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PLACE OF SURGERY IN HOMOEOPATHY

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In recent years, surgery has been the subject of vigorous discussion in and outside our organizations. Probably the marvelous achievements of modern surgery, the legitimate offspring of the two World Wars in one generation, have created the noteworthy interest in our ranks. But, if we look back and search for guidance in the life and works of our past masters, much of the cloud may disperse and things may be seen in their proper light.

To declare that surgery is beyond the scope of Homoeopathy is sheer ignorance of facts and distortion of the principles enunciated by Hahnemann. Hahnemann himself, besides being a great linguist, a sound chemist, an able physician and an untiring researcher, was an eminent surgeon in his day. Those who are acquainted with Bradford's or Haehl's *Life and Letters of Hahnemann* know that Hahnemann used to scrape and dry-dress carious bones. Practically, he was the originator of dry-dressing, for which an impartial medical history will give him due credit. A whole section (Sec. 186) of the *Organon* has been devoted to the cause of surgery. The place of surgery has been carefully determined here by Master Hahnemann, and except for some such items that may be added with advantage to the list of surgical cases given by him, there is little scope for improvement, to say little of alterations.

In the said section, Hahnemann clearly indicated, more

than a hundred years ago, instances where surgery should wisely intervene:

...by the reduction of dislocations, by needles and bandages to bring together the lips of wounds, by mechanical pressure to still the flow of blood from open arteries, by the extraction of foreign bodies that have penetrated into the living parts, by making an opening into a cavity of the body in order to remove an irritating substance, or to procure the evacuation of effusions or collection of fluids, by bringing into apposition the broken extremities of a fractured bone and retaining them in exact contact by an appropriate bandage, etc.

What is meant by this pretty small list is that traumatic, or in other words casualty, cases should be manipulated and met surgically. Unfortunately the phrase "to procure the evacuation of effusions or collection of fluids" creates some confusion. Some may go so far as to recommend aspiration in cases of pleuritic effusions, emphysema, hydrothorax, hydrocephalus, hydrocele, ascites, etc. But the context in which the whole is said leaves no loophole for any confusions, as it refers only to the "local maladies ... produced ... solely by an external lesion," and "the case of injuries accruing to the body from without" (sec. 186. *Organon*). So, the terms "effusions" and "collection of fluids" should indicate such conditions as are consequent upon local injuries, but which, instead of being removed by the natural processes of absorption and elimination, continue to be a source or maintaining cause of some physical or mental symptoms. Besides, neither our literature nor our individual practices are so poor as to lack positive proofs of the curability of such cases of natural diseases, e.g. emphysema, empyaema, ascites, hydrothorax, hydrocephalus, hydrocele, etc., in our therapy.

Rightly speaking, section 186 is a continuation and elaboration of sec. 7, which reads: "Now, as in a disease, from which no manifest exciting or maintaining cause (causa occasionalis) has to be removed." A suggestion is dropped here for the first time in the *Organon* that what is removable in some ailments is a local cause, an exciting or maintaining one, after the removal of which the ailment spontaneously terminates in health. Hence, the relevant

place of surgery and its utility as a therapy is recognized. In the long note following, Hahnemann writes: "It is not necessary to say that every *intelligent* physician would first remove this where it exists; the indisposition thereupon generally ceases spontaneously." Now, he gives a pretty long list of cases where either dexterous manipulation or operative surgery is a sheet anchor:

He will remove from the room strong smelling flowers, which have a tendency to cause syncope and hysterical sufferings; extract from the cornea the foreign body that excites inflammation of the eye; loosen the over-tight bandage on a wounded limb that threatens to cause mortification, and apply a more suitable one; lay bare and put a ligature on the wounded artery that produces fainting; endeavour to promote the expulsion by vomiting of belladonna berries, etc., that may have been swallowed; extract foreign substances that may have got into the orifices of the body (the nose, gullet, ears, urethra, rectum, vagina); crush the vesical Calculus; open the imperforate anus of the newborn infant, etc.

