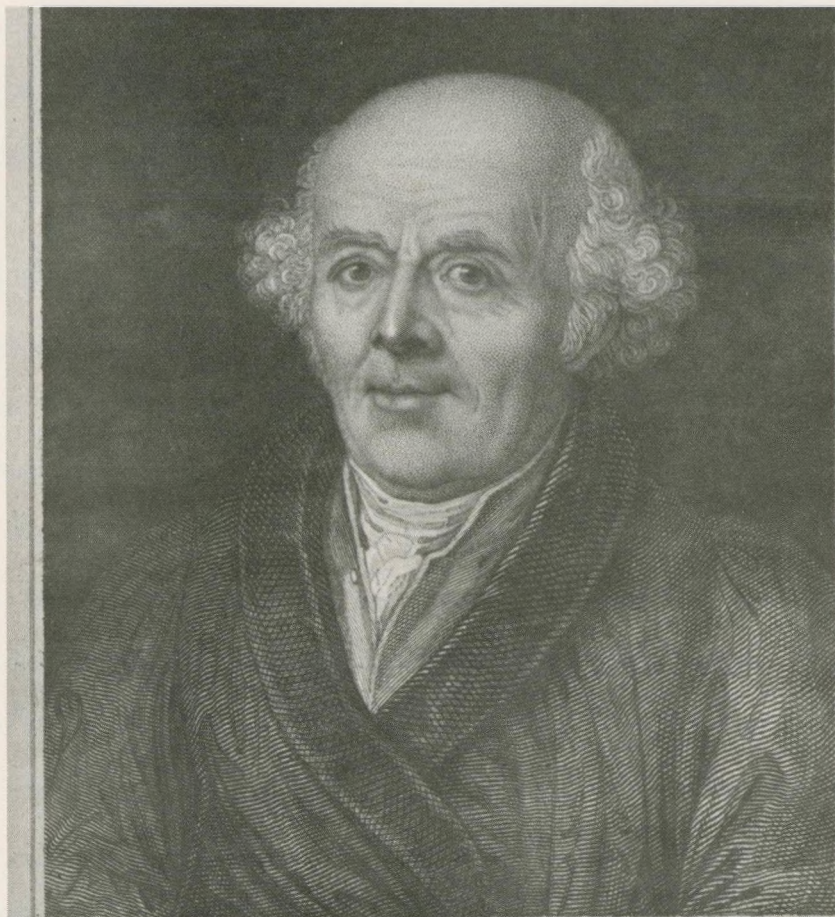




Gemahlt von Schoppe 1831.

Stahlstich v. Leop. Beyers in Wien

Samuel
geboren den
gestorben zu Paris



Hahnemann
10. Aprill 1755.
den 2. Juli 1843.

SAMUEL HAHNEMANN (1755-1843)

Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of the school of homeopathy, studied medicine at Leipzig and Vienna, receiving his degree in 1779. His dissatisfaction with the medical practices of the time, which relied heavily on purging, bleeding and cupping, led him to abandon medicine temporarily. "My sense of duty," Hahnemann said, "would not allow me to treat the unknown pathological state of my suffering brethren with these unknown medicines." He devoted the next ten years to chemical investigations, and published several important works.

In the 1790's Hahnemann occupied himself with the translation of several English treatises on drugs. While experimenting with cinchona bark, he allegedly discovered the principle underlying his homeopathic system of therapy: a disease can be cured by drugs which produce the same signs and symptoms in a healthy person as are present in the diseased individual ("like cures like"). Hahnemann expanded his views in his Organon der rationellen Heilkunde (1810) and the Materia medica pura (1811). The basic tenets of homeopathy, as outlined by Hahnemann, were as follows: 1) "like cures like"; 2) medicines increase in effectiveness when they are given in minute doses; 3) a large group of diseases are due to, or related to, a condition he named Psora (the itch).

Hahnemann's doctrines gained popularity as the nineteenth century progressed. Increasing numbers of homeopathic physicians and publications appeared in France, Germany, England and the United States. Despite its erroneous teachings, the homeopathic system was not without beneficent effects on the advancement of medicine. Many laymen approved Hahnemann's employment of a few medicines in diluted quantities, and the practice allowed physicians to see that interfering drastically with the course of disease was not the best therapeutic technique.