

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS HOMŒOPATHY —ITS PRINCIPLES, TEACHING AND PRACTICE

DR. B. K. SIRCAR, M.B., D.M.S., CALCUTTA

1. Medicine presents a complex mosaic as relating to its scope and sphere.

2. Apart from being a calling which may be followed merely as a means of earning a livelihood, medicine from the standpoint of Science may be broadly regarded as a branch of biology—human biology and the investigation of morbid phenomena, although applied physiology, as sufficiently distinct, to justify the recognition of a science of experimental medicine or clinical science.

3. Clinical science is a study of the phenomena of diseases as a whole and of the means best suited for prevention and cure; it is based on correct observation and experience. Experimental methods through the contribution of physiology, pathology and pharmacology may serve to check the fallacies and obviate inherent difficulties of observation, but they are never adequate standards for the acquisition of knowledge regarding the domain of life. Physiology and pathology are never co-extensive with life and disease. They are at best, the partial, outward and in many cases, the end-results of processes of life, normal or altered; no complete vital phenomenon has yet found adequate chemico-physical description; there is always something beyond purely chemical and physical formulations. That is the mysterious Life-principle which baffles all analysis.

4. Medicine is primarily an art but, like other arts and crafts, has benefited greatly from the help derived from the science, and in the case of a healing art, from those of physiology, bio-chemistry, pathology, chemistry and physics. In their attempt to turn medicine into an applied science, the orthodox school has laid undue emphasis on the auxiliary sciences and has reduced the art of medicine to a subordinate

position. The means to an end have usurped the place of the end itself. Clinical phenomena of diseases are the nearest approach to the factual reality. By the clinical mode of approach to the study of diseases and drug-actions on the living organism, Homœopathy has made medicine assume its true place in being an art—the art of healing, having a life of its own, independent of the nourishment its associated sciences bring. Homœopathy is a science of vital dynamics. Proper appreciation of this fact will explain the difference in attitude of a Homœopath and a so-called Allopath with regard to the relative importance of the pursuit of study of the auxiliary sciences (e.g., physiology, pathology, etc.) and medicine proper. Hence it is clear that the mode of pedagogy in a Homœopathic Institution must be different to that in an orthodox school; and necessarily, the equipments and paraphernalia in the two institutions must not be judged by a common standard. Of course, this is not to say that the existing Homœopathic institutions need no betterment in equipments and paraphernalia. None, more than us are cognisant of our short-comings and the difficulties we are labouring under.

5. Homœopathy as a science, is a department in general medicine which has for its principal objects the observation and study of action of remedial agents in health and disease, and the treatment of cure of diseases by medication, according to a fixed law.

6. Homœopathy is not strictly speaking, a "system of medicine", as is often inaccurately called, using the word 'medicine' in its broad, general sense. It is a system of therapeutics, complete in all essential points, though not perfect.

7. As an art Homœopathy works in perfect harmony with all necessary, rational, non-medical and mechanical therapeutic agents, e.g. surgery, obstetrics, hygiene, dietetics, sanitary science etc.

8. Homœopathy is the logical and legitimate offspring of the inductive philosophy and method of Aristotle and Lord Bacon. It is the highest development of modern therapeutic science and as such stands intimately related to the sciences of

logic, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, psychology and other sciences. The broader and more accurate the knowledge of these relations, the higher will be the respect for and the warmer the enthusiasm in the practice of the Hahnemannian Art and more the shedding off of the "inferiority complex" on the part of a Homœopathic Practitioner imposed on him by himself and by others, especially, the practitioners of the orthodox school. "Angina pectoris" does not become more scientific, simply because it is expressed in Latin in lieu of common language "Pain in the Chest". A pure Homœopath does not suffer from these illusions and the sooner a 'convert' gives up these traditional prejudices, the quicker he is set on the right track of Homœopathy. Science is the outcome of a particular attitude of mind characterized by an "intellectual morality" (i.e., boldness to accept whatever is found to be true) and not an attitude to befool and bemuddle the lay public with unintelligible, technical jargons.

