

## HISTORY

DR. W. A. MCFALL, M.D.

In January of the year 1900, in company with Dr. R. W. Schnarr of Kitchener, Canada, I journeyed to Philadelphia to study Homoeopathy at J. T. Kent's Post-Graduate School. The school was located on Spring Garden Street, and the doctors attending, whose names I remember, were: Drs. H. A. Cameron, Editor of *The Journal*, Ben Boggess, George Cooper, Harvey Farrington, S. Mary Ives and Frederica Gladwin. There was also a layman who attended some of the lectures and often worked in the dispensary. His interest in Homoeopathy was developed by reason of the fact that Dr. Kent had cured him of some chronic ailment, with Staphisagria.

I was greatly interested, as he told me that after the administration of the remedy he had an aggravation for three weeks and the potency was not changed for three months. His cardinal symptom was a sensation of a round ball in the forehead—between the eyes—sitting firmly there even when shaking his head. I have now practised Homoeopathy for many years, but rarely have I prescribed Staphisagria and never on the above symptom. Looking back I think that perhaps I have overlooked and neglected Staphisagria, yet at that time I carefully underlined the symptom and placed the man's name in the margin of my copy of Hering's *Guiding Symptoms*.

Our first lecture on materia medica from Dr. Kent was an event of much interest to me; I admired his fine scholarly bearing, which seemed accentuated by the round skullcap on his head; the quiet dignity that masked much firmness and determination; the pleasing robust voice. Dr. Kent was an excellent lecturer; eloquent, and rather dramatic in his manner of delivery. His confidence and faith in the principles and philosophy of Homoeopathy was an inspiring factor in all his tuition, for he conveyed this knowledge infused with a wide humanitarian interest and deep concern for the amelioration of human ills. These ideas are of value today, and I should like to narrate some of the interesting points in two or three of his lectures, being able to remember and quote them almost *verbatim*. The following few paragraphs reveal his lucid and direct style:

"We will take up the study today of *Ledum*; *Ledum palustre*. Oh, the coldness of *Ledum*! cold yet wants cold applications. In *Ledum* we have dropsical and swollen condition of the limbs; purple and mottled in appearance with a sensation of coldness, excruciating pain extending from below upwards, and all these relieved by cold applications."

Dr. Kent related an incident of being called to attend an old drunkard who had severe pain from a swollen dropsical condition of the lower limbs and the only relief the poor man could obtain was to keep his feet immersed in a tub of cold water in which ice was floating. Dr. Kent prescribed *Ledum*.

The man took his limbs out of the cold water and progressed to a good state of health.

"Ledum! Ledum palustre! Oh! the coldness of Ledum! Cold yet wants cold applications. Ledum is a useful remedy for punctured wounds such as come from stepping on pins, needles, splinters, etc. In driving through the country (we don't drive now, we motor) the horse steps on a nail, if it strikes the coffin bone, tetanus is likely to follow, then death. Get out of your buggy, prepare a powder of Ledum, place it on the horse's tongue and disaster is averted. Homoeopathy is as efficient for animals as it is for man, they also have a vital force. Homoeopathy is of tremendous value for the treatment of epizootic when it spreads as an epidemic among horses.

"While Ledum is useful for punctured wounds, Hypericum is useful for lacerated wounds with injury to sentient nerves. Arnica is a useful remedy in injuries received from a blow, when the patient experiences a sensation of bruising. For the after effects of accidents we have a number of remedies which are frequently indicated, such as Rhus, Ruta, Calc. phos. and Strontium.

"Another great sphere of action for Ledum is in the treatment of inebriates. Drunkenness is a manifestation of psora and should be treated as such; if the patient wills to be cured and will coöperate he can be cured. Besides Ledum, other frequently indicated remedies in the treatment of drunkenness are Crotalus, Lachesis, Sulphur and Sulphuric acid.

