

Organon of Medicine : Preface

<http://www.homeoint.org/books/hahorgan/orgapref.htm>

ORGANON OF MEDICINE



Dr Samuel HAHNEMANN (1755-1843)

Dr Samuel HAHNEMANN (1755-1843)

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

ACCORDING to the testimony of all ages, no occupation is more unanimously declared to be a conjectural art than medicine; consequently none has less right to refuse a searching enquiry as to whether it is well founded than it, on which man's health, his most precious possession on earth, depends.

I consider that it redounds to my honour that I am the only one in recent times who has subjected it to a serious honest investigation, and has communicated to the world the results of his convictions in writings published, some with, some without my name.

In this investigation I found the way to the truth, but I had to tread it alone, very far from the common highway of medical routine. The farther I advanced from truth to truth, the more my conclusions (none of which I accepted unless confirmed by experience) led me away from the old edifice, which, being built up of opinions, was only maintained by opinions.

The results of my convictions are set forth in this book.

It remains to be seen whether physicians, who mean to act honestly by their conscience and by their fellow-creatures, will continue to stick to the pernicious tissue of conjectures and caprice, or can open their eyes to the salutary truth.

I must warn the reader that indolence, love of ease and obstinacy preclude effective service at the altar of truth, and only freedom from prejudice and untiring zeal qualify for the most sacred of all human occupations, the practice of the true system of medicine. The physician who enters on his work in this spirit becomes directly assimilated to the Divine Creator of

the world, whose human creatures he helps to preserve, and whose approval renders him thrice blessed.

SAMUEL HAHNEMANN
LEIPZIG, 1810

ORGANON OF MEDICINE

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

PHYSICIANS are my brethren; I have nothing against them personally. The medical art is my subject.

I have to inquire whether medicine as hitherto taught has, in all its parts, been merely developed out of the heads, the self-deception and the caprice of its professors, or whether it has been derived from nature.

If it be merely a product of speculative subtlety, arbitrary maxims, traditional practices and capricious deductions drawn from ambiguous premises, it is and remains a nullity, though it may reckon its age by thousands of years, and be decorated with the charters of all the kings and emperors of the earth.

The true healing art is in its nature a pure science of experience, and can and must rest on clear facts and on the sensible phenomena pertaining to their sphere of action, for all the subjects it has to deal with are clearly and satisfactorily cognizable by the senses through experience. Knowledge of the disease to be treated, knowledge of the effects of the medicines, and how the ascertained effects of the medicines are to be employed for the removal of diseases, all this experience alone teaches adequately. Its subjects can only be derived from pure experiences and observations, and it dares not take a single step out of the sphere of pure well-observed experience and experiment, if it would avoid becoming a nullity, a farce.

But that the whole art of medicine as hitherto practised, though it has been, for want of something better, practised for these 2500 years by millions of physicians, many of whom were earnest high-minded men, is yet in every respect an extremely stupid, useless and thoroughly null affair, is proved by the following few incontrovertible considerations.

Unaided reason can know nothing of itself (a priori), can evolve out of itself alone no conception of the nature of things, of cause and effect; every one of its conclusions about the actual must always be based on sensible perceptions, facts and experiences if it would elicit the truth. If in its operation it should deviate by a single step from the guidance of perception, it would lose itself in the illimitable region of phantasy and of arbitrary speculation, the mother of pernicious illusion and of absolute nullity.

In the pure sciences of experience, in physics, chemistry and medicine, merely speculative reason can consequently have no voice; there when it acts alone, it degenerates into empty speculation and phantasy, and produces only hazardous hypotheses, which in millions of instances are, and by their very nature must be, self-deception and falsehood.

Such has hitherto been the splendid juggling of so-called theoretical medicine, in which a priori conceptions and speculative subtleties raised a number of proud schools, which only showed what each of their founders had dreamed about things which could not be known, and which were of no use for the cure of diseases.

Out of these sublime systems, soaring far beyond all experience, medical practice could obtain nothing available for actual treatment. So it pursued its course confidently at the patient's bedside in accord with the traditional prescriptions of

its books telling how physicians had hitherto treated, and in conformity with the methods of its practical authorities, unconcerned, like them, about the teachings of nature-guided experience, unconcerned about true reasons for its treatment, and quite content with the key to easy practice - the prescription book.

