

THE GENERAL COUNCIL & STATE FACULTY OF
HOMŒOPATHIC MEDICINE, WEST BENGAL

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NOTICE

Registered Homœopathic practitioners are hereby notified that the next T. C. Examination of the Council to confer the diploma of D.M.S. to the successful candidates will be held in the first week of December, 1951. Detailed informations regarding the said examination may be obtained from the Registrar by sending a 9 pies stamp to the above address.

Registrar.

THE MYSTERIUM OF PRESCRIBING

BY KARL KÖNIG, M.D.

In opening this lecture my I express my grateful thanks to the Faculty of Homœopathy for giving me again the opportunity of addressing the Faculty and for the permission to speak on the "Mysterium of Prescribing". This title has caused some of you to wonder what might be the content of my discourse. For many years I have occupied myself with the questions: What actually lies behind the mental process in man that, at times, enables us as physicians to find the true and proper remedy for some of our patients? How is it possible that by certain conscious and sub-conscious processes the proper remedy appears before our mental eye? What kind of inner answer can solve the complex question which a diseased person asks the doctor by way of the symptoms which he exhibits? For all the symptoms are to the doctor a question, and the remedy which he prescribes is the answer to this question. What, now, is really the mental process which makes it possible

for the physician to find the answer to this question which the symptoms ask?

I do not claim to be myself a homœopathic physician. In spite of this statement I have sometimes been able to find the proper remedy and to stand in wonder before the result and the achievement. These occasions give rise to the question: "What lies behind this *Mysterium of Prescribing*?" This is the problem with which I have been occupied for many years, and it is for the first time to-day that I dare to speak about this problem. Therefore, although I know that it will be a first attempt, I hope that, in spite of its incompleteness and deficiencies, it may be a first step in opening up the problem which in my opinion, has been rather neglected in medical literature. I am aware that the complexity of this question is so great that only in the course of years or centuries will the proper answer be found: therefore only the first step can now be attempted.

To begin with, I should like to describe the facts which lead us to arrive at a diagnosis. A good deal of literature exists in this field written by allopathic as well as homœopathic physicians; I shall first quote certain paragraphs from Dr. Ryle's book on *The Natural History of Disease* (Oxford University Press, 1936). In the chapter on "The Study of Symptoms", Ryle refers to the split within the whole field of medicine. There is on the one hand the way of scientific research; on the other hand the practical art of healing. Ryle now tries to discuss how it might be possible to bring the study of symptoms, which so far belongs to the subjective art of healing, into the objective field of scientific research. He writes: "It will, I think, be a very long time before symptoms can be studied experimentally on any considerable scale. Very few of them can be accurately reproduced. The majority of them as they occur in nature are transient. We have no practical method at present of measuring or photographing

subjective phenomena. They express the behaviour of disordered or diseased tissues." Please remember this very important statement! To the allopathic physician the symptoms express the behaviour of disordered or diseased tissues. Then Ryle continues: "Like the behaviour of plants and animals we are likely to learn more about them by constant and close observation, by careful recording, and by correlation of these observations with objective phenomena and existing physiological knowledge than by any other process of study."

In this book, which is so delightfully and earnestly written, Ryle continues his study of the nature of symptoms, and states: "Symptoms, as has been stated, express a disturbance of function. Although they are often caused by organic disease, they do not express the disease but the disturbance of function which the organic change produces. The same symptoms may thus be produced by functional error or structural flaw. While not specific for diseases, symptoms are nevertheless specific for functional errors, and these errors, for the most part, depend upon an exaggeration, a depression, or an inhibition of normal reflex phenomena. The dyspnoea of great effort in health is physiologically similar to the dyspnoea of small effort in heart disease. The angina of anxiety or tobacco excess or anæmia has the same physiological basis as the angina of coronary sclerosis, although none of its gravity. Gastric and intestinal pain, as severe as the pain of gastric ulcer or intestinal obstruction, may occur in the absence of gastric or intestinal disease."

Here in these words, the case is clearly stated. In studying symptoms and the complexity of their order, the allopathic physician thinks continuously of the disordered function and the disordered function leads him to a concept of what he describes by the word "disease".