"The physician who practises Homoeopathy must think in an orderly series, he must think from centre to circumference; he must aim to cure from within out. He must see drunkenness as a state of disorder; a manifestation of some underlying condition which can be cured, not by legislation, but by the carefully selected homoeopathic remedy. And when you go forth to practise medicine according to the law of similars do not forget Ledum! Ledum palustre! Oh! the coldness of Ledum; cold yet wants cold applications."

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"Lac caninum, bitch's milk. There are many who think that substances like these should not be used in medicine, but when prepared according to the homoeopathic art they become suitable and useful remedies. A great general running through the symptomatology of Lac caninum is an alternation of sides. Sore throats and ovarian troubles appear first on one side then on the other side, and then back to the original side. The condition of alternation from side to side can be compared to Lachesis, which has a sore throat going from left to right, and Lycopodium which has a complaint going from right to left. Another strong indication for Lac caninum is over-sensitiveness, hysteria and imagination. Patients requiring this remedy are so extremely sensitive they can't bear to have their fingers touch each other, often being so imaginative they think they see snakes, vermin, etc., and often feel they are floating in space."

"Lycopodium! This substance is the spores of the club moss. *Lycopodium clavatum*! When thrown into an open flame the powder emits an interesting flash of light. It is used by the old school to roll up their allopathic pills. *Lycopodium*, attenuated and potentized according to the homoeopathic art, is truly a wonderful and marvellous remedy. Its sphere is broad and deep, affecting every tissue in man, it is antipsoric, antisiphilitic and antisycotic. It stands forth as a great monument to Samuel Hahnemann."

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"Lachesis! This substance is obtained from the venom of a deadly viper of South America—*Lachesis trigonocephalus*. Lachesis is a frequently indicated remedy; it causes to appear that which is in man, and there is much of the snake in man. For this great remedy we owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Constantine Hering who introduced and proved it, thus giving to the world a priceless and potent agent for the healing of many human ills.

This knowledge—the treatment of disease according to the law of similars—became for me the corner-stone of my medical career, being quite convinced that it enhanced my professional qualifications, and, it was with gratitude and added confidence that I left Philadelphia at the conclusion of my post-graduate studies and returned to Canada to practise my profession.

One of my first patients was a woman about forty-five years of age, afflicted with rheumatism. She had great pain, soreness, stiffness and swelling in her hands, feet, knees and hips, great stiffness from sitting, better when in motion. But apart from her rheumatism she had one or two interesting conditions; she was very fond of oysters and all her life had eaten them at regular intervals.

Two years prior to my seeing her she had a miscarriage and she noticed that following this miscarriage, the oysters of which she was so fond made her sick. At first she blamed the oysters and thought they were tainted, then, that they were not cooked right. Still, no matter how they were served, sickness followed after eating them.

The symptoms as she told me were: vomiting, diarrhoea, great distension of the abdomen and extreme engorgement of the nasal mucous membrane. To use her own language: "I would have smothered only for breathing through my mouth." Dr. Kent had taught us that thuja patients are made sick from onions, that oxalic acid patients are made sick from strawberries and that lycopodium patients are made sick from oysters. So I gave my patient *Lycopodium* 1M. In three days her rheumatism was practically gone. We waited one month then allowed her to eat a generous serving of oysters, which was followed by no untoward symptoms, although to use her own words: "I sat up all night waiting to be sick." Now all this is very interesting; how could a miscarriage affect her so that she became susceptible to oysters? What was the pathology? It was a clear case of a vital force becoming deranged and a vital force being restored to order.

But she had another interesting condition, she was susceptible to

magnesium sulphate, complaining to me that: "Whenever I take a dose of salts, I have severe nerve pains all over my body, but especially in my head, and they extend right down to the tip of my nose." It was the pain extending to the tip of her nose that she complained of mostly. I procured some Mag. sulph. 3x and undertook to prove the remedy. However, she developed such severe and excruciating pains that she would not continue the experiment.

I am of the opinion that there are many people who are susceptible to magnesium and its salts. With the wide use of milk of magnesia, and other so-called salts of magnesia, many people have gas and nerve pain, that have various causes assigned to them, but many are no doubt due to the intake of magnesium. In our war industries where there is powdered magnesium, I had several patients, who, on account of the severe pain in their arms, were required to be transferred to other work.

