

## SEPIA

ROBERT STEWART, N.Y.

*Sepia officinalis* is the potentized ink of the cuttlefish. It is a remedy with a very full symptomatology, a polychrest. In fact, Dr. Gibson Miller has said that if he were allowed only one remedy, he would choose *Sepia*!

*Sepia* was originally proven by Hahnemann, and the story is interesting: an artist friend was making no progress under his most careful attention when he was surprised to observe his friend sucking on a brush that was frequently moistened with india ink (*sepia*). Hahnemann asked his friend to abandon this habit, upon which the artist improved. Hahnemann, suspecting its therapeutic possibilities, then instituted thorough provings of the ink, which have since made it among the more frequently indicated remedies in the homoeopathic materia medica.

*Sepia* has an affinity with the endocrine gland system, especially the adrenals, gonads and the pituitary. The resulting imbalance of estrogens produces the typical *Sepia* sluggishness of mind and body, and is noted particularly in uterine complaints. The overproduction of androgens leads to skin symptoms, discolorations, etc.

All of this is perhaps sufficiently familiar to most homoeopaths. Dr. Margaret Tyler gives a very graphic description in her book, *Drug Pictures*. What I would like to do in this essay is suggest a quite different line of approach, where it is applicable, to materia medica study itself: this is in the very fertile field of specific analogies, psychological and/or otherwise, that exists between the patient and his/her cure, the ink of the cuttlefish.

First, there is the tremendous escape and camouflage mechanism of the cuttlefish, one of the most highly evolved adaptive mechanisms in the whole animal world. Endowed with a multitude of chromatophores, it has the uncanny ability to mimic instantaneously any surrounding area in which it finds itself; even during 'emotions' it may change color very rapidly; faced with danger, the cuttlefish releases an abundant ink (*Sepia*) screen into the surrounding waters; and finally, Thor Heyerdahl witnessed the cuttlefish's amazing jet-propulsion ability when he saw them sail by the *Kon-Tiki* for 50-60 yards!

With the *Sepia* patient, there is an aversion to company, occupation, consolation (*Natrum mur.*) and contradiction as uppermost in the mental picture. The patient desires to escape, "If only I could get away from it all". There is an uneasiness in company. The patient is further given to sudden moods, to flushes and to chronic skin discoloration. The typical *Sepia* patient is weary and sad but may flash into active emotion especially if contradicted.

Secondly, the cuttlefish belongs to the class cephalopod. Cephalic means "pertaining to the head" and it is not difficult to see this resemblance between

the gray matter of the brain and the cephalopods of the oceans. (Jacques Cousteau has a book on octopus, squid and cuttlefish called, "The Soft Intelligence") Terrible headaches turn up repeatedly in the patient. On the other hand, we see that the shape and form of the fish suggest, quite remarkably, the human uterine area. This analogy is borne out in the remedy's constant use in uterine disorders. There is also about the cuttlefish the suggestion of a permanent embryo; again, the uterine area, but now, floating within its cerebro-spinal fluid, we see its analogue in the brain area, remaining evolutionarily plastic and embryo-like so that thought may take form, or have birth.

Thirdly, the ink itself serves as a screen created by the cuttlefish to confuse the enemy. In the terminology of Jungian Shadow analysis, we have in the man the anima and in the woman the animus: (1) cuttlefish are, as a whole, social creatures, forming great luminescent groups during procreation, yet, as a whole, the patient tends to be anti-social ("aversion to company, yet does not want to be quite alone either"). Perhaps this is so because the shadow, the ink, has finally come out; further, unlike the octopus, the cuttlefish has been known to bite humans; another thing about the female fish is its seemingly total disregard for its eggs once laid: thus we have the patient's great indifference; (2) in the patient, we have prolapses of the uterus, the bearing down pains. In the fish, midway between the nautilus and octopus, we have the desire to plunge out, to be free of the shell, to sink to the bottom. In the patient, this is translated as a sensation of everything coming out through the vagina. As a vicarious emotional outlet, this may signify a male thrust of the organs outward and downward; and (3) the male cuttlefish evolves a modified tentacle, the hectocotylus, for penetration at intercourse. It is said that the male loses this tentacle during coitus, which is echoed by the depression following coitus of the male patient, the feeling of castration that is recorded clinically; and in the woman, we have the melancholic aversion to any sex life.

Fourthly, the secretion of the ink sac, the sepia ink, is composed largely of melanin, which is found on the skin and in the black layer of the eyes in humans. In the patient requiring Sepia by the Law of Similars, this is the yellowish or brownish discoloration (vitiligo, etc.) so often found, an endeavor perhaps to conceal or hide a particular emotion. This ties in with the cuttlefish's amazing phosphorescent color changes as mentioned earlier. Also, the patient's desire to get away, like the fish, may be why it is said that the patient hides behind a "cloud of Sepia".

One final note has to do with the broad analogy between the very process of evolution itself as figured within the phylum mollusc, and the symptomatology of the patient. This is an area of open research. From the snail, the purple dye, we have the remedy Murex, with symptoms close to Sepia in many areas, but with a great nymphomania, and, of course, from the oyster,

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of the bowels become intolerable to the animal; it twists about, comes in contact with, and irritates the sensitive walls of the intestine, causing a peculiar kind of spasmodic colic, which increases materially the sufferings of the patient."

By the by, he says here clearly: "The psoric taint of the constitution of the patient is amenable for begetting worms in the bowels. So, the treatment of the worms must be to make the constitution of the patient, extricated from psora."

In conclusion he says: "That the worm after eradication of the psora, finds the contents of the bowles no longer suitable for its support, and therefore spontaneously disappears, for ever from the now cured patient, without the least purgative medicine."

Therefore, the best treatment of worms in children is to treat them constitutionally. Only the anti-psoric remedies in the homoeotherapeutics, may save the children from worms for ever and those remedies not only suffice for eradication of helminth in the bowels of children but make them free from predisposition to be easily affected by any disease, improve their general health squarely, fairly sharpen their mental faculties. In future they will become quite healthy men and women, the future parents of the coming generation.

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we have that great polychrest, *Calcarea carbonica*, which has excessive head sweats and is related to *Sepia*.

This kind of analysis and mnemonic study of a remedy may prove valuable to some minds and not to others. But it is hoped that others, physicians and laymen alike, will come up with like ways to make straight materia medica study come alive. Homoeopathy is an art. Let's paint some living pictures.

—*The Layman Speaks*, March 1977

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