

INFECTION VS. MIASM

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The basic problem of disease causation revolves round the answer to a specific question viz. is a specific illness caused by the invasion of micro-organisms or is the activity of the bacteria and viruses only secondary to a primary internal disorder.

Progressive knowledge of modern medicine and bacteriology throws considerable light on this much-debated problem. As for instance, experimental evidence has established beyond doubt that a specific illness can be produced by inoculating an organism with a strain of virulent bacteria. But is this artificial laboratory experiment necessarily an exact duplication of the average clinical infection i.e. where infection occurs through natural means? We are reminded of the classical experiment of the German Dr. Pettenkofer who swallowed a tubeful of culture of living Cholera vibrios and nothing happened in the way of damage to his health through manifestation of symptoms as found in a clinical case of Cholera. Now-a-days people live in big cities with smoky atmosphere and inhaling millions of tubercle bacilli with each breath but remain free from clinical development of tuberculosis. This experimental and clinical evidence appear contradictory. This apparent contradiction is now explained away by the variable factor of individual predisposition or susceptibility and resistance, a fact which was pointed out by Hahnemann with his discovery of the nature of chronic diseases.

Now, this leads to another question. What is resistance or susceptibility? Or what is the specific relationship between the endogenous factor of susceptibility or resistance and the exogenous factor of the infective agent? Adherents of Koch's postulates regarding causal relation of bacteria with disease conditions have apparently failed to account for uncertainty of development of clinical infection in a particular case. Besides the fact of lodgement and growth of pathogenic micro-organisms in a living being there must be some other deeper causes for

production of diseases. We have got to accept the existence of a supra. Physical dynamis which contributes "livingness" to a living organism. This dynamis of Life-Principle possesses some distinctive features, one of which is its power of maintaining the integrity of a living being, mentally, vitally and physically in the midst of an environment which is always acting on the former, with forces helpful or harmful as the case may be, we cannot get away from the fact that this mysterious Life-Principle is at the root of health, disease, cure and death. Life-force does not yield to outer forces mechanically or passively. It always reacts to them with an attempt at maintaining the equilibrium of the mental, vital and physical states. Its reactions are manifested through altered sensations and functions leading ultimately to structural changes. So, in disease conditions there is always a state of actions and reactions between the life-force and morbid forces, chemical, physical, biological or psychological. Normally life maintains its integrity, which we call health, by steadily opposing and within the borders of the organism, reversing the processes of outer nature. Whenever these forces of outer nature are insufficiently opposed by our interior, pathology results.

Disease conditions are produced under the following circumstances:

(1) An external invading factor of increased strength, may unconditionally over-ride the body's resistance: Exogenous origin of illness.

(2) One of the several specific resistance factors is weakened thereby allowing for the invasion of the outer infective agent: Exogenous in balance with endogenous aetiology.

(3) Any function of our system, of itself, may be altered in such a way as to become similar instead of opposed to any of the outer inimical processes; thus it spontaneously would create an enclave, as it were, of a morbid functioning: Endogenous origin of illness.

The purely exogenous type of illness is restricted to laboratory experiment of artificial inoculation and probably to violent epidemics. It also occurs in various cases of food and drug poisonings.

Under average circumstances the exogenous factor is held in check until some where our defence breaks down or something within us invites the invader. Individual attacks of acute diseases are manifestations of a chronic constitutional diathesis: a lowered resistance or increased disease disposition results from contamination with the miasms of Psora, Syphilis or Sycosis, in other words, from previous infection.

This is Hahnemann's discovery and is still much misunderstood. Hahnemann's ideas regarding mode of contagion and transmission of these miasms, lead us to believe that he anticipated bacteriology. If he did not go any further, one simply might substitute specific infections for his vague "miasms" and throw overboard the whole "Psora" theory in favour of "exact" bacteriological disease conditions. Yet Hahnemann insists that all-illness is due to infection by one of the miasms and even includes such states as insanity or epilepsy which most certainly show no bacteriological finding as a rule. He explains this by postulating a permanently changed constitutional response quality after being infected by the miasm, which according to modern terminology, would result in lowered resistance to exogenous infection and altered internal functioning leading even a non-infectious types of illness. This part of his teaching seemed very difficult for his contemporaries to conceive and hence was vehemently opposed.

Modern investigations in the field of Allergy have thrown a flood of light on this hitherto unexplained phenomena, long propounded by Hahnemann but which could not be experimentally verified by him due to non-development of pathological and bacteriological sciences in his time.

