

Robert Jütte

Samuel Hahnemann. The Founder of Homeopathy

Translated by Margot Saar

Copyright for the English translation: © Robert Jütte 2012

Originally published in German by dtv (Munich, 2005)

The Medical World in the Late Eighteenth Century

1792 Revolutionary France declared war on Austria. After the Battle of Valmy* the German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe wrote: “Here and now begins a new era in the history of the world.” The Habsburg Empire was in shock: the sudden death of the Austrian Emperor Leopold II, who had succeeded his brother on the throne in 1790, gave rise to rumours that he had been poisoned by Freemasons. Heated arguments ensued among physicians. Questions were raised as to the inadequate medical treatment received by the monarch.

The man who had the audacity to hurl criticism at Vienna’s eminent imperial physicians for the excessive use of bloodletting was a then virtually unknown medical doctor from Saxony: Samuel Hahnemann, who would go down in medical history as the founder of homeopathy.

In an article published in the journal *Allgemeiner Anzeiger der Deutschen*, Hahnemann charged the Emperor’s private physician with what we would today call medical malpractice and provoked a heated discussion about “right” or “wrong” therapies.¹ He had, at this point in time, already discovered the similarity principle as the mainstay of his new system of medicine, but had as yet not tested it or presented it to a wider public.

The medical case history just described is not only remarkable because of the prominent patient involved or the widely-noted appearance in the press of Samuel Hahnemann. It demonstrates how medicine was practised and experienced by patients at the end of the eighteenth century. The sensational occurrence is therefore an apt opening to the exciting life story of a “medical rebel” (Martin Gumpert) who was as much venerated and admired as he was mocked and criticized.

Emperor Leopold II was 45 years old when he died in 1792. Due to the high infant mortality life expectancy averaged 33 years at the time. A person entering adulthood (at 15), having survived all the children’s diseases, could expect to reach the age of 55. Today, male youths in Germany have an average life expectancy of more than 75 years.² So, even by the standards of his time, the Emperor died not only unexpectedly but “prematurely.” The month of his death, March, coincides with the annual mortality peak as indicated by historical demography for the respective age group in the eighteenth century. Among the ten most common causes of death, which were then named after the main symptoms, “chest complaints” ranked highest after “consumption,” “smallpox” and “stroke”. The “rheumatic inflammatory fever” to which Emperor Leopold II was said to have succumbed belonged to the “chest complaints” category.

The contemporary medical literature reveals “catarrhs,” “rheumatisms” and “inflammatory disease” as the most frequently treated ailments. In the bi-annual medical reports solicited by the medical authorities of the Grand Duchy of Baden in the early nineteenth century “fever” was, at 20 per cent, by far the most common, clearly differentiated, diagnosis.³

The threshold of illness was generally very high: according to medical publications of the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century people rarely sought medical help before the third day, in most cases considerably later.⁴ Even members of the upper classes stayed out of bed for as long as they possibly could because it was widely thought that “the bed [...] drew you in and

* At Valmy the allied Prussian and Austrian forces were – unexpectedly – defeated by the French army.
(Translator’s note)

promoted decline.”⁵ Driven, not least, by economic pressures, people tried to keep confinement to bed to a minimum. As a rule, patients remained at home. In-patient care in hospitals, which, around 1800, were still mostly refuges of the poor and needy, was generally reserved for the underprivileged.⁶ Leopold II was laid up at the *Hofburg*, Vienna’s imperial palace, and not, as one would expect today, on a private ward of Vienna General Hospital, although that particular institution was by then well on its way to becoming a hospital in the modern sense.

How patients experienced and interpreted their illnesses can be gathered indirectly from the medical literature, but, more importantly, from the great number of autobiographical accounts we have at our disposal. Two interpretive patterns prevailed in the late eighteenth century: disease was either explained pragmatically as due to natural causes (wrong diet, living conditions etc.) and certain environmental factors (miasma theory) or it was ascribed to supernatural powers (god, demons, witches etc.).⁷ Regardless of whether one favoured the one theory or the other, or a combination of both, there was general consensus that it was the patient who was to blame: either God had sent the disease to punish him for his sins or nature avenged itself on his body because of his excessive and unwholesome lifestyle. As we now know from social history, the religious interpretation did by no means result in a fatalistic view of illness, neither in rural nor in urban settings. On the contrary: in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, even if illness was seen as a trial ordained by God, those afflicted would seek medical assistance – whether they belonged to the Protestant bourgeoisie of Northern Germany or the rural population of Baden in the South. They therefore would take active steps to look after their health (and use such means as venesection, specific health regimens etc.).⁸

Members of the middle classes who fell ill and were seen at home by their family physician expected him to supply a reliable diagnosis, ensure a speedy recovery and find the time for a bedside chat. No authority gap divided patient and physician, not even if the relationship was one of patronage as in the case of court physicians and emperors or other persons of high standing.⁹ It was different in hospitals. Hospitals were more like “proto-clinics” (Michel Foucault), an embryonic form of the institution with an ambiance reminiscent of the workhouse, gaol or poorhouse.¹⁰ Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland, the most prominent physician of Goethe’s time, described hospitals as places which were “cold, loveless and indifferent to patients”.¹¹ Physicians looking after the poor and needy, often without remuneration, were frequently forced to comply with health police and health authorities in return for the opportunity for diagnostic and therapeutic research that hospitals certainly provided. The majority of patients would have found it a humiliating and undignified experience to “be at the mercy of a representative of the public welfare system”,¹² while this would not have kept members of the lower classes in particular from making every effort (by writing petitionary letters, for instance) to secure one of the desirable places in an institution where they would be sure to receive care. Although patients had little or no choice when it came to treatment – whether in or out of hospital – it was customary for patients or their families to fully exploit the fact that it was possible to consult more than one physician. They had the option of either returning to self-medication, negotiating treatment with their physician or, equally, of obtaining a second opinion if they were not convinced by the advice they had received.

If you fell ill in the eighteenth century an astonishing array of medical help would have been at your disposal. Financial considerations were secondary when choosing a healer. Neither in rural areas nor in the cities was the health market dominated by certified healers (surgeons, apothecaries, midwives) or even the much smaller group of academically trained physicians, despite an early movement, driven by the authorities, to establish a monopoly in their favour.

Contemporary publications may have differentiated between officially licensed surgeons and “charlatans” or “quacks”, but that kind of division was in reality hardly discernible.

More recent research has revealed that a clear differentiation between medical lay-practice and university-taught medicine did not yet exist in 1800. The concepts of illness and therapy held by the different groups might not always have coincided, but they often agreed that health problems or impairments had natural causes. Their ideas were derived from the Greek physician Galen’s doctrine of the four humours and their balance, or the lack of it, within the human body. Both groups also tended to use the same healing substances (especially in herbal medicine) and advertised, each in their own way, their “arcana” or secret remedies.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century academically trained physicians were in a different category from the surgeons, who acquired their skill partly as apprentices and partly as medical students. What distinguished both groups from the lay healers was not that they subscribed to a “rational” rather than empirical medicine. In their choice of therapist patients were primarily guided by a healer’s reputation, not their professional status. The reputation of a practitioner was based on the real or credible successes he achieved with his heterogeneous clientele, which was often made up of members of the upper, middle and lower classes in equal parts. It is therefore not surprising that well-to-do and educated citizens, who considered themselves enlightened, made the best possible – simultaneous or consecutive – use of the various therapies on offer. It is true nonetheless that lay medicine played a much more prominent part then than it does today. Inventories from that time show that many households possessed herbal books or vernacular medical textbooks that could be consulted in case of emergency.

If one studies the older standard works of medical history one can be led to believe that the medical profession was highly regarded in the eighteenth century and that physicians were financially well provided for. According to social hygienist Alfons Fischer, only university professors and private physicians to the aristocracy held such exalted positions and were well remunerated by their wealthy patients. For the majority of physicians it was hardly a “golden age”.¹³ We must nevertheless not be misled by the selective impressions gleaned from occasional comments on the economic situation of physicians in contemporary publications. Medical doctors were indeed fairly well paid as we can see from historical sources (annual tax records etc.) that offer exhaustive information on the wealth of different groups of people. The wealth of a physician in Wurttemberg averaged 6410 Florins at the end of the eighteenth century.¹⁴ An acre of farmland, by way of comparison, cost 150 Florins. Up to the nineteenth century the mobile possessions of physicians in Wurttemberg consisted largely of money and capital and the expensive clothing befitting their status, followed in value by furniture. At a time when physicians were not necessarily chosen on the strength of their medical expertise but more often on the basis of social considerations, physicians were forced to order fine clothes and appear in public “well-attired.”¹⁵

Before the age of scientific medicine dawned in the second half of the nineteenth century, a variety of contradicting theories were afloat, all attempting to explain the phenomenon of illness. Medical knowledge was mostly theoretical, but medicine, under the influence of philosophers such as Locke, Hume and Kant, began to turn increasingly to empirical evidence.¹⁶ Post-mortem dissections, as that performed on Emperor Leopold II, were part of that trend: the diagnosis established by the diseased person’s own doctor was critically compared with the findings of the autopsy and discussed among physicians. With the help of pathology, which boomed in Europe thanks to the pioneering work of Italian anatomist Giovanni Battista Morgagni, one hoped to learn more about the cause of death but also about

illness as such so that more definite therapy guidelines could be offered to physicians. Physicians had to know about the inner cause of an illness as otherwise they would not be considered competent by the leading medical authorities. There were different ways of acquiring such knowledge. While the “natural history” school of thought (ca. 1825 – 1845) promoted critical thinking and empiricism, “natural philosophy”, under the influence of Schelling, favoured a speculative approach in trying to explore illness and the as yet unpenetrated phenomena of life by means of theoretical deduction.

Hahnemann, like other physicians of his time, objected mostly to the latter of the two schools. In his 1808 treatise *On the Value of Speculative Systems of Medicine* the founder of homeopathy rejected all medical theorization. In his critical discussion of the Brunonian system of medicine[†] Hahnemann gave an outline of the range of medical theories abundant in his time: “After humoral pathology (that madness favoured by the mob that sees the diseased body as a vessel full of impurities with Greek epithets, which are supposed to produce stagnation and degeneration of the fluid and solid components, putrefaction, fever – everything patients might complain of – and which they fancied they could overcome by sweetening, diluting, purifying, loosening, thickening, cooling, and evacuating measures) had survived in a sometimes coarser, sometimes more refined form through the centuries – with occasional interludes of many lesser and greater systems (that seek the origin of disease in mechanism, in the inner form of the parts, in spasms and paralysis, in the solids and nerves, in chemism etc.) – the seer (Brown) appeared, who, as though he had penetrated the essence of nature, [...] assumed only one single principle of life (excitation) [...]”¹⁷ Hahnemann’s trenchant recital calls attention to the intense competition between older and newer concepts of medicine. What they all had in common, however, was that they were based on a purely speculative knowledge of what happens inside the human body.

At the same time, around the year 1800, the possibilities for gaining clinical expertise were rather limited. The diagnostic procedures that are at the fingertip of every medical practitioner today were not yet invented. The visualization of urine, which had not lost any of its popularity despite the physicians’ disapproval, was still carried out with the naked eye although some physicians already postulated the investigation of “the constituents of the diseased urine by means of chemical reagents.”¹⁸ Percussion, the method of striking and auscultating the body developed by Leopold Auenbrugger, had been known, but not widely used, since 1761. The stethoscope, today the hallmark of every physician, only became established in medical practice in the second half of the nineteenth century although Hyacinthe Laennec had invented it as early as 1819.¹⁹ Thermometers were rarely used for temperature-taking. One relied instead on pulse-taking with a watch that counted the seconds. Physicians considered the careful taking of the patient’s history to be of much greater importance than physical examinations. They were advised to beware, however, as we can read in a contemporary standard textbook, “not to take the information given by the patient too literally.”²⁰ But the patient’s report, subjective though it might be, still allowed the physician to gain essential insights into “the patient’s inner disposition, his education and other circumstances of his particular situation.”

The therapeutic possibilities available to physicians in Goethe’s time were as restricted as the methods of diagnosis. A contemporary physician was nevertheless justified in claiming that the amount of medicines available by far exceeded the cases of illness.²¹ Therapies were

[†] Doctrine of Scottish physician John Brown who postulated that the human organism responds to impressions, with “sthenic” (strong) disease arising from overstimulation and “asthenic” (weak) disease from lack of stimulation or “excitation” (translator’s note).

basically limited to the standard repertoire of which medical practice tended to avail itself up to the mid-nineteenth century. As early as 1790, Hahnemann had critically remarked in his German translation of William Cullen's *Materia Medica* that "bleeding, tempering, warm baths, dilutions, weakening diets, blood-purification and the never-ending laxatives constitute the limited armamentarium of the average German physician."²² Next to traditional dietetics it was the therapeutic "threesome" (bleeding, enema and emetics or laxatives) that formed the foundation of most treatment regimens. For the patient they were often kill-or-cure procedures. It is due to the horrendous side-effects of these measures and the immense suffering patients endured in having them administered that medical history tends to refer to that era as the age of "heroic medicine."

While patients would sometimes be given the herbal analgesics known at the time for pain-relief after surgery (it was not until 1805 that German pharmacist Friedrich A. Sertürner succeeded in isolating morphine in the laboratory), chronic or disease-related pain was seen by most physicians as an inevitable and unalterable concomitant of illness that patients simply had to accept. Only a few physicians, such as Johann August Unzer, were self-critical enough to ask themselves where one could find such "wise patients who are meant to bear their pain with patience."²³ The fact that patients in the newly erected general hospital in Bamberg received an average of four grams of opium and more than half a litre of spirit of wine²⁴ in 1789 had little to do with a change of heart among the physicians or with early forms of pain management. It was expression of the medical views held by the leading hospital physician – an admirer of the Scotsman mentioned earlier, John Brown, and his doctrine of "excitation" – who decided to use highly-dosed opiates to combat "asthenic" disease.

What therapeutic alternatives were there around 1800, if we leave aside homeopathy, which was only just being established as a medical system, and the "therapeutic nihilism" that relied fully on the body's own powers of healing? The secret, universal or home remedies advertised by lay therapists but also by renowned physicians (Hoffmann's Drops!) only partly met the understandable desire for "softer" therapies, not least because they either proved ineffective or they came with considerable side-effects and risks. The only actual alternatives were religio-magical therapies (pilgrimages, conjuring, faith healing, spirit healing etc.) and the water cures, which had not become popular yet (not to be confused with balneotherapy which had a long tradition).²⁵ A new method imported from the far-east (acupuncture) which experienced a renaissance when it was rediscovered by European physicians in the early nineteenth century answered the existing needs to an extent, but as a therapy it remained far less widespread than the "magnetic" cures introduced by the Viennese physician Franz Anton Mesmer, which were still very popular in Germany around 1800.²⁶

While government intervention and regulation in healthcare increased rapidly, state legislation in the German territories was in Hahnemann's times mainly restricted to the training of surgeons, to midwifery and pharmacology, the organization of health authorities, the assessment of health data (health reports, medical topographies) and, not least, medical provision for the poor. Other aspects of the medical Enlightenment (such as pastoral medicine and lay medicine) were only of marginal interest to the legislator. Unlike other countries where the tendencies towards professionalization and monopolization had begun to make themselves felt from the mid-1850s, Germany retained its "freedom of treatment" right into the twentieth century. For a long time the state relied (initially even supported by the medical community) on the self-regulatory forces of the medical market. That homeopathy of all systems would induce the proponents of a "state medicine" (as mainstream medicine was referred to then) to close ranks, was something its founder, Samuel Hahnemann, could not

Chapter 1

foresee when, in 1792, he accused the court physicians of Emperor Leopold II of malpractice. He had only just embarked on his career as radical reformer of the prevailing medical system.

¹ Cf. Hahnemann, GKS, p. 151ff.

² Cf. Imhof, Jahre, p. 80, figure 10

³ Cf. Loetz, Patienten, p. 341, table II

⁴ Cf. e.g. Fischer, Versuch, p. 95, 183. Cf. Lachmund/Stollberg, Patientenwelten, p. 48ff.

⁵ A.W.C. Ruhstrat, quoted from Loetz, Patienten, p. 125

⁶ Cf. Jütte, Krankenhaus, p. 25-43 (with further reading)

⁷ Cf., among others, Stolberg, Heilkunde, p. 88ff.

⁸ Cf. Döhner, Krankheitsbegriff, p. 38ff.; Loetz, Patienten, p. 227ff.; Lindemann, Health, p. 289ff.

⁹ Cf. Jewson's "classical" study, Patronage System, p. 369-385. For the changeable relationship between personal physician and patient cf. Treue, Leibärzte

¹⁰ Cf. Glöckerjan, Kurieren, p. 217

¹¹ Hufeland, Armenverpflegung, p. 10f.

¹² Loetz, Patienten, p. 105. Cf. also Frevert, Krankheit, p. 100ff.

¹³ Cf. Fischer, Gesundheitswesen, vol. 2, p. 69

¹⁴ Cf. Drees, Ärzte, p. 234ff.

¹⁵ This was certainly the impression the renowned Berlin physician Ernst Ludwig Heim had of his colleagues; cf. Huerkamp, Aufstieg, p. 28

¹⁶ Cf. also Wiesing, Romantik, p. 44ff.; Hess, Entstehung, p. 119ff.

¹⁷ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 505f. English translation adapted from R.E. Dudgeon, Lesser Writings of Hahnemann, Delhi 2004, p. 493

¹⁸ Sprengel, Semiotik, p. 69

¹⁹ Cf. Lachmund, Erfindung, p. 235-251

²⁰ Sprengel, Semiotik, p. 69

²¹ Cf. Lieutaud, Praxis, p. 38

²² Cf. Cullen, Materia Medica, vol. 2, p. 18 (German edition)

²³ Unzer, Curen, p. 605

²⁴ Cf. Ridder, Arznei, p. 41

²⁵ Cf. Jütte, Geschichte der Alternativen Medizin, p. 66ff.

²⁶ Cf. E.g. Ego, Animalischer Magnetismus

Born “... in one of the loveliest parts of Germany” (1755-1779)

The year of Samuel Hahnemann's birth, 1755, is deeply engraved in the collective memory of humankind. It was the year when, on 1 November – All Saints' Day of all days – a massive earthquake flattened Lisbon, shattering Enlightenment's naïve optimism at the same time. Immanuel Kant, along with many others, was deeply shaken by the natural disaster and reflected on its causes: “It is instructive to reflect on such horrendous calamities. Such reflection makes us humble by allowing us to see that we have no right – or that we have lost the right – to expect only agreeable consequences from the laws ordained by God. We might yet realize that this stamping ground of human desires cannot be the end of all our striving.”¹

Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann was born on 10 April 1755 to the porcelain painter Christian Gottfried Hahnemann (1720-1784) and his second wife Johanna Christiane Spiess (1727-1790), daughter of a regimental quartermaster from Koetzschenbroda near Radebeul. At that time, nobody in Meissen, the former seat of margraves and bishops, would have thought that soon an earthquake in far-away Portugal would shake the very foundations also of their little world. People here had their own concerns: the town was still recovering from the aftermaths of the Second Silesian War (1744/45). On 12 December 1745 Meissen had been taken without resistance by the Prussian commander-in-chief, Leopold I of Anhalt-Dessau. The town's famous porcelain factory, established in 1710 by decree of the Saxon Prince Augustus the Strong in *Albrechtsburg* castle, had suffered no economic losses due to the war. Otherwise Hahnemann's father, who had arrived in Meissen as a porcelain painter in March 1741, would hardly have purchased a property there on 6 April 1753, two years before the birth of his third child. The three-story building stood on the corner of the new market in Triebischvorstadt, one of the poorer quarters, and had cost 473 Thalers (the equivalent of almost two years' wages). Here Samuel Hahnemann was born in 1755, although the house no longer stands, having been replaced by a new building towards the end of the nineteenth century. The children in Hahnemann's neighbourhood were mostly the daughters and sons of persons of lower standing such as dyers, tanners and butchers.

It has never been established why Hahnemann, in his autobiography, gave the 10 April 1755 as the date of his birth while, according to the register of the *Frauenkirche* in Meissen he was born in the “early morning of 11 April.”² It cannot have been an oversight on the part of the registrar since the 11 April 1755 was a Friday, which is registered correctly. We must assume that Hahnemann was born at midnight since that would explain the discrepancy. The Köthen homeopath Arthur Lutze claimed he was told in 1855 by one of Samuel Hahnemann's daughters that her father was “born on 10 April at 12 o'clock in the night.”³ The error might therefore simply be that of the person who carried the glad tidings to the pastor or parish clerk. As a consequence the statue erected in honour of Hahnemann at a central location in Washington D.C. still bears the 11 April 1755 as his birth date.

Hahnemann was born into an artistic family. His paternal grandfather, Christoph Hahnemann, had been a painter in Lauchstedt, the summer residence of the Dukes of Saxony-Merseburg close to the city of Halle on the river Saale. Christoph Hahnemann's fifth child, Christian Gottfried Hahnemann was Samuel's father. In the church register at the *Frauenkirche* in Meissen he is entered as a “painter of the Royal Polish and Electoral Saxon Porcelain Manufacture of our town.”⁴ Samuel's uncle, Christian August (1722-1791) was also a porcelain painter in Meissen. His name appears among the apprentices in a 1744 register of “painters of landscapes and seafaring motifs”. We do not know which of the brothers was more talented, since they do not appear as individual artists. They belonged to a group of

employees who carried out the designs of well-known artists, but it is not possible to retrace their individual contribution to the factory's final products. Samuel Hahnemann's father achieved a certain prominence among this anonymous group as the author of a rare work on water colour painting. In the 1776 register he is named as a figure painter ("IIIrd Class"). In 1785 Hahnemann senior was awarded one hundred Thalers for his successful "attempt to improve the porcelain mass".⁵ He discovered the process together with his pharmacist son, Samuel August (1757-?), who had the same first name as his famous brother.

In his autobiography, which extends to the year 1791, Samuel Hahnemann wrote: "Together with my mother, Johanne Christiane, née Spiess, my father playfully taught me reading and writing."⁶ But before Samuel was old enough to acquire such basic skills, an event of world historical importance cast its shadows over his childhood. The Seven-Year War (1756-1763) left its mark on the town of Meissen. Frederick II of Prussia marched into Saxony and had large quantities of the Meissen porcelain confiscated. Not least it was the employees of the porcelain factory who had to bear the consequences of the looting because, for some time, they received no wages but were paid in kind (that is, porcelain).

Hahnemann makes no mention of these times of hardship in recollecting his early childhood. His autobiography, published in 1799, was written for a readership that was interested in the education of the by then quite famous physician. He therefore focused on his upbringing in the parental home and especially on his warm relationship with his father who was keen on education and who "had his own, sound ideas about what was good and worthy."⁷ From his father Hahnemann learned what it meant to be just, helpful, good and orderly. A few years after his father's death he wrote of him: "With great sensitivity and certainty he distinguished between the noble and the ignoble. He was my teacher in that respect, too. The views he held on the original principles of creation, on the dignity of humanity and its higher destiny was always reflected in his actions. My moral development was deeply affected by this."⁸ Christian Gottfried Hahnemann did not restrict his educational endeavours to his son but took active steps to improve the situation of the apprentices at the porcelain factory. He advocated boarding facilities for them and proposed, quite unusually for his time, a dual education system.⁹ The apprentices were to receive a thorough training as artisans as well as being taught reading and writing, and, to balance out the mostly sedentary work, physical exercise also featured in the curriculum.

The educational principle that Samuel Hahnemann's father handed down to his gifted son, which was "never to be a passive listener or learner"¹⁰ is reminiscent of the pedagogical ideas that Jean-Jacques Rousseau presented in his 1762 novel, *Émile*. The French philosopher, who was widely read in Germany at that time, thought that it was wrong to appeal to a child's reason at too early a stage. Education should be age-appropriate. Freedom was the right educational tool and adolescents should be allowed to discover their own natural boundaries. Teachers should not be figures of authority for the children since that would by necessity involve obedience and regulation.

Like *Émile*, the protagonist in Rousseau's *Bildungsroman* of the same title, the young Samuel Hahnemann did not receive formal education until he was between twelve and fifteen. For several years he attended the Meissen town school, which, since 1541, had occupied the premises of a former Franciscan monastery. Schooling was not yet compulsory in Saxony and needed to be paid for. Hahnemann described how his father kept taking him out of school for short periods of time so that he could work and support the large family. Samuel apparently followed his father's instructions without protest although he was so enthusiastic and avid a learner. In the end it was due to his remarkable talents that Samuel Hahnemann was able to

continue his schooling. His teacher Johann August Müller, the later headmaster of the private school of St. Afra, had detected Samuel's talent and promoted the gifted student from an early age. As a consequence, Samuel was exempted from paying school fees and his father allowed him to attend the town school although that meant that the family lost some much-needed income. In his autobiography Hahnemann wrote about his obviously happy days at school: "There was nothing remarkable about my schooling except that Master Müller, who taught the classical languages and German composition and who is without equal in honesty and industry, loved me as his own child and granted me liberties in my studies for which I am grateful to this day and which have influenced my subsequent studies. When I was in my twelfth year he suggested that I should teach the foundations of the Greek language to other students. In the private lessons he gave to his boarders and myself, he listened kindly to my interpretation of the ancient writers, often preferring my views to his own."¹¹ Master Müller seems to have been rather an unusual pedagogue for his time. He led his pupils towards independent learning in the spirit of Rousseau, leaving them free in a way that was particularly beneficial to the more gifted among them, such as the young Hahnemann. Müller not only recognized Hahnemann's talents from an early age, but promoted them, so that later the young man was able to earn a living for many years by translating books from other languages into German.

Christian Gottlieb Hahnemann did not think of sending his highly gifted son to a secondary school to prepare him for a university education. The family's dire financial situation meant that he had different plans for his son. He wanted him to learn a respectable bread-and-butter trade and apprenticed him to a merchant in Leipzig. The talented boy soon found his work unbearable. Although he feared his father's wrath, he secretly returned to Meissen where in his mother he found an eager advocate for his wish to study. On 16 November 1770 Christian Gottfried Hahnemann applied for a place for his fifteen-year-old son at the St. Afra School, an institution that was famous far beyond the borders of the country. The local ruler, Duke Frederick Augustus, accepted the application five days later. As an "extraneus", a day pupil, Hahnemann was expressly placed in the care of teacher Müller. He was granted one of the school's sought-after bursaries, which meant that his father did not have to pay the considerable tuition fees. Samuel Hahnemann did not board at the school but lived with his teacher. In return for board and lodging he served, as we know from the account books of the pension office, as Müller's "famulus" or assistant.

Pupils at St. Afra received a humanist education that included subjects such as Latin, Greek and Hebrew, on the basis of which they would study the classic writings and original bible texts, as well as arithmetic and music. The school took a strictly disciplinarian approach. It was not until the introduction of the Albertine school reform in 1773 that some of the draconian punishments (such as iron collars at mealtimes) were abolished. Expulsion was still a threat to those who committed minor transgressions (such as tobacco smoking), as one of Samuel's fellow pupils experienced in 1774. Among the pupils who – like Hahnemann – stood out at St. Afra's for their achievements and went on to become famous in later life were the writers Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and Christian Fürchtegott Gellert.

Samuel Hahnemann was a conscientious pupil at St. Afra School. His final Latin report describes him as "a gifted and diligent youth" known for his "perseverance, unusual alertness and studiousness" and certifies that "[...] he has thorough knowledge of Latin and Greek and is therefore able to understand the superior scientific presentations of the ancient writers. Next to this laudable scientific competence it is his true uprightness and grace that distinguish him."¹² That the young Hahnemann indeed deserved such high praise from his teachers is apparent from his rhymed farewell speech in French and an *oratio* in polished Latin which

were both delivered during his school-leaving ceremony at St. Afra's. His Latin speech is interesting because it revolved around the construction of the human hand, revealing Hahnemann's anatomical knowledge and inclination for the medical profession.

Samuel Hahnemann did not, as was formerly assumed, begin his medical studies at Easter 1775 but on 22 May 1775 (according to the Erlangen University student register¹³). He again relied on a benefactor for financial support. His father had given him a last gift of 20 Thalers when he left home, as we can read in Samuel's autobiography. The Meissen physician Dr Carl Wilhelm Poerner, who was also an eminent chemist and had therefore been appointed commissioner of the Royal Saxon Porcelain Factory, made sure that Hahnemann did not have to pay the usual tuition fee at the medical faculty of Leipzig University. Hahnemann clearly also used this medical study period to enhance his classical education as we can see from an accomplished Latin ode he wrote to his professor of Greek, Johann Karl Zeune.

The motivated medical student managed to earn a living by teaching German and French to a wealthy Greek youth and translating medical texts from English into German. His first translation of note was that of an English work on physiological experiments (written by John Stedman) which was published in Leipzig in 1777. The translator's name is not mentioned in the book, but Hahnemann listed it later among the volumes translated by him. In the two years that Hahnemann spent as a student in Leipzig, he translated two more books from English into German, one of them being William Falconer's "Study of Mineral Waters" (1777), and dedicated them out of gratitude to his benefactor Carl Wilhelm Poerner.

Since Hahnemann did not mention any of his Leipzig medicine professors by name we do not know whether he read under the university's vice chancellor Anton Wilhelm Plaz (1708-1784), who was professor of anatomy and surgery and later also of pathology. It was said of Plaz that he even held occasional disputes in the Greek language. From the university prospectuses one can gain information on what the teaching might have looked like at the time. During Hahnemann's enrolment at Leipzig Medical School there were five tenured professors who offered lessons. Dissections on dead bodies were already part of the curriculum ("anatomien ex cadaveribus exponet."¹⁴) and Hahnemann could have attended lecture courses in paediatric medicine. In his autobiography he wrote that he only attended courses which he deemed to be useful to him and that he otherwise preferred to restrict himself to studying the medical literature. In contrast to his time at St. Afra School where he had often been unwell, he now made sure that he would not suffer physically or mentally from excessive reading by adhering to a regime of physical exercise and movement in the open air.

Hahnemann did not find what he was looking for at Leipzig since there was no clinical training on in-patients. Few German universities (such as Halle an der Saale) offered that kind of practical approach. As a consequence Hahnemann decided to go to Vienna despite his unpromising financial situation. In Vienna he finally found the teacher he had sought in vain in Leipzig: Joseph Baron von Quarin, medical director of the Hospital of the Merciful Brothers in Vienna-Leopoldstadt and private physician to the Empress Maria Theresa. Hahnemann himself spoke of his teacher in Vienna in 1799 as "the great practical genius"¹⁵ to whom he owed everything he had learned as a physician. Quarin, who was professor at the Medical School from 1754, valued his gifted and diligent student from Meissen so highly that he taught him, together with other students, on his hospital wards. He even took Hahnemann along on home visits to private patients – a very rare privilege for medical students at the time. Hahnemann never forgot the extraordinary kindness bestowed on him by his Vienna teacher, with whom he was, in his own words, on very cordial terms.

The Hospital of the Merciful Brothers in Vienna offered plenty of opportunity for gaining clinical knowledge. In some years the hospital, which had 52 beds in Hahnemann's time, was full to overflowing. Between 1777 and 1781 an average of 1883 poor patients received medical assistance there every year.¹⁶ Better-off patients were rarely admitted since the older type of hospital was basically an almshouse. In 1774, an aristocratic patient would pay 60 florins for two hospital rooms plus two daily three-course meals – almost half of what a Vienna medical professor earned in a month. Hahnemann was able to survive (just about) for nine months in Vienna on a sum that was only slightly higher (68 Florins and 12 Kreutzers). Without going into more detail, he stated in his autobiography that the reason why he had only such a ridiculously small amount of money available to him was that he had been cheated out of a considerable sum of money at Leipzig.

As a consequence, Samuel Hahnemann had to leave the city on the Danube after nine months, in October 1777, despite the favourable academic conditions, without having gained any kind of degree. He did not seem to have been enrolled at the university either, since no evidence of his registration can be found in the Vienna University Archives. Again he found a friend in his need: Baron Samuel von Brukenthal, who had been appointed Governor in Transylvania by Empress Maria Theresa in 1777 and who resided at Hermannstadt¹. He offered Hahnemann a post as his librarian and private physician.¹⁷ Joseph von Quarin had introduced the two men. When von Brukenthal took office as governor in October 1777, Hahnemann arrived in Hermannstadt, a town of 10,000 inhabitants that boasted six pharmacies. We know little about his occupation as a private physician, but he apparently prescribed a mixture of cinchona and lactose for the baron, who suffered from frequent headaches. The relevant documents reveal more about his work as a librarian. In 1790, Baron von Brukenthal, an enlightened lawyer, owned a very comprehensive private collection of more than 13,000 volumes. The leather-bound catalogue, on which Hahnemann would also have worked, has been preserved and lists more than 6,000 titles, ranging from classical and contemporary literature through works on philosophy and religion to scientific and medical writings.

Hahnemann would primarily have been in charge of cataloguing the Baron's collection of medical books which included the work of the Halle physician Friedrich Hoffmann, who has remained famous to this day as the inventor of "Hoffmann's Drops." Hahnemann mentioned in his autobiography that he also kept the Baron's collection of coins in order.¹⁸ He still found time during his stay in Hermannstadt, as he informs us, to "learn a few more languages that I needed and to study a number of secondary sciences."¹⁹ He appears to also have been busy translating a substantial philosophical treatise from French into German. From a letter, that Hahnemann wrote to an unnamed publisher at a later point in time, we learn that the treatise was by Baron Paul-Henry Thiry d'Holbach and had the title "Système de la nature" (1770), a work that provoked severe criticism because of its materialist views.²⁰

Hahnemann did not spend all his time at Hermannstadt poring over books and coin collections. His medical activities were probably quite limited and not much is known about them. We do, however, have more information about Mr von Brukenthals's social life. He gave a reception almost every night in his Palais where lively discussions, most probably on philosophical themes, took place by candlelight. The host, who had writings by Diderot and Mirabeau in his library, was obviously intensely interested in the French Enlightenment. Hermannstadt's Masonic lodges also offered the opportunity for exclusive social meetings. Hahnemann joined one of these gatherings two weeks after his arrival. We read in the register of the "St. Andrew's Lodge to the Three Lotus Leaves": "Christian Friedrich Samuel

¹ Today Sibiu, Romania (Translator's note)

Hahnemann, born: Meissen, Saxony in 1755; character: candidatus med[icus] and bibliothecarius with His Excellency the Governor, religion: Protestant; admitted to the first degree on 16 October 1777.”²¹ The Lodge which, according to its statutes, saw itself as an “educational institution for the humaneness of men”, acted mostly in secrecy in the first years after its foundation in 1767. Among its members were, apart from two nephews of Baron Brukenthal, numerous renowned Transylvanian personalities, including the town’s physicians and apothecaries. The rather steep admission fee (20 Florins according to one source, 40 Florins according to another) would most likely have been paid by Hahnemann’s benefactor, Baron von Brukenthal who was not a member himself, but who had been close to the Masonic movement from his student days in Halle, where he had founded his own lodge.

Hahnemann did not progress beyond the first degree of membership while he resided in Hermannstadt, which does not mean that he lost interest in Freemasonry. He did, after all, go on to join the gracefully named Leipzig lodge “Minerva to the Three Palms”, of which Christian Gottfried Koerner, a correspondent of Schiller’s and father of the poet Theodor Koerner, was also a member. In some letters written by Hahnemann sometime after the early 1820s he referred to himself as “Br.” (brother), a clear Masonic allusion.²² Some Hahnemann researchers find evidence of Masonic terminology in Hahnemann’s “bible of homeopathy”, the *Organon of Rational Medicine*” (first published in Germany in 1880), in phrases such as “service at the altar of truth,” “thrice blessed” or “fellow brothers.”²³ In those days it was not necessary to be a dyed-in-the-wool freemason, as the biographies of Goethe, Herder, Fichte, Haydn or Mozart prove. For artists, writers and scholars it was something of a fashion to entertain a loose connection with the freemasons.

After about twenty months this carefree period in Hahnemann’s life came to a close. He seemed to have decided that it was high time to bring his interrupted medical studies to a conclusion with a doctoral degree. He chose Erlangen for this purpose, probably because the university there had the lowest tuition fees and the town had a small Transylvanian student colony.²⁴

As at Leipzig, the chairs of medicine at Erlangen University were not yet associated with specific subjects in those days. The professors mentioned by Hahnemann in his autobiography, lectured on such diverse fields as botany, anatomy or medical semiotics. Since 1770 Erlangen had specified a minimum period of study of six semesters (three years). Since Hahnemann had completed several semesters in Leipzig and Vienna (although his register entry only mentions Leipzig) he only had to attend a few lectures and seminars at Erlangen. Of the teachers he had there, two of whom interestingly also belonged to Masonic lodges, Hahnemann mentioned above all Johann Daniel (von) Schreber, the first director of the Botanic Gardens. It was to him that Hahnemann owed, as he pointed out, his excellent knowledge of the contemporary body of medicinal substances, in particular of the healing plants. The second Freemason among Hahnemann’s professors was Jakob Friedrich Isenflamm, another versatile physician, who was later appointed honorary member of the Erlangen Institute of Morals and Humanities. Hahnemann’s relationship to Isenflamm was obviously so close that, in April 1779, he had books sent to himself at Isenflamm’s address. Hahnemann also referred to the medical professors Heinrich Friedrich Delius, a physician and natural historian, who was somewhat wary of medical innovations, and Friedrich Wendt to whom the Erlangen medical students owed an increasingly practical approach to teaching from 1779.

On 10 August 1779, only a few months after enrolling as a student (12 April 1779) Samuel Hahnemann defended his medical dissertation at Erlangen. It had the title *Conspectus*

adfectuum spasmodicorum aetiologicus et therapeuticus (On the causes and treatment of cramp). The dissertation was printed, bearing as its motto the famous words of the Roman poet Propertius: “In great things it is enough even to have had the will.”²⁵ Hahnemann must have chosen the motto for a reason; he had obviously composed the dissertation under time pressure and would probably have liked to spend more time on it. As it was he, the former model pupil, received merely a pass (“rite”) for his effort. He was little perturbed by this minor flaw, however. What was important for him was that he had his doctoral title and could look out for work as a physician. In doing so, he was well aware that his medical knowledge was still limited, especially in terms of practical application. Whether Hahnemann remained in Erlangen for longer after gaining his doctorate or whether he went to Leipzig for six to nine months in order to widen his knowledge of chemistry, as Rudolf Tischner suggested, cannot be reliably ascertained from the sources. We do know for sure, however, that Hahnemann stayed in Dresden in November 1779, residing in “Haus Langesche” in a street called Scheffelgasse.²⁶

¹ Kant, *Schriften*, vol. 1, p. 431

² Cf. Landmann/Sauer, Meissen, p. 8

³ Quoted from Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. I, p. 10

⁴ Quoted from Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 2, supplement 2

⁵ Rückert, *Manufakturisten*, p. 154

⁶ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 116

⁷ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 116

⁸ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 116

⁹ Cf. Walcha, *Porzellan*, p. 142

¹⁰ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 117

¹¹ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 116

¹² Translated from the German translation quoted in Landmann/Sauer, Meissen, p. 23

¹³ Wagner, *Matrikel*, p. 220

¹⁴ Rabl, *Anatomie*, p. 64

¹⁵ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 117

¹⁶ Cf. Senefelder, *Brüder*, p. 33

¹⁷ The following details of Hahnemann’s sojourn in Transylvania are based on Tischner, Hermannstadt, p. 349; Crisan, Hermannstadt, p. 17ff; Lux, Siebenbürgen, p. 27ff.

¹⁸ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 117

¹⁹ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 117

²⁰ Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nuremberg, Autograph Archives K3

²¹ Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 13, supplement 9

²² Archives IGM A 1620, A 1621

²³ Cf. Hoede, Hahnemann, p. 22

²⁴ Cf. Deuerlein, Erlangen, p. 282

²⁵ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 17

²⁶ Cf. Schmeer, Hahnemannbrief, p. 181f.

“As if I were wandering around the world” – A physician’s quest (1780-1805)

In his autobiography of 1791 Hahnemann commented tersely on his first step into professional life following his graduation from medical school in Erlangen: “A native of Switzerland’s longing for his ragged Alps can hardly be more compelling than that of a Saxon for his country. I returned home to start my career as a medical practitioner in the Mansfeld area, in the small hill town of Hettstedt.”¹ It would mostly have been practical reasons that induced Hahnemann to return home. He was familiar with the mentality of the people there whose trust he needed to gain as a young physician, and he spoke their language. A letter from his sister, which was written many years later, speaks of relatives in **Hettstedt**, a town of 2100 souls, situated 25 miles or so northwest of the town Halle an der Saale². Hettstedt has a place in the history of technology because the first steam engine on German soil was in operation there in 1785. By that time Hahnemann had long moved on, because he remained there for only nine months. His reason for leaving was, in his own words, that “it was impossible to grow there inwardly or outwardly.” Obviously there were not enough patients and kindred spirits with whom the talented physician could share his thoughts and ideas. The brief time he spent there was nevertheless productive from a scientific point of view. Hahnemann gained sufficient experience to be able to write his first scholarly article since his dissertation and publish it in a medical journal (*Medicinische Beobachtungen*, edited by Friedrich Christian Krebs, 1782ff.)³ The article dealt with a fever (*Faulfieber*), presumably typhus, which had broken out in a neighbouring village. According to Hahnemann a young girl had brought the dreaded epidemic from town to the small village of Quenstedt, infecting her entire family. In his essay he described further fever cases he had witnessed while practising in Hettstedt. One of the patients who presented with the characteristic symptoms was a 55-year-old miner’s wife whom he treated successfully, as he stated, with vitriol ether mixed with 5 grains (=0.312 grams) of musk, large amounts of bitter beer – drunk cold – and “steel spirit” (presumably a Ferrum tincture). Hahnemann was still a long way away from a systematic treatment based on the “law of similars” and its small homeopathic dosages! Other patients who were verifiably treated by him during his brief sojourn in Hettstedt included a 50-year-old miner suffering from lethargy and two cases of St. Vitus’ Dance, one of them in a ten-year-old soldier’s daughter from Quenstedt. Hahnemann claimed to have cured these patients with diets and laxatives.

After leaving Hettstedt in the spring of 1781, Hahnemann led a restless itinerant life which took him to 20(!) different locations in northern and central Germany before he finally settled for a comparably long period in Torgau in 1805. We will cast a brief glance at the more important stages of this certainly most strenuous period in Hahnemann’s eventful career, especially since a new interest in the prominent physician and founder of homeopathy has recently emerged there.

Dessau was the next stop in Hahnemann’s quest for financial security and a satisfying medical practice. He wrote: “Here I found more pleasing social circumstances and the possibility of widening my experience. My free hours were devoted to chemistry and I was able to fill considerable deficiencies in my knowledge by undertaking small excursions to study mining science and metallurgy.”⁴ Dessau, royal residence of the Anhalt dynasty, had 7700 inhabitants at the time and featured more of a cultural life than Hettstedt which was 50 km away. But it was not only the widening of his medical and scientific horizon to which Hahnemann aspired in Dessau: it was there that he met 17-year old Johanna Leopoldine Henriette Kuechler (1764-1830), only daughter of an apothecary who had died in 1769 aged 65. Hahnemann’s (not fully authenticated) letter of 1 December 1782 to his newly wedded wife gives the impression that it was a love match although he might well have hoped for a

handsome dowry too. These are certainly the words of a deeply enamoured husband: “I do not praise you, I merely know you, do not admire you, merely love you and, do you know? So assuredly and steadily, that I am certain that over the years my feelings for you will grow even stronger, if, on the other hand, the tightest of all happy bonds can also be woven by providence.”⁵ Hahnemann indeed loved his wife faithfully until her death in 1839, not least because she stayed with him and stood by him “through thick and thin.” Later, when he lived in Leipzig, he described her to his friend Ernst von Brunnow as “the noble companion of his artist’s life”⁶. Brunnow, translator of the *Organon* into French, seemed to have a different view. For him, the then fifty-year-old wife of his revered master was a “nagging Xanthippe” whose bad influence on her husband he compared with that of Agnes Frei on Albrecht Dürer.

At the time of his wedding Hahnemann no longer lived in Dessau, although the marriage took place there, but 10 miles to the southeast of Magdeburg in the small town of **Gommern**. Gommern had just over 1200 inhabitants then and, until 1782, no physician had ever settled there. The reason put forward to convince the government of the necessity of installing a public health officer in Gommern was that the greater part of the population would otherwise die of (infectious) diseases.⁷ What authority concerned with the wellbeing of its country could object to such a proposition? Hahnemann was offered the post of town physician and health officer, but the appointment led to a conflict with the Medical School at Wittenberg which, according to the medical law of 1768, needed to be consulted in the matter. Hahnemann was accused of not having undergone the required admission examination as a “foreign *promotus*” and of having failed to pay the necessary fees. On 5 December 1783 the young physician was sworn in as a civil servant, but the University of Wittenberg continued to insist that the formal requirements had to be satisfied. Hahnemann felt he had to give in, especially as one of his former teachers at Leipzig, Johann Gottfried Leonhardi, was now professor at Wittenberg Medical School and would be able to supply him with a reference for the pending admission procedure. As it happened the reference was not particularly favourable: “I know Dr Hahnemann from Leipzig,” the dean wrote, “he is not without skill, but extremely prying. There was not a single professor at Leipzig who could teach him enough and he always wanted something special, just as he tried to obtain the licence to practise here without adhering to the procedure. As far as I know he gained his doctorate at Erlangen after studying in Vienna and following employment with a genteel *bibliothecarius* in Austria.”⁸ For the first time we come across a trait in Hahnemann’s character here that explains why he continuously found himself in conflict with his contemporaries and especially with his fellow physicians.

After receiving a letter from the Duke confirming him in his office but explicitly urging him to obtain the required medical approbation, the new-fledged physician apologized to the Medical Faculty in a letter of 18 November 1783 asking for leniency. The dean consulted with his colleagues and Hahnemann was requested to submit a “thesis for elaboration.”⁹ His studies in Leipzig were recognized and the admission fee was reduced from twenty to ten Thalers. Professor Leonhardi, whom Hahnemann honoured in later publications as his “teacher”, was so delighted with his former student’s repentance that he let himself be carried away to the extent of noting down on file: “I am pleased that my admonitions have met with such a remorseful and repentant sinner who knows also how to apologize freely for his errors. He shall *meo voto* be exempt from having to travel here. His elaboration of a thesis and the payment of the usual ten Thalers may entitle him to the office of health officer.” On 15 January 1784 Hahnemann sent the required written work, which turned out to be almost as comprehensive as his Erlangen dissertation, to Wittenberg. His cover letter contains interesting details of his life situation: “It is my honour to submit, most obligingly, the elaboration of the thesis assigned to me. That it is not shorter is due to the richness of the subject-matter, that it is not longer is due to the preciousness of your time. If you find the

language lacking in fluency I beg you to bear in mind that it has been eight years since I finished my studies. If the perusal of these pages is, as I would wish, not disagreeable to you, I would ask you to consider the situation of the author who has so little opportunity to do good here, being as he is surrounded by quacks and perhaps less of a charlatan than he seems to be. He is nevertheless compelled to earn his living mostly with unprofitable writing and longs for better occupation. May you, the fathers of health of such a respectable part of Saxony, find it in yourself to hear my request and propose a better way of providing for me.”¹⁰ Hahnemann’s medical dissertation, which has so far remained unknown, was on obstetrics and forensic medicine and asked “whether it is strictly necessary to cut the umbilical cord.” (*An funiculi umbili talis deligatio in recens natis absolute sit necessaria et quale sit eius intermissione in foro ferendum iudicium*). Shortly after submitting the work Hahnemann received the longed-for “certificate of admission” from the dean which entitled him to practise as health officer in Gommern.

Hahnemann’s hope of being able to add to his not unsubstantial basic salary through private practice proved illusory. His verdict of Gommern was therefore rather devastating: “There had never been a physician in that place; people did not understand what he was there for.”¹¹ In spite of this initial setback, Hahnemann applied repeatedly for one of the sought-after posts as public health officer in the course of his career. It was an occupation that provided not only regular work and an honourable and influential status, but also a basic salary that could be considerably supplemented by a flourishing private practice. Hahnemann earned 35 Reichsthaler per year at Gommern (15 Thalers less than originally agreed!). On top of that he received a significant payment in kind: 24 bushels (ca. 1319 litres) of grain, 24 bushels (ca. 1319 litres) of oats, 8 fathoms (ca. 26.4 cubic meters) of firewood and 8 three-scores (240) bundles of brushwood.

A contract Hahnemann entered into on 21 May 1784 shows how concerned he was, even when he was younger, that his wife should be well provided for in case of his death, while it also reveals the extent of his benefit from her considerable dowry.¹²

Next to his medical duties Hahnemann obviously found enough time to compose a major scientific work (*Directions for curing old sores and ulcers*, 1784) and translate two French pharmaceutical-chemical standard works into German. He probably used the translations to supplement his income, which was lower than expected. Disappointed, Hahnemann left the provincial town of Gommern, where his first daughter Henriette was born, after only three years at Easter 1785. His official letter of resignation to the council is dated 20 January 1785.

