

## WHICH REMEDY ?

By D.M.G.

Faced by a case of sickness there is always the temptation to affix a diagnostic name tag and prescribe the "stock treatment". It is a temptation that assails the would-be healer whether allopathic, homœopathic, or of any other school. The stock treatment will vary according to the fashion of the country or of the period, and may be anything from incantations to injections. Not so very many years ago the victim was bled and blistered, purged or "laudanum-ed", and this in a more or less routine manner. Certainly by these means a good deal of toxic material was removed from the patient's system, albeit in a somewhat crude and drastic manner.

Present fashions of therapy with their assortment of "miracle drugs" in capsules, tablets and mixtures of attractive colours for oral ingestion, and injections of all sorts and sizes, are perhaps more refined and backed up by high power advertising, more impressive. Extras thrown in for better measure are a variety of Rays, ultra-violet, infra-red, colour rays, cosmic rays, to say nothing of vitamin tablets and fancy foods and beverages with pseudo-medicinal claims and names. It must be admitted, however, that by means of this formidable barrage of drugs and treatments a great deal of toxic material can be, and often is, introduced into a body that is already sick and struggling to deal with the poisons on hand. The modern patient is in danger of being submerged under the tidal wave of medication that has followed in the wake of the N.H.S. Little wonder that a recent Minister of Health uttered these disillusioned and significant words, "I shudder", he said in a public speech, "at the cascades of medicine pouring down British throats".

Not only is the routine use of stock treatments a menace by reason of its associated risk of over-medication,

but it carries two serious defects. In the first place it is based too often on a diagnostic label that is inevitably inaccurate or inadequate or both. Important as it is to make the best diagnosis that can be arrived at, that is to infer as intelligently as possible what is going wrong in the sick body, it is extremely difficult to know with any great accuracy the exact morbid changes underlying the sick state. Consequently the terminological label attached is often only able to suggest part, perhaps a very small and comparatively unimportant part, of the whole pathology responsible for the sickness. As a guide to accurate prescribing such a diagnostic label is obviously extremely unreliable.

Another very grave defect is that routine prescribing ignores the all important individual factor in the case. One has to prescribe not for a disease name, not even for a symptom, but for a sick body and for the sick state in that body is the cause of the symptoms. This is the reason why the study of the sick person as a whole, and as an individual whole, lies at the heart of accurate homœopathic prescribing. It is only by the acquisition of the art of assessing the individual character of the sick state that it is possible to know *which remedy* to give in any particular case.

Every remedy has its own peculiar character, nature or personality. This must match the character or personality of the sick body as a whole. The effectiveness of the remedy in stimulating the body's natural resources in the direction of cure depends on such accurate matching.

As illustration take the two remedies Sepia and Silica. Looking up symptoms in Kent's Repertory one is struck by the frequency with which these two remedies appear side by side as "possibles" for selection. How is one to decide which of the two to prescribe in any given case ?

Much may in some cases be learned about the "personality" of a remedy by looking into its *origin*. Sepia is derived from the black pigment that is secreted by the

cuttle-fish and is expelled from its ink-bag into the surrounding water as required. This marine monster is an extroverted oyster, refusing to be encased and imprisoned in a dull shell of monotony and limitation. It is given to enveloping itself in a dark cloud of its own making. It can change colour rapidly. It displays a penchant for most violent jet-propelled motion in its desire for escape. It looks backward rather than ahead. It is not gregarious, preferring to remain hidden under cover of overhanging rocks. It is not, however, lazy or indolent but prepared to dart forth as opportunity arises and do the chores, viz. secure its dinner, usually a passing crab. Jelly-like as it may appear on the surface it is stiffened by a hard core of bone within, the white boat-shaped cuttle-bone that may be picked up on the sea-shore. These are some of the biological source from which the remedy *Sepia* is derived.

The origin of Silica is very different. We read that Silicon is, next to oxygen, the most abundant of all the elements in the earth's crust. Silica is the compound Silicon Dioxide. The sand used in glass-making is a nearly pure form of silica. Sand may be regarded as something that is in nature inert, inactive, unresponsive and of little obvious usefulness.

These two remedies are not only widely apart in their origin but in the living body they show quite different *affinities* for body cells and tissues. Silica has a marked affinity for connective tissues and skin; it may be considered a remedy especially associated with abnormal physical states. *Sepia*, on the other hand, is closely related to the glands of internal secretion and to states of over activity or under-activity of these glands. It is thus bound up with disturbances of emotional poise and of circulatory balance, and is a remedy pre-eminently associated with psychological sick states.

