

MASTERS OF HOMŒOPATHY

Dr. Margaret Tyler 1857—1943

DR. H. FERGIE WOODS

The debt owed by homœopathy in this country to Dr. Margaret Tyler cannot well be estimated. Miss Tyler lived for homœopathy. She thought and talked of little else. Whenever you met her she had a fresh tale of homœopathic success, chiefly concerned with the mentally backward children for whom she had a large clinic at the Royal London Homœopathic Hospital. Miss Tyler loved these children and they loved her, and she had some remarkable results with them.

She used manipulation, as well as homœopathy, having learned the rudiments of that, until then, comparatively new method of treatment from Miss Beadon, an osteopath to whom I introduced her. Miss Tyler's pioneer nature did the rest. She was ever ready to try any means that promised help to the patient.

In between her own times at the hospital, Dr. Tyler was generally doing locum work for someone away through illness or on holiday. She also found time, although this must surely have been in the night hours, to edit the Association's official organ, "Homœopathy", for which she wrote most of the matter herself. She was a forceful writer with an easy conversational style, and her series of pen pictures of the principal remedies will long be read and treasured by keen homœopathic students.

Miss Tyler was one of the kindest persons imaginable. She took up arms at once in any cause she believed a worthy one, but never bore malice towards her opponents. Her manner was sometimes brusque, and apt at first to intimidate those who did not know her, but the heart of gold underneath soon became apparent.

Miss Tyler accounted to no-one for what she did or said, and her forthrightness was at times a source of amused embarrassment to those around her. There was the occasion of a

concert at a homœopathic function, when the soprano was mounting the platform for her second group of songs. In the hush that preceded the opening notes, Miss Tyler asked, in tones that could be heard all over the room: "She isn't going to sing again, is she?"

I was greatly helped in starting general practice by Miss Tyler's kindness in handing over to me her evening clinic in Kentish Town, where the fees taken, although incredibly low, made a difference in those early days, when one counted every patient up to the first hundred.

Impulsive Generosity

Another example of Dr. Tyler's impulsive generosity was when, after hearing a member of the police force sing at a concert, she would not rest until she had had him fully trained, and established as a distinguished singer in opera.

I first met Miss Tyler when I went to the hospital in 1908, just after becoming qualified, to inquire about the scholarships to America to study homœopathy which had been instituted by the generosity of Miss Tyler's father, Sir Henry Tyler. Her honesty of purpose, enthusiasm and innate kindness were evident to me from that moment, and I never had to revise my opinion of her.

Dr. Tyler was quick to seize upon and use the fresh ideas on homœopathic treatment, new to this country, and looked upon askance by most of the hospital staff.

Largely on the strength of the new light from the West, she published one of her most telling pamphlets: "How not to do it". This was followed by other writings at frequent intervals, all of them forceful and lucid and valuable contributions to the practice of homœopathy.

PARENTS' INFLUENCE

Family Characteristics

Sir John Weir, in the *British Homœopathic Journal*, the organ of the Faculty, in 1943, wrote:

Dr. Tyler was one of homœopathy's most outstanding personalities. She owed much to her parents, Sir Henry and Lady Tyler, who early imbued her with the family characteristics

of enterprise, thoroughness, and selflessness in service for others.

Dr. Tyler's homœopathic interest was early aroused by her mother's skilful care of a large family, and she took up the study of medicine in order to be able to help the poor patients at the Royal London Homœopathic Hospital. There she worked for over 40 years, in various departments, and was appointed to the staff of the hospital in 1914. When due to retire a special appointment of auxiliary physician was made to retain her services, and she carried on to the end.

The out-patient department, she declared, was the happiest place in her life, and she always looked forward to meeting her friends, as she termed the patients. Her clinic was large, and the patients appreciated her devotion to them.

A Great Teacher

She was a great teacher and many sought the post of clinical assistant with her, to get wise and refreshing help. She could draw freely from a storehouse of homœopathic knowledge.