A healthy, unprejudiced, conscientious examination of this confused business shows plainly that what has hitherto gone by the name of the art of medicine was merely a pseudo-scientific fabrication, remodelled from time to time to meet the prevailing fashion in medical systems, like Gellert's hat in the fable, but, as regards the treatment of disease, ever the same blind pernicious method.

A healing art conformable to nature and experience did not exist. Everything in traditional medicine was the outcome of art and imagination, having no foundation in experience, but pranked out in the habiliments of probability.

The object of cure (the disease) was manufactured to order by pathology. It was arbitrarily settled what diseases, how many and what forms and kinds there should be. Just think! The whole range of diseases, produced in innumerable and always unforeseeable rariety by infinite Nature in human beings exposed to thousands of different conditions, the pathologist cuts down so ruthlessly that a mere handful of cut and dry forms is the result!

The wiseacres define diseases a priori, and attributed to them transcendental substrata not warranted by experience (how could plain pure experience ever sanction such fantastic dreams?); no! they pretended to possess an insight into the inner nature of things and the invisible vital processes, which no mortal can have.

Now, in order to decide on something positive with regard to the instruments of cure, the powers of the different medicines in the materia medica were inferred from their physical, chemical and other irrelevant qualities, also from their odour, taste and external aspect, but chiefly from impure experiences at the sick bed, where, in the tumult of the morbid symptoms, only mixtures of medicines were prescribed for imperfectly described cases of disease. Just think! the dynamic spiritual power of altering man's health hidden in the invisible interior of medicines, and never manifested purely and truly in any other way than by their effects on the healthy human body, was arbitrarily ascribed to them, without interrogating the medicines themselves in this only admissible way of pure experiment, and listening to their response when so questioned!

*Then therapeutics taught how to apply the medicines, whose qualities had been thus inferred, ascribed or imagined, to the supposed fundamental cause or to single symptoms of disease, in conformity with the rule *contraria contrariis* of the hypothesis-framer Galen, and in direct opposition to nature; and this doctrine was held to be more than sufficiently established if eminent authorities could be adduced in support of it.*

All these unnatural human doctrines, after being connected together by all sorts of illogical false deductions, were then welded into scholastic forms by the noble art that devotes itself to division, subdivision and tabellation, and lo! the manufactured article, the art of medicine, was ready for use, - a thing the most opposed to nature and experience it is possible to conceive, a structure built up entirely of the opinions of various kinds furnished by thousands of differently constituted minds. In all its parts this edifice is a pure nullity, a pitiable

self-deception, eminently fitted to imperil human life by its methods of treatment, blindly counter to the end proposed, incessantly ridiculed by the wisest men of all ages, and labouring under the curse of not being what it professes to be, and not being able to perform what it promises.

Sober, unprejudiced reflection, on the other hand, can easily convince us that to hold correct views about every case of disease we have to cure, to obtain an accurate knowledge of the true powers of medicines, to employ them on a plan adapted to each morbid condition and to administer them in proper dose, - in a word, the complete true healing art, can never be the work of self-satisfied ratiocination and illusory opinions, but that the requisites for this, the materials as well as the rules for its exercise, are only to be discovered by due attention to nature by means of our senses, by careful honest observations and by experiments conducted with all possible purity, and in no other way; and, rejecting every falsifying admixture of arbitrary dicta, must be faithfully sought in this the only way commensurate to the high value of precious human life.

It remains to be seen if by my conscientious labours in this way the true healing art has been found.

SAMUEL HAHNEMANN
LEIPZIG, end of the year 1818

ORGANON OF MEDICINE

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION



IN the five years since the publication of the Second Edition, the truth of the homoeopathic healing art has found so much acceptance from physicians far and near, that it can no longer be obscured, still less extinguished, by abusive writings, of which, however, there is no lack. I rejoice at the benefit it has already conferred on humanity, and look forward with intense pleasure to the not distant time when, though I shall be no longer here below, a future generation of mankind will do justice to this gift of a gracious God, and will thankfully avail

themselves of the blessed means He has provided for the alleviation of their bodily and mental sufferings.