Through observation Hahnemann noticed that some people exist with "peculiar corporal constitutions, which, although otherwise healthy, possess a disposition to be brought into a more or less morbid state by certain things which seem to produce no impression and no change in many other individuals" Organon Sec. 117. Thus Hahnemann discovered allergic conditions long before the modern medicine introduced the term 'Allergy'. Modern investigations in this field have also estab-

lished that an organism, once inoculated, remains forever in a state hypersensitivity and responds with varying symptoms of local and general character to renewed contact with even minute doses not only of the original but also of a similar or related antigen e.g. a typhoid fever serum agglutinates also paratyphoid bacilli; an infection with measles predisposes to tuberculosis; sensitization by Koch's bacilli increases the susceptibility to Strepto and Staphylococcal infections. The living organism reacts to antigens in two ways e.g. anaphylactically and immunologically. The former may be likened to what happens when the sensitized organism responds with symptoms of illness to a renewed contact with the exogenous pathogenetic factor. The latter type of response is analogous to the effect of the Isopathic or Homœopathic remedies.

In the light of these facts Hahnemann's contentions appear quite logical and understandable that in the train of one original infection a never ending stream of all sorts and kinds of ailments ensues, particularly so when the factors of mixed infection and the effects of drugs and suppression add their complication to the picture.

Thus Hahnemann's miasmatic theory explains how even a weak exogenous factor when confronted by the endogenous hypersensitive disposition may be conducive to illness. Reduced resistance leads to infection.

It may be pointed out here that Hahnemann did not define Psora as itch or scabies but as the chronic illness which underlies the scabies eruption. In the light of the foregoing it is understandable how an original Psora sensitization results in various phenomena of hypersensitivity one of which happens to be a lowered resistance of the skin to an invasion of the Acarius Scabii. This lowered resistance to its attack is of Psoric origin and the Acarius itself is similarly related to the Psoric antigen (as demonstrated by the provings and clinical action of the nosode Psorinum) even though the exact nature of this original psoric factor or plurality of factors may not yet be known to us. The other important point is that Hahnemann emphasises that the abuse of drugs also establishes a disturbance of human

economy quite analogous to the effect of the three chronic miasms.

To sum up it may be stated that all extra-human factors, drugs, improper foods, bacteria, physical forces alike, being potential disease producers are also capable of creating what Homœopathy calls the miasmatic state viz., a continued, steady progression, under various guises of the original pathology or a weakened resistance to the original or similar infective agent.

Now, about the endogenous cause of illness. There must also be a cause within us, to stop our counter action against the outside force-processes thereby allowing for what we may term the first or primary illness or infection which prepares the ground for others to follow.

Much light has been thrown in this field by Homœopathic method of Drug-Proving. We find, for instance, a single dose of high potency of Ignatia may provoke this 'Ignatia' illness if the individual happens to be hypersensitive to the very drug energy—be it as the result of previous drug abuse, or sensitization by Malaria—because he or she is of the characteristic Ignatia—like mental temperament. This temperamental configuration or an emotional shock not only produces a hypersensitivity, they give rise, even spontaneously, from within, to an illness which exhibits all the symptoms produced by the Ignatia drug-energy. A likeness of this outer Ignatia is spontaneously generated from within. This enclave of an out-side like-force-process, represents an interference with normal healthy functioning. Yet the origin of this strictly endogenous (though similar to an outside substance) lies in the impulse of our mental and emotional entity. One mental personality sets up an inner state which is similar to the potential effect of the outer energy. Since the inner and outer resemble each other, we may no longer may oppose the outer. The barriers are down for an extension of the extra-human process in our interior.

The bacillary invasion is secondary to the miasmatic disposition derived from the mental and emotional configuration or from the chronic hypersensitivity resulting from earlier sensitization.

Thus Dr. Edward Whitmont very aptly remarks that the

very flexible balance and polarity of endogenous and exogenous disease-origin, complementing each other, seems more adequately encompassed in the idea and Homœopathic description of the miasms than by the narrower one of infection, which really does justice only to the gross invasion of the external bacteria and completely overlooks the endogenous origin of illness.

GLIMPSES ON THE LIFE OF CHRISTIAN

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I need not mention the dramatic episodes of his physical life to show how, he had to struggle for existence until at the age of 80 years in 1835 after he shifted to Paris with his second wife.

The last eight years of his old age were only the rewards of his hard life long struggle, when his skill and merits were recognised by a huge busy practice amongst patients many of whom were rich occupying high positions.

Let his spirit and teachings guide us in the darkness and the crooked ways of the modern age.