Observing the *appearance* of the patient the *Sepia* case may shew a wax-like pallor, be trembly, obviously

near the end of his or her tether, on the verge of tears or may actually weep on telling the symptoms. The facial expression is devoid of sharp lines suggesting apathy. There may be freckles or brown pigmentation across the bridge of the nose. The Silica patient looks pale, but with a sickly pallor, appears tired, nervous, starting at every sound, jumping if touched, but thin, listless, suffering and desiring to sit around or lie down.

Again in the matter of *causation*, the Sepia state tends to derive from emotional stress, often of prolonged duration. The Silica sick state may arise as the result of a single experience of fright or emotional shock, or from poor nutrition: it is often associated with chronic sepsis.

As regards *modalities*, the general bodily reactions, these two remedies shew both similarities and differences. It is the latter which chiefly concern us in choosing between them. Both remedies are chilly, extremely so, but whereas the Silica patient wants to be heavily-wrapped and enjoys a well-warmed room, the Sepia patient feels faint, and oppressed in a hot stuffy atmosphere.

The Sepia patient is affected adversely by dull cloudy weather and before a thunder-storm. The Silica patient is worse before and during a thunder-storm, and also may be affected by the phases of the moon.

The Sepia patient is better by active movement and worse when sitting still and resting. The Silica patient is averse from any sort of activity and prefers to sit still or even lie down.

The Sepia patient has often a great liking for vinegar, pickles and spicy food. The Silica patient wants cold food and fluids, and this despite being a chilly mortal.

The Sepia patient may sweat profusely but remain without any marked thirst. The Silica patient is also liable sweats but complains of excessive thirst.

These are some of the observable signs and symptoms

which will guide in the choice of one or the other of these two most important and widely useful remedies.

A patient complains of "feeling tired all the time". Of course, this may be accounted for by the fact that the fatigue is due to tuberculosis, to some form of grave anæmia, to hypocortinism or other cause of asthenia. But often all these can be ruled out and something needs to be done about the tiredness. The patient shews an active type of inquietude, is enveloped in a black cloud of auto-genous melancholy, longs to escape, to "get away from it all", would fain be up and doing and getting on with the chores if only energy was not so lacking, feels correspondingly frustrated, could scream at times, is fed-up, browned-off, indifferent to nears and dears, takes no interest in anything, is in fact psychologically exhausted. The remedy is Sepia.

Another patient, equally tired and lacking in energy, is inactive from sheer listlessness and inertia, is quite content to sit around, has not the slightest desire to be up and doing or make any effort whatsoever, is sickly, spineless, sweaty, shivery, apathetic and devoid of go or grit. The remedy is Silica.

The Sepia apathy is an active revulsion, an active indifference, an active aversion from society and pleasures formerly enjoyed. The Silica apathy is just negative, utter lack of ability to care or be interested, mere boredom. It too is associated with a state of physical weakness and sickness, and is mainly caused thereby. In the Sepia patient the exhaustion of body is secondary to a profound disturbance in the emotional and psychological sphere.

It is by studying the remedies in this way, trying to arrive at their individual personality and peculiarities that understanding of the art of homœopathic prescribing can be achieved.

Recently one heard of a fine hunter that had been

written off by an experienced "vet" as finished, past help or hope. Another veterinary surgeon, an eminent colleague with a knowledge of and respect for homœopathy, happened to see the patient. He saw a very sick animal, barely able to stand, the picture of weak and weary suffering, looking all-in, looking also "silica". The remedy was prescribed, careful instructions were given regraded exercise and by the end of the season the moribund hunter was back following hounds.

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### PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

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6. The bed-rock on which rests the whole structure of Homœopathy is the Law of Similars. Hahnemann's concepts of dynamisation of drugs, Psora theory or even the Vital force theory are side issues—"hypotheses—pharmacological, pathological and physiological." Facts must not be confused with suggested explanations of facts.

7. Symptoms *versus* Signs :

The scientificity of Homœopathy is denied or decried as it puts its emphasis more on subjective symptoms than on objective signs. But the so-called scientists beg the very question as their premise of materialistic notion is open to serious objection. Some try to explain away this over-emphasis on symptoms by pointing out the fact that his doctrine came at a time when symptomatology was practically the sole method of diagnosis, so that other aspects did not receive the attention merited. But we can find out a deeper reasoning. The peculiar constitution of our mind is that it separates what is inseparable and then finds itself in a fix to put the parts together. The human organism is an indivisible whole of body, life and mind and after separating them for convenience of understanding the