

Book Review

A Study on Materia Medica: Dr. N. M. Choudhuri

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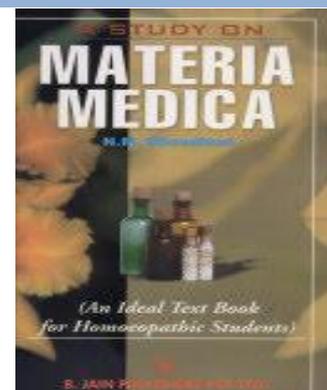
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Introduction

Since Hahnemann's time, we are correlating the symptoms of the patients with the drug symptoms. Art of prescribing and case perceiving is the basis to reach the 'similimum' through totality. This is the beauty of homoeopathic philosophy that we can reach 'similia' through totality from different angles. Though angles of prescription are different, we may reach the 'similimum' in one point. One can prescribe in a way where complete symptoms are available. One can prescribe through Kent's method. Where mental symptoms are

lacking, one may start with physical general, then particular symptoms. Where both mental and physical symptoms are lacking, selection may be based on a striking, peculiar as a key symptom and then medicines are differentiated by the help of other symptoms. In cases where advanced pathological signs are presenting only the common symptoms we can prescribe with the help of past history, family history, temperament, constitution, organ affinity and probable etiological factors. Dr. N. M. Choudhuri illustrates every aspect of angle of prescribing either

through his own acumen or with the help of burning example of those stalwarts, who made him Dr. N. M. Choudhuri.

I want to switch on citing a cure of the most marvelous description that Dr. Allen effected while Dr. Choudhuri was yet a student, studying medicine at his feet. It was in the case of a very near and dear relation of Dr. Choudhuri, who was suffering from a most persistent, distressing colic for years, which various doctors diagnosed, differently and none agreed as to its real nature. After years of unavailing sorrow and suffering and failure of every other treatment, he brought this to Dr. Allen's notice in Chicago where N.M. Choudhuri was a medical student at that time. He sent one single dose of *Psorinum* CM, packed nicely in an envelope to the patient in India. Since that day the patient had been having unflinching health and there had not been a vestige of pain from the time he took that solitary dose of medicine till the present moment. That colic was the after-effect, which none but Dr. Allen appreciated, of a suppression of the most distressing, maddening, tormenting eczema that the gentleman had for years on his scrotum with the intense scratching used to drive him almost to despair and which he suppressed by the application of many external and soothing ointments. The second reason that probably prompted Dr. Allen to make this choice was the peculiar mental attitude already referred to in this lecture. The patient was in total despair about his recovery and had even a suicidal tendency. The third ground for this prescription was probably the want of reactive power on the part of the patient or else why did he suffer so long and all remedies, even homoeopathic ones, prescribed by responsible doctors, some of which were well indicated, failed to bring him the desired relief.

The potency for suppuration or absorption of abscess

A great difference of opinion prevails amongst several authorities regarding the potency for suppuration or absorption of abscess. Dr. Choudhuri likes to put down all the opinions of stalwarts from he learned rather than burdened his own. Dr. Farrington says: "*If you give it in high potency when the throbbing, stabbing pains in the affected part and the general rigor show the onset of inflammation, it may abort the whole trouble. In other cases if you see that suppuration is necessary, and wish to hasten the process, then you give Hepar low*". Drs. Allen and Norton seem to think in the same way. There are others again like Drs. Clarke and Nash that differ. We are also inclined to believe that the 'indicated medicine' works with nature and promotes either absorption or suppuration as the vitality demands. Dr. Nash makes mention of a case in which the cm. potency of this remedy brought about "*the most rapid pointing, opening and perfect healing*". Dr. Clarke mentions another case of "*an axillary abscess with a large collection of pus*" in which Hepar 6C induced the most striking absorption.

Dr. L. P. Foster's opinion on the abscess

He makes difference between Kali sulph. and Calc. Sulph with Hepar sulph: "*Kali sulph.*", he says, "*acts on the epidermis, while calc. sulph. acts very much the same as Hep. sulph. only more deeply. Hepar acts on abscesses before they open, Calc sulph. after*". Foster mentions a case of multiple ulcers in the gluteal region of a lady about 3 inches in diameter and three-fourth of an inch deep that he cured with Calc sulph.

