

But, inspite of all the above, it is most lamentable that, even ten years after the achievement of National Independence, institutions of national utility, also, have to undergo disrespect and repression at the hands of bureaucracy and red-tapism. Since the inception of its life, the Association members have been moving from door to door, from the state secretariat to the central, from the door of the state health minister to that of the central, but to their extreme disappointment. There is no sign that its members will be registered in the near future. Almost every other state in Bharat is having or going to have homœopathic statutory bodies. Why has been the exception in the case of Saurashtra? Besides, Saurashtra has now been merged with the bigger state of Bombay, and as a result the Saurashtra homœopaths have lost their previous status with its rights and privileges. In the present circumstances, it is extremely desirable, not only from the constitutional point of view, but also from the humanitarian, that the Bombay Homœopathic Board rehabilitates them, by registering the bonafide homœopaths of Saurashtra, as the earliest opportunity.

—S. M. B.

## HISTORY OF THE *SIMILE* IN MEDICINE

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There are in general two kinds of disease, acute and chronic. Acute diseases are those, according to Dorland, (*Dictionary of Medicine*), "having a short and relatively severe course". They get well spontaneously or are thrown off by the *vis medicatrix naturæ* with or without the aid of medicine, though more quickly, of course, under the action of the homœopathic remedy. If severe, they may end in death. This is true of such acute affections as Asiatic cholera, diphtheria, meningitis or yellow fever. In the epidemics of cholera of years past, many patients collapsed while walking on the street as from a paralytic stroke. Causes were enumerated in THE

LAYMAN SPEAKS for May. Severity and duration depend on the character of the disease, the condition of the patient and the kind of treatment. Several acute diseases immunize their victims against further attacks. Among these are scarlet fever, whooping cough, measles, smallpox and mumps. With mumps, however, immunity is strictly local; if only one salivary gland is involved, the disease may attack the other at another time.

Many acute diseases have a tendency to recur unless the first attack has been cured homœopathically, even though they may be non-contagious. Little Johnny gets a sore throat; in a week or so he gets another and his tonsils begin to enlarge. Eventually he becomes a "mouth-breather", which means that the pharyngeal tonsil, a group of small glands situated on the back wall of the throat or pharynx just above the level of the soft palate, are swollen and hinder normal breathing. This is the condition known as "adenoids". Johnny's sister is always "catching cold". At first she had only a "runny nose", but of late she has been crying half the night with ear-ache. The last time, the ear-ache was relieved by a discharge of pus through a ruptured ear-drum and she was able to go back to school the next day. Little Johnny's father has a cold now and then and gets irritable and grumpy because it usually runs into sinus trouble and makes him stay home from the office for a day or two. Little Johnny's teacher may take cold now and then, but never gets very sick because she takes funny little sugar pills and gets well overnight.

Hypertrophied (enlarged) tonsils and adenoids are apt to impair the general health of a child and in many instances also the mental development; but a cold in the head is a virus infection and may pave the way for any one of a long list of ailments from sinus trouble, pneumonia, rheumatism or inflammation of the kidneys to a general systemic breakdown. For this reason, it is one of the most serious problems of civilized society. After years of research and experimentation, the cold in the head is still the *bete noire* of ordinary medicine, whose futile efforts to cure it have become a joke among the laity.

Ordinary medicine does not, however, despair. At a recent meeting of the Common Cold Foundation, Dr. John S.

Dingle of Western Reserve School of Medicine, announced that in another five years (!) a drug will be found that will cope with the viruses causing this seasonal misery. For years we have had foundations for the study of tuberculosis, cancer, polio and so on with the list of dread diseases, and now comes one to investigate sneezing, sniffing hawking and nose-blowing. The Common Cold Foundation expresses the dire necessity of solving the problem, and draws its support from a large number of industrial firms. At the same meeting, other noted specialists discussed the subject, and the consensus was that there is no known cure for colds, and that people who take dummy pills and "shots" report the same benefit as those who take nothing at all! The principal reason for failure with the problem of the cold is two-fold: first, they are continually searching for some specific; second, they are unaware that the recurrence of these acute conditions, and especially their disastrous after-effects, stem from an internal dyscrasia that can be reached only by a deep-acting constitutional remedy such as Homœopathy alone can supply. This brings us to the subject of this chapter, the true nature of chronic diseases.

