

## RHEUMATISM

DR. PHYLLIS SPEIGHT

Just over a year ago three friends of mine came to tea with me and as so often happens, the topic of health was introduced into the conversation.

I listened for a few minutes and then plunged my question as soon as it was possible to do so politely—"But what makes you all so certain that you have rheumatism? What in fact is rheumatism?"

John took a deep breath and said in a voice he would use for his favourite daughter who couldn't understand very easily, "I have just been saying, my dear, I have a bad shoulder and I went to my doctor and *he said* I have rheumatism."

Elizabeth took up the explanation and went on, "I went to the same doctor with aches and pains in both my legs and knees and he said the same to me and what's more he gave us both little pink tablets to be taken night and morning."

"And have these tablets cured you both?" I asked innocently.

"No—no they haven't, but then you see I've only had mine two months and Elizabeth only about six weeks but we are hoping if we continue they *may* do something."

"I've definitely got rheumatism", snapped Jane. "My arm has played me up for weeks and it's always worse in the cold and damp and everybody knows that the damp always makes rheumatism worse and I have an excellent doctor and he says I've got rheumatism—a month ago he gave me some tablets but unfortunately they upset my tummy, but the mixture I have now is better, although I must admit it's horrid stuff to take."

"Is your arm improving?" I asked patiently.

"N-o, I can't say it is—yet, but I shall persevere."

I could not let the matter drop here because although all three friends knew I was what is known as an Homœopath they had never been sufficiently interested to find out anything about Homœopathy.

"Just as a matter of interest", I said "I will look in the Concise Oxford Dictionary and read the definition of 'rheumatism'. P-Q-R-yes here it is—'Disease marked by inflammation and pain in joints.' Now, I don't see how this is going to help any doctor prescribe and cure your so-called 'rheumatism'!" I looked at each of my friends in turn and then began, for this was the moment I had been waiting for. "We cannot know rheumatism per se, nobody has ever seen it; the only things we can know are the signs and symptoms of the patient, and as each patient differs one from another it seems incredible to me that anybody should think that the same medicine will cure two totally different people suffering from what we choose to label 'rheumatism'. Even in these last few minutes whilst we have all been talking you have moved nearer the fire Elizabeth, and you have edged a good bit away from it Jane, so you see there are differences to be considered!" These two were quite unconscious of their movements and very surprised that anyone should notice such details, but they agreed they could follow the good sense of what had been said and John asked suddenly, "Do you consider then that Homœopathy could cure the rheumatism in my shoulder more quickly than the pink tablets from my doctor?"

I replied very firmly that I thought Homœopathy would cure John who was exhibiting certain aches and pains in his shoulder that he chose to call rheumatism and when *he* was put right all his troubles (whatever they were) would disappear and I added "If you care to take a few little pills which I will give you before you go home, I think things will start moving!" I had known John for some years and many details had registered in my mind. When at a theatre or in a party and anything funny was said he would laugh and laugh until tears ran down his face. He is the kind of person who very much dislikes consolation and fuss; he loathes cold weather, can be very irritable sometimes, has an aversion to fat foods and loathes salt. Also in the winter his lips crack badly.

This is a classical case of *Natrum mur.* and I gave him one dose of the thousandth potency and some *Sac. lac.* pills to take 2 night and morning.

Not to be outdone, Elizabeth looked at me and said she was more than prepared to forget her pink pills if I would give her something Homœopathic to cure the rheumatism in her legs and knees. She was always complaining of the cold and wore lots of warm clothes in winter. Although not stout, Elizabeth was well covered and I had noticed on the rare occasions that we had been out together that she got puffed very easily when going upstairs or up a slight incline. I didn't know Elizabeth very well so I had to ask some questions. As she loathed the cold so much it would be reasonable to suppose that she loved the sun and could sunbathe but she said at once, "Oh no, I *never* sit in the sun and if I did I would feel awful." This immediately led me to look up *Calcarea carb.* and when she confirmed that she often felt very tired, often sweated and that the sweat was cold and clammy and "you know I am really full of fears", I gave her a dose of *Calc. carb.* also in the thousandth potency, for the above symptoms are *characteristic* of that remedy. She also had *Sac. lac.* night and morning.

*Calc. carb.* must be one of the most fearful remedies and nearly everybody who writes about it says—fear, fear, fear runs all through the remedy, fear that something is going to happen to him or her or to somebody else ; fears that she will lose her reason, and that somebody will notice ; fear that people will notice her confusion of mind ; fear of death ; fear at night ; always fearful.

Jane had not said very much ; perhaps she did not get the opportunity but now she asked if I would prescribe for her too. I knew Jane a little better than I knew Elizabeth, but there were one or two questions that had to be asked. As I mentioned earlier she moved well away from the fire and during tea she ate no pastries and removed some of the butter from her scones. (I remembered having lunch with her one day and she cut every little bit of fat from her meat.) She is *always* out of doors, either gardening or walking and volunteered the information that if she has a headache it is better if she has a walk. To confirm my choice of remedy, I asked if she cried easily and she agreed that she did and then I asked if she ever had to be careful of getting her feet wet—"Oh yes, I al-

ways get tummy trouble of a cold or something if my feet get wet."

