

HOMOEOPATHY AS AN INSTRUMENT OF PRECISION

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Human nature is an odd mixture of credulity and incredulity. If you tell a man that there are two hundred and seventy billion stars he will accept your word for it, but if you put a sign 'Fresh Paint' he is never satisfied until he proves it is fresh. I am hoping that all of you here gathered, interested in Homoeopathy, will both believe what is to follow and put it to the test.

Modern medicine is proud, and justly so, of its instruments of precision; but as with many inventions, these often supplant the use of our natural faculties. An instrument, according to the dictionary, is a furtherance, an agency, a means to an end, and comes from the Latin *instruere*, meaning *to prepare*, from the same root as *instruct*. A secondary meaning is that of tool, which is really an extension of the human hand. The old-fashioned physicians could smell diphtheria or scarlet fever or typhoid upon entering the house, and even today many of us know the odor of cancer and of approaching death. But even those regular doctors whose senses are keenly alive and who combine vivid perceptions with the assiduous use of modern scientific technique, are at a loss a large part of the time and feel that their work in therapeutics is vague and only partially satisfactory. Regular medicine and much so-called Homoeopathy give drugs on the basis of diagnosis or pathology or organs affected or, at best, on what we call common symptoms such as vomiting, purging, etc. They are oblivious of the fine distinctions between cases of similar classification. The secret of precision is in *individualization* and not in trying to put the parts in place of the whole. The homoeopath who is worthy of the name knows that only by being an artist can you arrive at exactitude. To give *Bryonia* for pneumonia, *Rhus tox.* for rheumatism, *Sulphur* for eczema or *Nux* for indigestion, is not real Homoeopathy. The more exact the similarity between the patient's symptoms and the single remedy given, the fuller and more salient the totality of the symptoms elicited, the more swift and brilliant the cure because of the precision of the prescription.

Over and above all usual medical lore the homoeopathic specialist has unusual and specific knowledge of general symptoms pertaining to the patient himself as a whole; of aggravations and ameliorations as applied to each complaint (what we call *modalities*); of discharges, those most revealing vents of the inner man; of repercussing suppressions and their devious sequelae. In chronic work he elicits the health trends from childhood and even in the parents. From this welter of detail he arrives at a *totality* of the symptoms. This does not mean that he retains for final analysis every least item, although in confused cases a careful compilation is needed as a background. Then

follows elimination and emphasis, what we call the *evaluation of symptoms* and the final choice of remedy may be based on a mere five or six striking points which characterize the person in different spheres, in somewhat the way that a caricaturist, in half a dozen lines, shows up the inner and outer nature of his subject. Many fine prescribers claim that their grasp of a similar remedy is intuitive, but probably in addition to a sixth sense, they are using a vast unconscious store of wisdom and information and experience. The editing of our case taking is perhaps the most important point in Homoeopathy; to be able to sense what is germane, what is primordial and what is poignant in a case.

Doctors need to study botany, zoology and mineralogy, learning to enter into a substance, take on its life, pulse with its currents, read the signatures and correspondences and keep unsealed the eye of ancient knowledge. The signs are there that he who runs may read, but he must run, not halt or stumble. As an illustration let us take the octopus in the aquarium with its apparent apathy, its swift rages making murky the whole ambience with its ink; its womb-like shape; its flabby, sucking tentacles. What a compelling entity is *Sepia*!

The true homoeopath may not merely be accurate with the most common hundred or so remedies, but must enlarge his knowledge systematically by daily study of the materia medica in myriad books and magazines. He must search into remedy relationships and let his mind play on the free association principle. How revealing to realize that *Opium*, *Chelidonium* and *Sanguinaria* are of the same family, or that *Apis* is the animal counterpart of *Natrum muriaticum*!

It must be remembered that where medicine depends upon mechanical aids, whose perfection is fallible in direct ratio to the fallibility of the interpreter of the data, precision is impossible. The best instrument of precision that I have ever encountered is true Homoeopathy in skillful and devoted hands.

As an example: Miss X., fifty-ish, with double pneumonia when first seen, lying rigidly still, rusty sputum, temperature of 104, marked herpes on the lips and below the nose, stitching pain in the chest on breathing, hard cough, thirst for great quantities of ice water. Bryonia 10M, one dose and *Sac. lac.* Temperature descended by lysis on the third day, but the patient complained of a lumbo-sacral backache which bothered her much more than the pneumonia. No characteristic symptoms were forthcoming. Aesculus and later Kali carb, were tried in succession with temporary but not lasting relief. Finally she said how strange it was that the backache was much more severe after urinating (urine negative). On repertorizing in Kent only one remedy had this peculiar symptom: Syphilinum. In looking for corroborative symptoms I noticed corneal scars and the patient said she had had keratitis and iritis some years before. She had certain characteristics of the syphilitic miasin and the backache was troubling her most from dark to dawn. Syphilinum

1M, one dose, produced a two-hour violent aggravation followed by swift and permanent relief.

Case II. Mrs. Y., also at the mid-century; history of mucous colitis and liver trouble; complained of spasmodic abdominal colic or gripes, < on the left side, preferred heat to cold, and liked pressure though did not double up. Colocynth was of no avail. Magnesia phos. relieved temporarily but the attacks recurred. No diarrhoea, very few symptoms. Finally she said, "In these attacks I feel as though my stomach hit my backbone." I asked her to try stretching during the pain and she found it agreeable. Wassermann and blood count negative. Stools tended to be in little black balls. Plumbum 1M, one dose, produced rapid improvement and the colics, which had been coming every day or two for four months, have now been absent for five weeks.

Case III. Mrs. Z., 78, senile dementia, healthy looking, rosy cheeks, blonde, terribly restless and loquacious, singing, scolding, alternating with laughing and hilarity, incontinence of urine and feces, destructiveness marked, would tear up sheets and towels; family said she had been a spoiled beauty all her life. Cuprum 50M, one dose, greatly improved both the mental and excretory phases.

These are simple every day instances of the power of precision in Homoeopathy, but the results could certainly not be achieved without sedatives in regular medicine. Homoeopathy is arduous, but its rewards can be reaped for both the patient and the physician, especially if the doctor will remember the sentence in the book by the French aviator St. Exupery: "Perfection in its finality is not when nothing can be added, but when nothing can be taken away."

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