

MATERIA MEDICA

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The Materia Medica is the main substance of Homœopathy and the question of the growth and development of Homœopathy, external circumstances and politics apart, is in the first place the question of the Materia Medica. Presumably no one is content with the available books, grateful as we are for the labours of all those from Hahnemann down, without which we should have no books at all. There is much to be said for abandoning the dictionary style of sequence from A-Z which denies any inherent system in the remedies. How much agreement is there as to what alternative method would be best? Should the remedies be grouped according to the natural order of their occurrence in nature, the mineral, vegetable, and animal remedies separately, and these grouped according to the periodic table and in orders and genera? Or should they be grouped according to similarity of conditions or organs on which they primarily act, or else perhaps according to emanometer groupings, or nosode correlations, or in some other way? Presumably no one would today suggest arranging them according to Hahnemann's miasms, but the French groupings of remedies deserve consideration.

The Hahnemannian schema for recording symptoms is also of questionable value. It certainly makes more difficult the study of a drug picture as a coherent whole and atomizes thought—the exact opposite of what is required. But if this schema is abandoned, how should it be replaced? Should it be on the basis of the known actions of the analysed constituents of the remedy? Can one discern in the provings the main action of a remedy, and build the remedy picture up around this? Can one reach an intuitive idea of the remedy and unfold its modalities and actions from this centre in the manner so delightfully attempted by Gutman? Is it right to attempt to penetrate the inner field of dynamics of a remedy with the help of Psychological concepts as

demonstrated by Whitmont? What value is there in the attempts to read and interpret the remedies in their cosmic setting with a renewal of the doctrine of signature as essayed by König on the basis of Rudolf Steiner's work?

At the moment it would not appear that these and similar questions are matured to the point of establishing a planned, cooperative activity in this country. We can, however, establish a forum for the expression of these and other trends, and maintain informed and open minds without premature crystallization. But it would be interesting to know whether and in what way these approaches meet with approval or disapproval amongst those who care for the future of Homœopathy.

The organization of the necessary intellectual work to establish a flourishing school of Homœopathy is certainly a most important, even if extremely difficult, matter. Under present conditions all homœopathic physicians are engaged in full-time medical practice and it is an understatement to point out that this leaves little energy over for study and activity outside the immediate demands of one's patients. And yet it may well be that the future of Homœopathy depends more on an intensified study and development of the science and art of homœopathic healing in the light of the incredibly rapidly changing climate of orthodox medicine, than on waiting for recruits to come and attempt to practise our old and established tradition.

The last world war has proved an even greater watershed in intellectual life than the first, and the questions which face the modern physician are unrecognizably different from those with which our predecessors grappled. Homœopathy must be reworked in the light of this new world, but certainly not merely in the terms and concepts of the current mechanistic science.

In the meantime, could not more be achieved by work and discussion amongst kindred spirits in the local centres of homœopathic activity? There are many problems, and many different modes of approach. Concerted efforts in study groups devoted for a limited time to certain issues could prove immensely stimulating, and produce results more valid than the efforts of single individuals struggling alone.

The potential function of Homœopathy as an integrating

element within a comprehensive human medicine should bring about a much closer co-operation between homœopathic physicians than exists at present, and also stimulate fruitful co-operation with other elements in medicine which are seeking to establish a truly human study of Man and his needs in health and disease.

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true human symptoms corresponds to the proving of planes and ships under actual flying and sailing conditions, or testing the strength of materials under actual stress.

The minimum dose of a remedy has its corollary in the gasoline mixture of your car. If there is not enough gasoline, the motor does not kick over; but if you have too much gasoline, it chokes and kills the engine. If you have too much of a drug, it is toxic to the system.

From the foregoing discussion, we can see the principles found in Homœopathy. These principles are also found elsewhere in science and are universal in industry.

—*The Layman Speaks, April '58.*
