

**THE PEOPLE OF THE MATERIA MEDICA
WORLD
A COMPARATIVE MATERIA MEDICA**

DR. FRDERICA E. GLADWIN, M.D.

Adapted and Arranged by Mollie Ray Carroll

Preface

To give her students a sense of the whole individual human being behind each disorder and of the patient's counterpart in the "Organon of Homœopathy", Frederica E. Gladwin, M.D., described many patients in clear and graphic stories.

Dr. Gladwin had been a student of James Tyler Kent, M.D., who, she states, "with kindly patience led me into the Materia Medica World and acquainted me with its people" Her homœopathic practice and teaching extended from the late 1890's through 1931. Her characterizations are as true today as they were then. She was, at one time or other, during her career, Staff Physician to the Women's Southern Homœopathic Hospital and Professor of Children's Diseases in the Post-Graduate School of Homœopathics. She was a member of the International Hahnemannian Association, the American Institute of Homœopathy and the State Homœopathic Society of Pennsylvania. Her teaching of Kent's Repertory during the first ten years of the Post-Graduate School conducted by the American Foundation for Homœopathy was a great stimulus to her students.

She wrote that:

"In the days of the Philadelphia Post-Graduate School of Homœopathics, now long since fled, I learned that each of our remedies was in reality a composite photograph of a human being. It led me to try to put life into those photographs, make them living, moving people, doing and feeling the things that

were brought out in the provings. Then our students could more easily become acquainted with them, would remember them and would know them on meeting them in the world of sick people, as we know our friends in this good world of ours. Therefore, at first, I described these composites for our students reading the sketches before their Organon and Materia Medica Society.

"Later I found that older students, grave and tired practitioners were not averse to meeting their old acquaintances thus in an hour of relaxation; and so the stories were continued a while longer. Never intended as dignified medical treatises, these stories were simply intended to show the Materia Medica World as people with the kinds of persons whom we meet every day. We need but to know them as human beings in order to recognize them.

"In many of those who come to the homœopathic physician, the disorder which has persistently tried to demonstrate itself upon the surface has been thwarted so long that it has yielded at last and has turned its attention to the vital organs. At no point can we say, 'Here is the course'. The old, old story continually repeats itself, with variations. It is always the history of Sin and Ignorance, working side by side to the detriment of humanity. 'Tis a tangled web they are weaving; but in the tangle humanity is captured. Year by year the web grows stronger and more complex.

"To Homœopathy belongs the task of freeing humanity from this tangled web of disorder that Sin and Ignorance have woven about it. The homœopathic physician alone can pick up the thread, follow it in and out, never losing it, never breaking it, until at last he has traced it back to the beginning, to set the captive free. 'Tis a difficult task. It requires patience without end, perseverance without end. Dare we take up the work? Dare we refuse?"

Dr. Gladwin's vivid, imaginative lectures to her students have come down to us for the editing that is needed when the printed page must take the place of the warmly human, spoken presentation. Although her stories were told for medical students and for physicians, they are so simply related, and so

graphically, that the homœopathic layman can grasp them. Their philosophy is so entirely different from today's customary accent on the disease, rather than on the patient, and on a member of the body instead of the individual as a whole, that they can but strengthen our understanding and our faith in Homœopathy.

Let us accompany her as she addresses her stories to people like those whom Longfellow had in mind when he writes:

“Ye whose hearts are fresh and simple,
Who have faith in God and nature,
Who believe that in all ages
Every human heart is human ;
Listen to my simple stories
To the stories of my people.”

ARGENTUM NITRICUM

Once upon a time, Mr. Nitric Acid went a-wooing and the lady of his choice was Miss Argentum Metallicum. Mr. Nitric Acid was dark, with black hair and eyes, a swarthy complexion and that lean and hungry look which Julius Caesar disliked. Headstrong and obstinate, he never lost an opportunity to convince Miss Argentum that they two should become one, albeit he, and she, too, had epileptic fits.

Whenever his attacks came on, they would begin with a sensation as if a mouse were creeping up and down his left side. After that, he would lose consciousness and go off into a spasm. He would feel better when he was riding in a carriage, because of the gliding motion. When he walked he could hardly drag his feet along because of the tired feeling in his limbs. He would double up with colic, too, when he walked, and his colic was worse in the morning. His pains would come on either side, or they would start on the right side and then go to the left. He was extremely sensitive to pain and made a fuss over every slight hurt. He disliked work. He had an aversion to fresh air because it made him feel bad.

His eyes were weak and tended to ulcerate, as a result of Ophthalmia Neonatorum at birth. His mind was weak ; and

his memory poor. The more he tried to think of a thing, the emptier his mind became. He was despondent, nervous, hopeless and so discontented with himself that he often wept violently. Even when he was not sick, he thought he would die soon.