A great help to the spread of the good cause in foreign lands is won by the good French translation of the last edition, recently brought out at great sacrifice, by that genuine philanthropist, my learned friend Baron von Brunnow. He has enriched it with a preface which gives an exposition of the homoeopathic healing art and its history, and at the same time serves as an introduction to the study of the work itself.*

In this third edition I have not refrained from making any alterations and emendations suggested by increased knowledge and necessitated by further experience.

SAMUEL HAHNEMANN
KOTHEN; Easter, 1824

**Organon de l'art de guérir; traduit de l'original allemand du Dr. Samuel Hahnemann Conseiller de Son Altesse Sérénissime le Duc d'Anhalt-Kothen, par Erneste George de Brunnow; a Dresde, chez Arnold, libraire-éditeur, 1824.*



DUKE FERDINAND OF ANHALT-KÖTHEN.

ORGANON OF MEDICINE

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION

WERE that nature whose self-help in diseases is believed by physicians of the traditional school to be the incomparable



healing art, a close imitation of which should be the physician's highest aim, great Nature herself, i.e. the voice of ineffable wisdom of the great Artificer of the infinite universe, we should then feel constrained to be guided by this infallible voice, though we might be puzzled to understand why we physicians should, with our artificial interference by medicines, disturb or

injuriously aggravate these presumably incomparable operations of nature's self-help in diseases (vis medicatrix); but this is far from being the case! That nature, whose self-help was alleged by the traditional school of medicine to be the incomparable healing art and the only thing worth imitating, is merely the individual nature of the organic man, is nothing but the instinctive, irrational, unreasoning vital force subject to the organic laws of our body, which is ordained by the Creator to maintain the functions and sensations of the organism in marvellously perfect condition so long as the man continues in good health, but was not intended nor adapted for the restoration in the best manner of deranged or lost health. For should our vital force have its integrity impaired by injurious influences from without, then this force strives instinctively and automatically to free itself from the adventitious derangement (disease) by revolutionary processes, but these very efforts are themselves disease; they are a second different malady substituted for the original one. The vital force, I say, produces, in accordance with the laws of the constitution of the organism to which it is subject, a disease of a different sort, intended to expel the disease by which it was attacked, which it strives to accomplish by pain, metastases and so forth, but mainly by evacuations and the sacrifice of much of the fluid and solid constituents of the body, with difficult, often dubious, injurious, frequently even disastrous results.

Were it not that men in all ages were aware of this imperfection, and the not infrequent inadequacy of these blind efforts of the instinctive unreasoning vital force in its attempts at self-help in diseases, they would not have longed so much nor so zealously striven to assist the suffering vital force, so powerless to help itself efficiently, by the employment of better remedial means in order to terminate the morbid process in a more speedy and sure manner, thereby restoring the wished-for

health as speedily as possible, - in a word, they would not have exerted themselves to discover a healing art.

*But as what has hitherto been termed **healing art** was a mere (imperfect) imitation of those unhelpful, useless, not infrequently injurious efforts and operations of the instinctive, unreasoning vital force (misnamed nature) when left to itself in disease, it will, I think, be conceded that before me the true healing art was not discovered.*

But that homoeopathy is this healing art, which had hitherto been sought for in vain, its fundamental principles teach, its performances prove.

SAMUEL HAHNEMANN
KUTHEN; January, 1829

ORGANON OF MEDICINE

PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION

IN order to give a general notion of the treatment of diseases pursued by the old school of medicine (allopathy), I may observe that it presupposes the existence sometimes of excess of blood (plethora which is never present), sometimes of morbid matters and acridities; hence it taps off the life's blood and exerts itself either to clear away the imaginary disease-matter or to conduct it elsewhere (by emetics, purgatives, sialogogues, cliaphoretics, diuretics, drawing plasters, setons, issues, &c.), in the vain belief that the disease will thereby be weakened and materially eradicated; in place of which the patient's sufferings are thereby increased, and by such and other painful appliances the forces and nutritious juices indispensable to the curative process are abstracted from the organism. It assails the body with large doses of powerful