Practical experiences of Dr. N. M. Choudhuri

- **Acalypha indica:** Dr. N.M.Choudhuri said, "I have used this remedy with great satisfaction in hemoptysis of phthisis. There is dullness of chest on percussion. Patients complaining of severe pain in chest, progressive

emaciation, night sweat, evening rise of temperature, all indicating a serious stage, have been helped by the administration of *Acalypha*".

- **Aethusa in want of the power of concentration:** Dr. Clarke recommends it highly in patients suffering from want of the power of concentration. He mentions of a young undergraduate in whom with *Aethusa* he helped to bring back his long-lost power of concentration.
- **Filix mass in Tapeworm:** According to Hering, the tincture must be prepared from the fresh root, and the best time for its application in tapeworm is summer, as the root can be obtained fresh at that time. It also causes atrophy of the optic nerve, leading on to blindness, and hence it should be used with great caution.
- **Diarrhoea of Jalapa:** Jalapa helped him to treat a case of entero-colitis in a little baby of about seven summers. The baby came to him from allopathic hands after three months of prolonged diarrhoea. The baby was so emaciated and feeble that it was a piteous object to look at and the poor thing was constantly undergoing contortions of the body, due most probably to a colic to which it was a constant subject. Jalapa cured the child's diarrhoea and relieved the colic.

The book is wonderful collection of lectures by Dr. N.M. Choudhuri. He has given a brief of all the drugs in a study format starting from its Source, Description and goes ahead to form a clinical picture and describes the personality in a beautiful approach through the most prominent, most verified characteristic features. The instances of cases given are also praiseworthy which show the realistic aspect of the drug. The comparative study given is also in very simple language to make possible it to be

easily comprehensible and assimilation. A great deal of unnecessary and unauthenticated matter has been left out, to make the Repertory portion useful and easy of reference. A great friend & sincere well wisher predicted for 1st edition of this book "*it will at least be popular amongst vermin if not amongst human being*".

Comparison

The life work of the student of the homoeopathy is one of the constant comparison and differentiation. He must compare the pathogenesis of a remedy with the recorded anamnesis of the patient. He must differentiate the apparently similar symptoms of two or more medicinal agents in order to select similimum. We have much more from this book to compare remedies. Some examples may illustrate the idea about comparisons. *Abrotanum* and other remedies for marasmus of children: *Aethusa*, *Antim. crud.*, *Baryta carb.*, *Calcarea carb.*, *Cina*, *Iodium*, *Natrum mur.*, *Petroleum*, *Sarsaparilla*, *Silicea* and *Sulphur* are important remedies to be remembered in this connection. In *Aethusa*, with the emaciation we have immoderate vomiting of milk immediately after nursing. The same emaciation, the same want of power to hold the head up are present but the great intolerance of milk should always be our guide in its selection. In *Antimonium crudum*, we have the vomiting of food and drink, we have the watery diarrhoea, but the ugliness and peevishness of the child, the want of animal heat and the heavy milky or the milk-white coating of the tongue should help us in our selection. *Baryta carb.* is indicated when in addition to the general emaciation we have the immature and dwarfed mental condition of the child to think of. A general tendency towards swelling of cervical and other glands is also to be noticed in this remedy. In *Calcarea carb.* the emaciation is more marked in tissues other than adipose. The muscles and the bones suffer before the fatty tissues are affected. There is a general