9. That Homœopathy has raised medicine to a level of independent art is evidenced by the spectacular success of lay men as practising physicians, in all places. It is only the therapeutic success of lay men which induced brilliant medical talents like late Dr. Mahendra Lal Sarkar to come within its fold and to be a valiant propagandist for it. The instances of many a 'Saul' being converted to St. Paul, abound in the annals of Homœopathy in all ages and climes. An accomplished Homœopath does not necessarily require to be a person posted with the knowledge of the latest fads and discoveries in the auxiliary sciences. But we desire to turn out not merely first class Homœopaths but complete Homœopathic Physicians who will be capable of discharging other functions of a physician, viz., a diagnostician, prognosticator, hygienist and preventive officer than only that of a therapist; and who will hold their own in each of these fields in common with their Allopathic brother in every way and for all purposes.

10. The state control of the Homœopathic practice should only come when the state is ready to foster the growth and spread of this system by all available means at its disposals. The obligations of a Homœopathic practitioner will be called

for only when they get rights and privileges similar to those enjoyed by the other school.

11. Considering the vastness of our country and poor economic conditions of the general mass and wide gulf in the standard of living in the cities and villages, there should be graded Medical Service for the whole country, to render the medical help available to all strata of society, both in towns and villages.

These lead to consideration of setting up of at least two different courses of Homœopathy with suitable hospital facilities:—

(a) A full fledged Homœopathic course, akin in length and quality to the M. B. course of the present provincial universities, except that the distinctive Homœopathic subjects will be substituted in place of the parallel so called allopathic subjects.

(b) A medical course of four years duration, as we have, at present, under the General Council and State Faculty of Homœopathic Medicine, West Bengal, after Matriculation or its equivalent education.

12. Postgraduate training of Homœopathy and separate institution for Homœopathic training.

13. The Homœopathic system of medicine is perfectly scientific and is comprehensive enough to deal with the curative, palliative and preventive aspects of the therapeutic medicine. The Government should feel no hesitancy in adopting the Homœopathic system of medicine for public health purposes in case of occurrence of epidemics and in case of national emergencies and calamities like war, earthquake, etc., but bearing in mind the limitation in the scope and sphere of Homœopathy.

14. The future of Homœopathy may be marred by its foes and no less, by its friends. Let not Homœopathy be overshadowed and drowned by its enemies; neither by its overzealous friends, in their eager and misconceived idea of presenting Homœopathy in a so-called scientific garb, Homœopathy be made top heavy at least or at worst a sealed profession open to a few eligible candidates, suited to those who can

spend more liberally and available to the upper classes of society who can pay for it. Cheapest is the cost of Homœopathic medicines, the minimum the paraphernalia required for its proper teaching, let us not make it an expensive affair for the patients and physicians, as well, by our manner of state control through legislative enactments in a way such as to make it cumbrous and not available to all irrespective of their position in life.

15. Proper comprehension of the philosophic outlook of Homœopathy and the spirit of dispensing "greatest good to the greatest number" will serve as a beacon light to lead us in the correct path of finding right ways and means for the developments of the Homœopathic practice in the country. All those silly controversies about the relation between Homœopathy and Pathology, Homœopathy and Surgery, etc., will recede into the background and the essential and distinctive feature of Homœopathy will shine out in the mind generally clouded with confused ideas about life and relation between mind, life and body, and the relative character of the truth of life, disease, susceptibility to diseases, etc., alter the basic view point regarding immunity against specific diseases, generally held by the orthodox school. Homœopathy can deal with public health, but in its own way. Homœopathy is not after discovery of specific drugs for so-called specific diseases, so long vainly sought, but it is after all a general principle, applicable to all varying cases so that the particular remedy needed for each individual may be found. Research works and progress in medicine will take a turn different to that ordinarily pursued in other medicinal system. It implies re-orientation of our mental outlook, development of mental attitude of "intellectual morality" (which is true characteristic of a scientific man) characterised by open mindedness, freedom from prejudice and fairness and not the amount of experimental and laboratory work put in by a research worker.

—*The Homœopathic Herald, May, '59.*