

## THE HOMŒOPATHIC PHARMACIST

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In just the same way as the homœopathic doctor is an ordinary doctor first, with the added knowledge of homœopathy, so a homœopathic pharmacist is an ordinary chemist who has some special knowledge and experience the normal pharmacist has not acquired. He has qualified in the normal way, which means he has proved to his examiners, and can satisfy the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain that he has sufficient knowledge of pharmacy in general, and is amenable in his way of business to the necessary professional disciplines.

He is thus a person who is in a position which can and should be regarded as specialised. When he is deeply involved in this specialisation he becomes aware of aspects other than the mechanical manipulations of various drugs and processes required by homœopathic pharmacy.

The first of these aspects is probably that the chemist himself very soon becomes a believer in the efficacy of the drugs he supplies. Later on he may become convinced of the real value of high potencies, and their superiority if properly selected, over the lower potencies which are often perhaps in the earlier days of one's experience not so properly selected. And it is only then that he feels he has got something big and tremendously worth while to recommend to those who show an interest in the real cause of disease and its possible cure by homœopathy.

As the Pharmaceutical Society's Pocket Book will suggest, any chemist can be introduced to the subject and can acquire the necessary information on how to proceed to the making of the dilutions needed and the dispensing of prescriptions, but if he should contemplate obtaining the raw materials and the making of dilutions higher than the 3x or 6x, he usually jibs at the work involved and elects to get his supplies from a pharmacist who is known to specialise in this work,

*Minute Doses, Powerful Effects*

Having been trained in every aspect of drugs, their dosage, manufacture and testing for purity, it takes a tremendous lot of believing even to-day, that a 3x, that is a 1 in 1,000 dilution, is of any real value at all, but in certain avenues of his ordinary everyday work, such as the dangerous drugs, the ordinary chemist can understand that such a minute dose can have effects, even powerful ones, so he somewhat reluctantly, no doubt, may allow himself to be interested in the very poisonous BELLADONNA or ACONITE, even in a 3x dilution, and thus eventually allow that they might work.

The next big step for him is accepting the 6x. This it seems is approaching the near absurd. Surely, he thinks, one part of a drug in one million parts cannot be of much use for anything, even if it is a vicious poison in the first place. But the persistence of the users of homœopathic medicines and their cures may prevent him from completely shutting his mind.

And, possibly feeling a little uncomfortable now, he remembers from his pharmaceutical training that some of the tests for impurities he has had to know quite a lot about when dealing with all the substances mentioned in the British Pharmacopœia, is the permitted but limited number of parts per million of arsenic present in certain of them, and remembering that the limit of not more than two parts per million are permitted in glycerin, he is not now so ill disposed towards ARSENICUM 6x tablets after all.

By this time he has seen a few extraordinary results and become sufficiently interested to realise that ACONITE is not used with success in all cases of fever when he reads that it will only work if the symptoms of the case are sorted out and only the indicated remedy selected, which may often in the case of children be either BELLADONNA or CHAMOMILLA, and it is not always wise to depend upon ACONITE, marvellous though its effects often are. This is the first lesson learned in true homœopathic selection of a drug for a patient as distinct from a specific for a disease condition.

*Co-operation with Patient*

Drugs in powerful dosage are not, it seems, the only way

of forcing one's opinion and treatment on a patient's struggling constitution. One learns to be more co-operative with the patient's own inner tendencies towards getting well.

This is where the newcomer to homœopathic pharmacy really begins to think deeply for himself and realise the true importance of his work for homœopaths. If these very fine points in differentiation are necessary for the successful choice of a drug for a given condition, then everything possible must be done to ensure that each drug is as near perfect as possible, and this means that the several pharmacopœias and reference books must be studied and the correct procedure followed in the minutest detail.

The pharmacist who has arrived at or near to the ultimate in pharmacy for the homœopath has been led through the somewhat tortuous paths of never ending new problems and facets of his daily work, and ends up as a fully fledged manufacturing chemist, if in miniature as compared with the allopathic concern.

It is only through the twin deficiencies of lack of capital and the inability to produce specifics, each of equal impediment, which all these years has prevented the normal commercial development in homœopathy in the same way as other business concerns are able to expand when they have something good to offer the public. Consequently in this country one finds the homœopathic pharmacist more in a professional capacity than as an all out business concern.

There had in the past been several business concerns who had been suppliers of homœopathic medicaments in a big way, but when the turnover began to fall due to a number of factors, they produced a specific, so that to-day there is at least one nationally advertised and popular medicine obtainable anywhere, which has taken the place of previous homœopathic business, and true homœopathy has now been discarded by them.

#### *Finding Raw Materials*

But what are some of these many facets which lie in wait for the budding homœopathic pharmacist who may be willing to follow the course to the end? Before he can begin to pre-

pare anything, and if he feels he cannot take anybody else's work for granted, he must find his own raw materials, and this is one big and never ending problem.

The chemical drugs such as *CALCAREA PHOSPHORICA* and *SILICEA*, he must make himself in the laboratory. The commonly called raw drugs have to be found, because much more often than not, that normally available in pharmacy is unacceptable. Consequently one has to employ botanists at home and abroad to collect the correct and verified fresh drugs in due season, and send them suitably packed, usually by air from abroad these days, to avoid deterioration in transit.

Snake venoms need to be fresh, and may not be the normally dried product of the snake farms, so what is practically a special expedition has to be laid on to catch a wild snake and extract the venom on the spot. It will be seen that one has to be familiar with all the present day advances in transport, such as air service available, and world wide contacts for botanicals and venoms and such, to say nothing of overcoming various beaucroatic hindrances which prevail in some countries, that vegetable drugs may not pass through unless accompanied by a certificate of fumigation.

