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ADDRESS

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ANNUAL SESSION

OF THE

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF HOMEOPATHY

AT

WAUKESHA, WIS.,

ON THE

PROGRESS OF HOMEOPATHY,

BY THE

PRESIDENT, J. D. BUCK, M. D.

1890



## AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF HOMEOPATHY.

### PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

*Ladies and Gentlemen :*

I find myself in a peculiar and somewhat embarrassing position. One month ago I was notified by the executive committee of the Institute that they desired to present my name at the opening session of the present meeting as their choice for "President *de facto*" of the present session of the Institute. It was also intimated that there would probably be no opposition to their nomination, and that, if I accepted their nomination, I had better get ready an address as President, according to custom with former Presidents. As you are all aware, this arrangement had become necessary by reason of the severe and hopeless illness of the President-elect, and of the absence in Europe of the Vice-president, so that the Institute would be without a presiding officer. Had I been ambitious for fame I should hardly have accepted a position, the offices and opportunities of which would be confined to the brief session of the Institute; but, coming spontaneously as did the letter of the executive committee, and being couched in such cordial and flattering terms, I felt it a duty I owed to my colleagues, no less than to the profession at large, to accept their kindly offices.

No one can more sincerely regret and deplore the misfortune that has brought about this result than myself. I had expected to be present at the present session, and to see in the presidential chair one whom we all honor, and to whom Homeopathy owes an everlasting debt of gratitude. No man, living or dead, better deserves our tribute of praise for loyalty to our cause; for unflinching warfare in its defense; and for a championship for truth and justice extending over a third of a century. If this battle has been confined to a single State, its beneficent and far-reaching results are for every country and for all time.

The annals of Homeopathy will contain no name more deserving of grateful remembrance than that of Alfred I. Sawyer; and

what more fitting time and place than the present in which to give honor to whom honor is due, while we unite as a body in extending to his bereaved family and friends our sincere sympathy. Their affliction is ours; their misfortune is also ours. May a beneficent Providence comfort them in their affliction, and a common sympathy lighten their grief. I would recommend to the Institute that its expression of sorrow and sympathy be sent by telegram or otherwise to the family of Doctor Sawyer. I would also recommend that in future the officers of the Institute include a second Vice-president.

But, my friends, my perplexities do not end here. Article III of the by-laws requires that the President's annual address shall embody a résumé of the progress of Homeopathy during the year past, and make such suggestions as he may deem necessary for the Institute to take action upon during the session. I trust it will be apparent to every member of the Institute that no such résumé could be prepared with only a month's notice, in the few hours which a busy practitioner could gather from his many obligations to patients, to other societies, and to family cares. I trust, however, that I may have something to say regarding both the past and the future progress of Homeopathy that shall not be entirely void of both interest and value. Statistical it will not be, but there may be other things which quite as intimately concern the progress of our cause as the founding of colleges, hospitals, dispensaries, or medical journals; or even the enactment of laws defining the rights and privileges of the homeopathic practitioner. These are all necessary and beneficent, and they no doubt indicate progress, but they largely depend on the recognition of the principle of justice and fair play, and on the spread of intelligence and liberality among the people. These are the signs of progress; they are also the results of progress. But the principles that have thus made progress possible, and that have enabled Homeopathy to hold its own in an age of criticism, where principles are continually tested by results, lie deeper by far than statistics or any mere tabulated result.

The press, the pulpit, and the politician generally claim to lead public opinion. Yet we seldom find them advocating unpopular doctrines. These are rather the strongholds of conservatism, and they usually offer an organized opposition to the

new idea which finds lodgment in the breast of the individual reformer, whose institutions are far in advance of his age, and whose loyalty to truth is invulnerable, even in the face of persecution and ostracism. It is thus that every new discovery has to run the gauntlet of old prejudice, organized ignorance, and entrenched authority. The discovery of Homeopathy offered no exception to this rule. Hahnemann was more than a century in advance of his age. The age is even yet progressing toward Samuel Hahnemann. The name of Hahnemann stands for the reign of law, and the recognition of dynamics in modern life, and in all that concerns the nature of man or the apprehension of nature. The entire progress of the past century has been toward the recognition of the finer forces in nature; and this progress necessitates a recognition of Homeopathy. The entire progress of the age is away from superstition, away from blind chance or caprice, away from unsupported authority; and toward the recognition of universal law as underlying all phenomena, and as determining all results. This progress necessitated a recognition of Homeopathy as the one principle of practice, the one law of therapeutics which repudiated both precedent and empiricism. Strictly speaking, the progress of Homeopathy has been largely in its application and recognition. Its method was from the first strictly scientific, and its foundations were laid in absolute law.

