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EDITORIAL

IS HAHNEMANN OUTDATED BY THE MODERN DEVELOPMENTS IN THERAPEUTICS ?

A few members of the homœopathic society, some of them with considerable erudition, are gradually becoming more or more vociferous to establish that the principles, nay even the therapeutic law formulated and established by Hahnemann, are now out-of-date on the face of the immense glaring development in the present age of orthodox therapeutics. These gentlemen further assert that anybody who wants to stick to the principles and the basic law established by Hahnemann is bigoted and so unscientific. They go further to allege that, as Hahnemann himself was a scientific-minded man, free from prejudices, he would have surely accepted the inventions of so-called Modern Scientific Medicine that is, the recent developments in the field of traditional therapeutics.

Without going into the speculative controversy as to what would have been done by Hahnemann, had he been living today, we want to discuss two basic points so that, any misconception on them can be liquidated. These basic points are: (1) *On the score of principle*—what particular new inventions or developments can be accepted by a scientist in any particular line, refusal of which can be alleged as due to his bigotry; and which particular developments are accepted by the scientists in the same line, due to lack of sufficient conception and confidence in his own line, as well as to various forms of opportunism. (2) *On the score of concrete facts*—what new developments in the traditional therapeutics are able to contribute to the sole mission of

the physician—"to restore the sick to health, to cure, as it is termed", and to reach the highest ideal of cure—"rapid, gentle and permanent restoration of health or removal and annihilation of the disease in its whole extent, in the shortest, most reliable, and the most harmless way, on easily comprehensible principles."

1. On the Score of Principles

Surely, a scientist can never cherish any sort of dogma, prejudice or bigotry.*But every branch of Science stands upon certain basic laws and related principles. The particular science cannot stand, what to speak of thriving, if these basic laws and principles definitely prove to be wrong and useless. Even to these basic laws and principles the scientist must have an open mind, an attitude of verification in practice. If in any case of practice, he fails to apply the law or the principles, he must try to assess accurately, whether the failure is due to any defect in the law or principles, or due to other causes. If it is due to other causes the worker in that science should try to remove them, and if it proves to be due to any inherent defect of the law or principles, he should strive to eliminate these defects or difficulties and improve the science, as is happening today in the field of Physics, Einsteinian Physics improving upon Newtonian Physics, or if necessary totally eliminating the old science and establishing a new science with its own laws and principles, as modern Chemistry replaced Alchemy of the antiquity. This path of science is, of course, a bit hard and rigorous. But if one with a motive to avoid this hard path, disinclined to face the diligence necessary to assimilate the principles properly and to apply them in practice precisely, ignores these principles and adopt alien principles and methods, which cannot be fitted with the laws and principles of the science of which he claims to be an advocate, he can be taken as any thing other than honest to his professed science, if at all as a scientist and not a principleless opportunist.

Now, what are the fundamental facts on which Hahnemannian Homœopathy is standing and has flourished so far? They are the following:—

(1) The basic stand of Hahnemannian Homœopathy is that, it unconditionally accepts the sick as a whole individual—with

his body, mind and soul—and the different signs and symptoms and structural changes as so many manifestations and results of the entire disease, and as the actual image of the disease, the entire removal of which means total annihilation of the disease itself. On the other hand, removal or suppression of any one or more of these isolated manifestations, however overbearing, has nothing to do with total annihilation of the disease, but it rather only disturbs the natural image, making the cure more difficult if not impossible. So, the use of different remedies to remove the different symptoms (i.e. manifestations) of the same case of disease at a particular time is inconsistent with the basic stand of Homœopathy.

(2) Disease—as distinct from an indisposition (irritation, fatigue, indigestion, poisoning, etc.) or mechanical disorder (trauma, etc.), is a *dynamic* process affecting the vital process of the whole individual organism.

Notwithstanding immense development in the field of Physiology and Pathology in the modern age, the fundamental selective activity or the vital activity (i.e. life) of the protoplasmic molecules still remains far beyond human comprehension. That is why Homœopathic Therapeutics instead of going into those inexplicable intricacies bases itself on the totality of the manifested and cognizable reactions of the vital force. And that is the root of incomparable success of Homœopathic Therapeutics as an art. Any method of treatment ignoring this basic outlook may be called anything other than Homœopathic.

