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THE RULE OF SIDES.

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The following is an abridged statement of a number of researches, which occupied my mind during more than forty years of my life, and which may be better understood if given in historical order.

My principal objection to Homoeopathy, and the main argument in a treatise which I was writing against it (1822), was the question addressed to Hahnemann and his adherents: What is to be understood by your term "similar?" This is too vague an expression to be allowed to pass in science! What is your definition of your similarity? The mathematicians term what is of the same quantity, *alike* (*æquale*); and what has the same conditions of form, *similar* (*simile*). But what is your difference between alike and similar? You cannot tell! Further, you say the effects of medicines, even in the smallest doses, are much stronger than the diseases. What gives them such a peculiar power? We daily see common diseases, as gout, leprosy, etc., go on through life unchecked, and the effects of drugs, medicines or poisons, pass away without leaving a trace. Finally, you explain the cure through a remedy chosen on account of its similarity, by its later or secondary effect, which you say

is directly contrary to the first or primary effect. At the same time it must be admitted that such a thing can only happen, when there exists such a directly contrary state; and (*Organon* § 64) "if there exists no state in nature, that is directly contrary to this primitive effect," "it appears" "the vital power then seeks to gain the ascendancy by destroying the change (suchen sich zu indifferenziren)." We may well say "it appears" Hahnemann "seeks" to explain his law of cure without succeeding. The vital powers have, according to this, not only to produce something directly contrary, if there is such; but if there is none, they must be satisfied with bringing it to the point of indifference, and several such actions all at the same time as if dictated. How many things nature has to do, if a drug produces a chill followed by a fever—which latter is directly contrary in temperature—and afterwards a sweat—directly contrary to the dry skin during the fever? It seems as if here all the absurd contraries of Galen were united, only they are turned inside out. Thus I considered all this, arbitrary assertions, and the similarity "a bag of sheepskin" which might be stretched one way or the other.

In order to crown my treatise—which I had not the slightest doubt would kill Homoeopathy right off—I had of course to wind up with a series of cases and most careful experiments. Alas! what became of all my mathematical and philosophical objections? They flew like chaff before the winds.

It is enough to say that after a hard struggle, lasting more than a year, I was fully enlightened and driven by a sufficient number of clear facts to adopt the new art and all and every practical rule of Hahnemann, and my treatise remained, of course, unprinted.

During the following happy year, I was already led to remark that there were two kinds of similarity, if we may so express it: a true and a false one, *i. e.*, a curative one, and another not curative. Drugs very nearly related to each other, and chemically very similar, produced symptoms

of course, very nearly the same. Thus the symptoms of the one were similar to the symptoms of the other. But notwithstanding all this similarity, they were not antidotes to each other! Here was a law of nature, with its practical, unailing applicability, and there was not only an exception, but a contradiction! For instance, *nux vomica* and *ignatia amara* were botanically nearly related, chemically nearly the same—a discovery made in 1818, long after Hahnemann had already collected his provings of both.—Still they were not antidotes to each other, in spite of the greatest similarity not only of one-half of their symptoms, but especially of such as were the strongest, most predominating and *pathologically most important*. But *pulsatilla*, a plant which botanically and chemically stood at a great distance, could be an antidote to *nux vomica* as well as to *ignatia*; likewise *chamomilla*, equally distant from all the former, was an antidote to any of them. What was here the case with antidotes, could of course also take place with regard to the similarity of symptoms, between the symptoms of the sick and the symptoms of the drug. And as we had continually to look for similarity, as the mariner to the needle of his compass, it was of the highest importance for our art to distinguish between the curative similarity and the not curative, the right one and the misleading one.

Holding fast as to an axiom, that throughout nature all and every action required a contrary action of at least equal strength to be annihilated, thus only something opposite could make a cure—seeing daily that medicines cured morbid affections, neutralized them, as it were, by magic—the only temporary satisfaction was to suppose an opposite action of the so-called power of life, analogous to the production of the complementary colors in the eye. After looking at red, a green spectre appears; after yellow, a violet, etc., etc.; but, alas, again! the appearance of these subjective colors allowed quite a different explanation! I had to give up all such experiments and attempts, on account of the accumulation of impeding questions, leave them to the natu-

ral philosophers, and return to the effects of drugs on the healthy and on the sick. Soon after I was obliged to drop Hahnemann's doctrine of using only the primary effects to cure the sick, altogether, and declare myself against it; the separation of the primary effects from the secondary appeared more and more an impossibility, and the use of the so-called secondary symptoms proved to be by far the most important. Hahnemann himself silently adopted the same view, and in his chronic diseases he made, in *coniium* for instance, no such difference. But his theory, that the contrary action of life extinguishes the morbid symptoms, fell to the ground as soon as he admitted the use of the secondary symptoms.

Where now was the counterbalance, necessary according to the axiom, to restore the equilibrium of health? Was not the true, the curative similarity, such a one where the drug had an indispensable opposite? and might not the other, the not curative similarity, be one without it?

Proving the *sabadilla* in 1824, and in doses up to 30, 40, and 50 drops of the strongest alcoholic tincture, I was struck by the singular conformity of several symptoms going from the right to the left side, or passing through from right to left. It recalled to my mind the old observation of a case of poisoning by aconite reported by Mathiolus, who in 1561, made an experiment with a robber condemned to death, which was permitted in order to try the bezoar as an antidote. The poisoned young man observed a torpor like paralysis in the left arm and leg, which suddenly disappeared and befel the right side. (Symptoms 132 and 140 of the second edition of Hahnemann's *Mat. Med.*, 1822.) This peculiar contrariety between the *sabadilla* and aconite, I supposed might be a characteristic of the natural families of *Colechicaceæ* and *Ranunculaceæ*. Supposing it a possibility that certain natural families of plants, and of course also similar chemicals, might have such general characteristics in their effects, I remained on the lookout.