To Jane I gave a unit dose of *Pulsatilla* in the 200th potency and *Sac. lac.* night and morning.

I asked them all to tea again in a month's time and explained that although they came in saying they were all suffering from rheumatism they were going away with three different remedies to cure their aches and pains. And I assured Jane that it was quite wrong to suppose that all patients suffering from rheumatism got worse in damp weather; indeed some people felt better in the damp—all very strange!

Four weeks later tea was ready and I experienced a mounting sense of interest whilst waiting the arrival of Elizabeth, Jane and John. Would they be converted to Homœopathy—would their aches and pains be relieved . . . a ring at the bell interrupted my flow of thought.

"Come along and have some tea", I said after greetings had been exchanged, "and then we'll discuss this elusive thing called rheumatism."

Jane started, she was bubbling over with excitement and looked extremely well. "I'm cured", she said. "The most miraculous thing happened; about a week after taking the pills my arm ached terribly badly and felt very bruised and sore for two or three days and then it started to get better and for the last two weeks I haven't felt it at all. I feel on top of the world and so well in myself. But what I can't understand is this; before I took your medicine I had had catarrh on and off for about six months—well whilst my arm was bad my catarrh was dreadful, too, and I was blowing my nose constantly—a filthy greenish catarrh—this gradually went in a few days and now I am perfectly free—I cannot understand it."

"I did tell you Jane, if you remember, that I was going to treat YOU and not your rheumatism specifically and I didn't even know you had any catarrh; so you see by treating the patient all his ills, whatever they may be, will be kicked out from the centre to the circumference. Tell me, Elizabeth, how are you?"

She looked at me pathetically. "I cannot remember a more uncomfortable month," she said "and at times I have felt really

ill. My legs and knees have been so painful I could hardly walk, I've had two awful headaches and I thought I had left those behind years ago ; and lots of diarrhoea. My legs and knees have certainly felt better during these last two or three days but a curious thing is happening to me. Now that I have got over the diarrhoea, etc., which made me feel pretty weak, I have picked up quickly and don't feel nearly so tired and not so cold as I used to, which I think is very odd." "Poor Elizabeth," I said, "I am sorry but you have had an aggravation and a return of an old symptom ; everything is going according to plan and you will be cured."

John looked at me with a twinkle and said "I thought you had given me the wrong medicine and that I had drawn a blank—absolutely nothing happened until two days ago when I began to feel brighter and better in myself although my rheumatism isn't any better. Perhaps it's just the weather ?"

"Your rheumatism will improve," I said, "and you must all have patience. We cannot stampede nature she will take her own time to cure ; because our little pills give your own vital force the boost it needs, and your own body does the curing. This time they all went home with unmedicated pills.

At the end of the second month I gave Jane one more dose of *Pulsatilla* 200 as she had a slight "twinge" in her arm and this cleared it all up and she is still very well today and bounding with energy and gay spirits.

Elizabeth returned at the end of the second month feeling very much better in every way and the aches and pains in her legs and knees had almost cleared up. At the end of three months she had a slight return of symptoms but a second dose of *Calc. carb* 1m cured her and she is still talking about it today.

John never had another dose of *Nat. mur.* and although nothing happened for the first 24 days of his treatment, his shoulder then began to improve until finally it was cured and he felt better than he had felt for years in all sorts of subtle ways. He whispered in my ear as he left that his constipation of long standing had completely vanished,

These three said they had "rheumatism" but I would say John had the *Natrum muriaticum* disease, Elizabeth had the *Calcarea carbonica* disease and Jane had the *Pulsatilla* disease—what is your opinion?

—*Health & You, Jan., '58*

### CLINICAL VERIFICATIONS OF LESS WELL KNOWN REMEDIES

DR. EDWARD C. WHITMONT, M.D.

Mrs. E. G., aged 43. Pain, right side of chest, lower part. It occurs upon deep breathing and in a certain stooping posture of the chest. Some uncharacteristic cough with expectoration. Temperature subfebrile. Heart rate very irregular and rapid; an old rheumatic heart condition seems aggravated. After failure of the routinely prescribed medicines, an X-ray examination of the chest revealed extensive thickening of the bronchial branches as well as of the interstitial markings of both bases. Diagnosis: virus pneumonitis. *Beryllium* 200. cleared the condition in a few days.

*Beryllium* has been known to cause pulmonary fibrositis and acute pneumonitis in industrial workers exposed to it. In the absence of distinguishing modalities the drug was given in this case with satisfactory results on the basis of the clinical diagnosis.

Mrs. D. S., aged 47. Bronchial asthma for 25 years. Some amount of wheezing every morning. Severe attacks usually in the winter. Worse morning upon waking, worse winter, motion, snowy air, rain or fog. Concomitants: itching, oozing eczema of hands, worse washing. Patient is constipated, impatient,