless matter their own creative energy.

It is evident that the animal organism is not the type or natural order of existence of those subversive forces. Hence there is no bond of union between these forces and the organism, and it must be possible to separate them. As the invasion of the organism by those forces and their attempts at adapting the organism to themselves constitute disease, so does the separation of those forces from the organism constitute the cure of that disease. The question then is, how are those forces to be separated from the organism?

The answer to this question is perfectly simple and self-evident. We introduce into the organism the natural types or forms of existence of that variety of subversive forces which has invaded the organism. These types being united to the forces by that indivisible bond which I have shown to exist between effects and their causes, the disease will, of its own accord, and with readiness, leave the organism which is not its natural product or type, and embody itself in its natural type which is the medicinal substance. How this embodying takes place is to be shown by the farther progress of science. It is probable that the typical substance acts upon the subversive force with a power of attraction. The subversive force flows into or converges in the medicinal substance which is its type. In the same way do the sun's rays converge in the focus of a burning-glass, does the magnetic sphere of this globe converge in the point of a needle and its attractive force act upon the smallest molecule. In order to find out what medicinal substance is typical of any given variety of the subversive forces, we must, in the first place try to discover the symptoms of the diseases which are embodied in the various medicinal substances. For this purpose we try them upon the healthy organism. The symptoms which are thus evoked in the organism are *indications* of the effects which a certain order of subversive forces is capable of producing in the organism. To the medicinal substances producing those symptoms, this certain order of subversive forces is therefore related as causes are to their effects, and as soon as they are brought in contact with each other, they become indissolubly united, the disease becomes a mere material point, and is separated from the organism in perfect freedom, and what is essential, *in perfect order*.

So far my conception of the homœopathic doctrine, in its general nature at least, amounts to a demonstration. But now the question occurs: by what process, in what manner does the invasion of the organism by the subversive forces take place and

is disease constituted! Here, I confess, science leaves us altogether, and any attempt at solving this problem, must necessarily be speculative reasoning.

One thing however is yet sufficiently clear; it is this, that the human organism cannot be invaded by disease unless it has first undergone a process of adaptation to the nature of a certain order of the subversive forces. An indigestion, for instance, can only take place, when the original harmony or equilibrium of the organism has been interfered with by substances having been introduced which are not adapted to the organism, or by those substances having been introduced in too large a quantity or at improper hours. What is termed indigestion, is therefore the effects of a peculiar order of subversive forces acting upon the organism existing in a peculiar state of preparatory adaptation. It is so with every other disease. *Disease is the totality of the effects by which we recognise or perceive the action of a peculiar order of subversive forces upon an organism which has been exceptionally or specially adapted to, or prepared for their reception.*

Hahnemann's theory of Chronic diseases corresponds exactly with my conception of the homœopathic doctrine. The itch-vesicle, the chancre, and the cauliflower excrescence, are vicarious embodiments of some internal disease, in a similar way as the homœopathic medicinal substance is the external visible type or embodiment of the internally acting subversive forces. There is this difference between that vicarious embodiment of the internal disease and the homœopathic type, that the latter may be introduced into the organism and be again, by its own choice, separated from it together with the disease, whereas the vicarious embodiment of the internal disease is the measure of the degree and mode of adaptation which the subversive forces have accomplished in the organism. Hence the vicarious embodiment or symptom is a mere palliative, whereas the homœopathic type has a curative effect.

Hahnemann's theory of Chronic diseases strikes a death-blow at those violent modes of invading the living organism, which are practised by the allopathic physicians. The contents or the secretions of an organ are exactly proportionate to, or are the exact measure of the peculiar state of vitality of the organ. If the organ be invaded by subversive forces, those contents or secretions indicate the degree of adaptation existing between the subversive forces and the organ. Those contents act as palliatives inasmuch as they appease to a certain extent the fury of the invading forces. To deprive those forces of results which they claim as their legitimate property, would be to excite them into a more violent action and to cause them to attack the more delicate parts of the organism. I have explained this view more fully in my inaugural thesis and in my notes on blood-letting. Allopathic physicians and people generally are inclined to believe that retching indicating a desire of vomiting, or that tenesmus indicating a desire of going to stool, the system, in both these instances, may be and ought to be relieved by an emetic or a cathartic. To administer these violent remedial agents, is a foolish mode of relieving the system. Spontaneous vomiting or a spontaneous evacuation of the intestines may afford relief, because they are the natural terminations of a morbid development; but those artificial evacuations, though they may, for obvious reasons, by establishing a momentary counter-irritation for example, be momentarily followed by a semblance of relief, are not natural terminations of a morbid process, but they are concessions of the system taking place independently of the existing invasion of the organism by the subversive forces. Retching and tenesmus simply show that the subversive forces have not yet succeeded in adapting the organism to their own action, and that, so far from favouring this action by artificial means, the organism may be the more easily disembarassed from it by the homœopathic type.