

# Dr Hering: Interesting Aspects

**ABSTRACT:** Interesting aspects of Dr Hering's Life, his collaborators, his family, myth and facts of proving of Lachesis makes for interesting reading authored by Dr T L Bradford.

Abstracted from Internet site; <http://homoeoint.org/seror/biograph/hermann.htm> or google searh pioneers of homoeopathy.



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Constantine Hering

## Dr CONSTANTINE HERING (1800-1880)

His early story is widely known, so too his efforts to disprove Homoeopathy.

"*Machts nach, aber machts recht nach,*" he determined on personal investigation in order that he might the more positively refute the points which Hahnemann had set before the profession.



The young Constantine Hering

Calling upon an acquaintance, a druggist of Leipzig, for some *Cinchona*, he was met by the friendly inquiry, "For what do you want it?" To this he answered, "For the purpose of proving it, in order the more thoroughly to attack the new folly," To this the druggist replied, "Let it alone, Hering; you are stepping on dangerous ground."

Hering's answer was that he feared not the truth. And the result was, the pamphlet was not written and Homoeopathy gained an able champion.

Subsequently, while still pursuing medical studies, Hering received a dissecting-wound, which, under the treatment of his teachers, reached such a degree of severity that amputation of the hand was advised. At the suggestion of a friend who was a student of Hahnemann's, the efficacy of the potentized drug was tried, the result being a complete cure of the wound and a thorough conversion of Hering. So thoroughly was he convinced that the law of cure had indeed been discovered, that he staked thereon even his success at the University. His inaugural thesis, "De Medicina Futura" contained a forcible and unflinching defense of the law of cure. He completed his medical studies and received the degree of Doctor of Medicine from the University of Wurzburg, March 23, 1826.

Soon after his graduation he was appointed by the king of Saxony to accompany the Saxon legation to Dutch Guiana, there to make scientific

research and prepare a zoological collection for his government. He continued in this capacity for some years, but his love for the new truth which he had learned impelled him to further study and finally practice medicine according to Hahnemann's doctrines. Such was his success that he gained great favor with the governor of the province, whose daughter he cured of an affection which the resident physicians had declared incurable.

During his residence at Surinam he was an occasional contributor to the *Homoeopathic Archives*, for which journal he had written as early as 1825, while still a student.

The court physician, learning of this, wrought upon the king sufficiently to cause a notice to be sent to Hering, directing him to attend to the duties of his appointment and let medical matters alone. His independent nature rebelled at such intolerance, and led him promptly to resign his appointment.

Dr George H Bute, formerly a Moravian missionary at Surinam and a pupil of Hering, had settled in Philadelphia and was engaged in the practice of Homoeopathy.

Dr Hering continued in practice at Paramaribo for a short time after his resignation.

Learning, however, from Dr Bute that Philadelphia offered a good field, Hering left Paramaribo and landed at Philadelphia, January, 1833.

Here he remained for a short season, when he was induced by Dr W Wesselhoeft to assist in the establishment of a homoeopathic school at Allentown, the North American Academy of the Homoeopathic Healing Art. He labored in this field until financial embarrassments necessitated the abandonment of the institution.

This led to his return to Philadelphia, where he engaged in practice with Dr Bute, locating on Vine street, below Fourth. Here he soon acquired a large and lucrative practice. The wide scope of his education naturally offered a ready introduction to scientific and literary circles, while the active interest which he took in our republican

form of government led to an acquaintance with many persons of political prominence.

Among these may be mentioned Henry Clay, who, as a patient and friend, highly appreciated the services rendered by Dr Hering, as witness the following extract from a letter dated Dec 14, 1849:

"Your liberal kindness toward me would not allow you to indulge me in the gratification of testifying my gratitude to you for the successful exercise of your professional skill on me, on two distinct occasions, by the customary compensation; but you cannot prevent the expression of my great obligation to you for the benefit I derived from your obliging prescriptions.

I thank you for them most cordially . . . With great regard, I am your friend and obedient servant, "H Clay."

Agassiz, Carey and a host of others, distinguished in politics, art, and science, were among his friends.

Always a student, endowed with indomitable will and untiring industry, he seemed to infuse every one with whom he came in contact with the spirit of work. "*Change of occupation is rest,*" was his oft repeated expression. Though conducting a large practice, he found time to write much and to superintend the work of many younger and less experienced. His Saturday-night meeting, held for the instruction of students and young practitioners, were prized as a boon. Here he imparted golden truths, reaped from fields of ripe experience such as but few have enjoyed.