Just before his departure from Gommern Hahnemann learned that his father had died in Meissen on 15 November 1784. He must have felt similarly about the loss as his brother, who also lived far away from his place of birth, in Königsbach in the southern German state of Baden, from where he wrote on 22 December 1784: “The tidings of our father’s demise will have been as painful to you as they have been to me. We are both destined to mourn his death from a great distance.”¹³ Hahnemann did apparently not travel to Meissen to attend his father’s funeral.

The next stage on his wanderings was the famous city of **Dresden** which promised to be more interesting professionally as well as scientifically. In his autobiography Hahnemann wrote about the four years he spent in the city on the river Elbe, which counted around 60,000 inhabitants at the time: “Dresden was my next place of residence. I did not play a brilliant part there, presumably because that was not my intention.”¹⁴ In Dresden Hahnemann was not only able to gain experience in forensic medicine that would prove useful for his later treatise on

arsenic poisoning (1786), he also made the acquaintance of one of the most eminent German scholars of the late eighteenth century, Johann Christoph Adelung, author of the *Grammatisch-Kritische Wörterbuch der deutschen Mundart* (Grammatical-Critical Dictionary of the High German Dialect). It was also in Dresden that he met the famous French chemist Antoine Lavoisier who would later, in 1794, be guillotined under the “Reign of Terror”.

In Dresden, as in Gommern, it was again Hahnemann’s writing which occupied most of his time with the exception of a brief period when he served as locum for the town physician and was able to gain more bedside experience. Hahnemann was “continually” translating works from the French or English. In one instance he found out too late that his efforts had been in vain: in 1787, he had translated most of the French physician Nicolas Chambon de Montaux’s work on women’s diseases into German when another translation of that opus was published in Erfurt.

As well as specialist reading such as *Indicators of quality and adulteration of drugs* (1787) by the Belgian pharmacist Jean Baptiste van den Sande, Hahnemann translated a work of literature during his time in Dresden: the *History of the Lives of Abelard and Heloisa* by the Englishman Joseph Berrington, a volume of 638 pages! In addition to this, he composed a considerable number (12!) of writings on chemistry, natural sciences and medicine, including the enlightened treatise *Prejudice against heating with coal and ways of improving this fuel* (1787) and his *Instructions for Surgeons on Venereal Disease* (1789). The greatest stir he caused with a publication that introduced the public to his “wine test”, a method which made it possible to establish whether wine had been sweetened with the dangerous “sugar of lead”. Adding hydrogen sulphide to wine makes no difference to the iron contained in it, but it will cause lead or copper particles to separate as a dark precipitate. Unlike the “Wurttemberg wine test” Hahnemann’s procedure showed very quickly and reliably whether or not the toxic substance was present in wine. The Prussian authorities were convinced by Hahnemann’s method and made his wine test compulsory for wine merchants in the royal city of Berlin. Meissen winegrowers continue to present the method to an amazed audience at their annual wine fair in recognition of the town’s famous son and his achievements for the wine trade.

From Dresden Hahnemann continued to correspond with his mother and younger sister Benjamina (born 1768) who both lived in Meissen. After their father’s death Benjamina paid her mother’s rent and a small sum (three Reichsthaler) for her maintenance. As far as we know, neither Hahnemann nor his younger brother supported their mother financially. Samuel August (born 1757), who was two years younger than Hahnemann, wrote to him in Dresden in 1785 that he had hardly enough money to buy “clothes and shoes.”¹⁵ The correspondence between the two brothers has been preserved and demonstrates how close they were despite the fact that they lived so far apart. In his letters the younger of the two, an apothecary, wrote not only about the chemical experiments he conducted to find “fireproof colours for porcelain”, he also confessed that he lived with a widow although he was not yet divorced from his wife. When Hahnemann was once, in 1786, caught up in a heated argument with their mother and their sister Benjamina, the younger brother wrote to him imploringly: “But, dear brother, just imagine if you received sudden tidings of our mother’s death – she has one faltering foot in the grave as it is! I do know your heart! You would be devastated! You would wish that you had made your peace with her!”¹⁶ It is not possible to establish what the argument was about. There might have been problems with Hahnemann’s servant girl from Meissen. His mother chose her for him in July 1786 and paid her travel expenses, but admonished him in a letter to treat her with consideration, and disregard her minor shortcomings. Samuel Hahnemann seems to have been reconciled with his mother shortly afterwards, since she came to Dresden a year later to spend the New Year with him. She must

nevertheless have felt that he neglected his filial duties, because she complained to that effect to Samuel August, who was the real problem child in the family. Her relationship with Hahnemann during the last years of her life was obviously very cordial. We know from their correspondence that Hahnemann was in contact with her, even giving her instructions in his letters on the treatment of a prolonged cough. “I follow your instructions scrupulously,”¹⁷ she informed him on 29 December 1789. Half a year later he was notified of her death by his oldest sister, who lived in Eisleben with her second husband, churchwarden and general superintendent Johann Andreas Mueller. The moving letter reveals the aged mother’s devotion to her favourite son: “She loved you, dear brother,” Charlotte Gerharduna wrote to Samuel Hahnemann, “and gave you unmistakable signs of her love in the last year of her life.”¹⁸ She concluded her letter conveying her sincerest wish that the bond between the four siblings might remain strong despite their sad loss, not omitting, however, to remind him that he had formally resigned his inheritance.

One of the closer relatives with whom Hahnemann had written contact while he lived in Dresden was his cousin Christian August Hahnemann. When the latter was plagued by very painful haemorrhoids Hahnemann not only transmitted his best wishes for a quick recovery but also gave medical advice.

In 1788, shortly after having applied, without success, for the post of town physician in Dresden, Samuel Hahnemann moved to **Lockwitz**, a village five miles south of Dresden, presumably because it was cheaper to live there. There his fourth child, Amalie, was born on 28 March.¹⁹

In 1789 Hahnemann moved his family to **Leipzig** “to be closer to the source of science,” as he wrote in his autobiography, but also to accommodate his fast growing family. The autobiography, from which we have repeatedly quoted, was written there. It bears the date of 30 August 1791 although it was presumably written in Stötteritz which is today a suburb of Leipzig. As Hahnemann himself pointed out he had by then four daughters and a son. The dates of his children present a major problem to all Hahnemann biographers. It has only recently been established that the information supplied by the usually very reliable Hahnemann biographer Richard Haehl in the early 1920s as well as the population register of the city of Leipzig were partly incorrect. Additional sources (mostly parish registers) reveal the following order of births up to the end of the family’s first period of residence in Leipzig (1792): Henriette, born in Gommern in 1784; Friedrich, born in Dresden on 30 November 1785²⁰; Wilhelmine, born in Dresden on 16 May 1787; Amalie, born in Dresden-Lockwitz on 28 March 1789; Karoline, baptized in Leipzig on 4 April 1790.

Hahnemann’s wife gave birth to five children in seven years, an obvious indication that family planning was – for whatever reason – not applied in the Hahnemann household. Six more children were born by 1802.

We know that Hahnemann had the necessary medical knowledge, although he chose not to apply it in the case of his own family, from a statement of his about women who breastfed their child longer in order to “protect themselves from a new pregnancy.”²¹ Interestingly, we find this remark in a short article from 1787 with the title ‘On the difficulties of weaning’. Even Hahnemann’s mother was concerned about the family’s rapid growth as her letter of warning to her eldest son reveals: “I speak as a concerned mother now; how can a good woman recover her strength if she has a child every year? And how can the frail children gain enough strength and fortitude [...] as no-one knows what their destiny holds in store for them,

so that they can become useful members of human society? Especially since your means are limited?”²²

We know from contemporary narratives that Hahnemann was a strict, but loving and at times jovial father. Like his own father before him, Samuel Hahnemann tried “to encourage his children through his own example to be dutiful, virtuous and industrious.”²³ Despite the enormous workload that was always part of Hahnemann’s life he never thought that bringing up the children was solely his wife’s task. Whenever he could he would read to them from works that he found important. As he possessed a comprehensive library of his own there was never any lack of reading material. The financial constraints that he experienced during his first two decades as a medical practitioner made it very difficult for him to feed his fast growing family and to afford an adequate education for his only son and also for his many daughters. Hahnemann nevertheless spent “as much as he could possibly put aside with cautious economy on the education of his children”, as a friend of the family once wrote.²⁴ Throughout their lives his children remained grateful to him for his consideration. Even when, in 1835, their father moved to Paris with his second wife at quite an advanced age, they remained in contact with him despite the fact that they found his new marriage difficult to accept. The continued flow of letters between Köthen and Paris reflects the intimate and warm relationship between the father and the daughters he left behind, some of whom were themselves married by that time. But that belongs to a later chapter.

From a letter Hahnemann wrote from Stötteritz to the director of a mining company in Leipzig (most likely Wilhelm Heinrich Sebastian Buchholz) we learn how much he worried about his large family, especially in the early 1790s. “If I was unmarried, or if I had at least not five children,” the troubled family father lamented, “I would be quite different. But if I lived anywhere else, my outgoings would be higher.”²⁵ This must have been his real motive for moving from Leipzig, where living costs were high, to the outskirts of the university town after just a few months. The move seems to have taken place shortly after his daughter Karoline was baptized in the Nicolai Church in April 1790. But Hahnemann had another reason for moving out of town. He did not want to expose his “sickly children” to the “unhealthy town air”, as he wrote a year later to the same correspondent. These letters provide important information regarding the oppressiveness that country life held for him. While Hahnemann initially continued to practise as a physician to some extent in Stötteritz, it was not long before he gave up his modest country practice to earn “his bread as a writer”. He gave the following reasons for this step: “I have given up my practice entirely, because it cost me more effort than it brought in income and generally I was only repaid with ingratitude.”²⁶ Hahnemann consequently lived wholly from his work as a translator and writer of medical books in the early 1790s. While he had enough time available for writing, he lacked every other convenience that facilitates the work of a writer, such as access to libraries. He was forced to have the medical literature he needed delivered from town by messenger. Everything “apart from dry bread”, he complained, had to be sent from Leipzig. It is little wonder therefore that Hahnemann decided to leave Stötteritz again. He hoped for assistance from the Leipzig mining counsellor who was obviously well inclined towards him. All he wished for was “a place where I can keep a quiet private practice and broaden my knowledge as a scholar, meet good people and be able to bring up my children straight and sensible.”²⁷

While external circumstances during the family’s three-year stay in Stötteritz might have been difficult, it certainly proved to be a very prolific period. Hahnemann produced no less than eight translations from English, French and Italian (4552 pages altogether!) in a relatively short time. One of these translations, the two-volume *Materia Medica* of the Scottish pharmacologist William Cullen, was to have a significant impact on Hahnemann’s further

career. Hahnemann was in the habit, when translating, of adding his own comments as well as additional advice or even corrections. One of his annotations reads: “Cullen is mistaken; cabbage hardly loses any of its bloating effect if it is cooked for a long time.”²⁸

One of the decisive moments in the life of the future homeopath was his famous Cinchona experiment which led to the discovery of the “law of similars” (*similia similibus curentur*, “may like be treated with like”). The experiment which has been repeated many times to this day, either to corroborate or to refute Hahnemann’s thesis, marked the birth of homeopathy. The original footnote, which would merit a place in Anthony Grafton’s entertaining *The Footnote. A Curious History* (1997), reads: “By combining the strongest bitters and the strongest astringents, one can obtain a compound which, in small doses, possesses much more of both properties, than the bark, and yet no specific for fever will ever come of such a compound. The author [Cullen, R.J.] ought to have accounted for that. This principle of the bark that is still needed to explain its effect is not so easily discovered. But consider the following: substances that provoke a kind of fever (very strong coffee, pepper, Arnica, Ignatia, Arsenic) extinguish the types of the intermittent fever. By way of experiment I took four drams of good Cinchona twice daily for several days. First my feet and fingertips etc. turned cold; I became languid and sleepy; then my heart began to pound, my pulse grew strong and fast; unbearable anxiety, trembling (without cold shivers), prostration in all my limbs; then a throbbing in my head, red cheeks, thirst; in short, all the symptoms that are typical of intermittent fever appeared one after the other, but without the usual cold shivers. In brief, all the usual symptoms of intermittent fever are present: dullness of the senses, stiffness of the joints, and in particular the numb, unpleasant sensation that seems to be located in the periosteum of every bone in the body. The paroxysm lasted two to three hours each time and came back only when I repeated the dose, not otherwise. I discontinued the treatment and was well again.”²⁹ Cullen proposed that the effect of the Cinchona was due to its stomachic properties. The explanation suggested by the renowned Scottish pharmacologist for the effect of Cinchona on malaria, that had often been empirically proven, did however not satisfy Hahnemann. He carried out his own tests and arrived at the hypothesis which he would go on to develop into a “principle” or “law” over the years.

The clinical trials we know today did not yet exist, if we discount an early one-off trial carried out by British navy surgeon James Lind in 1747. Lind conducted a kind of cohort study to find out which remedy was best suited to cure the dreaded scurvy.³⁰ Self-experiments with drugs were still unusual in medicine. There were a number of brave and pioneering physicians in Hahnemann’s time that would test drugs on themselves to explore new therapeutic possibilities. One of them was Anton Störck, private physician to Empress Maria Theresa and temporary vice chancellor at Vienna University. It is likely that Hahnemann heard of these self-experiments when he studied in Vienna. The eminent physician and natural scientist Albrecht von Haller had postulated as early as 1771 that the effect of a drug ought to be tested on healthy persons before it was given to the sick.

Hahnemann ingested four drams twice a day (29.2 grams in total) of the fever remedy (Cinchona) which in those days was the usual dose. Apart from other, partly very unpleasant side-effects, he experienced a “kind of fever” which reminded him of an earlier malaria attack. Later provings with the same drug (or rather, with synthetically produced quinine) showed that the dose Hahnemann took does not cause a temperature rise in healthy persons. It needs to be born in mind, however, that in the eighteenth century “fever” was defined much more loosely than today. The most important symptoms of a fever were not the raised body temperature, which was not yet taken with a thermometer at that time, but the fact that the

patient felt cold and hot and had a fast pulse. More recent research has shown that there is something like quinine fever which is accompanied by a raised temperature, usually in cases of hypersensitivity. If that was so then, what Hahnemann experienced, was an allergic reaction to the Cinchona. We are thus faced with a paradoxical situation described so aptly by Georg Bayr, to whom we owe the most detailed historical-critical description of Hahnemann's controversial self-experiment: "It is the most incredible coincidence that the similarity principle, which Hahnemann derived from his Cinchona experiment, has to this day again and again been empirically verified although Hahnemann, from today's point of view, had throughout his life been the victim of a misconception with regard to the effect of Cinchona on malaria."³¹

Hahnemann not only translated a great number of books while he resided at Stötteritz, he also wrote his own works, including a number of ground breaking contributions to chemistry such as an in-depth description of the mercurial solution named after him: *Mercurius solubilis Hahnemanni*. Before his discovery of homeopathy Hahnemann had tended to recommend this mild mercury preparation for the treatment of venereal disease. Even his later opponents had nothing but high praise for the remedy. It is still used today in homeopathic dilution, for skin problems among other things. Of the medical works Hahnemann composed in those years of severe material constraints, his *Friend of Health* (1792) must be mentioned in particular. It is a popular handbook of the kind that was relatively common in the age of medical Enlightenment. The topics on which Hahnemann elaborated in a language that was also accessible to lay-readers ranged from rabies through the risk of infection posed by well-meaning visitors to the sick to the causes of bad air. One of his projects, the composition of "a complete medical dictionary"³² in several volumes, which a Leipzig bookseller had suggested to him, failed to materialize however, presumably because Hahnemann could not find enough collaborators for this major literary undertaking.

That Hahnemann had made a name for himself among scholars by the beginning of the 1790s with his numerous publications and translations is obvious not just from the fact that he was asked by an editor of biographical reference books to write an autobiography: in the same year, 1791, he was appointed as a member of the Academy of Practical Sciences in Mainz, an honour which Hahnemann, socially and scientifically isolated as he was in Stötteritz, greatly appreciated.

Although Hahnemann had often considered returning to Leipzig, he did in the end not move there when life in rural Stötteritz became unbearable, but to a town much further away. In January 1792 we find him in **Gotha**, capital of the duchy of the same name, with a population of more than 11,000. Gotha had a famous observatory, erected by Duke Ernst II in 1788 on the nearby hill of *Seeberg*, which attracted scholars from near and far. And last but not least, Hahnemann had a friend who lived and worked in this tranquil little town, the publisher Rudolf Zacharias Becker. Becker, who was convinced that all people could be educated, was the author of a major eighteenth century bestseller called "Noth- und Hülf-Büchlein für Bauersleute" (Little Book of Needful Help for Peasants) (1788) which sold over a million times in less than twenty years. This successful enlightener of the people founded the newspaper *Deutsche Zeitung* as well as a gazette called *Anzeiger* (1791). By imperial privilege the latter was renamed *Allgemeiner Reichsanzeiger* and received national status in 1806 as *Allgemeiner Anzeiger der Deutschen*.

On 6 February 1792, a newspaper article signed by Becker informed readers of the intended opening of a "convalescent home for up to 4 insane persons from affluent families", under the direction of a "philanthropic physician."³³ Those interested were asked to apply to the

advertising department of the *Deutsche Zeitung* in Gotha. The physician in question was none other than Samuel Hahnemann who was obviously in search of a new sphere of medical activity. In January 1792 he was still complaining to his benefactor, mining counsellor Buchholz: “The time that is devoured by my writing makes it impossible for me to devote myself to chemical analysis.”³⁴ Hahnemann had obviously realized that his chemical experiments could not support him and that his future lay in medicine, either as a translator or practitioner.

From the advertisement mentioned which was most likely largely composed by Hahnemann we learn how insane patients were conventionally treated at the time: “In the madhouses which are usually attached to a gaol or poorhouse those poor miserable people are only fed and detained in horrible ways to prevent them from harming themselves or others. That is all. They generally deteriorate as a result of the rough and misjudged treatment they receive at the hands of the wardens which only renders them more insane and incurable.”³⁵ Hahnemann was certainly right with his criticism of the asylums where the mentally disturbed were locked away rather than treated. There were hardly any places that offered appropriate treatment. Specialized lunatic asylums did not yet exist in Germany. Most people who suffered from mental disorders were looked after by their families or relatives since there were no effective remedies for their condition. In the eighteenth century only those who were considered dangerous to the public or in need of constant care were locked up in gaols or madhouses. The most famous institution of that kind in Germany was the Waldheim Gaol and Workhouse in Saxony which had opened in 1716 and had an orphanage and a madhouse attached to it. Maybe it was this institution that Hahnemann had in mind when he expressed his disapproval. After its foundation Waldheim rapidly grew to be the largest madhouse in the German-speaking realm. In 1772 it harboured 338 “idiots, melancholics and maniacs”, twenty years later it had 412 such inmates, including a number of patients of a better standing. We read about these more privileged patients who received better treatment in a travel log from 1793: “We saw several mad people, some of whom were of a very respectable standing, in their rooms and they seemed reasonable to a degree. Some were very talkative. Some did not speak at all but gesticulated continuously while others just sat silently and stared into space. Only a few of them, mostly women, were maniacs.”³⁶ While the wealthier mental patients had rooms of their own or shared a room between three of them, other inmates were herded together in dormitories with ten to twenty beds.

There was an alternative way of housing insane people who could not be looked after by their families in the age of Enlightenment: a combination of madhouse and hospital. The Vienna General Hospital was a classic example of this. It was founded in 1784 and featured the five-story “Fools’ Tower” (*Narrenturm*, also referred to as “Emperor Joseph’s *Gugelhupf*” because of its rounded shape) which, at the time, was seen as avant-garde in the care for the insane. The tower still exists although it is now home to a museum of pathology. The institution certainly did not offer therapy as we understand it today. If patients received any treatment at all, such as baths or venesection, it would still be based on the ancient four-humour theory and the view that all illness was rooted in the body. The untenable conditions that still prevailed in the psychiatric wards of some German hospitals in the early nineteenth century are revealed by a report from the Julius Hospital in Würzburg published in 1824: “Conditions were most scandalous in the uppermost room where the animal-people slept on straw mattresses, with woollen blankets for cover, where the straw that was soon enough soaked and putrefied with urine was rarely changed.”³⁷

While the insane were detained rather than treated in Vienna and Würzburg in the late eighteenth century, the first attempts at therapy-based care were being made by William

Battie in England and, during the French Revolution, by Philippe Pinel in Paris. Especially Pinel, a doctor for the insane, went down in medical history for freeing the insane from their iron chains in the Paris Bicêtre Hospital in 1794. It was he who famously said: “The insane are not culprits in need of punishment. They are sick and deserve all the consideration we owe to a suffering humanity.”³⁸ Pinel was among the first to experiment with mental treatments for insane patients who had so far been seen as incurable. He called his method “*traitement moral et physique*,”³⁹ using “moral” in the sense of mental.

The fact that Hahnemann advocated – and put into practice – a more humane psychological treatment of the mentally ill at almost the same time as Pinel and the English reformers has never really been appreciated by medical history. While small, privately run lunatic homes where a kind of psychotherapy called “moral management” was practised were established in England only at the beginning of the nineteenth century, a similar approach was introduced some years earlier in the German town of Georgenthal near Gotha. It was there that an exclusive establishment opened in the spring or summer of 1792 for which we find the following advertisement in the *Anzeiger*: “Everything is prepared here so that these most miserable of sufferers find security and humane treatment as well as everything that medicine has to offer for their recovery.”⁴⁰

The building offered to Hahnemann for use as a private asylum by the Duke was a wing of a former monastery which was transformed into the summer residence of the Dukes of Gotha after the reformation and served as a hunting lodge in the eighteenth century. The building now houses a nursing home. The premises would have been suitable for a larger number of patients, but it was Hahnemann’s intention from the beginning to take in no more than “four insane or melancholic persons.”⁴¹ They should however be wealthy enough to pay the fee he charged, which was not modest, as his opponents would later point out. It therefore comes as no surprise that only one insane person with sufficient funds found his way to Georgenthal: the writer and Secret Chancellery Secretary Friedrich Arnold Klockenbring from Hanover, for whose treatment his family was prepared to pay Hahnemann’s charges of 1000 Reichsthaler per year.

Klockenbring arrived in Georgenthal at the end of June 1792, accompanied by three strong attendants. The prominent state secretary and author was in an alarming state of mental aberration. It was assumed that the condition had arisen when Klockenbring became deeply upset and enraged about a lampoon which the poet August Kotzebue directed at him in 1790 under a pseudonym. As we know from the patient’s detailed case history, which was published in the *Deutsche Monatsschrift* in 1796, Hahnemann agreed with the diagnosis: “His spirit was so vulnerable and over-concerned with his honour and good reputation that it sank into the dust when it was hit by this hailstorm of, mostly unfounded, abusive accusations, and it was left to his shaken nervous system to make the sad catastrophe complete.”⁴²

Klockenbring who suffered from fits of rage had been treated by his personal physician in Hanover, Johann Ernst Wichmann, one of the most highly reputed physicians of his time. When his attempts at curing Klockenbring remained ineffective for more than six months and the patient’s condition became more and more alarming, the family called on Samuel Hahnemann who had just advertised his newly opened asylum in the *Reichsanzeiger*. After making inquiries about Hahnemann, who was mostly known as the author of medical books, Mrs Klockenbring came to inspect the institution and it was agreed that a treatment should be attempted.

When Klockenbring arrived in Georgenthal in summer 1792 Hahnemann saw in his face the “highest expression of mental aberration”. At first he only observed the patient whose condition he found terrifying. Klockenbring was seized by constant fits of rage. During these attacks he would act like a judge and impose punishments, quote heroes of Greek literature such as Agamemnon and Hector or tell the bible story of the trading of the birthright for a pottage of lentils in Hebrew to his warden, who was called Jacob. In between he would break into raving laughter or horrendous roaring. He would not settle at night either, but run to and fro shouting. When he was alone he tended to mumble to himself. He would also tear his clothes and bedding, paint his face to give it a “strangely majestic or half heroic half clownish appearance.”⁴³ He had an enormous appetite, as Hahnemann reported. He would apparently eat ten pounds of bread daily on top of the meals he was served! This greed would later abate as his condition improved.

We do not know how Hahnemann treated the only patient in his private asylum, but we know that he did not use any of the usual drastic methods for the detainment and immobilisation of lunatics. Hahnemann wrote in the case history that he never beat the patient, nor did he use any other corporal punishment. Klockenbring obviously loved Hahnemann for this, since he tended to show him “often in tears, the marks and calluses caused by the ropes which his former wardens had used.”⁴⁴ The humane treatment that Hahnemann applied included measures that we would call occupational therapy and counselling today. He would keep talking to the patient whenever his moods allowed it, and ask him to write little poems. He let him play the piano, but not the flute or organ since they obviously overexcited him. With his patience and humane treatment Hahnemann won the trust and affection of his insane patient, whose condition, after a few months treatment in Georgenthal, sufficiently improved for his wife to express the wish to visit him. Hahnemann was not in favour of her plan because he feared a relapse. Only when he had the impression that his patient was fully recovered – which was in spring 1793 – he informed Klockenbring’s wife that she could come to Georgenthal and take her husband home. Another source informs us that the former chancellery secretary recovered so well that he even wanted to resume office, but his application was turned down.

Hahnemann had succeeded in curing a case of severe lunacy after an eminent physician had failed to bring the patient back to reason. Despite this success no other wealthy patients presented themselves although Hahnemann received several inquiries, as he wrote in a letter to a friend, presumably Councillor Becker. No-one, not even royalty, was prepared to pay Hahnemann’s comparatively high charges for his “humane” treatment. It also appears that Hahnemann lost favour with Duke Ernst who had so generously made part of his hunting lodge available to him. A close adviser and confidant of the castle’s owner described in his memoirs the “eccentric strokes of genius of the institution’s director” and recounted the following anecdote: “Once when I asked the bailiff in Georgenthal, who is quite a wit, how many madmen Hahnemann kept in his asylum he answered wryly: only one and that is he himself.”⁴⁵ It is not possible now to establish what these jibes and accusations were based on. If one knows how belligerently Hahnemann often presented himself later as a homeopath one can easily imagine that his contemporaries occasionally lost patience with the arrogant, work-obsessed and inspired scholar and physician.

Hahnemann had to close his private asylum after only one year. In April 1793 the Duke granted him permission to remain in the castle until 1 July because he was unable to find another home for himself and his fast growing family in such a short time. Nine months earlier, on 29 July 1792, his wife had been delivered of twins, but one of the infants had died

at birth. The surviving girl was baptised Friederike.⁴⁶ It was Hahnemann himself who acted again as godfather, which is further proof of his social isolation in Georgenthal.

Hahnemann had to move on again. His destination this time was **Molschleben**, a village two hours walk to the north-east of Gotha which, today, has just above 1000 inhabitants. The family inhabited a large urban-style house there that was named after the woman who built it, a Mrs Karstädt. We have no records to prove that Hahnemann had a medical practice there which leads us to assume that he, again, was living from translating and writing. In Molschleben, where the family remained for about ten months, Hahnemann's sixth child, Ernst, was born on 27 February 1794. This was his second son who died, however, soon afterwards in an accident.⁴⁷ Hahnemann probably discovered his cure for cradle cap (*Hepar sulfuris*) not, as his biographer Richard Haehl suggested, in Molschleben but earlier than that, in Dresden-Lockwitz. The publication in question definitely speaks of four children who lived in the country with him. The reference can only relate to the rural suburb of Dresden where Hahnemann's fourth child, his daughter Amalie, was born in March 1789.

In May 1794 Hahnemann apparently left Molschleben to move further north. The reason for this further relocation can only be a matter for conjecture. The physician, who never went out of his way to avoid conflict, seems to have fallen out with an influential Molschleben family whom he referred to as a "despicable deputy mayor family."⁴⁸ His friend Becker from Gotha, with whom he had recently become reconciled after a quarrel, helped him with the removal by providing a wide carriage drawn by four horses. Furniture and books that had to be left behind were to be sent later. The journey turned out to be a nightmare for the whole family. Due to the coachman's carelessness, horses and carriage had an accident near Mühlhausen in Thuringia. From Göttingen, another stop on their way, Hahnemann wrote to his supporter in Gotha: "The coachman who turned us over is one of the most unscrupulous and dangerous fellows I have ever come across. I would not wish anybody else to be made miserable by him."⁴⁹ Through the accident the family not only suffered injuries which forced them to extend their stay in Mühlhausen to eight days, they were also mentally scarred. The children were, not surprisingly, very fearful when they climbed up on the vehicle to continue their journey. But worse was to come: Hahnemann's youngest son, who was still a baby, was so severely hurt in the accident that he died later in Göttingen.

The end of May saw Hahnemann in **Göttingen**, around 50 kilometres northwest of Mühlhausen. The university town had a population of 8900 then and we can assume that it was the family's next destination since Hahnemann enrolled himself at the Georg August Wilhelm University on 23 May 1794. As his doctorate is mentioned in the enrolment register Hahnemann might have sought a postdoctoral qualification ("*Habilitation*") at Göttingen's highly reputed medical school.⁵⁰ He certainly seems to have widened his medical knowledge there. In his memoirs the professor of chemistry and medicine at Kiel University, Christoph Heinrich Pfaff, described his meeting with Hahnemann in Göttingen. He first met the future homeopath in the maternity clinic, the *Accouchierhaus*, which was world famous at the time and, in 1794, under the direction of the eminent obstetrician Friedrich Benjamin Osiander. Not only post-mortem investigations were carried out there on diseased pregnant women and newborn babies, students also practised on gynaecological models and "living phantoms", as Osiander referred to his usually lower class patients. It was here that Pfaff met Hahnemann, his senior by eighteen years, who was by then a scientifically qualified and experienced physician and chemist and, still, representative of "mainstream medicine". Pfaff had the impression that Hahnemann was a "*Herrnhuter* and mystic"⁵¹, not least because he always kept the shutters at the front of his house closed, but that in no way prevented him from

visiting Hahnemann repeatedly to engage with him in lively discussion about chemistry and medicine.

It was not just the outstanding reputation of Göttingen's medical school that attracted Hahnemann. We know from his later letters that he sought, and established, contact with the humanist luminaries residing there, one of whom was Christian Gottlob Heyne. Heyne was without doubt one of the most eminent philologists and scholars of the late eighteenth century. Even Goethe wished to study in Göttingen because of him as we know from his "Truth and Fiction," but was held back by his father. When and how Hahnemann made the acquaintance of the great scholar is not known. But the founder of homeopathy, who from his youth had been a keen classical philologist kept loose contact with him up to Heyne's death in 1812.

It is also not clear what moved Hahnemann to leave Göttingen again after just a few months. Maybe there were difficulties at the medical school or he was not able to settle down as a medical practitioner in the town? Did he hope to find a more secure living elsewhere? We do not know. It might well have been a legal dispute to do with a tenancy matter.⁵²

In the autumn of 1794 we find Hahnemann no longer in Göttingen, but in **Pyrmont**. Some years later Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, another prominent contemporary of Hahnemann, would undertake the sixty-kilometre journey from Göttingen to Pyrmont, the summer residence of the Princes of Waldeck-Pyrmont. Unlike Hahnemann, the Privy Councillor and poet did not seek residence in the health resort but relief from a complaint that had troubled him since the beginning of 1801.

Shortly after his arrival Hahnemann informed one of his patients in Gotha, in a letter of 19 October, of his intention to practise in Pyrmont, a town of only 800 souls. But his hopes of finding enough patients in this fashionable spa town where, in the late eighteenth century, Europe's rich, powerful and sophisticated rubbed shoulders, were disappointed. There was no shortage of physicians as we see from a contemporary source: "From morning to evening one sees physicians run around and to and fro, busy inquiring after the wellbeing of their clients. Some argue at the crucial stage of their regimens, which might be wrong or harmful in some cases, about irrelevant trivialities and denounce others behind their backs. [...]"⁵³ Hahnemann, not surprisingly, considering all that medical competition, left Pyrmont after a few months. He did not mention an imminent move in a letter of 10 January 1795 to his friend Becker in Gotha, but his daughter Eleonora was born on 3 April 1795 in Wolfenbüttel, which seems to indicate that the family must have moved before her birth. Hahnemann's short treatise on the harmfulness of lead glazing on cookware certainly dates from his time in Pyrmont. It was published in 1795 in a Hanover journal.

Wolfenbüttel had 6397 inhabitants and was, again, only a short interlude in Hahnemann's quest for a domicile that would offer him an adequate livelihood as a physician. He was presumably drawn to the residence of the Guelphs because he had relatives there and not because of the town's famous ducal library where Lessing had been librarian. The widowed sister-in-law of Hahnemann's sister Gerharduna lived there who had been married to a merchant called Mueller. On 6 April Hahnemann applied to the health authorities in Brunswick for permission to practise medicine⁵⁴ in Wolfenbüttel. He was informed that, as a foreign physician in the Duchy of Brunswick, he needed to take an examination and pay the appropriate fee before the license to practise could be granted to him. It was pointed out to him, however, that he had the option of applying to the Duke in person for exemption from the strict regulation. It was not long before he received, on 14 July, the Duke's exceptional permission to practise, together with the assurance that license fee and examination were

waived in his case due to his status as a famous medical writer and “a skilled chemist and physician.”⁵⁵ In the end Hahnemann did, however, not settle in Wolfenbüttel but in nearby Brunswick.

On 14 August 1796 we find Hahnemann in **Brunswick**, a town of just above 27,000 souls, where a few months later he purchased a house with a garden. Hahnemann had to take out a loan, vouched for by his wife’s dowry, to pay the price of 2065 Reichsthaler for the property. His friend from university, Karl Heinrich Spohr, father of the composer Louis Spohr, was town physician of Seesen, which is close to Brunswick. In 1778 Hahnemann had used Spohr’s name as an alias because he did not want to be publicly known as the translator of a work from the English (John Ball’s *Modern Practice of Physic*).

It was evidently in Brunswick (“in my garden”⁵⁶) that Hahnemann wrote his notes about the treatment of the poet Klockenbring and most likely also the essay that was to break the ground for homeopathy. The paper was published in 1796 under the title “Essay on a new principle for ascertaining the curative power of drugs” in *Hufeland’s Journal for Applied Medical Science*. In it Hahnemann offered a detailed description of the “principle” of a new art of healing discovered by him that has remained controversial to this day: “*Each active substance provokes a particular disease in the human body that is the more specific, defined and violent the more active the substance is. Nature ought to be copied* since it occasionally cures a chronic condition when another condition is added. The remedy to be applied for the (preferably chronic) *disease must be able to artificially provoke another condition which is as similar as possible to the former* which will then be cured; *similia similibus*.”⁵⁷ In the second part of the essay, which was printed in the next issue of the journal, Hahnemann tried to corroborate his theory of the similarity principle by quoting a number of practical examples. He referred, for instance, to the effect of drugs used at the time on healthy subjects (as in case of poisoning) and their potential use according to his similarity principle. He also put forward a great number of examples from the contemporary medical literature and his own experiences and drug provings that he had carried out on himself and others, such as the Cinchona experiment mentioned earlier. Hahnemann also decried the mistakes that were made in medicine, such as the common overdosing with poisonous foxglove (*digitalis*) or the confusion of mercury poisoning with the dreaded syphilis. Over and above that, he presented some cases of successful treatments based on the similarity principle like that of the publican whom he cured with white hellebore (*vertrum album*).

Not even the fact that he had purchased a house there could keep Hahnemann in Brunswick. After less than a year, in June 1796, the property was sold and the family moved east to **Königslutter**, a town of 1600 inhabitants. There they stayed until 1799 although initially the auguries were not favourable. The Königslutter physician Dr Vibrans, a member of the Brunswick health authorities, and the resident apothecary Dr Krukenberg saw in Hahnemann a dangerous competitor. They accused him of manufacturing and dispensing his own medicines in violation of the drug law, which stated that physicians were only allowed to prescribe but not dispense medicines. We have here the first evidence of the dispensation of homeopathic remedies to patients which marked the beginning of a conflict with pharmacists that would grow ever more fervent as we can see from Hahnemann’s letter of justification, dated 17 October 1796: “I would never [...], without emergency, go against the law [...] when prescribing an official medicine and always send my long-term patients to the pharmacy with my prescription (but only to the best pharmacies in the country because the botchery of sham apothecaries is as detestable to me as poison mongering)”⁵⁸. The founder of a new medicine furthermore pointed out that “a person who is more than just a common physician” and who has discovered new methods for the benefit of a suffering humanity must not be in

any way prevented from employing them at his own discretion. We assume that he referred to the application of the similarity principle in medical practice, for which he, only much later - in 1810, introduced the term “homeopathy”.

Hahnemann seemed to have kept the upper hand in this conflict, since his sister wrote to him soon afterwards, on 15 November, from Eisleben: “After this victory you will live more peacefully and happily and be able to save more of your money.”⁵⁹ Hahnemann consequently decided to stay in Königsutter and take out a mortgage on another house with garden. At 2200 Thalers, the new property cost much more than Hahnemann had gained from selling his former house in Brunswick (1700 Thalers). It was a handsome property, of which Hahnemann took possession and where a few months later, on 15 January 1797, his daughter Charlotte was born. This time he did not have to stand as godfather himself. According to the church records the child’s godparents were Hahnemann’s sister Gerharduna, “Mrs Councillor Johann Wilhelmine Schwabe” from Dessau and the Leipzig bookseller Gerhard Fleischer. With his family steadily growing Hahnemann seems to have become aware of his paternal responsibilities, since the 43-year old drew up his last will and testament on 7 March in Königsutter and inquired about the possibility of joining a widow’s pension scheme. His sister Gerharduna found out for him that the Hamburg pension office would not take on new members while its sister institution in Berlin was even prepared to accept non-Prussians.

There is no doubt that Hahnemann began his homeopathic practice in Königsutter. The impression is substantiated by a few cases of treatment mentioned in his publications of that time which refer to the application of the similarity principle. He did not yet use the high dilutions which he explored only later, but usually small dosages, or grains, of opium (*Papaver somniferum*) for instance, for the “kind of fever” he and his family suffered from in the spring (presumably of 1797) and which manifested in “tension and pressure in the forehead”. He took half a grain of the medicine and gave the children, between a fifth and a 27th grain, depending on their ages. In an article for *Hufeland’s Journal* (vol. 5, 1797, no. 1) on “Some kinds of continued and remittent fevers” Hahnemann explained that it was on the basis of the characteristic symptom picture that he chose the remedy which provoked similar symptoms in a healthy person: “The immobility of the pupil, the tension and pressure in the forehead, in the precordial area [heart area, R.J.] and around the umbilicus, the general tension in all fibres of the body, the sopor, the relatively negligible diminution of strength, and the visible relief brought about by occasional sweating, the benefit afforded by eating pork which enhances the contractility of the fibre, in conjunction with the aggravation of symptoms occasioned by the east wind, all these symptoms led me to conclude that opium was the remedy indicated.”⁶⁰

As is still the case today in homeopathy Hahnemann chose the remedy not only on the basis of physical symptoms but included modalities such as sensitivity to the weather and preferences for certain foods such as pork. We are therefore not surprised to find in Hahnemann’s first pharmacological work, which was published in Leipzig in 1805 under the title *Fragmenta de viribus medicamentorum* (Drug Proving on the healthy body) some of these symptoms (“cold sweat on the forehead” or “reduced sensitivity”) again as the proving symptoms of opium.”⁶¹ It was also during his time in Königsutter that Hahnemann discovered the drug interactions that are relevant in homeopathy (known as antidoting), as we can see from his 1797 essay “Antidotes to some heroic plant substances”. In this essay he recommended, based on his own experience, coffee (*coffea*) as an antidote for white hellebore (*Veratrum album*) poisoning, again quoting examples from his own practice. It was also the time when he tried to find a way of producing “smallest dosages” of insoluble, solid

medicinal substances (such as the seeds of *Nux vomica* or *Ignatia*) by improving the methods of pulverization or *trituration*, as he would later call the procedure.

Apart from a few essays for publication in medical-pharmaceutical journals that Hahnemann must have written in Königsutter, he finished the two final parts of his pharmaceutical dictionary. They were printed in Leipzig in 1798 as Volume 2 and were received with high praise by the experts. One of the most prominent pharmacists of the eighteenth century, Johann Bartholomäus Trommsdorff, wrote about Hahnemann's dictionary: "An excellent work of which everybody should own a copy."⁶² While in Königsutter, Hahnemann also translated more medical books into German, including the 1200-page *New Edinburgh Dispensatory* (published in German in Leipzig 1797/98), an official pharmacopoeia which was highly popular at the time.

In August 1798 it was rumoured, even beyond Königsutter, that Hahnemann had put his house up for sale and intended to leave the town. Hahnemann felt compelled to publish, through one of his long-term patients in Gotha, the following statement in the '*Gothaischen Gelehrten Zeitung*' (Gotha Journal for Scholars): "The rumour that Dr Hahnemann of Königsutter will follow a call to Mietau is unfounded."⁶³ Hahnemann's sister, concerned that the family might move again, was greatly relieved. On 17 December 1798 she wrote to her brother: "I applaud your wife and kiss her for advising you to stay in your pretty house."⁶⁴ But the gossip seems to have been reassuring enough for Hahnemann's arch enemy, Dr Vibrans, to give up his plans of applying as health officer in nearby Hasselfelde. Hahnemann had applied for the same post shortly before but had been rejected. When Vibrans decided to stay, Hahnemann did, contrary to expectation, not give up but submitted a second application to the health authorities in February 1799, referring to the poor health of the incumbent officeholder. But his second application was also turned down which meant that the next relocation was inevitable. Hahnemann had already thought about the next possible place of residence when he arrived in Königsutter and had discussed it with his sister. Berlin, Hamburg and Altona had been considered at that stage, all of them places where Hahnemann's sister had contacts which she promised to use in support of her brother. Gotha was also an option since it offered a vacancy for a court physician. But Hahnemann's application which he sent in 1799 through one of his patients was without success. The efforts of his friend Becker to bring Hahnemann as a physician to Sondershausen also came too late.

In September 1799 we find the Hahnemann family as tenants of a wine merchant in **Altona**, at number 65, *Kleine Freiheit*. Altona, with its 23,000 or so inhabitants, was an expensive area as Hahnemann was soon to find out. Living costs were "at least three times higher than in Gotha,"⁶⁵ he complained in a letter to Councillor Becker. On top of that, it was difficult to earn enough there as a medical practitioner to support a family of, by then, ten. Hahnemann, it seemed, had relied too heavily on the advice of two fellow physicians, Johann Ernst Wichmann and Philipp Gabriel Hensler, who had given him "compelling reasons"⁶⁶ for moving to Altona or Hamburg. As it turned out he was, contrary to his assumption, not even allowed to dispense medicines there. Hahnemann had the idea of again taking a lunatic patient from a wealthy background into his house. With the help of his friend Becker a suitable patient was soon found in Johann Karl Wezel, a poet from Sondershausen, who had become insane in 1786, causing his followers and friends to place him into care. The "Society of noble philanthropists of Regensburg"⁶⁷ had collected the impressive sum of 15 Louis d'or so that he could be treated by Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland. Hahnemann, who was in the end applied to for help on Hufeland's recommendation, offered distant treatment but pointed out that it would be better to deliver the patient to his care in Hamburg. He asked 120 Marks for the in-patient care, just about a sixth of the monthly rent he had to pay in Altona. Hahnemann also

tried other ways of supplementing his obviously still very modest income. In the *Reichsanzeiger* of 22 November 1799 he announced that he would answer written requests for medical advice only if the letters were prepaid and “contain at least one Frederick d’or [old German gold coin, R.J.] as remittance or cash.”⁶⁸

As Hahnemann continued to find it difficult to make ends meet he had the idea of asking for a subscription of one Frederick d’or for his work on scarlet fever. Subscribers who sent the money would not only receive the book free of postage but also a sufficient amount of the “necessary powder [...] to immunize several thousand persons against scarlet fever.”⁶⁹ But even such generous promises, which were very much in line with the secret remedy trade that was thriving at the time, attracted very little interest, leading Hahnemann, in January 1801, to ask his friend and publisher, Becker, to print the essay in the *Reichsanzeiger* to “make it available to a wider public.”⁷⁰ Hahnemann’s reputation had suffered by now so that he saw fit to defend himself in a letter to Rudolf Zacharias Becker against the accusation of profiteering: “There is no evil in asking for advance payment for one’s inventions as long as one delivers the promised goods as soon as payment has been received.”⁷¹ He even enclosed a gold coin (Louis d’or) with his letter, asking the publisher to pass it on to a critical subscriber. But not even that gesture could protect him from the accusation of being mercenary that he would hear often from his opponents in years to come.

The financial difficulties which Samuel Hahnemann faced in Altona seemed to make the next move inevitable, although his sister urged him in a letter of January 1800: “Be patient for a bit longer. I hope your situation will improve.”⁷² When the house he rented went up for sale it was clear that the family had to move again. At first Hahnemann did not want to stay in Altona under any circumstances, not just because of the high rents but also because of his patients’ bad payment morale. It is said to have been acquaintances in Hamburg who persuaded him to settle down in the Free and Hanseatic City. He informed his friend that he had found a home in a “pretty house in St. Jürgen near **Hamburg**,”⁷³ at number 126 *Alstertwiete*. The family moved in May 1800, but any hopes that he would be able to make a living there were soon shattered. In a letter to Hufeland, Hahnemann spoke of his disillusionment: “The lack of outstanding physicians in Hamburg indicates, as I realize, that people here do not care about a physician’s real worth. It is more important that he lives in the most brilliant palace, keeps the finest carriages, plays for the highest stakes, [...] has worldly manners, gives expensive dinners and assume airs of nobility.”⁷⁴ After a short time, the head of a numerous family therefore decided, driven by his financial worries, that it was time to return home to the Electorate of Saxony. Just then the long announced mentally disturbed patient Wezel arrived. Hahnemann raised his fee by one Frederick d’or compared with the original arrangement because he paid 15 per cent more rent in Hamburg than he had done in Altona.

The patient was different from Klockenbring in that he was actually dangerous. On 24 July Hahnemann entreated his friend Becker to do everything in his power to have the patient, who tended to go berserk, taken back to Sondershausen. The humane treatment envisaged by Hahnemann proved wholly inappropriate. “When I began the therapy and tried to encourage him to go for a walk etc. it appeared that all those assurances [of the patient’s placidity, R.J.] were wrong. He wanted to throw me out of the house and beat me, and when I summoned more helpers to induce him with patience or violence to go for a walk or at least into the courtyard, he opposed all three of them, bit and scratched them, and it was impossible to move him.”⁷⁵ Hahnemann found that he was out of his depth with the care and secure keeping of his aggressive patient, especially as he could not find any helpers in Hamburg who were prepared to take on this difficult task, nor would he have had the means to pay for such help.

On 1 September, after two months of ineffective treatment, a “carriage from Sondershausen”⁷⁶ collected Wezel, “not a minute too late” as Hahnemann remarked in a letter to Becker with a sigh of relief.

Wezel was not the only one to leave the hanseatic city, Hahnemann soon followed suit, seeking more affordable accommodation elsewhere. Considering these disastrous events it comes as a surprise when we read in Hahnemann’s memoirs, which he wrote ten years later, that his time in Hamburg and Altona had been blessed with many good experiences.

The next stop on the way was **Mölln**, a town of 1600 inhabitants situated close to Hamburg in the Lauenburg region. Today a Kneipp spa town, Mölln was then mostly inhabited by craftspeople which meant that cheaper housing was available. On 20 September 1800 Hahnemann wrote from Mölln to his faithful friend in Gotha: “Here I will again take up the helm of my little ship of writing and only cure on the side what providence will send my way. The unrelenting waves of the great city of Hamburg, which only carry powerful vessels but bury the smaller boats, all but devoured me. Thank God for casting me ashore at the last minute.”⁷⁷ Hahnemann’s wife was again expecting and Louise, the couple’s youngest daughter, was born shortly after their arrival in Mölln. Contrary to previous assumptions, her date of birth was 1 October 1800 and she was baptized four days later.⁷⁸ The number of children, as Hahnemann wrote in a letter of 3 December 1800, had now “grown to nine”.⁷⁹

Once in Mölln Hahnemann informed the publisher of the *Reichsanzeiger* that he had discovered a “new alkaline salt” (*Alkali pneum*). Clients willing to purchase the new chemical substance were requested to send one Frederick d’or per ounce, free of expenses, to Hahnemann’s bookseller in Leipzig. But for the first time in his career the experienced chemist and pharmacist had committed a serious error. The substance he thought he had discovered was proven to be nothing other than the well-known borax. Hahnemann had to admit his mistake publicly, promising to hand over all moneys received against receipt “to the poor relief fund”.⁸⁰ As late as 1806, the founder of homeopathy apparently still felt obliged to restore his good name, for he wrote: “If I once committed an error in chemistry, for to err is but human, I was the first to acknowledge my mistake as soon as it was pointed out to me.”⁸¹ Hahnemann was as open to justified criticism as any scientist is expected to be today. He had not yet grown into the arrogant and headstrong physician that he was later driven to be by the constant and unrelenting criticism of those who opposed his new homeopathic medicine.

