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Homœopathy and Its First Missionary in India.

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It is a painful fact that some of the greatest men of India had the shortest biographies. Many great men have been enwrapped in the folds of oblivion. They have done great deeds and still have been forgotten.

Biography teaches us what man can be and can do at his best. It gives every man renewed strength and confidence. A noble character lives a universal life. He still speaks to us from the grave, beckons us on in the path which he has trod, guides, influences and directs us. A noble character is a perpetual bequest, living from generation to generation.

I write this article simply to pay our homage to the memory of the man who was the First Missionary of Homœopathy in India and to bear witness to the most beneficent truth ever discovered by the genius of man. You are all aware of the fact that Samuel Hahnemann discovered the principles of Homœopathy.

Of all the medical systems which have successively made their appearance in the world, there cannot be found any which has commanded more world-wide renown and greater interest than Homœopathy. Like all discoveries, like Harvey's circulation of the blood, like Paracelsus' antimony, and like Jenner's vaccination, Hahnemann's Homœopathy was, for sometime, persecuted with the most remorseless rancour by its opponents. A tempest of

derision burst upon Hahnemann's head while the news of his discovery was promulgated. The superiority of his philosophy which he ever maintained with so much kingly dignity, bore the infallible stamp of the exuberent predominance of his intellectual vigour and genius. To lift up the minds of the people to a healthy atmosphere of medical science and to dispel the darkness which stretched like a network into every nook and corner of this vast universe requires, no-doubt, the agency of a superhuman intellect and it was the immortal Hahnemann who performed that glorious task. The teaching and principles promulgated by Hahnemann have stood the probing test of the scientific world for more than a century and his law of cure stands unchanged to the present day. But science knows no barricade of race or language; the rays of its majestic sunrise are the liberty, equality, and fraternity which are illuminated by knowledge.

Hahnemann possessed the enthusiasm of a Columbus, the intellect of a Newton, the faith of a Luther, the perseverance of a Bruce, the independence of a Mazzini and the purity and integrity of a Washington. Truth triumphs alike over custom and prejudice and the doctrine of great Hahnemann has, therefore, advanced with rapid strides, sweeping away the stumbling—block of progress with the superiority and stability of its laws.

It is no hyperbole or fiction to say that Homœopathy has widened its boundaries over the entire civilized world. Homœopathy has survived the deadly arrows of persecution and won the clustering laurels of triumphant worth. The attention of all the civilized world has now been directed to the sublime truth of Hahnemann's Homœopathy in its pristine purity, and the mist of misconception, wilful or otherwise, that prevailed before as to its

relative position, in the medical world, has been cleared by the convincing proof of its worth.

Homœopathy has faced bitter opposition, has withstood the most rigid investigation and to-day everything produced and used by any school of medicine bears ample testimony to the fact that the Homœopathic law is the only rational and scientific law ever evolved for the right prescribing of drugs. Thousands of active, energetic, intelligent, thoroughly educated practitioners; hundreds of thousands of patients and practical beneficiaries stand and give testimony to its wonderful clinical efficacy, for in all diseases there can be found a *similimum*, for every ailment a Homœopathic remedy. We honour Hahnemann because his pure soul loved that which was right; because his stored mind of varied learning and enquiring spirit sought the truths of nature; because he ennobled our race; because he has contributed as much as any man living or dead to the real prosperity of the world; because he left a legacy of helpfulness to every human being. Millions are paying homage to his genius at this moment and pronouncing his name with veneration.

Homœopathy was born at a time of utmost stagnation in medical learning when the Science of Therapeutics was pregnant with chaos and confusion, was groping in the dark and haphazard and not much above that employed by the savage. Venesection was the sovereign remedy in every malady; polypharmacy had reached the climax, each massive dose containing almost everything ever known to be good for anything; mercurial treatment was so universally and continuously adopted that toothless victims on that account were met at every corner; blisterings and the red-hot iron skinned their victims in order to counter-irritate them; all these and other like measures, produced needless purgatorial sufferings, that the historian

may be able to outline, but never to depict in terms of actual experience.

Hahnemann's message at such a dark time was indeed, a "gospel of good tidings," destined to transform the world of therapeutics. It was revolutionary and reconstructive and marked the beginning of a new era in medicine. It was the "new birth" since improvement in all things pertaining to therapeutics began to date from that time. He will always be revered by posterity, as the Emancipator, the Messiah of Medicine, the Creator of the Science of Therapeutics.

The honour of being the first to signalise this law belongs to Hahnemann and Hahnemann alone; but it was the late Rajendra Dutt who was the first in our country to introduce the principles of this noble Science in Bengal and who spent a princely fortune for the dissemination of its truth amongst his country-men. His only regret was that he was not then in a position to place it on a footing which we all desire for it to-day.