The physician has then to ask himself what the symptoms mean in the whole household of nature, and Ryle

states: "The function of symptoms is presumably protective. Dyspnœa demands general rest for a local and general advantage. Pain in an injured limb compels local rest and so permits repair. The pain of angina pectoris demands instant immobility and so spares the heart in jeopardy from anoxæmia and acute muscle failure." Apart from these and many other examples, Ryle is, nevertheless, compelled to admit: "The protective significance of many other symptoms is obscure, but for the most part they are symptoms whose nature remains at present undetermined. In a more remote and less biological sense symptoms in man are protective in that they compel their victim to seek the advice and aid of others."

This kind of statement is scientifically untenable. It is the result of seeking for purposeful ideas behind natural phenomena. It is the same kind of thought which states that the good God has created the cork tree so that we are able to stopper our bottles of wine. Dr. Ryle is therefore quite unable to arrive at a proper answer to the question: "What is actually a symptom or a number of symptoms in a diseased person?"

If we now turn to the point of view of the homœopathic physician, we find in Kent's *Lectures on Homœopathic Philosophy* (Chicago, 1937) the following statement on the nature of symptoms: "Who is the sick man? The tissues could not become sick unless something prior to them had been deranged and so made them sick. What is there of this man that can be called the internal man? We say that man dies but he leaves his body behind. We dissect the body and find all of his organs. Everything that we know by the senses belongs to physical man, everything that we can feel with the fingers and see with the eyes he leaves behind. The real sick man is prior to the sick body and we must conclude that the sick man must be somewhere in the portion which is not left behind. That which is carried away is primary and that which is left behind is ultimate."

This statement is further substantiated when Kent continues: "We must, to be scientific homœopaths, recognize that the muscles, the nerves, the ligaments and other parts of man's frame are a picture, and manifest to the intelligent physician the internal man. Both the dead and the living body are to be considered, not from the body to the life, but from the life to the body."

Kent, in the following lectures, describes very clearly how symptoms are actually nothing else but the expression of what he calls "the internal man", the one who is not left behind when the physical body turns into a corpse. Only the living man can produce symptoms. This is a fundamentally new concept, and Kent states: "We study disease as a disorder of the human economy in the symptoms of the disease itself. We also study disease from the symptoms of medicines that have caused disorder in the economy. Indeed, we can study the nature and quality of disease as much by studying the *Materia Medica* as by studying symptoms of disease. . . . True knowledge consists of becoming acquainted with and understanding the nature and quality of a remedy."

Therefore, to the true homœopathic physician, the symptoms do not only suggest disease, they suggest the remedy itself, and from this fundamental principle springs the whole idea of the drug-picture.

There are two ways of looking at this single phenomenon, the phenomenon of the diseased person. If the allopathic physician examines a diseased person he can find exactly the same order of symptoms, being thorough and painstaking in his examination, as the homœopathic physician; but for the allopath, the various symptoms order themselves into a mental image which may fit into a picture of a known disease. For the homœopath, on the other hand, the order of the symptoms paints a mental picture which, to him, suggests a remedy. Therefore, when looking at a patient and his symptoms, two entirely different

images rise in the minds of the homœopathic and the allopathic physician. In the one, it is a disease, in the other a drug-picture which comes to the fore.

No doubt to the trained allopath, behind the diagnosis of disease, a certain medicine will be suggested, and to the homœopath, in the background of the drug-picture, a certain disease will occur. Nevertheless the main issue lies in the fact that a bundle of symptoms can be suggestive of two entirely different things: the disease or the drug-picture.

We now have to ask ourselves how it happened that these two different schools of medical approach to the patient, based on two such different points of view, have occurred in the development of the history of medicine. The homœopathic way arose some one hundred and fifty years ago and the allopathic some two thousand four hundred years ago. Let us make an excursion into the history of medicine.

Hippocrates, the great Greek physician who is called the Father of Medicine, lived from 460 to 377 B.C. in the island of Cos. If we ask ourselves from what source Hippocrates gained his tremendous knowledge we find that he was the son of another Hippocrates who also worked as a physician and that indeed there existed a whole family in which medical knowledge was handed down from generation to generation. All his forefathers, however, were physicians who had never spoken publicly of their medical knowledge. Hippocrates the Great was the first of them who dared to do so. I cannot withhold from you this statement: Hippocrates did not know more than his father and grandfather; he only made publicly known what he had learned. This is the reality behind the man Hippocrates. He lived in a time when medical knowledge was still cloaked in mystery for ordinary men. Before the age of Hippocrates, the mind of ordinary man was unable to grasp the knowledge which the family of the Hippocra-

teans held in their hands. The more the human mind developed from pictorial thinking to logical comprehension of ideas, the more all that was hidden knowledge was brought to the public notice. Hippocrates revealed a knowledge which, until his time, was hidden in the depths of the mystery temples.