A chronic disease is one that runs a long course and is seldom overcome by the vital force unaided by treatment. Hahnemann's theory concerning the nature of chronic disease began to take definite form in 1816, about six years after the appearance of the First Edition of the *Organon*. For some time he had observed that certain of his chronic cases did not respond to his remedies, or, after being greatly relieved they would recur, sometimes in a somewhat different form. He also observed that many which had apparently been cured would recur through error in diet, grief, climatic conditions, even overexertion. Occasionally he met with a case of one of the social diseases that would fail to respond to his most careful prescribing. As was his wont, he set about finding the cause. It occurred to him that it might be due to the limited number of remedies at his disposal at that time, but further investigation failed to confirm this. Then he noted that many chronic cases which recurred gave a history of the itch or scabies which had been removed by salves or ointments. Searching through

medical literature, he was able to find many examples of dire effects following suppression of the itch and other eruptions on the skin. The contagiousness of the two social (venereal) diseases, syphilis and gonorrhoea, was a matter of general knowledge, and also the serious internal conditions and after-effects following an apparent cure by the crude suppressive methods then in vogue. If, he reasoned, there is a subtle contagium that transmits these diseases, then there must be a similar "miasm"—as he called it—to account for the wide prevalence of non-venereal diseases. At once he began to test his theory. By further study of the remedies he already had, and the proving of new ones, he was able to select those that were deeper-acting—more homœopathic—to the mysterious hidden "miasm" (taint) that his theory predicated. With his usual care and conservatism, he did not publish the results of these researches until he had put them to rigorous clinical tests. In order that this new discovery of his might not be lost, however, he revealed it to three of his most intimate friends: Stapf, Gross and the Royal Prussian Consul-General Gotthelf. In a letter to the last-named of these, Hahnemann writes: "I have striven night and day for the last four years to discover the missing keystone and thus find the means of stamping out the old chronic diseases. By thousands of experiments and experiences, as well as by uninterrupted meditation, I have at last attained my object. None of my pupils as yet know of this invaluable discovery, the worth of which to mankind exceeds all else that I have discovered, and without which Homœopathy remains imperfect and defective. It is still wholly my property and enables me to cure the worst chronic diseases, which not only the doctors of the old humdrum school have to leave uncured—that would be natural—but also the best among my homœopathic pupils."

Hahnemann named this internal miasm (taint) or dyscrasia "psora", which is the Greek word for scabies or the itch, for it was Hahnemann's theory that it is the driving-in of the skin eruption that causes the chronic condition.

In the Sixth Edition of the *Organon*, Hahnemann says that since the two social (venereal) diseases had long been consider-

ed "miasmatic", since they persisted through life in a hidden form if not cured, there must be some "miasm" which was the cause of *non-venereal* diseases. By this time he had been able to confirm this in practice, at least to his own satisfaction. He says that after it has completed the internal infection of the whole organism it announces its presence by a peculiar eruption sometimes consisting of only a few vesicles (small blisters) and a peculiar odor, the monstrous psoric miasm—the psora—the only *fundamental cause* producing all the other numerous—I may say innumerable—forms of disease given in the textbooks as peculiar, independent diseases. "The fact that this extremely ancient infecting agent gradually passed, in some hundreds of generations, through many millions of human organisms and had thus attained an incredible development, shows how it can display such innumerable forms in the great family of mankind." In another place he goes back to Biblical times and mentions leprosy as a previous form of scabies, saying: "Moses, 3,400 years ago, pointed out several varieties of the itch which have kept mostly to the external parts of the body as their seat." This was true of the malady that prevailed in Greece, later in Arabia and lastly in Europe during the Middle Ages. "Different names were given by different nations to the more or less malignant varieties of leprosy."