The "etc." is there, and Hahnemann leaves all such cases not mentioned here to the discretion of the "*intelligent physician.*" But, "intelligence" is a distinctly wide term and comprises strong common sense, keen insight, and suitable clinical experience. So, by this method of intelligent approach to the problem, we may extend the etcetera and thus go on adding considerably to this list: to remove a manured lens cataract; to extract an illset and pointed tooth that pricks inside the cheek and causes ulcer; to remove by decapitation or craniotomy the giant head or heads of single or double monsters; to perforate the membrane in placenta praevia; to casareanize when the passage is short or the foetal position is most unfavourable obstetrically; to resort to laparotomy when the pregnancy is tubal; to manipulate and aid the quick delivery of the torn placenta; to close the lacerated, torn perineum by stitches, and so on; the central idea being to resort to surgery in cases which instead of representing diseased states are instances of obstetrical and other accidents. We may further add to this list cases in which strong common sense coupled with clinical experience demands that, because of a gross pathology representing causa occasion-

alis, and a critical condition of the patient, surgery must intervene immediately or the patient dies in a short time, i.e., cases in which it is imperative to remove a matured appendix threatening to rupture or is already ruptured; to set right a strangulated hernia and intestinal obstruction (not of the spasmodic type) threatening gangrene, to remove a too large biliary calculus entangled in a too narrow bileduct threatening to be ruptured; and so on.

Hahnemann has carefully drawn a fine line between surgery and medicine. Traumatic and other pathological cases (imperforate anus, effusions, etc.), along with the cases that require the dexterous manipulation of a surgeon (e.g. a vesical calculus that has to be crushed, a tight bandage that has to be replaced, etc.), are beyond the scope of medicine.

But when in such injuries the whole living organism requires, as it always does, active dynamic aid to put it in a position to accomplish the work of healing, e.g. when the violent fever resulting from extensive contusions, lacerated muscles, tendons, and blood-vessels requires to be removed by medicine given internally, or when the external pain of scalded or burnt parts needs to be homœopathically subdued, then the services of the dynamic physician and his helpful homœopathy come into requisition. (sec. 186, *Organon*)

Besides, all the so-called topical surgical cases, that are so termed solely owing to a misconception of their true character, e.g., abscesses, carbuncles, cellulitis, felons, erysipelas, gangrene, prostatitis, tumors, sepsis, tonsillitis, etc., are never surgical, properly speaking (except, of course, in cleansing method). They belong most surely to the province of the physician, since.

....very little reflection will suffice to convince us that no external malady (not occasioned by some important injury from without) can arise, persist or even grow worse without some internal cause, without the co-operation of the whole organism, which must consequently be in a diseased state....No eruption on the lips, no whitlow can occur without previous and simultaneous internal ill-health. (sec. 189, *Organon*. 6th Ed.)

Hence, the surgeon and the physician who are different persons in modern medicine are to live side by side in perfectly co-operative harmony with each other, without ever attempting to usurp one another's position.

The aforesaid revolutionary radicalism in medical thought left in its train many new and changed concepts of disease and its sequelae. Time and again since 1827 Hahnemann demonstrated the folly of considering itch, syphilis and gonorrhoea as topical or surgical diseases. The sole basis of his immortal work, *The Chronic Diseases*, is the wholesome conception of those three diseases as internal and constitutional ones, needing internal and constitutional remedies alone. Medical thought of the old school has at last seen the folly and falsehood of its own past method of treating those three ailments and, willy nilly, is embracing the doctrine of Master Hahnemann, changing its topical black-wash (Iodoform-Mercury) recipe to the hypodermic application of Arsenic-Bismuth-cum Penicillin. But, with regard to cancer, regular medicine is betraying the same senseless ignorance of facts and principles, as it showed till fifty years ago with regard to syphilis and gonorrhoea. To us as to Hahnemann, cancer is not a local and surgical disease but is definitely constitutional and medicinal. Radium, deep X-ray and surgery are not only ineffective but as pernicious in bringing about metastasis as inducing a rapid fatal termination. What Hahnemann says, writing in 1832 (*Organon*, 6th Ed. p. 244; the note is almost the same in Dudgeon 5th edition, p. 153), is noteworthy and tells the story of our present age :

