

A. Teste

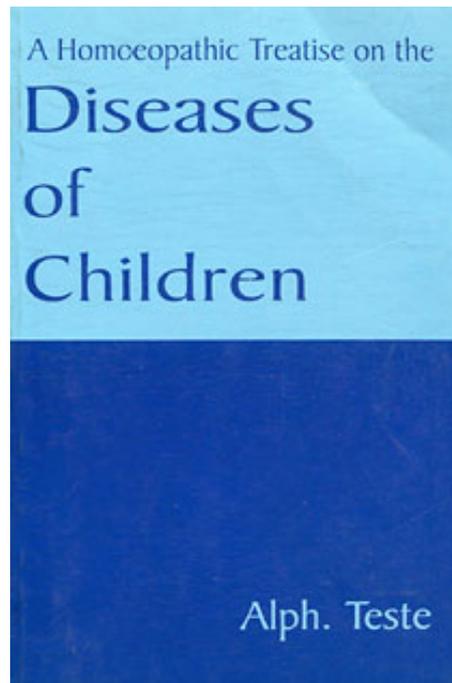
Diseases of Children

Leseprobe

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von [A. Teste](#)

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INTRODUCTION

SECTION. I.

WHAT HOMCEOPATHY IS.

SAMUEL, HAHNEMANN, to whom we are indebted for the fundamental laws of Homoeopathy, is, notwithstanding the insults, that folly and ignorance still offer to his memory, one of the finest geniuses the world has produced.

Among all the benefactors of humanity, no one, perhaps, has a larger claim upon its gratitude. We may safely predict- that his reputation will increase with time, and that generations yet unborn will bless his name.

Sixty years have passed since Homoeopathy made its appearance in the world. In consequence of the obstacles which, in the beginning, it encountered from the folly of some, and the envy of others, its progress was at first slow; it shared, in this respect, the fate of all great discoveries. At present, however, it has ceased to be a novelty; no medical school counts more adherents. It is practiced in all civilized

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countries; it has its representatives in Turkey, in India, in the two Americas, its dispensaries and its hospitals in most of the capitals of Europe. The books which treat of it would already fill libraries. These works, many of which testify to the great mental superiority of their authors, possess this remarkable feature in contrast with the medical books of the Old School, that they are all devoted to the development of the same principle. It is in fact the unity and invariability of this principle which constitutes the strength of Homoeopathy, and which so forcibly distinguishes it from those deceptive Utopias which, under the usurped name of medical science, have reigned in the schools from Empedocles to Broussais; that is to say, for more than twenty centuries.

The history of medicine, during this long period, is a *compendium* of all the dreams, all the extravagances, and all the absurdities which it is possible for the human mind to elaborate, when it strays without an axiom in the domains of abstraction.

To judge it by its history, we must believe that, the medical art, which ceased to be anything when it endeavored to become a science, claimed always to ally itself to metaphysics. If by this ambitious alliance, it escaped the inconvenience of remaining within reach of the vulgar, it incurred the still greater one of losing itself in the clouds.

This strange substitution of sophistry for the pure and simple observation of nature, has its root in an

almost invincible tendency of the human mind. "Man," says Broussais, "is tormented by a desire to know the first cause of what he sees, and when the impossibility of discovering it is demonstrated to him he takes refuge in a supposition."*

We need not then be too much astonished if, from the most remote ages, physicians *supposed* the first causes of diseases; and if, this first step made, proceeding from hypothesis to hypothesis, they have *supposed* even to the virtues of the remedies they prescribed. The exposition of the system of Galen, whose sterile branches reach even to the present generation, is a summary of all the systems which have succeeded each other, from the infancy of rationalism down to the too famous so-called *Physiological School*. Abstractions of the closet, chimerical hypothesis, fantastical intervention of *three spirits* and *four humors*, whose harmony produces health, and disagreement disease; mysterious connection of these spirits and these humors with the four elements of Aristotle; in short, empiric expedients taken at hazard, to equalize, correct and purify at need, these imaginary principles: such was humorism in its cradle, and such the humor-alism which was the favorite practice of our ancestors, and of which the grossest errors are perpetuated in the medical practice of the present day.

Thank Heaven, Homoeopathy has nothing in com-

* Examen des Doctrines Médicales, tome 1, page 9.

mon with these fatal extravagances which have so long made medicine a subject of laughter to the philosopher and of deception and dread to mankind in general.

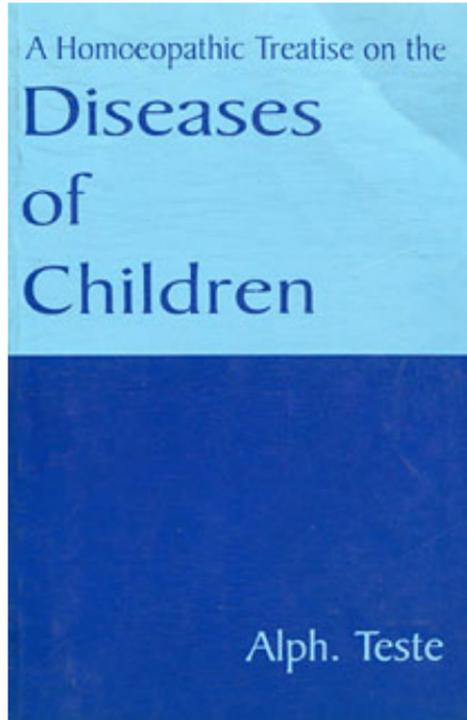
Homoeopathy is not a creation, but a discovery.

It is not a system, but a method.

It has no other theory than the logic of facts; no other principle than a certain law of nature, as evident as an axiom in geometry—as certain as gravitation and the rotation of the earth.

If the honor of being the first to signalize this law, whose incidental manifestation had struck from time to time some of his predecessors, may be contested with Hahnemann, his glory, his great glory consists in having proved that it was not an exceptional phenomenon, as was believed before him, but a general and constant physiological fact.

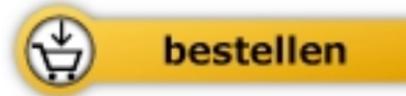
We shall consecrate the second paragraph of this introduction to the examination of this axiom of modern medicine.



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