

THE HOMŒOPATHIC MATERIA MEDICA

(A SIMILITUDE)

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"Drugs become personalities. And as in measure as this is the case, will be our skill in prescribing."—Sir John Weir

The Homœopathic Materia Medica may be likened to a city. It was founded by Samuel Hahnemann. After six long years of careful thought and experimenting, he conceived of a plan and built this city. Its foundations were laid on truth, its structures raised by honest experiment and careful observation and its soundness was tested by time.

One unique feature of this city is that all its citizens are peculiar personalities. Let us start with the aristocracy: The noblest of them is Lady Platina,—thin, dark haired and of a rigid fibre. Conscious of her high birth perhaps, she is so arrogant, proud and contemptuous, pitifully looking down upon people usually venerated. She has a mental delusion that every thing about her were small, all persons physically and mentally inferior, but she, perfectly large and superior. Sitting in the corner is Lord Aurum,—a sanguine, ruddy person with black hair and eyes. In his kittenhood days he was a pining boy, low spirited, lifeless with weak memory and lacking in boyish go. He is now a grown up man and in spite of his noble birth, he is profoundly melancholic, feels life a constant burden, and constantly dwells on suicide as the thoughts of death give him intense joy. Just one more of the aristocracy—Sir Argentum. He stands third in nobility. He is a tall, thin, irritable person, ill-humoured and disinclined to talk. Though he is a man of only forty years, he looks like one of eighty. He is tired mentally and he forgets what he is talking about. If compelled to discourse, he feels strange all over and has nervous shakes or shocks.

The commoners are no less peculiar: Miss Alumina is a

spare, dry, thin woman with a mild, cheerful disposition. Time passes too slowly for her, an hour seems half-a-day. She is unable to walk except with eyes open and in the day time only. She has an abnormal appetite, craving for such ridiculous things as chalk, charcoal etc. A pin prick is not immediately felt by her. When walking she feels as if walking on cushions. Mr. Ferrum is a pettish, quarrelsome, disputative person, easily excited and angered by the least contradiction. His face, lips and mucus membranes are extremely pale but, they become red and flushed on the least pain, emotion or exertion. Pale though he is, he is very serviceable to persons who are hypochromic. His bodily pains and other complaints are relieved by slowly walking about. Mr. Cuprum is a person suffering from clonic spasms, beginning in the extremities and spreading into the abdomen and all over the body. His tongue retracts like a snake and he stammers. He is a real blessing to people suffering from terrible cramps in the abdomen and calves during cholera. Mr. Plumbum is anæmic and weak with muscular atrophy from sclerosis of spinal system. He has loss of memory and unable to find the proper word. He has delirium alternating with colic and he assumes strange positions in bed. There is a distinct blue line along the margin of his gums. At times he gets terrible colic with a sensation as if the abdominal wall is drawn by a string to the spine. Once he had intussusception with stercoraceous vomiting.

Now, a peep into the harem. There loiters in the cool breeze Miss Pulsatilla, with sandy hair, blue eyes, pale face, affectionate, mild and gentle. She has easy tears and some times laughs through her tears. She cannot detail her ailments without weeping. She weeps even when thanking her. She is much comforted by consolation. Her first serious impairment of health started from her puberic age and has never been well since. Her symptoms are always changing--no two chills, no two stools, no two attacks alike. Her pains shift from place to place and her moods change rapidly. Mrs. Sepia is an elderly lady, thin, rather masculine with a tendency to hirsutism on the face and a yellow saddle across the upper part of the cheeks and nose. She is sorry for herself and thinks she has had a

raw deal from life. She is a shrew who refuses to be tamed, always nagging at home and indifferent to her occupation and even to her own near and dear ones. She has dread of being alone but at the same time she does not like to meet her friends. Miss Ignatia, in striking contrast to slow and indecisive Miss Pulsatilla, is quick to perceive and rapid in execution. She is a perfect paradox—the roaring in her ears is relieved by music, her piles are relieved when walking, her sore throat feels better when swallowing, the empty feeling in her stomach is not lessened by eating and her cough increases the more she coughs. Mrs. Actæa has recently delivered a child. During pregnancy, she had nausea, sleeplessness and false labour-like pains and during labour she had shivers in the first stage and convulsions from nervous excitement. Soon after confinement she took cold and now she has puerperal mania. She is full of fear, anguish and restlessness. She has an illusion of a mouse running away from under her chair. She is very suspicious and will not even take medicine because she suspects that there is something wrong about it. Miss Liliun with profound depression of spirits, can hardly avoid weeping. She is tormented about her salvation. She is disposed to curse, strike, to think obscene things. She is listless yet cannot sit still; restless, yet does not want to walk. Mrs. Amylinum is a nervous, sensitive, plethoric woman, now at her climacteric. She has intense surging of blood to face and head. She craves fresh air, opens clothing, removes bed covers and opens windows in coldest weather. Her face flushes at the slightest emotion. She stretches and yawns for hours. It is impossible to satisfy the desire.

Now let us offer our sympathies to these few men who have ceased to be men: There goes Monsieur Lycopodium with keen intellect but poor physique. His upper part is emaciated and the lower, semi-dropsical. He has married for the second or third time. His desire is as strong as ever, but he cannot perform. He avoids company, but is afraid to be alone. Mr. Selenium has great emaciation of face, hands, legs and feet. He is very forgetful in business but during sleep, dreams of what he had forgotten. He has lend thoughts but physically

impotent. He stands at the street corners feasting his eyes on the forms of passing girls, while his semen dribbles down his flaccid organ. Mr. Caladium is a very sensitive person, the slightest noise startles him from sleep. He has sexual desire and excitement minus erections. Mr. Agnus is very absent minded with reduced power of insight. He cannot recollect and has to read a sentence twice before he can comprehend. He is prematurely old, being an old sinner, with impotence and gleet. He has abused his sexual powers and is now sans power and sans desire.