It may at first seem strange that I should dwell for a few moments upon the "Law of Cure," as it is called, and which is supposed to be familiar to even the tyro in Homeopathy. It is too often conceived that this law applies only to the action of drugs on the sick, or to remedial agents for the cure of disease. I hold that the law is universal; that it is the principle of all action, and commensurate with all life; and that the future progress of Homeopathy largely depends on this larger recognition of the basis and application of the law. It may, indeed, seem a strange paradox, to say, that while Homeopathy is based on law, it is often practiced empirically; and yet that is the real meaning of what is sometimes called "routine practice."

It may not have occurred to many persons that there is any very direct connection between the law of gravitation and the law of cure; yet such is the case.

Newton's first proposition in regard to force declared that

action and re-action are equal and opposite. This equation, or the problem of the parallelogram of force, is by no means confined to the sun and planets; to cosmic movement, and terrestrial phenomena; but it obtains in all life, and lies at the basis of every molecule of protoplasm, of every tissue cell, and of every drop of blood in man. Drugs, whether medicines or poisons, act on man according to this principle; for in man it is the basis of all action, the law of all life.

Similar action implies opposite action; or else all action must cease. Between these opposite actions the sum of energy, or vital force, maintains an equilibrium. This equilibrium is what we call health. Disease results when action and re-action, though still opposite, are not equal; and it is the province of the remedy to restore the lost equilibrium. It was formerly held that in electricity there were two fluids, one positive and one negative. Then it was held that there was one fluid acting in opposite directions; and finally the idea of a special fluid called electrical was abandoned, and an electrical or magnetic condition of all substance was conceived, in which tension, or polarity, is manifest by two poles.

Similar theories have been held in regard to the human body, and its condition in health and disease; and such theories are still held by even those who call themselves homeopaths. Empirical prescriptions and blood purifiers are often the result. Losing sight of the dynamic action of drugs in accordance with exact law, the most speedy and beneficent effects are also often unrealized, for they do not uniformly occur. There is in man a tendency to health, and a tendency to disease; a tendency to life and a tendency to death; and the only beneficent effect a drug can have is to give direction to this tendency. This action is dynamic; one of adjustment, not of quantities or equivalents of force.

Homeopathy has to-day two rivals in the realm of dynamics with which it can not blindly contend and hope to maintain its position. These are so-called Hypnotism and Christian Science. Both of these proceed empirically. Names count for nothing. Each is dominated by an idea, but neither discerns clearly an underlying law. Believing as I do in the reign of law and the survival of the fittest, I think it desirable that we re-examine our foundations, to see whether or not they are secure and commen-

surate with our present need, and sufficient for future progress. In the new age now dawning, Homeopathy is being put to a new test. It thrived under old-school opposition and abuse, but how will it fare in the presence of these new rivals that meet it on its own ground in the realm of dynamics? Empiricism under the homeopathic garb may be less harmful than many other forms of empiricism, but there is nothing to show that it can be more enduring, nor is there any reason why it should be so. Nothing short of science based on law will stand the test. The law must be universal, and the science must be applicable to, and commensurate with, the trend of the age. It is true that no one can obtain letters patent on a law of nature; but it is precisely for the discovery of a law of nature as a basis of cure that we give credit to Hahnemann. The application of this law to the cure of disease by no means confines itself to drugs. It is the law, the principle of action, the method of application, that is covered by the homeopathic claim for recognition; and this law, this method, this application, is as broad as human nature, and commensurate with the life of man. We have wrangled over potencies till we have lost sight of principles. We can, indeed, afford to smile complaisantly at the ridicule and opposition of the old-school doctor, for he has often persecuted us into popularity, and cursed us into a competency! Denial and abuse count for very little in this age, in the presence of demonstrable results. But are we ready to change places with the old-school doctor and become abusers and deniers while others demonstrate results?