The yearly meeting of the natural philosophers of Germany, took place in Dresden, in the fall of 1826, while I prepared myself for my scientific mission as a traveler to South America. Professor Oken, the founder of the Society, was the lion of the day, at least in my eyes. A paper was read from a traveller in Brazil, about the turning of some plants in a spiral to the right or the left. Oken was loudly and enthusiastically called upon the stand, to explain the matter, or give his philosophical opinion upon it. He finally came forward and said: "Gentlemen, right and left in nature is one of the greatest mysteries. I know nothing about it." With this impression on my mind I left my fatherland a few days afterwards, and went to South America.

Having discovered during my exploring trips (1827) that all lightning moves not in a zigzag line, but always in a spiral; and not only that, but also in a spiral *which turns to the right*, supposing this to be the motion of all positive electricity (1828), it explained the turning to the right of the embryo of the snail, swimming free in the egg, it being a positive body, because it receives the negative oxygen in breathing. Supposing it might even lead to find a reason why all the planets turn to the right. Still I could not make much practical application of this to *Homœopathy*, until I had drawn the following conclusions:

After comparing all our drugs with regard to the time of day, I found that alkalies or positive electric substances had, as the acme of their coughs, the hours after midnight, during morning and forenoon; while the acids or negative electric substances had their more violent coughs after noon, during the evening and before midnight; and further, that with the active expulsive diarrhœa it was exactly the reverse, all the negative electric substances had it in the morning hours, and all the positive electric in the afternoon.

Thus in the cycle of the daily actions, commencing after midnight, *alkalies acted from above downward*, first on the chest and afterwards on the abdomen; acids, on the contrary, acted in the morning first on the abdomen, and afterwards

on the chest, or *from below upward*. Thus the first "with the sun," the others "against the sun," as the common people say. Here a general characteristic was discovered of the two main divisions of Elements, a characteristic where the symptoms of the drug and of the case ought to be alike. After ten years of continued careful observations with regard to the hours of the day and the electric nature of the drugs, I published a short report of it, calling the attention of all observers to this remarkable rule. N. A. Hom. Journal, Vol. I., page 41, 1851.

Every drug thus might also have a prevailing tendency to move, if not in all, at least in some of its symptoms, either from right to left or from left to right; and it was very likely that drugs being positive electric substances, or containing predominating alkalies, viz., narcotics, would be inclined to move from the right side to the left; and negative electric substances, acids or acrids, from left to right; and if so, *they ought only to be given in such cases of sickness as had moved or were moving in the opposite direction*.

According to this *aconite* would not cure a case of torpor or apoplectic lameness, which occurs first on the left and afterwards on the right side, in the same way in which it occurred in the criminal as reported by Matthiolus; but would only be the true curative agent in otherwise corresponding affections going from the right towards the left side. *Sabadilla*, acting from right to left, would only be the curative agent in complaints moving from left to right, etc.

It was not until lately that my particular attention was called to the real agreement of this rule of sides with the recently mentioned third rule of Hahnemann, and this only induced me now to lay it before the public after I had followed it in practice for more than a score of years.

If older symptoms have always to be attacked last, and the more recent ones first, this is something opposite to the development of the disease. Why might it not be applied even to cases where an inflammation of the eyes or of the tonsils attacks one eye or one tonsil first, and the other

afterwards; and why should not a drug have the preference which moves through the system in an opposite direction? That is if the symptoms have moved from right to left, to give a medicine which acts from left to right, and vice versa.

As in all matters of this nature, we have to appeal to experience in general, it would be of the highest importance for our theory, and often useful to the practitioner if this rule should be corroborated and sustained by other observers.

Every practitioner is urgently requested to communicate such cases where in acute or chronic diseases, headaches, eye complaints, erysipelas in the face, inflammation of the tonsils, of the pleura, or the lungs, rheumatism, especially the acute cases, or gout or spasmodic affections, etc., the symptoms had commenced on one side of the body, and gone or commenced to go to the other side, *cases where one drug*, but of course only one, given alone, neither mixed nor in alternation with others—even after other medicines had been given without success,—*cured a case nearly or altogether*. Only such cases as had been put on paper at once, ought to be referred to, not cases from recollection, because the best memory cannot be trusted in such matters,—also not cases reported only by other persons, as people are very apt to change sides in repeating.

A collection of such cases, even a small number of observations, made without any regard to this or any other theoretical rule, would be of much more importance than the large collection made after this rule had been adopted. The question has to be settled, not only with regard to large classes of drugs, but has to be decided *with every single drug*, with symptoms produced as well as symptoms cured; and not only this, it is very likely that some drugs may act in both directions, or may have some symptoms only in one direction, and others in the opposite.

Our *Materia Medica* contains very little in this respect, and it is not of much use to give all the symptoms observed as having passed one way or the other. The true manner of proceeding, if we wish to settle the question, is to form a collection of cases elucidating or contradicting the rule.

Provers, if they take only one moderate dose, ought to observe, with more care than hitherto, the sides of the body. The only prover who always has done this in all his provings is Dr. Jeanes.