

"For the cliff is all right, if you're careful," they said,  
 "and if folks even slip and are dropping,  
 it isn't the slipping that hurts them so much  
 as the shock down below when they're stopping."

So day after day, as these mishaps occurred,  
 quick forth would those rescuers sally  
 to pick up the victims who fell off the cliff,  
 with their ambulance down in the valley.

Then an old sage remarked: "It's a marvel to me  
 that people give far more attention  
 to repairing results than to stopping the cause,  
 when they'd much better aim at prevention.

"Let us stop at its source all this mischief." cried he,  
 "come, neighbors and friends, let us rally;  
 if the cliff we will fence, we might almost dispense  
 with the ambulance down in the valley."

**Part II by Herbert Nehrlich**

So the townspeople met at the top of the cliff  
 where the workmen put up a strong fence,  
 woven wire and posts that were hardy and stiff  
 and they lauded each other's good sense.

For a week the fence stood and no ambulance came  
 then one morning they woke up to see  
 that the fence had been cut from the cliff to the tree  
 in the valley they stood with their shame.

Said a voice from the sky, and they knew it was God,  
 "If you keep people healthy at all,  
 there are forces objecting as they find it quite odd  
 when no earls and no peasants do fall."

And instead of a fence on the edge of the cliff  
 they had placed at the bottom a pool,  
 where they'd land in the water, not ending up stiff  
 but each victim was seen as a fool.

And to face their disease that had caused the neglect  
 they would get a big bucket of pills,  
 though the cost of it all would not nearly reflect  
 that they'd taken the fence from the hills.

But the pharmacist said "It's the minds of all men,  
 they are missing the atoms of dope,"  
 and that medicine taken again and again  
 was the modern way's spirit of hope.

The sage who had said that the fence should be built  
 then spoke up, from the cliff near the edge  
 but the white coated doc said it must be the guilt  
 and he gave to the people this pledge:

"You will no longer be in the danger to fall  
 from the cliff, neither earl nor a peasant,  
 as the ordinance says that the citizens, all,  
 won't be wandering near any crescent."

And the sage on the edge while addressing the town  
 said "They're neither your neighbour nor friend."  
 Both the doc and his buddy then pushed the sage down  
 off the cliff. Thus the story does end.

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**American Medical Revolutions**

About 170 years ago our ancestors forced the repeal of licensing laws which had created a monopoly over the practice of medicine for orthodox physicians. Ordinary people, farmers, artisans, tradesmen and others got together and forced politicians to act on their behalf. They were tired of bloodletting, and harsh medications like mercury compounds that ruined their teeth and weakened their bodies. They opted for kinder and gentler alternatives with lower casualty rates, particularly the newly introduced homeopathy. They were impressed that tiny doses of medicine were able to cure cholera much better than the massive doses used by orthodox physicians.

Homeopathy, introduced in America in 1825, was a brand new medical discipline developed by a German physician named Samuel Hahnemann (1744-1843). He was disillusioned with the results of medical practices of his day. He stopped practicing and began to study the effects

of medicine on a healthy person, himself. He tried quinine, a very popular medication, first. It caused symptoms of malaria, the disease which it was able to cure. Similarly mercury produced symptoms of syphilis on which it had therapeutic effects. This experimental evidence led to an assumption: substances which produce symptoms in healthy people can have a curative effect on sick people who experience the same symptoms. Extensive experimentation with his family and friends resulted in collection of the symptomology of 27 medications. With this information he was able to investigate the validity of his hypothesis.

Returning to the practice of medicine he found that clinical experience validated his hypothesis. By this means his hypothesis became a theory in accordance with scientific methodology. Ultimately, confirmed by other investigators, it became the law of similars.

Subsequently experimentation with varying doses disclosed that small amounts of medicines had more effect on the diseases of patients than large amounts. This experimental evidence led him to conclude that his medications were stimulating the inherent healing powers of his patients. They were getting well without the damaging side effects of excessive amounts of medicines.

Many orthodox physicians in Germany, observing Hahnemann's successes, sought training in the application of the new doctrines and began to practice homeopathy - generating a new school of medicine in the process. It became popular all across Europe. Homeopathic physicians began treating the royalty and nobility of Europe.

Homeopathic physicians didn't try to find the cause of diseases. They spent a lot of time identifying symptoms in considerable detail since each patient was considered to be unique. The symptoms defined the disease. Matching the symptoms of

the patient with the symptoms associated with medications was not an easy job. Intelligence, training and dedication were required to achieve the full benefits of homeopathic technology. Ultimately some homeopaths limited themselves to the use of low potency medications while the most effective practitioners used the high potency variety, those with the highest dilutions.

