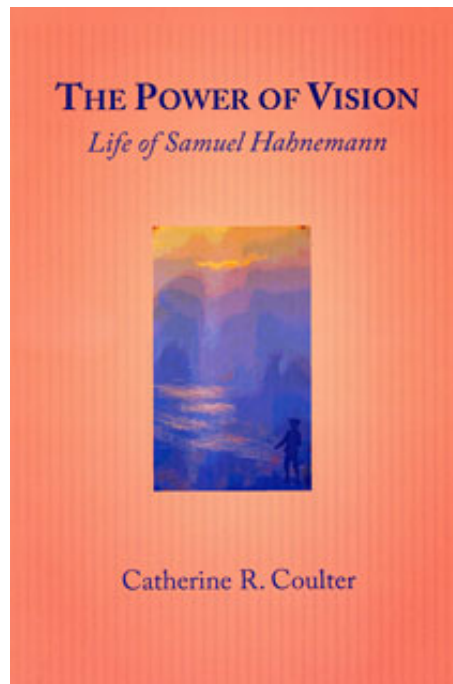


Catherine R. Coulter

The Power of Vision

Leseprobe

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ing animal to cure, I let it out in the garden, to see what herb attracts it. Last summer I was brought a cat whose underbelly had been ripped open when attacked by some wild creature. I thought it would head for the leopard's bane, but it didn't. It immediately started nipping at a flowering daisy; and healed so well that, since then, I started experimenting, with some success, with the whole plant, crushed, then made into a beeswax balm with for injuries to the abdominal area. In the same way a dog, with urine retention, when let loose in my garden, went directly for the corn silk on the husks that I had thrown on the compost pile that day. Later, I brewed the corn silk into a tea that has been effective in similar cases of urine retention. In this way, the stock of herbal medicines increases."

THE PHRASE, "How to unlock the healing secrets of nature" lingered in Samuel's mind for the whole of that month, until early in May he was struck with a bold surmise. He was bursting with excitement and couldn't wait to run his idea by Frau Martha. The first afternoon he was free, he set off with eager haste to share with her his inspiration. "If Frau Martha is correct that every specimen in the plant kingdom carries its own healing power," he reasoned, "then why limit the power to plants? It might be that all matter on this earth — every substance in the plant, animal, mineral, and metal kingdoms — is endowed with healing properties that have only to be uncovered!" He wondered how she would respond to this conjecture.

Samuel was so impatient to impart this idea that he ran most of the way to her house. But when he arrived at the cottage, he found the door locked and the windows shuttered. The garden in back, although filled with the scents and colors of spring flowers,

did not seem as well tended as usual, and when he knocked at the door, there was no response. Had she gone to visit some distant relative for a month or more? If so, how soon would she be back? He walked over to the nearest neighbor to inquire. A woman whom he recognized as having last autumn brought Frau Martha a peck of apples in exchange for a herb that cleared her sinuses, informed him that Frau Martha had passed away three weeks ago.

Samuel was stunned. He stood speechless, staring at the woman who, taking pity on the boy's evident distress, went on to explain, "She did not suffer long. She caught a chill in the middle of April — remember that cold, wet spell we had? Well, Frau Martha insisted on going out to tend to the garden and plant a new herb a patient had brought her. The following day, she took to her bed with a bronchial catarrh, and before the week was out, by God's mercy she had departed hence in peace."

Still Samuel could not utter a word and barely heard the neighbor's reassuring words, "After all, she was eighty-eight years old. That's a ripe age to live to, working at what you love best until the very end. Then dying swiftly, practically without pain."

By this time, Samuel had rallied sufficiently to inquire, "What will happen to her garden with its precious herbs and flowers?"

The woman shook her head sadly. "It will pass on to a great nephew of hers, who is nearest in kin." She then added even more dolefully, "Regardless of who inherits the cottage, it is certain that Frau Martha's knowledge of botanical lore will never be duplicated."

She then kindly urged the boy to partake of some refreshment before his long trek back to town, but he was too overcome with sorrow to stay. As he walked home with head bowed, he tried to comfort himself with the recognition that eighty-eight years was, indeed, a noble life span; that a person who lived that long with mental faculties intact and physically able to carry out her life's work,

was a most fortunate being. Yet the loss of two irreplaceable friends in the space of one year was a cruel blow.

Unbidden there came to his mind something his father said to him during a particularly low point in the family's fortunes. "Life does not owe us anything. A man takes what is sent him, grateful that it is not worse; and without complaint, makes the best of what is offered." Samuel raised his head and threw back his shoulders. He set his jaw determinedly, in defiance of whatever hardships life might throw his way. He would show himself to be a man, and not complain.

