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## MEDICAL LUNACY

DR. S. M. BHATTACHERJEE, M.A., P.R.S.M., BERHAMPORE

### POLITICS

Politics is a hydraheaded science, which branches off into as many sciences as human society can claim to its credit. The conception of the rights and privileges of a group or coterie and the considerations of the prospect and enhancement of a science give a political colour to it, which otherwise would emerge in all purity and simplicity. Simple villagers do a lot of politics even in their limited scope. The students do a good deal of politics for the reduction of their fees, enlargement of their rights and privileges and heightening of their prestige. Similarly, Medicine, whose sole purpose is purely humanitarian, in that it only seeks to ameliorate the physical and mental ills of the people in the safest, surest and quickest manner, has started to develop a peculiar politics of its own. Medicine is concerned with the well-being of the individuals, and a modern State is preoccupied with the welfare of its people. Yet, Modern Medicine has come down to oppose the very conception of socialized medicine. For, here, among other things, the rights, privileges and interests of a group have been in conflict with those of many. A medical man is also a politician today. This is obvious from the quotation from the World Medical Journal, July-1957 :

"Dr. Sen remarked that medicine seems always to be on the defensive with relation to Social Security. This implies weakness, and Dr. Sen suggested that W.M.A. needs a 'peaceful militant offensive policy toward Social Secu-

rity'. The problem is that 'free medicine' is always good for a lot of votes, and physicians themselves account for a small minority of the electorate".

—*W.M.J.*, page—224.

#### A LUNACY

This political activity of a medical man may be regarded in some quarters as a type of "Lunacy". The said Journal aptly writes (page-223) :

"In India", he (Dr. Sen) observed, "The Doctor who takes an interest in medical affairs is called a medical politician and regarded as a lunatic but, unfortunately, such lunacy is not infectious".

But, political thinking is not out of place in medicine. The medical man has not merely to deal with disease and medicaments, but has his first choice with the individual patient, the citizen of a State, whose mental, physical and social well-being is his primary concern. To think of the welfare of the sick individual is itself a philosophy, a medical philosophy, which placed in the perspective of the social and economic considerations involving the State, the patient and the doctor, transforms itself into a political philosophy. So, medicine becomes a political affair.

If political thinking in medicine is a lunacy, our Master Hahnemann had been the first medical lunatic in known human history. For, he before all proclaimed the idea of socialized medicine, when he wrote :

"Until the State, in the future, after having attained insight into the indispensability of perfectly prepared homœopathic medicine, will have them manufactured by a competent impartial person, in order to give them free of charge to homœopathic physicians trained in homœopathic hospitals, who have been examined theoretically and practically, and thus legally qualified. The physician may then become convinced of these divine tools for purposes of healing, but also to give them free of charge to his patients—rich & poor."

—*Organon*, 6th Ed., p—295.

## FUNDAMENTALS

The consideration of medicine as a social science leads one to some fundamentals of organized human society. Medicine is more a philosophy than a politics. Health and illness, the primary concerns of medicine, are not commodities procured or transported at one's sweet will. Health is a fixed central state in an individual's vital functions. Illness is a dynamic swinging in the opposite direction. They are individualistic in character, and are dependent upon inheritance, acquirement and unwanted vitiation. The congenial influences or inroads of the environment upon individual organisms are of no mean consequence in the promotion and preservation of health or production and maintenance of disease. Mental and emotional factors contribute a large part in this direction. What an impossible task it is for the rulers, legislators or political leaders to help to maintain health and remove disease, save of course in the act of a tolerable control of epidemic incidents! The patient is an individual, with his problems strictly individualistic, and asks for the help of an individual. The second individual is the medical man of his choice, who can extricate him from the intricate knots of disease and put back its vicious hand to the peak point of health. So medicine, ideally, is a philosophy which establishes a Doctor-to-Patient relationship, that large and stereotyped institutions or panels of less intimate doctors can not and should not replace. The co-operation and the faith that emerge from the patient combines with the attention, care and sympathy that echo from his choiced physician, to introduce a solid pattern of inter-relationship, which can never be broken without a spiritual breakdown of the suffering human's conditions.

In a welfare State it is the duty of the rulers to ensure the best available medical care and treatment to the people, to safe-guard their interest and secure them from the greed, malpractice and conspiracy of unscrupulous medical men and commercial manufacturers of drugs. So, State-control of medicine is inevitable to certain extent. The free-man in a free society, on the other hand, is entitled to a freedom of choice of the physician, as well as on the method or type of

treatment. This freedom of choice on the part of the patient necessitates the guarantee of four other freedoms to the medical man. They are :

1. Freedom to choose one's patient.
2. Freedom to choose one's place of practice.
3. Freedom to choose one's method of treatment.
4. Freedom from interference by lay men, whatever they may be.

An authority that takes note of and implements the fundamentals is the only body eligible for the task of introducing socialized medicine. Any other will injure not only the interests of medicine, but also of the suffering individuals, and ultimately of the State itself. Such political and philosophical thinking is inherent in the practice of medicine, call it a lunacy or anything else.

#### WORST LUNACY

Dr. Sen is reported to have regretted that the lunacy of the medical politician has not been infectious, but all will be happy if the said lunacy does not degenerate into a combination of fantasy and fanaticism,—the worst of all lunacies which politics takes on, when deprived of all the force of facts,—its foundation sapped of all the strength of reality. Actually, all are happy that Dr. Sen has not had many as his followers, which is evident from the World Medical Journal (same issue, page-223) :

“Dr. Sen of India commented on the difficulty of educating people and their leaders to the needs and accomplishments of medicine. Most physicians are preoccupied with their practices.”

The degree and scope of socialized medicine are sure to vary with the degree and scope of implementation of the plans. Opportunities are different in different social conditions. What is true of U.K. or U.S.A. is not so in India. Every one is grateful to our planners that they accepted this in principle, and though providing extra-ordinarily for organized medicine, at the sacrifice of other systems, did not oblige Dr. Sen's group hundred per cent. For, in that case the Government of India would have been liquidated, all its resources squandered and

all other systems of medicine totally neglected. The same magazine writes (page 223-24) :

“Dr. Sen called attention to the universal demand of politicians that medical care be made less expensive. He observed that the fastest transportation is always the most expensive ; and, by analogy, the most efficient medical service is also the most expensive. If time is economically valuable, then the best may indeed be the cheapest”.

True, “time is economically valuable”, and more valuable than many things. But, what is most valuable in India is a pinch of salt and a morsel of rice or bread. Medicine removes disease and wards off sufferings, but food maintains life and averts death. To present a starving man with a bottle of medicine is the most ludicrous of all possible aids, representing the most grotesque of fantasies and the basest of all fanaticisms. The idea of too expensive medicine in India is a criminal medical lunacy, which can receive support from no quarters.

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## LYCOPodium

### *Grand Characteristics (General)*

1. Right-sidedness. Symptoms and conditions affect especially the right side of the body and organs on the right side. Complaints which begin on the right side of the body and extend to the left (opposite of *Lachesis*).
2. Aggravation in the evening, especially from 4 to 8 p.m. Amelioration after 8 p.m., except the weakness.
3. Amelioration in the open air and aggravation in the warm room, but sensitiveness to the cold open air and aggravation after walking in the open air.
4. Aggravation from cold drinks and amelioration from warm drinks.