He has to keep in touch with all modern drugs, their uses and their poisoning effects, termed "side re-actions" because many toxic drugs have as a result a homœopathic application. This practice I have termed tautopathy.

#### *Keeping in Touch*

He has to keep in touch with advances in machinery design for application to the processing of raw material, and even design and have his own modifications made. These include high speed mills, juice extractors, tincture presses, and filtration aids. He will often find it of advantage to note advances in the cosmetic industry for external preparations such as creams, ointments, and jellies.

Having successfully embarked upon the acquisition of the raw materials he now approaches the potentising process. The insoluble substances, such as *CALCAREA PHOSPHORICA* and *SILICEA* can now be triturated, an arduous task in itself if properly car-

ried out, but a simple enough pharmaceutical procedure, and the potencies above the 6x and of course from the mother tinctures also run up by the fluid potentizing procedure.

The operational organisation and laboratory procedure in making and storing the potencies is considerable. The method adopted must be simple but infallible and capable of rigorous control.

The alcohol and water used must be twice distilled by oneself from ultra modern apparatus and hard glass electrically controlled stills, that is if the determination of the particular pharmacist carries him to this degree of perfection.

In the making of the potencies, for it should be remembered that homœopathy would doubtless not reach the heights it attains in this country without them, it is necessary they be produced and supplied in as near perfect attainment as may be possible, and I venture to suggest that this is unlikely if an intelligent appreciation of the practical characteristics of potency energy, and a firm belief in the value of high potencies, are lacking on the part of the producer.

Not only the necessary care in making must be there, but also in the storing, maintaining and handling of them. All this adds up to homœopathic pharmaceutical integrity giving birth to the necessary ingenuity.

#### *Understanding Legal Aspects*

Once made, and available for distribution and use, the legal aspects have to be fully understood, for there is a formidable list of various Acts of Parliament which control the sale and offering for sale of medicines, such as The Pharmacy and Medicines Act, the Merchandise Marks Act, the Poisons Law, the Dangerous Drugs Act, to say nothing of pharmaceutical ethical conduct, which every pharmacist is expected to conform to.

Thus a homœopathic pharmacist often finds it difficult when asked by a member of the public which remedy might be useful for one or another of the various diseases for which it is forbidden by law to mention a likely remedy.

I will not develop the thought of mentioning individual drugs, but I will mention one which is very much in mind just

now, and which I heard was recently the subject of a talk given to Women's Institute meeting, CAULOPHYLUM, popularly known as Blue Cohosh, or Squaw Root. This is a drug which even the text books of allopathic medicine still find space to mention.

Martindales Extra Pharmacopœia, that excellent doctors' and pharmacists' book of reference, gives the dose of the dried rhizome as from a 5 to 30 grains, and says it has been used as a diuretic and emmenagogue. One wonders just how the American Red Indians, who gave us this drug, used it; but I doubt if they gave it in such a massive dose as 30 grains. The fact is all potencies, and even the 30th c.H. have a very big reputation for value in conferring easy labour to mothers, among other indications during pregnancy.

It is usually given a few weeks beforehand as a routine among those who know of it, but cases have been reported of when the delivery has been delayed, a few doses of the 30th potency have had the desired effect within a short time. In such cases perhaps one may be forgiven for mentioning that ordinarily the immediate follow up remedy would be ARNICA 30 or 200 to both infant and mother. In homœopathy we use the freshly dug rhizomes imported by air from North America where it grows wild.

#### *Problem of Giving Advice*

Such statements as these about the usage of a drug may lead the public to ask the pharmacist for advice, which if given may encourage a satisfied customer to become a budding patient and so the chemist may find himself in a very difficult position. The temptation to recommend a medicine when asked to do so, and which he knows will perhaps be of great value, is very strong indeed. This is especially so when he is a convinced homœopath and over years of observation, reading and experience with the whole subject, knows even a little more than a lot of hints and tips as to the successful application of one or another remedy. But as a professional man his duty is to encourage the public to have confidence in proper medical advice and whenever possible to guide the public in that direction.

However it often happens that this can only be done if he can give a practical demonstration, and so I suppose such recommendations as he feels he should make are justified. It would not be right, having said that much, not to record that the chemist is only an ordinary person, even if he has had a very extensive education pharmaceutically, and that most of the subjects and experience which form the major part of the training of a doctor, the chemist knows little about, so it is quite obvious that in the best interests of the patient he should always be referred to the doctor, or hospital, whenever this may be possible.

*No Guarantee to Public*

From the ordinary practical point of view there are no tests of any sort or kind which can prove or disprove that a homœopathic medicine is in fact what it purports to be. There is no guarantee at all to any member of the public that what he is buying is in fact what he wants, this again of course emphasises that the integrity of the pharmacist must be without question.

The chemist's job in life is a dual one. The laws which govern pharmacy say "he keeps open shop" but in the service he gives there to the public, he practises both a craft and a profession, and so far as homœopathic pharmacists are concerned, and perhaps I should indicate more especially the homœopathic primary producer pharmacist, he is one of the few chemists left who really practises the whole craft of pure pharmacy these days.

He has no one to help him out of his difficulties except the various technical experts, such as botanists and zoologists and others with specialised qualifications, and has to rely entirely upon his own ingenuity. And this of course means his training as a pharmacist is one of the most satisfying things about his daily work.

—*Homœopathy, July '60.*