

## MATERIA MEDICA—THE FOUNDATION-STONE AND STUMBLING BLOCK OF HOMŒOPATHY

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In the middle of a busy day do any of us ever stop to think how much we owe to our materia medica? Not alone that is a guide in the treatment of our patients, but that from it stems all that system of therapeutics that we know as Homœopathy?

I can hear, perhaps, an objection that the *Law of Similars* is the rock-bottom of our system, and so it is. The law has always been there to be discovered, but man did not know of it before and, until the time it was confirmed, it was merely an hypothesis and a gleam in Hahnemann's eye. The confirmation could come only through the materia medica.

Our conception of materia medica is somewhat different from those of other persuasions. To them, materia medica is only the stuff used for therapeutics. To us, it is a combination of that stuff with what they call toxicology. For the one who does not understand our terminology, this should be a common starting point.

Let us stop and consider what has evolved out of our materia medica :

1. Guided by the effects of cinchona bark on himself, Hahnemann used them as a guide in the treatment of the sick. The result seemed to prove the hypothesis. With uncanny skill he chose proper material of many kinds and proved that all worked according to the same hypothesis, thus confirming it and raising it to the level of a law. Thus the *Law of Similars* came into our consciousness.

2. By keen observation he noted the aggravation caused by large doses and began to reduce them both in size and frequency of repetition. From this came potentization and the final teaching of the single dose.

3. He also noted that the reaction to some remedies was longer than others. This led to the classification of long and short acting remedies.

4. He noted that under some remedies the present condition would clear up nicely, only to return a short time later. By experimentation he discovered superficial and deep-acting remedies.

5. From No. 4 it was only another step to the theory of chronic diseases.

6. No. 5 led to (a) the Law of Direction of Cure; (b) the nosodes (*Psorinum* being the pioneer nosode).

7. The great mass of drug effects led to the Repertory with its many modifications and improvements.

8. Hand in hand with all of the above evolved our Philosophy.

From the above we can see how fundamental materia medica has been

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## BOOK REVIEW

**Hahnemann Mate Mesmerism O Tahar Upayogita** by Dr. B. K. Basu, published by Sm. Kamala Rani Basu, 4A Rani Shankari Lane, Calcutta-26, Pages 61. Price Re. 1.50.

We congratulate the Author, for bringing to the forefront the much overlooked Aphorisms 288 and 289 of the Organon. In this book, written in Bengali, the Author has described with his habitual attractive literary style, all the essential details of the art of Mesmerism. We hope, this book will be very useful to those who are interested in the Art.

J.K.

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and how much we owe to it. One might almost say it was the alpha of Homœopathy.

Like a coin and everything else in the world materia medica has a good and a bad side.

1. Its mass is stupendous and is almost an immediate deterrent to the novice.

2. There can be no doubt that much of the mass could be thrown overboard without undue loss.

3. It has been well, also poorly, taught. The worst method has been the reading off of the symptoms in the manner of a continuous reading of a telephone directory. The best is the skilful picking out of characteristics and bringing them together into a picture of an individual, an art of which the late Dr. Gladwin was a master.

4. There has never been any special instruction as to how to study it in most of our teaching institutions.

5. The amount of work involved is also most difficult and unglamorous. It is not for the young man who wants to run around a hospital in a white nightshirt and have the communication system always calling "Dr. Kildare!"

Without a doubt No. 5 is the cause of the loss of so many young men. At no time has the need of a qualified homœopathic preceptor been any greater than it is today. A young homœopath needs a preceptor; the young regular needs only a drug salesman.

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