

THE DOSES OF MEDICINES THAT HAHNEMANN USED*

DR. S. PRASAD, Gaya

The question of size of doses of medicine selected homœopathically is of vital importance. It requires a careful study. When Hahnemann began to prescribe medicine according to the law of similars, he gave them in the usual quantity. Though the patient's symptoms were generally removed, he often found in the first instance symptoms of the patient severely aggravated, so he started reducing his doses accordingly (R. Hughes, pp. 122-23). He did so step by step making experiments, counter-experiments until he reached infinitesimal doses of medicines.

In the following paragraphs pieces of information collected as to how he reduced the doses of medicines step by step are noted.

1796—In this article entitled "Essay on a new principle of ascertaining the curative actions of drugs" published in Hufeland's Journal he advised medicine in crude, but small doses (Kent's L.W., p. 295).

1798—In an article "Some kinds of continued and remittant fevers" contributed in Hufeland's Journal he recommended.

- (a) Arnica root in doses of several grains.
- (b) Ignatia 2 to 3 grains doses for boys of 7-12 years.
- (c) Camphor 30 to 40 grains etc. etc.

In the same year in another article "Some periodical and hebdomadal diseases" contributed in Hufeland's Journal he recommended.

- (a) Ignatia 8 grains.
- (b) China $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 dram etc. etc.

In the same year later on Hahnemann gave the first hints to diluting of medicines. He recommended.

- (a) Sabina, Hyoscyamus 1/10 grain of concentrated juice.
- (b) Stramonium 1/1000 grain of concentrated juice.

Homœopathic aggravation of symptoms led him gradually to decrease the dose in material quantity.

1799—He advocated very small doses.

1800—In his writings "Treasury of medicines and collections of selected prescriptions" he mentions about very small doses of medicines viz. one ten-millionth part of a grain of Arsenic. (H. H., May 1954).¹

1801—One of the most noted substance of a medicine selected and publicly recommended by Hahnemann being a 'Similar' was Belladonna in infinitesimal dose in scarlet fever. Hahnemann tells us how he first lighted upon the remedial virtues of Belladonna in the course of his practice during

* Read in the District Homœo. Medical Association Conference, Gaya on 10-4-66.

an epidemic "My memory, and my written collections of the peculiar effects of some medicines furnished me with no remedy so capable of producing a counterpart of the symptoms here present in Belladonna. I therefore gave this girl of ten years of age, who was already affected by the first stage of scarlet fever, a dose of this medicine (1/4,32,999 part of a grain of extract) which according to my subsequent experience was rather too large a dose. So remarkable was the effect that the following day she was playing again complaining nothing and quite lively" (Life of Hahnemann by Rosa Hobhouse, pp. 142-43).

1802-9—Little information can be gathered. Obviously he was experimenting and counter-experimenting medicines of lower and higher dilutions with succussions as it appear from the following writing of Kent (L.W., pp. 231-32). In this year he discovered that smallness of doses brighten the power of cure. He recommended in some scarlet fever tincture of *Opium* in one part to 500 part of alcohol, one drop of this to be shaken with 500 drops of alcohol, the patient to take one drop of this preparation as a dose. Hahnemann experienced the effect of dilution and shaking in increasing the effectiveness of medicine.

1810—The year of publication of 1st edition of 'ORGANON'.

1811—The year of publication of 1st edition of 'MATERIA MEDICA PURA'.

In those we do not find detailed treatment regarding the size of the dose, as in the 5th edition of ORGANON and 5th edition of 'MATERIA MEDICA PURA'.

1815—On 1st September he gave a full drop of undiluted juice of Bryonia root to a washer-woman (40 years) patient in robust health with brilliant result, but he warned in 1830 his disciples not to imitate it. On 27th December of the same year he gave 1/2 drop of the quadrillionth of a strong dose of Pulsatilla to a weak pale man of 42. The next day he was free from all ailments (M.M.P., pp. 20-23).

These successes did not stop Hahnemann from advancing further step by step in reduction of the dose till the end of his life. Whenever he met medicinal aggravation, he reduced the dose further and dynamised it.

DYNAMISATION OR POTENTIZATION

After 1815 it seems he experimented dynamisation of drugs, which is the greatest of all his discoveries. Dynamisation or potentization is not only dilution. Dilution means quantity, whereas potentization means quality.

That the properties of crude medicinal substance gain, when they are fluid by repeated succussion with unmedicinal fluids, and when they are dry by frequent continued trituration with un-medicinal powders, such an increase of medicinal power, that when these processes are carried very far, even substances in which for centuries no medicinal power has been observed in their crude state, display under this manipulation a power of acting on the health of man that is quite astonishing, e.g., Natrum mur. (table salt), Carbo

veg. (charcoal), Aurum met. (gold) in their crude state have no medicinal virtue, but when prepared in Homœopathic potencies have wonderful curative powers. There are many such examples. Hahnemann (at page 45 of M.M.P. Vol. 2) says that he was apparently the first who made this great, extra-ordinary discovery. It may further be admitted that even after more than 150 years it is a mystery to many students of Chemistry, and materialistic minds. In laboratory test the chemists do not find any medicinal properties under Homœopathic tituration after 12th potency.

