

THE PLAN OF TEACHING MEDICINE IN A HOMŒOPATHIC MEDICAL INSTITUTION

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Medicine proper deals with diseases, their ætiology, symptomatology, diagnosis with differential diagnosis, prognosis, treatment and prevention, so far as it is possible. Now, the homœopathic approach to the study of diseases differ much from that of the modern scientific medicine. According to Homœopathy and according to strict canons of logic and philosophy, health and disease are qualitative states of a concrete individual. Diseases, as described in text books of the "Practice of Medicine" are abstractions made by our mental concepts; the factual reality is the diseased persons. It is our mind, which for purposes of practical descriptive convenience, has separated disease-conditions from diseased persons and gave these conceptual general names (nosological labels as they are called) for economy of thought-expressions and thought-communications; but mind separates what is really inseparable and falls into a confusion which leads to faulty practice. So Hahnemann criticised all the nosological methods of labelling different disease-conditions and also the method of treating diseases by name. In case of actual treatment a concrete individual has to be treated and not merely mental abstraction. Individuals are units of nature; they are unique by virtue of their individuality and hence defy all attempts for grouping. Thus Hahnemann maintained that nature follows no classification or possesses no nomenclature regarding diseases. Nature creates individuals, produces individual disease and insists that the true physician shall not treat in his patients the systematic combination which makes up a genus of disease (a kind of confounding together of different diseases) but shall always treat the individuality of diseases. So, nosology i.e., classification and naming of disease is not the guiding star for a Homœopath in his therapeutic practice. The teacher will take every opportunity to impress on

the minds of the student, the distinctive approach of Homœopathy to the study of diseases, to the method of case-taking and to that of selecting appropriate homœopathic remedies for therapeutic purpose. Though the other school is slowly but surely realising the necessity of studying the patient and treating him as a whole, they have, so far, failed to discover the right technique for the purpose and here Homœopathy has scored over them. Failure to find and to utilise the technique, the necessary division of medical practice into specialities as 'piece-meal' medicine is encouraged, especially in hospital practice, where, very often, no one is interested in the patient as a person. Interest in the impersonal, analytical scientific aspect of medicine is being allowed to overshadow the human and individual problem. On the other hand, the homœopathic epigrammatic slogan is "Treat the patient and not the disease".

The teacher of Medicine should demonstrate to the students that the patient must be treated as a whole and not as a collection of systems and organs corresponding to the specialities of medicine. He has, in addition, to inculcate in his student's mind, the right attitude to medicine and to instill in him a sense of that intimate personal relationship between doctor and patient which is the essence of good medical practice.

The student must learn to regard Medicine as a unity; he will do this only if all his teachers co-operate to present him with an integrated conception of medicine and only through the co-operative efforts and team-work of his teachers will he learn to appreciate relationship between general medicine and the special aspects of medicine.

It is desirable that in the teaching hospital the idea of the treatment of a 'patient' rather than a disease should be carried into the arrangement of wards. The water-tight division into medical and surgical wards is not in the best interests of medical teaching, nor is the division into special wards for gastro-enterology, neurology, cardio-vascular diseases etc. And it is more so as many diseased conditions e.g. tumours, appendicitis, etc. in which the other school usually calls for surgical intervention, are amenable to homœopathic treatment. Measures that disintegrate medicine should be avoided. All that foster an attitude which

regards the patient as a 'whole' person should be supported and encouraged.

The methods of teaching medicine should include systematic lectures, lecture-demonstrations, practical work in the wards and out-patient departments and clerkships.

In this connection it is desirable to discuss about Pathology and Bacteriology:

The teaching of this subject has to become very cautious and judicious. Allopathy and Homœopathy seem to hold quite opposite views regarding the role of Pathology and Bacteriology in connection with disease. While the former school associates causally the pathology of tissues and micro-organisms with disease-conditions, Homœopathy reckons the tissue-changes as the end-results of the disease process and considers the micro-organisms as conditioned causes of diseases. According to Homœopathy, disease is purely a dynamic disturbance of the vital force of the vital principle, expressed in and through the organism as altered sensations and functions, which may or may not ultimate in gross tissue-changes. So the tissue-changes, which constitute the pathology, are no essential part of the disease 'per se', and as such, are not the object of treatment by medicine. Since the discoveries of Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch the medical world came to believe in the simple slogan "Kill the micro-organisms and cure the disease." But subsequent experience gradually revealed the truth that the matter is not so simple. There is an elusive factor, called 'susceptibility' on the part of the patient, which is behind the infection and actual outbreak of various types of diseases. As Homœopathy is mainly concerned with the reactions of the human organism to different morbid factors, whether microbial or otherwise the role of bacteria or viruses in the production of diseases is quite secondary according to Homœopathy. Nevertheless the basic knowledge of Bacteriology is necessary for a complete Homœopathic physician for purposes other than therapeutic e.g. for diagnostic, prognostic, and preventive and for general management of a case. Of course, the preparation of nosodes requires knowledge in that subject. And every homœopath knows what an important role the nosodes play in homœopathic therapeutics. Similarly the knowledge of Patho-

logy (mainly structural tissue changes) is necessary for disease determination, prognosis for discrimination between the symptoms of the patient and symptoms of the disease, for evaluating symptoms, for obtaining the totality of symptoms and for selecting the similimum remedy as well as for adjusting the potency of indicated homœopathic remedies.

Only broad basic training in pathology, free from specialist's bias, should be imparted to students. Teachers of Pathology should never lose sight of the fact that they are training medical practitioners, especially homœopathic practitioners and not technicians and specialists in Pathology. The living patient and not the corpse, should be the central theme in the training of the subject.

Further, the purpose of the instruction in pathology is to enable the student to correlate the subjective symptoms with the objective ones, as far as possible or to interpret clinical symptoms (physical and mental) and their inter-relationship on the basis of underlying pathology so far as it is possible from the chemico-physical and physiological point of view. The students should be impressed about this fact.