

**Homœopathy; its nature and evidence; : with a few words on small doses, /
by Thomas Hayle, M.D.**

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HOMŒOPATHY;

ITS NATURE AND EVIDENCE;

WITH A FEW WORDS ON SMALL DOSES,

BY

THOMAS HAYLE, M.D.

"STRIKE, BUT HEAR."

THE word "Homœopathy" is composed of two Greek words, *ὁμοιος* (homoios) like, and *πάθος* (pathos) affection or suffering. As applied to the treatment of disease, it indicates the principle, on which the treatment is founded: that principle is the likeness between the symptoms produced on the healthy body by the medicine proposed to be given, and the symptoms of the disease to be treated. If, for instance, the symptoms were a whitish coating on the tongue, with inflammation and swelling of the tonsils; or if they were those of erysipelas, Belladonna would be given; because, when given to people in health, it will produce like symptoms. Remark, the symptoms are only *like*, not the *same*; and the medicine which produces the one set of symptoms is *different*, is *another thing* from the cause of the disease, which produces the other set. The proposition is not then "what causes, cures;" but "agents which produce, or have a tendency to produce similar actions in the healthy body, neutralize each other's action, when they meet in the same body." It is not absolutely necessary that the medicine should infallibly produce the symptoms in question in all persons, but only that they should occur sufficiently often under its action, to prove its tendency to produce them. Remark again, the action of a medicine is to be ascertained by trials or provings on the *healthy*, not the diseased, body. If it be tried on the diseased body, who can distinguish the symptoms of the medicine from those of the disease, or from the compounded action of both? If you want to find the North, by the help of a compass, would you go magnet in hand? You would have the North wherever the magnet was. Examples of the Homœopathic Law abound. Mercury, which produces a certain kind of dysentery, will remove a similar kind. Peruvian bark cures a kind of intermittent fever, by virtue of its tendency to produce a similar kind; so does arsenic: and volumes might be, indeed, have been filled, with examples of the same kind. After these assertions it may fairly be asked, on what evidence do you believe that medicines, given on this principle, cure disease? We answer, on the following:—

1st. On the administration of a Homœopathic medicine, acute diseases frequently yield so rapidly as to force on the patient the conviction that the medicine has caused his relief. Within a minute or two he has felt its action manifested in an indescribable feeling of comfort about the part affected; and if, there be increased quickness of pulse, a fall of from 5 to 10 beats in the minute precedes, or accompanies the relief. So frequently does this occur, that when the Homœopathic practitioner meets with a case of severe suffering, he feels convinced that, either he will be able to relieve his patient before he takes his leave, or, from a trial of different medicines, and an observation of their effects, he will be able to put him in the way of getting relief. Most mothers, also, who have adopted Homœopathy in the treatment of their families, are well aware of this fact, and owe many a quiet night to the speedy action of the Homœopathic remedies. I once found a patient in a state of extreme nervous excitability. The room was quite dark; the shutters were closed; the curtains were drawn; the eyes were tightly bandaged; not a ray of light could be endured. Sound was equally offensive; the footfall of a person moving across the room, the jingle of keys, even the crumple of a piece of paper caused a scream. By some management, I contrived through a chink in the shutter to look at my watch, while I felt the pulse. It beat 120 in the minute. By the help of a candle, I selected the proper remedy, Coffea, gave a dose, and at the expira-