deceptive appearance of plumpness about this child. Profuse sweat especially in the head, crusta lactea, engorgement of glands, especially the mesenteric, sour pungent clayey diarrhoea and great craving for eggs are prominent symptoms. *Cina* is inferior the none in marasmus but the itching of the anus, the wetting of the bed, and presence of worms in the stools, the beastly temper, the constant picking of the nose and a strong desire on the part of the child to be constantly rocked are guiding indications. *Iodium* is indicated when the hunger is excessive and the child wants to eat constantly. *Natrum mur.*, a great remedy at all times, is particularly indicated in marasmus when atrophy is more marked in the throat and neck of children. The mapped tongue, herpes labialis, marked repugnance to bread; sadness, profuse sweating, palpitation and constipation are sure indications for *Natrum mur.* *Petroleum* is indicated in marasmus when the patient is subject to a peculiar type of diarrhoea, harassing all day long but mostly absent at night time. The other prominent symptoms are a marked odour of garlic in the breath and faeces of the patient, aversion to fresh air, a marked tendency for eczema, excoriating cracks and bleeding rhagades. *Phosphorus* is used in children growing over-tall but slender. The pot belliedness, the pale waxy countenance, the delicate eyelashes and soft hair, a frequent tendency for diarrhoea where stools pour away like water from a hydrant, the great tendency for affection of bones, the strong craving for cold iced drinks are symptoms too definite to be misleading. *Sarsaparilla* is generally called for in very pronounced cases of marasmus where the disease is fully developed. The emaciation is extreme, the face looks shriveled, the skin lies into folds, and eruptions are prone to appear on tongue and roof of mouth. Offensive sweat about genitals, restlessness before passing of urine, passing of great quantity of sand in the urine are also characteristic of this remedy. *Silicea* is indicated in nervous,

irritable, timid children who though wasting everywhere present an exceedingly large head. Malnutrition is marked everywhere in *Silicea*. A great aversion to mother's milk is also noticed. *Sulphur* though coming last in this list is not second in importance to any. In fact it is used oftener than many of the other remedies mentioned in this list. Nobody can mistake a Sulphur baby. There is nothing inviting about him. The skin is dry, harsh and wrinkled giving the child an old man look. Eczema, itch, eruptions, enlargement of the glands, obstinate constipation and persistent diarrhoea, a never-to-be-forgotten nauseous smell, dirt and filth speak of an ugliness that is only to be encountered in Sulphur.

Dreams

Dreams, to a homoeopath, are often quite guiding. They give us a far better insight into the deeper nature of our patient than many of the so called symptoms that crop up and float on the surface to meet our superficial gaze. It is not for nothing that dreams differ. Some dream of accidents, others of amorous subjects, others again of topics of varied nature – each dream in its turn specifies a particular temperament, or more correctly a special deviation of the individual from the normal. Important cures have been recorded, based on dreams alone.

Repertory part

A short and a concise Repertory have been affixed to help in the study of the *Materia Medica*. The method followed has been the usual one of the organs in order of their natural arrangement. Kent, Kneer, Lippe, Boenninghausen, Boericke and other popular authors have been consulted. A great deal of unnecessary and unauthenticated matter has been left out, to make the Repertory portion useful and easy of reference. The reason why a Repertory has been added to this volume is because practical Homoeopathy is identical with Repertory practice.

“Negligence and inaptitude in handling Repertory are frequently the causes of unsuccess of many amongst us. The proper understanding and management of the Homoeopathic Materia Medica is a stupendous task. As has been mentioned repeatedly, it is a philosophy and a science combined in one. It needs the best brain, the coolest judgment, and an untiring and endless endeavour to master it even partially, and Repertory forms a valuable aid in achieving this object”.

The index is arranged alphabetically but the chapters are not arranged in this manner. Total numbers of pages of this repertory are 215 (from page 835 to page 1049 of this book). There are only 2 grades in this repertory. Typography is *Italics* (1st grade) and Roman (2nd grade).

Criticism and conclusion

Symptoms of *Aranea diadema* has been described in this book as “very efficacious in headache and confusion of head brought about and aggravated by smoking”. On the contrary, Boericke’s *Materia Medica* describes it as “greatly relieved by the open air”, which is in as “it is very efficacious in headache and confusion of head which is by relieved by smoking and the open air”. Correction should be considered in *Ocimum canum*, where the given introduction is of Holy Basil which is actually the common name of *Ocimum sanctum*. The actual *Ocimum canum* is Brazilian *Alfavaca* or *Kala Tulsi*. Difference should be made clearly between *Tarentula hispanica* and *Tarentula cubensis*.

In the end, it could be concluded that this book provides us wisdom to prescribe confidently like Dr. Choudhuri viewed the paths by different authorities.

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