For one, I am as complaisant in the presence of Hypnotism and Christian Science, as before the Rip Van Winkles of a generation ago, with their boluses and their blood-letting. For the first time since the advent of Homeopathy it meets a rival in its own domain; viz., dynamics.

So far as under any name the practice of medicine consists in drugging the sick, I am in favor of anything that opposes drugging. Beyond this point I am in favor of law as opposed to empiricism, even though empiricism may hide under the name of Homeopathy.

The progress of Homeopathy does not depend on the repetition of a formulary, and the practice of empiricism. It depends solely on the apprehension of the universality of the law, and

its intelligent application to every departure from health, whether of body or mind. This law is involved in every physiological process, in all hygiene and dietetics, no less than in the administration of remedies for disease. Applications under the law must vary according to the realm involved, but the principle of application remains the same. In the use of electricity, and of hot and cold water, for example, the principle is clearly shown. But I need not particularize here.

If the practice of medicine in its application to the body, and on the physical plane, is by no means confined exclusively to medicinal substances, so on the sensuous and mental planes does it necessarily include many things besides drugs. What these adjuncts may be and how they should be applied is a question now pressing for consideration. Having a guiding law, applicable to every department of man's being, we ought to be able to discover the hygiene and dietetics of the mind as well as of the body. This is precisely what Dr. Talcott is doing at Middletown, and he is simple overwhelmed with patients, though he is as one man against an army. When merely for sport or pastime people are thrown into syncope or catalepsy by persons entirely ignorant of physiology and the laws of life, when a glance of the eye, or the shimmer of a coin, or a mere "suggestion" is shown to act as powerfully as the strongest drug, it is high time for those who know something beyond mere empiricism to discern and apply both mental and moral hygiene.

Hitherto the progress of Homeopathy has been the progress of an idea. This idea has been to apply potencies rather than ponderables, dynamics rather than drugs, to the cure of disease; and this application has been based on natural law. Through this application the law has been demonstrated times without number. Something more is necessary to constitute real progress. We have all the elements of progress within our grasp, and these are the elements of a science as far-reaching as the nature and the needs of man. That a homeopath may also be an empiric would, perhaps, generally be denied; and yet one may be a homeopathist without being a scientist; but no one can be a scientist in therapeutics and ignore or be ignorant of the basic law to which I refer, and which stands as the foundation of Homeopathy. It is no doubt true that if the practitioner of medicine must be an empiric, he will do more good

and less harm as a homeopathist; but the real progress of medicine as a science, and therefore the true progress of Homeopathy is not to be secured through empiricism in any form.

It would be out of place at this time to enter into any lengthy argument to show that the action of similars under our law of cure is by no means an action restricted to the administration of drugs to the sick; and yet this is just the procedure that in my humble judgment is so necessary to the progress of Homeopathy *per se*. In noting carefully the symptoms in a case of disease our method is that of all exact science. The process is one of careful observation and exact analysis. A true picture of the diseased condition is formed from the totality of the symptoms. The process by which we derive this picture is one of synthesis, and is the exact opposite of scientific analysis. In other words, it is philosophical. These are complementary processes in the application of the law of cure, and induction and deduction here go hand in hand. The terms science and philosophy, be it observed, refer to processes or methods of procedure, not to formulated results. The results are true just in proportion to the range and number of facts involved, and the correctness of our methods of using these facts by induction and deduction.

There is a further value to these exact methods, viz.: they point unmistakably to the real nature of disease, and thus offer a logical and exact basis for pathology. The various forms of energy and modes of motion observable in the organism may be synthesized as vital force. Every so-called disease, with all its varying symptoms, may thus be regarded as a disturbance of vital equilibrium.

In the normal manifestation of vital energy we observe an ebb and flow of energy, action and re-action, systole and diastole. In other words, to use Newton's formulary, action and re-action are equal and opposite. There is an incoming tide of food, and outgoing tide of effete matter. There is the process of assimilation, and the process of disintegration, the process of decay and the process of continual rejuvenescence. While both matter and force are thus constantly re-distributed, and the balance of power is thus constantly being adjusted and maintained, an ideal equilibrium is, nevertheless, to be preserved.