medicines, often repeated in rapid succession for a long time, whose long-enduring, not infrequently frightful effects it knows not, and which it, purposely it would almost seem, makes unrecognisable by the commingling of several such unknown substances in one prescription, and by their long-continued employment it develops in the body new and often ineradicable medicinal diseases. Whenever it can, it employs, in order to keep in favour with its patient, remedies that immediately*

suppress and hide the morbid symptoms by opposition (contraria contrariis) for a short time (palliatives), but that leave the disposition to these symptoms (the disease itself) strengthened and aggravated. It considers affections on the exterior of the body as purely local and existing there independently, and vainly supposes that it has cured them when it has driven them away by means of external remedies, so that the internal affection is thereby compelled to break out on a nobler and more important part. When it knows not what else to do for the disease which will not yield or which grows worse, the old school of medicine undertakes to change it into something else, it knows not what, by means of an alterative, - for example, by the life-undermining calomel, corrosive sublimate and other mercurial preparations in large doses.

** For the same object the experienced allopath delights to invent a fixed name, by preference a Greek one, for the malady, in order to make the patient believe that he has long known this disease as an old acquaintance, and hence is the fittest person to cure it.*

To render (through ignorance) if not fatal, at all events incurable, the vast majority (99/100) of all diseases, namely, those of a chronic character, by continually weakening and tormenting the debilitated patient, already suffering without that from his disease and by adding new destructive drug diseases, this clearly seems to be the unhallowed main business of the old school of medicine (allopathy) - and a very easy business it is when once one has become an adept in this pernicious practice, and is sufficiently insensible to the stings of conscience!

And yet for all these mischievous operations the ordinary physician of the old school can assign his reasons, which,

however, rest only on foregone conclusions of his books and teachers, and on the authority of this or that distinguished physician of the old school. Even the most opposite and the most senseless modes of treatment find there their defence, their authority - let their disastrous effects speak ever so loudly against them. It is only under the old physician who has been at last gradually convinced, after many years of misdeeds, of the mischievous nature of his so-called art, and who no longer treats even the severest diseases with anything stronger than plantain water mixed with strawberry syrup (i.e. with nothing), that the smallest number are injured and die.

This non-healing art, which for many centuries has been firmly established in full possession of the power to dispose of the life and death of patients according to its own good will and pleasure, and in that period has shortened the lives of ten times as many human beings as the most destructive wars, and rendered many millions of patients more diseased and wretched than they were originally - this allopathy, I shall first expose somewhat more minutely before teaching in detail its exact opposite, the newly discovered true healing art.

As regards the latter (homoeopathy) it is quite otherwise. It can easily convince every reflecting person that the diseases of man are not caused by any substance, any acidity, that is to say, any disease-matter, but that they are solely spirit-like (dynamic) derangements of the spirit-like power (the vital force) that animates the human body. Homoeopathy knows that a cure can only take place by the reaction of the vital force against the rightly chosen remedy that has been ingested, and that the cure will be certain and rapid in proportion to the strength with which the vital force still prevails in the patient. Hence homoeopathy avoids everything in the slightest degree enfeebling,* and as much as possible every excitation of pain,

for pain also diminishes the strength, and hence it employs for the cure ONLY those medicules whose effects in altering and deranging (dynamically) the health it knows accurately, and from these it selects one whose pathogenetic power (its medicinal disease) is capable of removing the natural disease in question by similarity (similia similibus), and this it administers to the patient in simple form, but in rare and minute doses (so small that, without occasioning pain or weakening, they just suffice to remove the natural malady by means of the reacting energy of the vital force), with this result: that without weakening, injuring or torturing him in the very least, the natural disease is extinguished, and the patient, even whilst he is getting better, gains in strength and thus is cured - an apparently easy but actually troublesome and difficult business, and one requiring much thought, but which restores the patient without suffering in a short time to perfect health, - and thus it is a salutary and blessed business.