tion of two minutes, again felt the pulse: it was now 100. Convinced that the effect had taken place, I assured my patient that she could now bear the light; and having withdrawn the curtains, and opened the shutters, after some solicitation prevailed on her to remove the bandage. To her astonishment, she now felt no pain, and her extreme dislike to noise had also disappeared. She has since assured me that never has she enjoyed greater calm and peace than during the rest of that day.—Ten days ago, there came to the Dispensary a young man, of about 20 years of age, in great agony. His head, he said, was bursting; the pain would come on almost every minute for a quarter or half minute at a time, and he would burst into tears, and become completely incapable of restraining himself. Three mornings before he came to me, a similar headache had come on; it came on at 7 o'clock in the morning, and continued till the afternoon; each morning ever since, it had returned, lasting about the same time, and equally severely. His pulse was 76. The periodicity and agonizing character of the pain suggested to me arsenic as the remedy, and I instantly gave him a dose. Within a minute, from the change in his features, I saw that I was right in the choice of the medicine, and he said he felt lighter. Having to go down stairs, I told him to wait until I saw him again. Half an hour after he told me his pains had returned after a short relief. I felt his pulse, it was 64; and gave him another dose. He never had an attack after. In about two minute's time, I repeated the medicine; his pulse was then 60. Frequently since have I heard of him, but his headache has never returned.—In another case, several medicines had been ordered for a severe headache, to be taken in turn. The headache was of the throbbing character, compelling the patient to lie down, and to keep the head perfectly still. The slightest movement of the head increased the throbbing immensely, which then extended down the sides of the neck, so that the whole throat felt as if pulled by strings. The first and second medicines produced no effect; the third, immediate relief. A minute had not passed before the head could be freely moved without pain. This medicine was phosphorus; and the headache, on each recurrence, several months intervening between each, was immediately removed by it as at first. The patient had been subject to these headaches four or five times a-year for twenty-two years; they recurred but twice, and for a year have ceased altogether. These are the first cases that occur to my memory. An appeal to my case book would furnish me with hundreds of similar ones; and every Homœopathic practitioner has met with so many, as to fix firmly in his conviction the great probability of the speedy relief of acute cases. Now the frequent occurrence of speedy relief in acute cases, on the exhibition of a medicine is evidence of a very high order in favour of the belief, that such relief is due to the action of the medicine. The shortness of the interval which elapses between the administration of the medicine and the relief, produces an irresistible conviction of the connection of the one fact with the other. The time which has elapsed between the two facts has been so short as to narrow almost to nothingness the possibility of the effect being attributable to any other cause. One would as soon believe that the thunder, which in a few seconds follows the lightning, has no connection with it, as that the relief, which so soon follows the medicine given for the avowed purpose of relief, has no connection with the medicine so given. Besides, it would be almost miraculous if another cause should always select precisely this short interval, in preference to the length of time that in most cases may have occurred previously. It is this kind of evidence, which in systems of Logic comes under the head of the Method of Difference, or Experimental Method, the most conclusive of all kinds of evidence. Upon the addition of a new agent to a collection of phenomena, another and new phenomenon is, either immediately, or within a very short interval, observed, or an old one disappears. In adding, for instance, to a chemical mixture a particular acid, either a precipitate may appear in a clear liquid, and cause it to become thick, or a thick liquid may become clear. Now, wherever the Homœopathic relation between

the symptoms produced on the healthy body by the medicine, and those of the disease, is clearly made out, there the same invariable sequence of relief on its exhibition occurs. The medicine, homœopathically chosen, always relieves. I have numbers of patients, who know, from repeated experience the medicine that will relieve particular symptoms, when they arise. When they take the medicine, they are sure of the result. One of the cases above detailed is an instance in point. Error in judgment, or defect in knowledge, will of course prevent a successful result, as they will in any other art. But failure from these causes is not failure of the law; it is failure of the individual. And in spite of all causes to the contrary, such is the plainness of the law, that relief obtains in the great majority of cases. It occurs so often as to warrant the practitioner in believing in the very great probability of his being able to give relief; and the mother, in expecting a quiet night, in spite of the present restlessness of her infant. When failure occurs in one case, it does not logically vitiate the conclusion, that, in the other great number of successful cases, the result has been due to the Homœopathic agent; it only renders it probable, either that the medicine was not well chosen, or that (what in such a complexity of circumstances would not be wonderful) some unknown circumstance is present, which interferes with the result. It is confidently asserted, that no man of sound mind, who shall have been regularly trained in a practical knowledge of the principles of evidence, can witness a thousand trials of properly chosen Homœopathic medicines in cases of acute suffering, without becoming convinced of their efficacy.

2nd. Most chronic diseases yield gradually, but certainly, to Homœopathic treatment. Diseases, which have baffled all other treatment, or rather been aggravated by it, begin to yield, and gradually disappear: even the incurable are often much relieved. I have known some symptoms of several years' standing disappear, and never return, after a single dose of a Homœopathic remedy. At this moment I recollect two: a case of periodical spasms of the stomach of many years' standing, disappeared, after one dose of *nux vomica*; and a case of chronic diarrhœa, of many months' standing, after a single dose of sulphur.

3rd. The treatment of disease in Homœopathic Hospitals is greatly more successful, than in the Allopathic; and a comparison of the registers of private practitioners of the different schools gives the same result.* Under a Commission of Inquiry, appointed by Duke William of Brunswick, the books of both the Allopathic and Homœopathic practitioners were examined, with the view of discovering the respective proportions between the cases treated and the deaths. The highest Homœopathic proportion was three in the hundred, the lowest, less than one; while the Allopathic proportion ranged from eight to ten. When it is known that the practitioners in Brunswick are obliged, under heavy penalties, to keep a faithful register of cases treated, and the deaths occurring, and that the inquiry, in the case of one of the Homœopaths, extended over ten years, and in the case of the other, over four, statistical evidence of this kind must be allowed to have some weight.

