

OBSERVATIONS ON "HAHNEMANN'S PREVISION OF BACTERIOLOGY—A MISCONCEPTION"

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I have been rather shocked to read the address given by Dr. G. Dirghangi to the students of C. H. M. C. The way, he has spoken about people who may differ from his view point shows absolute lack of good taste. It has marred completely the value of a particular view point that he may be labouring to put forward. On going through the whole merge of his vituperative verbosity the only conclusion that one can draw is that the speaker is out to throw mud on others. He is himself confused in his ideas. In trying to push forward his particular view point by vindictive and discourteous language he is bringing disgrace to our profession. I really feel sorry for the students who happen to have such people as their teachers and guides.

By dispassionate arguments he might have built up a case for his particular view point and we do not mind him having a particular conviction but the way he has expounded it is certainly highly objectionable.

Personally I feel that Hahnemann by sheer force of acute observation and logic came to conclusions which the medical world in general discovered later. He could not but come to the conclusion that the rapid spread of cholera and its mode of propagation could only be explained by the existence of some very minute but contagious inimical agents. If Hahnemann had been alive today he would have been shocked by the caricatures drawn by some of his "faithful" followers. He was a great genius with an open mind and I do not think he would have scrapped the whole facts and figures about bacteriology, the way our friend pictures him. Hahnemann's injunction has been that we must learn all about disease and health. Nobody today can deny the role of bacteria as exciting causes in some disease entities. We, as homœopaths, are concerned more

with the reactions of the patients and their resistance but as medical practitioners we have also the responsibilities for preventing the spread of disease. That can be possible only if we know at least elementary knowledge of Bacteriology and the mode of spread of diseases caused by various bacterial and virus infections.

Regarding Hahnemann's prevision he has modestly said that "perhaps" it was so, because he did not have precise instruments for "experimentation" and "isolation". From all this who would deny him the honour of anticipating the existence and role of bacteria in disease?

We do agree that bacterial invasion is effective only if the soil has been prepared but to dismiss the pathogenacity of certain bacteria and to blind oneself to the contagious nature of some of these living inimical agents is a travesty of the Hahnemannian spirit of enquiry. It is indeed to the credit of the great genius of Hahnemann that he very nearly came to the discovery of minute infective agents responsible for the contagion of cholera. We must remember the background of his times. What looked immaterial and invisible at that time has been made very much visible now.

Hahnemann studied in general, more the dynamics of disease; hence his concepts and terminology consist mostly of "invisible spirit like forces". But that apostle of scientific spirit would be the first person to give bacteriology the reasonable place in medicine if he were alive today. It goes to his credit that he used "most probably" when he described the nature of cholera contagion. That is the right attitude of a scientist in the circumstances. It would have been most dogmatic on his part if he had positively asserted this statement without further proofs.

Our learned friend says that in epidemics it is the element of fear alone which precipitates the epidemics of cholera, etc. How are then children affected? Probably because the atmosphere is charged with fear!

It is only because of recent studies in bacteriology that we have been able to know accurately the mode of spread of such diseases and epidemics and hence we are better equipped with the knowledge of preventive methods against these epidemic outbreaks.

In the end I pray that we should try to understand the spirit of Hahnemannian writings and should not mis-represent him especially to students. We should also try to see how he would have reacted if he was alive today.

A SHORT STUDY OF ARNICA

BY MEREDITH STARR

Referring to *Arnica*, Dr. Kent says that it is a wonderful, misunderstood remedy: mis-used, because it is almost limited to bruises. He states that the *Arnica* patient is morose, wants to be let alone, does not wish to be talked to or to be approached. He has found it effective in preventing a typhoid state and curative in intermittent fevers, congestive chills and old cases of gout, particularly when the mental state is characterized by moroseness and stupidity. He affirms its usefulness in inflammatory conditions of the abdomen, liver and intestines, with tumefaction, uneasiness, prostration and soreness often so marked that the patient cannot be touched. It is also a remedy for whooping cough and for shocks and injuries of various kinds.

Boericke underlines the employment of *Arnica* in putrid phenomena; influenza; violent spasmodic cough, with facial herpes; pleurodynia; angina pectoris; and crops of small boils. He recommends it particularly in cases when injury, *however remote*, is the cause of the trouble; in neuralgia originating in pneumo-gastric disturbances, and in rheumatism affecting the muscles and tendons.