** Homoeopathy sheds not a drop of blood, administers no emetics, purgatives, laxatives or diaphoretics, drives off no external affection by external means, prescribes no warm baths or medicated clysters, applies no Spanish flies or mustard plasters, no setons, no issues, excites no ptyalism, burns not with moxa or red-hot iron to the very bone, and so forth, but gives with its own hand its own preparations of simple uncompounded medicines, which it is accurately acquainted with, never subdues pain by opium, etc.*

Thus homoeopathy is a perfectly simple system of medicine, remaining always fixed in its principles as in its practice, which, like the doctrine whereon it is based, if rightly apprehended will be found to be so exclusive (and only in that way serviceable), that as the doctrine must be accepted in its purity, so it must be purely practised, and all backward

straying to the pernicious routine of the old school (whose opposite it is, as day to night) is totally inadmissible, otherwise it ceases to deserve the honourable name of homoeopathy.*

** I am therefore sorry that I once gave the advice, savouring of allopathy, to apply to the back in psoric diseases a resinous plaster to cause itching, and to employ the finest electrical sparks in paralytic affections. For as both these appliances have seldom proved of service, and have furnished the mongrel homoeopaths with an excuse for their allopathic transgressions, I am grieved I should ever have proposed them, and I hereby solerunly retract them - for this reason also, that, since then, our homoeopathic system has advanced so near to perfection that they are now no longer required.*

That some misguided physicians who would wish to be considered homoeopaths, engraft some, to them more familiar, allopathic malpractices upon their nominally homoeopathic treatment, is owing to ignorance of the doctrine, laziness, contempt for suffering humanity, and ridiculous conceit, and, besides showing unpardonable: negligence in searching for the best homoeopathic specific for each case of disease, has often a base love of gain and other sordid motives for its spring - and for its result? that they cannot cure all important and serious diseases (which pure and careful homoeopathy can), and that they send many of their patients to that place whence no one returns, whilst the friends console themselves with the reflection that everything (including very hurtful allopathic process!) has been done for the departed.

SAMUEL HAHNEMANN
KOTHEN; March 28th, 1833

ORGANON OF MEDICINE

*AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE SIXTH EDITION.**

** In Hahnemann's manuscript copy, he has a note in French which, translated is as follows:*



Medicine as commonly practised (allopathy) knows no treatment except to draw from diseases the injurious materials which are assumed to be their cause. The blood of the patient is made to flow mercilessly by bleedings, leeches, cuppings, scarifications, to diminish an assumed plethora which never exists as in well women a few days before their menses, an accumulation of blood the loss of which is of no appreciable

consequence, while the loss of blood with merely assumed plethora destroys life. Medicine as commonly practised seeks to evacuate the contents of the stomach and sweep the intestines clear by the materials assumed to originate diseases.

In order to give a general notion of the treatment of diseases pursued by the old school of medicine (allopathy) it may be observed that it presupposes the existence sometimes of excess of blood (plethora - which is never present), sometimes of morbid matters and acridities; hence it taps off the life's blood and exerts itself either to clear away the imaginary disease-matter or to conduct it elsewhere (by emetics, purgatives, sialogogues, diaphoretics, diuretics, drawing plasters, setons, issues, etc.), in the vain belief that the disease will thereby be weakened and materially eradicated; in place of which the patient's sufferings are thereby increased, and by such and other painful appliances the forces and nutritious juices indispensable to the curative process are abstracted from the organism. It assails the body with large doses of powerful medicines, often repeated in rapid succession for a long time, whose long-enduring, not infrequently frightful effects it knows not, and which it, purposely it would almost seem, makes unrecognisable by the commingling of several such unknown substances in one prescription, and by their long-continued employment it develops in the body new and often ineradicable medicinal diseases. Whenever it can, it employs, in order to keep in favor with its patient,* remedies that immediately suppress and hide the morbid symptoms by opposition (*contraria contrariis*) for a short time (palliatives), but that leave the cause for these symptoms (the disease itself) strengthened and aggravated. It considers affections on the exterior of the body as purely local and existing there independently, and vainly supposes that it has cured them when it has driven them away by means of external remedies,

so that the internal affection is thereby compelled to break out on a nobler and more important part. When it knows not what else to do for the disease which will not yield or which grows worse, the old school of medicine undertakes to change it into something else, it knows not what, by means of an alterative, for example, by the life-undermining calomel, corrosive sublimate and other mercurial preparations in large doses.

* For the same object the experienced allopath delights to invent a fixed name, by preference a Greek one, for the malady, in order to make the patient believe that he has long known this disease as an old acquaintance, and hence is the fitted person to cure it.