At the same time Plato was forced to take a similar step, and his pupil Aristotle, out of his knowledge, created the laws of logical thinking. These three great men committed treason for the good of mankind. They gave away the secrets of the mysteries into which they were initiated.

Hippocrates emerged out of the temples and brought with him the secrets into which his forefathers were initiated. Hippocrates threw this mysterious cloak away, stepped out from the shadow of the temples and took with him a certain number of remedies which he knew he could use and which, until then, were known only to the initiated physician. With this handful of remedies and with a completely different and new approach to the diseased person, describing the difference between organic and epidemic diseases, and the way in which to detect symptoms, he opened the doors of medical knowledge to mankind.

If we now ask ourselves what was the content of all that was hidden within the mysteries and which Hippocrates tried to reveal in parts, we should not look for something mysterious. For Hippocrates, although he opened the doors to the mystery-knowledge, did not give away the magic source of its content. And the main content of the mystery-knowledge of olden times, in the sphere of the temple medicine, was nothing other than what we know to-day as the various drug-pictures of our homœopathic remedies. These drug-pictures were taught in the temples to those who were chosen to become physicians. This teaching was done in a different way. It was done in such a way that the imaginative powers of thinking were used and the drug-pictures then were real pictorial

images. These images were not permitted to be disclosed to the uninitiated. But the true initiates among the ancient physicians knew in a different way the same truth which we know to-day: that the same remedy which can heal, is also able to create disease. Therefore these remedies are, if known, a potential danger in the hands of men, and for this reason only those who were willing to heal and who had purified themselves to a certain extent, and of whom no misuse of knowledge was to be expected, were initiated into the mysteries of the temples.

Through Hippocrates who stepped out of the mysteries and closed the gate of the temple behind him, the pictorial images of the drug-pictures were lost to mankind. Man was no longer able to see the true picture of *Apis*, *Belladonna*, *Calcarea carbonica* or any other of the great remedies.

The trend of medical thinking had to move forward in a different direction. The physician had the task of gradually learning to study the symptoms in relation to the disease and not to the remedy, and more and more the body itself became the central subject of study in the realm of medicine. Hippocrates turned the eye of the physician from the remedy to the human body and all the surrounding forces which influence it.

Most of the physicians followed the teachings of Hippocrates, and only in a few remaining mystery temples were the old methods still carried on.

Parts of one of these mystery places are still preserved. In Epidauros we can see a huge amphitheatre, and among the ruins of the different temples and treasure-houses there exists a strange structure; beneath the earth a kind of spiral is built of stone, and from the inscriptions found in the temple of Epidauros it is known that the patient was led to this spiral in the evening and put to sleep there. During the night he dreamed of the god Asklepios, who appeared to him and held in his hand a plant or substance which, upon waking, the patient could remember. This

plant or substance was subsequently used as his remedy. This type of instruction by way of dreams happened many times in the mysteries, and brought healing to thousands of people. It was in Epidauros that the patient himself, and not the physician, experienced in a supernatural way his own particular remedy.

This way of finding the right and proper remedy was gradually lost to mankind from the time of Hippocrates. In Hahnemann, for the first time after two millenia, the foundation of a new medicine was again created. It was Hahnemann who resumed the search for the proper drug-pictures, but now in a new and scientific way. In the time between Hippocrates and Hahnemann, the history of medicine followed a special direction. It was its task to discover the nature of disease and not the nature of the remedy. Only odd people, old shepherds and old women of the countryside, had some insight into the healing powers of certain remedies. In the herbal remedies of the Middle Ages this remedial knowledge was preserved, but it was a traditional wisdom, not a scientific one. It was handed down like the old mystery knowledge from father to son and lived within the blood and hereditary forces of some families.

Hahnemann, in a precise and scientific way, had the great intuition to collect symptoms, not relating them to the disease but to the remedy. This was a tremendous step forward in the development of medicine. For it was Hahnemann who again opened the doors of the mysteries which had been closed since the time of Hippocrates.

The history of medicine has two great pillars, the two great "H's", Hippocrates and Hahnemann, the one who lived in Cos and the other who worked in Köthen; and we may rightly say that between Cos and Köthen the diagnosis of disease was the main element of medical knowledge. Before Cos and after Köthen, the diagnosis of the remedy was and will be the central theme of medicine.

(To be continued)