(3) If real disease is accepted as a dynamic disorder, it goes without saying that it can be removed only by dynamic means, that is by a potentised remedy and not by any chemical or physical force, which can deal with only material end-results.

(4) The basic Law of Homœopathic therapeutics—*Similia Similibus Curentur*—is inseparably connected with the abovementioned basic outlook. And any remedy to be used in accordance with this law—that is any remedy demanding to be named as a Homœopathic remedy—must fulfil one basic condition: It must have a clear and authentic record of pathogenetic properties—that is, a total picture of subjective and objective symptoms as elicited by its proving on a considerable number of healthy

human beings. It is obvious that, any medicine having any property other than clear human pathogenetic data, cannot be used on the basis of the law of symptom-similarity.

As a matter of fact, the law of symptom-similarity was apprehended by many a medical genius of antiquity; but none of them could accept or establish this as a basic law of therapeutics, because the necessity of this pre-condition (which appears so commonplace and obvious to us today), simply did not occur to their mind, and they bothered for finding out any property of their medicines, other than their pathogenetic properties on human beings. It occurred to the genius of Hahnemann, for the first time in whole history, to hit at this moot point. And thus he was enabled to place and establish the old law on a sound and limitlessly useful basis. It is unfortunate that, the so-called Modern Scientific Medicine is hesitating to accept this obvious truth wholeheartedly, and is still running after the will-o'-the-wisp, and the neo-scientists in the homœopathic society are being beguiled by the same.

(5) Certain methodological principles emanate from this basic Law with its own standpoint and outlook. Most important of them are as follows:—

(i) For treating any individual case of disease with its totality of manifestations at a particular time—nothing but a *single remedy* covering the characteristic features of the case can be used.

(ii) It is obvious that, in a diseased condition the system remains hypersensitive to the dose of a medicine that produces similar symptoms. Hence the dose of the remedy must be a minimum as consistent with the case in hand.

(iii) As the activity of the Homœopathic remedy is not on the material plane, but on the dynamic plane—having no question of absorption, assimilation, excretion, etc., injection has no place in the administration of a Homœopathic remedy. This point has been discussed *ad nauseam* on various occasions.

2. On the Score of Concrete Facts

It must be clearly admitted that, in the present age *pari passu* with prodigious development in the general sciences, there

has been immense development in the field of medical sciences especially, in the field of Physiology, Pathology, Diagnostic Methods, Hygiene and Preventive Medicine, Surgery, etc. Simple recognition of these facts will not do; it must be clearly understood that, this huge store of knowledge in Medical Science in general, does not belong to any particular school of Medicine, but all the schools of Medicine have equal rights on them. Although, for various reasons, many of the contributions to the common medical knowledge have been done by members of orthodox school of Medicine—most of the epoch-making inventions and discoveries belong to scientists who either belong to no medical school, or to the homœopathic school. Thus Roentgen, the discoverer of X-Ray, was only a physicist, Pasteur, the modern inventor of vaccine-therapy, was only a chemist and he was anticipated by more than 50 years by Hering and a few other members of the homœopathic school; Koch, the modern discoverer of the relation of particular bacteria with particular diseases (although his too much stress on germs as the *cause* of diseases has been much shaken by other scientists of the orthodox school itself, beginning from Petenkoffer to Rene Dubos) was anticipated by Hahnemann 50 years earlier, during the epidemic of Asiatic Cholera in Europe in 1831-32; and most of the modern developments in the field of Hygiene and Preventive Medicine were anticipated and clearly formulated by Hahnemann himself.

But unfortunately, notwithstanding these immense developments in all the branches of Medicine—in the field of therapeutics, the orthodox school has made little advance. Of course in the recent years they have made some glaring addition to their armamentarium of drug-therapeutics in the form of sulfas, antibiotics, corticosteroids, various forms of tranquillizers, etc. But these developments are more glaring than epoch-making in any way. Far from contributing to the cause of cure, they are proving to be more effective suppressors of the manifestations of disease, thus making the task of cure more complicated and difficult. And that is why serious protests are being raised against these drugs by leading scientists of their own school, like Dr. Rene J. Dubos of the Rockefeller Institute and many others.