As is evident from his treatment at a distance of his friend in Gotha, Hahnemann continued, while in Mölln, to work on the similarity principle which he had discovered some years earlier. In a letter of December 1800 Becker consulted him because he suffered from migraines. Hahnemann asked for a detailed description of the symptoms, about the kinds of pain he experienced but also about his moods, sleeping behaviour and food and drink preferences. These questions were essentially those of the system of history taking to which he was to devote several sections (62 ff.) in the first edition of his main opus, the *Organon* (1810).

Although conditions improved initially while he was at Mölln, Hahnemann did not stay long. On 8 June 1801 we find him in **Machern** near Leipzig, over 400 kilometres away, and in August of the same year in nearby **Eilenburg**, a small town of 1800 inhabitants. As the main reason for his relocation Hahnemann stated that, although there was no shortage of patients in Machern, it lacked all “of life’s comforts”.

Hahnemann's removals, which occurred at ever shorter intervals, now began to disconcert even his faithful friend and helper in need, Councillor Becker in Gotha. He upbraided Hahnemann in particular because it had come to his notice that public rumour associated Hahnemann's restlessness with the scandal regarding the scarlet fever remedy and the alleged alkaline salt. Hahnemann, finding himself so scolded, responded in a way that reflected as much his character as his state of mind during that time: "I can be blamed for my frequent removals as little as any other traveller: 'why does he not remain in one place like the coral polyp?' Only the feeble minded rail against a scholar's external circumstances, whether the man wears a round wig or a pigtail and does not have his hair cut short like anybody else – whether he wears boots or shoes? Whose concern is that?"⁸² And for those who were critical of his lifestyle he added: "Where did I ever leave debts when I moved on? If I ever betrayed anybody by as much as a penny, let them come forward! Who pays for my travels (the last cost me 700 r[reichsthaler] C[urrant]) so as to have the right to ask me: why are you doing that?" This is, again, the confident scholar speaking, who has no time for outer appearances and will certainly not have anybody else tell him how he has to lead his life.

Eilenburg offered better working conditions. In a letter to his friend, dated 18 September 1801, Hahnemann sounded more optimistic: "I was almost not able to write today for in the few weeks that I have lived in Eilenburg I have been blessed with so many clients that I often do not even have time to eat. I encounter much goodwill here towards me [...] although there [in Machern, his former residence] I was not short of patients from near and far either in my country practice. But there is much more work here."⁸³ And now, for the first time, we have evidence to substantiate Hahnemann's confident words, because his first case journal which has been preserved dates back to the Eilenburg period, covering the years 1801 to 1803. Hahnemann saw 997 patients during that time in 2930 consultations, which amounts to an average of three consultations per patient. Interestingly, the number of patients decreased from year to year during the period under investigation, while the number of consultations rose from 1.8 to 3.0 consultations per patient. The range is considerable, a fact that is blurred by the statistical mean. While some patients saw Hahnemann only once we find one case of a patient who had 55 consultations. If we work out the daily average of patients or consultations we arrive at merely one to two patients or three to four consultations per day. This is a modest figure if one compares it with later years, when Hahnemann had become famous as the founder of a new healing approach. It was, nonetheless, a promising start if one considers that Hahnemann continued with his writing as well during that time.

In Eilenburg Hahnemann devoted most of the time not spent in medical practice to formulating his new approach to healing. In 1801 he published an essay in *Hufeland's Journal of Applied Medical Science* with the title "Essay on small doses of medicine and of Belladonna in particular." In this essay he described for the first time the high dilutions which, to this day, have been erroneously seen as a fundamental principle of homeopathy while they are in fact the result of practical bedside experience: "Ordinary physicians cannot believe that of a substance, of which a patient can swallow any amount when he is healthy without feeling much of an effect, he only needs a millionth part to be strongly affected. But it is the undeniable truth."⁸⁴ The millionfold dilution Hahnemann mentioned corresponds to our C3 potency today. But Hahnemann had not reached the lowest degree of dilution yet, as we shall see later. As the Eilenburg case journal reveals, he also used C6 (one part to a trillion) and C9 (one part to a quintillion) potencies, of *Cocculus* or *Arsenicum album* for instance.⁸⁵ It is also noticeable that, in his early records, Hahnemann tended to write down the exact degree of dilution more frequently every year. In his 1801 essay 'On the cure and prevention of scarlet fever', which caused so many problems for him, we find a detailed description of the gradual dilution using spirit of wine up to a C3 potency, which he called a "weak solution". A look at

the later case journals shows that he continued to develop the diluting process, choosing ever higher dilutions and abolishing complicated manufacturing methods in favour of the centesimal and millesimal scales. In the 1820s he arrived at a standard dilution of C30, a stage where it is no longer possible, according to Loschmidt's number (which was, however, not established until 1867), to detect a molecule of the original substance in the dilution. This fact little concerned the renowned chemist and pharmacist Hahnemann at a time when modern atomic theory was in its infancy. The founder of homeopathy never harboured any doubts that even an unimaginable dilution of one in a decillion would still be effective. This he inculcated in his critics, also among the homeopaths, in 1835 when speaking about the effect of the C30 potency: "This true maxim is not one that needs to be comprehended or blindly believed. I do not demand any belief with regard to it; neither do I expect it to be comprehended. I do not comprehend it either. It is an unalterable fact and it is proven by experience, on which I rely more than on reason."⁸⁶ To this day neither the supporters nor the opponents of homeopathy understand how such extreme dilutions can be effective, although there is no lack of possible hypotheses (quantum mechanics, chaos theory etc.) for their explanation now.

It was also in Eilenburg that Hahnemann discovered coffee as a homeopathic medicine. The curative effect of coffee in certain kinds of chronic illness is, however, not to be confused with its use as a palliative in mainstream medicine at that time. As a consequence of his discovery Hahnemann strictly forbade his patients the consumption of coffee while they underwent homeopathic treatment.

The problem with Eilenburg was that it had no library which meant that Hahnemann was forced to borrow books from Leipzig. His publisher Johann Ambrosius Barth, who brought out Hahnemann's first homeopathic pharmacopoeia (*Fragmenta*) in 1805, often helped him with this. Hahnemann must have worked on that fundamental volume under the most taxing of circumstances, not just in regard to the procurement of the necessary literature.

The first year in Eilenburg was a nightmare even for Hahnemann who, having moved so often, was used to a fair amount of trouble. There were constant arguments with the neighbours in the house where he rented accommodation. As early as November 1801 Hahnemann appealed for help to a Councillor of Commerce with whom he was acquainted: "These people are wholly unbearable. They gather around my children and wait for them when they try to walk down the stairs and [...] and laugh in their faces, clap their hands and wave their fists in front of their noses; they use sticks to rap on the wall of the staircase from their kitchen when my children are walking up, and they even try to provoke me into fighting with them. Do please save me."⁸⁷ The conflict between neighbours, which indeed ended in fisticuffs and a court case, was provoked by noise, as common a problem then as it is today. The house owners, who lived on the ground floor, obviously felt disturbed by the noise produced by Hahnemann's large family on the floor above. The domestic peace was shattered. A month after the new tenants had moved in the conflict culminated in an exchange of rude insults and even physical assault (Hahnemann received, as he stated, a blow to the left arm when he tried to break up the hostilities). The court files, which have been preserved, give insight into the severely constrained living conditions of Hahnemann's family. In justification of his children's boisterous behaviour, which was apparently the main source of the noise Hahnemann stated: "But this dancing, jumping and singing very rarely went beyond what can commonly be expected of children, as any impartial person who knows the inside of my lodgings will admit without my assurance; seeing how our children were locked up with us in the parlour where it is impossible to move or even turn without running into the furniture that all but fills the room."⁸⁸ We also learn from Hahnemann's court statement that many of his patients saw him in his lodgings and that he hardly ever paid home visits, a habit which would

later become one of his principles. From the same source we find out about a slanderous attack that was aimed at alienating Hahnemann's patients. His fellow tenants apparently broadcast the rumour that he worked through the night, cured his patients with "sympathy" (i.e. conjuring and faith healing) and was in league with the devil.

It is not known how the court case ended. Even before a ruling was delivered Hahnemann took the only possible step out of the intolerable situation. In deepest and coldest winter he left the temporary accommodation earlier than planned and moved into the unfinished new house which he had commissioned on arriving in Eilenburg. In a letter to a bookseller in Leipzig he wrote in November 1801: "I think of moving into my new house within the next weeks. It caused me unspeakable concern how it could be completed free of debt."⁸⁹

But the family did not remain in the new house for very long. According to Hahnemann's biographer, Richard Haehl, he spent a short period of time in Wittenberg in 1804, before he moved to Dessau, his wife's home town, for a year. Case journal D5, which covers the years between 1803 and 1806 does, however, not mention this change of residence and it seems more likely that the family moved from Eilenburg directly to **Schildau**, a small town of some 780 souls that lies between Torgau and Wurzen. The latter view is corroborated, on the one hand, by the fact that, in the case journal, we frequently find a particular place next to a patient's name and on the other also by documents held at the Saxony State Archives.

According to these archives, which have hardly been investigated, Hahnemann, on 18 April 1804⁹⁰, purchased a manor* in Schildau but remained in Eilenburg until the official handover date of St John's day (24 June) 1804. A conflict soon arose, however, between buyer and seller which ended in court and caused much dismay and considerable additional costs on both sides. The next move was, it seems, again initiated by a court case, probably in conjunction with the fact that the town was situated so unfavourably at the former Prussian border, far away from any of the major traffic arteries.

The next stage on Hahnemann's seemingly aimless quest was **Torgau** near Leipzig, where he evidently lived from early January 1805 after he had sold the farmhouse in Schildau to the solicitor Christian Salomon Zieger.⁹¹ Hahnemann settled down in Torgau, where he remained for some years and became well known as a physician thanks to his growing practice on the one hand and the publication of fundamental homeopathic works on the other.

¹ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 118

² IGM Archives A 1209

³ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 36

⁴ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 118

⁵ Albrecht, Denkmal, p. 111

⁶ Brunnow, Hahnemann, p. 31

⁷ Landeshauptarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt, Abt. Wernigerode, Rep. D Gommern II, XVII No. 6, sheet 3v.

⁸ University Archives Halle Rep. I No 4911

⁹ University Archives Halle Rep. I No 4911

¹⁰ University Archives Halle Rep. I No 4911

¹¹ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 118

¹² Landeshauptarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt, Abt. Wernigerode, Rep. D Gommern I,I No 30, sheet 267v-268r.

¹³ IGM Archives A 1157

* The property is described as an "*Anspännergut*", which means that, originally, the tenant had to provide feudal services to the landowner in exchange for the tenure.

- ¹⁴ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 118
- ¹⁵ IGM Archives A 1158
- ¹⁶ IGM Archives A 1160
- ¹⁷ IGM Archives A 1189
- ¹⁸ IGM Archives A 1201
- ¹⁹ Evangelisch-Lutherischer Kirchengemeinde Verband Dresden, Kirchbuchamt, Taufregister (baptism records) Lockwitz, year 1789, p. 218
- ²⁰ Evangelisch-Lutherischer Kirchengemeinde Verband Dresden, Kirchbuchamt, Taufregister (baptism records): Dresden Neustadt, year 1785, p. 253a. The birth year 1786 given by other biographers is wrong.
- ²¹ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 71
- ²² IGM Archives A 1188
- ²³ Albrecht, Denkmal, p. 112
- ²⁴ Albrecht, Denkmal, p. 112
- ²⁵ Letter of 29 August 1790, printed in LPZ 22 (1891), p. 159
- ²⁶ Letter of 29 August 1790, printed in LPZ 22 (1891), p. 159
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ Cullen, Abhandlung, vol. 1, p. 290
- ²⁹ Ibid., vol. 2, p. 65
- ³⁰ Cf. Tröhler, Evidence, p. 3
- ³¹ Bayr, Selbstversuch, p. 65. Cf. also Lochbrunner, Chinارينdenversuch, p. 39f.
- ³² Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 30, supplement 18
- ³³ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 149f.
- ³⁴ IGM Archives A 8
- ³⁵ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 150
- ³⁶ Bemerkungen auf einer Reise von Jena nach Altenburg, Dresden, Königstein und Meissen. In: Deutsche Monatszeitschrift 1793, No 1, p. 309-342, quotation from p. 320.
- ³⁷ Quoted from Mettenleiter, Juliuspsital, p. 308
- ³⁸ Quoted from Schott, Chronik, p. 241
- ³⁹ Jetter, Irrenhaus, p. 32
- ⁴⁰ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 158
- ⁴¹ Quoted from Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 35
- ⁴² Hahnemann, GKS, p. 206
- ⁴³ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 208
- ⁴⁴ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 211
- ⁴⁵ Uhde, Reinhardt, p. 317
- ⁴⁶ Book of baptism, marriages and funerals of the Protestant parish of Georgenthal, vol. 4 (1785-1808). I thank Roland Scharff, Georgenthal, for an extract from the baptism records.
- ⁴⁷ AHZ 128 (1894), p. 171
- ⁴⁸ IGM Archives A 539
- ⁴⁹ IGM Archives A 540
- ⁵⁰ Selle, Matrikel, p. 351 No 17026
- ⁵¹ Pfaff, Lebenserinnerungen, p. 68
- ⁵² University Archives Göttingen, Best. Universitätsgericht A XLVII, 45
- ⁵³ Frankenau, Pyrmont, p. 74
- ⁵⁴ Printed in Lohoff, Braunschweig, p. 124
- ⁵⁵ Printed *ibid.*, p. 128
- ⁵⁶ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 206
- ⁵⁷ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 223, emphasis in original
- ⁵⁸ Printed in Lohoff, Braunschweig, p. 139
- ⁵⁹ IGM Archives A 1204
- ⁶⁰ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 272
- ⁶¹ English translation based on German translation from the Latin in Wettermann, Fragmenta, p. 201
- ⁶² Quoted from Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 52
- ⁶³ Quoted from Schuchardt, Briefe, p. 55, note 2
- ⁶⁴ IGM Archives A 1209
- ⁶⁵ IGM Archives A 545
- ⁶⁶ Goethe and Schiller Archives Weimar 06/4770
- ⁶⁷ Quoted from Bärnighausen, Schriftsteller, p. 116
- ⁶⁸ Printed in Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 42
- ⁶⁹ Printed in Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 70

- ⁷⁰ Printed in Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 73
⁷¹ Printed in Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 74
⁷² IGM Archives A 1211
⁷³ IGM Archives A 548
⁷⁴ Goethe and Schiller Archives Weimar 06/4770
⁷⁵ IGM Archives A 549
⁷⁶ IGM Archives A 551
⁷⁷ IGM Archives A 551
⁷⁸ According to the church records in the town archives of Mölln
⁷⁹ IGM Archives A 552
⁸⁰ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 299
⁸¹ Quoted from Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 1, p. 69
⁸² IGM Archives A 555
⁸³ IGM Archives A 556
⁸⁴ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 350
⁸⁵ Cf. Hörsten, Kommentarband, p. 75
⁸⁶ Hahnemann, CK 1835, p. 311
⁸⁷ IGM Archives A 699
⁸⁸ Transcript in IGM Archives A 1801, original privately owned
⁸⁹ Staatsbibliothek Berlin, Sammlung Darmstadt 3a 1790
⁹⁰ Sächsisches Stadtarchiv Leipzig, Bestand Schildau Nr. 1308. The only exception in the biographical literature on Hahnemann is Lange, Hahnemann, p. 11
⁹¹ Sächsisches Staatsarchiv Leipzig, Bestand Schildau No. 1310

From the *Medicine of Experience* (1805) to the *Organon* (1810)

Hahnemann was to stay for seven years in Torgau, a small town of some 4300 souls, situated on the banks of the river Elbe. He bought a house with a garden in the *Pfarrgasse* early in 1805. It was, apart from his childhood in Meissen, the longest stretch of time he spent in one place. One of the first letters written from Torgau reveals that Hahnemann had planned from the beginning to quit writing for good in favour of his medical practice. The letter to the Leipzig firm, which had published his translation of Albrecht von Haller's *Pharmacopoeia* from the Latin, contained an order for "Stark's forceps, cephalotome [to cut out still births R.J.] and a crotchet",¹ costs to be deducted from his advance fee. These obstetrical instruments were used at the time in difficult births, one of them being the kind of forceps that had been known in Germany from the eighteenth century. The fact that Hahnemann asked specifically for a "state of the art" version of the instrument, named after the Jena gynaecologist Johann Christian Stark (who was also private physician to Goethe) marks him as a knowledgeable obstetrician. Hahnemann was obviously intent on extending his "sphere of work" in that direction.

Hahnemann's own account is not the only source of evidence for the growing popularity of his Torgau practice. According to case journal D6 he treated 507 patients in less than eighteen months (23 April 1806 to 9 September 1807), almost as many as in the period covered by D5 which was twice as long and involved 628 patients. From this unique source we also learn that Hahnemann practised on Sundays, bank holidays and even on Christmas Day.

From the information available to us we know that Hahnemann's patients came mostly from Torgau and the surrounding area, although he also treated a significant number of patients from further afield. Some of them lived 40 or more kilometres away in places like Chemnitz and Bitterfeld, or his former places of residence Königsutter and Gotha. There is, for example, a 36-year-old patient called Theilemann who came to Hahnemann from Mockeritz on 20 August. We read about him in the case journal: "Theilemann of Mockeritz (36)//has lain sick for ½ year//lientery [watery diarrhoea R.J.] for a fortnight, loses everything//¼ year cough and sputum, but too weak now to produce phlegm// unable to take food// much inner heat, constant urge to drink// (usually very busy, takes brandy// still does everything// 6§No1 Chin [uncia] ¼." ² The patient was first given 6 doses of pure lactose (Hahnemann's homeopathic placebo), followed by a medicine from bottle number 1, of which only the treating physician knew that it was a quarter of an ounce (7.5 grams) of cinchona bark. The dosage was certainly not homeopathic; but we find indications elsewhere in this early case journal that Hahnemann experimented, as he had done in Eilenburg, with higher degrees of dilution. Case journal D6 also mentions, on 28 January 1807, the homeopathic pilules (globuli) which are still the most common dosage form for homeopathic medicines.

Although Hahnemann sometimes treated ten or more patients in one day in Torgau (some of them by letter), he found enough time to work on the theoretical foundations of his new doctrine and to pursue his pharmacological studies. It was at this time that it became clear to him that the task of radically reforming the medical system fell to him, and to him alone. He expressed his conviction for the first time in the letter just mentioned which was written on 11 August 1805 and in which he asked his publisher in Leipzig to promote his most recent publication (*Aesculapius in the balance*) so that "pharmacology as a whole" could be reformed.³ In the book, which was written for a wide readership, he repeatedly criticized the inadequacy of the prevailing medicine. He had observed, as he admitted, that medicine was often unable to help sick people, a fact that, over many years, had caused him much frustration. None of the therapy systems commonly in use (he mentioned the Brunonian

system among others) produced convincing results: “If I looked through the list of acute diseases I would find that the cures effected by such contrary methods were not cures at all but processes of self-healing,” Hahnemann wrote.”⁴ He was not alone in this view in the early nineteenth century. A school of thought known as “therapeutic nihilism” had emerged among Vienna’s physicians. Instead of resorting to venesection and any of the other interventions of “heroic medicine” (Hahnemann spoke of “deterrent revolutionary cures”) its proponents suggested waiting and relying on the body’s self-healing powers. The often astonishing success of this non-interference approach proved them right. But Hahnemann came to the opposite conclusion: with the discovery of the similarity principle he was sure that he had found the key to a new art of healing which truly deserved to be called that.

Hahnemann wrote for the first time about how he envisaged this fundamental renewal of medicine in a booklet called *Medicine of Experience*. It was published in 1805 in Berlin and reprinted in the same year in Hufeland’s *Journal of Applied Medical Science* and included Hahnemann’s maxim that “medicine is a science of experience; it seeks to eliminate illness by using auxiliary means.”⁵ The statement does not sound particularly revolutionary to our ears. But at a time when medicine was determined by speculation and a purely empirical approach was often seen as tantamount to quackery, it was a signal for the medical scholars. In Hahnemann’s view physicians had been mistaken for over 2000 years in seeking to discover and explain invisible changes in the body, an approach that he rejected. Physicians, he thought, could not know the inner causes of an illness, but they could find a potentially effective therapy by studying its outer manifestations. While the most consistent and noticeable symptoms which caused the greatest degree of discomfort in the patient were in Hahnemann’s view the “main signs” [keynotes R.J.], the “most singular, unusual signs were the ones that were most characteristic, distinguishing, individual.”⁶ This was the first formulation of the fundamental principle of homeopathic remedy finding: not the obvious but the characteristic symptoms in a disease picture must inform the choice of (homeopathic) medicine in the individual case.

Hahnemann then went on to describe the similarity principle he had “discovered”: “In order to bring about a cure we only need to offset the present counter-natural irritation of the disease with a suitable remedy, that is, another morbid potency which is very similar in effect to the disease itself.”⁷ Remedies capable of achieving this included animal and plant substances, but their effect had to first be proved on healthy subjects. It was in the same ground breaking publication that Hahnemann wrote about the proving of substances on healthy subjects, a procedure which homeopaths still use for new substances today. (It constitutes, next to the law of similars and the individual choice of remedy, the third pillar of homeopathy): “In order to follow this sign of nature and learn more about it, we carefully use these strong and less strong remedies, each one separately and unblended, on healthy bodies. In doing so we note down meticulously all signs in the order of their appearance, while we carefully remove all irrelevant influences, so that we are left with the pure symptoms of the illness which each of these medicinal substances produces absolutely and by itself in the human body.”⁸ Hahnemann was, naturally, strictly opposed from then on to the mixing of remedies. Only pure substances could point the physician in the right direction.

In the same context Hahnemann explicitly referred readers to his pharmacopoeia (*Fragmenta*) which had also been published in 1805. It provides, for instance, a list of symptoms which can occur in a healthy person after eating peppers (capsicum). They include dizziness, dryness of mouth and tightness of the chest. That these observations were mostly the result of Hahnemann’s own drug provings can be deduced from an annotation to the symptom “sullenness and constriction of pupils with increasing bodily chill”, where he wrote: “I

observed how the chill increased from the fourth to the fifteenth hour and then abated in the course of 24 hours.”⁹ In later including the drug symptoms of sick patients in his pharmacopoeia Hahnemann did not necessarily go against the homeopathic principles which were sacrosanct to him. It was not a step born out of a need but simply the result of practical therapeutic experience. The *Fragmenta*, written in Latin and forerunner of a later fundamental opus (*Materia Medica Pura*, first edition 1811-1821), contain, as well as observations from experiments on himself, numerous findings gleaned from the newer and older medical literature.

When reviewing a book on children’s diseases in the *Allgemeine Literatur Zeitung* (general literary journal) in 1806, Hahnemann explicitly applauded the “modern endeavours to free medicine from pedantic rumination and from the speculation and jumble of unknown remedies.”¹⁰ The founder of homeopathy doubtlessly saw himself as the spearhead of the reform movement and appeared unperturbed by the, at times quite harsh, criticism hurled at him. He did not shy away from conflict and often responded sharply when he felt called upon to pillory the flaws of the prevalent medical system. Hahnemann’s greatest concern was the truth which he claimed to have found. In 1806, in his refutation to the physicians who had accused him of misleading the scientific world he wrote from Torgau: “My discovery is firmly grounded and unshaken and will prove reliable as long as the world exists, as can be shown in any case of pure and true scarlet fever that is in need of therapy.”¹¹

To sustain him through this conflict and support him when he was exposed to the cold wind of adversity that blew at him from the medical brotherhood, Hahnemann needed a role-model, a historical example, with whom he could identify. Who could suit Hahnemann, who was born in Saxony and baptized in the Lutheran church, better than Martin Luther, founder of a new religion, who had so firmly stood his ground in the face of his enemies. It comes as no surprise that Hahnemann, shortly after his arrival in Torgau, actively promoted the installation of a Luther memorial, adding to the ongoing public debate on the topic with a literary contribution. How strongly he identified with “Luther’s spirit” would become apparent some years later when he compared himself to the religious reformer: “If the path I discovered by overcoming all common prejudice and calmly observing nature, the only path that will bring healing and health, goes against all the dogmas of our medical schools, like the theses which Luther so valiantly nailed to the church door at Wittenberg once went against the spirit-crippling hierarchy – then neither my nor Luther’s truths are to blame.”¹² In an article published in the *Allgemeiner Anzeiger der Deutschen* on the unavailability of medicines from overseas as a result of the English naval blockade Hahnemann revisited his historical comparison: [...] our medical art needs to be reformed from head to toes. [...] The situation has grown so desperate that the benign moderation of a Johannes Huß [sic] no longer suffices. It needs the fire and ardour of a steadfast Martin Luther to sweep out the ubiquitous cobwebs.”¹³ Hahnemann even borrowed from the language of the greatly admired reformer: the phrase “from head to toes”, for instance, is reminiscent of Luther’s postulation of a church reform “in head and limb”. The dispute surrounding Hahnemann’s new approach to healing, which only fully erupted in the 1820s, was not dissimilar to a religious conflict, even though it involved no bulls of excommunication or burning of heretics at the stake.

We know from Hahnemann’s writings from the Torgau period that he continued to develop his new approach to medicine and to experiment ever more boldly with dilution grades. As early as 1806 he spoke of the possibility of diluting medicines up to a “nonillionth grain”, the equivalent of today’s C15 potency. But more urgent was the finding of a name for the system he had discovered.

Hahnemann had obviously used the word “homeopathic” in 1807, “which means being able to cure diseases with a similar pathological tendency”,¹⁴ but it was not until 1810 that he introduced the noun “homeopathy”, which would become such an important “fighting word” in the history of alternative medicine in Germany and other countries.¹⁵ Since some of his opponents made the mistake of calling his approach “homopathy” instead of “homeopathy”, the founder of a medical system, that has remained controversial to this day, felt called upon to inform the public that the substances he used were meant to stimulate similar rather than the same (Gr. *homo*) disease symptoms.¹⁶

The term “rational” medicine, which Hahnemann chose as the title of the first edition of the *Organon* (1810), proved too ambiguous and not concise enough. Hahnemann was well aware that many of the medical systems which emerged in quick succession were referred to as “rational” since their inventors “arrogantly thought that they were able to penetrate and understand the inner essence of life and of the healthy and sick organism”. (*Organon*, Section 54). As the founder of a new “cure” he therefore responded with a dual semantic strategy. For his own therapeutic approach he introduced the term “homeopathy” which he used in all his publications from then on. But with the growing criticism of his doctrine and the often polemic attacks from his many medical opponents it was soon no longer sufficient to just refer to the “former medical school”, “old medicine” or “conventional medicine” etc. A new epithet was needed and Hahnemann coined the word “allopathy” as a generic term for all therapies which were so entirely different from homeopathy. The word “allopathy” (from Gr. *allos* – other and *pathos* – suffering) first appeared in 1816 in the preface to the first edition of the second volume of his *Materia Medica Pura*, where he described medicines which “stimulate in the healthy body an illness different (allopathic) from the one that is to be cured”.¹⁷ He also referred to another therapeutic approach which differed from homeopathy in that it endeavoured to “generate a condition in the healthy person that was opposite (enantiothetic) to the one to be cured”. While the latter designation soon passed into oblivion, “allopathy” became a generic term for all approaches that were opposed to Hahnemann’s doctrine.

It is hardly surprising that the representatives of the “common art of healing” were not pleased to be labelled “allopathic”. They found it not only incorrect, but also highly libellous, as none less than Goethe’s physician Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland pointed out in 1831 in his famous comment on homeopathy: “Conventional medicine remains the rational one, as opposed to homeopathy. I would therefore ask again that “rational medicine” be consistently used in future instead of the much too narrow and even incorrect term “allopathy” to separate the existing scientific from the homeopathic medicine. For the essential difference is that the former is founded on reason and logical conclusions.”¹⁸ His not particularly original proposal does not seem to have met with great enthusiasm from his colleagues since we continue to find the opposites “allopathy” and “homeopathy” in the polemical writings of the following decades.¹⁹

The term “quackery”, still carelessly employed today by some physicians in defence of scientific medicine, was used by Hahnemann to distance himself from the then flourishing secret-remedy business, which was to an extent also driven by physicians and apothecaries. In Hahnemann’s view “quack medicine” meant “remedies which anybody can purchase and which are all made to the same pattern. They are advertised as truly effective for all kinds of illness, or for an illness with a name that covers a number of different conditions, each of which would require a different specific substance to be cured”.²⁰ It is exactly the opposite with “classical homeopathy” where only single remedies are used for individual symptom pictures.

The “scientific medicine” of which Hufeland spoke so complacently was severely fragmented in Hahnemann’s times. It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that the scientific orientation which was primarily based on the Paris school of medicine was able to gain ground. Before that, the majority of academically trained physicians was not prepared to put an end to the “Icarus flight of metaphysical speculation”²¹, (as the prominent German physiologist Hermann von Helmholtz called the one-sided focus on rational medicine in 1877) and rely instead on knowledge derived from physical and chemical methods. A few decades later things had changed and scientific medicine seemed to have won the day. From the mid-nineteenth century homeopaths and other physicians who were critical of the new way realized that they were swimming against the tide and that, by adhering to their traditional views, they were running the risk of being demoted to the “level of quackery”.²² The epithet which Hahnemann had applied to healers who offered one patent remedy for all diseases was now attached to the followers of his own doctrine who refused to embrace the new scientific spirit in medicine.

In 1810 Hahnemann’s famous opus, the *Organon of Rational Medicine*, was published by Johann Christoph Arnold in Dresden. Often referred to as the “bible of homeopathy” it saw five consecutive editions, each of them improved and extended in Hahnemann’s lifetime. A sixth edition which Hahnemann had prepared was not published until 1921 because his widow withheld her permission for the publication while she was alive.

In his preface to the first edition of the *Organon* Hahnemann gave expression to his high expectations. Clearly, he saw himself as a reformer of medicine: “In my investigations I found the path that leads to the truth. I had to walk alone on this path that is far removed from the trodden path of medical observance.”²³ Conscious of his own achievement and mission, he quoted Horaz on the title page of the second edition: “aude sapere” (dare to know, or, as one could paraphrase: dare to use your own judgement), a maxim that had, thanks to Immanuel Kant, become the programme of German Enlightenment. We know from one of the letters he wrote from Torgau that Hahnemann revered the Königsberg philosopher (“I admire Kant immensely, mainly because he drew the boundaries of philosophy and of all human knowledge where experience ends.”) The *Organon* is only indirectly influenced by Kantian philosophy in that it refers to the concept of experience, which appears in Hahnemann’s early homeopathic treatise *Medicine of Experience*. According to Kant (*Critique of Pure Reason*, second edition of 1787) we “must never, in rationally speculating, venture beyond the boundaries of experience”. Rational speculation must only be directed at the objects of our experience. Homeopathy, as Hahnemann emphasized again and again in his main opus, is founded on experience. In the first edition of the *Organon* he wrote: “The unprejudiced observer knows the worthlessness of supersensible speculation which cannot be substantiated by experience, and, as shrewd as he may be, he will perceive nothing of an illness but the external, sense-perceptible changes in the condition of body or soul, morbid accidentals, symptoms [...]” (section 8). It is, in other words, to no avail to speculate about the causes of illness. Only the “external manifestation of the internal essence of illness” (section 9) can guide physicians empirically in their search for the right medicine. The only logical conclusion is therefore: “Since it can be undeniably established that, with regard to any remedy or illness, experience shows that a remedy cures rapidly, thoroughly and lastingly the disease that conforms to it in symptoms, we can conclude that ‘a remedy’s capacity to cure depends on whether its symptoms are similar to that of the illness’, or, in other words, ‘the remedy which, in the healthy body, produces most of the symptoms that are also present in a given disease, is able to cure that disease in the fastest, most thorough and lasting way” (section 19). Again, we have here the preliminary formulation of one of the fundamental principles of Hahnemann’s approach to medicine. In section 31 he summarized again: “The

great homeopathic law of cure rests on this law of human nature which has been established through experience: that an illness can only be eliminated and cured by a remedy which tends to produce a similar illness; for the effects of remedies as such are nothing other than artificial illnesses.” By way of an example he described the effect of the cinchona bark mentioned earlier.

Once Hahnemann had expounded the theoretical foundations of his “rational medicine”, proving his point by citing numerous examples from medical literature (from Hippocrates to Haller), he proceeded to answer in the subsequent sections of the *Organon* three questions arising from his fundamental tenets: “(1) How can we find out all we need to know about a disease in order to be able to cure it? (2) How do we investigate the pathological potential of the remedy which, as the counter-disease, is able to cure the natural disease? (3) How do we best employ the artificial pathological agent (remedy) in order to cure the natural illness?” (section 38).

In answer to the first question Hahnemann stated that the classification of illnesses into categories was futile and that it was wrong to differentiate between local and general illness in the way the prevailing medicine did. The separation into febrile and non-febrile conditions was also of little use to the physician as “healing artist” (section 45). Physicians needed to know the symptom picture of an illness in the individual case rather than names of diseases. It was therefore their task “to carefully study the individual symptoms of each disease and the individual effect of each remedy” (section 47). In consequence, he was little interested when patients came to him with one of the usual diagnoses (dropsy, cold fever etc.). Even if he occasionally noted them down in his case journal, he was never guided by them in finding the right therapy.

Hahnemann answered the second question, which concerned the homeopathic method of finding the right medicine, by providing guidelines for individual history taking which are still in use today in homeopathy all over the world. First, the attending physician listens to the patients’ or their relatives’ description of the complaints (from section 63). Hahnemann clearly already postulated and used the “free-floating attention” in homeopathy which Sigmund Freud would recommend a hundred years later in psychoanalysis.

The symptoms mentioned by the patient are then meticulously listed, before the physician proceeds to ask questions about the first appearance of the symptoms and the kind and location of the pain experienced by the patient (section 65). Suggestive questions are to be avoided (section 66). Any information about bodily functions (such as bowel movements) which the patient omitted to mention must be elicited and the physician must not forget to ask about the patient’s moods and emotions. Hahnemann already differentiated between mental and emotional symptoms (psyche), general symptoms (diet, weather, modalities etc.) and physical symptoms. A complete symptom includes information on localisation (where), sensation (feeling) and modality (is aggravated, improves with...). The physician completes the picture by noting down all observations he made while interviewing the patient (face expression etc.). Questions of an intimate nature, such as about the patient’s sexual habits and any kind of excesses, must also be asked (section 72).

“Once the essential symptoms and the picture of the disease have thus been recorded in detail, the hardest work is done,” we read in section 82 of the *Organon*. What remains is “the choosing of the homeopathic remedy, that artificial medicinal potency, with which a similar illness [...] is injected, as it were, into the patient. Due to the similarity of symptoms this artificial counter-disease can overrule and eliminate (thoroughly cure) the patient’s illness.”

Any other course of action would in Hahnemann's view constitute a meddling with symptoms on more or less empirical grounds. The third question concerned the best way of applying the remedy capable of producing a "counter-disease". Hahnemann answered it by pointing out that the "individual medicines have to be tried in moderation on healthy persons" so that it can be established "what kind of changes, symptoms and signs of action they each produce in a person who is healthy in body and soul" (section 86). The drug proving on the healthy person described here constitutes another fundamental principle of homeopathy.

Considering the great number (often hundreds) of symptoms that can come to manifestation in the healthy organism, how does the homeopathic physician know which of them is to guide him in his choice of therapy? The *Organon* provides a concise answer to that question: "The most peculiar and most frequently generated symptoms are the most exquisite" (section 95). More general symptoms such as sleeping disorders or languor are less conclusive (section 130). Hahnemann also described the phenomenon known as initial aggravation (section 132). When a homeopathic remedy is taken, physical complaints might first deteriorate, especially in chronic illness. Hahnemann saw in this initial reaction or "initial aggravation" a sign that the remedy was effective since it was stimulating the life force. We would say today that the remedy encourages the organism to heal itself. If the remedy did not produce the desired effect, the "complex of symptoms needed to be newly evaluated" (section 143) in order to find another, more appropriate homeopathic substance. Hahnemann warned physicians that they should not make any medicine a particular "favourite" because it occasionally proved successful (section 221). That he sometimes deviated from that principle in his later practice – albeit with due caution – is a different matter.

The *Organon* also provides detailed information about the administration of homeopathic medicines. In the first edition Hahnemann recommended mostly the use of powders, later he preferred globuli. One principle was however essential to him: "there is no necessity in any treatment to use more than one simple medicinal substance at a time" (section 234). Hahnemann was undecided for many years as to whether "double remedies", that is, the simultaneous use of two homeopathic substances, might be indicated in individual cases if both drug pictures were similar to the symptom picture. In the end he decided to abandon the relevant paragraph which he had initially planned to include in the fifth edition of the *Organon* (1833).²⁴

In the *Organon* Hahnemann also stipulated that only the smallest possible dosages of homeopathic medicines (section 242) were to be administered. Because individual remedies could act in different ways he refused to give specific indications as to their dilution. The case journals show clearly that, when the first edition of his main opus was published, Hahnemann only used potentization grades far below the "magic" threshold of 10^{-23} (where there still is physical evidence, although it would only become possible much later to establish such evidence scientifically). Hahnemann did mostly not even go as far as the C12-potency, which corresponds to a dilution of one in a septillion.

The *Organon* concludes with the assurance to readers that only with the homeopathic approach "a full cure without side effects or after-effects" could be achieved (section 271). Other methods, like the use of purgatives, Hahnemann would only allow in exceptional cases such as poisoning where it is essential that the stomach is emptied quickly. Other than that, the founder of homeopathy firmly rejected all healing methods commonly in use at the time. Venesection and "the blending of many medicines" were particularly abhorrent to him.

It was not long before the medical brotherhood began to register its, initially moderate, criticism. Some voices even explicitly praised aspects of Hahnemann's work. The first to comment was August Friedrich Hecker, professor of medicine in Berlin and author of medical textbooks. Hahnemann had mentioned him by name and criticized him in his preface to the *Organon* and Hecker took the first opportunity to strike back. He went as far as calling Hahnemann "a liar" and found great pleasure in picking out contradictions and inconsistencies in the first edition, passing trenchant comment on them. His attack did not fail to have the desired effect. Hahnemann decided to take up the gauntlet, but chose to act not personally but through his son who, at that time, had not even finished medical school yet. There was no question as to who had wielded the young man's pen, when the 72-page refutation was published in 1811 by the same publisher who had brought out the *Organon* a year earlier. The paper bore the elaborate title: "Refutation of Friedrich Hahnemann, the son, of Hecker's attacks on the *Organon of Rational Medicine*: an explanation of homeopathic medicine". The son (that is to say, the father) tried to prove false each of Hecker's accusations and objections. The whole paper was rather arrogant in tone not least due to its offensive choice of language ("impertinent insults", "disgusting drivel"), and it certainly did nothing for Hahnemann's just cause nor for himself or his son, who was about to take his final examinations. In a short "anti-critique" published in the *Allgemeine Anzeiger der Deutschen* and signed, this time, by himself, Hahnemann vigorously objected to "being maligned in several reviews by the old school with empty words and phrases."²⁵ That he even styled himself as a new Copernicus must have struck his opponents as preposterous if not delusional.

Hahnemann's derogatory comments in the *Organon* provoked polemic responses from Hecker in particular, but also from other leading representatives of conventional medicine. The exchange gave rise to a heated dispute on the validity of the homeopathic doctrine that continues to this day.

Some favourable opinions were also voiced once the first edition of the *Organon* was published. For instance, in the *Medicinisch-Chirurgische Zeitung* where, in 1811, the editor praised drug proving on the healthy person in particular as a worthwhile innovation. In a subsequent issue of the same journal we read the following, quite impartial verdict: "The reviewer has to admit that the author expresses some very nice views in those 222 pages and also much that is entirely his own and original. It is a pity, however, that their application is too general and has to always serve as proof that his homeopathic way of healing can be generally used."²⁶

Unperturbed, Hahnemann continued on his path with subsequent editions of the *Organon*, only occasionally expressing his wrath about the unenthusiastic reception of his work by the medical scholars. He was now mainly concerned with adapting his fundamental work to new insights gained at the bedside or in his intensive studies of the medical literature. The number of sections rose from 271 to 292 and the volume grew considerably in size, even if one takes the change of format into account. The sixth edition, which Hahnemann almost completed in manuscript form before he died, had, in Richard Haehl's edition of 1921, 347 pages including the index. A lesson can be learned from the long drawn-out dispute about the definitive edition in particular, which could only recently be settled thanks to a text-critical publication by Josef M. Schmidt (1992), but the details of that development would go beyond the scope of a Hahnemann biography. Brief mention should be made of the immense success of the "Bible of Homeopathy". Already in Hahnemann's lifetime it was translated into many European languages. Today it is available in almost all languages under the sun, including many languages spoken in Southern Asia. *Un livre sans frontières* (A book without boundaries) is the apt title of a publication by the French homeopath and collector of

historical *Organon* editions, Jacques Baur, who died in 2003. It describes the history of the influence exerted by the various translations of the *Organon*.

During his time in Torgau Hahnemann wrote the first part of another fundamental homeopathic work which was also published by Arnold in Dresden, just a year after the *Organon*. In this volume entitled *Materia Medica Pura* Hahnemann listed for remedy after remedy all the symptoms he had discovered in the healthy body or had read about in the literature, and in much more detail than he had done in the book's forerunner, the *Fragmenta* of 1805. In the preface he commented on his provings: "In my own provings I would observe anything that might contribute to their purity, so that the true power of action of each remedy could reveal itself clearly in the observable successes. The trials were conducted on persons who were as healthy as possible, under similar and moderate external conditions."²⁷ The individual symptoms have numbers allocated to them and are listed in two rows, proceeding from the head to the tips of the toes, and from the symptoms of the body to those of the soul. Homeopaths, keen to learn how to derive the right medicine from a symptom complex, were expected to gain a thorough knowledge of the *Materia Medica* in conjunction with the relevant *Organon* sections. Hahnemann would not use the register or repertory he had drawn up in 1817 until later. It was the forerunner of the printed repertories which, in our time, are available as computer programs.

By the time Hahnemann's residence in Torgau came to an end he had published two essential textbooks for the use of physicians who were interested in trying out his healing method: the *Organon* and part I of the *Materia Medica Pura*. The first proper pupils did not present themselves, however, until the founder of homeopathy had decided it was, again, time to move on. Hahnemann had, as he himself pointed out, plenty of patients in Torgau. The members of his family, which included – apart from his adult son who lived in Leipzig – “a wife of rare quality and seven almost-grown-up, healthy, cheerful, educated, obedient, innocent daughters”²⁸ were obviously happy in the small Saxon town. But the threat of war was looming over them. In preparation for the Wars of Liberation (1813-1815) Torgau was converted into a fortress. Hahnemann therefore felt compelled to sell his “beloved, comfortable *Freihaus*”^{*} and move to Leipzig where he felt safer. He had felt threatened once before in Torgau, some years earlier, when French troops were concentrated outside the town. In a previously unknown letter, dated 3 November 1806, Hahnemann excused himself from attending a court hearing in Schildau stating as his reason the “imminent deployment and stationing of imperial French and other troops”²⁹ and referring to his duty as a physician and paterfamilias.

On 18 September 1811 we find Hahnemann in the city where he had begun his studies, where he had enrolled his son Friedrich as a future student at the tender age of four (!) and where he had once before resided for a brief interval.

¹ Sammlung Deutsche Homöopathie Union (DHU) no 56, Karlsruhe

² Hahnemann, KJ D6, Edition Bußmann, p. 333

³ IGM Archives A 1631

⁴ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 371

⁵ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 390

⁶ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 393

⁷ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 398

^{*} *Freihaus*: in medieval and early modern times a house which, although situated within the walls of a city, did not fall under its jurisdiction. (Translator's note).

- ⁸ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 399
- ⁹ Hahnemann, *Fragmenta* (1805), German translation Wettemann, p. 64
- ¹⁰ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 419
- ¹¹ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 447
- ¹² Hahnemann, GKS, p. 498
- ¹³ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 500
- ¹⁴ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 461
- ¹⁵ Hahnemann, *Organon* (1810), p. XLVI
- ¹⁶ Hahnemann, RA (1825), part 3, p. 3
- ¹⁷ Hahnemann, RA (1816), part 2, p. 9
- ¹⁸ Hufeland, *Homöopathie*, p. 15
- ¹⁹ Cf. Leschinsky-Mehrl, *Streit*
- ²⁰ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 541
- ²¹ Helmholtz, *Denken* (1877), p. 20
- ²² Schultz, *Medicinalreform* (1846), p. 938
- ²³ Hahnemann, *Organon-Synopse*, p. 4
- ²⁴ Cf. Sahler, *Komplexmittel*, p. 22ff.
- ²⁵ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 550
- ²⁶ Quoted from Haehl, *Hahnemann*, vol. 1, p. 102
- ²⁷ Hahnemann, RA (1811), part 1, p. 5
- ²⁸ IGM Archives A 1600
- ²⁹ Sächsisches Staatsarchiv Leipzig, Best. Schildau No 1308, sheet 157r

Homeopathy goes academic: Leipzig 1811-1821

Hahnemann must have moved from Torgau to Leipzig between 24 and 28 August 1811 as there are no entries in his case journal for those three days. The assumption is corroborated by Hahnemann's letter to a physician, Dr Villers, in Göttingen from 28 September 1811 in which he pointed out that his family had been in Leipzig "for four weeks."¹

Torgau, which had become too dangerous for Hahnemann's taste, was indeed expanded into a fortified outpost by Napoleon. A letter written in Leipzig on 3 December 1811 and addressed to Johann Friedrich Henricke, an editor and friend of Hahnemann's in Gotha, illustrates how Hahnemann felt about the war preparations: "*Mars constructor* [Latin, poetic for construction work in preparation for war R.J.] all but buried me under the giant ramparts of Torgau, causing me to seek refuge here."² A look at the Torgau Chronicles reveals that his fears were not entirely unfounded.³ We read there that more than 180 buildings were demolished to make way for the fortification works.

In Leipzig Hahnemann felt safer. The city had about 35,000 inhabitants at the time, most of them Lutheran Protestants. There was less evidence of an imminent war there than in Torgau which was situated further to the east and on one of the main arteries leading to Berlin. The Saxon metropolis, facetiously compared to Paris by Goethe in part one of his *Faust* ("You're right! Leipzig's the place for me! 'Tis quite a little Paris; people there acquire a certain easy finish'd air."^{*}), was an important trading centre at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Its prestigious town houses, charmingly adorned as they were with alcoves and pediments, and the many parks and green spaces reflected the wealth of its residents.

Hahnemann lived in the city centre, in *Burgstrasse* (Strauben house), where many departments of the university are situated today. In the nineteenth century, the former Pauline monastery, which was very close to the *Burgstrasse*, served as the university's main building and was home to its medical school. The physical proximity to the university is significant in that Hahnemann's relocation to Leipzig had been motivated by the fact that the town had a medical school which offered teaching possibilities. Hahnemann had briefly considered Göttingen as an alternative, another university town that he knew. A good friend wrote to advise against it, however, referring to the political situation there (Göttingen was under French influence). Going back to the place where, 36 years earlier, he had embarked on his medical studies seemed therefore the better option, especially since a big city like Leipzig also held the promise of a larger clientele.

The following passage from an advertisement published by Hahnemann in early December 1811 in the *Allgemeine Anzeiger der Deutschen* reveals how determined he was to promote his new doctrine: "I feel that my doctrine which I described in the *Organon of Rational Medicine* (Dresden, by Arnold 1810) – while it inspires the highest hopes for the wellbeing of a sick humanity – is in its essence so new and conspicuous, and contrary to almost all medical dogmata or conventional views or diverges from them so thoroughly, that the physicians of my time who have been taught differently will not find easy access to it simply by reading my book, if there is no practical evidence to convince them."⁴ This unhappy state of affairs had motivated him, he continued, to open "an institute for university trained physicians where I will explain to them every step and aspect of homeopathic medicine as put forward in the *Organon*; and, most importantly, I will practise my method before their very eyes to enable them to apply my healing method themselves in all cases." Hahnemann envisaged a training

* English translation Anna Swanwick

period of six months offered exclusively to academically trained physicians. Even when his doctrine had become established, Hahnemann was reluctant to introduce lay-practitioners to homeopathy. Exceptions such as his future friend Clemens Maria Franz von Bönninghausen, a lawyer, serve to prove the rule. His reservations might partly have been provoked by the wish to safeguard his medical system from allegations that it could be practised by lay healers and quacks.

But there was no interest in Hahnemann's offer, nor was there much of a response, positive or negative, to his *Organon* when it was first published. Hahnemann had to consider other ways of recruiting more pupils whom he could advise on the practice of homeopathy. Seeking access to university, as he had done fifteen years earlier in Göttingen, seemed a step in the right direction. In 1811 Leipzig had already seven medical chairs – for anatomy, surgery, therapy and materia medica, physiology and pathology, clinical medicine, obstetrics and chemistry – as well as subordinated professorships in forensic medicine and public health, mental therapy, and medical history and literature.