Hahnemann did not claim to have discovered the law of similars. The therapeutic systems of empiric physicians in ancient Greece and Paracelsus had included this theory. The important discovery that medicinal substances could be more active at high dilutions was his alone and he was vilified because of it. Those whose incomes depended on the sale of large quantities of drugs found it economically damaging. Orthodox physicians, whose use of excessive amounts of mercury caused their patients to lose teeth and deteriorate physically, hated it as a serious threat to their physical safety as well as their professional reputation. But many physicians trained in the orthodox tradition abandoned it and took up the practice of homeopathy with great success.

Success of homeopathic treatments with camphor, copper sulfate and *Veratrum album*, recommended by Hahnemann during the Asiatic cholera epidemic in Europe in 1832, firmly established homeopathy in France. When Hahnemann arrived in Paris in 1835 he was granted a license to practice medicine within 6 months. He subsequently cured the Marquess of Anglesea of tic de leureux which French physicians had been trying unsuccessfully to cure for 20 years. After losing prestige and patients to the homeopaths, member of the French National Academy of Medicine called them knaves, ignoramuses, charlatans and quacks. Nevertheless orthodox physicians adopted camphor, copper sulfate and *Veratrum album* as remedies for cholera.

American homeopaths were as successful treating cholera in the 1830s as the French homeopaths. They added to their reputation when in 1978 a yellow fever epidemic spread from New Orleans into the Mississippi Valley with alarming death rates: 4,600 of 27,000 cases in New Orleans, 5,000 out of 18,500 cases in Memphis with a total of 15,934 death out of 74,265 cases reported in the Mississippi Valley. Homeopathic physicians in New Orleans had treated 1,945 cases with loss of 110. In the rest of the south they had treated 1,969 cases with loss of 151–7.7%. The overall death rate for reported cases in the south was at least 16%. The French Government awarded a gold medal to a French homeopath for his work during the New Orleans epidemic. Homeopaths were popular!

Insurance companies began offering reduced rates to persons employing homeopathic physicians and homeopathic life insurance companies were being chartered. In 1870 the Homeopathic Life Office of New York reported that it had sold 7,927 policies to followers of homeopathy and 2,258 to other; 84 deaths in the first category and 66 in the second justified the lower premiums charged to the former.

As a result of these successes by 1892, homeopaths in the United States controlled about 110 hospitals, 145 dispensaries, 62 orphan asylums and old peoples homes, over 30 nursing homes and sanitarium and 16 insane asylums.

In 1889 the Westborough, Massachusetts insane asylum was run by homeopaths and the Springfield Republican reported that the cost of maintenance is much less and recoveries and general success greater than in allopathic asylums.

Meanwhile competing medical technologies and an oversupply of physicians drastically reduced the income and status of about 110,000 orthodox physicians. An average one earned \$750 per year in 1900

and about 40 per year committed suicide because of financial difficulties. But about 15,000 homeopathic physicians prospered and 26 schools of homeopathy flourished at the end of the century. Unsuspecting homeopaths, fully occupied with their lucrative practices, gave grudging support to their own organization not realizing that they were in danger.

Orthodox physicians at the American Medical Association (AMA) plotted their downfall. The first objective was reduction in the number of medical schools and medical students. This had been a cherished goal since 1846 when the founding convention of the AMA occurred.

Politically astute George Simmons, M.D. who graduated from Hahnemann Medical College of Chicago in 1882 and later attended Rush Medical School, was appointed secretary of the AMA and editor of its journal (JAMA) in 1899. Soon thereafter he was appointed secretary of a committee to consider reorganization. In 1901 a reorganized AMA changed from a loose federation of independent professionals into a political powerhouse. The reorganization substantially reduced the influence of individual physicians who had been objecting to unethical drug company advertising.

In 1904 the AMA established a Permanent Council on Medical Education. In 1905 the Council arranged a conference of state medical licensing boards to review the status of medical education and set standards for medical schools. A temporary standard required four years of high school and 4 years of medical school and examination of graduates by state boards before licensing. In 1906, the committee inspected 160 medical schools, grading 82–A, 46–B and 32–C. Fifty schools agreed to require 1 year of college sciences courses for admission.

In 1907 Arthur D. Bevan, M.D., the Council's chairman, convinced Henry Pritchard, former President of MIT, who





now headed the Carnegie Foundation, to sponsor a study of medical education. That Foundation, founded in 1905 with the objective of upgrading the status of college teachers and creating a uniform system of higher education, was a logical ally. In November of that year the trustees approved the proposed study and Pritchard hired Abraham Flexner, an educator who had graduated from Johns Hopkins University, to work on the project.

