

HOMŒOPATHY AND THE "FAMILY DOCTOR"

Our readers will be interested to know that in the August issue of *Family Doctor* the following question appeared under the heading of "Homœopathy":—

"Can you please tell me exactly what homœopathic treatment is? My father aged fifty-eight is recovering from coronary thrombosis. He still has occasional pain in the chest which his doctor says is nothing to worry about and for which he is receiving tablets. Last week however a friend of his told my father that he had had the same complaint and that he attends a homœopathist who, he claims, has done wonders for him. He has offered to put my father in touch with this man, but my father would like a little more information before doing anything."

The answer was as follows:—

"Homœopathy was founded by a German doctor, Samuel Hahnemann, who lived between 1755 and 1843. It is based on three main principles. One, a remedy should be used which actually causes symptoms similar to the disease treated. For example, a purgative should be given to treat diarrhœa, which is often sensible, or a constipating drug to treat constipation, which isn't so sensible. Two, one drug only should be used, an excellent idea. Three, this should only be given in tiny doses. Bigger doses, not unnaturally, aggravate the malady.

"The method has survived. This was not surprising, naturally, in days when ordinary medicaments were not very effective. It did no harm and the patients were allowed to cure themselves. But in these days of antibiotics, things are very different. If I had the misfortune to contract pneumonia I shouldn't want to be treated with a tiny dose of some stuff that caused a fever. I should want the appropriate antibiotic in full doses at the earliest possible moment to destroy the invading bacteria in the quickest possible time. Which is what these drugs do. Surely that is common sense?

"Coronary thrombosis is caused by a clot in the heart

muscle's own arteries. The ideal treatment is to prevent more clot from forming. This would hardly be expected to happen if you took in tiny doses a drug which might be expected to cause more clot to form. But then the doses used by homœopaths are so small as to have a negligible effect. Once the acute phase is over rest is the best treatment. That is prescribed by plain doctors and homœopaths."

In the October issue of that magazine there appeared the following letter headed "Homœopath Replies".

"Glasgow, C. 3.

"Dear Editor.—I am writing to you as Honorary Secretary of the Scottish Branch of the Faculty of Homœopathy, a Fellow of the Faculty, and Assistant Physician to Glasgow Homœopathic Hospital. I would have answered quite differently the question in a recent issue asking what homœopathic treatment is.

"Homœopathy is a type of treatment which stimulates a patient's natural resistance to disease. Drugs which produce a group of symptoms when given in crude doses, are capable of stimulating the cure of a similar group of symptoms in a particular patient, when prepared in a special way. For example, arsenic given in poisonous doses causes diarrhœa, vomiting, collapse, fear, restlessness. Prepared by the homœopathic method of dilution arsenic can cure a patient with a similar group of symptoms, even though these may be due to gastroenteritis or to heart failure. The homœopathic potency of arsenic is not just a tiny dose of arsenic, but a remedy with curative powers and without its dangerous properties.

"Homœopathy is a recognised speciality in the Health Service, and is used by qualified physicians as an addition to modern methods of orthodox treatment. It is of great value in the treatment of many conditions for which there is no specific orthodox therapy, and also has a place in maintaining the general standard of health and preventing the development of more serious illness."

H. W. BOYD, M.B., F.R.F.P.S."

—*Homœopathy*, Nov., 1958.