As IT TURNED OUT, Fate dealt kindly by the lonely boy, providing him with a different but equally kind friend. Herr Muller, the former rector of Town School and now head of the Classics and German Departments in Prince's School, believing that Samuel was made for a high destiny, took him and his talents under his wing and gave him all the assistance and special attention he could use. As Samuel wrote later in his autobiography, "Herr Muller loved me as if I were his child, according me liberties in my studies for which I am thankful to this day. I had free access to him any time of day."

For the next three years, Samuel was immersed in preparing for the University. Allowing for no distractions, he applied himself to his studies with untiring industry. The fever of learning drove him irresistibly forward, compelling him to reach out in every direction and to distinguish himself in every branch of knowledge. But that he was growing increasingly convinced that he was destined for a medical career was prefigured in his choice of subject for his graduating thesis (written in Latin), "On the wonderful construction of the human hand."

The Proving of a Remedy

THE PROVINGS brought home an additional important aspect of the homeopathic doctrine — namely, that there exists an inseverable link between body, mind, and emotions. Mental-emotional illnesses display physical symptoms, and physical illnesses display mental-emotional symptoms. Accordingly, the patient must always be approached as a whole — as a complex of physical and mental symptoms.

This interdependence of all processes within the human organism was dramatically displayed in the Hahnemann family's proving of *Natrum muriaticum* (the Latin for sodium chloride). In addition to eliciting a legion of such physical symptoms as migraine headaches, blurred vision or excessive lachrymation, heart palpitations and heartburn, constipation, oily skin and hair, eczematous and herpetic eruptions, etc., the number of mental-emotional symptoms were staggering. It was as if a heavy black cloud had descended over the family, affecting the mood of every member.

HENRIETTE, by nature a calm child, seemingly content with her lot as the conscientious, responsible eldest child on whom her parents could always rely, suddenly grew resentful of having constantly to assist her mother with the household chores and childcare. "It's unfair," she complained. "I'm tired of being the eldest girl. I have

no life of my own." To add to this grievance, her lovely, near-translucent skin broke out in pimples and she felt embarrassed to be seen, even by her family. "I hate myself," she fumed. "I'm stupid and ugly. I'm older than Friedrich but he's cleverer than I and already knows more than I do. And now I've got pimples on my face! How can anyone love me?"

Wilhelmine, likewise generally at peace with the world from confidence in her artistic abilities, quite unexpectedly decided that her drawings were worthless, and impulsively threw all her art supplies into a box, vowing she would never touch a pencil or brush again. Worse: in a fit of self-criticism she impulsively tore up two of her favorite drawings — but then, immediately regretting the action, reproached herself for several days following. Moreover she grew touchy and sensitive, prone to feeling slighted without cause.

Amalie, of a lively, cheerful disposition, appeared to have lost her high spirits and joy in life. She grew downcast, found no pleasure in her usual occupations or enjoyments and moped around the house complaining of boredom. This, in a youngster habitually as merry as the day is long, was a true reversal of character. Yet if anyone offered her consolation or tried to lighten her mood, she would cry out, "Oh, go away! Leave me alone!" and petulantly wave them away.

Even Karoline, at the tender age of barely two, developed her share of emotional symptoms. She was the child who had inherited her mother's musical talent more than any of her siblings (she was already improvising little tunes that she sang to her dolls) and who was invariably soothed by the harpsichord. Now, at the first notes struck by her mother, she would stick a finger in each ear and run out of the room crying, "I don't want to hear! Stop it!"

And the latest infant, Ernst (named in honor of his father's

childhood friend), was afflicted alternately with diarrhea or constipation, and was refusing to nurse.

The orchestrator of this notable production was affected no less than his progeny. His persistently aching head, following a two-day migraine, rendered him low-spirited. He was feeling bitter about the privations the family had to endure and the obstacles he had to overcome. Uncharacteristically, he even experienced self-doubts regarding his work; or, if not of its intrinsic merit (here his confidence was unshaken), then doubts amounting to a fear that homeopathy would never be recognized by the medical community at large and would disappear without trace after his death. All these emotions, however, he kept strictly to himself. Meanwhile, his neck grew so weak from depressed spirits that, while working at his desk or even when sitting at the dinner table, he had constantly to support his head with his hand.

However, the two individuals who reacted most strongly to the proving of *Natrum muriaticum* were eight-year-old Friedrich and Frau Henriette. The others' reactions were as a summer breeze compared to mother and son's equinoctial gale.