Among the remedies which he proved prior to his departure with the Saxon legation may be mentioned *Mezereum, Sabadilla, Sabina, Colchicum, Plumbum-aceticum, Parts-quadrifolia, Cantharis, Iodium*; also fragmentary provings of *Antimonium-tartaricum, Argentum-metallicum, Aristolochia, Clematis-erecta, Belladonna, Caltha-palustris, Demantium, Geum-rivale, Nostoc, Opium, Ruta, Tanacetum* and *Viola-tricolor*.

During his residence in South America his observations and provings embraced *Lachesis*,

*Theridion, Curassivicum, Askalabotes, Caladium-seguinum, Jamboo, Jatropha, Solanum mammosum, Spigelia, Vanilla, Alumina, Phosphoricum acid and Psorinum.*

After his arrival at Philadelphia we find him again employed in like work, either proving or superintending the provings of *Mephitis, Ictodes-foetida, Crotalus, Hydrophobinum, Brucea, Calc-phos* (both acid and basic), *Hippomanes, Castor-euorum, Kalmia, Nicandra, Viburnum, Phytolacca, Gelsemium, Gymnocladus, Chlorine, Bromium, Fluoric-acid, Ferrum-met., Kobalt, Niccolum, Oxalic acid, Oxygen, Ozone, Thallium, Tellurium, Palladium, Platinum, Osmium, Lithium, Glonoine, Apis, Cepa, Aloes, Millefolium, Baryta-carb, Nux-moschata* and *Formica*.

**Among his other works may be mentioned:** "Rise and Progress of Homoeopathy;" a pamphlet, Philadelphia, 1834, afterwards translated into the Dutch and Swedish languages. **Necessity and Benefits of Homoeopathy;** a pamphlet, 1835.

**Domestic Physician,** published in 1835. This work passed through fourteen editions in America, two in England, and thirteen in Germany, and has also been translated into the French, Spanish, Italian, Danish, Hungarian, Russian, and Swedish languages.

**The Effects of Snake Poison,** 1837.

**Homoeopathic Hatchels,** 1845.

**Proposals to Kill Homoeopathy;** a satire, 1846.

**Suggestions for the Provings of Drugs,** 1853.

**Amerikanische Arzneipruefungen,** 1853-57.

Translations of Gross's **Comparative Materia Medica,** 1866.

**Analytical Therapeutics,** the first volume only, issued, 1875.

**Condensed Materia Medica,** two editions, 1877-79.

**Guiding Symptoms,** the third volume of which he completed just prior to his death.

In addition to these may be mentioned his editorial work connected with the *Homoeopathic News,* 1854 and the *American Journal of*

*Homoeopathic Materia Medica,* 1867-71, besides many miscellaneous writings scattered through the various journals of it school. It may further he added that he assisted in the translation of Jahr's Manual, Allentown Edition, 1838

Dr Hering was a member of the Academy of Natural Sciences Philadelphia, to which institution he presented his large zoological collections.

He was one of the founders of the American Institute of Homoeopathy, and for many years continued in active relationship with it as well as with the State and county societies.

He was one of the originators of the American 'rovers' Union, instituted Aug 10 1853.

He was also one of the founders and a member of the first faculty of the Homoeopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania, continuing in this relationship at intervals until 1867, when he assisted in founding the Hahnemann Medical College of Philadelphia in which he held the Chair of Institutes and Materia Medica, being Emeritus of the same at the time of his death.

Founders of the Homeopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania: Constantine Hering, Jacob Jeanes, Walter Williamson.

It would be difficult to give a proper estimate of Dr Hering's character and of his influence upon medical science.

His acts are matters of medical history and the impress of his thought is already made, deep in the medical practice of our age.

It is not possible that the memory of his career is one which posterity will willingly set die; for the coming ages, even more than the present will learn to depend upon LAW as the great governing actor in the production of the fact of natural science, therapeutics included.

And so, as Homoeopathy must become more and more the one only acknowledged therapeutic principle, the brightest names that posterity will cherish will be those who have done so much to establish it among men. While among the most brilliant of them all will stand the name of -

Hering.

Suddenly, at half past ten o'clock, on the evening of July 23, Dr Constantine Hering departed this life in the eighty-first year of his age.

During the past decade the doctor has at times suffered quite severely from asthma, though for several years past the attacks have been less severe, so that he has been enabled to attend almost daily upon a large circle of patients.

Having spent the early part of the evening of his decease with his family, he retired to his study shortly after eight o'clock, seemingly stronger and more cheery than for some weeks past. Just before ten o'clock he rang for his wife, who, immediately found him suffering from extreme dyspnoea, but perfectly rational.