From this standpoint must arise our concept of disease. The

idea that there are many diseases with a multiplicity of symptoms is not consonant with the well-known operation of our law of cure. As the one vital énergy of the body is the motor back of all varied physiological process, and as any disturbance of this vital energy manifests as symptoms and constitutes disease, so may we conclude that there are not many diseases, but rather one disease manifesting in a great variety of forms. Innumerable immediate causes may promote disease through localized effects within narrow areas; but before these effects can manifest themselves, the vitality in parts or as a whole must be disturbed or disarmed. Add to these considerations the phenomena of all physiological action, viz.: hyperæmia and its concomitants, which local disturbance of equilibrium is permissible with a return of normal equilibrium through the fund of vitality, and we have the basis of all pathology. All diseases have a common root in disturbed vitality, however various their manifestations or symptoms. All restoration to health depends on the restoration of equilibrium. Every disturbance of equilibrium manifests itself as disturbed function, disturbed nutrition or decreased vitality.

Returning now to our basic proposition, viz.: that action and re-action are equal and opposite, we find that as a result we have a normal tension and an equilibrium incident to health.

The life force, or vitality *per se*, is thus consonant with magnetism, for it manifests as polarity. Polar tension with general equilibrium, or an organized system of vital magnetic areas, gives a comprehensive idea of the animal body. Here then we have a complete philosophy of the law of cure; not based on the theory, but logically deduced from the phenomena of life. That disturbance of equilibrium which we call disease, whether in tissue, in organ, or in organism, is a disturbance of polarity. Bearing in mind now the well-known law of magnetic attraction and repulsion, viz.: that likes repel, and unlikes attract, we can readily see why a remedy will both cause and cure a given disease manifesting as a group or totality of symptoms. The drug remaining unchanged and the polarity of organ or body being reversed, the effects are also reversed.

It may thus be seen that what we call our law of cure is not confined solely to the action of drugs, but that it has its basis in the one law of life; that all manifestations of life, health, and

disease operate under this law ; and that its adequate apprehension will furnish us with a key to both pathology and progress.

In thus claiming for Homeopathy its full birth-right, and demonstrating its basis as founded in exact science and the soundest philosophy, lies the future progress of our school. These foundations are invulnerable ; they are always open to investigation ; they are demonstrated ten thousand times a day by the action of remedies under the law, and we can rest securely in their everlasting verity.

In the further progress of dynamics as now foreshadowed by every form of hypnotism, Homeopathy is not to be superannuated and left behind. We are almost wholly ignorant of man's nature in the higher aspects of his being ; but unless we admit an ideal and unalterable disharmony as man's normal condition, we must conclude that the law of action discerned in the lower realms of man's nature equally obtains throughout his entire being. Otherwise man would be hopelessly at war with himself, and disharmony and disease his normal condition.

Few individuals are ready to deny their own identity. This identity presents itself as self-consciousness. Consciousness is the supreme condition of man. As a fact, it is unconditioned, though depending on conditions for its manifestations. All conditions below the mere fact of consciousness, that is, all motions, sensations, feelings and mental processes depend upon the law already pointed out ; that is, they consist of actions and reactions, regulated by the general principle of normal equilibrium. Passing by all these lower manifestations, though involving them more or less as results, hypnotism directly modifies our states of consciousness. In doing this it reveals the nature of consciousness itself. Under hypnotic suggestion the will is in abeyance, dominated by an idea, without motive, and hence irresponsible. In other words, reason and judgment are dethroned, and the individual is to all intents and purposes obsessed.

It could easily be shown that this is the condition of many insane persons, and in the inception of the disease whenever hypnosis has occurred most beneficial results have followed. Did time and opportunity permit, it could easily be shown that here, also, is the operation of our law of cure ; but in order to do this it would be necessary to examine in detail that which we call mind, thought, or intellection ; and, still further, the re-

lation of mind to the laws of physiology, to mathematics, and to consciousness. This would involve a volume, rather than form a part of an hour's talk.

