

## IMMUNITY AND HEALTH

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Anyone suspected of being a homœopath will not escape the anxious question, "What is the world do you do about immunity?" And a ready answer is another question, "What better immunity do you want than health?" But in the turmoil of modern discussion this answer with whatever truth and finality it may have seldom satisfies.

One practical starting point is put prominently to the front in the early sessions of the Foundation Course for Laymen, where definitions of terms take precedence over the use of terms. By definition, medicine is the science and art of preventing, alleviating or curing disease; though it is not the only such art, its main implements are medicines and they are for the most part given by mouth or through the skin. In the field of medicine, Homœopathy stands out for its aims, which is to embrace man in his totality and to treat the man rather than the man's malady. From that it follows that if and when the man is so altered in his vital powers that he is able to emerge from sickness, his vital powers are better able to keep him from sickness. It follows, too, incidentally that Homœopathy's remedies are always internal and never through the skin because man's vital powers are within. But in any event Homœopathy can allow itself no less a purpose than to leave the patient after his illness better able to remain well by reason of the treatment. This purpose flows inevitably from the definitions at the start.

If man comes away from medical care better able to keep well, he stands at a higher level than before in health and there is no quibble as to what manner of illness may be about him, poised to strike him—as ordinary medicine pictures it. Whether he is struck or not depends on his power of reaction, more than it depends on some artificial shield, and this is a matter of good health. There are at least two ways to regard health. The ordinary way is to think of it merely as the absence of illness, a passive state that needs shelter and is quite helpless without it. This is a

traditional concept that generally escapes analysis or test and is accepted unquestioningly at face value. It is an escapist attitude. It welcomes almost anything that seems to offer escape from illness. And one escape is good for the day thereof. What happens next is of little or no concern until it strikes. Then it is a matter of another escape.

But health can be regarded in an extraordinary way, not as a passive state calling for shelter, not as a result of a clever escape, but an inward power always at work, busy with the tasks of growth, maintenance, repair, home defense, with enough left over for outward activity and useful living. With this kind of health we have the individual citizen, the social being, the personality that counts in the world. Such a person has the power to live in the world by meeting the world's tests as well as its hazards. This is Homœopathy's concept and Homœopathy's goal.

Now if Homœopathy is right about this, then the power to remain well which is health is the power to meet threats and constitutes the actual and the fundamental preventive. What man relies on in the end, rather than some artificial shelter or technical escape, is such a practice of medicine as sets up the patient with enhanced power to stay well by reason of medical treatment. When man becomes wise enough to demand that brand of service and to know it when he sees it, little occasion will remain for prophylaxis. Instead of the future being clouded with mysterious threats and health becoming an ever more complicated and expensive concern, the tendency will reverse toward that simplicity which marks the genuinely applied science.

As a practical matter, it would not be possible to carry out Homœopathy's concept or to approach Homœopathy's goal with a chest of medicines bedeviled with side-effects, after-effects, unwanted or unexpected dangers. One of the first tasks confronting the pioneers was to find out the essential mode of action of medicines and to purify it. How that task was met is another story and a long one, but it was nicely met and the process turned out to be the comparatively simple process of potentization. Yet after more than 160 years potentization is still so little understood in ordinary medicine that *Consumer Reports* for May, 1959, discharges its function of providing authoritative advice by saying

on Page 263: "It is a classic principle of pharmacology that a drug which is useful in relieving symptoms or curing disease also is capable of causing serious reactions; . . ." It goes on to give examples. "Penicillin can cause serious allergic reactions." Antibiotics that have what are called broad spectrums—meaning that they destroy a wide variety of germs—can bring on "super-infections" by other germs that they do not destroy. Drugs intended to bring down high blood pressure can disturb the nervous system. Chlorpromazine affecting the nervous system as a tranquilizer can also bring jaundice. Cortisone, hydrocortisone, prednisone and other steroid hormones can bring upset metabolism, mental disturbances and digestive derangements. Presumably the list could go into the wee small hours.

*Consumer Reports* express sympathetic admiration for heroic doctors who in this amazing day must cope with such a tossing sea of complications. Indeed, if one of them is called to give first aid to the injured he cannot begin safely until he is told the victim's blood type, rh factor, the date of his tetanus toxoid immunization, the date of the booster dose, what "medical conditions" the victim is possessed of, what he is allergic to, what drugs he is now taking by generic name, by trade name and the dosage schedule. A printed form is placed at the bottom of the page to be filled out with the aid of the family physician and carried in the billfold for the doctor to find who answers the emergency call. So long as drugs are used that entail bad side-effects, just so long do complications and allergies follow medical attention and raise the hazards of existence.

Research done in the usual way, on the usual suppositions regarding health, leads to drugs with complicating consequences whether they are for treating the sick or for preventing sickness. Research done in the usual way not bound by the usual suppositions about health led to medicines of relatively pure effects. These are the potentized remedies known to Homœopathy. They are employed according to homœopathic procedures both in treating the sick and in preventing sickness. Using them to prevent a particular communicative malady would be indicated seldom if all persons were under Homœopathy and were thus better able to stay well under their own power. But things being as they are,

there is need for prophylaxis on occasion. Homœopathy is equipped with a number of remedies to choose from in a particular situation and chooses the one remedy most fitting for the particular epidemic. In cases such as smallpox or poliomyelitis or rabies or tetanus (lockjaw), ordinary medicine is obliged to rely on inoculated "protection" because ordinary medicine is off its limits when the malady starts. If Homœopathy prevailed, these maladies would carry far less terror, for in every individual case there is a curative remedy to be found and the situation is far from hopeless.

Sitting together at a class luncheon the other day were two classmates, one of whom was a doctor of ordinary medicine, dismayed to learn that the other had any questions whatever about the virtue of vaccination against smallpox. "Believe me," said he, "I would much rather have a little scar on my arm than have my face covered with pock-marks." "But how about fixing it," said his lay friend, "so you would not have either one?"

—*The Layman Speaks, June 1959*