It seems that the unhallowed principal business of the old school of medicine (allopathy) is to render incurable if not fatal the majority of diseases, those made chronic through ignorance by continually weakening and tormenting the already debilitated patient by the further addition of new destructive drug diseases. When this pernicious practice has become a habit and one is rendered insensible to the admonitions of conscience, this becomes a very easy business indeed.

And yet for all these mischievous operations the ordinary physician of the old school can assign his reasons, which, however, rest only on foregone conclusions of his books and teachers, and on the authority of this or that distinguished physician of the old school. Even the most opposite and the most senseless modes of treatment find there their defence, their authority - let their disastrous effects speak ever so loudly against them. It is only under the old physician who has been at last gradually convinced, after many years of misdeeds, of the mischievous nature of his so-called art, and who no longer

treats even the severest diseases with anything stronger than plantain water mixed with strawberry syrup (i.e., with nothing), that the smallest number are injured and die.

This non-healing art, which for many centuries has been firmly established in full possession of the power to dispose of the life and death of patients according to its own good will and pleasure, and in that period has shortened the lives of ten times as many human beings as the most destructive wars, and rendered many millions of patients more diseased and wretched than they were originally - this allopathy, I have, in the introduction to the former editions of this book, considered more in detail. Now I shall consider only its exact opposite, the true healing art, discovered by me and now somewhat more perfected. Examples are given to prove that striking cures performed in former times were always due to remedies basically homoeopathic and found by the physician accidentally and contrary to the then prevailing methods of therapeutics.

As regards the latter (homoeopathy) it is quite otherwise. It can easily convince every reflecting person that the diseases of man are not caused by any substance, any acidity, that is to say, any disease-matter, but that they are solely spirit-like (dynamic) derangements of the spirit-like power (the vital principle) that animates the human body. Homoeopathy knows that a cure can only take place by the reaction of the vital force against the rightly chosen remedy that has been ingested, and that the cure will be certain and rapid in proportion to the strength with which the vital force still prevails in the patient. Hence homoeopathy avoids everything in the slightest degree enfeebling, and as much as possible every excitation of pain, for pain also diminishes the strength, and hence it employs for the cure ONLY those medicines whose power for altering and*

deranging (dynamically) the health it knows accurately, and from these it selects one whose pathogenetic power (its medicinal disease) is capable of removing the natural disease in question by similarity (simila similibus), and this it administers to the patient in simple form, but in rare and minute doses so small that, without occasioning pain or weakening, they just suffice to remove the natural malady whence this result: that without weakening, injuring or torturing him in the very least, the natural disease is extinguished, and the patient, even whilst he is getting better, gains in strength and thus is cured - an apparently easy but actually troublesome and difficult business, and one requiring much thought, but which restores the patient without suffering in a short time to perfect health, - and thus it is a salutary and blessed business.

** Homoeopathy sheds not a drop of blood, administers no emetics, purgatives, laxatives or diaphoretics, drives off no external affection by external means, prescribes no hot or unknown mineral baths or medicated clysters, applies no Spanish flies or mustard plasters, no setons, no issues, excites no ptyalism, burns not with moxa or red-hot iron to the very bone, and so forth, but gives with its own hand its own preparations of simple uncompounded medicines, which it is accurately acquainted with, never subdues pain by opium, etc.*

Thus homoeopathy is a perfectly simple system of medicine, remaining always fixed in its principles as in its practice, which, like the doctrine whereon it is based, if rightly apprehended will be found to be complete (and therefore serviceable). What is clearly pure in doctrine and practice should be self-evident, and all backward sliding to the pernicious routinism of the old school that is as much its antithesis as night is to day, should cease to vaunt itself with the honorable name of Homoeopathy.

SAMUEL HAHNEMANN.
Kothen, March 28, 1833.

*Confirmed Paris, 184 -**

**Hahnemann did not put in his manuscript the exact date, leaving this probably until the book would go to the printer, but Dr. Haehl suggests February, 1842, as the date according to a manuscript copy made by Madame Hahnemann.*

Wm. B.

>>>>>

Copyright © MEDI-T 1998

ORGANON OF MEDICINE