

Catherine R. Coulter

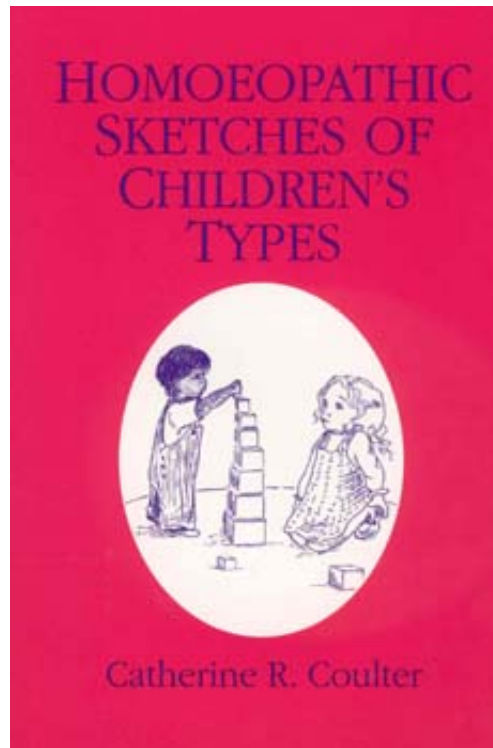
Homoeopathic Sketches of Children`s Types

Reading excerpt

[Homoeopathic Sketches of Children`s Types](#)

of [Catherine R. Coulter](#)

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Causticum

(HAHNEMANN'S SPECIAL PREPARATION OF LIME AND BISULPHATE OF POTASH)

Similar to *Lycopodium*, the *Causticum* child gives the impression of being well-balanced, both socially and emotionally, with his manners and temper under good control. Like *Lycopodium*, too, he feels at ease in most social situations, and (most significant), innately accepting human nature as is, he possesses a talent for making others feel comfortable in his presence. He also knows how to cooperate in a group; is himself energized, not depleted, by peer companionship; and in fact, regards a day without socializing as a day not
•worth living.

Causticum's social adroitness stems from not only a fine attunement to another's sensibilities but also a sympathetic nature—a characteristic he possesses in abundance, at times to the point of becoming too easily upset over others' pains or problems. For example, the child might develop physical symptoms (something as concrete as joint pains) following a quarrel between family members or between friends, even if it does not concern him directly. Or he gets too deeply or lastingly involved

in children's sandbox wars. This sympathy can extend to all living creatures. A woman was relating how her eight-year-old daughter was, alone in the family, strictly vegetarian. "We as a family are more or less vegetarians. That is, we like to consider ourselves 'polite vegetarians,' eating what is served when dining out. Deborah, however, will not compromise. In fact, as soon as she learned to speak she would, when eating meat, inquire, 'What's it made of?' When told that the meat came from a chicken or a lamb, she would start crying and say, 'Poor chickie!' or 'Poor little lamb!' and push away her food, untasted."

And another slightly younger *Causticum* girl would become upset when some insect or bug was swept out of the house or even wiped off her person, for fear it might be injured ("Don't brush it off, Mommy. Let it stay. I don't mind—really. Brushing it off might hurt it."). Once, at a family picnic, she even protested the brushing away of a colony of ants advancing towards the leftover food, crying out, "Don't do that! They must be hungry! Don't they have as much right to the food as we do?"

Like *Natrum muriaticum*, the *Causticum* child might begin early in life to sense the essential sadness in this "world and exhibit periods of melancholy. The difference is that *Natrum muriaticum's* sadness is more deep-seated and tenacious, and affects the whole of his outlook on life; whereas with the more balanced *Causticum*, sadness has its place in the overall scheme of things. Even if felt acutely at the moment, or lingering for some time, sadness does not cause a distortion that will permanently affect his world view. When circumstances change, his attitude rights itself and a more cheerful outlook prevails.

The type is not without its own particular weaknesses, however, the principal one of which is, with age and a growing

security of social standing (and without entertaining overly high expectations of others' capacities), the child may become opinionated. This is not the *Arsenicum album* or *Nux vomica* who knows better than another about a given subject; nor is it the *Sulphur* boastfulness about some specific accomplishment. *Causticum* confidently airs his (not necessarily informed) opinions about *everything* and is ready to give advice to anyone—even to the expert in his own field. Thus an adolescent who knows very little about music will say to a friend who plays in the school band, "I don't see why on earth you bother with the saxophone, even if you do enjoy it. There is a much greater demand for the guitar. Also, you've got a good voice and then you can accompany your own singing if you want to earn some money..." Or another adolescent will challenge an older sibling who has decided which college to attend: "Why did you choose x? With your interest in architecture, you should really have chosen y or z, both of which have better art departments. Although I, personally, think you'd do better in engineering. Take it from me, that's where your real talent lies."

If *Causticum* is quarrelsome, it is not from selfishness, an unreasonable willfulness, or anger at being thwarted in his designs, it is precisely because his opinions are being challenged. (*Lycopodium* has every bit as high an estimate of his own opinions and does not easily tolerate contradiction, but he is not as obvious about it; instead of quarreling, he hides his displeasure under an air of superior indifference or disdain.) But although this type might appear too insistent in his views and his ideas on management of his life, from being inherently sensible and conscientious (an old head on young shoulders) he tends to judge correctly what is best for him. Authority figures may well

leave him to make his own decisions as early as age permits—and allow him to pursue his own course, even if this entails making a few mistakes. (Let him learn that he is not *always* right.)