Hahnemann approached the matter prudently. Very early in 1812 he applied for a lectureship at the medical school and was informed by the dean that, as a foreign physician, he had to obtain the right to lecture “by defending a dissertation [...] with a respondent and by paying to the faculty the sum of 50 Thalers. He would then be fully recognized and permitted to advertise his lectures in public and in the university prospectus.”⁵ Although academic lectureships did not yet require “habilitation” [postdoctoral qualification necessary to teach at German universities. Translator's note], candidates had to submit a further scientific dissertation and defend it publicly at the university. Examination charges were also due at Leipzig, just as in other places, and they were far from moderate since they were a means to limit the number of applicants. The conditions were certainly favourable for Hahnemann: as an experienced author, writing another scientific dissertation was no obstacle, and the 50 Thalers charged by the university were not beyond his means either.

Hahnemann was clever enough not to present himself as a medical reformer in his academic dissertation. The paper he handed in after only four months bore the neutral title (in English translation) *Dissertation on the Helleborism of the Ancients* and was 86 pages long in print. In this dissertation Hahnemann tried to prove that the plant referred to as *Helleborus niger* by Greek and Latin authors was identical to *Veratrum album*, a remedy that merited greater attention in therapy. What he did not reveal was that he had (re-)discovered the plant for homeopathy in 1796. He obviously thought it wiser not to ruin his chances of receiving a lectureship at the university at the last minute, not even with the most casual reference to his new healing method. Postdoctoral dissertations required candidates then, as they do now, to demonstrate scholarliness, a field where Hahnemann excelled. Not only did he quote Greek and Latin authors extensively, he also, most impressively, cited Avicenna, the most famous Arab physician of the Middle Ages. With his strongly philological dissertation on medical history Hahnemann remained on safe grounds, especially in view of the fact that the professor of surgery, Karl Gottlob Kühn, had a special interest in the history of medicine and was a publisher of ancient medical texts (including the works of Galen).

Hahnemann's scholarly dissertation concludes with the recommendation that the ancient and tested Hellebore merited being reintroduced into medical practice: “Our physicians have forgotten about *Helleborus niger*, or replaced it, although it is a plant which the ancients used to cure many chronic maladies. It is certainly an excellent and highly estimable medicine, as long as it is used exclusively for complaints for which it is appropriate and suitable.”⁶ The relatively mild criticism of contemporary medicine implied can hardly have struck the

academic public as provocative. And Hahnemann had nothing to fear from the “respondent”, that is, the opponent in the defence procedure, for it was none other than his own son Friedrich. The printed edition of the dissertation refers to him as “Master of the Liberal Arts and Bachelor of Medicine.” The unusual constellation in itself shows that the gaining of the postdoctoral degree was a mere formality and that Hahnemann, as an expert in medical literature, was in fact welcome at the medical school.

How deep an impression Hahnemann’s “defence” of his dissertation on 28 June 1812 left with the academic world is apparent from a letter written, a few days later, by a Dr Huck from Lützen to a friend: “Though I am not inclined to talk to anyone of one of the greatest thinkers of all times, I gladly converse with you about the man who, by the most convincing evidence, succeeded in wholly winning over, in no time at all, the unprejudiced among the medical and non-medical scientists of Leipzig. Listening to Hahnemann, the boldest investigator of nature, as he defended the masterpiece of his intellect and industry, was heaven! [...] Most of his opponents graciously admitted to fully agreeing with him in medical matters suggesting – just to have something to say – that, if they had any questions at all, they were of a philological nature.”⁷ Even if the letter writer was clearly an early and very enthusiastic follower of homeopathy, who revered Hahnemann unconditionally and is even said to have named his son ‘Luther Reinhard Hahnemann’, his testimony, though overstated in its religiosity (“there is only One God and One Hahnemann”), allows the conclusion that the rest of the audience will have been equally impressed.

Despite Hahnemann’s brilliant performance, the members of the medical school who witnessed it seemed to have been slightly uneasy about admitting him as a lecturer to the university. Franz Hartmann, one of his early pupils in Leipzig, wrote that Hahnemann’s first lectures were “mostly attended by the envoys of local professors and physicians and other informers.”⁸ There was no problem as long as Hahnemann restricted his lectures to the history of medicine, but that changed as soon as he announced in Latin (*Morbus Hominum sanandi*), in 1814, his intention to give an introduction to homeopathy⁹, based mainly on his *Organon of Rational Medicine*. These lectures were regularly disturbed by students and listeners, who voiced their discontent and attended, according to Hartmann, merely for the sake of the “unfortunate arguments in order to give free reign to their ludicrous sense of humour”.¹⁰ If we think of the biting attacks Hahnemann had launched against the prevailing medicine in the *Organon*, we can easily imagine him holding forth about the “heroic medicine” in his lectures. His mannerisms and unusual outer appearance will have provoked laughter, especially among the younger members of his audience. Franz Hartmann, Hahnemann’s oldest student, wrote: “He presented from his arrival to his departure from the lecture room such a peculiar appearance that it would have taken men of his own type of mind and age to look seriously into his eyes.”¹¹ Hartmann described Hahnemann’s uprightness, firm gait and the way he approached the lectern: “[...] the few hairs of the thoughtful head are carefully curled and powdered, inspiring respect for his advanced age, which would have been apparent even if the bald crown and white hair had not been powdered; add to that the beautiful white linen round the neck and on the chest. The black waistcoat and the short black trousers; on the button of the latter was fastened the strap of his shining black top boots, above which appeared the finest white stockings.” Hahnemann’s outfit was very different from the dignified garb worn by medical scholars as a reflection of their rank and reputation.

Hahnemann’s unusual outer appearance was further enhanced by his idiosyncratic lecturing style, which his students will have found quite hilarious: “think of this figure as, after three measured steps he gives an almost imperceptible nod of the head as a sign of greeting, then takes three more steps and having arrived at his chair in front of which is a little table, he sits

down with pathos after removing carefully the shining tails of his coat, opens the book, takes out his watch and puts it on the table before him; then clears his throat, reads the respective paragraph with ordinary voice, but becomes more ecstatic during his explanations, with shining and sparkling eyes, and great redness of the forehead and face. [...].”¹²

Even Hartmann, who was fond of his teacher, had to admit that Hahnemann’s demeanour must have seemed bizarre to his audience. Word soon spread that Hahnemann’s lectures had high entertainment value, but the novelty effect wore off after some time and the few faithful listeners who remained were duly impressed by his personality, his knowledge and, above all, his new medical system. They were not trained physicians but mostly young students, some of whom had started off studying some discipline other than medicine. Only seven students are said to have attended Hahnemann’s lectures during his final semester at Leipzig, in the winter of 1820/21.

From his few students Hahnemann recruited the candidates for his homeopathic drug provings. Among them was his son Friedrich who had completed his medical studies with a doctorate in 1813. Friedrich went on to practise medicine in Wolkenstein in the Ore Mountains [*Erzgebirge*] for a short period of time. In 1817 he applied to the Prussian government for the chair of medical history in Bonn or Halle, where he taught pharmacology, stating that the history of medicine had “always”¹³ been his main interest. It has not been possible to establish when exactly he fell out with his father, a circumstance to which we will return later. The last letter Friedrich wrote to his parents is dated 6 November 1820, apparently when he was in England, suffering from mental problems.

There is plenty of information on the drug provings in Leipzig, on how they were carried out and what part family members and pupils played in them. Franz Hartmann, one of the provers, gave a detailed description of the procedure: “The medicines which were to be proved he gave us himself; the vegetable in the form of essence or tincture, the others in the first or second trituration. He never concealed from us the names of the drugs which were to be proved, and his wish that we should in the future prepare all the remedies whose effects we had while students consciously tried, fully convinced us that in this respect he had never deceived us. Since he for the most part had previously proved the drugs upon himself and his family, he was sufficiently acquainted with their strength and properties to describe for each prover according to his individuality, the number of drops or grains with which he might commence without experiencing any injurious effects. The dose to be taken was mixed with a great quantity of water, that it might come in contact with a greater surface than would be possible with an undiluted drug; it was taken early in the morning, fasting, and nothing was eaten for an hour. If no effect was experienced in three or four hours, a few more drops were to be taken; the dose might even be doubled, and the reckoning of time was to begin from the last dose; the same was the case where the drug was to be taken for the third time. If, upon the third repetition, no change was remarked, Hahnemann concluded that the organism was not susceptible to this agent, and did not require the prover to make any further experiments with it, but after several days gave him another drug to prove.”¹⁴

From Hartmann we also know how meticulously Hahnemann recorded the symptoms: “In order to note down every symptom which presented itself, he required each one to carry a tablet and lead pencil with him, which had this advantage, that we could describe with precision the sensation (pain) which we experienced at the time, while this precision might be lost if these sensations were noted down at some subsequent period. Every symptom that presented itself must be given in its connection, even though the most heterogeneous symptoms were thus coupled together; but our directions were still more precise; after every

symptom we must specify in brackets the time of its occurrence, which time was reckoned from the last dose. [...] He never took the symptoms which we gave him for true and faithful, but always reviewed them once with us, to be sure that we had used just the right expressions and signs, and had said neither too much nor too little.”¹⁵ Hahnemann was, as we see, a very strict prover who expected precision in expression and observation from his students. These are qualities which are still crucial in homeopathic drug proving today while the procedure as such has been improved to factor out the possibility of provers being manipulated or influenced by subjective experiences.

The symptoms described by Hahnemann, his family and pupils were faithfully listed and enumerated in the second volume of the *Materia Medica Pura*, which was published in Dresden in 1816. Hornberg, for instance, after taking *Pulsatilla*, experienced “a subtle ringing in his right ear” (No. 22), while Rückert, after twelve hours, felt “as if his ear was blocked and he heard a buzzing noise” (No. 24). With the same substance, Stapf experienced “a kind of pressure at the base of the nose” (No. 26). When poison ivy (*Rhus toxicodendron*) was proved, Franz observed, among other symptoms, a “dull pressure in the lower molars and in the left shoulder, at the collarbone” (No. 70), while Hornberg complained about a “subtle, painful pulling sensation behind the left ear” (No. 54) and Rückert experienced “rheumatic stiffness of the neck” (No. 194).

Hahnemann’s systematic drug provings were advanced for his time but they do not conform to the standards set by homeopaths today. The commission of the German Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices, which is responsible for such matters, now stipulates: “Homeopathic drug provings require planning, execution and evaluation in line with the current scientific knowledge in the relevant disciplines. A proving schedule is to be established in advance. Design (basis of comparison, time frame and proving schedule of individual provers, number of provers) and methods (data collection and evaluation) have to be suitable for establishing a drug picture.”¹⁶ It would be unthinkable today for provers to be aware, as they were in Hahnemann’s day, of what substance they are proving. Simple “blinding” is now a matter of course. The double-blind trials, seen as the “golden standard” in clinical studies today, are, however, not an invention of mainstream medicine. They were introduced as early as 1835 by homeopathic physicians in Nuremberg to prove the efficacy of their methods.

With few exceptions Hahnemann entrusted mainly young and inexperienced students with the often difficult drug provings that represented a fundamental aspect of his new medical approach. He explained why this was so in a letter to Stapf in response to Stapf’s proposal to invite all physicians to conduct homeopathic drug provings: “No, only young heads which are not yet filled to overflowing with the conventional dogma, through whose veins do not yet stream millions of medical prejudices; only such young and impartial people who still value the truth and happiness of humanity, who are open to our simple doctrine of salvation. [...]”¹⁷ Hahnemann’s scepticism was presumably partly the result of his failed attempt at interesting the physicians of Leipzig in his homeopathy courses. Medical students, as he had found out, were more amenable. Still today it is thanks to homeopathic student groups that homeopathy, which is still as controversial as ever, holds its own in medical training. With their dedication to research and development they continue the tradition of the union of drug provers which Hahnemann had recruited from his immediate academic environment.

Hahnemann’s students in Leipzig received a rare reward for the hostilities and strain they took upon themselves: they were asked to join the social gatherings which took place once or twice a year in Hahnemann’s home in *Burgstrasse*. It is again Hartmann to whom we owe a

colourful description of these meetings to which only particularly bright and diligent students were invited: “During these supper parties things were not altogether homoeopathic, for although I can vouchsafe for a perfect simplicity of food served, yet instead of white beer a good wine was provided, of which, however, out of deference to the Master only a moderate amount was consumed. At these entertainments Hahnemann, on the one side and his wife on the other, separated his family from the guests (five daughters – his son and two married daughters were no longer at home). Joyous humour and wit dominated these gatherings, and the desire to laugh was unending, for as a rule other talented men were invited. Here, Hahnemann was the most cheerful man, even entering into the pranks of others, yet without offending propriety, or making any of those present the target of his jokes. When the meal was ended a pipe was smoked and about 11 o’clock we took our leave [...]”¹⁸

It is easy to imagine the cheerful crowd around the jovial and good-humoured Hahnemann. Although his adolescent daughters, who were all of a marriageable age, sat separately at these “gentlemen’s gatherings”, it was obviously not Hahnemann’s intention to prevent their coming into contact with his pupils on other occasions. His youngest daughter Louise (born in Mölln in 1800) went on to marry his assistant Theodor Mossdorf when the family lived in Köthen. Mossdorf, who was born in 1797, had commenced his medical studies in Leipzig in 1817. The marriage did not last, however, and was dissolved a few years later due to what Hahnemann referred to as Mossdorf’s “moral conduct”.

Apart from these gentlemen’s meetings Hahnemann occasionally invited the one or other pupil to join his guests and the family. Hartmann wrote about these gatherings: “How comfortable the Master felt in the circle of his beloved and his friends, among whom he numbered not only his pupils but also the learned of other faculties who did homage to his learning. How beneficial was the recreation which he then allowed himself after eight o’clock in the evening seated in his arm chair, with a glass of light Leipzig wheat beer. It was highly interesting at such times to see him become cheerful, as he sank into his arm chair, wearing his velvet cap and dressing gown and having taken off his boots, enjoying a glass of light (Leipzig) wheat beer and a pipe.”¹⁹ Hartmann continued by describing how relaxed the atmosphere was when Hahnemann told stories from his eventful life or spoke about science or geography. Apparently he was fascinated with China and often dwelt on the way children were brought up there, especially the respect they showed towards their parents. From a later statement we also know that he was a great admirer of Confucius.

Hahnemann did not welcome questions about his medical practice at these informal meetings. It was too serious a topic to be discussed there. Despite the fact that he was always the centre of attention, he felt he was a private person at these social gatherings. The almost sixty-year-old Hahnemann usually appeared well-disposed and talkative, relishing the attention and reverence shown towards him. A glass of beer and his pipe were part of his relaxation ritual at the end of a long working day. Often, his pipe would go cold during the lively discussions to be relit by one of his daughters.

Hahnemann’s pipe is kept by Hahnemann House Trust London now, while his tobacco pouch, which was made and embroidered with pearls by his wife, can be admired in Stuttgart among the History of Homeopathy collection at the Institute for the History of Medicine of the Robert Bosch Foundation.

We do not know who was invited to Hahnemann’s home apart from his pupils. One of his guests will have been the scholar and philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Lindner who was apparently Hahnemann’s patient from 1817. When, at the end of Hahnemann’s time in

Leipzig, the attacks on him increased, Lindner, who was professor of philosophy at Leipzig University, was among those who defended Hahnemann in public. He also initiated, in 1820, a petition to the King of Saxony. In the same year he took Hahnemann's side when the latter was involved in a court case by publishing a pamphlet in Leipzig with the title: 'Defence of Doctor Hahnemann's homoeopathic method of healing, based on attested facts and evidence, by a lay-man for physicians and non-physicians.'

Also among Hahnemann's circle of supporters and benefactors in Leipzig was presumably Ernst Georg Baron von Brunnow who had read law in the important trade fair town and had first heard of Samuel Hahnemann in 1816 from a fellow student. Brunnow left a vivid account of his first encounter with Hahnemann. While on a walk, he noticed an elderly gentleman with "so extraordinarily intelligent a countenance who walks respectfully arm in arm with his somewhat corpulent spouse, and is followed by two pairs of rosy girls."²⁰ Brunnow asked his companion, an older student, who the striking personality was and was told: "Why, he is the discoverer of the homeopathic system of medicine which is turning old medicine topsy turvy." The name of Brunnow, eldest son of a high-ranking Saxon officer from Courland, first appears in the case journals in 1818. Even before he went to Hahnemann to seek medical advice, he studied the *Organon* and soon became a fervent admirer of homeopathy. On the subject of his relationship with Hahnemann he wrote: "[He] received me graciously and we grew to be closer with every day, so that after a few months' time an intimate friendship existed between the sixty-year old physician and the nineteen-year old student."²¹ Brunnow remained faithful to homeopathy throughout his life although his relationship with Hahnemann was tarnished for a number of years when Brunnow took sides with those of Hahnemann's pupils who did not adhere to his teachings in their purest form. Out of gratitude to the "reformer", as he called Hahnemann, Brunnow translated the *Organon* and other writings into French. It was due to his translation that Hahnemann became known in France, a fact which would impact on his later life in a significant way.

To Brunnow we also owe the following vivid description of the older Hahnemann: "Locks of silver hair clustered round his high and thoughtful brow, from under which his animated eyes shone with piercing brilliancy. His whole countenance had a quiet, searching, grand expression; only rarely did a gleam of fine humour play over the deep earnestness, which told of the many sorrows and conflicts endured. His carriage was upright, his step firm, his motions as lively as those of a man of thirty."²² Brunnow also commented on Hahnemann's striking dress and his eating habits: "When he went out he wore a simple dark coat, with short trousers and boots. Inside the house he preferred his flowery, homely dressing gown, yellow slippers and black velvet cap. He was rarely seen without the long pipe, smoking being the only indulgence he allowed himself in his strict dietetic regimen. He drank water, milk and white beer and ate most frugally. His entire household was kept as simple as his clothes and food." The earliest portrait of Hahnemann that we know of was painted by Friedrich August Junge in 1819, when Hahnemann still lived in Leipzig, but only a print of the original painting has been preserved. It depicts Hahnemann at his desk, the quill in his right hand, a bookcase behind him. Hahnemann's earnest and concentrated expression meets the eyes of the observer. He wears the usual black coat of the gentleman of his time, with a white scarf knotted around his neck. The flowing white hair almost covers his ears and, in conjunction with the receding hairline, gives away the age of the model. The picture is clearly meant to suggest reliability, earnestness, scholarliness and diligence, all virtues which we find mentioned again and again in written contemporary testimonies. Portrayals that show Hahnemann with the characteristic "velvet cap" stem from a later period and were privately produced and distributed. Iconography thus also confirms Hahnemann's strict separation between his public and private appearance.

The publisher Carl Heinrich Reclam, father of the founder of the publishing company of the same name, was another of Hahnemann's benefactors in Leipzig. He took it upon himself to publish Lindner's earlier mentioned pamphlet as a commission in 1820, and two years later, at his own risk, the first homeopathic journal (Stapf's *Archiv für homöopathische Heilkunst*). In 1832, Reclam described himself in a letter to Hahnemann as "a devout admirer of homeopathy which I have found beneficial to my recovery from many ailments."²³

Among the citizens of Leipzig who signed the petition in support of Hahnemann addressed to the King on 19 March 1820, we find apart from numerous craftsmen, teachers and students also a number of dignitaries: Lindner, the professor of philosophy mentioned earlier, the lawyer Ferdinand Ludwig Hager, the artist Karl Heinrich Grünler, lecturer at the Academy of Fine Arts, the Chief Justice of Leipzig and city council deputy Dr Johann Wilhelm Volkmann. Volkmann, with his wife and children, were Hahnemann's patients over many years. The name first appears in the case journal in 1819 and even later, towards the end of Hahnemann's time in Köthen, Antonie Volkmann continued to consult the physician (until 1831), whom she valued highly and recommended to her friends. How close the Volkman's connection with Hahnemann was is also apparent from the fact that they owned a special edition of the third edition of the *Organon* with a handwritten dedication by the author. In the diaries of Dr Volkmann from the 1820s and 30s we find repeated mention not only of Hahnemann but also occasional references to other well-known names from the early days of homeopathy, among them Hartmann and Hornberg.²⁴

One who came to Hahnemann's succour during his conflict with his medical and pharmaceutical opponents in Leipzig was none other than Dr Moritz Müller, the renowned physician who would later also turn to homeopathy. Müller had asked Hahnemann's pupil Hartmann, with whom he was evidently acquainted, for his copy of the *Organon* as soon as he heard about the new approach to medicine. Although he did not agree with everything that was written there, he was convinced by the similarity principle. All in all, he was sufficiently impressed by the new system to refuse to sign, in 1821, a newspaper announcement which sharply criticized Hahnemann. Instead, he published an appeal in the same paper, the *Leipziger Tageblatt*, calling on his colleagues to investigate the new method without prejudice.

We know that Hahnemann had not only friends and sponsors in Leipzig but also a number of adversaries, among them the professors Johann Christian August Clarus and Friedrich August Benjamin Puchelt of the Medical School. In his memoirs Hahnemann's pupil Hartmann wrote of Carus, who had taught anatomy and surgery since 1811: "He despised the 'undertakings of Hahnemann and his pupils' (as he put it), to whom he scathingly referred as 'ignoramuses'. They were a thorn in the flesh to him and he pursued with bitter hatred all that reminded him in the least of Hahnemann and his teachings."²⁵ That Carus did not restrict himself to empty threats is obvious from the disciplinary proceedings and lawsuit for unlicensed practice that he filed against the students Hornburg and Franz. The influential physician and privy councillor also initiated an appeal, signed by thirteen Leipzig physicians and published in the local press on 23 January 1821, in which they fervently defended themselves against Hahnemann's accusation that they had applied the wrong treatment in some cases of scarlet fever.

We know from Moritz Müller that Friedrich August Benjamin Puchelt, who had held the chair of pathology since 1815 and practised at the town's almshouses, spoke critically in public about homeopathy and its founder. In conversation with colleagues and students he apparently

used words such as “quackery, ridiculousness and absurdity” in referring to the new system.²⁶ In his writings Puchelt seemed to exercise more moderation. There, he did not condemn Hahnemann’s doctrine straight out, but admitted that the law of similars was certainly worth considering and even defended it against its critics. What irritated him most was that Hahnemann publicly claimed exclusivity for his medical approach: “I am convinced that his whole doctrine would not have met with such opposition, that it would even have been welcomed and applied by some physicians, had Hahnemann not so blatantly declared war on all other medical views.”²⁷

Hahnemann’s first serious scientific opponent was not one of his Leipzig colleagues, but Professor Karl Heinrich Dzondi from Halle an der Saale. The dispute arose when Dzondi, in the *Allgemeine Anzeiger der Deutschen*, defended his view that in order to combat a disease one needed a substance which counteracted its causes. The practical example he put forward was the treatment of burns with cold water. To read such advice in a paper which had always been the platform for his own ideas on the reformation of medicine enraged Hahnemann. In a frosty response he pointed out that a cook would never apply cold water but heat if he burned himself. On 29 July 1816, Professor Dzondi proposed a wager of 500 gold Thalers to settle the issue in public: “Let each of us have his hand – I suggest the right hand which holds the quill – burnt with a red hot iron and then be treated with his own remedy, not with that of his opponent [...]”²⁸ The trial was to be conducted before three witnesses with a public audience. Hahnemann did not accept the wager. He most likely considered such a public spectacle to be beneath his dignity and ignored all of Dzondi’s further letters. Dzondi then published his correspondence with Hahnemann in the *Allgemeine Anzeiger der Deutschen*, quoting other physicians in support of his view. The one-sided literary feud went on until 1817 by which time the public had probably lost all interest in it.

But not only academic battles were fought in Halle and Leipzig. The actual war, from which Hahnemann had fled when he left Torgau, soon caught up with him in Leipzig. On 3 September 1813 Hahnemann wrote to his pupil Stapf: “If only the horrible war would leave us alone so that we could print something again. That would fill us with new life.”²⁹ But there was no thought of an end to the war in Saxony in the autumn of 1813. The decisive battle against Napoleon was imminent. This, the greatest battle ever fought in the history of the world, which involved more than half a million soldiers, was won in the end but it would be another year before the war against Napoleon finally ended. The loss of life was immense on both sides: the allied forces lost almost 54,000 men, the French 72,000, with almost half of them being killed or injured and the rest taken prisoner.

Unlike Goethe, who did not join in the general triumph after the Leipzig Battle of the Nations and who displayed no patriotic sentiments, Hahnemann experienced the victory over Napoleon as liberating. In a letter to Stapf he gave expression to his joy over the French defeat: “I share your hopes that the situation will improve now. During our former subjugation, everything that is good around us remained silent. All the better people had become so timid and disheartened; they did not dare to speak their mind. All we heard was the mob of slaves who, with the general morale declining, rejoiced in spreading their evil intentions and in stifling all that was good or better in speech and writing because they took the great oppressor [Napoleon, R.J.] as their model.”³⁰ Hahnemann was clearly no friend of the French emperor. He had suffered from French censorship and seen his scientific productivity curbed by it. He was German and a patriot at heart. In Leipzig where people had suffered much in the War of Liberation he was not alone in his views. In this respect he also differed from his opponent Dzondi, who, because of his sympathies with the French, lost his professorship in 1817.

The war years and the “battle of giants”, as the events of 16 to 19 October 1813 were referred to, were not only severely troublesome to Hahnemann in his great concern for himself and his family. They allowed him, after all, to increase his medical knowledge and enhance his reputation as a skilled physician who knew how to successfully combat epidemics. In 1814 his treatise on the *Treatment of typhus and hospital fever at present prevailing* was printed, in which he proved that the traditionally used remedies had little or no effect on the epidemic, which affected soldiers as well as civilians. Hahnemann recommended the homeopathic use of bryony (*Bryonia alba*) and poison ivy (*Rhus toxicodendron*) instead and, in severe cases, also a homeopathic dilution of black henbane (*Hyoscamus niger*). We know from a comment that Hahnemann’s treatment proved immensely successful. Of the 180 “typhus” sufferers he treated in and around Leipzig in 1813 only one elderly person died.

The symptoms described by Hahnemann suggest that it was an outbreak of epidemic typhus, one of the worst war epidemics. The potentially fatal illness (five to twenty per cent of those infected die if untreated) was often confused with typhoid fever at the time because it had similar symptoms. Epidemic typhus is caused by a different pathogen, however, and transmitted in a different way. From Hahnemann’s arresting description of the third stage of the illness, the “delirious or mad stage”³¹, we can be quite certain that it was not typhoid fever or dysentery, which was rife around Leipzig, claiming thousands of victims. Epidemic typhus is transmitted by lice and was a constant companion of the Napoleonic troops on their retreat from Moscow. In Mainz, where large parts of the French army withdrew after the Battle of Nations, the epidemic raged so severely that even the gravediggers refused to do their work because of their fear of contracting the fever. Around 18,000 soldiers and a tenth of the town’s population are said to have succumbed to the epidemic which spread rapidly, helped by desperately poor conditions of hygiene. The epidemic claimed not only scores of anonymous victims. Also prominent people succumbed to it, such as the philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte who died on 29 January 1814 at the age of 51. He had been infected by his wife who for many months had nursed the injured soldiers in Berlin military hospitals and who herself survived. Fichte’s last words to his son who was about to give him medicine were: “Leave it, I do not need any more medicine, I feel I am recovered.”³²

It would be futile to ask whether Hahnemann could have saved Fichte with his “new” approach to medicine. There is a statement by Hahnemann’s pupil Hartmann, who had first met his academic teacher in the year of the Battle of Leipzig, which shows that the founder of homeopathy did not only achieve unusual and widely noticed successes with his treatment of the “nerve fever”: “even at the time when I made Hahnemann’s acquaintance his reputation was widespread and he achieved almost incredible cures which confirmed his fame again and again.”³³ The treatment of patients who had contracted the dreaded “hospital fever”, as epidemic typhus was also called, will have enhanced Hahnemann’s reputation, as his case journals from the years under consideration confirm. From August to November 1813 the number of consultations rose fivefold and remained at that high level until the middle of 1815. Around twenty new patients came to see Hahnemann every month. The number of consultations fluctuated between 200 and 300 every month, which indicates a very high workload during that period of Hahnemann’s working life. The Battle of the Nations and the outbreak of epidemic typhus can certainly be considered the “beginning of Hahnemann’s flourishing practice.”³⁴

Before we turn to Hahnemann’s most prominent patient of his Leipzig years, we should look more closely at the main part of his clientele. In the Eilenburg journals, professions are only mentioned in 30 per cent of cases. Statistical evaluation shows that patients working in

“trade” and “industry” made up over 45 per cent, that is, the highest proportion of those whose occupation is mentioned. Professions requiring higher education, such as in administration, and members of the aristocracy, made up over thirty per cent of his clientele even at that early time. It is not surprising either that there were more members of the aristocracy and the educated bourgeoisie as well as higher ranking civil servants among Hahnemann’s clients than less wealthy patients from other professional backgrounds. The move to the university city of Leipzig meant that Hahnemann’s clientele changed and hardly included any representatives of agricultural professions such as farmers or gardeners. Most of his patients were now traders and civil servants. There was also a particularly high number of pastors and law or theology students, especially in the early years when the overall number of patients was not yet so high. It seems that Hahnemann, when he first arrived in Leipzig, saw more representatives of the lower classes (especially servants, but also small farmers) in his practice. A slight increase of military persons among his clientele (to almost five per cent) is noticeable for the years 1812 to 1815.

Hahnemann’s growing fame and his relocation from Torgau to Leipzig meant that the number of patients who had to travel more than a day to see him also grew. His “catchment area” extended quite far during the first years in Leipzig, with some patients not being able to reach his practice within a day. While only about half of his patients lived in or around Leipzig, a third took it upon themselves to travel over a hundred kilometres to see him. Let us look, by way of comparison, at another medical practice of the same period. The physician Karl Arnold Kortum of Bochum is among the few members of the profession for whom we also have reliable documentation. Most of Kortum’s patients lived within a radius of sixteen kilometres of his practice and none of them had to travel more than 60 kilometres to get to him.

Compared to earlier periods more men than women sought out Hahnemann in his Leipzig practice (49.4 : 37.5 per cent). The ratio had been inverse in Eilenburg, that is, between 1801 and 1803, when only about 40 per cent of his patients were men, compared to 47 per cent women (with the others it is not possible to establish the gender). The age range remained the same. In Eilenburg and Leipzig the majority of patients were between 20 and 55 years old (60 and 69 percent respectively). The higher figure for Leipzig could be due to the fact that the age group was more strongly represented there, since it was a university town and centre of commerce, than in the former more rural environment. The age pattern of Hahnemann’s practice also differs from that of the “allopathic” practice in Bochum, mentioned earlier, where the majority of clients were under 30 years of age. The age distribution of patients in Hahnemann’s practice largely corresponds to more recent socio-statistical surveys, although one needs to bear in mind that a significant demographic change has occurred and average life expectancy has risen considerably since the beginning of the nineteenth century. In medical practices offering naturopathy or homeopathy today, patients from the 21-to-60-year age bracket clearly prevail compared to practices that do not, or only rarely, offer alternative therapies.

Even in Leipzig Hahnemann made home visits only in exceptional cases. As a rule patients came to see him in his practice, a habit which was still quite unusual at the time. He was a radical medical reformer in that respect also, since the custom of offering consultation hours only established itself in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century. A contemporary description allows us a glimpse into Hahnemann’s Leipzig practice: “During the period when I kept company with Hahnemann he lived at two different houses consecutively. In both there was a small window next to the main door, in which the head of a girl would appear whenever the doorbell was rung, like a tower guard inspecting the newcomer. [...] The parlour was

usually filled with patients to each of whom he would devote the same degree of attention. A square, medium-sized table next to the window was used for his writing materials. This is where he questioned and thoroughly examined the patients, writing down every, even the seemingly most trifling detail of the patient into a small quarto book which he closed each time he went to another room to fetch the required medicine.”³⁵ The quarto book in question no doubt refers to the famous “case journals” which have been preserved almost in their entirety, giving details of the whole period of Hahnemann’s medical practice (1801-1843). Other books on Hahnemann’s table that are mentioned are two large folios “in which were pasted, in alphabetical order, the symptoms of all substances proved by him or his students”. The two folios are the earliest versions of today’s repertories which are structured in a way that makes it easy to find the right homeopathic medicine (in this case alphabetically). The two folios show how meticulously Hahnemann conducted his medical practice. They are now kept at the Institute for the History of Medicine of the Robert Bosch Foundation in Stuttgart.

Hahnemann tended to hold consultation hours in the morning between 9 and 12, but saw patients also between two and four in the afternoon, after a midday break which would begin exactly at noon with the ringing of the church bells. His wife, who maintained a strict domestic regimen, made sure that these times were adhered to. Her occasional look of reproach, when yet again he appeared late for lunch, he bore with humour, as one of his pupils tells us. The afternoon walk, which Hahnemann took with his wife and some of his daughters at exactly four o’clock, at the end of his practice hours, was as sacrosanct as his lunch hour. Only on Sundays did these rituals take place in the mornings, with the family sometimes even venturing as far as the outskirts of Leipzig.

Among the more than 2200 patients treated by Hahnemann in his Leipzig practice were some prominent representatives of the world of arts, music, science and politics. Apart from the wife of Leipzig’s Chief Justice, Antonie Volkmann, a benefactress, we find the name of Friedrich Wieck in the case journals. We know him today as the father of the famous and gifted pianist Clara Wieck, who married the composer Robert Schumann. Having studied theology, Clara’s father first earned a living as a private tutor, an occupation which he soon gave up to become a piano teacher and take on ownership of a pianoforte workshop in Leipzig. When he went to see Hahnemann in his practice in 1815, he was thirty years old and not yet married. He suffered from facial pain, tooth aches and night fevers. In the course of the treatment, which continued until 1816, other symptoms surfaced which, today, would suggest acute jaundice. The detailed history taking in accordance with the rules set out in the *Organon* included psychological peculiarities (such as “does not like to see the moon, finds it unpleasant”).³⁶ Sexual details are no taboo for Hahnemann as we see from an entry in Wieck’s medical history which reads: “violent erections before the jaundice.” Wieck, it seems, was on the whole very happy with the success of Hahnemann’s treatment, although it took some time (ninety consultations) before his problems were resolved and Hahnemann tried several homeopathic remedies on him, advising even mesmerization (stroking with the hand) and magnetizing (with rods). It is remarkable that Wieck, who was not yet a musical celebrity at the time, often saw Hahnemann on Sundays or holidays. Hahnemann seems to have been always available to his patients, whether they were prominent or not.

Hahnemann’s most illustrious patient during his time in Leipzig was without doubt the Austrian field marshal Karl Philipp von Schwarzenberg, victor of the Battle of Leipzig. He suffered a stroke in 1817 at the age of 41 from which he gradually recovered thanks also to a spa treatment he underwent at Karlsbad. In the autumn of 1819 Schwarzenberg’s health deteriorated when he suffered partial memory loss and impaired speech. He was first treated by Joseph von Sax, field surgeon major at Vienna’s military hospital. Later, the Dresden

professor of medicine Friedrich Ludwig Kreysig, author of a much-lauded work on heart disease and the Austrian military surgeon Matthias Marenzeller were also consulted. Marenzeller had become known early on as an opponent of heroic medicine which resorted mostly to venesection, laxatives and emetics. He had heard of Hahnemann's new medical approach in 1816 and now recommended him to Schwarzenberg. With such a prominent patient this was not easy since it first had to be ascertained that he was not falling into the hands of a charlatan. To that purpose, messengers from Schwarzenberg's entourage were sent to Leipzig, in March 1820, to make inquiries about Hahnemann's practice and successes.

The first person they interviewed was the Leipzig professor of medicine Johann Christian Jörg, one of Hahnemann's opponents. The verdict he offered the Austrian delegation is not surprising: Hahnemann was a charlatan. The academically trained surgeon Johann August Ehrlich, on the other hand, gave a positive account. His view was by no means without weight seeing that, due to his services to medicine, he had been appointed honorary doctor of Leipzig Medical School. He told the committee of some of Hahnemann's successes, not failing to mention that the founder of homeopathy was a controversial figure among Leipzig's physicians and was involved in a dispute with the local apothecaries. He advised the delegates to ask Frau Volkmann for further information regarding Hahnemann's medical successes.

This they did and in their report to Prince Schwarzenberg they pointed out that the wife of the Leipzig Chief Justice had suffered from similar symptoms to those of the Field Marshal. They described the sickness and recovery of Antonie Volkmann in dramatic terms: "[...] she lost all flesh and strength. The doctors prescribed a chalybeate bath but her condition deteriorated to an extent that, the following winter, she was no longer able to rise from her chair unaided or take a single step in the room." The poor woman also had "unusual cravings for food or sleep without being able to satisfy either of them. Her speech was weak and incomprehensible, but she had no chest pain."³⁷ The reporters did not omit the information that Mrs Volkmann had been declared "incurable" by the same physician who had treated the Prince: Professor Kreysig from Dresden.

Antonie Volkmann was not the only patient to praise Hahnemann's successful therapies, as the delegation would report to Prague, where Schwarzenberg resided at the time. But they had also been instructed to obtain a personal impression of Hahnemann. On 9 March 1820 they called at Hahnemann's house where they met with unexpected difficulties. One of Hahnemann's daughters, who served as his assistant, naively refused the unannounced delegation admission, pointing out that Hahnemann was too busy. In the end the two delegates, who had obviously not mentioned who had sent them, were able to persuade her to give them an appointment for six o'clock that same afternoon. We know about the ensuing consultation from the delegation's final report: "The patient's situation is described to him. He inquires whether we are physicians and seems not to be disappointed when we answer in the negative. He asks more questions about the patient. His conduct instils trust. On repeated inquiry we disclose the patient's name, swearing him to secrecy, and express merely a wish to obtain his advice in the matter. He asks whether the patient can still walk with a stick and declares, when this is affirmed, that the condition is not serious enough to warrant any doubt that it can be cured. He asks to see the papers and asks repeatedly whether the patient would follow the doctor's advice, pointing out that it is his custom to receive advance payment for taking on the treatment. He mentions that he is unable to leave Leipzig. He asks us to see him in 24 hours' time."³⁸

Several other conversations with Hahnemann followed over the next days in which he showed himself quite confident that the Field Marshal could be cured. He still saw the risks involved

as we see from a letter he wrote to the patient's wife: "As my help is being sought in this case, the uncommon importance of the patient combined with the uncommon importance of his illness could represent an immense risk for me who has never blotted his reputation as a physician with overhasty promises, if I was not convinced, since I am familiar with this kind of condition, that I was able to at least alleviate the Prince's situation."³⁹ Hahnemann was certainly flattered to be asked to treat such a famous patient, well knowing, on the other hand, that his reputation would suffer severely if he failed, and grist would be added to the mill of his numerous opponents. The founder of homeopathy seemed sufficiently sure of himself and his art to take the risk. He tellingly asked a princely fee for the treatment of such a prominent patient, insisting as usual on an advance payment of 100 Friedrich d'or, the equivalent of 500 Prussian Thalers. As a comparison, a bushel of wheat (ca. 55 litres) cost two Thalers in Berlin at that time.

Neither the fee Hahnemann demanded nor his caution regarding a full recovery could keep the Prince and his entourage from grasping the potentially saving straw by trying out the controversial medical approach. The report from Leipzig was promising. After a number of unsuccessful allopathic treatment attempts, the victor of the Battle of Leipzig was determined to give homeopathy a try, especially as he was still in a rather poor condition.

The first treatment was conducted by letter as was customary if patients lived at a greater distance from their physician. Prince Schwarzenberg received his first homeopathic medicine on 25 March. Unfortunately the name of the remedy is not specified. In addition, Hahnemann sent dietetic instructions including advice such as: "He should never be forced or urged to occupy himself with anything he feels is beneath his dignity or against his convictions."⁴⁰ In his letters Hahnemann also expressed the hope that his high-ranking patient might strictly adhere to his instructions.

We do not know which homeopathic powders were contained in the 24 small envelopes that Hahnemann sent to Prague. There will have been merely lactose (the homeopathic placebo) in some of them and the actual remedy, in several degrees of dilution (C6 to C30) in the others. The patient was to be given one little packet per day of the remedies in the morning ("as soon as he can be woken up") by his attending physicians. These physicians had to report any changes in the patient's condition to Leipzig where Hahnemann entered the information into his case journal. If we read these notes we gain the impression that the patient felt better every day. But soon the characteristic symptoms returned, and more strongly, so that Prince Schwarzenberg decided to discontinue the treatment by correspondence and make his way to Leipzig to see Hahnemann in person. He had already applied to the Emperor for leave of absence on 17 March and received the imperial permission together with the following good wishes: "I wish you an early and complete recovery – with whatever method you may choose – as long as it is applied in the proper way."⁴¹

On 19 April Prince Schwarzenberg reached Leipzig where he moved with his wife and entourage (which included his private physicians Dr von Sax and Dr Marenzeller) into a garden house in the *Milchinsel*, one of the park-like suburbs of Leipzig where a famous monument (the *Kugeldenkmal*), donated by the Leipzig merchant Carl Lampe in 1845, now stands as a reminder of the Battle of the Nations. The news that the conquering hero of that battle had arrived spread like wildfire in Leipzig and beyond, even as far as Carlsbad where Goethe was seeking relief from his ailments. In a letter of 5 May 1820 to Johann Heinrich Meyer the famous poet wrote: "A curious game is being played in this place where all innovations are rejected and undermined. It is forbidden to cure with magnetism (Mesmer)!" adding, "not even the practice of Hahnemann's method is permitted. [...] But now Prince

Schwarzenberg, who is very ill and probably incurable, has confidence in this new Theophrastus Paracelsus and applies for leave of absence to the Emperor to seek help across the border.”⁴² What is striking about Goethe’s comment is not just his comparison of Hahnemann with the controversial early sixteenth century physician and reformer Paracelsus but his knowledge of the ban on homeopathy which applied from 1819 in all the countries of the Habsburg Monarchy. In the year in question, 1820, Goethe seems to have shown particular interest in homeopathy, since he mentioned it favourably several times. In a letter to his son August, written from Jena on 2 September 1820, he referred to Hahnemann: “[...] now I believe more than ever in the teachings of this wonderful doctor, since I have had occasion to experience so vividly the effect of the minute doses.” With regard to the victor of the 1813 Battle of the Nations he added his wish that “Prince Schwarzenberg, who is at Leipzig now for such treatment, may draw as much benefit from it as I do [...]”⁴³ Unlike Beethoven, who was in the care of a homeopathic physician in 1825, Goethe will most likely have treated himself with homeopathic medicines rather than consult a homeopath.

Hahnemann’s practice obviously benefited from the prominent patient, whose presence in Leipzig was soon the talk of the town. Shortly after the Prince’s arrival Hahnemann’s patient numbers soared. Hahnemann even made an exception to his rule and visited the famous patient at his bedside almost daily, as we can conclude from the case journal entries of 1820. The treatment with various homeopathic substances, including *Nux vomica* and *Belladonna*, seemed successful at first. On 8 July 1820 the Prince wrote to his relative Friedrich August, King of Saxony: “Since I began my treatment with Doctor Hahnemann, some of my symptoms have receded and I do not doubt that I will soon have improved sufficiently to be able to deliver to you personally my deeply felt gratitude for the many proofs of your supreme grace that you have bestowed on me during my sojourn here.”⁴⁴ But his optimism proved to be premature. Hahnemann had foreseen a severe relapse and predicted, at the beginning of July, that another serious crisis would occur within three months. His premonition proved to be justified: on 1 October, while the Prince was dining with the Duchess of Anhalt-Köthen, he suffered severe cramps and vomiting. Hahnemann, who was called immediately, gave him *Aurum* in addition to the homeopathic remedies he had been taking so far. During the days that followed Hahnemann went against his custom and changed the medication almost daily rather than allowing one remedy to unfold its full effect. The olfactory application of homeopathic substances, which Hahnemann thought a most efficacious method, did not alleviate the condition either. The worst was to be expected. On 7 October the Prince received the last rites. There was now no hope.

Hahnemann was not the only one who was feverishly active at the Prince’s sickbed during those anxious days, as we can see from the frequently changing medication. Schwarzenberg’s private physicians no longer held back but began to intervene so that the Prince’s immediate retinue, which included the Austrian Consul General in Leipzig, Adam Müller, was unable to tell which of the medical approaches was responsible for the slight improvement that occurred. Hahnemann noted down a final consultation in his case journal on 10 October. On the next day the Prince received the last rites again. In the evening of 11 October his private physician, Dr Joseph von Sax, undertook a last desperate attempt to save the Prince’s life by applying leeches. But this was in vain, too. The patient fell into a coma and died a few days later, on 15 October, without having regained consciousness. On the next day Hahnemann sent his condolences to the widow which included the words: “Alas! How great is my loss also!!!”⁴⁵ He must have been concerned about the damage to his reputation, especially in the eyes of his opponents, and to his practice in general.

But all remained calm initially. Hahnemann was even involved in the post mortem, alongside the Prince's personal physicians and Hahnemann's adversary, Johann Christian Clarus. The autopsy revealed a great number of organic diseases (including cardiomegaly and arteriosclerosis), each of which could have led to the patient's demise. While the death of his prominent patient meant that Hahnemann sustained a certain loss of prestige, his opponents knew better than to blame him for the death of the moribund Prince, especially as the autopsy report had been made public. Among Hahnemann's followers, who remained faithful to him, well aware of the risk he had taken in accepting the hopeless case in the first place, was Antonie Volkmann, who had recommended him so warmly to Schwarzenberg's family. Not even Matthias Marenzeller, whose interest in homeopathy had been awakened in 1816, turned his back on the new method. On the contrary: in 1828 he carried out homeopathic drug provings at the Joseph Academy in Vienna on behalf of the Austrian Emperor. Aided by his influential clientele, he had practised homeopathy continuously since 1819, although the method was illegal in Austria.

Hahnemann nevertheless lost a highly influential advocate in his legal dispute with the Leipzig apothecaries as an immediate consequence of Schwarzenberg's death. On 16 December 1819 three apothecaries had complained to the city council about Hahnemann's habit of dispensing medicines directly to patients. In doing so he went against their monopoly as stipulated in the medical legislation, which allowed physicians the dispensing of drugs only in exceptional cases. That the Leipzig "dispensation dispute" broke out relatively late had to do with the fact that the apothecaries did not at first see the new homeopathic approach as a threat to their profitable business. It was only when Hahnemann's practice became inundated with patients and when his direct and indirect pupils began to adopt his medical system that the apothecaries felt they had to take action. They also felt slighted in their professional honour, as we can see in the following extract from their petition to the magistrate: "Dr Hahnemann has [...] during his entire stay in this town prepared and dispensed his own medicines to his patients, stating untruly and insultingly, that the skill and competence of the apothecaries could not be relied upon."⁴⁶ The claimants pointed out particularly that they did not take issue with the homeopathic method as such, but with Hahnemann's ongoing violation of the dispensing law, which applied not only in Saxony.

In Hahnemann's eyes the dispute touched on a fundamental issue that essentially concerned the future of his approach to healing. Both sides obviously fought with no holds barred. Hahnemann responded to the apothecaries' petition with a detailed letter of justification. His main argument was that homeopathic medicines were not like other remedies and did therefore not fall within the scope of the existing legislation. His defence in court, on 14 February 1820, culminated in the statement: "The new way of healing, called homeopathy, which is the exact opposite of the former medicine, has no prescriptions that could be handed to the apothecary; it has no combined substances but only a single simple one for each case of illness."⁴⁷ He did not refrain from pointing out that the apothecaries did not usually understand and even sneered at homeopathic dilutions. They could therefore not be expected to prepare such small doses reliably. Hahnemann certainly knew what he was talking about. Not only was he married to an apothecary's daughter, he was, as the author of a two-volume pharmaceutical lexicon, a knowledgeable pharmacist himself.

His pleading did, however, not convince the Leipzig authorities, especially since the claimants insisted that they were in the right. The magistrate notified Hahnemann of his verdict on 8 March: "Dr Samuel Hahnemann is hereby, under penalty of 20 Thalers, prohibited from dispensing any medicines, objections notwithstanding. He must not give cause for more severe measures and has to pay all costs listed below."⁴⁸ Hahnemann was defeated. But he did

not give up so easily. The issue was, after all, of existential importance to him. He immediately instructed his solicitor, Ferdinand Ludwig Hager, also a supporter of homeopathy, to appeal. At the same time, a group of reputable citizens sent a petition to the King of Saxony entreating him to repeal the verdict banning Hahnemann from dispensing medicines. Not only did they refer to Hahnemann's great achievements in chemistry and pharmacy, but also and in particular to his healing successes, of which they all had personal experience. They listed the reasons which Hahnemann had set out in his written defence, such as that the existing drug laws were not applicable to the new way of healing. The petitioners even tried to propitiate the King by arguing that Hahnemann was of "an advanced age" and had not "that much time left to live".⁴⁹ Just as a reminder: Hahnemann was 65 years old at the time, and as we know now, the petitioners were quite wrong with their argument. Hahnemann was to live to the ripe old age of 88. But not even he himself expected to reach such a biblical age, as we know from his comments on ageing.