1830—In this year the 5th Edition of *Materia Medica Pura* was published. Here the minimum dose is one small sugar globule of the size of a poppy-seed moistured by one drop of decillion fold (i.e. 30th potency), and which are so small that 300 of them weigh one grain.

1830-35—He mostly used 30th potency of centesimal scale which could cure without aggravation. This is widely and popularly used as safe potency. He began to standardise the 30th centesimal in all cases. This will appear from his letter dated 12.9.1829 to Dr. Schreeter, "I do not approve of your dynamizing the medicine higher. There must be some end of the thing, it cannot go infinitely. By laying down rule that all homœopathic remedies be diluted and dynamized upto X (i.e. 30th), we have an uniform mode of procedure in the treatment of all homœopathists".²

1832—In another letter of 1832 to Dr. Stapf he says "that Herr Von Korsakoff's novel experiments are of inestimate value, but for homœopathic treatment of patients, it is expedient in the preparation of all kinds of medicines to remain at the decillionth attenuation and potency in order that all homœopathic practitioners may be able to promise themselves uniform result in their cure".²

But later on as it appears he changed his opinion and says that there is no limit to be set to the number of our dynamization so long as they can lead to aggravation. (H. G., April 1962, p. 162).³

1837—Experience showed Hahnemann that "it is most useful to give to the patient the powerful homœopathic pellet only in solution and this solution in divided doses. Before giving a dose of medicine it is necessary that every time the phial should be shaken. The vital principle cannot well bear the same unchanged dose of medicine even twice in succession. For this the good effect of the former dose of medicine is either neutralized in part or new symptoms proper to the medicine or symptoms which have not been before present in disease appear, impeding the cure. Secondly that in taking one and the same medicine repeatedly, if the dose in every case varied and modified only a little in degree of its dynamization, the vital force of the patient calmly and willingly receive the same medicine even at brief intervals very many times in succession with best result every time." (Vide Preface 5th Ed. of *CHRONIC DISEASE*, pp. 153-54). Under the method of administering medicine as noted above, he found no potentization in an attenuating vial too strong with two succussions as previously advised and

so he again used ten strokes with each. So he took back what he wrote 3 years before on the subject (C.D., p. 157).

1839—He started feeling difficulties. Ten strokes make them more powerful and two strokes do not give the desired result. He found his escape in a new scale of potency which he started experimenting after 1839. His friend and disciple Boenninghausen (in his L.W., p. 74) says "In the new edition of the ORGANON which will probably appear yet in the course of this year, improved and completed by Hahnemann himself, a new simplified procedure for the potentizing of the medicines will be taught, which has considerable advantages over the former and yields a preparation as to efficacy of which I can, from own experience, give full praise. I know this procedure, but according to my pledged word of honour, am not, as yet, permitted to communicate it to any one". The 6th edition of Organon was completed by Hahnemann in February 1842. But before the book could be published he died. He disclosed his experience that the centesimal scale of potency (ratio being 100 : 1) was found altogether too limited to develop thoroughly. The number of succussions was insufficient to rouse the development of the medicine to the desired extent. In case more succussions are used specially by powerful machines, the ratio of the diluting medium being too small are then developed specially in higher degree of dynamizations, acts almost immediately, but with furious, even dangerous specially in weak patient without having a lasting mild reaction of vital principle (pp. 292-93 6th Ed. ORGANON). This offended his ideal of cure which should be gentle (ORG. sec. 2). Therefore he found his escape in the 50 millesimal scale potencies wherein he widened the gap between the medicinal substance and the diluting medium to obviate any furious aggravation. The method of preparation of 50 Millesimal scale potencies is given in Sec. 270 of 6th Edition of ORGANON. The ratio between the medicine and diluting medium is 50,000 : 1 with many succussive strokes as against 100 : 1 with ten succussive strokes. However in this act the standardization remained the same at ceiling level of 30. Hahnemann found that "with this dis-proportionate higher ratio between medicine and diluting medium many succussive strokes can produce a much greater development of power, mildest in action which however, if were chosen homœopathically touches all parts curatively (footnote Sec. 270 ORGANON 6th Ed.). The mode of administration of this medicine is given in (footnote of sec. 248 of 6th Ed.).

A brief history of the doses of medicines that Hahnemann used in different forms from 1796 to 1842 have been given above. It is for his followers to test the method and teachings of his rich experience of his advanced age and communicate to those interested including the writer of this paper results obtained. Hahnemann never demanded blind faith from his followers. So what is requested here is to test his teachings and method given in the 6th Edition of the ORGANON, before summarily rejecting on

speculation and imaginations. This writer is using 50 millesimal scale of potencies from 1963 with growing confidence.

REFERENCE

¹ H. H.—“Homœopathic Herald”—Calcutta.

² Two letters referred—See article by Dr. S. M. Bhattacharya printed at pages 31-32 of the booklet, “Fifty millesimal Potencies” published by Hahnemann Publishing Co. Private Ltd., Calcutta.

L. W.—Lesser Writings.

³ H. G.—“Hahnemannian Gleanings”—Calcutta.