One additional difference between this child and *Lycopodium* should be noted. *Causticum* is "strong on justice." He expects the world and people to be just and, contrary to the above mentioned acceptance of people, grows dismayed when justice does not prevail. *Lycopodium* either instinctively senses the inevitable injustices of this world or simply is less concerned about justice. With him, the important point is not to permit himself to become distraught over this particular realization—but, accepting it, try to work with and through it to a higher good. This is how, later in life, he succeeds in the world of politics, law, and large institutions. Conversely, *Causticum* (like *Natrum muriaticum*) makes his mark in the world by actively pitting himself against injustice.

Concluding with the mental-emotional picture of *Causticum*, one point to be borne in mind is that the child's impulses generally are benign. Even his tendency to be opinionated stems from a desire to assist erring humans resolve their problems or an off-balance world regain its equilibrium. This fundamental goodwill, combined with friendliness, an essentially balanced disposition, and a well thought through approach to life (he is one cautiously to test the waters before committing himself), causes the remedy to be prescribed to children primarily for some specific physical complaint rather than a behavioral disorder or emotional imbalance.

A boy of four was brought to a homoeopath for twitchings and jerkings at night in bed. The overall physical picture sug-

gested *Causticum*, and the physician, casting about for confirmatory mental symptoms, inquired of the mother whether her son had any particular stress in his home or nursery school to cause the nervous twitchings. At first she could not identify any stress, since the boy—the youngest of four children, adored by parents and siblings alike—was still at a stage in life wherein he felt as assured of happiness and never-ending love around him as of the supply of air and sunshine.

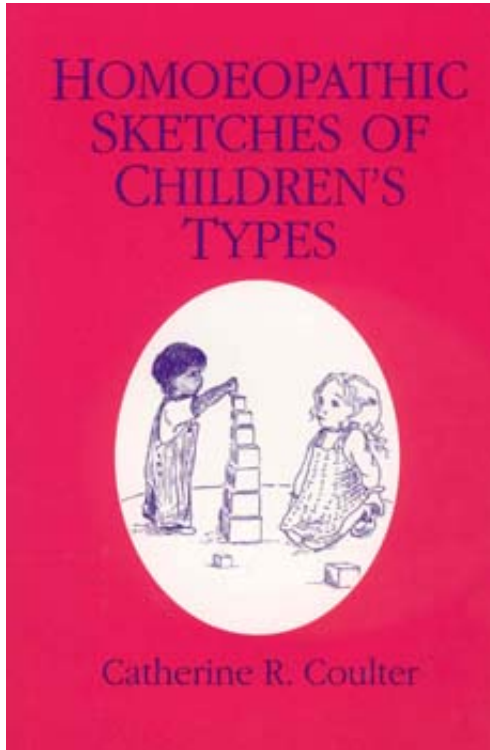
"No stress that I am aware of," she replied, her mind drawing a blank. "Life to Jamie is one long carnival of fun and excitement, as far as I can see. I cannot pinpoint a single cause for distress. You see," she went on, "with older brothers and sisters, there's always something exciting going on and—" She stopped short. "That's it! Jamie is always trying to keep up with the older children. He is forever plotting how not to be left out. *There's* his stress."

"And has he figured out the procedure?"

"Oh, Jamie has a whole bag of tricks. If he wants to participate in a game, first come the promises: '*I promise not to cheat the rules*' or '*I promise I won't be a painy neck*'; or if it is a board or a card game that is in question, '*I promise I'll a'ways 'member to sit with my legs crossed...like this*'—the way he is taught to sit quietly in nursery school. If he cannot think of what else to promise, he falls back on some dim notion of polite behavior: '*I promise to 'member to a'ways wash my hands before I play*.' Finally, when he has exhausted all his charm and sly cunning, he pulls out his last stop: '*An' if you won't let me play, I won't invite you to my birthday party!*' But, once he's allowed to join in their activities, his behavior is irreproachable."

The constitutional picture of *Causticum* was complete.

Causticum is most often prescribed for a child's enlarged glands; warts; growing pains; restlessness in the legs at night; the above-mentioned twitchings and jerkings of some part of the body when in bed; rheumatic joint pains, which may well be brought on by exposure to a cold wind; and for coughs "with (or from) a tickling in the throat or larynx: incessant, dry, night and day; the child cannot cough deep enough, the expectoration slips back again. *Causticum* is also given for bedwetting (as with *Sepia* often before midnight) or for the spurting of urine from coughing, sneezing, and laughing. Even though good physical coordination (like good mental balance) is more often the norm, occasionally, the remedy is prescribed when isolated groups of muscles are impaired, causing speech defects or poor voice control, poor sphincter control, and muscular disabilities that affect the gross movements (the child is slow learning to walk or is unsteady on his feet) or the finer movements (difficulty in writing out his letters); or the child is simply clumsy in his movements. In terms of the more prominent modalities, wind, cold, drafts, change of weather or extremes of temperature bring on complaints; the child is *better from* warmth, motion (not too strenuous), and, paradoxically, from cold drinks.



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