Hahnemann's monumental work of 700 pages was published serially in four parts from 1828 to 1839 under the title, *Chronic Diseases, Their Nature and Their Homœopathic Cure*. Over half of it is taken up with special indications for the antipsoric remedies, those that the author had found most efficacious in treatment of psora because of their great depth of action. Many of them were new. Fourteen pages are devoted to the innumerable evil effects of suppression of eruptions on the skin. Only twelve pages are allotted to the social diseases. Few books have ever aroused more excitement in the medical world. Criticism, especially of the psora theory, began from the moment of publication. Hahnemann's enemies immediately seized upon all the real and apparent discrepancies in his theory. "Preposterous! Scabies is disease of the skin and is caused by the itch mite. How can one skin disease be trans-

formed into another totally different skin disease?" Even some of Hahnemann's own loyal disciples refused to accept his theory *in toto*. I have quoted from the Sixth Edition of the *Organon* chiefly because therein the theory is given more briefly than in the larger work, and also to show that even in 1842, when he had completed his last message to the profession, he had not changed his views, but rather had added several more confirmations of them.

It was no fault of Hahnemann that in his day dermatology was in its infancy, and that the standard textbooks then at his command classed many skin diseases, now recognized as totally different in nature and origin, as in the same category. It was quite natural, therefore, when he compiled the imposing list of skin affections in his *Chronic Diseases* illustrating the dire effects resulting from suppression of the "itch", he included such maladies as scald head, lichen, ringworm, erysipelas, barber's itch and leprosy. His theory was really based on *suppression*, not on the name of the disease. This is evident from the fact that he offers the ill effects from the driving-in of six or eight different diseases as confirmations.

The itch is produced by the *acarus scabiei*, discovered by Bonomo in 1683, and well known to Hahnemann. Although he fails to mention this—in fact, appears to have overlooked in both in the *Organon* and in *Chronic Diseases*—it is quite evident from many statements in these works that he did not hold the germ itself as responsible but the toxin it elaborated.

Roberts objects to the term "miasm", which he says conveys Hahnemann's meaning perfectly in the German, but not in the English translation. Roberts offers the term "stigma" as a substitute. "Miasm", now obsolete, is defined as noxious emanation from a swamp, which was supposed to be the cause of malaria. Nevertheless, the original Greek *miasma*, from which the word miasm is derived, means "stain", and "stain" is quite appropos.

But let us for the time being forget terms and words. The reality of subtle insidious taints or dyscrasias as the underlying factors in chronic disease has been demonstrated by several hundred conscientious homœopaths who not only applied

Hahnemann's instructions in every-day practice but added to them. Whether or not they believed that "psora" resulted from suppression of the itch, they found it a good working hypothesis in the treatment of deep-seated chronic ailments. Lastly, in deference to Hahnemann, let us say with Garth Boericke : "It would be a bold thing to do to condemn Hahnemann's method of treating chronic disease, when we know so little of life's processes."

—*The Layman Speaks*, Aug., 1956

## OUR DEBT TO HAHNEMANN

### DISCOVERER OF HOMŒOPATHY

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April 10 is a red letter day in the history of Homœopathy, being the birthday of its discoverer, Dr. Samuel Hahnemann of Germany, a great thinker, philosopher and medical scientist. Great is the contribution of Hahnemann to medical science and great indeed is the debt which humanity owes to this great man, for giving it a system of treatment which besides being very simple and cheap is highly efficacious, rational, scientific and easy to understand and apply. Without any expense or botheration to the patient of having his blood, urine and stool etc. tested, Homœopathy carries speedy relief to a large majority of patients on symptomatic indications, often saving them from avoidable surgical operations.

Let us make a brief survey of the Hahnemannian view regarding disease and its true cure, to see how admirably it fits in with reality.

The human body is an automatically functioning machine. The Vital Energy, which is a non-material dynamic force, automatically and without any outside help or interference maintains the body, its endocrine glands and its every cell and part in a state of health, "so that our indwelling, reason-gifted