

NEVER REPEAT ?

DR. G. M. DESHPANDE, Betul.

Years back I regularly received the *Homoeopathic Outlook*, a thin quarterly, published by M/s. Roy & Co., Bombay. Once I did not receive an issue of it, another did not come, and still another never came. Alas! it ceased to exist I learnt. How soon my Lucy's race was run! I doubt if it has been resuscitated since.

It brought me beacons of homoeopathic knowledge and titbits of wisdom. One such was, never repeat while amelioration holds. But this advice needs to be repeated a hundred times. Everyone who has practised Homoeopathy with zeal has perhaps found this to be the bitterest pill to swallow. Trained consciously or unconsciously in the belief of, thrice daily before/after meals or two capsules every four hours to maintain the proper level of concentration in blood, how can we disbelieve the wisdom in repetition of the dose? Never repeat? Nonsense!

Dr. Younan in his *Therapeutic Hints* writes: "I cannot refrain from relating to you an incident in my study of the *Materia Medica Pura*. In reading the introduction to the proving of Aconite, the first drug of the *Materia Medica Pura*, I could hardly believe that Hahnemann was in earnest when he wrote that 'a single dose of 2 globules, the size of poppyseeds, of the 30th potency of Aconite was an all-sufficient dose for the cure of inflammatory fever where the surgeon would use the lancet for the purpose of bleeding'. Such a remark to an allopathic physician, fresh from his studies, feels like a bomb-shell, and I remember throwing the volume of *Materia Medica* I was reading from one end of the bed to the other with the remark, "the man is mad." Every major break-through in science or art has been branded as madness and so was Hahnemann's dictum of infrequent repetition of dose.

But wiser counsel prevailed on Dr. Younan. He deeply studied Hahnemann's writings and practised Homoeopathy as Hahnemann taught it, not repeating the dose until it was called for, even in such acute diseases as cholera, pneumonia, etc. The large number of cases described in his book reveal how brilliant were the results he thus obtained.

How prompt are we in repeating the doses! A child of three had diarrhoea with greenish, offensive, mucous stools with griping in the abdomen; foul tongue, foetor oris, perspiration without relief, nightly aggravation, etc., all pointing unmistakably to Merc. sol. I advised the 30th and had it repeated every few hours with the result that although there was a great improvement in the nature and number of evacuations the child began vomiting curdled milk and looked distressed.

A middle-aged gentleman had very painful throat, left side, pain reaching the ear, < swallowing liquids, etc., at once suggesting Lachesis. He was

in acute distress and wanted the quickest relief. I caught the infection of his impatience and ordered two hourly repetition of the 6th. The next morning the gentleman turned up to thank me for the splendid relief I gave him but related an awkward experience of his—his ignorance of my sin saving me from the blame. He stated that he could not get uninterrupted sleep, for, every time he pulled his covers up to his chin he had to suddenly kick them off for fear of suffocation.

A professional homœopath handed out a vial of two drams of globules of Sulphur 200 and advised a gentleman of 23 to take a few globules each morning and night till the vial was exhausted. The gentleman took the medicine religiously as advised and lost his appetite, his sleep and got a coat of dry, itchy, burning eruptions all over his body, a good protection against severe winter! Dr. Margaret Tyler repents in her article 'How Not To Do It', over having irretrievably spoilt a case of chronic diarrhoea, and one of mitral incompetence, needing resply Aloe and Ars., by unjustified repetition of the dose, with the pious intention of hastening the cure.

But then, why do we repeat? Ignorance of the laws of repetition? Not at least for those well-trained in the principles and philosophy of Homœopathy. Dr. Stuart Close in his *Genius of Homœopathy* says, "Young practitioners and many old ones too, for that matter, give too many doses, repeat too frequently, change remedies too often. They give no time for reaction. They get doubtful, or hurried, or careless and presently they get 'rattled' if the case is serious. Then it is 'all up with them' until and unless they come to their senses and correct their mistakes. Sometimes such mistakes cannot be corrected and a patient pays the penalty with his life. It pays to be careful and 'go slow'."