The collection of signatures was successful in that the Council was obliged to refer the matter to the state government for decision. The state government first wanted to conduct its own investigations. The situation had changed in the meantime, since Hahnemann had taken on the treatment of the victor of the Battle of the Nations. There is indeed evidence that Schwarzenberg put in a word for his homeopathic physician in the highest places. After an audience with the King his adjutant informed Hahnemann that the "prohibition of his medical approach"⁵⁰ was out of the question for the time being. On 14 July the King ruled that no steps were to be taken against Hahnemann, so that Schwarzenberg's treatment would not be hindered.

After the Prince's death the King of Saxony felt no longer bound by his word and six weeks later the following sentence was announced to Hahnemann: "that the latter would be allowed to dispense medicines only when in the country where the distance to the next town makes it difficult to obtain them, or in alarming cases where time does not allow for prescribing and obtaining the urgently necessary medicaments from the pharmacy, or when they need to be sent to places where there is no pharmacy or when they are given free of charge to the poor as long as they are prescribed at the authorities' instruction."⁵¹ Hahnemann's adversaries did not find the verdict satisfactory. They feared that it contained too many loopholes that would allow him to continue as before (e.g. the dispensation of medicines to patients from rural areas). They appealed to the state government for more precision in the matter, but their application was turned down and the verdict of 30 November 1820 stood.

After the defeat he had suffered in this legal case Hahnemann felt that he had no professional future in Leipzig. The number of patients had also fallen after Schwarzenberg's death. What better time for packing up again and seeking more favourable conditions elsewhere?

Shortly after the verdict against him had been pronounced, Hahnemann began to look for a new place to live. On 5 February 1821 he turned to a fellow brother of his Masonic lodge in Altenburg, informing him of his wish to relocate: "All I wish for is to be able to settle in some country town or market village, where the post will facilitate my connection with remote parts, and where I will not be burdened by the pretensions of apothecaries, for, as you know, the pure practice of this art only uses such minute tools, such small doses of medicine, that no apothecary can benefit from them, and because of the way he was taught and used to practise, he cannot help but find the matter ridiculous and therefore make fun of the public and of the patients. For these and other reasons it is impossible to find support from apothecaries in the practice of homeopathy."⁵² Hahnemann considered moving to Saxony-Anhalt, but not to Altenburg as he did not wish to enter into competition with his Freemason friend there who

was also a physician. Prussia would also have been a possibility since the pharmaceutical laws were less stringent there, but Hahnemann preferred, as he openly admitted in a letter, to go somewhere where he had had good experiences in the past.

Hahnemann felt persecuted by the Leipzig physicians and pharmacists, although that was rather a subjective impression. More recent research shows that an actual eviction, as it is often described in the older history of homeopathy, never took place. While the number of Hahnemann's critics had increased by 1821, no trace can be found of a regular hate campaign. Most conflicts were of a personal nature and were often provoked by Hahnemann's gruff demeanour. Homeopathy as a system was not necessarily the target of criticism. We must also not forget that Hahnemann did not only have enemies in Leipzig, but also supporters of his approach to medicine, even among physicians and in government circles.

Hahnemann's departure from Leipzig was consequently his own choice following a number of disappointments that had all come together. Once the decision to look for a new place of work was made the only remaining question was how quickly an alternative to Leipzig could be found. He had, after all, practised successfully there for many years. A solution offered itself more quickly than Hahnemann had thought possible. He received an offer from the Duke of Anhalt-Köthen to settle in his territory on favourable terms. On 22 January 1821 Hahnemann said goodbye to the citizens of Leipzig in a newspaper article which concluded with the words: "I write this in honour of the Leipzig people, to whom I feel obliged to pay my most sincere respects now that I will no longer be able to serve them."⁵³ Hahnemann, as it turned out, only moved at the end of April 1821 once all questions regarding the conditions for his new residence were resolved to his satisfaction.

¹ IGM Archives A 1601

² IGM Archives A 593

³ Grulich, *Chronik*, p. 147

⁴ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 551

⁵ Quoted from Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 1, p. 106

⁶ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 637 (German translation: Helmut Bourhofer)

⁷ Quoted from Albrecht, Hahnemann, p. 30

⁸ Hartmann, *Leben* (1844), col. 182

⁹ IGM Archives A 1852

¹⁰ Hartmann, *Leben* (1844) col. 182

¹¹ Quoted from Cook, Hahnemann, p. 106

¹² Quoted from Cook, Hahnemann, p. 107

¹³ Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Handschriftenabteilung, Sammlung Darmstädter 3 0 1817

¹⁴ Quoted from Bradford, *Life*, p. 111f.

¹⁵ Quoted from Bradford, *Life*, p. 112

¹⁶ www.bfarm.de/de/Arzneimittel/bes_therap/am/anthropo/Hom_AM_Pruefungen.pdf

¹⁷ Neues Archiv für die homöopathische Heilkunst I (1844), p. 162

¹⁸ Quoted from Cook, Hahnemann, p. 110

¹⁹ English translation adapted from Cook, Hahnemann, p. 110

²⁰ Quoted from Bradford, *Life*, p. 117

²¹ Brunnnow, Hahnemann, p. 29

²² Quoted from Bradford, *Life*, p. 118

²³ Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 284

²⁴ Cf. Hickmann, *Leiden*, p. 21

²⁵ Hartmann, *Erlebnisse* (1850), col. 328

²⁶ Müller, *Geschichte*, p. 1

²⁷ Puchelt, *Homöopathie*, p. 42

²⁸ Quoted from Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 1, p. 116

²⁹ IGM Archives No A 405

³⁰ IGM Archives No A 406

- ³¹ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 649
- ³² Schweizer, Philosophen, p. 226
- ³³ Hartmann, Erlebnisse (1850), col. 292
- ³⁴ Schreiber, Leipzig, p. 144
- ³⁵ Hartmann, Leben (1844), col. 185
- ³⁶ Genneper, Wieck, p. 52
- ³⁷ Quoted from Nachtmann, Behandlung, p. 97
- ³⁸ Quoted from Nachtmann, Behandlung, p. 96f.
- ³⁹ Quoted from Nachtmann, Behandlung, p. 98
- ⁴⁰ Quoted from Nachtmann, Behandlung, p. 101
- ⁴¹ Fürst Schwarzenberg, Feldmarschall, p. 300
- ⁴² Goethe's Werke [Weimar edition], IV. Abt. Bd. 33, 1905, p. 18
- ⁴³ Ibid. p. 191
- ⁴⁴ Haehl, Hahnemann-Funde, p. 55
- ⁴⁵ Quoted from Nachtmann, Behandlung, p. 104
- ⁴⁶ Quoted from Schreiber, Leipzig, p. 119
- ⁴⁷ Printed in Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 120
- ⁴⁸ Quoted from Michalak, Arzneimittel, p. 59
- ⁴⁹ Quoted from Michalak, Arzneimittel, p. 61
- ⁵⁰ Haehl, Hahnemann-Funde, p. 56
- ⁵¹ Quoted from Michalak, Arzneimittel, p. 65
- ⁵² Printed in Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 128
- ⁵³ Quoted in Hartmann, Leben (1844), col. 129

Court Physician and Pioneer of Homeopathy in Köthen (1821-1835)

On 21 April the Nuremberg newspaper *Der Korrespondent von und für Deutschland* [Correspondent from and for Germany] carried the following notice: “Dr Sam. Hahnemann, the discoverer of the homoeopathic system, is about to leave Leipzig and take up residence at Coethen. His Highness, the Duke of Anhalt-Coethen, has bestowed on him not only the licence to practise but also permission to prepare and dispense the medicines necessary for his cures without the intervention of apothecaries. The health authorities of Cöthen present themselves as a laudable model of impartiality and due regard for scientific progress.”¹

Köthen was then a “quiet little country town”², as a travelling French homeopath who visited Hahnemann there informs us. Another traveller in pursuit of homeopathy considered the wide and well laid-out streets and the ducal palace with its park to be worth mentioning in his report of 1832. In the early nineteenth century Köthen, the residence of the Dukes of Anhalt-Köthen, had hardly 6000 inhabitants. Its renaissance palace, erected between 1597 and 1606, received a new North wing in 1823, the “Ferdinand building”. Apart from the Lutheran and the Reformed churches there was already a synagogue for the small Jewish community there in the early 1820s. It had been consecrated in 1802, just a few years before the *Code Napoléon* granted equal rights to Jews in the Duchy. The foundation stone for the Catholic church was not laid until 1827.

At the time of the Confederation of the Rhine, which ended in 1813 with Napoleon’s defeat, the Duchy came under Prussian influence. The territory of the Anhalts was almost entirely surrounded by Prussia. As a consequence of this dependency the Anhalt countries joined the Prussian Customs and Trade Union in 1828, an act that had been preceded by a trade war which, in conjunction with an agricultural crisis, had considerably debilitated the small Duchy. Since 1818, Anhalt-Köthen had been ruled by Duke Ferdinand (1769-1830), a descendant of the House of Anhalt-Köthen-Pless who had been governor general of Silesia and the Duchy of Glatz before succeeding to the dukedom. Ferdinand was not what one would call an enlightened ruler. His short reign was characterized by paternalism and bureaucracy, narrow-mindedness and subservience. In 1825 he and his wife, Duchess Julie von Anhalt-Köthen (1793-1848) converted to Catholicism while in Paris. The spectacular change of creed of a Protestant ruler seemed to have been instigated by the Austrian politician Adam Müller, who skilfully used the Prussian customs conflict to offer his services as an unofficial advisor to the Duke of Anhalt and soon managed to gain the Duke’s complete confidence.

It was Müller who acted behind the scenes when Prince Schwarzenberg consulted Hahnemann in Leipzig and when it became necessary to prevent, or at least postpone, the threatened prohibition of Hahnemann’s right to dispense. He was also instrumental in inviting Hahnemann to Köthen, as we know from a letter he wrote to Duke Ferdinand on 26 April 1821: “I hear that Dr Hahnemann left for Köthen yesterday to buy a house there. The proclamation in the Nuremberg Correspondent with the eulogies of the Köthen medical authorities regarding their reception of Hahnemann caused an immense stir here the day before yesterday. Regrettably my copy has not yet arrived and I am unable to present it to Your Highness!”³

Ever since meeting Hahnemann, Müller had been a staunch follower of homeopathy. He even wrote to Friedrich Gentz, one of the best known publicists of the Metternich era whose reactionary convictions he shared, urging him to seek homeopathic treatment for his health problems. (“A drop of China extract or Valeriana works wonders!”⁴) Gentz followed the advice and consulted Hahnemann in writing.

There was someone equally instrumental in getting Hahnemann established in Köthen, having had positive experience with homeopathy: Ducal Chief Chamberlain Joseph Günther Baron von Sternegg. According to a source dating from 1877 he recovered from severe illness after undergoing homeopathic treatment and therefore advised the Duke that he, too, should consult Hahnemann. While the name “von Sternegg” does not appear in the Leipzig case journals, there is evidence that Hahnemann treated Sternegg’s children Elise and August during his time in Köthen. It must have been largely due to the Chief Chamberlain that Hahnemann found the kind of favourable and liberal conditions in his new home town that he had been denied in Leipzig. At Adam Müller’s request Sternegg also arranged for the amendment of one essential detail in Hahnemann’s license to practise, which was signed by the Duke on 2 April 1822. Initially Hahnemann had, apart from his approbation, only been granted permission to “prepare the necessary medicines himself” while he was expected to comply with the existing pharmaceutical laws in every other respect. After his experience with the Leipzig pharmacists Hahnemann was not satisfied and asked Adam Müller to intervene and convince the Duke that it was necessary for Hahnemann not only to prepare his own homeopathic medicines but also to “administer them to his patients.”⁵ The intervention in such a high place was successful. On 2 April 1821 Hahnemann received the longed-for permission in writing.

The move to Köthen could go ahead. The appointment as privy councillor and (unsalaried) court physician was to follow a year later, but for Hahnemann the honorary title was less important than the license to practise, as he pointed out in a letter to his pupil Aegidi of 18 March 1831: “Because I received ducal permission to prepare and dispense my own medicines I have moved from Leipzig to this wretched village with 11 carriages full of furniture and at the cost of 600 Thalers.”⁶ Hahnemann’s unambiguous choice of language clearly reflects what he thought of the quality of life at his new place of residence. After the years in Leipzig, Köthen must have struck him as utterly provincial.

Before the move to Köthen, which turned out to be very expensive because of his large household, Hahnemann had to find a home for himself and those of his grown-up daughters who still lived with him. A suitable abode was soon found, in *Wallstrasse*, a road described in contemporary travel journals as one of the Köthen “boulevards” where only the better-off citizens resided. Arthur Lutze who, in the mid-nineteenth century, had a homeopathic clinic in Köthen, left a vivid account of Hahnemann’s spacious property: “The room on the left, next to the entrance was used as a study and consulting room, while the room on the right, together with a back room were used as waiting-rooms for patients. [...] The first floor of the house was occupied, in Hahnemann’s time, by the family. Passing through a very clean yard paved with flagstones we reach the small but dainty garden, thirty steps long and twelve steps wide, at the back of which is a bower overgrown with ivy. In this garden he (the Master) used to walk, leaning on the arm of one of his daughters, sometimes

even as late as midnight on beautiful summer nights, in order to recuperate after the work and trouble of the day.”⁷ A French traveller, M. L. Auquier, who visited Köthen in May 1833, has us know that Hahnemann owned three big guard dogs as well as an extensive library (“crammed full as no other”⁸), containing as well as his own writings works on natural history, general medicine and anatomy.

Not far from Hahnemann’s house, in the same road, the Anhalt architect and master builder Christian Gottfried Heinrich Bandhauer built a monastery for the order of the Merciful Brothers whose charitable healthcare services Hahnemann had witnessed as a student in Vienna. The “Duke of Anhalt-Köthen’s High Medical Officer” Johann Wilhelm von Brunn, whose task it was to oversee the health system, was also a resident of *Wallstrasse*. Despite the special privileges granted to him by the Duke, Hahnemann was to have several quarrels with von Brunn. Relations between the neighbouring medical competitors were bound to be strained. When an arsonist was at large in Köthen in 1825 Hahnemann even feared that his property might become a target.⁹ Apparently he felt threatened enough to make an attempt to relocate to Dessau. Despite his assurance, in a letter to Duke Leopold Friedrich, that he did not intend to “practise there as a physician”¹⁰ and was therefore not subject to the pharmaceutical laws, it was feared at the court of Dessau that conflicts might ensue with the physicians in the country and that there might even be diplomatic implications because Hahnemann was court physician to the Duke of Köthen. Hahnemann had no choice but to remain where he was.

Hahnemann continued to adhere firmly to his habits and the daily routine was as strictly regulated in his new home as it had been before. Hahnemann rose at six in the morning in summer and at seven in winter. He would then take several cups of warm cow’s milk and undertake a short stroll through the small garden which seemed to be his refuge. Then he would see patients until midday or attend to his extensive correspondence. A friend of the family named Albrecht, who was headmaster of the Köthen Seminary, described Hahnemann’s favourite lunchtime dishes which, as had been the case in Leipzig, were taken at twelve o’clock sharp. Albrecht wrote: “[...] he usually liked to take strong beef broth, very tender roast of beef, mutton or game of any kind, roasted larks, chickens or doves and the like. He was not fond of veal or pork and liked his compote very sweet. He would not eat any vegetables apart from green beans, cauliflower and spinach, and preferred cake rather than bread. He would drink a good wine at table when he had guests. His usual daily drink was “Gose beer” [a top-fermenting beer that owes its special flavour and characteristic fizz to the addition of table salt and coriander and its high percentage of biological lactic acid, R.J.]”¹¹

Apart from the early morning cup of milk, a diet based on plenty of meat, sugary drinks and few vegetables does not necessarily strike us as healthy but Hahnemann’s eating habits were based on his own dietetic convictions. He also recommended to his patients to eat a strong and nutritious meal at midday, but no veal or pork if possible. Tea, coffee and wine were to be avoided while beer was permitted.

Hahnemann not only ordered his patients to rest after lunch and take exercise in the open air, he continued to adhere to his own dietetic rules up to a ripe old age. According to headmaster Albrecht’s account Hahnemann took a little nap on the sofa after lunch and then saw patients until seven in the evening. The light evening meal,

from which milk must never be missing, was followed, in all seasons, by a walk in the garden. After the walk Hahnemann would withdraw to his study to work on his books until late at night. With increasing years Hahnemann adhered ever more strictly to his daily routine. In 1829 he sent his apologies to his pupil Stapf for not accepting an invitation to Naumburg, arguing that “[...] I must, if I want to live another year, observe my daily rhythm strictly and not deviate from it even by a hair’s breadth.”¹²

Hahnemann was himself the best advertisement for his regimen. We hardly ever find indications of illness in his correspondence. He seemed to never have been seriously ill until the early 1830s, when he suffered from “suffocative catarrh”¹³ for a few weeks, but managed to cure himself with a dose of *Coffea* in the C30 potency followed by *Calcium carbonicum* and *Ambra*. Visitors from abroad who travelled to Köthen to see Hahnemann and who had never met him before were often astonished at the robust health and youthful appearance of the septuagenarian. One such visitor was Ludwig Griesselich, a homeopath who came to see Hahnemann in 1832. He wrote in his travel notes: “Hahnemann shows in all his actions the fire of youth. Nothing would indicate his advanced age were it not for the white locks that frame his temples and the bald crown that is hidden under his small cap. Hahnemann is short and sturdy and moves briskly. Every movement is lively. His eyes betray the scientist; they shine with youthful enthusiasm; his features are sharp and animated. Age has left no trace either on his body or on his mind.”¹⁴ Portraits of Hahnemann which were made during his time in Köthen prove that he appeared much younger than he in fact was. The face is smooth and without wrinkles, the cheeks are rounded. Only the wavy white hair and the receding hairline are telltale of a more advanced age. The bust of Hahnemann, made by a Leipzig sculptor in 1829, which was thought to be a “perfect likeness”¹⁵ by one and all according to the model, does not show an aged man, but rather a man in his prime.

The family had hardly moved to their new house when there was a double reason to celebrate in Köthen: the wedding of Hahnemann’s daughters Louise and Amalie in July 1822. Louise, the younger of the two, married Hahnemann’s assistant Dr Theodor Mossdorf. Mossdorf was from Dresden and moved in with the Hahnemann family after the wedding. The marriage did not last, however, and was dissolved in the spring of 1826. After, if not even before, the divorce Louise lived alone again at the parental home and remained single for the rest of her life, jealously guarding her father’s inheritance (especially the house) in Köthen until she died in 1878. Her older sister Amalie, born 1789 in Dresden-Lockwitz, married the physician Friedrich Suess and followed him to Wittenberg. The marriage was also short-lived as Suess died even before their first child was born. Leopold Suess, Hahnemann’s grandson, therefore also grew up in Köthen. He would later study medicine and, after graduating, settle in London as a homeopathic physician.

In addition to the married youngest daughter at least three other daughters lived with Hahnemann: Charlotte, born 1797 in Königsutter, died unmarried in Köthen in 1863; Karoline, born in Leipzig in 1790, also died unmarried, probably prior to 1830; and Eleonore, born in Brunswick in 1795, who married Dr J.H. Wolf from Leipzig in 1831 but divorced him again in 1835. Four daughters must consequently have lived in the house by the town walls in 1831.

Hahnemann's son Friedrich was also a cause for concern. One year before the family moved to Köthen they at last heard from him after a long period of silence. He informed his parents that he had suffered much in the previous months and that he was on his way from Scotland to Truro in Southern England where he would practise as a physician for a while. He wrote in his letter that he was "in good health," merely plagued by "a degree of melancholy (probably due to being wifeless)."¹⁶ This must be an allusion to his family situation: he had left both his wife Caroline, whom he had married shortly after his temporary occupation as a homeopath and pharmacist in the Ore Mountains, and his daughter Adelheid. The family had still been united, although there were already signs of crisis, at the end of 1817, when Friedrich Hahnemann was temporarily working as a civil servant in Prussia, "lecturing in pharmacology" in Halle an der Saale.¹⁷

Shortly afterwards, in 1820, he notified his parents that he was on his way home: "there will be a change in my situation in three months' time, dear parents and sisters, which will allow me to visit you; until then and eternally I remain your loving Friedrich Hahnemann."¹⁸ The promised visit never happened. The anxious parents, who were obviously concerned about their son's mental condition, had no choice but to wait. In 1827 another letter arrived from England announcing their son's imminent arrival. The last sign of life was received by Friedrich's wife in 1828 and came from Tenerife. By 1834 Hahnemann considered having his son declared lost or dead, but legally this was only possible after ten years which meant that Friedrich retained custody of his daughter for some more years. Friedrich Hahnemann had been introduced by his father to the new medical system at an early age. But nothing is known of his fate. It has been speculated that he went to live in the United States but so far there has been no evidence to support this. Hahnemann must have been deeply grieved by his son's fate but he never mentioned his feelings in any of his letters to family or friends.

Hahnemann suffered another blow while he lived in Köthen. He had just turned 75 when his wife Henriette died after a longer period of illness. Hahnemann spoke of a "liver ulcer opening towards the lung"¹⁹ which had troubled his wife incessantly three years earlier. In March 1830 she contracted a cold and developed a high fever which seemed to indicate pneumonia. She died in the night of 31 March "after great suffering, fever and pain,"²⁰ as Hahnemann wrote to Stapf. The founder of homeopathy was unable to help her. Henriette Hahnemann was a resolute, if not stubborn, woman. As the daughter of a pharmacist she thought she knew which therapy was best for her. More than anything, she relied, as Hahnemann remarked, on her "immense life force" and was averse to any kind of medication. She even affronted her beloved husband, a homeopathic physician who forbade his patients the use of allopathic medicines, by undergoing venesection towards the end of their time in Leipzig without his knowledge or permission. Such conduct could not remain a secret. When a Leipzig patient wrote to Hahnemann in 1832, justifying the fact that he had given permission for his mortally ill daughter to be bled with an allusion to Hahnemann's wife, he struck a nerve. Hahnemann replied: "In the past forty years I have never artificially withdrawn even a single drop of the precious lifeblood from any of my patients. It is unfair to allude to the blood-letting which my late wife asked (or rather forced) me to consent to when she suffered continued blood loss (about 13 years ago) and deemed herself close to death. Against my will and conviction she sent for the surgeon who purged her before I could do anything to prevent it. (I would have

been able to open her veins myself if I had not thought it injurious and wrong, and against all true homeopathic principles.)”²¹ Hahnemann’s wife was certainly able to stand up for herself and is generally thought to have run a tight ship in the family home.

While the daughters cultivated an image of their late mother as a devoted and caring housewife and mother who “stood faithfully behind her husband, come what may”²², and made sure he had the space he needed for his scientific studies, there were also critical voices from among Hahnemann’s pupils. Hartmann described her as a woman who “patronized” the famous man “in his own house”²³ while Ernst von Brunnow spoke of the “most disadvantageous influence”²⁴ which she apparently exerted on Hahnemann. Mélanie d’Hervilly, Hahnemann’s second wife, concluded from the reports and behaviour of the daughters that her predecessor must have been of “terrible character.”²⁵ Nobody can deny, however, that Johanna Henriette Leopoldine Hahnemann, née Küchler, had no easy life. Not only did she bear eleven children and bring up ten of them under the most adverse material conditions. She also brought her whole inheritance into the marriage, allowing the still unknown Hahnemann, who had only few patients, to continue to develop his new medical system in times of severe financial constraints. We can therefore only agree with the Köthen headmaster Franz Albrecht, who was well acquainted with Hahnemann’s first wife, and who described Johanna Henriette as doubtlessly “an important and determined woman.”²⁶ He was, however, mainly driven by the wish to make Hahnemann’s first wife look better compared to the new love he found so late in life.

Hahnemann liked to welcome guests in his house in Köthen. With his growing fame more and more budding homeopaths from all over Germany and from abroad sought his advice and were keen to see him in action. One of his young assistants was Dr Bredenoll from Westphalia, who, in 1833, stayed for one month in Köthen and, for the payment of a fee he was introduced into the practice of homeopathy. Others, such as Ludwig Griesselich from Karlsruhe were only there for a day or two, drawing immense benefit from conversations they had with Hahnemann at the table or on walks, and, most importantly, by observing the master in his consultation room. The number of interested people, who wrote to ask his advice on how best to acquaint themselves with the new healing method, was even greater. Hahnemann was always happy to comply and left hardly any letters unanswered; the dissemination of homeopathy was after all his most important endeavour.

While still at Köthen Hahnemann felt compelled to find someone to relieve him due to the enormous number of patients who came to his practice. His first medical assistant was his later son-in-law, who in 1822 obtained permission from the Duke to practise in Köthen, with the express proviso that he had to apply himself “in support of the Privy Councillor, Dr Hahnemann.”²⁷ But he left Köthen in 1826 after the breakdown of his marriage with Hahnemann’s daughter and Hahnemann was left without assistance. Ernst Theodor Ferdinand Rückert, his Leipzig pupil, spent just over a year in Köthen in the late 1820s, but his foremost task was to draw up a repertory for Hahnemann’s work on *Chronic Diseases* (published 1828-1830). Similarly, his pupil Georg Heinrich Gottlieb Jahr stayed for eight months with Hahnemann in 1834 to help him with the composition of his *Thesaurus of Symptoms*.

Hahnemann did not find a successor for Mossdorf until 1832 when he employed the physician Gottfried Lehmann as his assistant. In 1833, he wrote about him in a letter: “Through God’s providence I have found an excellent helper in my intolerably demanding yet greatly blessed practice: the vigorous Dr Lehmann who loves me like a father. He deeply regrets the allopathic misdeeds he committed over 17 years and has, through industrious study and practice in $\frac{3}{4}$ of a year grown to be the most excellent and pure homeopath. It is a joy to work with him and do much good.”²⁸

Hahnemann’s stately house in Köthen was also open to his friends. One of the most important friendships Hahnemann had been able to form after his relocation from Leipzig was without doubt that with the Münster lawyer and councillor Clemens von Bönninghausen. Von Bönninghausen had been in the Prussian civil service since 1823 but found no fulfilment in his task. As an enthusiastic botanist he was entrusted with the position of director of the Botanical Gardens in Münster in 1826. He even had a plant species he discovered named after him. A friend from university who practised as a homeopath in Westphalia apparently cured him from a serious illness in 1828, drawing his attention to the new approach to medicine. In the same year he wrote to Hahnemann asking his advice for the treatment of his son. It was the beginning of a life-long friendship which mostly evolved through their correspondence but was later to be consolidated by family ties.

In 1830 Bönninghausen began to treat his friends, neighbours and acquaintances homeopathically. His first patient was none other than Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, the famous poet and author. It was not until 1843, the year when Hahnemann died, that Bönninghausen obtained permission from the Prussian king to practise as a homeopath. By then he had treated hundreds of patients as well as a great number of animals from the surrounding farms.

Hahnemann did not seem to mind that Bönninghausen was not a university trained physician, although he usually set high store on future homeopaths completing regular medical studies first. He particularly valued Bönninghausen’s botanical expertise on which the latter built his thorough studies of the *Material Medica*. In 1833 Hahnemann wrote him a very effusive reference: “The Councillor Baron von Bönninghausen of Münster has studied and embraced my homoeopathic doctrine so profoundly that he has become a perfect homeopathic practitioner and merits the deepest confidence. Were I sick and unable to help myself I would not consult any physician but him.”²⁹ No other homeopath was ever praised so profusely by the master himself. From the 1830s the two practitioners often consulted each other on questions of therapy and homeopathic theory. It was a mutual giving and taking although the correspondence shows clearly that Bönninghausen was the one who sought advice more often.

In Bönninghausen, who was 30 years his junior, Hahnemann detected the human qualities he valued so highly in the people he liked to surround himself with: loyalty, reliability and studiousness. It is hardly surprising that Hahnemann began to share even private concerns with his correspondent. He would write to him, for instance, that he was beginning to feel his years and that he found it difficult to cope alone with his many patients. Or he would openly share his sentiments about the death of his benefactor, Duke Ferdinand. The intimacy of their friendship is reflected on the one hand by the fact that they addressed each other as “dearest friend” and, on the other,

in the poetic language they used to describe their everyday routine and private lives. “I have not yet heard any of the 1000 nightingales outside the gate,”³⁰ Hahnemann wrote from Köthen in May 1832, when he complained again to the distant friend about his heavy workload. But despite their repeated mutual assurance of friendship a certain formality continued to govern their correspondence. It was one of those traditional scholarly friendships which are based on mutual regard and esteem. When Bönninghausen’s son Carl later married the adopted daughter of Hahnemann’s second wife, their relationship remained as before since they refrained from adopting a more familiar mode of address.

It was mostly in the late 1820s and early 1830s that Hahnemann complained to other correspondents too about the growing number of patients who flocked to his practice in Köthen. In his first four months in Köthen the names of 241 new patients appeared in the case journals on top of those of his Leipzig patients who remained under his care. There is a striking difference between his Leipzig practice and that in Köthen in terms of the gender and age of his patients. The age range was initially wider in Köthen. In Leipzig he had seen fewer members of the younger generation. Unlike before, most of the new patients who consulted Hahnemann in Köthen were women (52 per cent). Men predominated only in the 35-to-44-year age bracket. The difference leads us to conclude that Hahnemann was more of a family practitioner in Köthen, even though he rarely deviated from his principle of making home calls in exceptional cases only. The fact that of the patients who did not come from Leipzig the vast majority lived in Köthen or nearby supports the supposition that he had built a whole new patient base in his new place of residence, and that, due to the reputation which had preceded him, this happened at much faster a pace than at any time before.

Hahnemann’s move to the ducal residence of Köthen, with the attached privileges of his appointment as court physician and the right to dispense, meant that the composition of his patient base underwent another transformation in the medium term. The upper classes were soon more strongly represented. Of the patients Hahnemann now saw, two thirds were members of the aristocracy or the ducal court, or had a background in jurisdiction, administration, science, education, the church or the arts. A spot check of some case journals of that period supplies evidence of the growing number of aristocratic patients. From 1821 onwards, the number of lower class patients went down continuously compared to Eilenburg and Leipzig, and those representatives who still came to see Hahnemann were mostly servants of his upper class clientele. It can hardly be denied that, from his arrival in Köthen, Hahnemann was well on the way to becoming a “fashionable doctor” whose fame spread far beyond the borders of the Ducal Residence of the Anhalts. One of the patients who travelled some distance to consult Hahnemann in Köthen was Count Georg Franz August Baron von Buquoy of Prague, a well-known scientist. Another prominent patient, Metternich’s adviser Friedrich von Gentz, has already been mentioned in a different context.

But Hahnemann’s most illustrious patients in Köthen were without doubt the Duke and Duchess. The sovereign who had bestowed such generous privileges on Hahnemann, is first mentioned in the case journals on 1 May 1821. The symptoms described seem to indicate that he suffered from erectile impotence and his marriage did indeed remain without issue. Hahnemann was obviously unable to cure him but nevertheless received profound expressions of gratitude for his medical assistance

from the Duke two years later with assurances of his “full satisfaction.”³¹ Hahnemann’s treatment of the Duke’s “nervous condition” proved more successful. The following official announcement appeared in the *Staat- und gelehrten Zeitung des Hamburger unpartheiischen Korrespondenten* *: “Our highly revered Duke, who was afflicted with a dangerous nervous disease, is now out of all danger thanks to the efforts of Councillor Dr Hahnemann who is famous for his healing methods.”³² It is easy to imagine what such a public notice did for the honorary ducal court physician. The Duchess, who herself suffered from an “insidious nervous malady”³³ consulted Hahnemann too and was equally satisfied as can be inferred from a letter she wrote him on 4 May 1825. She continued to consult Hahnemann after the death of her husband in 1830.

Hahnemann expected even the most high-ranking of his patients to place their full trust in his medical approach and adhere strictly to his instructions. Such a close physician-patient relationship will in itself have contributed to some extent to the success of Hahnemann’s therapies. Yet all patients, whatever their social background, needed first to accustom themselves to the unfamiliar medical approach.

“If I knew of better medical help, or help that was more suitable or accessible to me than yours, I would long have availed myself of it, however much I abhor changes that are not indicated by you.” The statement is taken from a letter written in 1832 by a confident lady patient in Bernburg and it is addressed to Samuel Hahnemann. But Friederike Lutze, the author of the letter, had more to say in justification of her criticism of Hahnemann and described her view of a beneficial doctor-patient-relationship: “[...] I know from your own instruction that you need no patients, least of all me. I could have known this intuitively and drawn my own conclusions. Yet, this was not my view; I did not speak of any alternative medical help but merely of a simple proven remedy which was urgently recommended to me for the removal [...] of the obstacles that are in the way of health [...]. Maybe you felt insulted that I spoke so openly of my lack of trust in this cure? It did not occur to me that I could insult an unprejudiced man by repeating what was known to him in any case. God knows how hard I tried to warm to it, and how I continued to ask others to instil love and trust in me; it would have served me well and enhanced the treatment. [...] I am very uncertain about my relationship with you, more than ever before. (Maybe because I am feeling worse again). I do not understand it and I cannot understand you. It might all have been different, if I had lived in Köthen. Seeing and speaking to you more often would have ensured a better understanding of your nature and character and would have helped me to interpret your words more easily. It leaves no lasting impression if one sees a person only a few times after a strenuous journey; I am still too weak for that; [...] Or are you not convinced now that I cannot expect to benefit from this cure because of my continued lack of trust and for other reasons? If that should be the case, all I ask is that you tell me so in a few clear words.”³⁴ Hahnemann’s comment at the top of the letter speaks a clear enough language: “I will not waste my time and efforts on such lack of confidence.”³⁵

The letter is most unusual indeed. Of the more than 5550 patient letters which are now kept in the Archives of the Institute for the History of Medicine of the Robert Bosch Foundation in Stuttgart the one quoted from stands out due to its explicit expression

* ‘state and scholarly Journal of the Hamburg independent correspondent’

of criticism, expectations and disappointment. Friederike Lutze, whom Hahnemann did accept back as a patient shortly afterwards, was by no means the only dissatisfied customer. Others also occasionally admitted in their letters to Hahnemann that they were rather disappointed with the treatment or that they felt misunderstood by Hahnemann. One such critic was a clergyman called Jacobi from Landsberg. He complained in his letter that he only “had experienced frustration despite the hope Hahnemann had initially instilled” in him.”³⁶ A handwritten note about the content of his reply reveals how angry Hahnemann was about Jacobi’s impatience: “[...] he better not write again if he does not think better of it.”³⁷

How typical are these expressions of discontent of Hahnemann’s practice, especially during his time in Köthen? And how about the many satisfied patients who gave him their trust over many years? What characterized the doctor-patient relationship in the homeopathic practice in Hahnemann’s time?

We should first ask what distinguished Hahnemann from other physicians of his time that was not associated with the medical approach he had discovered. One important difference resides in the fact that Hahnemann expected his patients to come to his practice. A few exceptions notwithstanding he refused to make house calls. “We must not call on any chronically ill patient, even if he were a prince, because our time is too precious and it would be beneath our dignity. We must only call on acutely ill patients who are confined to their bed. If patients who seek your advice and are able to walk refuse to come to your house they can stay away. There is no other way. It is demeaning to run after patients as allopaths do. You make your way to the patient only to be turned away by the servant girl who tells you he is at the theatre, gone out driving, etc. Pshaw! You go on to a second, then a third, just like an allopath or beggar. Pshaw! [...]”³⁸ Hahnemann wrote these contemptuous words in 1829, in a letter to the homeopath Dr Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Ehrhardt in Merseburg. Two years before his death Hahnemann told his friend and favourite pupil Clemens von Bönninghausen that patients had “to come to my place as long as they are capable of driving or walking, be they ever so noble.” He also explained why: “I deem it beneath the dignity of true physicians to run after people who could come to them. I only have myself driven to those who are confined to their bed.”³⁹

It has only recently been established that Hahnemann was more often talked into calling on his patients than is apparent from the evaluation of the Köthen case journals. For one patient, a seriously ill woman of 55 years, called Steinfels, we only find thirteen entries altogether in the case journals before she died. Six days before the last consultation, which took place on 12 July 1821, Hahnemann wrote to her relatives about the outstanding payment of his fee: “Cost of treatment for the deceased M. Steinfels, medical treatment and 39 house calls between 25 June and 14 July. 22½ Thalers.”⁴⁰ Hahnemann had clearly called on the bedridden Mrs Steinfels more often than the case journals reveal, but had neglected to write down each and every visit. He was still unable to help her. The case does, however, not prove that Hahnemann went against his principles since the patient was obviously very ill and unable to come to his consultation rooms.

How was it with the higher ranking patients, foremost among them the Duke to whom Hahnemann was private physician? Would the famous homeopath deviate from his principles for their sakes? As we see from the case journals treatment in these cases

often took place through an intermediary. Hahnemann would not go to see the Duke in his palace, nor would the Duke call on Hahnemann as that would certainly have been beneath his, the duke's, dignity. We see in such relationships the remnant of the traditional patronage which used to exist between private physicians and the influential patients on whom they depended.

What was unusual in those days is standard today. Like all private practitioners, homeopaths keep consulting hours and pay home visits if required. We see from the case journals that the ratio of personal consultations and consultations by letter was 3 to 1 when Hahnemann first came to Köthen. Consultations by letter are now a thing of the past and only rarely to be found.

But not just the mode of communication has changed in the course of the last hundred years. Hahnemann treated a considerable proportion of his patients from a distance, which means he did not usually see them. It was, however, only in a very few exceptional cases that even the history taking and treatment were carried out by letter only. This is surprising if one bears in mind that many of Hahnemann's patients lived quite far away from him, some even outside the borders of the German Empire. Thanks to the rapid development of transport facilities patients are much more mobile now. In addition to that, there are many more homeopaths around. Hahnemann, however, deplored the fact that, since the death of his benefactor Duke Ferdinand von Anhalt-Köthen in 1830, no new homeopath was granted license to practise in that country. One can only commiserate with Hahnemann who, in 1832, expressed his frustration in a *cri de coeur* to Clemens von Bönningen ("and thus I do not know where to send the excessive number of patients"⁴¹).

Patients keen to be treated by Hahnemann had to face the inconvenience of travelling to his practice and of bearing the often substantial costs this involved. But that was not all. Hahnemann expected much of his patients. Not only did they have to acquire a basic knowledge of homeopathy, they were also expected to trust fully in his homeopathic approach. In the case journal of 26 August 1830 we find the following entry: "Merchant Hesse from Eisenach (37) this year purging in Kissingen, much damage done through allopathy also, should read the *Organon*."⁴² There were patients for whom the *Organon* was not enough and who procured additional reading for themselves. One of them was a certain Ihlefeldt from Quedlinburg who, in 1832, thought of purchasing Karl Gottlob Caspari's *Katechismus der homöopathischen Diätetik* [Catechism of homeopathic dietetics] (1st edition 1825), but was instructed by Hahnemann to "follow the *Organon* in all dietary questions."⁴³ Patients were also warned not to read too widely in Hahnemann's works. The founder of homeopathy was not in favour of patients treating themselves when they were sick. One patient, called Holtz, incurred Hahnemann's displeasure when he began to treat himself after studying homeopathic writings. Hahnemann reprimanded the culprit in no uncertain terms, and obviously with success: the patient in question, owner of a brick-yard at Wusterhausen near Neuruppin who was 40 years of age and father of ten children at the time of his correspondence with Hahnemann, described in a letter his concern that, despite some alleviation of symptoms, he could not look to the future with a calm mind, "because if something unexpected occurs I will stand alone without medical help, and the refuge I seek in the books of your worship you have taken from me with your gracious letter of 9th March."⁴⁴

In cases of chronic illness, where the recovery process was usually slow and relapses were to be expected, Hahnemann set certain conditions before accepting a patient for treatment. He, as the physician, had to be convinced that there was a chance of cure and the patient had to trust him unreservedly. This meant that chronic patients needed to be better informed about homeopathic treatment than others who sought his medical advice. In a letter to Clemens von Bönninghausen he explained that a chronically ill person “had to buy the *Organon* first and read it carefully”⁴⁵ before he would take him on as a patient. This not only enhanced his book sales, it had the additional advantage that the patients would gain “deep trust in the indispensable advantages of this kind of treatment” and that they would adhere “to the cure steadfastly even if exposed to contrary insinuations.”⁴⁶

Hahnemann’s patients, as a rule, were expected to renounce the allopathic approach and trust fully in a new method which even today is still controversial. This cannot have been easy for all patients. A woman called Wolframsdorf, for instance, who had sought homeopathic treatment for her young daughter, reported that she had felt compelled to deny Hahnemann “as Peter did the Lord” because there were so many allopaths where she lived.⁴⁷ The brickyard owner mentioned earlier informed Hahnemann that the allopathic doctors, who had caught wind of the fact that he had consulted a homeopath and on whom he would continue to be dependent in an emergency, were now demanding a higher fee from him.

Not all of Hahnemann’s patients were as familiar with the new healing method as Holtz, who even knew that Hahnemann usually prescribed a placebo at the beginning of a treatment. Patients who had not read the *Organon* – most likely the majority – tended to come to him “in a situation of urgency,” as Hahnemann said, “insufficiently describing their condition since their former allopathic physician hardly ever required them to do so.”⁴⁸ Even today, homeopaths have that experience when new patients come to see them who are new to homeopathy. They are given a questionnaire to fill in which will later facilitate the history taking. From as early as the 1830s Hahnemann used a similar kind of tool: he handed to his clients “guidelines for patients of what to pay attention to when describing their illness” which had been drawn up by his friend Clemens von Bönninghausen.

Just how much Hahnemann’s interest in a precise and detailed description of the patient’s condition diverged from the approach applied in “mainstream medicine” at a time when the great discoveries of bacteriology had not taken place yet, is evident from an 1875 allopathic pamphlet. Step by step, the leaflet lists the duties of physicians and patients. In article II, section 4 we read: “Patients must not tire the doctor with tedious descriptions of events and matters which are irrelevant to the illness. Even on issues that are related to the condition they will speak much more concisely if they simply answer questions than if they try to recount in all detail.”⁴⁹

The contrast with the famous section 84 of the *Organon* could not be more striking. “The patient describes what ails him; the relatives describe what ails him, how he behaves and anything else they observe in him; the physician observes, listens to and perceives with all senses what is changed and conspicuous about the patient, then writes it all down in the exact words of the patient or the relatives. He must quietly hear the patient out and not interrupt him, unless he diverges from the topic.”⁵⁰

According to Hahnemann, a devoted homeopathic physician had to be, above all, a true “healing artist”⁵¹: he had to know how to “restore the patient’s health fast, gently and lastingly, or how to alleviate or eliminate the disease in the most direct, reliable and advantageous manner, on the most plausible grounds”⁵². To that effect he had to develop the capacity of precise observation. In his search for the right homeopathic medicine he must not allow “narrow-minded preferences to influence the conscientious selection”⁵³ of the appropriate remedy. Over and above that, a homeopath was expected to continue to “perfect his art”⁵⁴ and make the patient’s wellbeing his main concern. The *Organon*, which saw three revised editions during Hahnemann’s stay in Köthen, also stipulates that “the genuine healing artist will know not to choose medicines as favourites simply because he found them suitable and helpful in several instances, for in doing so he would be in danger of neglecting other, more rarely applied medicines which might be homeopathically more appropriate and hence more effective.”⁵⁵ Hahnemann’s 54 case journals, the ongoing investigation of which brings to light ever new surprises, provide ample proof of his view that homeopaths must continuously call their own treatment habits into question.

According to Hahnemann’s annotation to Section 119 of the *Organon* “no physician, who wants to be seen as sensible and who does not want to go against his own conscience – the only manifestation of true human dignity – would ever administer any other medicine to cure a disease but the one he knows inside out, i.e. whose virtual effect on healthy persons he has proved sufficiently to know that it is able to produce a more similar state to that of the disease symptoms than any other substance known to him.”⁵⁶ In other words, it is the duty of every homeopath to enhance his pharmacological knowledge by carrying out drug provings on the healthy subject.

From the 1830s Hahnemann insisted on a further postulate. “Half-homeopaths”, as he dismissively termed them, were easily distinguishable from “true healing artists” because they left it to their patients to decide “whether they wanted to be treated homeopathically or allopathically.”⁵⁷ A good homeopath, on the other hand, would use only the new art of healing and break entirely with the old school. In our age of complementary medicine this principle is no longer seen as cast in stone, not even by classical homeopaths.

People who meet homeopathy for the first time are usually struck with how different it is from today’s mainstream medicine with its “five minutes per patient” approach, as Michael Balint, the psychoanalyst, who died in 1970, referred to it. Since Hahnemann’s times individualization has been one of the fundamental principles of homeopathy, along with the in-depth history taking in each individual case including physical examination if necessary.

The guidelines for eliciting from the patient and recording the symptom picture (especially in case of chronic disease) stretch over sixteen sections (90 to 105) and thirteen pages in the *Organon*’s second edition. Hahnemann largely adhered to his scheme as we see from the following case history which is taken from one of the many Köthen case journals:⁵⁸

7 June [1830]

[line]

- 31 Sam. Friedheim; (33) took nothing for many years, against psoriasis\ this/
from childhood
- 32 [before]
- 33 glands in armpits, groin and inside elbows swell on bad days
- 34 has very scabby patches the size of a florin on the thenar [base of thumb, R.J.]
between thumb and first finger
- 35 on the arms/ especially tip of elbow \ also, thighs and lower legs are covered
- 36* itches and stings autumn and spring very dull
- 36 at times severe rhinitis
- 37 poor digestion, onions and cucumber salad cause belching
- 38 very little urine, rarely thirsty / not every day. Stool and hard, no ineffective
urge
- 39 1815 in Salze [Bad Salzungen?, R.J.] in the spa, caused chest tightness /
appetite, has very bitter taste; in mouth
- 40 strong temper. Choleric
- 41 difficulty falling asleep, likes to lie in, does not dream every night / libido;
modest, potency
- 42 only clap; 10 years ago
- 43 still often lesions when passing water, when pressing the penis
- 42* last year strong nosebleeds;
- 43*14\14/ No I. Tict.sulph.; II/X 1 Reichsthaler
- 44 first Sulph., then Sars[aparilla]

Hahnemann first gave the patient *sulphur* and asked him to come back every fortnight to see how he responded to the medication. Over the next consultations he learned more about the patient and his afflictions. On 24 July Hahnemann prescribed *Sarsaparilla* (a South American plant, related to smilax), a remedy he had already considered during the very first consultation.

The statistical evaluation of the case journals shows that the symptoms Hahnemann was mostly interested in were associated with sleep, bowel movements, appetite and body temperature. He always asked patients about their coffee consumption, a factor which homeopaths today still include in their catalogue of questions. Hahnemann's particular interest in the patient's lifestyle must be seen in association with his dietetic views, which were largely derived from Graeco-Roman medicine. He was, in that respect, a typical representative of the age, as were Hufeland and other physicians who tended to give their patients dietary advice if no specific therapy was called for.

It is not clear how patients felt about the detailed history taking in those days. If we look more closely at the consultations that were carried out by letter we gain the impression that the in-depth (self-) interrogation gave patients the opportunity to unburden themselves which in itself reduced their suffering to an extent.

The patient-physician relationship did not least depend on the length and frequency of the consultations. When Hahnemann first practised as a homeopath in Eilenburg between 1800 and 1803, he saw 997 patients in 2930 consultations, which makes for an average of three consultations per patient. In Köthen, in the early 1830s, Hahnemann saw (or wrote to) eight patients per day on average. How often a physician, also an allopathic one, saw a patient depended on his illness and on how far away he lived. Patients with acute symptoms (such as high temperature) would, in

some cases, see Hahnemann as much as three times a day. Long-term patients were asked to present themselves again after seven, fourteen or 21 days. For patients who consulted him by letter, the time in between consultations was naturally longer. Up to six months could sometimes pass before the follow-up consultation took place.

Homeopaths, who refer to Hahnemann when they recommend that the second consultation should only take place six weeks after the first, unless special circumstances or a chronic condition indicate a deviation from that rule, clearly act at variance with Hahnemann's common practice.

The relationship between physician and patient is put to the test when patients fail to comply with doctor's orders. We know that Hahnemann was rather piqued at such lack of obedience. His patients were obviously aware of his sensitivity in this respect and often went to some length to justify any omissions or changes to the treatment scheme. Antonie Volkmann, the wife of Leipzig's Chief Justice, wrote to Hahnemann in Köthen: "[...] most revered Councillor! You seem to believe that I use other medicines from time to time or that I do not adhere to my diet. But that has never been the case yet. Until my last indisposition I never used any other medicine, not even olfaction, and my diet is, if anything, rather over-conscientious than over-negligent."⁵⁹ In a later letter she asked explicitly whether it was indeed recommendable to use "camphor spirit according to prescription"⁶⁰ as a prophylactic against cholera since that remedy had once caused her to suffer severe side effects. Hahnemann did not demur in this case, and showed willingness, in other instances also, to accept a compromise as long it was only the dosage form of a homeopathic prescription that was at stake.

