

ADVENTURES IN PHARMACY

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The homœopathic pharmaceutical need is often a most difficult one to fill, because the normal commercial procedure cannot be applied to the making and acquisition of our primary products.

One cannot approach a normal business concern at home or abroad and ask them to supply you with often the simplest of our crude drugs, because they just cannot or will not be bothered. I find the only hope of succeeding is to seek the help of someone interested in homœopathy. Consequently one has to keep an eye open with practically everybody one has dealings with abroad.

I want to pay tribute to all the help which missionaries from many lands have given to homœopathy in this way over the years. Probably one of the most spectacular examples of this co-operation was from Peru, when after very many years of continually trying, at long last we obtained supplies of absolutely undoubted LACHESIS venom, later doubly checked for correctness in this country by the experts.

The acquisition of snakes and spiders is always difficult because we must have them fresh, so to speak, whereas the snake farms are more than reluctant to supply anything but their own product of dried venoms, often processed in some way. Thus when one of the Faculty's doctors attended the International Homœopathic Congress in Rio de Janeiro a few years back, it was possible to arrange for him to see the venom expressed from three needed snakes, by experts, and this was partially potentized at once using pure water on the spot. Those same snakes were then killed, preserved, and brought home as proof of origin.

Inquiries Round the World

We have just settled another interesting problem. We received a request from the Argentine for the 200 c.H. potency of HURA CREPITANS, as distinct from HURA BRAZILIENSIS. Inquiries to all the worlds botanical authorities including Kew, British Guiana,

Trinidad and Venezuela, produced a reliable answer when taken collectively, but questions to primary producer homœopathic pharmacists in all other countries, gave only conflicting result.

Clearly the inquirer had received little satisfaction on sometimes being told that HURA BRAZILIENSIS or HURA CREPITANS was unobtainable.

The resulting fact which emerged was that they are both from the same tree, more acceptably named HURA CREPITANS, which was the name given to this tree by the most famous of botanists, Linnaeus; whereas HURA BRAZILIENSIS was the name given to that tree by another well known botanist, Willdenow.

Thus they are not so likely to be varieties of the same species as some experts suggested, and as Clarke in his Dictionary of Materia Medica says, although there is always this possibility with these drugs which have not been very clearly recorded in the first place by the introducer of it.

The final answer to the query was now quite clear, our drug HURA BRAZILIENSIS is made from the fresh sap taken from the tree, while HURA CREPITANS is made from the ripe seeds; these eventually came to us from Venezuela; where these trees line the streets of Caracas.

There are therefore in fact two differing preparations although arising from the same tree, and they will doubtless continue under the names given in Clarke's Dictionary. I think this was probably one of the most confusing problems I have been faced with, which necessitated the writing of some dozens of letters.

Leaves used by Maoris

There is another unusual drug used by the homœopaths which in finding gave considerable trouble, BRACHYLOTTIS "REPENS". This is a drug the leaves of which the Maoris of New Zealand have used for applying to sores and ulcers; also, for employment as paper, whence the name puka puka came to be applied by them to the white man's ordinary paper. Incidentally this drug is worth remembering for certain bladder troubles, for CANTHARIS is not always the first and last drug to think of.

Eventually, through the help of the Director of Kew Gardens we obtained some fresh leaves and flowers by air from New

Zealand to satisfy an export order to America, and the interest this stirred up in both New Zealand and here had a most unusual result for me, for on going into the Royal Chelsea Flower Show that year, there staring me in the face were branches of *BRACHYGLOTTIS REPANDA* in full leaf and flower. Once again this research revealed the second name should be "*repanda*" and not *BRACHYGLOTTIS REPENS*.

The acquisition of fresh *LEDUM* gave some considerable trouble over a long period. This mother tincture is made from the fresh small twigs and leaves of *LEDUM PALUSTRE*, otherwise known as Wild Rosemary or Marsh Tea, although the only resemblance it has to our garden rosemary is the appearance of the leaves on the twigs and stems, possibly the bushes resemble each other too, but I have never seen *LEDUM* growing.