He again writes, "One of the most difficult things is to learn to wait. Three things are necessary; wisdom, courage, and patience". I should like to add one more and it is confidence in the choice of our prescription. How quickly we doubt our own choice of remedy. We not only repeat but also change the remedy nervously, especially when the case is acute.

Dr. Hahnemann, Dr. Kent, Dr. Lippe and many other brilliant stars of the same galaxy achieved miraculous results with unit doses of the simillimum. Dr. Dorothy Shephard worked magic with not the minimum doses alone but the minimum repetition as well. Dr. Robert Cooper, the doctor who cured cancers, often gave a single dose of mother tincture and permitted it to expand its action over a long period. Dr. Boger states, in his *Studies In The Philosophy Of Healing*, "I have prescribed for over five hundred cases of typhoid and practically every case seen at the beginning has needed only one remedy, one dose." "One remedy, one dose, is also true in pneumonia. Give the indicated remedy at the start and you can well afford to wait for the crisis." We do not like to wait, however. We repeat and not only lose our cases but also heap undeserved sufferings on our patients.

Emboldened by the examples and assurances of the stalwarts I decided

to wait, an experiment in courage. A single dose in potency of the indicated remedy after a paroxysm of intermittent fever did not permit the next paroxysm to appear. A single dose in a case of very bad weeping eczema of hands cleared not only the eczematous eruption but also the finger-nails which were deformed, discoloured and crumpled. An obstinate dry eczema covering more than half of the right side of trunk and defying select homocopathic treatment for over twelve years quietly receded on receiving a dose in potency. Yes, a single dose. Epilepsy of nearly thirty years standing brilliantly yielding to only a few doses of a single homocopathic remedy in potency, very infrequently repeated. Need I say that I became convinced, almost against my wishes to the contrary, of the wisdom in waiting?

So, shall we not repeat? No, let us not so long as amelioration holds. A golden rule, an infallible rule, tried and tested by thousands the world over.

But can we afford to strictly adhere to it? Yes, if we are in unbroken contact with the patient. If not, we shall have to adopt Dr. Stuart Close's practical advice—only as the second best, of course. "Cases may present themselves, however, which cannot be watched as closely as we would like. We may not be able to visit the patient frequently, or remain with him long enough to observe the full period of remedial action. In such cases it is permissible and indeed necessary, to order a repetition of doses at stated intervals of one, two or three hours, until improvement is felt or seen, or perhaps until our next visit."

All the foregoing discussion concerns the use of decimal and centesimal scale potencies. We have to stand apart so long as the dose administered is exhibiting its acrobatics be it at the snail's pace. This inability of the physician to hasten the action of the remedy is utter helplessness, an insult added to injury of the benevolence in him. Hahnemann, as could be expected of a fireless genius, took up the challenge and set forth experimenting ceaselessly. He prepared a different scale of potencies, the so called 50 Millesimal ones, and found that they could be repeated far more frequently and the cure worked faster. In the sixth edition of his *Organon*, in the article 246, he says, "... were it possible, this period should be diminished to one-half, one-quarter, and even still less, so that a much more rapid cure might be obtained. And this may be very happily effected, as recent and oft repeated observations have taught me, under the following conditions..." In this and subsequent articles he describes, with his characteristic astuteness, the mode of administration and repetition of dose "for the quickest accomplishment of the cure." In the footnote No. 132 to section 246 he writes, "... The same carefully selected medicine may now be given daily and for months..."

Who would not crave to effect a cure at the quickest? The truth in Hahnemann's assertion of greater efficiency of his 50 Millesimal potencies and more rapid cures by their more frequent harmless repetition needs, however, to be corroborated by a meticulous, reliable, comparative study,

although sporadic claims to better results with them are made.

So, shall we repeat? Yes, only after the sense in repetition—may be of the new scale of potencies—is established beyond a shadow of doubt by careful, scientific experimentation and its oft-repeated confirmation. I for one, am not competent to make any comment for I have never used the 50 millesimal potencies. Those who have should come forward and publish their unprejudiced experiences confirming or contradicting Hahnemann's claims. The most reliable verification can, of course, only be done by institutions engaged in homoeopathic research, whom naturally we look to for a trustworthy guidance.