His openness applied particularly to olfaction, the smelling of homeopathic medicines, which Hahnemann considered to be immensely effective but he would not necessarily ask it of every patient. In 1833 he wrote to Bönninghausen: "I do not do it yet [meaning olfaction, R.J.]. People are still used to taking powders however inefficient they may be. But my foreign patients from Denmark, Russia, some from France, who have studied the art more thoroughly, receive and ask for olfaction only."⁶¹ "Classical" homeopaths today know the problem too. They might use olfaction successfully with family members and friends, but meet with the greatest scepticism if they suggest the method to other patients.

What about those of Hahnemann's patients in Köthen – we would call them "drop-outs" today – who, for various reasons, decided to discontinue their homeopathic treatment? He did have them too, but we do not usually learn anything about their motives. Their names cease to appear in the case journal, but they might equally have passed away or been cured. If we get to know why a patient was moved to stop consulting Hahnemann it is only by accident, as in the case of Jenny von Pappenheim, a young patient who, in 1829/30, was treated by Hahnemann for depression following an unhappy love affair. We find the following entry in the case journals on 17 February 1830: "[...] she now thinks she does not need my help; if she should suffer a relapse, she may well ask for my beneficial intervention again which brought her such happy relief from her troublesome burden and restored her youth and health."⁶² In this case the treatment was not broken off but had proved successful and could have been continued in case of recurrence. The resumption of discontinued treatments could have other reasons, too, as we see from the case of a Captain from Erfurt who had to

suspend treatment, as he explained, for professional reasons and who contacted Hahnemann again sometime later.⁶³

Payment for medical services was another factor that could impact on the doctor-patient relationship, but is less of a problem now that public and private health insurance providers and medical professional associations provide “intermediary” services.

Unusually for his time, Hahnemann insisted on advance or cash payment. To his pupil Dr Franz Hartmann we owe the following description of his billing procedure: “The minimum fee for 6 powders, which were numbered and only one of which contained a medicine, and of which sometimes three, sometimes only two daily dosages per day were taken, was 16 good *Groschen*, for wealthier people 1 Thaler 8 good Groschen to 2 Thalers. The latter might also be charged the fixed sum of 10-12 Louis d’or, to be paid in advance, and be asked for the same amount again *ad libitum* at a later time.”⁶⁴ Some members of the medical brotherhood saw Hahnemann’s insistence on advance payment as an offence against good manners although private physicians were often under contract with wealthy patients who paid them a fixed salary. But payment was usually only due at the end of the year, which meant that the debtor could choose to postpone, reduce or even refuse payment altogether.

Hahnemann was obviously more aware of the payment habits of many patients than those of his opponents who, out of competitiveness, accused him of greed. He was a realist and pragmatist in this respect too and kept an eye on the financial dimension of his profession. We see from the case journals and from patient letters that most patients were prepared to pay the fee Hahnemann demanded, which was by no means inappropriate. This was true also for his less wealthy clients who often struggled to find the means to pay for the drawn-out homeopathic treatment which was not necessarily less costly than an allopathic therapy would have been. Friederike Lutze once pointed out in a letter to Hahnemann that financial worries added to the burden of patients who were suffering from their illness as it was: “[...] my extended illness has cost me dearly and the worry of having to meet these expenses adds to my suffering and causes me much anxiety.”⁶⁵ This shows how great an achievement it is that at least some private insurers now pay for homeopathic treatment and spare patients additional financial worries. For the patient-doctor relationship it means that a potentially aggravating factor has largely been removed.

Over the years Hahnemann saw a rising number of chronically ill patients in his consultation rooms, but their treatment did not appear to be as effective as he would have wished. He must have begun to question his approach in Leipzig if not earlier. It was not until the early 1820s that he began to devote himself to the problem with his usually systematic thoroughness, as we see from his letter of 10 January 1823 to the Prussian Consul General Dr Friedrich Gotthelf Baumgärtner. In the letter he deplored the fact that homeopathy was still unable to cure “fully the internal chronic illnesses” even though it proved so successful otherwise compared to allopathy. A way had to be found to cure chronic illness too: “To surmount this shortcoming and in this way accomplish the art of eradicating fully the old chronic diseases, has been the sincerest endeavour of my life day and night in the past four years, and through a thousand experiments and experiences and perpetual reflection I have finally achieved this end. Of this invaluable discovery, which, in regard to its merit for humanity, exceeds

everything I have ever invented, and without which homeopathy would remain deficient and incomplete, none of my pupils has as yet any knowledge.”⁶⁶ Hahnemann’s decision not to immediately announce to the whole world that he had discovered the “keystone” of homeopathy proved to be wise. No other theory which the founder of homeopathy had so far developed met with as much scepticism among his followers (let alone opponents) as his doctrine of chronic disease.

The secret was first unveiled to his closest pupils, Ernst Stapf and Georg Wilhelm Gross, who were editors of the first homoeopathic journal, the *Archiv für homöopathische Heilkunst*. Hahnemann informed Stapf in 1827 in rather vague terms that he had found a way that made chronic diseases no longer appear as “paradoxical, impenetrable phenomena.”⁶⁷ But not even to these trusted pupils did he reveal any more details but the names of the remedies that would help if patients with persisting complaints responded neither to “Nux, Puls[atilla] or Ign[atia] etc.” He continued to stave off the two initiated homeopaths with the promise of the imminent publication of a book that would lift the veil of secrecy. Finally, in 1828, and with the same publishers who had released his *Pure Materia Medica* the first part of Hahnemann’s most controversial work *Chronic Diseases. Their Nature and Homoeopathic Treatment* went on sale. In the introduction the author expressed his doubts as to whether his new insights would be received benevolently or even adopted by others. Criticism of homeopathy had risen in the 1820s and, as a consequence, Hahnemann knew that he had to expect staunch resistance from the medical brotherhood. He nonetheless believed that he could not withhold from the world such an important discovery and placed all his hopes into “a more scrupulous and insightful”⁶⁸ posterity. But posterity is still struggling with Hahnemann’s doctrine of the chronic diseases, being far from having accepted it.

In the introduction Hahnemann described how he had discovered the secret. Unlike his followers he was unable to content himself with the thought that the failure of homeopathy to cure certain conditions was only due to the insufficient number of homeopathic remedies available. After years of research at the sickbed he had his *eureka* experience. “The persistently noticeable fact that even chronic non-venereal maladies which have been treated in the best homeopathic way recur again and again after repeated removal, each time more or less similar but with new symptoms, presenting with increased complaints every year, first led me to conclude that the homeopathic physician meets in such chronic disease, as in all (non-venereal) chronic symptoms, not the illness itself which he has to cure – which otherwise he would be able to fully eradicate homeopathically in a short time as shown by experience and success. What he meets is always a separated part of an underlying extensive original disorder which manifests from time to time in ever new accidental symptoms. [...]”⁶⁹ Years of observation had obviously led Hahnemann to the insight that the currently manifesting symptoms were not necessarily conclusive with regard to homeopathic remedy selection. Symptom similarity had to be sought at the deeper level of what Hahnemann referred to as “miasms”. The homeopath therefore had to search in a patient’s case history for the “original illness” or “miasmatic disease”.

Before the bacteriological era arrived in 1876 with Robert Koch’s discovery of the anthrax bacteria and, six years later, of the micro-bacterial tuberculosis bacteria, another explanatory model had prevailed for a long time. It goes back to ancient medicine and was based on the view that epidemics originate in and spread through

the presence of bad vapours which find their way into the air out of soil, boggy grounds and water. It was named miasmatic doctrine from the Greek word *miasma*, which means “dirt” or “pollution”. Hahnemann adapted the term ‘miasm’ for his own purpose. According to his doctrine all illnesses are caused by particular original or archetypal conditions – he referred to them as “psora”, “sycosis” and “syphilis” – which manifested externally as the various diseases. Hahnemann held that it was the miasmatic essence underlying an illness which had to guide the therapeutic decision so that a lasting cure could be achieved. Today, Hahnemann would probably speak of predisposition (not in the sense of constitutional types) or of a primary disease focus, which is triggered by bacterial infection and chronic irritants that, in turn, are caused by environmental or traumatic events. In the history of homeopathy there is no shortage of attempts at adapting Hahnemann’s doctrine, which is difficult to penetrate even for his followers, to any of the currently predominant medical theories. In the 1990s the Belgian homeopath Alfons Geukens, for instance, added alcohol, tranquilizers, drugs, antibiotics and cortisone as more “modern” miasms to Hahnemann’s tripartite system.

Through observation Hahnemann had come to be convinced that all chronic diseases could essentially be reduced to three miasms: “namely firstly syphilis (which I also call venereal chancre disease), sycosis or condyloma disease, and finally psora, the chronic condition which causes eczema.” Hahnemann thought that psora was the most important miasm because seven eighths of all illnesses were psoric in nature, while the rest was sycotic or syphilitic.

Scabies, an itchy skin disorder, was widespread in Hahnemann’s times, but its pathogen, the itch mite, was not yet known. It was only isolated in 1840 by the teacher of Robert Koch, Jakob Henle. While Hahnemann, along with other eighteenth-century physicians thought that scabies was caused by “small living insects or mites,”⁷⁰ this initially had no influence on their choice of treatment. The traditional doctrine of the four humours as well as a number of ineffective home remedies continued to prevail, while Hahnemann was the only one to recommend, as early as 1792, the use of sulphur solutions to destroy the mites.

At the time many physicians advised against the use of remedies, especially sulphur, to “force back” the scabies, warning that these interventions might provoke much worse conditions such as consumption or insanity. The Tübingen professor Johann Heinrich Ferdinand Autenrieth was one of them. He believed that foot ulcers, swelling of the knee, paralytic symptoms, glaucoma as well as “hysterical anaemia” and “mental aberrations” could be caused by the inappropriate treatment of scabies. In the second edition of *Chronic Diseases* Hahnemann gave credit to the famous clinician, who also treated the insane poet Friedrich Hölderlin, but begged to differ in his ultimate conclusion. Autenrieth believed that scabies could be cured with thorough topical treatment while Hahnemann was convinced that only the application of homeopathic “internal medicines”⁷¹ could completely cure the condition.

The fact that Hahnemann, early on in his career, had the right instinct with regard to the causes of scabies shows that he saw more in the “itch disease” (Greek: *psora*) than just a skin infection. It was rather a generic term for a number of skin disorders (from “leprosy to the itchy rash”⁷²) which were not considered to be illnesses in their own right but outer symptoms of a great variety of health problems. This kind of

conceptual ambiguity led to misunderstandings then as well as among later generations of physicians who grew up with the bacteriological paradigm.

Hahnemann's concept of psora as "the mother of chronic diseases" did not only raise the eyebrows of his opponents, his followers were similarly nonplussed by it and refused to accept it. One homeopath who was not afraid to speak openly to the master was Ludwig Griesselich who had visited Hahnemann in Köthen in 1831. Three years later he wrote to him from Karlsruhe where he had a homeopathic practice: "As far as the psora is concerned I tell you freely, honestly and faithfully that it has made more enemies for homeopathy than any adversarial publications. Of that I am convinced."⁷³ He did later show more understanding for Hahnemann's psora doctrine, but held on to his fundamental criticism: "It is of little consequence whether we call the general condition psora or dyscrasia, cachexia or corrosion; we recognize in a large number of skin disorders manifestations of an overall malady of the organism. [...]"⁷⁴ Griesselich, a representative of a pragmatic stream of homoeopathy – they are known as "hygienists" in medical history – was among the first to point out that Hahnemann's psora concept was, even then, too vague for scientific purposes. He did allow, however, that it was Hahnemann's achievement to have called attention to the interrelationship between skin and internal organs with his psora doctrine.

Hahnemann was convinced that he had discovered the origin of most chronic diseases once and for all, when he declared that "a general psoric illness of the entire organism"⁷⁵ was responsible for a great variety of the most diverse conditions. In the first edition of *Chronic Diseases* the list of symptoms ranged from "facial pallor" to "unhealthy skin". The list of "anti-psoric" remedies suggested by Hahnemann is equally comprehensive and is listed in alphabetical order. It begins with *Ammonium carbonicum* (ammonium carbonate) and ends with *Zincum* (zinc). The increase in the number of proving symptoms is also remarkable. While we find 306 proving symptoms under *Natrium carbonicum* (carbonate of soda) in the first edition, there are three times as many (1082) in the second edition of 1835.

One of the patients where Hahnemann assumed an underlying psoric problem was Antonie Volkmann, the wife of the Leipzig Chief Justice, who continued to consult him after his relocation to Köthen. Her case history illustrates how sulphur gradually came to be Hahnemann's most important anti-psoric medicine, especially in cases which he thought not to be too far advanced. We notice something else in this case history that stretches over many years: in the late 1820s and early 1830s Hahnemann obviously carried out extensive and systematic drug provings on patients and recorded a multitude of (individual) symptoms which were included in the homeopathic *Materia Medica*. Drug provings on the sick, which, even in the third edition of the *Organon* (1924, section 149) was still described as the prerogative of the "masters" of homeopathy and only to be performed in exceptional cases, became routine (though not the rule) in Hahnemann's practice shortly afterwards, especially with chronically ill patients.

The two other miasms Hahnemann thought to be responsible for chronic illness were venereal, that is, they were related to sexually transmitted infections. In Hahnemann's time medicine was not yet able to differentiate pathogenically between the various sexual diseases. "Clap", vernacular for gonorrhoea, and syphilis were considered to be one and the same disorder, while chancroid (*Ulcus molle*) was already seen as a

separate condition. In 1831, a new theory emerged which assumed that syphilis and chancroid were the same illness, but different from gonorrhoea. Only with the discovery of the individual pathogens (gonorrhoea in 1879, *Ulcus molle* in 1889 and syphilis in 1905) did it become possible to arrive at the differentiation that is still valid today. We need to bear this historical development in medicine in mind to understand Hahnemann's theories regarding "sycosis" or "syphilis".

Sycosis, the Greek term Hahnemann used for figwarts, is largely identical with clap, an infection of the urethral and vaginal mucosa which can occasionally manifest in other parts of the body. Hahnemann was less interested in the complaints that went with the acute inflammation (when passing water, for instance) than in the skin changes which included prolific growth ("figwarts") on urethra, glans or foreskin. Hahnemann was ahead of his time in that he saw clap as a separate condition rather than one of the various stages of syphilis as the famous British physician John Hunter had tried to prove by heroically inoculating himself with what he thought was gonorrhoeal secretion. Hahnemann's therapy was also groundbreaking in that he did not treat the symptoms, as physicians usually did right up to the twentieth century. His postulate was: "This reliable internal cure for sycosis means that no topical remedy (apart from thuja sap) needs to be applied to the figwarts. [...]"⁷⁶ Hahnemann's main remedy for this miasm was, as the quotation reveals, homoeopathic Thuja, or tree of life.

Before he discovered homeopathy Hahnemann had researched the treatment of syphilis intensely and, at that time, he had still preferred topical treatment. But his extended homeopathic practice convinced him that the venereal disease, which for him included the symptoms of chancroid (*Ulcus molle*), could only be cured with "systemic" treatment. If the condition had not progressed too far and was not complicated by another, simultaneous psoric disease, it needed, in his view, merely a "single, small dose of the best mercurial remedy, in order to thoroughly and lastingly cure the entire syphilis with chancre within a fortnight."⁷⁷ It was consequently not the choice of remedy (mercury), but the form of application that distinguished Hahnemann's approach from the contemporary therapy, which would only change in 1909 after Paul Ehrlich's discovery of *Salvarsan*.

Hahnemann's miasmatic theory was not the only reason why his followers and opponents were irritated by his doctrine of the chronic diseases. They also mistrusted and disapproved of the altered way of preparing and administering homeopathic medicines, especially when Hahnemann, in the second edition, rejected simple dilutions and introduced his concept of potentization, or, as he called it, "dynamization". He saw himself as the discoverer of this method which allowed, as he explained, "medicinal properties [to manifest] which lie concealed in natural bodies when in their raw state, but which, if stimulated, have an almost spiritual effect on our life, that is, on our sentient and irritable fibre"⁷⁸. Hahnemann had obviously left the firm ground of materialism and was accused of having become a believer in immaterial powers. The belief in "the power of succussion", as Ludwig Griesselich called it, exposed homeopathy to an even greater extent to attacks from its opponents.

Hahnemann, on top of all that, did not restrict himself to the prescription of C30 potencies, which he had adopted as a rule since the late 1820s when treating patients who suffered, as he thought, from a miasmatic disease. Because of the problems that

arose, as he had observed time and again, when the administration of a remedy was repeated prematurely, Hahnemann began, while still in Köthen, to experiment with higher potencies (60C to 90C). He did, however, not break the “sound barrier” of the high potencies, until close to the end of his life when he lived in Paris and introduced the 50-millesimal or LM-potencies, which are so highly diluted that the original medicinal substance is no longer chemically verifiable.

Although Hahnemann had certainly anticipated the controversial reception of his miasmatic doctrine, the largely restrained response, and even rejection, from his followers must have come as a surprise. What he had not expected was that he would have difficulties even with his publisher because of this work. When Hahnemann prepared a second edition in 1834 he was shocked to find out that his former publisher, Arnold, had lost interest. Sales had obviously fallen far short of expectations. A remaining stock of 800 copies is mentioned in the correspondence. Arnold, who had published Hahnemann’s *Organon* and *Pure Materia Medica*, refused to print the second, improved edition of the *Chronic Diseases*. Hahnemann decided to engage legal help, authorizing his son-in-law, Dr J.H. Wolff, to present himself in Arnold’s office in Dresden. On 9 July 1834, Bönninghausen sent a letter of consolation from Münster in which he wrote: “The attitude of publisher Arnold is most vexatious and doubly deplorable because it is disadvantageous for the public and it grieves you.”⁷⁹ Hahnemann suspected his opponent Karl Friedrich Trinks, a homeopathic doctor in Dresden, of having thwarted his plans and used therefore every opportunity of denouncing Trinks in his correspondence.

While Arnold released the first two parts of the controversial opus in 1835, Hahnemann had to find a new publisher for the remaining parts. In the end it was the Düsseldorf publisher J.E. Schaub who stepped into the breach so that the remaining parts of the – much increased and revised – second edition could finally be published in 1837. That the project would make a loss was to be expected. In 1838 Hahnemann received a note from his new publisher, who felt hard done by and was obviously angry because only 110 of 1500 copies of the new edition of *Chronic Diseases*, Part III, had been sold. Schaub did not hesitate to state his view as to why sales were slow: “People say the main reason is that the homeopathic system has been developed and improved by some of your former pupils, while your reverent worship is holding on to the old system etc.”⁸⁰ Hahnemann must have felt deeply hurt by this letter on more than one account. To his disappointment about the lack of interest in his work was added the indignation of being accused of having been overtaken by his pupils. Schaub’s letter was not deemed worthy of an answer.

Hahnemann was confronted with yet another challenge in 1830. A terrifying epidemic had spread through the Baltic States, Poland and Galicia and looked set to move westward. The cholera, which had raised its ugly head for the first time in India in 1817, now threatened Prussia. Any hopes that the severe winter of 1830/31 would extinguish the epidemic were disappointed. In Warsaw alone, more than 1100 deaths were associated with the cholera. The cause of the epidemic (the bacterium *Vibrio cholerae*) was as yet unknown. The following witness report illustrates the conditions in the Russian town of Saratov: “There are sick and dying people and corpses everywhere. Streets and houses, rooms and hallways are sullied by victims who are suddenly overcome by vomiting and diarrhoea and people have to wade through infectious excrement. Pestilential stench everywhere and funeral after funeral.”⁸¹ In

Russia alone, more than 200,000 people were said to have fallen victim to the epidemic in 1830.

The governments of Prussia and Austria responded in the usual way. As in the times of the plague a *cordon sanitaire* was imposed, which means that borders were closed and strictly guarded by soldiers. The poet Karl Gutzkow wrote that a dual “contumacy line” at the Eastern border of Prussia was meant to provide protection “not only against cholera but also against rebellious ideas from Poland.” Quarantine wards were set up as a prophylactic measure at the border crossings, where those suspected of being infected had to spend several weeks under observation, and physicians were deployed to areas where cases of cholera had been reported in order to establish whether the disease was miasmatic or contagious.

The medical interventions (mostly venesection) applied by physicians illustrate their helplessness. Even after the isolation of the cholera pathogen in 1883 the arguments about its epidemiology continued. A.P. Wilhelmi’s *Pharmacopoea Anticholerica* contains 283 “proven recipes” which were all ineffective from today’s point of view and might well have done more damage than good to cholera sufferers. A whole plethora of guidebooks appeared at the time recommending all kinds of remedies for warding off or curing the dreaded disease. Faced with this abundance one of Hahnemann’s pupils was moved in 1832 to wryly comment: “At first it seemed to me from a distance that the masses of books were meant to replace the cordon, or to mend the holes in it, like the Dutch tend to mend holes in the dams with whatever they can put their hands on, when water levels rise. Later I thought I recognized in this the strange scholars’ cholera which might be a protection against the real cholera just as cowpox protect against small pox.”⁸² But Hahnemann joined the ranks of those who contributed to the mass of publications on cholera. In 1831, between June and October, he composed four pamphlets on cholera one of which was banned by the Köthen authorities, because it allegedly contained undue attacks on allopathic physicians.

As we know, Hahnemann had attempted to cure epidemics at the beginning of his medical career and had written about his experiences. It was consequently only to be expected that he would express his view on the matter, especially seeing that the epidemic presented the greatest threat to body and property in living memory and had shaken the comfortable bourgeoisie with its fundamentally optimistic outlook to the core. Over and above that, the founder of homeopathy had by that time become such an eminent and successful physician that not only private persons from all over Germany turned to him for medical advice, but also several sanitary commissions.

In the summer of 1831 Hahnemann had expressed his view, in a letter to a junior lawyer at the Higher Regional Court, that a healthy lifestyle was the only prophylactic measure against cholera. In his pamphlet on the epidemic he promoted, apart from a “regular life order” also homeopathic remedies: *Veratrum album* (white hellebore), *Rhus toxicodendrum* (poison ivy), homeopathically potentized copper (*Cuprum metallicum*) and especially camphor. Hahnemann wrote in a letter of 16 June 1831, that a “homoeopath from the Galician border”⁸³ had called his attention to successful trials he had conducted with camphor, the remedy that was set to become *the* homeopathic cholera prophylactic. In his very first publication on cholera, which was printed in the *Allgemeiner Anzeiger der Deutschen* on 28 June 1831, Hahnemann

wrote that only camphor could cure the epidemic: “Camphor which, next to its very special effect on cholera, is better able than any other remedy to destroy just with its vapour the smallest animals of the lower order very quickly, is therefore capable of rapidly destroying and eliminating the cholera miasm (that most likely consists of an imperceptible living organism fatal to humans, which attaches itself to skin or hair and is thus transmitted, unnoticed, from one person to another.” Hahnemann obviously favoured the transmission theory in spite of his use of the word miasm. What was still a vague and unspecific idea for Hahnemann – that bacteria invisible to the human eye could be the cause of the disease – was confirmed around fifty years later by bacteriologist Robert Koch who proved beyond doubt the presence of microbacteria in the intestinal tissue of cholera patients. Hahnemann also described in detail the various forms of cholera although he never saw a cholera patient face to face in his life. He relied on the witness reports of his correspondents who were active as homeopathic practitioners in the trouble area.

Camphor had been known for some time in homeopathy, yet homeopaths were puzzled about the Master’s untypical posology. In his essay *Surest Cure and Eradication of Asiatic Cholera*, published in Leipzig in 1831 and repeatedly reprinted, he wrote: “The patient, if unconsciousness or trismus do not yet prevent him from swallowing, takes a mixture prepared from ca. one quarter pint of hot water and (a grain) two teaspoons of spirit of camphor (one part camphor dissolved in two parts wine spirit) which are shaken occasionally. Of this he takes a small teaspoon every minute [...]” Hahnemann’s pupils questioned the “unhomeopathic” use of camphor, compelling him to publish an explanation. In an article written for the *Allgemeine Anzeiger der Deutschen* Hahnemann pointed out that camphor was an extraordinary medicinal substance which allowed frequent administration. In a letter of 15 December 1831 to homeopath Dr Georg August Benjamin Schweikert Hahnemann professed that the use of camphor could only be homeopathic and not “palliative”⁸⁴ because it did not just combat the symptoms but eradicated the illness altogether. But Hahnemann did not seem all that sure of himself, for in a letter to his closest friend, Clemens von Bönninghausen in Münster, which was composed just a few days later, he described camphor as the “main antipathic remedy”⁸⁵, in other words: its effect was based on the principle of contraries.

In November 1831, encouraged by the reports he received from fellow homeopaths throughout Europe of their successful treatment of cholera, Hahnemann addressed an open letter to King Frederick William III of Prussia. He again accused the allopathic physicians of incompetence and praised the blessings of homeopathy in combating the dreaded epidemic. His letter ends with the dramatic appeal: “But your Majesty who will rejoice only in the life and wellbeing of your subjects! You sadly have no or hardly any homeopaths (true healing artists) in your states which are otherwise known for their exemplary freedom of thought.” We do not know how the Prussian Sovereign responded to the flattery and challenge contained in the epistle. Hahnemann had, characteristically, written this open letter just after he had lost his long-time mentor and advocate at the court of Köthen. Duke Ferdinand had died in August 1830 and was succeeded by his younger brother Heinrich, who had little interest in homeopathy. As a result Hahnemann did not only experience renewed difficulties with dispensing his own medicines but his publication on the *Cure and Prevention of Cholera* was banned as soon as the danger of Köthen falling victim to the cholera was over. In Leipzig the Medical Health Officer Dr Clarus, whose

acquaintance we made earlier, also attempted to set censorship in motion. In the face of these official, but only partly successful, efforts to hinder the dissemination of Hahnemann's writings on cholera, Ludwig Griesselich, the homeopath from Karlsruhe, who had paid a visit to the Master in Köthen in 1831, commented with irony: "Adding up all these attempts at censorship one could get the impression there was something subversive about homeopathy. The purpose of censure, one would have thought, was to keep peace in the states and not to keep physicians from healing or the sick from getting better."⁸⁶ With the demand for homeopathic cholera prophylaxis still unabated, Griesselich could not refrain from pointing out that Hahnemann's doctrine was most widespread in the states with the strictest censorship. He alluded mainly to Austria where homeopathy had been prohibited since 1819 due to pressure from the medical authorities. Since cholera was still rife in Vienna and other towns of the Austrian empire, the number of supporters of homeopathy continued to grow nevertheless. According to statistics provided by the homeopathic physicians only five to ten per cent of homeopathically treated cholera patients died compared to a 50 per cent mortality rate in other hospitals.

How can this success in the homeopathic treatment of cholera be explained? Statistics tend to be problematic and there is always the possibility of figures having been manipulated. Although there are no modern clinical trials to prove the efficacy of camphor in cholera, we know for sure that homeopathy was successful at the time because it did the only right thing by not weakening patients even more through bloodletting etc., but by giving plenty of fluids instead. Camphor, as we know, was given in watery dilution and frequently.

The successes which also impressed governments elsewhere in Europe, including London, meant that Hahnemann could look confidently to the future and to the further dissemination of his doctrine. Or, as his pupil Karl Julius Aegidi, private physician to the wife of a Prussian prince residing in Düsseldorf, wrote so aptly in a letter of 30 November 1831 to his revered teacher: "Cholera does much to increase the love of homeopathy."⁸⁷

In the year when homeopathy experienced its breakthrough in the combat against cholera and emerged as an established medical discipline, Hahnemann turned his thoughts again to the founding of a homeopathic hospital, where healing and teaching could take place side by side. On 24 April 1831 he wrote to his friend Bönninghausen: "If only we had a homeopathic hospital with a teacher to instruct on homeopathic practice under the state's protection. We have a small fund of 3000 Thalers for this which lies unused; the rapid dissemination of the art and solid education of young homeopaths would be guaranteed for the future."⁸⁸ The capital mentioned had been given by Hahnemann's pupils in 1829 on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Master's doctorate. The invited guests from Germany and neighbouring countries who came to Köthen on the occasion donated the impressive sum of 1250 Thalers towards a clinic where homeopaths could be trained. Hahnemann's appreciative letters to pupils and friends show how deeply he was moved to see his life's work honoured in this way. He carefully watched over the growing fund, convincing his wealthier patients to keep donating larger sums for this worthy purpose. Hahnemann himself promised to donate the proceeds from selling a steel engraving with his likeness "for all eternity to the homeopathic institute of healing."⁸⁹ He even took it

upon himself to discover how to best invest the capital at a favourable rate of interest, advising Dr Rummel, the trustee of the fund, accordingly.

In 1832 the dream finally became reality. The capital had grown to about 3500 Thalers and permission had been obtained from the Saxon home office for the establishment of a homeopathic institute for healing and teaching in Leipzig. A suitable building was soon found and, on 22 January 1833, “in the presence of several hundred friends of homeopathy and other invited distinguished persons”⁹⁰, the Institute opened its gates in the *Glockenstrasse*. Its first director was Dr Moritz Müller. 664 patients were treated in the homeopathic hospital between January 1833 and September 1839. According to the annual reports, 392 of them were discharged as cured, 131 as improved and 83 as incurable. Fifty patients died in the hospital, a relative moderate mortality rate for those times. Hospitals were usually seen as “death traps”, not only because of their lack of hygiene and therapeutic inadequacy, but also because the patients who were taken to these forerunners of modern hospitals were often undernourished and socially disadvantaged. As it turned out, Hahnemann visited the homeopathic hospital, on which he had initially lavished so much attention, only once, in June 1834, and his visit had severe consequences. The fears he had harboured for some time were confirmed: the Leipzig homeopathic hospital did not meet the rigid standards of purity demanded by the homeopathic doctrine. The occasional use of venesection and enemas was sacrilege in the eyes of the founder of homeopathy and merited the most stringent sanctions. Hahnemann had always been concerned that his doctrine might become diluted and it was not the first time that he saw his fears confirmed.

The conflict among Hahnemann’s pupils and followers as to which direction homeopathy should take had been brewing for some time. In a letter to Dr Stapf, editor of the “Archives for the Homeopathic Art of Healing” Hahnemann had, in 1826 already, railed against the laxness of homeopaths whom he described as “a society of sciolists”⁹¹. Shortly after the festive celebration of the anniversary of his doctorate, for which the still small group of diverging homeopathic practitioners united in Köthen, struggling to hide the rift between them, Hahnemann composed a welcoming address to the participants of the first assembly of homeopathic physicians in Dresden. As usual, he did not mince his words: “And finally, it is my wish that every homeopath, who aspires to be worthy of this high profession and rejoice in the blessings of the only true art of healing, will never desecrate our art by corrupting it with any allopathic procedure but will keep the art pure and genuine.”⁹² He concluded his admonitions with the words: “He who most faithfully follows my teachings will be dearest to my heart. He will do honour to himself and the purity of his mind will bring him happiness.” There is no doubt that Hahnemann’s demeanour must have struck his listeners as that of a dogmatic who would not suffer dissenters among his ranks. But Hahnemann’s main intention was, not least, to safeguard the identity and therefore recognisability of homeopathy as an independent healing method on the future medical market.

An episode which occurred in Leipzig at the end of autumn 1832 was the final straw. A former patient of Hahnemann’s, the editor Carl Heinrich Reclam, admitted in a letter that Dr Moritz Müller and another homeopathic physician had treated his seriously ill daughter with leeches before trying homeopathically dosed phosphor. Hahnemann now felt that he had to take a stand publicly and soon enough found the

right medium for this undertaking: the daily newspaper *Leipziger Tageblatt*. On 3 November it published his “Address to the Leipzig semi-homeopaths.” Hahnemann, not beating about the bush, called his renegade pupils “bastard homeopaths”, “crypto-homeopaths” and “allopathic changelings”, threatening that this was the last time he would warn them against deviating from the only true path. His tirade culminated in the admonition: “Either be honest allopaths of the old guild and remain ignorant of the better path, or be pure homeopaths for the salvation of your suffering brothers.”⁹³ His philippic met with great resonance in the homeopathic world. By writing to friends and loyal pupils Hahnemann had made sure that his newspaper article would create a *furore* far beyond Leipzig.

It was not long before a counter statement appeared in the same newspaper, composed by the Leipzig association of homeopathic physicians, which expressed no sense of guilt and underlined the physician’s freedom to choose his preferred treatment. But more was still to come. On 19 November Dr Moritz Müller wrote to Hahnemann on behalf of the berated members of the association defending the legitimacy of their therapeutic choices. Their accusations must have fuelled Hahnemann’s anger even more. In their letter, which covered several sheets, they went as far as accusing him of despotism: “Educated and erudite men would term the restriction of science to one person’s tenets dogmatism or despotism, intolerance towards those who are of similar mind they would call fanaticism. Fanaticism has been eliminated from religion and it must never be found in medicine, a science of experience which is still incomplete even with homeopathy included.”⁹⁴ The evil word (“dogmatic”) was out and has, to this day, often been used by Hahnemann’s opponents, not entirely without foundation. As he grew older, Hahnemann often saw his life’s work under threat. In that respect too he resembled the man to whom he liked to compare himself: Martin Luther. Luther also grew increasingly rigid in his theological position towards the end of his life, as is apparent, for instance, from his growing intolerance towards Judaism. But that does not make him dogmatic, as little as Hahnemann’s insistence on empiricism (especially in his own medical practice) makes him a fanatic. If homeopathy had been more firmly established in society and in the scientific world when the conflict with the “half-homeopaths” erupted, he might have shown more equability towards the “renegades”. As it was, Hahnemann felt compelled to use fire and sword to keep his followers united.

At the time when the dispute about the “pure doctrine” first came to a head, there were also pupils who were prepared to follow the Master blindly, such as Hermann Hartlaub, who had studied homeopathy as an assistant to Dr Moritz Müller. In his dissertation, which was published in February 1833, he distanced himself from his former teacher, Müller, and declared any allopathic treatment carried out by a homeopath to be an offence against the “divine truth”⁹⁵ (*veritate divina*). And Dr Lövy from Prague, who had been in contact with Hahnemann before the differences flared up, averred in 1833 in a birthday letter: “Above all things I must reassure you that I practise the purest homeopathy.”⁹⁶ Shortly before that Hahnemann had published an appeal to his “true pupils” in the *Allgemeine Homöopathische Zeitung*, the organ of the Central Association of Homeopathic Physicians which was founded in 1829. An invitation to stalwart followers, printed in the *Allgemeine Anzeiger der Deutschen* and asking them to come together in Köthen on 10 August to celebrate the anniversary of Hahnemann’s doctorate, also had the aim of “separating the sheep from the goats”.

There was no lack of attempts to smooth the waters and prevent the conflict from spreading. One of the pupils who tried this was Dr Aegidi, but his request to put an end to the tiresome dispute was curtly rejected by Hahnemann: “And how can you advise that I offer an olive branch to these public deceivers?”⁹⁷ Ludwig Griesselich whose visit to Köthen was still fresh in Hahnemann’s mind, wrote from Karlsruhe on the occasion also urging the esteemed master to “make peace”.⁹⁸

The attempts at mediation were not entirely in vain even if the divide among the homeopaths seemed to grow wider in the summer of 1833, when competing meetings were called in Leipzig and Köthen. But when, at the Leipzig meeting, the leading figures of the homeopathic association were replaced by loyal followers of Hahnemann, reconciliation began to look more likely. After drawn-out negotiations an agreement was achieved. A formal contract was signed by the disputing parties on 11 August 1833 in which Hahnemann’s fundamental principles of the homeopathic doctrine were summarized as follows⁹⁹:

1. Strict and absolute adherence to the *similia similibus* principle and therefore
2. avoidance of all antipathic interventions wherever a cure can be achieved with homeopathic means. Therefore, as far as possible
3. avoidance of all interventions with positively weakening effects or weakening after-effects, including any kind of bleeding, evacuation upwards and downwards, of all interventions that cause pain, inflammation or blisters, of burning and punctures etc.
4. avoidance of all interventions which merely serve to stimulate while they always have a weakening after-effect.

The compromise consisted mainly in the addition of the words “as far as possible” which allowed Moritz Müller to agree to the arrangement. Despite the vagueness of the formulations Hahnemann seemed to be content with what had been achieved. He referred to the “Köthen contract”, as the agreement is called in homeopathic historiography, as a *formula concordiae*, an allusion to the history of the Reformation. In the letter, which was addressed to Dr Aegidi, Hahnemann showed himself amenable. He insisted that he would bear no grudges and that he was prepared to let bygones be bygones. After the agreement was signed, Hahnemann wrote several letters to his opponents, displaying such a degree of understanding and leniency that the recipients must have rubbed their eyes in disbelief.

But the conflict had affected Samuel Hahnemann deeply. Not even his appointment as honourable member of the New York Physicians’ Association in April 1833 could lighten up his mood for long. He fell ill in the same month (in his letter to Bönninghausen he spoke of severe “suffocative catarrh”) and saw his illness as the result of the problems he had experienced with Müller, Hartmann and the other Leipzig homeopaths. He was “severely ill” for over three weeks, but had recovered again by 30 April thanks to several tried and tested homeopathic remedies which he had taken by olfaction, as he informed his loyal correspondent. As always, work proved the best medicine for Hahnemann. In the summer of 1833 he published the fifth revised edition of the *Organon* and he had no shortage of patients. In a letter to Bönninghausen he mentioned that his assistant, Dr Lehmann, proved a great help but that the influx of patients was still more than he could cope with, while he added

proudly: “And the foreign patients are an additional burden; one from Petersburg, one from Silesia, another from Copenhagen and one from Bordeaux; and several from Paris have announced their arrival for April, not to mention the scores of patients who send me letters.”¹⁰⁰

One young woman was not afraid to undertake the long journey from Paris to Köthen to be cured by the famous homeopathic physician whose fame had spread to the Seine. She would profoundly change Hahnemann’s life. The elegant lady who, on 7 October 1834, arrived at the inn where Hahnemann used to put up foreign patients was Mélanie d’Hervilly, a gifted painter who had even exhibited at the Paris *Salon*. She had originally wanted to study medicine but that had not been an option for women, not even in post-revolutionary France. Instead she had chosen the fine arts early in life. When her attention was drawn to homeopathy she read the French translation of the *Organon*, which was published in Paris in 1832, and was filled with enthusiasm for the new healing method. Later she wrote about the awakening experience: “The sun of medicine had risen for me.”¹⁰¹ She decided to seek out the German author of this work to consult him with regard to an affliction she had contracted, as we know from a biographical note of 1846, when she suffered the painful loss of her most intimate friends. The Paris physicians had obviously been unable to help her. In a letter to Bönninghausen Hahnemann described the chronic condition as “*tic douloureux* on the right side of the lower abdomen.”¹⁰² The French word ‘*tic*’ is still used for a series of irregular, repetitive, random but conscious, rapid, abrupt and uncontrollable movements of muscles or muscle groups. ‘*Douloureux*’ is French for painful. French-speaking physicians still refer to trigeminal neuralgia, which can manifest in a painful facial tic, as *tic douloureux*. The main symptoms of the disorder are extreme attacks of facial pain usually of short duration, often just lasting seconds. The pain tends to occur periodically around the area of the affected nerve branch interrupted by frequent pain-free intervals. In Hahnemann’s time the term was not only used for this specific symptom picture which often affected women over 40, mainly in the facial area. It could also refer to other neuralgias, which it probably did in Mélanie d’Hervilly’s case since she was only 35 when she came to see Hahnemann. We do not have any more information about the enigmatic condition because the pages of Hahnemann’s case journal which would have contained Mélanie’s history were removed. There is, for instance, a sheet missing between the original pages 135 and 136 that presumably included notes on the consultation of Madame d’Hervilly on 8 October 1834. Whether it was Hahnemann’s future wife who made sure that medical confidentiality was observed is a matter for conjecture, but we do find allusions to the nature of her affliction in one of the many love letters from the early days of their courtship. There we read, among other things, that she suffered from spasmodic abdominal pain and that her “belly was inflated like a balloon”¹⁰³. It is interesting to know that, at around the same time, the English homeopath Harris S. Dunsford, helped by Hahnemann, cured the Marquess of Anglesey, Lord Paget, of a similar complaint (*prosopalgia*¹⁰⁴) which did, however, only manifest on the right side of the face. His successful treatment was favourably mentioned in the English papers and led to an increase of followers of homeopathy among the English aristocracy.

Hahnemann clearly cured Mélanie of her troublesome condition and what had begun as an ordinary doctor-patient relationship soon turned into an extraordinary love story. Mélanie referred to the *coup the foudre*, as the French refer to love at first sight, in her

memoir of their first meeting: “The expression of importance in his countenance awakened reverent astonishment in me. He talked with me for some time and felt a sudden, vivid friendship for me.”¹⁰⁵ The word “friendship” must be a cautious paraphrase for vehement love. How otherwise could it be explained that Hahnemann, only a few days later, proposed marriage to his young, very charming and sophisticated patient. Mélanie hesitated, not only because of the enormous age difference between them. She was only 35 and he was 80. In the eyes of the world he was an old man with one foot in the grave. Hahnemann’s daughters had to be thought of: they kept house for their father, some of them being older than the young bride. For decency’s sake Mélanie took lodgings in the neighbourhood, in the house of Hahnemann’s assistant Dr Lehmann. She befriended Lehmann’s wife, who soon enough discovered the secret of her heart. The lovers managed to see each other regularly without violating the decencies of the time, by pretending that she consulted him medically and also because she was keen, as she said, to observe the great master at work. The daughters would soon enough have got wind of what was going on behind their backs, especially since Hahnemann often received letters from Mélanie. The young women who were concerned about their father’s reputation must have wondered about the content of those letters, while we are able today to peruse the glowing mutual affirmations of love which the couple brought to paper.

The first letter was written at the end of October 1834. Mélanie already addressed Hahnemann intimately as “my friend”¹⁰⁶ and described how deeply she had been moved by what had happened in the morning. Hahnemann had obviously asked her to stay. “You wish me to stay, and therefore I stay. It is the sincerest proof of affection I can give you.” She promised to restore his agitated soul to peace and make him happy. “I will give you the happiness of the angels,” she vowed, referring to their relationship as “spiritual kinship” while insisting that there could be no physical dimension to their union. But in her next letter, written on 6 December, she spoke of more. She justified her conduct by pointing out that Hahnemann had kissed her first and that she had only allowed it because their kisses had been “innocent”. “Had I but recognized this new terrible love which erupted like a volcano,” Mélanie wrote, “I would have concealed it.” The friendship had obviously turned into passionate love. She openly described to Hahnemann her “love dreams” in which their later marriage was already a theme. As proof of the mutuality of their attachment she quoted Hahnemann as saying “You said to me: ‘I never loved anybody as I love you; we will love each other eternally.’” and responded with equal warmth of feeling: “In my thoughts you will be my husband for ever, no other man will ever lay his profane hand on me, no other mouth will kiss mine. I offer you my trust and swear eternal love and faithfulness.” To gain certainty about his feelings she also asked him to explain the “agitation” he felt in her presence. Her letter turned somewhat more prosaic when she referred to her material situation. She did not want to be seen as a fortune hunter and informed him that she owned more than 100,000 French Francs in securities as well as property in Paris worth 30,000 Francs.

In her next letter, which was probably written on 8 November, Mélanie returned to the question of his “agitation”. It was this “agitation” to which his daughters, who had not remained oblivious of the relationship, objected. It soon came out that it was sexual desire and Mélanie professed herself to be shocked that such intimate matters were openly discussed in Hahnemann’s house. “Good God, to intrude into the secrets of one’s father’s sexual sentiments and, above all, to admit to one’s father that one has

done so!!!!”¹⁰⁷ She swore that no erotic feelings on her part had been involved when she received his kiss and regretted to have stirred his blood with the innocent proof of her love. “Who is the more chaste of us?” she asked rhetorically, adding that she would like to “embrace him in love”.

The letter deals mostly with Hahnemann’s relationship with his daughters, especially the two youngest, Charlotte and Louise, a topic that continued to prevail in their correspondence. Mélanie objected to their keeping their father like a bird in a cage and to their opinion of him as an “old lecher.” What upset her most were their continuous surveillance and permanent presence during consultations. She implored Hahnemann: “Good God, what would Europe, that admires Hahnemann, say if it was known that the eminent doctor cannot see patients without his daughters being present!!!” She demanded that he insisted on the space that was due to him as a man and head of the family. At the same time she assured him that she did not mean to interfere with his household once they were married. She was above such banal everyday matters: “[...] my demanding work requires my undivided attention and my life is that of a spiritual worker.” She assured him that she did not attend to such matters in Paris either since that was what housekeepers were there for. Mélanie’s relationship with the daughters is also described. It seemed to have been quite cordial to begin with, a fact that Mélanie thought was due to her joviality and vivaciousness which seemed to have made a deep impression on Charlotte and Louise.

What about the accusation, with which Mélanie continued to be confronted, of having entered Köthen in men’s clothes? Such a habit would have struck most people as outlandish. Even in the early 1870s, when she had been a widow for many years, she was, as a woman of rank, compelled to defend herself against the allegation and vehemently deny it. In a letter to Hahnemann she spoke openly about the issue: “[...] even when I dressed up as a man and enacted my farce I took the greatest care not to expose myself to accusations of indecency.” So she must have arrived in Köthen dressed in men’s clothes. Such unusual behaviour in a woman was apparently considered less scandalous by some members of Köthen society than by Hahnemann’s later biographer, Richard Haehl, with his Wilhelmine sensitivities.

Let us return to the letter in which Mélanie described the change in the daughters’ attitude towards her. Their growing hostility and lack of trust since they had found out about the budding love affair is apparent from a note Mélanie handed to Hahnemann: “You must interrupt your reading from time to time and speak to me in French about my health so that your daughter, who is listening, will think we are talking about that.” It was obviously necessary for Hahnemann to mislead his daughter by pretending that what he was reading was Mélanie’s medical history.

On Sunday, 9 November, Mélanie continued the letter she had begun the day before. She was very excited because a third party (probably Hahnemann’s assistant Dr Lehmann) had just encouraged her to accept Hahnemann’s offer of marriage. “This marriage is God’s will!” she assured Hahnemann, who seemed still in doubt, referring to the Creator again in her postscript: “[...] through an accident which I did not seek I see myself in possession of all the secrets of your family. I am aware of all you have suffered, dear God, yes, I was sent by the heavens to make your last years happy – it is my mission which I accept with eagerness, to which I devote myself wholly!” The family secret referred to must have been his “hell of a marriage” over which

Hahnemann researchers have so far cast the veil of silence, partly because they have no information and partly out of respect. That Mélanie devoted her life to what she saw as her mission and that she did so successfully is apparent from the letters Hahnemann wrote to his friends in Germany long after the wedding, in his final years. He never tired of pointing out that he had never been as happy in his life as he was with Mélanie.

But a number of obstacles first had to be overcome before the couple could marry. The following letter describes them in detail. There is first of all the reputation of the bride, about whose family history even the enamoured Hahnemann knew very little. Mélanie described her traumatic childhood, the mental instability of her mother, under whose outbreaks of fury she had suffered immensely in her early years. During one of her hysterical fits her mother had even tried to kill her with a dagger. The unbearable tension in her parental home was also the reason why Mélanie was adopted by her art teacher, Guillaume Lethière, a politically active historical painter who had enjoyed the protection of Napoleon Bonaparte's brother Lucien.

The letter reveals furthermore that the pangs of conscience Hahnemann suffered with regard to his daughters made him reluctant to remarry. Mélanie accused him of having “wholly subjected yourself to the rule of your two youngest daughters,”¹⁰⁸ remonstrating that his daughter Amalie, who was twice divorced by that time and part of the household too, suffered from the tyranny of her two younger sisters. In the postscript Mélanie appealed again to the love they shared and demands of Hahnemann to be a man and take the first step by formally asking for her hand in marriage.

From one of the following letters, dated 20 November, we learn that Mélanie's appeal to his paternal authority was not all in vain. Hahnemann had by then obviously banned both his daughters from his consultation room. Undaunted, they found other ways of obtaining information. As Mélanie soon found out, they were eavesdropping from the next-door room and she advised Hahnemann to “be careful even of what you say in French.”¹⁰⁹

Fortunately for Mélanie, she had the Lehmanns on her side, who even tried to have a word with Hahnemann's daughters. They also encouraged Mélanie to hold on to her marriage plans despite all the difficulties, as we can see from a letter addressed to Hahnemann on 21 November. Here, Mélanie revealed another mystery. In Lethière's “patchwork” family, into which she was adopted as a young girl, she had obviously encountered “another kind of hell”.¹¹⁰ Apparently the situation there had also been tense, fraught with frequent arguments between the parents and the children, who came from different marriages. Their quarrels were mostly about financial matters since Lethière had difficulties making ends meet as an artist forcing the family to live in very restricted circumstances.