Dr. Tyler served the hospital with single-minded devotion; indeed, she was part of the institution. She was full of enterprise and would seek the good in anything that offered possibilities, hence her interest in manipulation. She had to stand criticism, but that did not weigh with her, once convinced. The best was always her aim in life; nothing less would satisfy.

She never spared herself, working all day and far into the night. She read a drug each night before retiring, in different books to feel the spirit of the remedy. Dr. Tyler had an able pen, though she declared that she wrote with difficulty and much correction.

About 1907 her great anxiety was for the future supply of homœopathic physicians, as there was no definite post-graduate teaching, though much had been done by individuals. She was a great believer in going to the fountainhead, as she termed Hahnemann, and feared that much if the homœopathic practice was getting away from her ideal. She then, with her mother, instituted the Sir Henry Tyler Scholarship Fund to help doctors to go to the United States to study under Dr. James Tyler Kent, a keen Hahnemannian, in practice. This created a stir and much controversy, but Dr. Tyler carried on with her efforts, and

many of the physicians of to-day studied under Dr. Kent between 1908 and 1913.

The war intervening stopped this course of events, but by that time the men who had been abroad could take up the teaching of homœopathy, and so assist in developing the present course of lectures. And the Tyler Scholarship Committee continued to help men in the provinces to come to London for tuition.

Dr. Tyler remained a learner all her life, hence her freshness of outlook, as shown in her many pamphlets on the various aspects of homœopathy. She loved to dip into the past, and to recall the triumphs of the early believers.

We owe much to her writings. The study of DROSERA awoke a new and deep appreciation of this drug, and for the last few years she had developed an interest in the nosodes, finding confidence by her results in the exhibition of these remedies. Indeed, she often said that her usefulness as a physician was greatly enhanced by her knowledge of these apt-to-be-forgotten remedies. The many who have found them successful greatly encouraged Dr. Tyler. She felt it was an aspect, alas too often neglected.

Storehouse of Information

Present day homœopathy owes much to her presentation of the case. Her "Drug Pictures" of homœopathic remedies, culled from every possible source, are a storehouse of information. She consulted freely and deeply with the giants of the past; her references were meticulous, and she went to great pains for verification. She felt that the information was essential for others, and that was enough to stimulate her to further endeavour.

The "Correspondence Course on Homœopathy", for those doctors who could not attend lectures, has been of great help to many, enabling them to get a complete introduction to the study of homœopathy, and their interest once aroused they naturally proceeded further. Dr. Tyler spent years over its production.

But perhaps her greatest field of usefulness was through her editorship of the journal "Homœopathy", from 1932 to 1942. Its influence was world-wide, and has been described in a con-

temporary as "one of the best journals of pure homœopathy published". One American society took it as a text-book for its studies. The wealth of information is almost beyond belief, affecting homœopathy in all its aspects, and the journal is a storehouse for the busy practitioner. Her whole object seemed to be to make it as easy as possible for the doctor who had little time for detailed study, and in this she was very successful.

Dr. Tyler was gratified to receive so many kind expressions of thanks and appreciation from doctors, and others, the world over. She felt that after all it had been perhaps worth while.

In a recent number of the Homœopathic Recorder (U.S.A.) Dr. Tyler is described as "one of the grandest, greatest and most beloved teachers and workers of the present day", an epitaph which will be universally endorsed by her friends.

Religious Values

Behind the physician was the woman who was deeply imbued with the ultimate religious values of life. In that spirit she did her work, trusted and respected by many, for her fine character, personal integrity, and complete lack of all selfish ambitions. One of her admirers has written :

"I am convinced that Margaret Tyler will be recognised as a very great woman and homœopathic pioneer in the future. She will rank with that good Victorian company in which we honour the names of many richly endowed adventurous souls who saw 'the future in the instant', and clung to their faith, and, for right or wrong, brooked no interference in their concept."

Despite failing health she worked to the very end, and died in service. It is typical that almost her last quotation was :
"At the end of life we shall not be asked how much pleasure we have had in it, but how much of service we gave in it ; not how full of success, but how full of sacrifice ; not how happy we were, but how helpful we were."

Dr. Tyler's memory and influence will live in the hearts of many.

—Homœopathy, Feb., '58