We now pay a brief visit to the lunatic asylum: There is poor Bell, with red face, wild and blood-shot eyes, trying to jump out of his bed and run away. He tries to strike and bite those near him. He has hydrophobia and sometimes yells like a dog. He slinks to the darkest corner of the room and likes to remain there alone. Stramonium is loquacious, talking all the time or singing. He is praying beseeching, entering. Contrary to Bell, he desires light and company. Sometimes he imagines he is double or lying cross-wise. Hyoscyamus makes irrelevant answers. Thinks he is in the wrong place. He talks of imaginary doings but has no wants and makes no complaints. He suspects some plot against him. He fears he will be poisoned, or he will be bitten or sold. He is immodest and exposes his person and sings obscene songs.

Let us pay our respects to the wise men of the city. Professor Sulphur is the most prominent among them, lean and stoop-shouldered. He is very inquisitive and wants to know the cause of everything, even the cause of that cause. His clothes are unwashed and his hair unkempt. He does not believe in bathing. He is the most unwashed, unwashable. He is popularly known as "the ragged philosopher". Mr. Bacillinum alias Tuberculinum, tall, slim, flat, narrow-chested and active, is physically weak but mentally precocious: He is a prodigy. Mr. Nux is a great scholar. He sticks to his desk and suffers from want of exercise. The only place he visits frequently is the privy, where he makes ineffectual efforts to defecate.

Before leaving the city let us go round the nursery! Abro-

tanum is a marasmic child, its legs emaciated, the skin flabby, hanging in folds and the neck so weak, it cannot hold the head up. It is ill-natured, irritable, cross and despondent. Sometimes it is violent, inhuman and would like to do something cruel. But the funniest thing is, that inspite of its prostration and hectic fever, the child has ravenous hunger and wants to eat all the time. Little Aconite is but two days old and has not passed either stool or urine. Aethusa, poor child! She cannot bear milk. She vomits it in large, sour curds. She has also epileptic fits with clenched thumbs, red face and eyes turned downwards. Antim crude is a fat child with a milk-white coated tongue. He is a fretful, peevish boy. He cannot be touched or even looked at. He does not wish to speak or be spoken to. His little sister Antim Tart. is just born, pale, breathless, gasping with dilated nostrils. It has asphyxia neonatorum and death rattle. Argentum Nitricum is a dried up, withered, old-looking child, more emaciated in the lower extremities. He has granular conjunctivitis and his eyes are scarlet-red like raw-beef, with profuse muco-purulent discharge. He craves sugar. He is very fond of it, but it produces diarrhoea. He has also diarrhoea as soon as he drinks and his urine passes unconsciously day and night. Baryta Carb is a scrofulous, dwarfish child. His memory is deficient. He is forgetful and inattentive and he cannot be taught. He has chronic cough and enlarged tonsils. Bell is just cutting teeth. He is having high temperature and convulsions. He bores his head into the pillow. You put your hand under the sheets to feel him and you experience hot steam enveloping your hand and the impression lingers for a long time after the hand is withdrawn. Acid Benz. has watery diarrhoea which runs right through the diaper, very offensive like the stink from the decaying body of a dead animal. His urine is dark brown and the urinous odour is highly intensified. Borax startles at the slightest noise. It is afraid of downward motion. When laying down on the crib it cries and clings to the nurse. It awakes suddenly screaming and grasping sides after cradle. Its hair is frowzy and tangled, splits, sticks together at the tips and cannot be combed. If the bunches are cut off, they form again.

Its eye-lashes are loaded with dry, gummy exudation. They turn inward and inflame the eye especially at the outer canthus. The tip of its nose is shining red. Its mouth is apthous and it cannot suck milk. It has frequent urination and it screams before urinating. Calcarea has red face flabby muscles. He has a large head and the fontannels and sutures are open. His abdomen is large, the pit of his stomach looks like an inverted saucer and his spine is curved. His legs are thin and crooked. His head sweats profusely while sleeping wetting the pillow far around. When he awakes, he scratches his head furiously. Chamomilla, a more peevish child you cannot find. The child is quiet only when carried. It wants this thing and that and becomes angry when not immediately given; but, when offered it flings it out of the room. Cina has pale face, dark rings around eyes bluish appearance around the mouth. It grinds its teeth and starts and screams in sleep. It constantly picks its nose or rubs it on the shoulder of the nurse or on the pillow. Kreosote is old-looking, wrinkled and emaciated. Its teeth began to decay as soon as they appeared. Its gums are bluish-red, soft, spongy, bleeding and ulcerated. Podophyllum has just started showing its teeth. It has intense desire to press the gums together. Its head is hot and rolls from side to side. It has a profuse, very offensive diarrhoea soaking napkin through. Sambucus is a scrofulous child. It has sniffles and its nose is completely obstructed preventing breathing and nursing. It awakes suddenly nearly suffocated, its face turns livid, sits up in bed, gasps for breath—it can inspire but cannot expire. It sweats profusely during waking hours but on going to sleep, dry heat returns. Silicea is a rachitic child with weak angles and a large sweaty head which must be kept warmly covered. She has a blushing stool which when partly expelled recedes again. The child is always spick and span and she has a constant fear that she might tread upon pins or thorns.

There are many other interesting persons whom we should meet in the city, but we shall leave them till our next visit.