In the days that followed Mélanie and Hahnemann continued to see each other, but had to pretend that their meetings were medical consultations. They could hardly speak to each other openly because there was always the danger of the daughters listening in. Mélanie therefore thought of a way of extracting a promise of marriage from Hahnemann. In the letter she handed him in his consultation room on 27 November she asked him to be honest with her regarding the question of matrimony: “Write two or three words for me on this sheet or another one if you like – do not

speak because there are spies in your house.”¹¹¹ Hahnemann obliged and his moving words have been preserved for posterity: “I will be who I am for eternity. I love you as I never loved before in my life. It is an indisputable fact. My wish to be united with you in matrimony is as ardent as yours.” Hahnemann suggested to his love that she should present to his daughters written evidence of her social standing in Paris and her financial circumstances as the only way of convincing them that their mistrust was unfounded.

We know from a letter of 29 November that Hahnemann made his agreement to the public announcement of their marriage dependent on several conditions. Foremost among them was that Mélanie was to procure from Paris the documents necessary for the wedding (birth certificate, proof of her single state) and a certified statement of her financial affairs. It was customary at the time for the bride to obtain a parental declaration of consent. Mélanie considered it very important that Hahnemann should ask her father, who lived in Aix-en-Provence, for her hand in marriage. She suggested that she would draft a few lines in French for him, to which he agreed.

On 3 December Mélanie communicated to Hahnemann in the usual way that the letter to her father was on its way and that all the required documents were expected to arrive in Köthen in about six weeks’ time. She swore him to secrecy until that time so that the few people who knew of their relationship would continue to believe that their union was a purely spiritual one, although they both had other intentions: “This does not mean that you should refrain from doing what you are still able to do in that respect.” That she was alluding to their mutual desire for a sexual relationship is obvious since she mentioned her wish to have a child. It is not the only “bridal letter” with such explicit “erotic” references. In her second letter to Hahnemann, which was mentioned earlier, Mélanie wrote of her fear that she might arouse “too fervent, baleful sentiments” in him. In an undated letter (probably written around the middle or end of December 1834 in which she coyly referred to his jealous daughters) we read: “They will be tormented by jealousy on our wedding night. Your daughters are so jealous that they even begrudge you the innocent signs of affection of your other children. It is therefore necessary that they believe what the whole world believes: that there is no physical passion between us.”¹¹² In a letter of 10 December we read: “Never show your friends your physical desire for me.”¹¹³ A remark made by one of Hahnemann’s favourite pupils, Stapf, also proves that the couple’s “spiritual kinship” was in no way platonic as one might assume with a view to the difference in their ages and status. In the homeopathic journal he edited, Stapf published the following description – for obvious reasons only after Hahnemann’s death: “[...] When I last saw him in Paris in the autumn of 1835 [he prided himself] on his almost undiminished virility.”¹¹⁴

Hahnemann was in the process of consulting his friend Isensee on questions of inheritance rights in the case of his remarrying, when Mélanie’s birth certificate arrived in Köthen. With the couple being in possession of this important document the calling of the banns seemed just a question of time. But another complication emerged: their different confessions, which had so far not been a problem for Hahnemann. At a time when registry marriages did not yet exist this presented an obstacle for which a solution had to be found. Hahnemann was clearly not at ease when he asked Mélanie in a letter she had written to him on 5 December: “As a last sacrifice before our union I must ask you to learn by heart the Protestant-Lutheran

Credo so that we share the same religion.”¹¹⁵ In apology for the imposition he added: “But you know as I do that religions are mere garments one dons and casts off, it all just serves to accommodate to worldly prejudice.” It is the liberal and enlightened thinker who speaks out of these words.

In the time that followed, Mélanie pondered their future together. In her letter of 10 December she again declared herself prepared to set up her own household to take the strain from her relationship with Hahnemann’s daughters. In another letter she described her plans in more detail: “[...] your daughters must be able to live happily in your house as they were used to. I do not want to be a burden to anybody and will most certainly not force your children out of their father’s house.”¹¹⁶ A clear proprietary order, which Hahnemann’s friend Isensee had agreed to set up, was to relax the situation. Isensee as well as the Lehmanns were in favour of the marriage plans and helped the couple in whatever ways they could. Mrs Lehmann even sent Mélanie two doves which the latter rightly interpreted as “symbols of love”.¹¹⁷

As proof of her financial independence Mélanie insisted on paying Hahnemann for the medical consultations, pointing out in her letter of 20 December that it was for her a question of honour and character.

The longed-for goal seemed almost within grasp, when an occurrence threatened to put Mélanie out of countenance. As we learn from her letter of 26 December Hahnemann travelled to Leipzig without consulting her and was severely berated as a result. After his return he informed her in his defence: “Even if I had wanted to despatch such important papers by courier, the postmaster and the public would have been crying that I had sent millions.”¹¹⁸ Hahnemann’s excursion, which has so far remained unknown, obviously had to do with adjustments to the inheritance that had to be kept confidential. Mélanie, though upset at first, teased him in her next letter by repeating what Mrs Lehmann, who was very fond of her, had contrived as a punishment for Hahnemann’s misdemeanour: “We will let him sleep alone in the wedding night!”¹¹⁹ Hahnemann took the hint and responded with equal light-heartedness.

Finally, on 18 January 1835, the minister of St Agnus’ Church in Köthen, Johann Gottlob Schmidt, married the unequal couple in Hahnemann’s house in the *Wallgraben*. Several friends of the bridegroom and bride were present as we see from the marriage certificate. The wedding was at first kept secret for good reasons. The bride had converted to Protestantism. Notification of the marriage did not appear in the newspapers before the beginning of February. Hahnemann’s friends and pupils were flabbergasted. Among the first to wish the couple well were Hahnemann’s childhood friend from Meissen, Dr Anton Friedrich Fischer, and his faithful patient of many years, Princess Louise, wife of a Prussian Prince. One of his oldest friends, Baron von Gersdorff in Eisenach, made no secret of his mixed feelings in his congratulatory letter of 1 June 1835: “I will write to him [Dr Mauro, homeopathic physician in Naples, R.J.] to tell him how happy you are but wish you could assure me first of your physical wellbeing since your enemies are convinced that it will be your certain end.”¹²⁰

The letter from a loyal friend is not the only indication of the wild rumours evoked by Hahnemann’s marriage. The image of the *femme fatale* who pursued older men and

broke all laws of decency with her boisterousness (“keen horsewoman and swimmer”, a skilful “markswoman” with pistols and, as if that were not enough, “a painter”) was difficult to erase from the collective memory of Köthen’s society. The village newspaper ‘*Dorfzeitung von Sachsen-Meningen*’ did its best to give currency to the rumour by publishing the following malicious article: “The great father of homeopathy, Dr Hahnemann in Köthen, to prove to the world that he is the best advertisement for his art, has remarried on 18 January in his eightieth year – a young Catholic lady, daughter of a Paris landowner. The young man is still sprightly and robust and challenges all allopaths: do as I do if you can! Apart from other precious gifts the old bridegroom gave his young bride, who had come to him as a patient in men’s clothes, a ring worth 500 Thalers and 40,000 Thalers to her while bequeathing a mere 32,000 homeopathic Thalers to each of his children. It has come to our notice that several allopaths intend to convert to homeopathy.”¹²¹ Hahnemann, who might not have minded the allusions to his virility, was not prepared to acquiesce in the anonymous writer’s accusations that his new wife was a fortune hunter and that he had disadvantaged his own children. It was not long before his lawyer, Isensee, published a notice in the *Allgemeine Anzeiger der Deutschen* rejecting the defamations and pointing out that Madame Hahnemann was in possession of considerable means of her own. Hahnemann, the article continued, had specified in his marriage contract that the greater part of his estate (48,000 Thalers are mentioned) would go to his children directly after his marriage. Only the sum of 15,000 Thalers would not be paid out to them while he was still alive since it would secure the testator’s livelihood. In conclusion the lawyer, who had previously acted as Hahnemann’s solicitor, wrote: “Apart from a very simple and ordinary golden wedding ring, Madame Hahnemann has not received a single object or penny of her husband’s estate.”¹²²

Hahnemann’s endowment agreement of 17 February 1835, which is today kept in the Archives of the Institute for the History of Medicine of the Robert Bosch Foundation in Stuttgart, is further proof that the original provocative newspaper article was indeed libellous. It shows that Hahnemann provided not only for his children but also for his grandson, who was left in the care of his mother when his father, Hahnemann’s son Friedrich, went missing. Hahnemann undertook to pay for the boy’s training as a needle maker. As the document contained some points in need of clarification it had to be amended in June 1835. In his new will he named his children and their descendants as universal heirs in equal parts. His two youngest daughters were to take immediate possession of the house at 270 *Wallstrasse* which Hahnemann had purchased for their provision. His daughter Amalie (“because she always loved me devotedly and tenderly”) received the next-door property. All other details of the complex will are not of interest in this context. What needs to be mentioned is that Mélanie was to inherit part of Hahnemann’s personal possessions, including his valuable manuscripts and notes. In the interests of his children Hahnemann arranged for strict separation of property in his new marriage, a union which nobody expected to last long considering the bridegroom’s advanced years.

Hahnemann’s will also put an end to inheritance quarrels and disagreements that had often erupted in his house after the sudden nuptials. The “Last Will and Testament” of the founder of homeopathy states clearly what he expected of his heirs: “In one word I wish that my family will leave her [Mélanie, R.J.] in peace [...]”¹²³ Hahnemann hoped for a new beginning with his beloved wife, for a second spring as it were, not

in Köthen, where malicious tongues would continue to wag and make their life difficult, but somewhere new: in Paris, the capital of the nineteenth century.

-
- ¹ English translation adapted from Bradford, *Life*, p. 133.
² Rapou, *Histoire*, vol. 2, p. 287
³ Printed in Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 132
⁴ Gentz, *Briefwechsel*, p. 354
⁵ Printed in Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 132
⁶ IGM Archives A 16
⁷ English translation taken from Haehl, *Life and Work*, vol. 2, p. 147
⁸ *Deutsche Populäre Monatschrift für Homöopathie* 1881, Beiblatt No. 1, p. 9
⁹ Cf. Brückner, *Häuserbuch*, p. 290
¹⁰ Landeshauptarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt, Abt. Dessau, A 10, No 305, sheet 14 and 15
¹¹ Albrecht, Hahnemann, p. 103
¹² IGM Archives A 426
¹³ Stahl, *Briefwechsel*, p. 82
¹⁴ Griesselich, *Skizzen*, p. 30
¹⁵ IGM Archives A 1554
¹⁶ Printed in Albrecht, Hahnemann, p. 126
¹⁷ Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden, Best. Landesregierung Loc. 31058, f. 46r.
¹⁸ IGM Archives A 1183
¹⁹ IGM Archives A 434
²⁰ *Ibid.*
²¹ IGM Archives A 1641
²² Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 189
²³ Hartmann, *Leben* (1844), col. 186
²⁴ Brunnnow, Hahnemann, p. 31
²⁵ IGM Archives M-451
²⁶ Albrecht, *Leben*, p. 101
²⁷ Printed in Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 136
²⁸ IGM Archives A 830
²⁹ Stahl, *Briefwechsel*, p. 88
³⁰ Stahl, *Briefwechsel*, p. 57
³¹ Printed in Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 130
³² Printed in Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 137
³³ Mortsch, *Kommentar D22*, Ms. p. 30
³⁴ IGM Archives B 32813
³⁵ *Ibid.*
³⁶ IGM Archives B 32690
³⁷ *Ibid.*
³⁸ Printed in Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 153
³⁹ Stahl, *Briefwechsel*, p. 137f.
⁴⁰ Hahnemann, *Krankenjournal D22*, p. 264
⁴¹ Stahl, *Briefwechsel*, p. 57
⁴² Hahnemann, *Krankenjournal D34*, Edition Fischbach-Sabel, p. 467
⁴³ IGM Archives B 32852
⁴⁴ Quoted from Meyer, *Patientenbriefe*, p. 68
⁴⁵ Stahl, *Briefwechsel*, p. 46
⁴⁶ *Ibid.*
⁴⁷ IGM Archives B 32694
⁴⁸ Stahl, *Briefwechsel*, p. 47
⁴⁹ *Der Aertzliche Stand und das Publikum*. 5th edition, Munich 1876, p. 6
⁵⁰ Hahnemann, *Organon-Synopse*, p. 487
⁵¹ *Organon*, §3, 6th edition, Edition Schmidt
⁵² *Organon*, §2, 6th edition, Edition Schmidt
⁵³ *Organon*, §258, 6th edition, Edition Schmidt, p. 206
⁵⁴ Hahnemann, *CK*, vol. 1, p. 238

- ⁵⁵ Organon, §257, 6th edition, Edition Schmidt, p. 206
- ⁵⁶ Organon, §119, note 1, 6th edition, Edition Schmidt, p. 145
- ⁵⁷ Ein Wort an die Leipziger “Halb-Homöopathen”, *Leipziger Tageblatt*, 15 December 1832
- ⁵⁸ Hahnemann, *Krankenjournal D34*, Edition Fischbach-Sabel, p. 315
- ⁵⁹ Printed in Hickmann, Volkmann, p. 377
- ⁶⁰ Printed in Hickmann, Volkmann, p. 382
- ⁶¹ Stahl, Briefwechsel, p. 84
- ⁶² Hahnemann, *Krankenjournal D34*, Edition Fischbach-Sabel, p. 35
- ⁶³ IGM Archives B 32752
- ⁶⁴ Hartmann, *Leben* (1844), col. 185
- ⁶⁵ IGM Archives B 32795
- ⁶⁶ Printed in Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 158
- ⁶⁷ IGM Archives A 420
- ⁶⁸ Hahnemann, CK (1828), 2nd edition, part 1, p. V
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 8f.
- ⁷⁰ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 157
- ⁷¹ Hahnemann, CK, 2nd edition, part 1, p. 79
- ⁷² Hahnemann, CK, 1st edition, part 1, p. 21
- ⁷³ IGM Archives A 235
- ⁷⁴ Griesselich, *Handbuch*, p. 148
- ⁷⁵ Hahnemann, CK, 1st edition, part 1, p. 79
- ⁷⁶ Hahnemann, CK, 1st edition, part 1, p. 147
- ⁷⁷ Hahnemann, CK, 1st edition, part 1, p. 153
- ⁷⁸ Hahnemann, CK, 2nd edition, part 5, p. V
- ⁷⁹ Stahl, Briefwechsel, p. 104
- ⁸⁰ IGM Archives A 633
- ⁸¹ Quoted from Winkle, Geisseln, p. 167
- ⁸² Hering, *Schriften*, vol. 1, p. 332
- ⁸³ IGM Archives A 1486
- ⁸⁴ IGM Archives A 384
- ⁸⁵ Stahl, Briefwechsel, p. 51
- ⁸⁶ Griesselich, *Skizzen*, p. 130
- ⁸⁷ Printed in Vigoureux, Aegidi, p. 165
- ⁸⁸ Stahl, Briefwechsel, p. 48
- ⁸⁹ Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 283
- ⁹⁰ Quoted from Eppenich, *Krankenhäuser*, p. 40
- ⁹¹ IGM Archives A 415
- ⁹² Hahnemann, GKS, p. 779
- ⁹³ Hahnemann, GKS, p. 836f.
- ⁹⁴ Printed in Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 1, p. 211
- ⁹⁵ Hartlaub, *Medicorum*, p. 9
- ⁹⁶ IGM Archives A 301
- ⁹⁷ IGM Archives A 52
- ⁹⁸ IGM Archives A 234
- ⁹⁹ Printed in Haehl, Zentralverein, p. 131
- ¹⁰⁰ Stahl, Briefwechsel, p. 81
- ¹⁰¹ German translation in Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 332
- ¹⁰² Stahl, Briefwechsel, p. 119
- ¹⁰³ IGM Archives M-416
- ¹⁰⁴ Bradford, *Life*, p. 361
- ¹⁰⁵ German translation in Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 332
- ¹⁰⁶ IGM Archives M-447
- ¹⁰⁷ IGM Archives M-449
- ¹⁰⁸ IGM Archives M-451
- ¹⁰⁹ IGM Archives M-453
- ¹¹⁰ IGM Archives M-468
- ¹¹¹ IGM Archives M-454
- ¹¹² IGM Archives M-467, based on Handley, *A Homeopathic Love Story*
- ¹¹³ IGM Archives M-460

¹¹⁴ Neues Archiv für die homöopathische Heilkunst 1 (1844), p. 138

¹¹⁵ IGM Archives M-458

¹¹⁶ IGM Archives M-462

¹¹⁷ IGM Archives M-457

¹¹⁸ IGM Archives M-464

¹¹⁹ IGM Archives M-465

¹²⁰ IGM Archives A 1153

¹²¹ Printed in Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 338

¹²² Printed in Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 340

¹²³ Printed in Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 347

In the “Great Metropolis”: Paris (1835-1843)

Due to the continuing strained relationship with Hahnemann’s daughters, Samuel Hahnemann and Mélanie D’Hervilly spent the first months of their married life in separate households in Köthen. The possibility of moving to France was never mentioned. What the couple did plan, as Hahnemann wrote to his friend Bönninghausen on 22 May 1835, was a trip to Paris because Mélanie had to see to her financial affairs. He was reluctant to let his newly wedded wife (“without whom I cannot last for two hours at a time”¹) travel by herself. He was mainly looking forward to “resting there and seeing hardly any patients.” But things would turn out differently. The couple’s departure from Köthen was not for a limited period but for good, as indeed the daughters had guessed when their father in late May to early June 1835 divided the major part of his movable possessions among them. Amalie received, as well as the silver tea and soup spoons, “two pictures of my good father,”² that is, her grandfather, and numerous works written by Hahnemann including the fourth and fifth editions of the *Organon*. Friederike had to content herself with a “pipe with white bowl,” a tobacco jar and a handbook on political science written by Hahnemann’s former patient Klockenbring. Eleonore, by contrast, received eight golden rings, two silver ‘Hahnemann commemorative coins’ and a silver pocket watch as well as linen and clothes. Charlotte also received a silver pocket watch as well as a gold lady’s watch. A list of Hahnemann’s movable possessions, which has been preserved, reveals that he owned a small collection of watches. A microscope was also among the objects Hahnemann left to Charlotte while he was still alive. Louise who was divorced by then received musical instruments and also oil paintings of Hahnemann and his first wife by the artist Julius Schoppe, further paintings and prints and Hahnemann’s greatest treasure: “all the case journals written by her father personally”. This was another sure indication that the founder of homeopathy had decided to give up his practice of many years and retire. Not even his missing son Friedrich was forgotten. A golden caddy decorated with brilliants, which had been given to Hahnemann by the Duke of Anhalt-Köthen, was bequeathed to him.

On 7 June the newly wedded couple left for Paris. They enjoyed “a fortnight’s very pleasant journey,”³ as Hahnemann wrote to his friend Bönninghausen, reaching the French capital on 21 June 1835. It was a hot summer in Paris that year and the couple decided soon after their arrival to exchange Mélanie’s small flat at 26, rue des Saints-Pères, right in the middle of the Quartier Latin, for a more spacious abode. Their new residence lay further to the south, at 7, rue Madame, adjacent to the Jardin du Luxembourg. Hahnemann loved the new, quietly situated flat very much, as he informed Bönninghausen at the beginning of January 1836: “[...] our large windows overlook a pretty garden, which is for our private use but has a gate at the back to the [Jardin du] Luxembourg, a public garden which is an hour’s walk long and planted with trees. There we enjoy the purest open air (since 15 July), as if we were in the country, like two turtle-doves [...].”⁴

But it was not only their idyllic urban abode with the opportunity to extend his beloved walks which Hahnemann enjoyed with his charming, young wife who seemed to read every wish in his eyes. Mélanie, who descended from ancient, though no longer wealthy, French nobility, had made a name for herself as an artist and was now able to introduce her husband into Paris society. Hahnemann had not been six months in Paris when David d’Angers made a bronze cast of his head. The eminent

neoclassical sculptor, whose art was influenced by Antonio Canova, strove for natural expression and casual posture. He was the creator of the famous colossal busts of Napoleon, Goethe, Schelling and others and also specialized in portrait medallions, a genre in which he came to be highly influential.

Mélanie was personally acquainted with many other artists and writers. She had been friends with the dramatist François-Guillaume-Jean-Stanislas Andrieux, editor of the important literary journal *La Décade* and closely acquainted with the French Emperor. Andrieux died shortly before Mélanie's return to Paris, but another literary friend from earlier days, Népomucène Lemercier, was still alive in 1835. Lemercier was one of the most brilliant dramatists of the First Empire and had been elected to the renowned Académie Française as early as 1810. And, above all, Hahnemann soon met another striving writer and close friend of Mélanie's, Ernest Legouvé, who would later devote a love poem to her ('Hymne à Sainte Mélanie'). Although her intellectual mentors (among them were the politician Louis-Jérôme Gohier and the painter Guillaume Guillon-Lethière) had died some years before the couple reached Paris, Mélanie had brilliant connections in the highest circles of Paris society.

No other city attracted as many artists, musicians, intellectuals and pleasure-seeking aristocrats as Europe's secret capital. Niccolò Paganini gave regular guest performances in the metropolis on the Seine during Hahnemann's residence there. Composer Jacques Offenbach was at the beginning of his career and would, a few years later, take Paris by storm. The greatest musical successes were celebrated by a French conductor, however, whose name is almost forgotten today: Philippe Musard, the uncrowned king of the sweeping balls that were relished by the *juste milieu*, the upper classes who sought pleasure and political relaxation during the reign of King Louis Philippe (between 1830 and 1848). Musard soon became one of Hahnemann's patients. Due to his advanced age Hahnemann was immune to the dancing fever that had seized all of Paris, although he felt twenty or thirty years younger, as he wrote to his friend in Germany. He preferred the opera which he and his young wife attended once a week. The *Théâtre Italien*, where the works of Verdi and Rossini were performed, he loved best. In a letter to his children he pointed out that he had no problem with the fact that performances often only started at midnight. The couple also regularly attended the *Comédie Française* and other theatres where they saw, as well as the classics, plays by contemporary authors belonging to Mélanie's circle of friends and acquaintances. One of the most celebrated actors of the time was Eliza Rachel who had become famous with her portrayal of Roxanne in Racine's *Bajazet*. Unfortunately she died young. At the time, visits to opera or theatre were, to a greater degree than today, social happenings where one met people of influence. On the occasion of a performance of Donizetti's opera *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the *Comédie Française* in the winter of 1835, Samuel and Mélanie Hahnemann apparently had the opportunity to chat with the French minister of education, Pierre Guillaume Guizot, who also occupied a seat in the front row. Interestingly, it was Guizot who around that time decided in favour of Hahnemann's application to establish a homeopathic practice in Paris.

The physician, who had once preferred the comfort of his own home, taken long walks purely for health reasons in Leipzig and Köthen and entertained *en famille* in the evenings, had turned, if not exactly into a *flâneur*, into a lover of culture who lived life in the metropolis to the full. As part of his new interests he decorated their Paris

domicile with the works of art his wife possessed. In a letter of 14 June 1836 to his friend Gersdorff he mentioned a “considerable collection of paintings” that included Mélanie’s own pieces (also the famous oil painting of Samuel Hahnemann which she had finished just after their marriage in Köthen.) The sales catalogue from 1878 shows that the couple’s art collection, which will certainly have been added to over the years, was indeed exquisite if somewhat motley. Next to paintings of artists who are hardly known today (for instance Gabriel François Doyen, by whom Samuel and Mélanie Hahnemann owned a sketch for a panel painting with the title ‘La peste des ardents’) there were two male portraits by Tintoretto and a picture with a religious theme painted by none other than Titian. The catalogue listed altogether 161 *objets d’art*, including ancient sculptures, renaissance busts, Roman mosaics, ornate vases and valuable china. Not everything came under the hammer, however. Mélanie’s portraits of relatives remained within the family and most of them are now kept at the Institute for the History of Medicine of the Robert Bosch Foundation in Stuttgart. There is no self-portrait of Mélanie, the gifted painter and art collector, but a contemporary lithography which shows her in her late thirties. The image confirms the impression received by the American actress Anna Cora Mowatt when she first met Mélanie d’Hervilly in 1839: “She was an elegant looking woman, with a finely rounded form, somewhat above the medium height. Her face could not be called beautiful or pretty, but the term handsome might be applied to it with great justice. Her forehead was full and high, and her hair thrown back in a manner which perfectly displayed its expansive proportions. Those luxuriant tresses of a bright, flaxen hue were partly gathered in a heavy knot at the back of her head and partly fell in long ringlets behind her ears. Her complexion was of that clear but tintless description which so strongly resembles alabaster. There was a thoughtful expression in her large blue eyes, which, but for the benignant smile on her lips, would have given a solemn aspect to her countenance.”⁵ A strand of Mélanie’s striking blond hair, which other contemporary reports also remarked upon, was probably mixed in with Hahnemann’s watch chain, which was woven from human hair. The chain holds a red agate medallion with a declaration of love written in French which translates into English as: “My place is in your noble heart, which is the only place for me. I dedicate it to your happiness. With you I have found my place for life.”⁶

The unaccustomed luxuriousness of his new lifestyle with its wealth and variety of sense impressions seems to have been beneficial for the octogenarian. Hahnemann never tired of emphasizing in letters that he had found a real fountain of youth. To his friend Gersdorff he wrote: “Friends, who have not seen me for years, hardly recognize me. They profess that they find me ten years younger, and I feel as vigorous, cheerful and healthy as if I was in my thirtieth or fortieth year.”⁷ Hahnemann was obviously spared the afflictions that usually come with old age. He reported to Germany in 1840, when he was 85 years old: “I am often told that I look younger with every year. I certainly had no illness at all this year which has not been the case for ten years. I used to suffer from persistent bad catarrh and cough accompanied by a high temperature in the spring.”⁸ Hahnemann ascribed this happy development at his age to the unceasing love for his young wife. It was due to her, as he said in his letter, that in his long life he had never felt “healthier and happier than in Paris.”⁹

Hahnemann’s great happiness is a regular theme in the correspondence of his Paris years. What impression did he give the people surrounding him? The sources available confirm that the founder of homeopathy appeared amazingly youthful and

dynamic. When the American actress Anna Cora Mowatt, whom we quoted earlier, met Hahnemann in the winter of 1839/40, she was struck with the famous physician's youthful radiance: "The crown of his large, beautifully proportioned head was covered by a skull cap of black velvet. From beneath it strayed a few thin snowy locks, which clustered about his noble forehead, and spoke of the advanced age which the lingering freshness of his florid complexion seemed to deny. His eyes were dark, deep set, glittering and full of animation."¹⁰ The description concurs with the oil portrait painted by Mélanie in 1835 just after their wedding. The figure in this painting leaves the same impression with the onlooker as the real Hahnemann had done on the American actress in Paris, in whom he inspired respect and admiration. Another American visitor, a homeopathic physician, aptly conveyed the striking effect the ageing Hahnemann had on his contemporaries in describing him as a "youthful elderly man."¹¹

There never was a shortage of visitors to the Hahnemann-Hervilly residence. Guests were looked after by the couple and domestic staff which, although befitting a household such as theirs, came at a considerable expense – as we know from letters Hahnemann wrote to friends in Germany. Every Monday evening a group of homeopathic physicians gathered at 1, rue de Milan (then situated in the first, now in the ninth *arrondissement*) where Hahnemann and his wife had moved in late 1836 and where they inhabited a mansion in almost rural surroundings, close to where, in 1842, Saint-Lazare station was built. Homeopaths from all over the world who passed through Paris were welcome at these gatherings where opinions and experiences were shared. More often than not the meetings will have taken the form of a "master class" given by Hahnemann to advanced students. The Parisian physician Dr Simon Felix Camille Croserio, co-editor of the journal *Annales de la Médecine Homoeopathique* and a frequent guest at these occasions, mentioned in a letter that most foreign guests came from Hungary, Italy, Germany, England and the Iberian Peninsula. One of the visitors who came from further afield to the Hahnemann-Hervilly mansion was the American homeopath Heinrich (Henry) Detwiller. He called on Hahnemann twice in 1836 and told him about the recently founded homeopathic school in Allentown/Pennsylvania for which he was raising funds. He had to leave empty-handed, as he wrote in his memories of the visit. In Detwiller's words Hahnemann justified his refusal to donate funds by pointing out "that it is impossible for him at present to find funds for our enterprise or make sacrifices himself for the purpose, but he offered to send us a life-size marble bust of himself by the famous sculptor David in Paris." Hahnemann kept his promise but the bust was lost in a shipping accident and never reached its destination. We do not know whether Hahnemann was unable to comply with the repeated request for a donation because of his expensive lifestyle (he paid 6000 Francs a year for rent alone according to his own account) or because a large part of his estate had remained in Germany to provide for his children. Maybe he was still haunted by the disappointment he had experienced with the Leipzig homeopathic hospital that he had helped to fund.

Not only homeopathic physicians from all over the world were welcome in Hahnemann's elegant domicile in Paris. "Famous men from all parts of Europe" paid their respects to the founder of homeopathy, men such as the British diplomat and art and antiques collector Lord Elgin who brought the Parthenon frieze to London. We learn from one of Mélanie's diary entries that the prominent English visitor arrived at five o'clock in the afternoon. Later we find his name again in the Paris case journals.

On the same evening at eight o'clock, the diary entry informs us, the two hosts took their habitual turn around the garden, speaking of the stars in the night sky and rejoicing in the beauty of their surroundings. The moment asked for another declaration of love which touched Mélanie so deeply that she wrote down the entire scene: "Ever since I have known you, I admire God [...], how perfect he made you."¹² Moved to tears, the young woman threw herself at his feet, embracing his legs, while Hahnemann gently stroked her arms. The document is testimony to the oddly matched couple's great love and publicly displayed intimacy, which we also find often described in Hahnemann's own reports from those years.

Members of Hahnemann's family in Germany visited rarely. Only his daughter Amalie, by then twice divorced, came once or twice with her son Leopold. The other children, all of them long grown-up, promised to fulfil Hahnemann's wish for a meeting once the extension of the railway rendered the long journey from Köthen to Paris less strenuous. Contact between them remained limited to their congratulations on Hahnemann's birthdays or the anniversary of his doctorate, and the expressions of gratitude he returned. Occasionally, Mélanie would add a few amicable lines in German to her in-laws. She even corresponded with Charlotte and Louise, the two daughters who had made life so difficult for her in Köthen. It was only after Hahnemann's death, when the question of the inheritance arose, that the relationship between stepmother and daughters sank to another low-point.

French politicians would also occasionally call at the mansion in rue de Milan to converse with the Hahnemanns. A letter Mélanie wrote in 1838 informs us of a planned meeting with a "Monsieur le Conseiller"¹³, whose name is not mentioned, to discuss the funding of a homeopathic hospital in Paris.

Mélanie excelled at organizing parties when the occasion arose. Fully conscious of the social obligations deriving from her husband's fame, she was well aware that modesty would be misplaced in the circles in which they moved. The status he had achieved had to be publicly exhibited since that pleased the French upper classes who had come to terms with Louis Philippe's regency and were not shedding any tears over the revolution. The couple's first party was arranged by Mélanie a few months after their arrival in Paris. The occasion was the sojourn in Paris of the French homeopaths, who had solemnly celebrated Hahnemann at their annual conference and appointed him honorary president of their association. The founder of homeopathy returned the honour bestowed on him by giving a reception at his home. One of the guests, Dr Peschier, was full of praise for the festivities in his article for the homeopathic journal of which he was editor, "The charm and grace with which she [Mélanie, R.J.] did the honours at this celebration cannot be praised highly enough. Hahnemann received us as if he had been a *grand seigneur* all his life."¹⁴ The prediction with which he concluded his report would prove accurate. "He [Hahnemann, R.J.] will not return to Köthen in a hurry."

Hahnemann's birthdays were the main reason for entertaining guests and the 10 April 1838 was celebrated particularly lavishly as we see from a report published in a German newspaper, the *Frankfurter Journal*. "In the Rue de Milan, where Hahnemann resides, equipages and hired vehicles lined the road left and right as is the custom at grand *soirées*. 'The father of homeopathy lives well,' my friend remarked. We entered a gate and crossed a courtyard to arrive at a *hotel*, surrounded by gardens,

of which Hahnemann is the only tenant. On the first floor we stepped into a *salon* filled with the *beau monde*. In the centre of the room stood a marble bust adorned with a golden laurel wreath. ‘This,’ said Cannabich [his companion, R.J.] ‘is Hahnemann’s bust. His thankful disciples and friends embellished it today with a golden laurel crown in celebration of his birthday.’ The ends of the wreath which fell over the shoulders were engraved with prominent names from all over the world.”¹⁵ Readers of the German newspaper also learn that the sculptor was present in person, explaining to the astounded German journalist how proud he was to have produced images of two such great Germans for posterity. As well as to Hahnemann he was referring to the German political writer and satirist Ludwig Börne. The celebration reached its climax when Hahnemann entered the *salon* hand in hand with his young wife, shaking hands with each of his guests. He was then led to the decorated bust by one of the French homeopaths, who gave a birthday address, wishing the jubilant “immortality”. The newspaper report continues: “French and Italian poets followed, reading their celebratory poems and then the German musicians Kalkbrenner, Panofka etc delighted the society with their play.” One of the musicians mentioned was Friedrich Wilhelm Kalkbrenner, a brilliant pianist and composer, and a competent businessman, who co-owned the Paris piano manufacturer Pleyel. The other was the violinist Heinrich Panofka, an equally well-known composer who, from 1834 to 1844, was the Paris correspondent for the music journal *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* which had been founded by Robert Schumann. The world of arts, literature and music was soon to be Hahnemann’s new “scene”. At his time in life he delighted in the veneration and recognition he found in these circles.

The sixtieth anniversary of Hahnemann’s doctorate in 1839 was celebrated with similar glamour. Hahnemann’s daughter Amalie, who was in Paris at the time, wrote home to her family about the festivities: “First our dear mother and father, who was very cheerful, received the most beautiful silver and gold cup. The word “*santé*” was written on the cup and on the saucer it said “60th doctorate”. Thus began this happy and delightful day. Then one of the greatest violoncellists in Europe, a man named Bohrer, arrived and sweetened the entire day for us ‘till the evening, when the whole society came together, many ladies and gentlemen, bringing with them beautiful flowers and wonderful poems. Then we heard the most divine music: the famous Clara Wieck, who is in Paris now, delighted us with her beautiful talent. She and the violoncellist mentioned earlier gave us so much pleasure that we were entirely enchanted. Our dear father was overjoyed and content, and blossomed like a rose.”¹⁶ The pianist was indeed the wife-to-be of Robert Schumann, who would just two months after her much-noticed performance at the sixtieth anniversary of Hahnemann’s doctorate appeal to the Supreme Court in Leipzig for permission to marry without paternal consent. The unwilling father was, as we remember, Friedrich Wieck, one of Hahnemann’s Leipzig patients. The cellist of whom Amalie spoke so highly was Max Bohrer, a member of the Bohrer-Trio which performed in Munich and Paris among other places. The other members of the trio were the violinist Anton Bohrer and his wife, the pianist Fanny Dülken. In 1851 Mélanie adopted a daughter of Anton and Fanny Bohrer’s, Maria Sophie Barbara, who is said to “have danced on the knees”¹⁷ of Hahnemann when she was little. Six years after her adoption the young woman married the fourth son of Baron Clemens von Bönninghausen, Hahnemann’s friend in Münster.

Not only musicians honoured the famous German doctor with their contributions on such an extraordinary academic jubilee, which not many scholars before him had been able to celebrate. Homeopaths from all over Europe came to pay tribute to Hahnemann with words and gifts. Amalie wrote to inform her siblings at home with unconcealed pride of the experience: “The great *salon* was gloriously decorated with the wonderful oil paintings made by our dear mother. More than a hundred candles gave brilliance to the room. Among many others there was a young physician from Lyon, called Mure, who had written an excellent poem for our dear father. He recited it so superbly, I was deeply moved. [...]. In short: it was a splendidly beautiful day.” Dr Benoît Mure who would later gain fame for introducing homeopathy to Brazil, published his poem some years after the event because it had, as he explained, touched the audience “to tears”.¹⁸

The following year brought new occasion to celebrate: Hahnemann’s 85th birthday. The *Leipziger Allgemeine Zeitung* honoured the event with a special report from its correspondent on 12 April: “Two days ago Hahnemann celebrated his 85th birthday. In the evening the German elite living in Paris and a great number of sophisticated Frenchmen gathered to congratulate the grey-haired general of the continuously growing homeopathic phalanx [...]. Arts and sciences united in appreciation of the special day. That the Germans played the main part at the celebration goes without saying. In an antechamber on the ground floor, a new statue of Hahnemann was exhibited, excellently conceived and executed by Mr Woltreck from (I believe) Dessau.” The correspondent adds a detailed description of the bust which “sits on a rock, wrapped in a simple, beautifully draped robe which is open at the chest. The major and minor details have a satisfying and soothing effect and do not distract the gaze from the main object, the beautiful countenance that expresses mildness as well as strength of spirit.”¹⁹

As had been the case at former festivities in the Hahnemann-Hervilly mansion the excellent musical presentations were again followed by numerous poems and addresses, as the Leipzig correspondent reports without elaborating further on the details. His conclusion he does however share with his readership: “Enough! The celebration was perfect and worthy of the good man to whom it was dedicated.” The guests who had been invited to the memorable evening in the rue de Milan will have thought the same. Franz Woltreck’s sculpture of Hahnemann, the cast-in-stone reminder of the special event, did unfortunately not survive, but a copy made by the artist himself which matches the description of the Leipzig newspaper correspondent, is now kept in the Anhaltinian art gallery in Dessau. Two casts of a Hahnemann bust which the artist presumably produced for the same occasion, also survived.

We do not know of any other festivities that might have been celebrated in Hahnemann’s Paris mansion. There might have been a similar celebration for his 86th birthday when the Saxon ambassador in Paris presented Hahnemann with the certificate that gave him the freedom of the city of Meissen – a gesture which moved Hahnemann deeply as we can see from his letter of thanks to the magistrate.

About a year before Hahnemann moved to Paris news had reached him in Köthen that the *Gallic Homeopathic Society* had bestowed an honorary degree on him. The Union of French homeopaths with headquarters in Lyon was founded in 1832 as a national association. Two years later the *Société Homéopathique de Paris* was founded which

was conceived as a society that would be more than a local homeopathic organization. It had also honoured Hahnemann before his relocation to Paris by appointing him honorary president. There clearly was a strong homeopathic movement in France in the early 1830s which recruited its members from the most diverse backgrounds, including Saint-Simonians as well as deeply pious Catholics. The homeopathic physician from Lyon, Toussaint Rapou, who had visited Hahnemann in Köthen, favoured the Trappists' order, while one of the early followers and propagators of homeopathy, the social reformer and successful businessman François Barthélémy Arlès-Dufour, belonged to the French social utopists who derived their name from the founder of their movement, Claude Henry Count of Saint-Simon. The Neapolitan physician Count Sébastien des Guidi was seen as an important pioneer of homeopathy in France. He had been 'converted' to homeopathy in his native country in the 1820s and, after settling in Lyon in 1830, he grew to be one of Hahnemann's most fervent and successful pupils on that side of the Rhine.

Despite their considerable achievements (especially in the cholera year of 1832) and the support they found in the organisations mentioned earlier, the homeopathic physicians remained a small minority that was exposed to massive hostilities from the proponents of mainstream medicine in France. In 1860 there were hardly more than 400 physicians in the whole country who had committed themselves to the new healing system (out of a total of 17,000). The internal rifts which had appeared slightly earlier in Germany also emerged in the French movement at an early stage.

There were two reasons why the French homeopaths received Hahnemann with open arms in 1835. On the one hand both competing homeopathic societies, which had bestowed honours on Hahnemann before he even arrived, gained in prestige when the founder of homeopathy left his fatherland to spend his remaining years on the Seine, at the side of a young wife, who belonged to the cream of French society. On the other hand the French homeopaths feared no competition from the master who had, after all, announced that he would retire to Paris to pursue scientific studies but not treat patients. Their hopes were soon crushed. Not only did Hahnemann soon interfere with the conflict between the homeopathic factions, he also started a homeopathic practice that, in no time, began to flourish. His wife Mélanie turned out to be so efficient an assistant to him that she soon practised homeopathy herself, treating a considerable number of poorer patients every day free of charge.

On 15 September 1835, when the *Gallic Homeopathic Society* invited Hahnemann as guest of honour to their meeting in Paris, the French homeopathic world still seemed in harmony. But it was not long before the first clouds appeared on the horizon. The founder of homeopathy made no secret of his intention to take the lead in homeopathy at his advanced age. After a few friendly words by way of introduction to his address to the assembled homeopaths Hahnemann soon came to the point: "If the Paris Society [he was referring to the competing homeopathic association, R.J.], notwithstanding a few exceptions [...] has not yet been able to gain deeper insights into our art, this is without doubt due to the novelty of the phenomenon of homeopathy in Paris."²⁰ His criticism of the deficient knowledge of most Paris homeopaths will have pleased the homeopaths assembled at that meeting, who had mostly come to the capital from the provinces. But Hahnemann's next sentence contained a warning to those who had felt praised by implication. They should strive even more sincerely to improve their knowledge of homeopathy. His earnest reproach

did not fail to have the desired effect. In the draft of a letter, which is unfortunately undated, Mélanie wrote in retrospect that Hahnemann's arrival in Paris had provoked a "schism" among the French homeopaths and that a certain Dr Pétroz liked to see himself "as the pope of the true Hahnemannians".²¹ Hahnemann's "rival" for leadership over the French homeopaths was the physician Dr Antoine Pétroz, president of the Paris Homeopathic Society, who had initially been a frequent and welcome guest in Hahnemann's house.

Hahnemann expressed himself more plainly in regard to the French homeopaths in a letter to his friend Bönninghausen: "Our art counts many more true pupils in the provinces (most of them came here on 15 Sept. from all parts of the country for a general meeting) than in Paris where they have fallen behind, because many charlatans have usurped the practice of homeopathy and brought great disadvantage and shame to the art with their false mixtures and cures. Now that I am here they are intimidated after much initial resistance, since my presence impresses them and the public is learning to distinguish between their false cures and the true, pure, healing homeopathy."²² Hahnemann also mentioned that he had gathered around him a small "crowd of true pupils and successors (5 in all)", with whom he intended to raise homeopathy in France to the highest possible level. Among them were alongside Georg Heinrich Gottlieb Jahr, who had followed Hahnemann to Paris and had become one of his closest associates, the French physician Léon Simon and above all Dr Simon Felix Camille Croserio, who was mentioned earlier in a different context. Croserio, who came from Savoy, proved of great help to Mélanie after Hahnemann's death. In 1845, only two years after Hahnemann's death, the three physicians founded the *Société Hahnemannienne de Paris* and published the journal *L'Hahnemannisme*. From 1839 onwards Dr Mure from Palermo was also a member of the inner circle of Paris pupils.

The past had clearly caught up with Hahnemann. The conflict between the different homeopathic factions, which had caused him so much concern and grief in Köthen, was in full sway also in Paris from the mid-1830s.

The dispute was, however, not only about direction but also, as soon became apparent, about patient numbers. Hahnemann was obviously the most powerful competitor in that respect; for who would not choose to be treated by the founder of homeopathy himself if the opportunity offered itself. Initially it had seemed unlikely for a number of reasons, his age being one of them, that Hahnemann would practise in Paris. Yet, after Hahnemann's arrival the Paris homeopaths were able to see for themselves that Hahnemann's vitality was undiminished by his years. Dr Peschier attempted to dispel the worries of his fellow homeopaths: "His wife would not wish the precious moments left to the valiant old man to be spent on individual patients. Those seeking consultation are no longer admitted indiscriminately and have to apply for an audience. Hahnemann knows what he owes the world of scholars and he will not be willing to waste time on patients that he could spend on his research." But it turned out to be different. Mélanie did all she could to enable Hahnemann to continue with his homeopathic practice and used her connections to the government to obtain the necessary licence for medical practice. On 12 October 1835 the German newspaper *Allgemeine Preussische Staatszeitung* informed its readers: "By royal decree of 21 August Mr Hahnemann who has lived in Paris for several months, was granted permission to practise."²³ The French press was even better informed. The

popular newspaper *Temps* used its report about Hahnemann's approbation to aim a political gibe at the French government and homeopathy simultaneously: "Hahnemann needed government permission to be able to practise his art in Paris. He obtained this permission through Mr Guizot's very obliging intervention. This is not surprising seeing that Mr Hahnemann is as good a doctrinaire as Mr Guizot. His doctrine consists in bestowing on his patients medication in as small dosages as the ministry bestows freedom on the country."²⁴ As minister for education and health, Guizot was a controversial figure not only for liberals, due to his autocracy and politics. He was often the target of the political satire which thrived in nineteenth France thanks to journalists and artists such as Honoré Daumier to whom we owe a cartoon of Guizot. What the French press, which was notorious for its investigative journalism, overlooked that personal relationships might have helped decisions along in this case. We refer to Hahnemann's meeting with Guizot at the opera in 1835. The journalists were content with having found a political simile that they could apply to the governmental decision to grant Hahnemann the right to practise.

Once Hahnemann had gained his approbation, despite a petition launched against it by the Medical Academy in Paris, it was clear that the founder of homeopathy would not return to Germany. In a letter to his friend Bönninghausen he wrote: "Even if I was 50, 60 years younger I would never consider returning to Germany. [...] I am healthier here and happier than ever in my life and wish that the same be granted to you."²⁵ Hahnemann even suggested to his favourite pupil that he should come to Paris and practise there as a homeopath, advising him to purchase a "doctor-diploma" as a prerequisite for obtaining the French permission to practise. As we know Bönninghausen decided against such a move. He preferred to look after the great number of patients from near and far who came to see him in Darup near Münster.

Hahnemann's pronouncement that he would not return to Germany must have met with severe disappointment among his patients on the other side of the Rhine. Not many of them took it upon themselves to travel all the way to Paris. Consultations by letter from Germany also declined gradually with every year that Hahnemann spent away from Köthen. Among those disappointed was Princess Luise von Anhalt-Bernburg, the wife of the Prussian Prince Friedrich Wilhelm who had been one of his most faithful patients over the years. In a letter of March 1835 she expressed hope that Hahnemann would soon return to the ducal town of the Anhalts. It is unlikely that the sensitive and resolute princess, who had preferred Hahnemann to her own private homeopathic physician, heeded Hahnemann's public commendation to his German patients to consult his assistant of many years, Dr Lehmann in Köthen.

His decision not to return to Köthen meant that Hahnemann lost the major part of his original clientele, although a few German patients stayed with him after 1835. Research into the seventeen Paris case journals that have been preserved reveals that the majority of his patients were French, as was to be expected (78.4 per cent). The second largest percentage were British citizens (16.9 per cent) who were probably not in Paris for Hahnemann's sake but rather to ensure that the English "dandy" was represented among its bohemian society. In terms of mileage the catchment area of Hahnemann's practice in Paris did not differ much from what it had been in Köthen. A great number of patients continued to travel from further afield to see him. The many Anglo-American, Italian and German surnames are also proof of the international composition of Hahnemann's Paris clientele.

The social composition of his clientele also changed remarkably. We see from case journal DF 5 that ten per cent of his patients were French aristocrats. Other than that we find the following professions among the relatively few patients (N=21) for whom we have more detailed information: artists (6), officers (4), civil servants (3), physicians (2), merchants (2), craftsmen (2), waiter (1) and student (1). Among the numerous prominent patients Hahnemann treated in Paris were the artist David d'Angers, the writer Eugène Sue, the violinist Niccolò Paganini and the banker James Meyer Rothschild.

That Hahnemann was widely seen as a “fashionable doctor” for the *haute volée* is apparent from the report in the *Frankfurter Journal* on the occasion of his 85th birthday. The writer quoted his friend, who had invited him to the festivities, as saying proudly: “You have seen how many Italians, English and Americans attended the occasion and what class of Frenchmen believes in homeopathy.” When he found his friend still doubtful he advised him to go and see for himself the crowds that flooded to Hahnemann’s practice. When the correspondent returned to the rue de Milan on another day he was impressed by what he saw: “[...] I found the forecourt and the steps full of poor people whom Hahnemann treats free of charge, and in the antechambers I counted no less than 15 persons.”²⁶ A letter Hahnemann wrote to his pupil Dr Ernst Stapf in 1838 confirms that he treated not only the rich and famous, but also the poor and underprivileged: “In the course of the last six months,” we read there, “the great number of cures achieved by me and my dear wife awakened a lively interest in homeopathy in younger physicians. My wife has cured more of the most dangerous afflictions among the poor than I did among the rich. 10 to 20 patients fill the antechamber and even the stairs of our small abode [sic! R.J.] every day.”²⁷ In a letter written only two years later to the Privy Councillor Heinrich August von Gersdorff in Eisenach Hahnemann spoke of 20 to 40 poor patients who consulted Mélanie daily.²⁸ In the same context he mentioned that patients who were not bed-ridden had to present themselves in his consultation rooms. In Paris, Hahnemann continued to make home visits only in the exceptional cases when patients, whether they were rich or poor, were bound to their bed. If that was the case he would visit them in the evenings.