He asked for his old friend and physician, Dr Charles G Raue, who was immediately sent for; at the same time, Dr A W Koch also, an old and esteemed friend neighbor, was summoned; but before help could be offered the spirit had departed.

Not unexpected, nor yet unprepared for, was the call. To one in attendance he remarked, "Now I am dying."

Many times during previous illness did his friends despair of his life, but he felt his time had not yet come. Now he knew that a change was indeed coming. That undaunted spirit, which for more than fourscore years animated the living day, was about to leave its abode for realms above.

Thus departed one to whom Homoeopathy in America - yea, in the whole world - will ever remain a debtor.

Said Dr Lilienthal at a memorial service; "Dr Hering died in harness. At six o'clock on the evening of his death he made his last prescription."

And Dr Edward Bayard observed, "He ceased to exist, by the withdrawal of his life by the Giver of life, like some locomotive running smoothly upon the track, after exhausting her fuel, slows down and stops—not thrown from the rails by broken machinery and rushing to ruin with terrible violence."

Though called in the ripeness of old age, his death, nevertheless, falls like a heavy pall over the entire profession. We have been called to mourn the departure of others whose names we must ever revere; but with the death of Hering is broken a connecting link which bound the present to the past, the established triumphant homoeopathy of our own day to the early struggles and sacrifices of its pioneers. East, West, North, South, Europe and America, have among their busy practitioners many who look toward the home of this truly great man as toward the home of a father. Hundreds have shared with him of tire wondrous store of knowledge which he possessed. Many came; none were sent empty away. Their capacity to receive, rather than in his willingness to give limited the amount bestowed. Blessings will ever attend name.

Reference: *Pioneers of Homeopathy* by T L Bradford

#### HERING AND HIS COLLABORATORS

At the time of the merger of the two schools, Hering now 69 years old, was Homoeopathy's elder statesman. Still in contact with his old students, he spent his time in his medical practice and compiling his major work. A good friend Dr Charles G Raue, his son-in-law, Dr Calvin B Knerr, and Dr Charles Mohr, a recent medical graduate, (who went on to become a teacher at Hahnemann) all assisted him. The collaboration resulted in the *Guiding Symptoms*, released as a 10 volume set over a period of years. When some wondered about its size, Hering said, "Who would object to a library because it is too large? If you have good catalogs, you always have a better chance of finding what you are looking for than in a small one." They sat with Hering in his study, and worked. They had completed three of the volumes when Hering died in 1880.

AUGUSTUS KORNDORFER, MD. October 27, 1843  
June 10, 1923.

Educated in Philadelphia, Korndorfer attended the Homoeopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania from 1866 to 1867, transferring to the

Hahnemann Medical College (with Hering), graduating in 1868. He and classmate Ernest Farrington assisted Hering in compiling Hering's *Condensed Materia Medica*. Korndoefer was professor of clinical medicine at the Hahnemann Medical College, and worked at most of Philadelphia's homeopathic hospitals. He died, senile, aged 79.

**ERNEST A FARRINGTON, MD.** January 1, 1847—December 15, 1885.

Born in Williamsburg (now Brooklyn), New York, Farrington was educated in Philadelphia. He graduated first in his class from high school in 1866, preceptored with his brother, H W Farrington, MD, and entered the Homoeopathic Medical College of Pennsylvania in the fall of 1866. He decided to move to the newly chartered Hahnemann Medical College in 1867 and gained his degree in 1868. In 1874 Farrington became professor of materia medica, filling the vacancy left by Guernsey.

Materia medica was his love. He met daily with "Papa" Hering, who said, "When I am gone, Farrington must finish my *Materia Medica*." Farrington was a contributing editor of the *Hahnemannian Monthly*, and his *Clinical Materia Medica*,

Transcriptions of his class lectures, was published after his death.

Farrington was a Swedenborgian Christian and a member of the Church of the New Jerusalem.

**CHARLES G RAUE, MD.** May 11, 1820. August 21, 1896.

Born in Saxony, Raue immigrated to the United States aged 28, with a referral letter from Hering's brother. Raue gained his medical degree from the Philadelphia College of Medicine, and studied homoeopathy under Hering.

He was professor of pathology and diagnosis at the Homoeopathic Medical College, and wrote his major work, *Special Pathology and Diagnostics with Therapeutic Hints*, in 1867. He was Hering's

personal physician.