My second patient was a little Yorkshireman by the name of Charlie. Charlie had very little education, but he could talk and tell you all he knew in graphic and picturesque language. He even told his symptoms in the same interesting manner and in doing so his tongue would shoot in and out of his mouth in the manner of a snake.

About ten years prior to my seeing him, Charlie had a sunstroke and each spring as the weather changed from the cold to the warmer days, he had attacks of acute mania. They were so severe, and as there was little accommodation in those days for patients of that type, they put Charlie in a padded cell in the jail, or is it gaol? He consulted me because he felt tired, and what he complained mostly of was that he felt more tired after a night's sleep than when he went to bed.

Dr. Kent taught us that a stool could stand on three legs and so could a prescription. So with the three great symptoms of loquacity, aggravation after sleep and aggravation during the first warm days of spring, I gave Charlie Lachesis 45M. Charlie never had an attack great or small after the prescription.

About five years rolled around and Charlie developed a diarrhoea. I gave him, as I thought, well chosen remedies: Aloes, Sulphur, Podophyllum and Veratrum, but the diarrhoea still flowed on. Charlie was irritated and disturbed. He came in to see me and said that it was very strange to him that I could cure him of his fits, as he was pleased to call his spells, but that I could not cure his diarrhoea. It was very evident to him that I was good on fits, but poor on diarrhoea. Challenged in this manner I gave him his favourite prescription, Lachesis 1M. In three days Charlie returned to my office with the question: "Why did you not give me that last medicine in the first place? I am all cured now! Why did you not give me that last medicine before?" I answered, "Because," and did not finish the sentence.

About ten years passed, and I was again called to see Charlie. He had a right sided hemiplegia; his arm and leg hung powerless and impotent by his side; his tongue was locked. He could no longer entertain you with his

symptoms, his face was flushed. The only course that lay open to me was to give him a potentized remedy of the venom of the deadly viper of South America, so he received Lachesis CM. In a few weeks' time he was almost fully recovered; he could walk with his own power and his tongue was loosed and in use again. When power and feeling came back to his right arm and shoulder he had great pain and distress.

Charlie moved to a distant town and died of pneumonia. As he became weaker and respirations became shallower, and inspiration followed expiration in a rapidly increased rate, his friends told me that Charlie muttered: "If only Dr. McFall was here with his magic powders, he was sure that he could be cured," and that the sundial of his life would be turned back a few degrees.

The next patient I wish to describe was a physician and a good homoeopath; a staunch disciple of Samuel Hahnemann, ever ready to fight and work for what he considered homoeopathic principles. If he heard of a brother homoeopath giving iron for hypochromic anaemia, he didn't hesitate to call him a mongrel. If he heard of a homoeopathic physician removing a gangrenous appendix, he named it needless cutting, and the homoeopath who prescribed antitoxin for diphtheria was placed beyond the pale. He was a real exclusive.

One Saturday he went to a picnic and getting overheated and tired, he took sick. At the midnight hour I was called to see him. His face was flushed, he had a temperature of 102° and was mildly delirious. I prescribed Bell. 1M and stated that I would call in the morning to see him. It being Sunday it was about twelve noon when I visited his home. He was better and up and around. However, to my amazement he told me that he had taken that morning, China 200 for weakness and Silica 200 for sweats. I then thought of Dr. Kent and how in describing the power of these high potencies, for good or for destruction, he stated that he would sooner be in a room with wild men brandishing open razors, than be the victim of indiscriminate prescribing of high potencies.

As a result of this experience I never use the word mongrel in reference to a homoeopathic physician, and when I hear men boasting of the purity and integrity of their homoeopathic prescribing, I simply say to myself, let conscience be their guide; and at the same time wonder if they are guilty of the same and like practice; of giving between daybreaking and twelve o'clock noon, China for weakness and Silica for sweats.

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