To the American actress Anna Cora Mowatt we owe another description of what Hahnemann’s Paris consultation hours were like. She recounted how a long stream of carriages was lined up in front of the entrance to Hahnemann’s splendid mansion in the Rue de Milan and that she was forced to wait in her vehicle for almost twenty minutes. When she was at last driven into the courtyard the following picture presented itself: “Three or four liveried domestics assembled in a large hall received the visitors as they alighted, and conducted them to the foot of the wide staircase. At the head of the first flight they were received by a couple more of these bedizened gentlemen, who ushered them into an elegant saloon, sumptuously furnished and opening into a number of less spacious apartments. The saloon was occupied by fashionably dressed ladies and gentlemen, children with their nurses, and here and there an invalid reposing on a velvet couch or embroidered ottoman. The unexpected throng, the noisy hum of whispering voices, the laughter of sportive children, and the absence of vacant seats were somewhat confusing.”²⁹

The visitor eventually found a seat in a little boudoir and, after waiting for more than three hours, was finally taken to the consultation rooms. There she was seen by Hahnemann and his wife Mélanie, who had by then become his colleague and conducted her own consultations for poor patients.

The case journals that have so far been evaluated confirm the impression conveyed by the vivid account of the American actress that Hahnemann's practice in the French metropolis had grown considerably. During the final years of his life Hahnemann saw an average of sixteen patients every day. In the summer months the number of consultations receded noticeably, since most of the wealthy clients of the Paris "fashionable doctor" withdrew to the country where it was cooler and more pleasant than in the city.

Among the prominent personalities who succeeded in obtaining one of the sought-after appointments in the Rue de Milan and who resigned himself, against his usual custom, to having to wait was the virtuoso violinist Niccolò Paganini who arrived in Paris on 21 June 1837. It was not his first visit to the French metropolis: he had celebrated major musical triumphs here some years earlier. With his first Paris concert in the spring of 1831 he had earned 19,000 Francs. His enthusiastic audience at the *Académie Royale de Musique* included representatives of the musical and intellectual elite of Paris. Next to well-known writers and artists such as Eugène Delacroix, George Sand and Théophile Gautier you would meet the composers Giacchino Rossini, Luigi Cherubini, Daniel François Auber, Giovanni Pacini and Giacomo Meyerbeer there. The Paris critics were in raptures.

For some time, Paganini had been seeing doctors and consulting one medical expert after the other. He had been given a variety of different diagnoses and undergone a number of different treatments. To his friends it did therefore not come as a surprise when one of his scheduled concerts had to be cancelled. Shortly after his arrival in Paris in the summer of 1837 the gifted violinist felt physically so exhausted and tormented that he went to consult Hahnemann. Considering the exalted reputation Hahnemann enjoyed in the highest circles of Paris society after such a short time, it is hardly surprising that Paganini came across Hahnemann in his search for a physician who might be able to free him from his persistent afflictions. He had met homeopathy (or rather: a homeopath) before, in the year 1828 while in Vienna. He was suffering from the after-effects of the massive mercury treatment which he had been advised to undergo six years earlier, probably because the treating physician assumed he had syphilis. Among the many other physicians the tortured artist had consulted was Dr Matthias Marenzeller who had received a call to the renowned Vienna Medical School (*Josephs-Akademie*) by the Austrian emperor. We made his acquaintance earlier in connection with Hahnemann's treatment of Prince Schwarzenberg. The experienced military surgeon had long been open to homeopathy and, like Hahnemann, he fought against the abuse of bleeding and purging. Marenzeller had not recommended homeopathic treatment to Paganini on that occasion but advised him to discontinue the strong laxatives he was in the habit of using and take himself to the spa town of Karlsbad. It was not until nine years later that Paganini had first-hand experience of the controversial new healing method.

We can be quite sure that Paganini was not given preferential treatment as Hahnemann's patient. He, too, will have had to wait, albeit in an elegant *salon*, on 12

July 1837 before the doyen of homeopathy was ready to see him. Hahnemann could afford to let even the rich and famous wait. For a long time it remained a secret what exactly Paganini confided to the old physician when he was finally able to sink into a seat in his consultation room. The numerous Paganini biographies either mention his visit to Hahnemann only incidentally or not at all, because the authors had no idea that a homeopathic case history of him existed.

The conversation with the eminent patient was conducted by Mélanie as was generally the case in this unusual “team practice”. She meticulously wrote down name and address of the patient. For obvious reasons there was no need to mention his occupation. A mistake was apparently made with the patient’s age. Paganini was 55 at the time not 50 as it says in the fifth French case journal. It is unlikely that Paganini gave a younger age (as he had done with his first biographer) since he had never withheld his correct birthdate (1782 instead of 1784) from doctors before. Mélanie must have either misheard the date or written it down wrongly by accident. As prescribed in Hahnemann’s *Organon* the patient’s details were duly recorded followed by the patient’s history as told by him. We have consequently an in-depth history of this patient, first written in Mélanie’s hand and then continued by the master himself. The case journal entries are not a literal transcript of the conversation between physician and patient but they summarize what the patient said in the order he said it. Hahnemann, by contrast, placed – at least in theory – great store on “everything being written down in exactly the words that the patient or relatives use” (*Organon*, sixth edition, section 84). In Paganini’s case the following picture emerges for the homeopathic physician:

“Nerves and imagination have been severely exhausted = at the age of 14 and 16 susceptible – coughed frequently – before and later he overexerted himself and began to cough from the age of 12 / then 4 leeches to the anus which relieved him from the cough for a month – since then it has persisted. A great number of leeches was applied several times to the side of the liver, then for 5 months mercury embrocations which ruined his teeth which are rotten – long salivation – and caused damage to the eyes. Followed by a three-month milk diet, resulting in much weight gain. But the better he felt the more he coughed. When the cough is moderate and often repeated, he is free from severe attacks.”³⁰

Hahnemann is informed by the very ill musician that “ten years ago he ruined himself with women, not so much through coitus but by looking at women which caused persistent erections throughout the day. After the milk diet he was bled four times. In the last 6 years the urethra has tightened, he needs to catheterise himself each time he passes water – the catheter is thick (paralysis of bladder and spasm in bladder neck).”³¹

Much of what is mentioned in this case history has been known to a greater or lesser extent to Paganini researchers: his juvenile illness, the chronic cough, the mercury treatment and his problems passing water. What is new is the explanation which casts light on the famous violinist’s legendary sex life. Women were not just spellbound by his wonderful music but because of – or even despite – his unusual physiognomy. As we find out from his history he suffered for many years from priapism (chronic erection) which could be evoked by the mere sight of a woman.

Hahnemann's detailed notes also hold information about Paganini's symptoms at the time, but his earlier episodes of illness and attempts at curing them keep shining through his descriptions, a fact which supports the assumption that Hahnemann never or hardly ever interrupted his patients. As we know he placed the greatest store by the spontaneity of his patients' accounts. The case history continues as follows:

"Bowel movements usually every day and several times in small quantities. He sleeps until 4 ½ then needs to urinate. In the morning after defecation he needs to lie down again because of the head. Cough? Any attempt at reading or conversing causes bowel movements or the urge to pass water, and tires the head. For some years he has had stinging pains in thighs and legs, in the flesh. For the pain and especially the tenesmus [painful spasm of the sphincter, R.J.] he has taken le Roy [a strong laxative, R.J.], almost every day for 1 ½ years. But even 8 years ago he took it occasionally. Le Roy took his ability to urinate at will, weakened him and increased the spasms and loss of blood. Anal bleeding is increased at present, uninterrupted for 3, 4 days, up to 4 table spoons at a time. Usually continues for a fortnight uninterrupted. He feels sleepy after breakfast, needs to lie down and sleep for 2 hours. When he stands up he feels the urge to defecate. He only ever produces small stools, hardly ever diarrhoea. Especially in the mornings he feels unable to work. When he wants to practise, he feels a sudden urge to defecate, even without success 8, 10 times, or to piss 8, 10 times. When he moves, before as well as after breakfast, he either needs to defecate or urinate with a catheter. Sleeps in the daytime from 11/12 to 1/2 o'clock. For the spasms to subside, he needs to draw urine. Because of these afflictions he is unwilling to speak, look at anything, even read the newspaper. Eats at 5 p.m. / due to zealous violin playing and the irritation of his genitals he has contracted a cough / long-sighted, wears very strong spectacles. Every three days this cough which takes his breath away, 8/9 years ago evoked by a smell and even a dream during sleep, and when he feels at his best and has more strength. He wishes to keep the little cough because it keeps the severe attacks at bay. When he contracts catarrhal cold, he cannot go to sleep without becoming breathless."³²

The reader is filled with compassion at Paganini's pitiable condition. The most basic human needs caused him the greatest pain. Not even in his sleep did he find respite. And the worst of it was that he was unable to work, that is, to play his violin. His life's purpose was under threat. He had, it seems, lost his joy in life as life had become torture. As a consequence he must have been impatient to see what the famous German physician would prescribe, about whose successes and cures patients and physicians all over Europe and even in America were so enthusiastic.

At that time in his professional career Hahnemann tended to start treatment with sulphur in very high dilution (C30, that is, a decillionth part). The precise instructions he gave show that he expected his patient to prepare his own medicine by mixing one drop of the diluted or "potentized" original substance with thirty table spoons of water and then shake the mixture ten times to achieve the dynamization which was so crucial in Hahnemann's view. Of the medicine prepared in this way the patient was to take a teaspoon at night and only come back after the fourth spoon was taken. Apart from that Hahnemann prescribed his proven diet: no coffee, no tea and only watered-down wine.

On 19 July 1837, exactly seven days later, Paganini came to see Hahnemann again and was asked to give a detailed report of any changes that had occurred. There was no ground-breaking improvement in his condition and on one day he had even felt particularly unwell. This was presumably due to the phenomenon of “initial aggravation” which is well known in homeopathy. Hahnemann assumed that the deterioration was caused by the patient dining out. A new symptom mentioned by Paganini was that he had blood in the stool on some days of the month. Hahnemann instructed the patient to observe the frequency of his urge to void over the following days. He wanted to wait for the effect of the diluted sulphur and slightly increased the daily dose.

On 25 July Paganini consulted Hahnemann for the last time. Again, it was first Hahnemann’s “assistant” Mélanie who noted down the symptoms which the famous patients had experienced in the preceding five days. Paganini’s sleep was sometimes better, sometimes worse. Stools were still frequent (4 to 6 per day). He also had bad dreams. The cough still returned and the stinging pain in the legs had not disappeared. The patient continued to suffer from cramps. He felt a pressure in the abdomen. Because there had been no great signs of improvement, he had even asked his landlord Loveday for advice. Loveday had given him another homeopathic remedy (*Ipecacuanha*) but that, too, had remained without effect.

In the end the master himself asked questions. As we know from the accounts of other patients, Hahnemann had probably kept himself in the background and listened carefully. He asked again about individual symptoms, showing particular interest in the bowel movements. He wrote down the characteristic signs which were to inform his choice of the “simile,” that is, the most appropriate homeopathic remedy. Behind these symptoms he made a note of the drug pictures which he and his pupils had established in provings on the healthy person. *Pulsatilla* appears twice as a substance; once it is underlined which means that Hahnemann considered it particularly suitable. As his final prescription we read in the case journal: “today Puls(atilla) 1 pilule C30 in 15 tablespoons, 1 teaspoon morning and evening.”

We do not know how Paganini fared with this remedy because his name does not appear again in Hahnemann’s case journals. The reasons for this remained a matter of conjecture for a long time. The “demon violinist” was obviously not disappointed in homeopathy as such since he continued to be treated for a while by a friend of Hahnemann’s, the French homeopath Dr Croserio. But not even Croserio, the best of Hahnemann’s pupils in Paris, was able to help him.

The reason why Paganini did not return to the founder of homeopathy proved to be quite banal as we know now thanks to a lucky archival discovery. The doctor-patient relationship was tarnished in this particular case because Paganini fell violently in love with Hahnemann’s young wife during the very first consultation. A letter written by Mélanie to the enamoured patient, informing him in no uncertain terms that she was unable to reciprocate his feelings, resulted in the discontinuation of treatment. Paganini’s answer to this epistle has been preserved and allows us to guess what might have taken place during the consultation. The seriously ill violinist dictated it to his son: “May it finally be granted me to free myself from this weight, from these innumerable obligations. If you – Madame – would graciously allow me to offer you advice I would propose that you do not use weapons which you do not know how to

handle. – Whatever the nature of the politeness and propriety which you pride yourself on possessing, the words ‘weakened hands’, ‘such a sick man as I’, ‘the sufferer whom your leniency spares’, ‘the object of public derision’ are misplaced and could even be dangerous when addressed to the sick in general.”³³ The letter ends with the moving words: “I avail myself, Madame, of my son’s hand, since – as I told you – my patience or rather, my weakened hand, is exhausted by too many strokes of the pen whose victim it was [...]. I am punished since you thought I had become guilty of an impoliteness towards you.”

Paganini, deeply hurt by Hahnemann’s young wife, turned his back on homeopathy after Dr Croserio’s treatment had also remained without effect and went on to consult the well-known Paris physician François Magendie, a pioneer in the field of experimental physiology. As many physicians had done before, he promised the violinist that he would cure him soon. But on 3 August 1837 Paganini informed his friend Germe that, every night, he was tormented by fever, cough and rheumatic pain in the legs and that doctors were of no use. He soon entered the final phase of his long drawn-out suffering of which he was only relieved when he died in Nice on 27 May 1840. Seventeen years earlier he had written to Germe: “Fortunate is the man who can bid adieu to this world without ever having been in the hands of physicians. It is indeed a miracle that I am still alive...”³⁴

There were other patients whom Hahnemann was unable to help either because their illness was too far advanced or because it did not respond to homeopathic treatment. One of them was the husband of the actress Anna Cora Mowatt. She travelled to Paris to consult Hahnemann on his behalf in December 1838 but the homeopath insisted that her spouse who had contracted a serious eye problem had to come and see him in person in the rue de Milan. But the patient gained no benefit from the consultation, his condition even deteriorated. Although a staunch believer in homeopathy, he discontinued the treatment and consulted the American surgeon Dr Valentine Mott, who was in Paris at the time. Mott successfully operated on his eyes and restored his eyesight.

Other case histories from the Paris period are proof of Hahnemann’s triumphs and served to cement his fame as a successful therapist, also in cases which did not seem very hopeful. One such case was that of the twelve-year old Scottish boy John B. Young whom physicians had given up as incurable. Miracles do take some time to perform, even for Hahnemann. Nine months passed before the boy regained his health under the homeopathic treatment. Decades later, as an adult, Young described his cure through Hahnemann to American homeopaths. He confirmed that the founder of homeopathy had helped many other patients who were under Hahnemann’s care at the same time. “In fact I saw several whose lives were saved by Hahnemann and whom he restored to health, just as he had done with me.”³⁵ It is hardly surprising under the circumstances that the patient, whose treatment had been made possible by the help of a wealthy benefactress, felt, even many years later, that Hahnemann was “divine”. John B. Young also provides important evidence that Hahnemann, at least since his move to Paris, did not restrict himself to homeopathic history taking but was open to the progress of conventional medical diagnostics as is shown by his use of the stethoscope which had been invented in 1819.

While Hahnemann continued to treat patients according to the method he had discovered, he also strove to improve it and expand it on the basis of his bedside experience. Part of the research he conducted in Paris at his advanced age was the development of the “LM potencies”. They remained a mystery for some time because the sixth edition of the *Organon*, in which he described their application and preparation, was not released until 1921. We therefore need to take a leap forward in time.

On 28 July 1856, a notice appeared in the German journal *Allgemeine Homöopathische Zeitung* which might have easily been overlooked by the casual reader. The sensational information released by the author, whose identity was concealed behind the initials NE, incensed Hahnemann’s widow, Mélanie d’Hervilly, across the Rhine. Even the present-day reader senses the contentious nature of the short notice which reads as follows: “The news that we will soon be in possession of the writings which our master has left behind will bring joy to the heart of any person who is penetrated by the truth of our teachings and who – like the writer of these lines – is filled with great respect for their founder. Many beautiful cases of healing are, without doubt, concealed in Hahnemann’s Paris journals. Once they come to light they will be of the greatest service to homeopaths now and in the future. But many a new theory can be expected also from the release of the writings bequeathed to us by such an astute and inspired thinker and observer, whose clear mind could not even be clouded by his advanced age. In one aspect only Hahnemann seems to have overstepped the mark and that is his theory of potentization.”³⁶

After this cautious introduction the author went on to reveal one of the best-kept secrets of homeopathy: “By chance I gained access to some of his last prescriptions and learned to my astonishment that he was no longer satisfied with the 30th potency and the usual mode of dilution, but that he had increased it considerably. In one letter, for instance, he gave instructions ‘to dissolve one globule of remedy in 15 teaspoons of water, add a single teaspoon of this solution to a large bottle filled with water and, after shaking it, give one teaspoon of that final mixture to the patient.’”

The author had apparently found access to Hahnemann’s case journals which were jealously guarded by Mélanie d’Hervilly in Paris. Apart from Hahnemann’s favourite pupil Clemens Maria von Bönninghausen no-one was permitted to see them. It must therefore have been through his intermediation that the unknown author saw extracts from the case journals. Mélanie, to whose attention the notice in one of the longest established homeopathic journals was bound to come, appears to have suspected this too. In an unpublished letter to Bönninghausen, written in French and dated 8 September 1856, that is, only a few weeks after publication of the above-mentioned journal, she vented her anger and reprimanded her step-daughter’s father-in-law for disclosing confidential information. In her letter, the Q-potencies – as they are called now – were mentioned for the first time by name: *divisions infinitésimales* (infinitesimal dilutions).³⁷

The provoking announcement in the *Allgemeine Homöopathische Zeitung* concluded with the wish that the long expected sixth *Organon* edition might at long last bring clarity about the new potentization methods. The author expressed his view that the planned publication was in good hands with Bönninghausen whose knowledge and “clarity of thought” he could not praise enough. But he was mistaken. Where other

homeopaths had failed, Bönninghausen did not succeed either: he was unable to convince Mélanie to make Hahnemann's literary legacy available to his pupils. In 1859, three years after this incident, Bönninghausen published an article on homeopathic posology, in which he described his positive experiences with high potencies (greater than C 30) and expressed his hope that Hahnemann's widow might soon publish the sixth edition of the *Organon* since it included the description of a "new dynamization method relating to high potencies [...] more powerful than any previous preparations."³⁸

Two years later Bönninghausen published another article in defence of the high potencies in the same journal. He and other fellow homeopaths had followed Hahnemann's example and had used them with great success, he wrote. Bönninghausen omitted to mention which drugs Hahnemann had prescribed to his patients in such high dilution during the last decade of his life. Instead he remarked, rather cryptically, that "the progress [Hahnemann] made in this field in the years leading up to his death is only known to his close friends, among whom we have the fortune to count ourselves."³⁹

The veil of secrecy surrounding the "*médicaments au globule*" or "50-millesimal potencies" was first partly lifted in 1921 by the Stuttgart homeopath and biographer of Hahnemann, Richard Haehl, when he published the definitive edition of the *Organon*. Hahnemann's famous addendum to section 270 contains a detailed description of how to prepare the potencies according to which "the substance of the drug is diminished 50,000 times with each degree of dynamization, while its power is incredibly increased."⁴⁰ Elsewhere, Haehl pointed out how important the Q-potencies (short for Latin *quinquagintamilia*), as they are mostly referred to today, were for Hahnemann's medical practice during the final years of his life. We read in Haehl's biography of Hahnemann: "Potencies obtained in this new way were described by Hahnemann as 'médicaments au globule', as distinct from the 'médicaments à la goutte', prepared by his former method, the potency degrees of which he had always expressed by Roman figures. The new preparations from globules he described with Arabic figures surmounted by a circle (1°, 2°, 3°, 5° etc.)."⁴¹

Information as to when and how Hahnemann applied the mysterious Q-potencies for the first time can only be gained from the seventeen Paris case journals which have been preserved. Unfortunately, neither the later case journals nor the sixth *Organon* edition, of which for many decades only a manuscript existed, reveal which abbreviation Hahnemann used for this form of medication in his notes. According to Rima Handley, author of the double biography of Samuel and Mélanie Hahnemann, the musician Rousselot is said to have been one of the first patients to be treated by the new method. He first consulted Hahnemann in October 1837 because of a hearing problem and was initially treated with a whole range of homeopathic remedies in centesimal potency. On 16 September he was given one sulphur globule in the tenth potency dissolved in a glass of water, as Handley writes. She is therefore convinced that the notation "o" definitely refers to Hahnemann's new approach of using globules instead of drops. And the "use of globules", she continues, "stands for what we call LM potencies today [she means Q-potencies, R.J.]."⁴² The author is however unable to provide conclusive evidence for her assumption. She suggests, furthermore, that the drugs which Hahnemann used in such extreme dilution during the last years of his life were *Calcium carbonicum* (oyster shell), *Graphites* (black lead), *Silicea* (silica),

Lycopodium (club moss), *Natrium muriaticum* (sodium chloride), *Nux vomica* (poison nut), *Phosphor*, *Hepar sulphuris* (calcium sulphide), *Belladonna* (deadly nightshade) and *Bryonia* (bryony) and especially *Sulphur*. Handley claims that Hahnemann administered the Q-potencies not only, as recommended in the sixth edition of the *Organon*, in ascending but also in descending order. By way of example, she describes the case of the sculptor and artist Joseph-Théodore Richom(m)e. He apparently was first given the eleventh then the tenth Q-potency. Hahnemann then omitted several stages and continued in ascending order (Q7, Q8, Q9). Handley concludes from her research that Hahnemann used the Q-potencies especially for healing chronic illnesses and that he showed a marked preference for *sulphur*. In acute cases he seems to have preferred centesimal potencies.

Handley's hypothesis has not remained without contradiction. Other homeopaths have made attempts at unveiling the secret of the Q-potencies in Hahnemann's case journals. But it is doubtful that a conclusive answer will ever be found. In evaluating the French case journals it might be futile to focus exclusively on the Q-potencies while neglecting other exciting aspects of Hahnemann's Paris practice such as his experiments with replacing coal for water or alcohol in dilutions, or his more frequent use of placebo (that is, lactose). His dietetic instructions to patients and the olfactory application of medicines, which we find frequently in that period, are worthwhile research topics, as are Hahnemann's experiments with succussion and the various instructions he gave to patients on how to prepare their medicine at home.

Hahnemann's continued striving to improve homeopathy and his alert and inquisitive mind, even at an advanced age, did not only find expression in the sixth *Organon* edition. He was equally concerned, right to the end, with the further development and dissemination of his theory of chronic diseases. In September 1836 Hahnemann spoke of his concerns in that respect in a letter to Bönninghausen: "I only have one more wish," he wrote from Paris, "which I will not see fulfilled here – that the remaining parts of my *Chronic Diseases* be published. My publisher of 25 years, Arnold in Dresden, has gone bankrupt through his own fault and was only able to print the first two parts. I am apprehensive about offering the remaining four parts to a German bookseller at my age and will have to leave this very laborious and comprehensive work to my descendants in manuscript form, thus depriving posterity of it [...]"⁴³ His fears were, as we know, unfounded.

In the introduction to the third part of *Chronic Diseases* (1837) Hahnemann described how manufacture and administration could be improved, for instance by slightly changing the degree of dynamization, that is, by reducing or increasing the number of succussions during dilution.

A year later the fourth part of this work, which is disputed even among Hahnemann's followers, went on sale. In its preface, which was also written in Paris, Hahnemann referred to the then wide-spread concept of vitalism in ascribing the efficacy of homeopathic remedies to the positive effect they have on the vital force that is present in every human being. For this he was even praised by one of the best known physicians of his time, Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland, who was otherwise mildly critical of homeopathy. The physician of Goethe wrote in an essay published in the journal founded by him: "This is in fact the true merit of homeopathy, that it stimulates the vital force in the afflicted organ to activity and support, and seeks and

applies the remedies which are most closely related to this organ or this condition.”⁴⁴ We no longer call it “vital force” today. We speak of the body’s own healing forces which are triggered through a regulatory therapy such as homeopathy. Hahnemann obviously tried to identify the active principle of homeopathy after having for many years insisted that the processes inside the sick as well as healthy organism were “not accessible” to the intellect.

Hahnemann’s last literary legacy, the fifth part of *Chronic Diseases*, was published in Düsseldorf in 1839. In its preface, which is dated 19 December 1838, Hahnemann again praised the powerful effect of the highly diluted and “dynamized” homeopathic medicines: “Homeopathic dynamizations are true awakeners of medicinal properties which lie dormant in natural bodies while they are in their raw state, and which are stimulated to affect our life in an almost spiritual fashion.”⁴⁵ He concluded this eulogy with the words: “For the perfection of our only healing art and the wellbeing of the patients it seems worthwhile for the physician to undertake the necessary efforts to awaken in his medicines the appropriate, best possible efficacy.”⁴⁶

We know from Hahnemann’s correspondence that, alongside his extensive medical practice, he continued his work on scientific research and publications right up to his death. Since writing became increasingly strenuous for him during his last years, from 1842 on, he dictated his letters to friends and colleagues, only adding his signature in his own hand. Hahnemann’s last letter, which was addressed to his daughters in Germany on 5 January 1843, returned their New Year’s greetings and ends with the words: “Live healthily, well and content, my dear children.”⁴⁷ There he also mentioned that he used no other secretary “but my dear wife”. The signature is not as clear and well-formed as usual. His hand must have shaken. Georg Heinrich Gottfried Jahr, a frequent visitor to Hahnemann’s house at the time, reported that Hahnemann fell ill shortly after his 88th birthday. It first looked as if he had contracted the “bronchial catarrh” which usually afflicted him at the beginning of spring. But he was unable to overcome the “spring complaint”, as Jahr called it. In the almost six weeks of his illness Hahnemann gradually grew weaker. He probably contracted pneumonia in the end, which did not respond to homeopathic treatment. Hahnemann must have felt that he was close to death. His pupil, Dr Croserio, who never left his sickbed, described Hahnemann’s last days in a letter to an English homeopath: “How much equanimity, patience and imperturbable goodness he exhibited! Though he had a distinct presentiment of his approaching end, yet he never permitted an expression to escape him which could alarm his wife; he calmly made his final arrangements, and embraced each of his friends with tenderness, such as belonged to a final adieu, but with steady equanimity. Hahnemann expired at 5 a.m. Two hours afterwards I visited his sacred remains. The face expressed an ineffable calm. Death could not detract the least from the angelic goodness which belonged to the expression of his features.”⁴⁸ In a painting of Hahnemann on his deathbed he indeed looks as if he had just fallen asleep peacefully. Mélanie commissioned the painting on the day of her husband’s death from the German (not Dutch, as Haehl suggested) historical painter Friedrich Bouterwerk who lived in Paris. It was unfortunately destroyed in the Second World War. According to another report the founder of homeopathy bore the pain in his hour of death stoically. When Mélanie lamented the providence which permitted that such a great physician, who had helped so many people in his life, had to suffer so much, Hahnemann is said to have replied: “God owes me nothing, I owe him everything.”⁴⁹

The death of her dearly beloved husband came as a shock to Mélanie, who, in the years she spent with Hahnemann in Paris must have suppressed all thoughts of death for obvious reasons. Her grief was therefore the more vehement. Hahnemann's daughters and great-grandson, Leopold Süß-Hahnemann, resented the way she dealt with her bereavement, reproaching her for not providing the kind of funeral that would have befitted such a famous man and prominent physician. Their views must however be seen in the context of the subsequent inheritance disputes. Mélanie will have had reasons for behaving as she did, however incomprehensible her actions must have appeared to others at the time. She was clearly distraught and wanted to be left alone in her grief. In a letter of 30 July 1843, written to the German homeopathic physician Christoph Hartung, who had cured Austrian General Johann Josef Count Radetzky, she described the "dreadful hopelessness"⁵⁰ that had overcome her after Hahnemann's death. She could not part from her husband and obtained special permission to keep his body in her house for two more weeks. She even spent the impressive sum of two thousand Francs to have him embalmed according to a special method. She allowed nobody to enter the house of mourning, not even Hahnemann's German relatives. It was not until the 11 July that a small funeral procession walked to Montmartre cemetery in driving rain. Hahnemann's grandson and his mother were the only relatives from Germany who attended the funeral. Leopold described the ceremony which he considered unworthy of his grandfather: "The immortal founder of homeopathy was buried like the most miserable pauper, early in the morning, just after 5 o'clock; a common hearse carried the body, followed on foot by his wife, his daughter, the widow Süß with her son, and a Dr Lethière. His 'faithful' wife had the coffin placed into a vault in which two of her old "friends" were already entombed."⁵¹

The vault was not to be the final resting place of Hahnemann's remains. The dying wish of the founder of homeopathy, which, for reasons that cannot be established, was first ignored, was ultimately also to be fulfilled: the words "non inutilis vixi" (I did not live in vain) were inscribed on his gravestone. His fame soon became, and has remained, universal.

¹ Stahl, Briefwechsel, p. 118

² IGM Archives A 1277. All following quotations are also from there.

³ Stahl, Briefwechsel, p. 120

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Quoted from Bradford, Life, p. 390

⁶ From the IGM's Stuttgart collection, No. 39/42

⁷ Quoted from Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 359

⁸ Letter of 12 August 1840, printed in LPZ 28 (1897), p. 125

⁹ Quoted from Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 386

¹⁰ Quoted from Bradford, Life, p. 393

¹¹ Quoted from Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 388

¹² IGM Archives M-101

¹³ IGM Archives M-424

¹⁴ Based on German translation taken from Hygea 3 (1836), p. 395

¹⁵ Printed in Albrecht, Leben, p. 78f.

¹⁶ Printed in Albrecht, Denkmal, p. 116

¹⁷ IGM Archives M-492

¹⁸ Mure, Doctrine, p. XLVII-LII

¹⁹ Quoted from AHZ 17 (1840), col. 287f.

²⁰ Quoted from AHZ 8 (1836), col. 178

²¹ IGM Archives M-172

²² Stahl, Briefwechsel, p. 121

- ²³ Quoted from Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 1, p. 251
- ²⁴ Quoted from *ibid.*
- ²⁵ Stahl, Briefwechsel, p. 124
- ²⁶ Quoted from Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 381
- ²⁷ Quoted from Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 384
- ²⁸ Quoted from Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 385
- ²⁹ Quoted from Bradford, Life, p. 385
- ³⁰ IGM Archives DF, f. 179
- ³¹ IGM Archives DF, f. 179
- ³² IGM Archives DF, f. 179
- ³³ Library of Congress, Washington D.C., Music Division, Paganini letter of 3 September 1837
- ³⁴ Quoted from Neill, Paganini
- ³⁵ LPZ 26 (1895), p. 49
- ³⁶ AHZ 52 (1856), p. 144
- ³⁷ IGM Archives M-554
- ³⁸ AHZ 58 (1859), p. 156, note 1
- ³⁹ AHZ 61 (1860), p. 159
- ⁴⁰ Hahnemann, *Organon*, 6th edition, Edition Schmidt, p. 218
- ⁴¹ Quoted from Haehl, Life and Work, vol. 1, p. 329
- ⁴² Handley, *Spuren*, p. 86
- ⁴³ Stahl, Briefwechsel, p. 124
- ⁴⁴ Hufelands Journal der practischen Heilkunde 76 (1838), p. 24
- ⁴⁵ Hahnemann, CK (1839), part 5, p. V
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.* p. VI
- ⁴⁷ Quoted from Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 380
- ⁴⁸ Quoted from Bradford, Life, p. 426
- ⁴⁹ AHZ 50 (1855), p. 47
- ⁵⁰ Printed in Tischner, Hahnemannreliquie, p. 27
- ⁵¹ AHZ 69 (1864), p. 103

“[...] the honour of a monument”: the Hahnemann cult

On 11 August 1856, a day after the traditional annual commemoration of Samuel Hahnemann's doctorate, which is celebrated by homeopaths all over the world, the *Allgemeine Homöopathische Zeitung* published an article by Clotar Müller, head of the Leipzig Policlinic. Thirteen years had passed since the founder of homeopathy had died. In the article, which was suggestively titled “Hahnemann's ‘d’*Outre-Tombe*” (Hahnemann from beyond the grave), Müller deplored the way “Hahnemann's shadow was conjured up from the grave”.¹ Rumour had it that writings by Hahnemann were about to be published for the first time (including a new edition of the *Organon*) and this would not remain without impact on the factional conflict among homeopaths. Müller, whose father Moritz once had to defend himself against the allegation of being a “half-homeopath”, spoke dismissively of the role of “poltergeist” that had been allocated to Hahnemann. It was high time, he wrote, that the paternalism and patronizing came to an end, seeing that the great old man had been dead for more than a decade.

The late founder of homeopathy was undoubtedly still the authority and exerted power even “from beyond the grave”. This was, to an extent, due to the Hahnemann cult that had begun when he was still alive, and not altogether without his support. Unlike other prominent personalities he had, however, in refraining from writing an autobiography (discounting his brief autobiographical sketch of 1791), refused to shape the image posterity would have of him. In 1834 his son-in-law had suggested that he should publish his life story with a likeness of himself since “the biographies [...] of great men” were known to differ from one another. But Hahnemann, almost eighty years old at the time, declined – for whatever reason – and left the task to others. The first biographical sketches were published in Hahnemann's lifetime, written by people who knew him such as the Köthen headmaster Franz Albrecht, who, with his “biographical memorial”, intended to present Hahnemann in the right light (that is, as seen by his daughters). The first source-critical biography, by Richard Haehl, a physician and well-known collector of homeopathica, was not published until 1922 and Rima Handley's double biography of Mélanie and Samuel Hahnemann not until 1990. In 1847, Constantin Hering, one of Hahnemann's most prominent pupils, advised future biographers on what they needed to bear in mind when writing about the founder of homeopathy: “Next to his writings, those that are published and the many as yet unprinted letters as well as other notes and testimonies, it is above all the inner moral person that must be described, his heart and his feelings. It is here where we are exposed to the danger of misjudging, or the very greatest danger, that of being unjust where we ought to be least unjust, that the greatest awareness and caution are needed to fulfil the most basic, most general duty. Here, nothing must be lost that could be testimony and nothing believed that was not said by the man himself. Exclusively on the basis of what he said, about himself and others, can he be judged.”² Hering's precepts have often remained unheeded in the past two hundred years, by opponents and supporters of homeopathy alike.

It is apparent from witness reports and Hahnemann's own writings that he was not a vain person, primarily concerned with his posthumous reputation. It was not until quite late in his life, towards the end of the 1820s, that he began to give thought to the question of how he would be remembered. In 1829 he wrote to his pupil Friedrich Rummel, who had asked Hahnemann for his likeness: “If I live to meet a good portrait

painter, I will ask for my portrait in a larger format, as has been requested [...]. If not, we will leave it and allow that those who come after me remember me by the spiritual properties of my inner self that speak out of my writings. My vanity does not ask for more.”³ Like so many other great scientists and scholars Hahnemann wanted to live on in his work. Other forms of remembrance were initially foreign to him, although this would change soon. In the same year, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of his doctorate, two artists began work on likenesses of the master. Hahnemann approved of both the oil painting by the Leipzig painter Julius Schoppe, which had been commissioned by his pupils and was to become very popular as a lithograph, and the bust by Dietrich (“a young, deserving artist”). It was important to him, as he wrote to Rummel in another letter, “that no distorted image of me is passed down to the world.”⁴

In 1834 Hahnemann gave permission for a “small well executed likeness (painted in oil)”⁵ to be used for a steel engraving to raise funds for the foundation of the Leipzig Homeopathic Hospital. 70,000 copies were first spoken of, but in the end the much smaller number of a thousand copies was said to have been commissioned by Hahnemann, at his own expense, from a Vienna engraver. When the question presented itself, whether he should be portrayed with or without his beloved black skullcap, the founder of homeopathy accepted the artist’s advice and agreed to “appear before the public with his honest bald head”.⁶ When the intended separate sale of his portrait proved slow, Hahnemann offered the plate to his publisher Arnold for the sum of 6000 Thalers, to be used to illustrate any further editions and copies of his work. He had clearly overestimated the demand. In a letter to his Vienna pupil Anton Schmit he blamed the homeopaths who only thought of themselves: “Less than two per cent consider doing something in support of the art [of homeopathy, R.J.]”⁷

Hahnemann occasionally honoured faithful supporters of homeopathy, friends and influential patients, by bestowing on them mementos such as cameos, portraits, signet rings, or even ringlets from his thinning crown. Among the recipients of such highly valued keepsakes were his friend Clemens von Bönninghausen (portrait, lock of hair), the French homeopath Count des Guidi (ring) and the homeopathic physician Christoph Hartung who practised in Lombardy (cameo). The Hahnemann House Trust in London holds a leather souvenir case containing a letter written by Hahnemann on 18 December 1836, in which he expressed his wish that the enclosed lock of hair might continue to remind the recipient (a Mrs Ramsay) of him and his wife Mélanie. The cult clearly started in Hahnemann’s lifetime.

After Hahnemann’s death his widow, who came into conflict with the authorities for breach of the approbation regulations and, from 1857 to 1870, signed over the homeopathic practice *pro forma* to her son-in-law Carl Anton Bönninghausen, made sure that the founder of homeopathy would not be forgotten. Hahnemann’s relatives in Germany and some pupils nevertheless accused her of denying her late husband a monumental tombstone, which could serve as a place of remembrance, and of withholding writings left by him. But not long after the death of her deeply beloved Samuel she considered having a medal made as a “lasting memory”⁸ of her husband and discussed her plans with the sculptor David d’Angers. She also gave permission for a lock of hair to be cut as a keepsake from Hahnemann’s head on his deathbed.

Homeopaths all over the world were obviously interested in owning such keepsakes of the deceased master as we can see from the request of an unknown correspondent who, around 1850, wrote to Mélanie d'Hervilly, asking for a souvenir of S. Hahnemann (cameo, quill, autograph, cigar or lock of hair) and pointing out that "such items, even if they are not worth much in themselves, are of great value to those who, like you and I, cherish his memory."⁹ We have unfortunately no information as to how the widow responded to the request, but can presume that she declined. A visitor, who shortly after her death in 1878 (she died of pulmonary catarrh at the age of 78) was shown the room where she died, felt as if he had entered a museum: "When one memento after the other was placed before me, it was as if I truly sensed his presence. Here a lock of his hair, there his handkerchief, his shirt collar and the necktie he wore at the end. On the other side was a large pack of letters from patients with Hahnemann's prescriptions added to the margins. In front of me hung a splendid oil painting of Hahnemann, showing him in his sixtieth year. In the corner stood a large marble bust by David, in short, everything around me was Hahnemann or by Hahnemann..."¹⁰ No doubt, anybody owning a letter from Hahnemann's quill could consider himself lucky, for such keepsakes would soon turn into valuable assets. The sums paid for Hahnemann autographs at the beginning of the twentieth century reflect the high demand and the continued veneration of their author.

Apart from such individual forms of commemoration, it is above all the monuments, which we find all over the world, that keep the collective memory of Hahnemann alive. The first of these monuments was erected in Leipzig. After news of Hahnemann's death had reached Germany, the homeopaths, at their gathering on 10 August in Dresden, agreed to set up a memorial in his honour and began to raise funds without delay. But it would take some time before their plans became reality. It was not until 1847 that the Central Union of Homeopathic Physicians appointed a monument committee that was to choose between four different designs. They decided in favour of the sculptor Carl Johann Steinhäuser, the only one of the contending artists who had known Hahnemann in person. They clearly wanted the statue to be as authentic as possible. Criticism was soon voiced with regard to the chosen location. Foreign sponsors in particular objected to Köthen because of its remoteness. In the end Leipzig was decided upon. Proceeds from selling a special coin, depicting the envisaged monument, were to contribute to covering the costs. The life-size statue was sculpted by Carl Johann Steinhäuser in Rome and cast in Leipzig. On 10 August 1851 the monument in honour of Hahnemann was finally unveiled on the "Promenade" in Leipzig (now: Richard Wagner Square). The festive act was attended by physicians from all over Germany, from Spain, England, France and Italy. Only Mélanie d'Hervilly sent her apologies. In his official address Hahnemann's pupil Rummel pointed out that there were homeopaths who felt it was premature "to grant Hahnemann the honour of a monument".¹¹ Rummel, however, thought it was high time if Germany, the cradle of homeopathy, was not to be accused of failing to acknowledge the historical significance of the great physician.

The world's first Hahnemann memorial, which was surrounded by a cast-iron railing with motifs of plants used in homeopathy, has survived the storms of time. When the Nazis seized power and all "monuments to Jews" were to be destroyed, Hahnemann's first name awakened the suspicion of the anti-Semitic iconoclasts, but following some biographical research they gave up their plans of demolishing the Hahnemann

memorial in 1937. It was not even included in the “German people’s metal donation to the *Führer*”.

It was not long before Köthen, where Hahnemann had been active for several years, had its own monument. In 1855 the former post-office clerk Arthur Lutze, who had become a very successful homeopathic lay practitioner, had a monument placed in the garden behind his clinic, not far from Hahnemann’s former residence. It was, however, demolished in 1910. Another impressive memorial was donated to the town in 1897 by the German Councillor of Commerce Louis Wittig, who had made a fortune selling the “health coffee” promoted by Lutze. Today, this monument stands in the park of Lutze’s former clinic. It is similar in form and dimension to another Hahnemann memorial that would be inaugurated some years later in Washington.

The Washington monument is the most impressive one, a clear sign that in the second half of the nineteenth century homeopathy had gained a strong foothold within the US healthcare (which it, however, relinquished again a few decades later). On 21 June 1900 the monument was unveiled in Washington D.C. in a festive act which had been planned since 1892. It was then that the American homeopaths began to raise funds for a monument to be set up in a central location. In just a few years the considerable sum of \$ 75,000 had been donated and building works could have commenced had it not been for the fact that permission from the legislator and the president needed to be obtained before a monument could be installed in the American capital. As Hahnemann was not American a fair amount of lobbying was necessary before this could be achieved. In 1897 both houses of the US Congress granted permission, but President Cleveland refused his signature. It was only under his successor, William McKinley, a friend of homeopathy, that the monument could finally be erected on the east side of Scott Circle, where Massachusetts Avenue, which runs towards the White House, intersects Sixteenth Street. Several thousand people attended, including the President and First Lady and many other prominent politicians. American Attorney General John W. Griggs emphasized in his address that Samuel Hahnemann, though not an American, had left a scientific legacy that belonged to the world, and that therefore one of the most beautiful squares in the capital had been made available for a monument in honour of the important man. Before Griggs began his speech the famous American homeopath and occasional poet Dr William Tod Helmuth recited a solemn ode which he had specially composed. It ended with the words: “And all the nations of the earth shall sing/The grand Te Deum – Homeopathy!”¹²

The American memorial is laid out in a semicircle, like a Greek exedra, with the figure of Hahnemann seated at the centre in a niche, his head resting on his hand in a pondering attitude. It is based on the bust by David d’Angers which was described earlier. In the cubic pedestal the words *similia similibus curentur* are inscribed and the freeze above the figure bears Hahnemann’s name. The bas-reliefs above the stone benches on both sides of the figure show scenes from Hahnemann’s life. The work was executed by sculptor Charles Henry Niehaus, who also created the bronze statue of the American president James A. Garfield (1885).

Today, there is hardly a taxi driver or tourist guide who knows this monument in Washington. The place of pilgrimage for homeopaths from all over the world is now Hahnemann’s final resting place on Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris, where many celebrities are buried. Hahnemann’s remains were transferred there from the

CHAPTER 8

Montmartre cemetery thanks to an initiative of American homeopaths in the 1890s, who were shocked to see that Hahnemann's grave was not clearly identifiable in the tomb he shared with Mélanie's foster father Lethière. It frequently happened that visiting homeopaths, keen to pay tribute to the late master, mistook Mélanie's adjacent grave, which is more splendid and better cared for, for that of Hahnemann. The festive exhumation of Hahnemann's mortal remains took place on 24 May 1898, with 35 people attending, among them the grandson, Dr Leopold Süß-Hahnemann, who had accompanied the original funeral procession to Montmartre cemetery 55 years earlier and who was the only surviving witness of that event. It was possible to establish the identity of the deceased by his wedding ring, which bears the inscription "Samuel Hahnemann, Mélanie Hahnemann, joint Cöthen, 18 January 1835", a sealed flask containing a golden commemorative coin which shows Hahnemann's profile, a detailed report about the embalment and a farewell letter from Mélanie. The letter contains, in French and Latin, the moving words: "Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann, born in Meissen in Saxony on 10 April 1755, died Paris on 2 July 1843. His wife, Marie Mélanie d'Hervilly, will be united with him in the grave according to his wish, and the words he wrote will be carved: In this our grave are united ash to ash, bone to bone, as love had joined them in life."¹³

Samuel's and Mélanie's joint wish was respected by the group of American and French homeopaths who had initiated the transferral of Hahnemann's remains to Père Lachaise cemetery and collected donations for a monument worthy of him. The remains of his widow were buried in a small coffin at Hahnemann's feet. Two years later, on 21 July 1900, the Hahnemann memorial was unveiled. To this day it has remained the central place of commemoration. Made from highly polished Scottish granite, Hahnemann's bust stands on a pedestal. To the left and right of the bust are two stone slabs in which the titles of Hahnemann's most important works and the law of similars have been inscribed. The pedestal itself informs us that the monument was made possible by donations from homeopaths all over the world. Close to the grave of Hahnemann and his wife Mélanie, other famous personalities from the world of arts, literature, music, medicine and the sciences have found their last resting place. Among them are the composers Rossini and Donizetti, the writers Racine and Molière, the physician Franz Joseph Gall, founder of phrenology, and his colleague Joseph Ignace Guillotin, known less for his commitment to the smallpox inoculation than for his infamous invention of an apparatus for supposedly pain-free executions.

Robert Musil's much-quoted verdict that "as soon as someone has lost all influence, a monument is set up for him," does not apply to Hahnemann. This is, at least in part, due to the multi-faceted and sometimes cult-like commemorative culture that attaches to homeopathy. In India, where more than half a million homeopathic physicians and healers are registered, people continue to celebrate Hahnemann's birthday, adorning his busts with flower garlands. The collective memory mostly retains the "special" birthdays: on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Hahnemann's birth the town of Meissen organized festivities that involved most of the population. On the same day celebrations took place in London, Paris, Philadelphia and in other towns where homeopathic medical associations existed. In Vienna the president of the Association of Homeopathic Physicians eulogized: "It is not granted many people to see their reputation and fame extend to all continents in their lifetime. Fewer even have the good fortune of being celebrated after centuries by all civilized and scientifically minded societies on earth and of gaining the right to eternal fame as benefactors of

humanity.”¹⁴ A hundred years later, on Hahnemann’s 200th birthday, these solemn words still applied. The 1955 International Hahnemann Jubilee Congress took place in Stuttgart, as Meissen was at that time part of the GDR, and the event was overshadowed by the conflict between East and West. In one of the many speeches it was mentioned that Hahnemann’ spirit was present at every meeting of the worldwide association of homeopathic physicians, the *Liga Medicorum Homoeopathica Internationalis*, which still exists today.

There are forms of collective memory which are more important for homeopathy than stone monuments or celebrative extravaganzas. Homeopathy seeks most of all to secure its body of knowledge, unlike other medical systems that constantly strive to renew theirs. The homeopath Bernhard Hirschel referred to this self-critically in 1851, in his address at the inauguration of the Leipzig Hahnemann Memorial. It was most important, he said, to ensure that there was a future, that there was a new generation. The means and ways to achieve this primary goal were “writings, drug provings, clinics, university chairs, pharmacies, associations for the promotion of homeopathy, travelling etc.”¹⁵ In many countries his wishes have become reality. Serial publications, journals, hospitals, training centres, pharmacies, physicians’ and lay-practitioners’ associations, foundations and institutes bear Hahnemann’s name and increase his posthumous fame. Roads are named after him (not only in Germany). – To adapt a word of the composer Carl Orff on the evanescence of fame: “It is the best monument for a physician if his work remains part of the repertoire.” There are many factors that ensure that Hahnemann’s doctrine still plays a major, if not increasing, part in today’s healthcare worldwide. But that is another story.

¹ AHZ 52 (1856), p. 154

² Hering, Hahnemann, p. 299

³ IGM Archives A 1552

⁴ IGM Archives A 1555

⁵ IGM Archives A 1484

⁶ IGM Archives A 1490

⁷ IGM Archives A 1520

⁸ IGM Archives M-103

⁹ IGM Archives M-520

¹⁰ Based on German translation in Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 474

¹¹ Quoted from Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 2, p. 485

¹² Bittinger, Sketch, p. 70

¹³ Facsimile reproduction in Haehl, Hahnemann, vol. 1, p. 393

¹⁴ AHZ 50 (1855), p. 7

¹⁵ Hirschel, Bekenner, p. 5