I can not therefore advise, for instance, the local extirpation of the so-called Cancer of the lips and face (the product of highly developed Psora, not infrequently in conjunction with Syphilis), [as it necessitates the vital energy to] transfer the field of operation of the great internal malady to some more important part (as it does in every case of metastasis) and the consequence is blindness, deafness, insanity, suffocative asthma, dropsy, apoplexy, etc.... the result is the same, without previous cure of the inner miasm, when Cancer of the face or breast is removed by the knife alone and when encysted tumours are enucleated; something worse ensues or at any rate death is hastened. This has been the case times without number, but the old school still goes blindly on in the same way in every new case, with the same disastrous results.

Citing from Hahnemann, "the true method of cure, which has never assumed to itself the power of *directly* influencing organic defects" (*Chronic Diseases*, part i,

p. 199. Ind. Edit.). Some one may announce that cases with end-products of diseases are not amenable to homœopathic treatment, but are, therefore, to be relegated to surgery. The above lines are said in the context of organic defects, "adventitious organisms, malformations and degenerations," etc., which are produced by the continuous and excessive use of allopathic drugs. Hahnemann is not very optimistic about such cases. But natural diseases of this type with positive characteristic indications have a strong tendency to be cured by medicines. Who has not seen a tumor, a corneal opacity, an indurated tonsil, a bony projection (e.g. a calcaneal spur) or a rheumatic deformity, disappear under homœopathic treatment? Even in cases which Hahnemann pronounced as almost incurable, glimpses of hope were seen by him, provided the vital, reactive power was strong enough to "absorb and reform what it has compulsorily deformed." He therefore "can promise an improvement only after a long period of time" (*Chronic Diseases*, p. 199). Only the questions of time and reactivity of the vital principle crop up here which, being satisfied, cure ensues.

A stumbling block we meet in this regard is that our remedies have not been proved so far as to produce pathological tissue changes and organic lesions. Characteristic local and constitutional symptoms, that are indicative of the patient in relation to the remedy-type, are our sole guides and, if adequately present, may go a long way in the removal of gross pathology. Still here the question of time is a strong factor, truly speaking. After the patient is cured and order is established in the economy, the gross pathology also will go, but no one can assure when. Dr. Kent, therefore, takes a humanistic attitude and says:

We have to keep servants on their feet to earn their living, and operations have to be performed upon them, because they can not lie up for a year or two to be cured. The surgeons will always have a place with us, but let us do our part as physicians first (*Materia Medica*, p. 201).

In cases, on the other hand, with organic defects but

without any characteristic indications whatsoever to prescribe upon, surgery can not be eliminated (provided of course the case is at all amenable to surgery).

Considering all that has been said or insinuated by our Masters in the art of healing, there is very little scope for orienting ourselves with regard to this subject. Conditions for surgery have already been drawn up, its relative place has already been circumscribed. What can be done best by our organizations is to voice our loud protest against so much needless and criminal surgery that wastes so much money and energy, and cripples or injures for life so large a section of humanity. It is our duty, on the other hand, to report to an international organization, our successful medicinal management of the so-called surgical cases (which are usually many) in order to counterbalance the fanatical craze for surgery, in surgeons as well as in patients. Moreover, it is our duty to educate the public and bring home to them that the organic defects, morbid pathology and obstetrical accidents are the end-results of diseased states hidden within, which, when treated homœopathically in time, may go a long way safely to ward off such troublesome or fearful consequences. Notwithstanding, surgeons have a place with us, and we look for the dawn that will proclaim the advent of hundreds of first-grade surgeons amidst our fold, to whom we may refer our cases, without seeking any outside help.

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THE VITAL FORCE

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The Homœopathic science of treatment has been based upon the supposed existence of a Vital Force in the human or animal economy. It may be called the pivot on which turns the whole machinery of Homœopathic cure.