Evidence of this kind, as might have been expected, has produced its usual effects on the human consciousness, and in these effects the observant mind perceives additional guarantees of its soundness. Witness the gradual, the extensive, the increasing diffusion of Homœopathy; the withdrawal of State prohibitions, in consequence of its *superior success* in the treatment of *virulent epidemics*; the waving of established customs in its favour, in consequence of its

* Out of 909 cases of Pneumonia, treated Allopathically by Guisolle, Briquet, Skoda, and at the Edinburgh Infirmary, 212 died, or nearly one out of four; whilst out of 299, treated Homœopathically by Fleischmann, there died only 19, or about one out of fifteen. Out of 111 cases of Pleuritis, at the Edinburgh Infirmary, 14 died, or about one out of eight; of Fleischmann's cases, 3 died out of 224, or little more than one out of a hundred. 21 cases of Peritonitis, at Edinburgh Infirmary, gave 6 deaths, or more than one out of four; 105 of Fleischmann's, 5 deaths, or less than one out of twenty. (See "Introduction to study of Homœopathy," by Drs. Drysdale and Russell.)

superior efficacy statistically demonstrated; the publication of myriads of cases, in the tone of which, the philosophic observer recognizes truth; the adoption of its practice by established practitioners, who had nothing in a pecuniary point to gain, but all to lose, by the change; the confessions of old men, who, after fifty years' practice, blessed God for the knowledge of Homœopathy; the admissions of opponents, sometimes, we fear, suppressed, half uttered; the influence it has had in the simplification and improvement of the ordinary practice; the discreditable attempts to account for the action of small doses. They are, we are told, not what they seem, not the medicines whose names they bear, but violent poisons—we work cures by Beelzebub! We cannot stoop to the Augean task of exposing the depravity of the position. Our worst wish is, a speedy return to common sense and right feeling. In all this, who does not see the cloud as big as a man's hand? Verily there will be a great rain.

Four objections may be made to the preceding evidence. 1st, It may be said, that the natural tendency of disease is towards cure; that cures therefore take place under all treatment, and cannot fairly be adduced in evidence for the success of any. Such cures as we have adduced, however, do not take place of themselves, or under any treatment, but the Homœopathic: at least they cannot be looked for under any other. They are too sudden. 2nd, The cures may be referred to the imagination. They are too frequent: who relies on imagination, as a means of cure, or expects to relieve in general by that means? What, too, becomes of children; and animals; and of those who are cheated; and of the cases in which one—two medicines are tried and fail, and another succeeds; all having had equal aid from the imagination, as, for instance, in the third case cited? 3rd, Is it diet? Most of the cures are too sudden for the diet (the objection provokes a good-humoured smile); many of the patients cannot eat, and others make no change. 4th, Your statistics are certainly more favourable than the Allopathic; but this may only prove that you do nothing, and they—harm. There is, I must confess, more in this objection than I can answer in so small a space. I can only protest that we do positive good; and that the other half of the objection must be allowed. Large doses of arsenic, iodine, mercury, Peruvian bark, depletion, &c. do vastly aggravate and prolong the cases of chronic disease from natural causes.

It is needless to say much about the dose in which the remedies are given. Every practitioner gives such a dose as will produce a sufficient curative effect; but the dose is not the principle on which the medicine is given. It is, in fact, only the result of observation; not deduced from any known facts by reasoning. The ridicule, therefore, which attacks the smallness of the dose after its necessity has been established by observation, is a ridicule of the Creator, who established such a relation between the quantity and its effects on the living body; and if the ridicule be manifested before the experiment is tried, it is premature; for no one can know in an experimental matter what is absurd, until he has tried it. If they will have their laugh, let them earn it by a trial; and if they won't try, let our laughing friends cease to laugh, and reflect at least on some facts which they know, namely, that every man in passing over a hill side leaves something on the ground or in the air, which no chemistry can detect, and no microscope can perceive; but which has its existence, nevertheless, and its value, for his faithful hound. Let them remember, too, that the causes of the most virulent plagues, which occasionally decimate, and may one day depopulate our globe, are equally imponderable, intangible, and invisible; and that there is no great absurdity in attempting to meet agents of so subtle a nature by agencies, as subtle as their own.