**CALVIN B KNERR, MD.** December 27, 1847. September 30, 1940. Knerr graduated from Hahnemann Medical College in 1869 and became Hering's assistant. He lived in Hering's house and, in 1874, married Hering's daughter Melitta. While living in the Hering house he kept a diary, and in 1940, when he was 93, the diary was printed under the title of *The Life of Hering*. Upon Hering's death Knerr became the literary executor of Hering's work and completed the 10 volumes of *Guiding Symptoms* by 1895.

**Charles G Mohr, MD.** May 2, 1844. October 31, 1907.

Born and raised in Philadelphia, Mohr received his medical degree from Hahnemann Medical College in 1875. Aside from being a trusted student of and assistant to Constantine Hering, Mohr was chief of staff at the Hahnemann Hospital from 1877-1882, General Director of Hahnemann Hospital from 1901 and professor of materia medica and therapeutics from 1885 until his death.

**CONSTANTINE HERING- HIS FAMILY:** Hering married Charlotte Van Kemper in Surinam in 1829. They had one child, John, before her death in 1831. Hering relates that Charlotte's mother sent her to the country, and thinking nursing would prematurely age her, gave her herbs to suppress the milk, and she died. "I vowed never to be married again to a wife who had a mother," said Hering. His son stayed with the Van Kemper family in Surinam when Hering came to the United States. Hering brought his son north for schooling, after which the boy returned to Surinam.

Hering married Marianne Husmann in 1834, shortly after arriving in America. From this marriage there were four children, two (Max and Odelia) living past infancy. Marianne died in 1840, and Hering returned to Germany in 1845, intending to stay. There were overtures about his assuming Hahnemann's practice. While in Germany, he met Therese Bucheim, married, and re-



turned to the United States in 1846 after hearing the homeopathic movement was in disarray. This marriage produced eight children, six of whom survived him (Rudolph, Melitta, Walter, Hildegard, Carl, and Herman).

**HERING AT HOME:** According to Knerr, the Hering household was always full of life. There were conversations constantly after dinner, either around the table or in the garden, under the grape arbor.

Knerr describes a meeting of Hering and Dunham where Dunham asked questions, Hering gave answers, while Lilienthal (and Knerr) sat and listened.

Herman Faber, an artist friend, described Hering's entrance to a room as: "His step was heavy, elastic; rather large feet nicht schon, as one of his admirers would say."

Dr C E Boyce said: "For his breakfast he had a couple of pieces of zwieback with a cup of coffee or hot chocolate prepared by himself over an alcohol lamp. He never seemed to know when it was time to get ready for the day's business...He was a good listener if one had anything to say of value....I don't remember a time when he was the first to say goodnight."

Dr George Norton recalled Hering's chief pleasure and relaxations from work were the "meetings on Sunday afternoon, when a circle of old friends assembled in his reception room, and over cigars and coffee compared experiences and discussed various subjects. Neither hot, cold, nor stormy weather interfered with these social gatherings."

Hering's favorite saying was, "Change of occupation is rest."

It is reported that the Hering household had the first German Christmas tree in Philadelphia.

**MYTH AND FACT: THE PROVING OF LACHESIS**

The story is told in Clarke's *Materia Medica* and is well known.

It is certainly a good story. But...what is not known.....

A translation of Hering's own account of his first meeting with the famed bushmaster snake was published in *Simillimum*, winter, 1991. According to Hering's account, he was living in Paramaribo, Surinam, and had been looking for a good snake specimen. The natives brought him one that had been run over by a cart at the edge of town. Hering untied the snake and noticed it was still alive. He extracted some venom and began to triturate it with milk sugar. He accidentally ingested some, and the first proving began.

It is worth recounting:

"A very peculiar sensation, almost like a scratching in the back of my throat. After an hour I felt a pain in my neck. It was like a pinching of a very circumscribed area at the right of neck's base, as if on the side of my throat. This pain was not increased by swallowing, but it was by pressure. After a few hours, going by cart, in the fresh air, a feeling of anxiety as if a great tragedy was happening far away, it was like a painful oppressive feeling. I was excessively distressed during the next hour. Toward evening, a quite unaccustomed disposition to a jealousy akin almost to delirium, and as insane as it was unconquerable. During this state of somnolence, or half sleep, I developed a peculiar disposition to loquacity. I spoke a lot, I wanted to talk without sitting up; my words soon turn into an endless babble and I immediately become conscious that I am ranting. I take hold of myself then but soon I am starting to do the same thing again, and so on. Half the evening is spent this way...After having gone to bed very sleepy, I can't sleep; soon I am completely awake... Having fallen asleep very late, I wake up very early in the morning...."

No wife mentioned. No note taking, save for Hering's own.

**On an Electrician's truck:**

**"Let us remove your shorts."**