Causes of failure of the so-called Modern Scientific Therapeutics are as follows:—

(1) All the prodigious achievements in the Science of the present century including Medical Science have been made in the physico-chemical line; the patient with his life has gone far out of the picture. Every physician has to deal with some physico-chemical data obtained from various laboratories; any acquaintance with the patient himself has become of secondary or no importance.

Of course, rethinking has already started in their camp, that is why Pavlovian Physiology is tending to replace the standard Physiology, Separansky's Neural Pathology is tending to replace Virchow's Cellular Pathology. The Medical Curriculum Committee of the British Medical Association in its report on the training of Doctors (1948) declared—

“The Committee believes the cause of the failure to produce good doctors is to be found in the very conception of medicine, on which the curriculum has been based”.

“It proposed a drastic overhaul—which involves a different approach. That approach is based on the conception of disease as a disturbance in the structure and functions of the organism—and regards simply as a descriptive convenience the concept of disease as clinical entities”.

“The student should learn to regard disease as the expression of a structural change or a functional disturbance in an individual patient”.

“One of the most serious defects is the failure to regard the patient as a whole”.

“He will learn that every patient has his own distinct personality”.

“Moreover, most text-books encourage the habit of ‘labeling’ disease instead of teaching the students, to think first of the patient as an individual where normal health is in some way disturbed”.

“We should return to first principles and so remodel the training of our students that they will base their future practice on the understanding of each patient as a whole”.

Thus, we see that, on this basic stand Hahnemann far from

being outdated, was antedated by more than a century and a half.

But this acceptance of the basic stand of Hahnemann will not serve and purpose so long as—

(2) They run after the "*materia peccans*" or "*tolle causum*", so long as they strive to set to order "the disturbance in structure and function", by destroying the *materia peccans* or by removing or treating the alleged cause. The position of the *materia peccans* of the age, the various bacteria and viruses, which have been holding the status of specific cause of various respective diseases, are being totally shaken by further investigation. Dr. Rene J. Dubos, one of the leading scientists in the field of antibiotics has by extensive experiments proved that— (i) a particular bacterium or virus may be an essential concomitant of a respective disease—but it is not at all the cause of the disease, (ii) the factors which make a particular bacterium or virus become pathogenetic have not yet been known, (iii) isolated destruction of particular bacteria may make the case more vulnerable to disease by disturbing the normal bacterial flora essential for healthy life.

Then again, in running after the cause of the disturbance one has taken charge to treat, each of the proximate causes will be found to be the effect of a prior cause, and ultimately he will reach the disordered vital force at the root of all evils (unless, of course, some external maintaining cause can be found, which must necessarily be removed by appropriate means). Take, for instance, a case of Haemorrhoids—the cause is found to be portal congestion, portal congestion is due to disturbance in liver, disturbance in liver is due to various maintaining causes—which are removed, still the disorder persists, but this is removed only when the whole vitality of the patient is set to order by proper constitutional similitum, by following a definite therapeutic law. But—

(3) The Orthodox school lacks this very essential thing for any scientific art. They have not yet any law to guide their drug therapeutics. Many a leading authority of their school—like Osler, Bayer, Arndt, Schultz, etc.—has long been sounding a note of imploration to appreciate and accept the law established by Hahnemann, but unfortunately, they are falling on deaf ears,

So in the field of Therapeutics also Hahnemann is not at all outdated, his date is only tending to come up.

Such is the actual situation in the field of drug-therapeutics of so-called Modern Scientific Medicine. Still the neo-scientists in the homœopathic society—with their claim of being more scientific, being free from prejudice, being uptodate,—are wanting us to accept the arms which are being rejected by their owners as useless, or nay harmful.

If we sincerely wish to respect immortal Hahnemann and not to be hypocrites and traitors—we must fight with all our might to save the precious gift bequeathed to us by the Epoch-maker in the field of Medicine, from the hands of these neo-scientists—the feeble-minded renegades—in the interest of sick humanity.

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