Flexner headed for his alma mater's medical school, which he used as his standard of comparison. Accompanied by Nathan Caldwell, M.D., who replaced Bevan as Chairman of AMA's Council on Medical Education, Flexner made a comprehensive survey of medical schools in 1910. His opinions of most of the schools he visited and evaluated were not flattering. Harvard University was incensed at his opinion of their medical school which had been reorganized by Charles Elliot in 1870.

Flexner was convinced, probably by Dr. Caldwell, that Hahnemann and homeopathy were frauds, since this was the official opinion of the AMA which denied that homeopathy possessed therapeutic efficacy. Flexner also bought the opinion of William Osler, M.D. that "sectarian allopathy and homeopathy" were yielding to the new scientific medicine.

Flexner's famous report, coauthored by Nathan Caldwell, caused substantial changes. It started a process that empowered the AMA, disorganized the homeopaths and forced the closure of homeopathic medical schools. Even though John D. Rockefeller favored homeopathy and repeatedly insisted that it be supported, all of his money was spent on "scientific medicine". Frederick Gates who was influential in disbursing Rockefeller's money wrote that Hahnemann was insane. John D., Jr. told his father that the homeopaths were integrating with the

allopaths. Letter requests for funds from one homeopathic school were said to have been unanswered.

Scientific medicine was designed to be capital intensive. Requirements for teaching it increased costs beyond the capability of students to support the schools with tuition and fees. As a result schools, unable to supplement their income from other sources like grants and bequests, were forced to close or consolidate. In 1910 the number of medical schools was reduced from 166 to 131. Only 63 were left in 1929. In the 1930s and 1940s, 11 homeopathic schools closed. After 1930 even the Hahnemann Medical College of Philadelphia was teaching allopathic medicine except for one or two classes of homeopathy.

New laws gave the AMA the power to control what the schools taught. Curricula were heavy in the sciences, but there was only minimal training in nutrition and pharmacology. Physicians who used to make up their own remedies began to rely on pharmaceutical company formulations and for information on drugs. Production of physicians was substantially reduced. Competing medical sects, whose members had totaled less than 10% of all physicians, were all but emasculated.

Evidently our present unsatisfactory situation came about because the frustrated monopolists of the 1820s found a way to put themselves back in the driver's seat. They convinced upper and middle class people that they were scientists who could bring the benefits of science to their patients. At least \$300 million (\$600 million according to Harris Coulter's *The Divided Legacy*) contributed by wealthy donors, supplemented by an unknown amount funneled through the JAMA by the pharmaceutical industry and other advertisers, helped them regain control. At a time when one dollar bought a 10-hour day's work, this was an irresistible flood that carried the orthodox physicians back

into power and supported the monopoly for almost a hundred years.

Once in control, efforts to reduce competition and increase income have been unceasing. Physicians who practice alternative medicine, in competition with regular physicians, are subject to harassment. In the state of Washington about 30% of them are being harassed at this time. Those who make substantial advancements in medical science often find the Federal Government moving against them. The FDA and FTC have used taxpayer money to suppress new technology in a number of cases. Even State legislators have cooperated, in cases where other means failed,

The purpose of the new licensing laws was to protect the public but, in fact, monopolized medical care, according to reports, has been killing over 200,000 of us every year and promises to bankrupt the country. These laws are used to prevent free public access to less lethal, more effective and less expensive therapies. As Daniel Haley so eloquently wrote, in *Politics in Healing*, “we don’t need government protection from things that can’t hurt us”.

Medical science should be a search for the truth and many medical scientists have spent their lives in this search. Unfortunately scientific medicine, as practiced by the medical monopoly during the last century, has rejected the discoveries of a number of medical scientists. Too many promising technologies have been consigned to the dust bin of history. As a result, medical services are much more expensive than they should be and lower in quality than they could be. Less suppression and more competition can make people healthier at lower cost.

One hundred years of suppression of advancements in medical science is enough. Even physicians have been victimized. Their expensive schools don’t teach them about the suppressed science

and give them inadequate training in nutrition and therapeutics. We can do without the high prices and poor care. Let’s recover and apply the suppressed technology and reward, rather than discourage, innovations that promise lower costs and better quality care. Replace the medical monopoly with laws guaranteeing freedom of choice in medical care.

Again in 2008, as in the 1830s, orthodox medicine is killing lots of people and creating lots of invalids. The exorbitant price of \$2 trillion a year is too much. We owe it to ourselves and our descendants to reintroduce competition into the medical marketplace. Forcing the repeal of the Medical Practices Act will be a good start. The Access to Medical Treatment Act proposed in the 2000 session of Congress might also be resurrected.

– Jack Phillips  
20 Moir Road  
Saranac Lake, NY 12983