We took advantage of friends in Canada, persuading them and the oldest trading company in the world, to arrange to send large bottles and pure spirit as preservative out to trappers in those localities where it grew. After a long silence they reported it would be better for the drug to be sun dried, for the trappers had their own ideas about the preservative alcohol.

After the last war we were lucky to make contact with people in Norway who collected a magnificent supply of it one day, packed in beautifully, when a car trip to the London airport next afternoon saw it through the Customs so speedily that it was processed that same evening. The difference between tincture made from this fresh *LEDUM*, as compared with that from the dried has to be smelled to be believed.

The Curious Cactus

There is a drug in our *Materia Medica* called *ANHALONIUM LEWINII* which Clarke's Dictionary mentions and says is useful for brain-fag, delirium, headache, and hallucinations. Mescal buttons, is the common name, and these have been used by the Indians of sub-tropical America in their religious ceremonies, probably more in the distant past than nowadays.

It is one of the most extraordinary of drugs in its effects, and a year or two ago obtained a lot of publicity from being written up by Aldous Huxley, to whom it had probably particular appeal as

a subject of intriguing personal interest in "The Doors of Perception". The hallucinations caused by eating this curious cactus are very well described in Gustav Schenk's most interesting "the Book of Poisons" in which the author expends some five pages in giving the effect upon him of taking a small fragment of this dried drug.

It is known in Mexico as peyote. When the homœopaths gave it a place in our *Materia Medica* its name then was ANHALONIUM LEWINII, but nowadays the botanists prefer to call it LOPHOPHORA LEWINII. Mescaline is to-day's derivative drug, and allopathic name.

The need for some fresh supplies, quite apart from the curiosity to see this famous cactus called forth more than ordinary determination in the face of refusal. We soon found that exports of it from Mexico were prohibited and knowing no other source had to send a letter, very kindly supplied by the Faculty, couched in as legal phraseology as possible, addressed "to whom it may concern, the Mexican Government" saying it was essential for small supplies to be available in Britain for medical purposes.

In due time and after more letter writing half a dozen plants arrived by air and were duly turned into mother tincture. About six months later we received a circular list of some hundreds of cacti etc., suppliable by a Mexican firm of cactus growers. In the list was noticed LOPHOPHORA LEWINII, so we sent a postcard order for a dozen. These were duly received. Some are now in my greenhouse and others at Kew Gardens.

Purple of Cassius

Purple of Cassius is a colour we find mentioned in the Bible, its use was confined in those days for regal or sacred uses, it being one of the most beautiful and permanent of colours, rivalling colloidal gold which is an extremely lovely rich purple. To-day pharmaceutical references define purple of Cassius as gold stannate.

In the early days the material for the production of the dye was obtained from an eastern Mediterranean shell fish which I had the greatest difficulty in running to earth. Eventually after many failures we succeeded in persuading an expert in Naples to organise the collection of this sea snail, dissect the purpurigenous

gland, one from each, and send them to us, suitably preserved and contained for the making of our homœopathic Murex.

The collector's diffidence and our luck in finally obtaining sufficient for our purpose will be apparent when it is known that about 2,000 specimens are necessary to produce one gramme weight of the purple. Luckily we do not require the pure purple, only the inspissated juice, even so the 2x trituration when dissolved in water should produce a good pink colour. Clearly, even the 2x trituration would be an extremely expensive preparation from which one would only be parted with reluctance.

—*The Homœopathy, July, '59*

OBITUARY

DR. N. M. JAISOORYA NO MORE

Indian Homœopathy suffered a great loss by the passing away of Dr. N. M. Jaisoorya on 28th June 1964 at the age of 65 years. Dr. Jaisoorya was too well-known amongst not only Homœopaths but the whole progressive public of India to require any introduction. He was not a passive scholar and thinker but was ever a dauntless fighter for whatever his pure conscience and highly erudite intelligence thought to be true and just in any field of social life—politics, economics or medicine. It is this rebellious spirit in him that brought him from a very high position in the orthodox school of Medicine to Homœopathy, not only as a true student, but also as a staunch fighter.