In the so-called "mind cure," "metaphysics" and "Christian science," we have various forms and degrees of hypnotic suggestion, however stoutly this may be denied by the advocates of these methods. They one and all aim directly to modify states of consciousness, or, as they term it, modes of thought and belief. These processes are not altogether void of good results. We can not ignore them, for they are too numerous and too well authenticated. We can not put them down by denial or ridicule. Would it not rather be the part of wisdom to apprehend them by a larger apprehension of the law under which all verifiable results in man occur? I am aware that this is claiming a good deal for our one law of cure; but if it is the law of all life, and if it thus underlies the entire nature of man, then that which appears as breaks in the operation of the law is really only the gaps in our own knowledge. Our own ignorance is the missing link.

Avoid it as we may, these are the fields into which we must enter with a science based on facts, and a philosophy guided by reason and analogy, or else we must submit to be superseded by those who can and will enter the field thus armed and equipped.

As already pointed out, the entire progress of the age has been in the realm of dynamics, and toward the genius of Homeopathy. Step by step, as progress has occurred, Homeopathy has stood the test and shone with clearer light. Even in the manufacture of steel, the force of projectiles and the resistance of iron-clads, our "potencies" have been recognized. The 10,000th of one per cent. of carbon used in the manufacture of steel represents our "6th potency."

I trust I have presented a picture of progress possible for Homeopathy other than the mere extension of our boundaries and public recognition of our methods. Valuable and desirable as is all this, Homeopathy may move to still higher ground and invite the age to follow, if we but magnify our calling and improve our opportunities.

I am no stickler for creeds, either in medicine or elsewhere. A creed may be called a general average of inference in the absence of any real knowledge. The less the knowledge, the

greater the inference, and the denser the ignorance, the more iron clad the creed. The apprehension of nature's laws, verified by experience, attested by facts, warranted by analogy, and confirmed by a far-reaching and comprehensive philosophy, is a very different thing indeed. Real knowledge draws inferences no less than does ignorance, and these inferences, like all forces in nature, follow the line of least resistance. They are in the trend of facts, along which brighten the illuminating rays of human reason, that beacon-light of man's intelligence. Contrast the therapeutics of to-day with that of half a century ago, and blind indeed is he who fails to see that progress has been but a climbing toward homeopathic principles and methods—the proving of drugs, the single remedy, and the minimum dose. Was it a mere lucky guess, a bright empiricism that gave Homeopathy a century's advance over the therapeutics of the world? If it was, then let us, by all means, hasten to amalgamate with the scientific empiricism of the nineteenth century, and trail our banner in the dust. Does it follow because our old school brethren have minimized their doses that our work is ended? The age has but just advanced to a plane when it is capable of apprehending not only the subtlety and power of dynamics, but the universality of law in therapeutics. Our grandest achievements lie before us, not in our past of trial and persecution.

Insanity is the crying evil, the accumulating curse of the age. The whole realm of mental therapeutics is to-day, in spite of Homeopathy, and in spite of all our boasted progress, in even a more deplorable condition than was physical therapeutics at the advent of Homeopathy. Curable cases of mental alienation are daily drugged into the hopelessly incurable, and while every asylum, both private and public, is overcrowded, the advancing army of the bewildered and deranged comes marching on. We have wrangled over potencies till we have forgotten our law. The whole question of potencies is but the application of the principle of the primary and secondary action of the drug, for every proven drug shows opposite groups of symptoms, and only the primary or secondary action of the group can determine the high or the low potency. This is but one phase of the operation of our law. Nor can the susceptibility or idiosyncrasy of the individual change the law, though

it may determine our potency. Homeopaths and Hahnemans we may indeed have been, but have we been progressive and scientific physicians in any large degree? Is the single formula that "likes are cured by likes" all there is of this universal law of nature? Did Hahnemann discover the last secret and exhaust the possibilities of man? Against such a supposition stands every insane asylum of the land, while the discordant cries of thousands upon thousands of bewildered souls, of demented and raving human beings, protest against our lack of zeal and our ignorance of the nature and the needs of man. How many physicians pay the least attention to the habits of thought, the mental hygiene of their patients? We prescribe drugs for incipient insanity due to lust, greed, envy, jealousy and hatred, just as a barber surgeon might prescribe cathartics for gluttony. Is there any good reason why we should be at such pains to regulate the bodily habits of our patients, and see to their food, dress, bathing and exercise, and entirely ignore the higher and more important realm of man's being? Shall laws be applied to the welfare of the body, and ignorance and caprice only govern the mind? One half of man's nature, and that the highest and most important, is habitually neglected by the average physician.