Friedrich, in response to a justified reproof of insubordination to his parents' wishes, stormed upstairs and locked himself in his room — allowing no one to enter and only accepting food from a tray left outside his door. The family was familiar with his outbursts of temper, but this scene was in a class of its own. Friedrich suffered from rickets (a softening of the bones due to malabsorption of calcium; now known to be caused by a sunlight or vitamin D deficiency during the time of rapid bone growth in infancy and early childhood) which had led to poor bone formation. All the poor boy's pent up anger against a fate that had played him such a rotten trick with his ungainly body exploded into rage against his parents who

had brought him into the world. When his father tried to reason with him through the closed door, he was accused of cruelty towards his children: that in an attempt to aggrandize himself, he allowed them to suffer want and deprivation; and currently he was subjecting them to physical and mental pain as well — as witnessed by this proving. "I'm glad to have this opportunity to tell you all this. I've been holding it in for too long," he concluded.

Yet strangely enough, it was his mother, one of the very few persons in the world for whom the boy had any affection, who was the target of his strongest passion. She was blamed for not protecting her children from their father's tyranny. She, who could have influenced her husband, mulishly bore the privations of her life and let herself be trampled upon by his egotism and ambition. At this point Friedrich even opened the door to emphasize his words, but without allowing his mother to enter. "If you were not so spineless and would stand up for yourself and your children, you could *make* Father earn a proper living like a regular physician, and then we'd all be better off. I'll never forgive you. *Never**. And I *mean* it — you'll see." And without allowing her to answer, he slammed the door in her face.

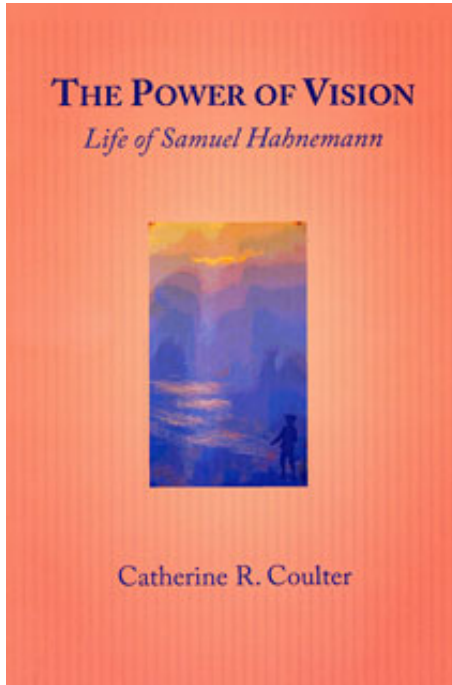
Frau Henriette was hardly in a state to feel injured by her son's rudeness and accusations. Albeit in an entirely different manner, she was reacting just as strongly as Friedrich, and was desperately trying to hold herself together. For the first and only time in her married life, her stoic nature broke down. She complained of her life being that of a drudge and a long-suffering beast of burden; of having to sacrifice her musical and intellectual gifts to assist her husband in his work. Year after year, without respite, she had endured untold hardships and deprivations. Would there never be an end to their grinding poverty? Was there no let-up or reward in sight?

These grievances lasted two days, after which they took a different turn and she presented another aspect of her distraught state of mind. She began by assuring her husband in a martyred tone, "No, I'm not giving up. I'm not going to leave you. I'll remain loyal to you and the homeopathic cause till the day I die. I just want you to be aware of the demands you make on *all* of us. I just want to tell you —" All this while she had been fighting off the tears, but at this point she broke into heavy, gulping, broken sobs. Her face became blotchy and her nose bright-red. Her pretty delicate features swelled up almost beyond recognition and hot tears spurted out from between puffed scarlet lids and streamed down her cheeks. It was like the bursting of a dam, where nothing can arrest the flow. Finally, after nearly a dozen years of courage, self-control, and self-sacrifice, Frau Henriette could take no more. During all of that day and much of the night, she sobbed inconsolably, as if her heart would break.

In short, every family member felt in some way isolated, unsupported, rejected, betrayed by life, and resentful — yet, simultaneously, like Amalie, repulsing sympathy or consolation and insisting on being left to work out their difficulties by themselves.

Eventually, by the end of a week, these strong emotions subsided; and except for the memories of the ordeal they had undergone, family life returned to normal. The final scene of this particular proving was Friedrich's emerging from his room to join the group at dinner. "Well, that was fun!" he announced in his ironic way. "I can't wait to see what entertainment Father comes up with next, to rival this performance." But it was said without bitterness.

Everyone laughed. The black cloud lifted as suddenly as it had descended on them, and the sun emerged once more.



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Life of Samuel Hahnemann

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