What anyone ever saw to admire in Miss Argentum Metallicum was a mystery. She was tall, thin, pale-faced, sallow, by no means beautiful. However, her manner was rather attractive, for she was always joking and laughing. She liked to talk for she had a clear mind and she argued glibly. She often spoke or sang in public, but couldn't depend on her voice, for she had strained it at some time or other. Therefore when her friends expected her to sing in public, she might become hoarse. Sometimes her voice would fail her entirely, so that she could not sing or speak out loud. Sometimes, when she tried to sing, the notes came double, greatly to her own surprise, as to that of her audience.

Like Mr. Nitric Acid, she had had sore eyes from birth, although hers did not ulcerate so readily as did his. Unlike Mr. Nitric Acid, she disliked to ride in a carriage, for any motion aggravated her discomfort. Her heart was always jerking, stopping, trembling, palpitating or somehow troubling her. Her pains would appear on either side, or they would begin on one side and move over to the other. After an attack of epilepsy, she would go into a delirious rage and would try to strike those about her.

Mr. Nitric Acid finally persuaded her to marry him, carefully concealing from her what a nervous, irritable, discontented fellow he really was. It is not my purpose to describe their wedding, nor to speak of their married life, but to talk of their son, Argentum Nitricum.

That poor little chap didn't begin life in the right way at all. He was a tiny, withered, dried up, old-looking baby and he always remained delicate. Nor was it strange. How could he have been a healthy child? He had inherited psora from his mother and the other two chronic diseases from his father. It was altogether too much to expect that he would be well and strong.

Soon after his birth he had sore eyes. The doctor called it Ophthalmia Neonatorum. He suffered from profuse, purulent discharge from his eyes, and the corneas became ulcerated. The poor little fellow cried and made a great fuss, but could not make the nurse understand that he wanted cool, fresh, air. She thought that he had wind colic—as he frequently did—for he seemed to cry less after he had passed much flatus up and down. Since the first attack, he had had all sorts of misery with his eyes, just as his parents had always been weak-eyed from Ophthalmia Neonatorum at birth. Like his father, the little one was inclined to ulceration of his eyes.

All through his infancy, and even in after years, Argentum Nitricum, like his father, was troubled with colic. Great quantities of gas would collect in his stomach and abdomen, and he would get relief only when it passed noisily up or down. It rumbled and gurgled so loudly that one could often hear it. Sometimes the gas became incarcerated, and then his abdomen would distend and he would endure severe pain.

Argentum Nitricum did not get through his second summer without having the summer complaint. The little fellow suffered this after his mother had carelessly eaten a quantity of candy. It made his stools look like green grass, chopped up with mucous; or else they would turn green upon exposure to air. He expelled them forcibly, with much flatus. Even now he cannot satisfy his craving for candy without bringing on an attack of diarrhoea.

As a child, Argentum Nitricum had had chorea. His legs would draw up, then his fingers and toes. His arms would jerk upward and outward. After a severe fright he would have an epileptic seizure. He still has occasional attacks of epilepsy but he can tell when they are coming on, for his pupils become dilated a day or two beforehand. His seizures usually come during the night or when he arises in the morning.

Argentum Nitricum often has palpitation of the heart, and shortness of breath. His discomfort usually starts on the left side. He longs for fresh, cool air, is restless when he cannot have the windows open and generally feels better out of doors.

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ment of a blink helps along the flow of the secretion and polishes the front of the eyes. Eyes are organs of light and should be kept bright to accept light.

The starrer, by not using the eyelids naturally, is subjecting the eyes to a dryness which could culminate into a distressing condition. Also, the retina, which receives the light impressions, is over-exposed by the ceaseless flow of light.

The flick of a blink is a momentary blackout of the retina.

The average person should blink every five seconds, which adds up to 5% of waking hours.

Watch passengers in buses and tubes and pick out the starers. How grim they look, with fixed facial muscles. Then notice those who blink. Their expression is far more pleasing, normal blinking being a free and unconscious action.

So if you are a starrer, condition yourself to blink.

—*The Homœopathic World, Jan.-Mar., and April-June, '59*

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Generally, too, he suffers from vertigo. His limbs seem nearly paralyzed; yet he feels such distress about his head when he is riding that he feels impelled to get out and walk fast for relief.

On a day that nothing ails him he imagines that he is sick.

Unlike his parents who are always hungry, he has no appetite. Like his father, he is soon satisfied with food, although his mother is always hungry, even when her stomach is full. Like his mother, he is drowsy; but he cannot sleep because his skin itches. He is tearful, like his parents, weeping in despair over his physical condition. Like his father, he has an enemy. While his father hated Mr. Mercurius and pestered him constantly, trying to undo him, Argentum Nitricum seems always seeking to annihilate Mr. Natrum Muriaticum.

Argentum Nitricum has none of his mother's merry disposition. He is a nervous, gloomy hypochondriac. In fact, his character is not so strong as that of either parent, and he cannot enter as deeply into people's lives as they can.

—*The Layman Speaks, Jan., '59*