There is, moreover, a most glaring inconsistency in our methods. While openly advocating dynamics, and claiming to recognize the potencies of nature's finer forces, we have allowed ourselves to become engulfed in the crass materialism of the age. Man is neither all mind nor all body; he is a complex being, made up of many powers and potencies. We have indeed made great progress in apprehending and controlling his bodily infirmities, but the extent and increase of mental diseases prove, beyond all controversy and all denial, that we have made no progress in the apprehension and control of mental states.

When we are ready to apply the same exact scientific methods to the study and control of mental states that we have used in regard to bodily disease and physical therapeutics, then, and then only, may we hope for similar results here as elsewhere.

Modern hypnotism has entered the field empirically after wasting a century or two in reviling earlier discoverers like Mesmer and Von Reichenbach; and less than a decade of careful experiment and observation has already created a literature and promised to lay the foundation of a mental science.

Our law of cure is applicable here as elsewhere, but our method of study and of application are at fault; and at the risk of being misunderstood I shall venture to point out wherein I think our methods are wrong. I may even be accused of taking advantage of my temporary opportunity to propagate heresy. Had such considerations had final weight with Hahnemann we should never have heard of Homeopathy.

We are practically in the habit of regarding the human body with its functions and manifestations as really constituting man. More than a quarter of a century ago Dr. Draper, in his *Human Physiology*, pointed out this defect in our methods, and outlined the better method. This was the very method that in astronomy had resulted in the most wonderful discoveries, and Dr. Draper could see no reason then why the same scientific method should not be applied to the study of man; neither can I now. In mistaking the manifestation for the man we not only fail to understand man, but we also misinterpret the manifestation as well. I do not care at this time and place to advocate the existence or speculate upon the qualities of the human soul, though in the absence of much exact knowledge the assumption of its existence is quite as scientific as its denial. I do not care to assume anything beyond what every intelligent man and woman will admit, viz.: Our own consciousness and individuality—just what we mean when we use the personal pronoun “I.” This “I” exists, and is conscious. This, then, is the beginning and end of my offense. This conscious “I” manifests the varied phenomena of life through the bodily mechanism and functions. The persistency of this “I,” or ego, and some form of consciousness, continues until the death of the body. The ego and its consciousness, then, is the point on which I insist.

If, now, we look on all so-called mental alienation, whether arising from change of tissue or function, as a perversion of the consciousness of the ego, we shall find that they all have a logical sequence, and that we have grasped a central fact of incalculable value in all our investigations.

This is merely making a different use of facts which we all know, and of experiences which we all share. This is the point at which hypnotism strikes, and so modifies and controls our states of consciousness; and it is for this reason, and because our previous methods failed exactly here, that the new craze has

made such marvellous strides of late. Not only anesthetics, but many drugs, like hashish and opium, modify our states of consciousness, but we have observed these modifications far less than the bodily changes and sensations that accompany them.

Here, then, is the realm, and, I believe, the true method of future research. Let us enter this realm in the name of law, with the exact methods of science, and prove beneficent ministers, not only to bodily ills, but to minds diseased, and so help to stay the tide of insanity that threatens to engulf the human race.

And now, ladies and gentlemen of the Institute, appealing to your consideration and forbearance no less than to your co-operation, may I not hope that the present session of the American Institute of Homeopathy may not prove less efficient or interesting than the many that have preceded it? Together, we can make it a success. Individually, I shall fail, even without the cloud of sorrow and disappointment under which we convene. I assure you that I appreciate the honor which contentment, void of ambition, has never led me to covet. I appreciate it all the more because it came unsought. If I can not return an equal honor to each of you, I can vie with you in fraternal regard, and in all good wishes for your earthly prosperity and your everlasting happiness.