Rajendra Dutt's fairly long life is replete with numerous interesting and glorious achievements and many are the anecdotes which adorn it. It does not fall to the lot of every man to win a fair name in the annals of his country. Thousands come on the stage of life and shuffle off their mortal coil without leaving any trace behind. They are never thought of or their memories cherished, even by those who had intimate contact with them through life-long friendship, partnership in business or any other kindred association. Hundreds of men known to us in our life, when the faculty of judgment is generally ripe, have passed away and with their death have vanished their names out of our remembrance. Such is the sad fate of the majority of us. Those, who leave foot-prints on the sands of time, are undoubtedly men of extraordinary

merit and exceptional intelligence. In an age which is remarkable for its reactionary tendencies and reckless spirit of criticism and in a country where the growth and development of genius is retarded, to an almost immeasurable extent, by unnatural custom and by rivalry and jealousy; the perpetuity of a good name implies, the possession, on the part of the hero, many a brilliant and transcendental quality. That Rajendra Dutt should be held in grateful remembrance by rich and learned men of all sects and denominations in this land is a proof positive of his excellence and sterling merit. As a Homœopath he is, no doubt, little known beyond India, but this need not in any way detract from his eminence. Vico and Bishop Butler who exercised a far-reaching influence on the philosophical and religious speculation of Italy and Great Britain were scarcely known until recently outside the limits of their respective countries. The conversion of the late illustrious savant Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar M. D., D. L., C. I. E. to Homœopathy was due to Rajendra Dutt's dogged perseverance and it was, no doubt, Rajendra's grand task, the magnitude of which cannot be easily conceived.

If Rajendra Dutta had accomplished no other work, this alone would suffice to entitle him to a high position among the homœopaths of our country. But by far the most splendid work which he performed and which is worthy of being cherished with life-long gratitude by us all, is his staunch and uncompromising advocacy of Hahnemann's Homœopathy. The tree which Rajendra Dutt along with Dr. Sircar assisted to implant, has flourished although they no longer water it and preserve it, for it has struck its roots deep; no storm can overthrow it; its branches have extended far and wide and its top is destined to reach the height of perfection.

Excepting the late Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar we can think of no other Indian who in our time and generation rendered more brilliant services to the cause of Homœopathy than Rajendra Dutt. He made a life-long endeavour to prove the usefulness and superiority of homœopathic remedies.

The personal element plays so important a part in the history of every moment that no one can afford to ignore it or to treat it with indifference. Great and good principles may be embodied in a system and yet the attempt to further its cause may end in smoke through the incapacity and insincerity of its promoters. Had Rajendra Dutt not relinquished the allopathic mode of treatment and had he not spent the moiety of his fortune for the propagation of homœopathy with the bull-dog tenacity of purpose, the name of Hahnemann would have till now, been all Greek to our country-men.

The Homœopaths of India ought to be in deep obligation to Rajendra Dutt and regular anniversaries in his honour should, therefore, be celebrated till the truth he had the courage to embrace and disseminate has permeated the profession, or till at least the majority of the profession recognise the truth for the welfare of the human race.

Rajendra Dutt was the most illustrious member of one of the leading old Calcutta families.

The Datts of Wellington Square were one of the earlier post-Plassey families in Bengal, of which the Rajas of Sobhabazar were the earliest and most famous, and the Singhs of Jorasanko, the Mullicks of Barabazar, the elder Datts of Nimtola and the Tagores of Pathuriaghata coming next, one after another. Ukoor Dutt founded the Wellington Square Dutt family and was a contemporary of Maharaja Naba Krishna, the ancestor of the Sobhabazar family who was Persian Secretary to Lord Clive.

He amassed all his immense fortune in an humble honest way, by trade and business. His death took place in 1790. His business, a most lucrative one, remained in the family down to 1833. Rajendra was born in 1818, was brought up amid the associations of this great and noisy business, with multitudinous native sailors and Captains crowding his house.

As Rajendra evinced incontrovertible tokens of precocity from his childhood and as he was a beloved grandchild, he was largely associated with his grand-father and uncle in the business.

There could also be found here the secret of his sad reverses. In those days, before the era of a Government paper currency, money used to come in bags of silver coin. Not only the jingle of gold and silver could always be heard in the house, but as a child he was accustomed to sit and lie down upon silver coins in his grand-father's and his uncle's rooms.

It would thus be apparent that Rajendra had the very worst early education for cultivating the habits of prudence and economy. His father died when Rajendra was a child and so he was adopted as it were by his uncle and wife. That he might not experience the pangs of his orphanage, they lavished more than ordinary care and attention upon him, until they became notorious for their dotage. They loved Rajendra more than their own children. As Rajendra was bred up in the lap of superfluous luxury, they allowed him to indulge in every fancy, no matter how wild or capricious it might be. He was therefore permitted from his boyhood to make ducks and drakes with the money in his possession. The uncle did not like that any body would chide him. And this continued all through his school-boy days.

Rajendra's uncle Babu Doorga Charan Dutt was a

most extraordinary man, famous for capacity and prudence and force of character and integrity. Rajendra's success in life was certainly due to his early association with such a lofty character. His nephew used to say that in all his experience he had never come across a man like his uncle. If Rajendra had possessed but his uncle's prudence, he would probably have been a better and happier, if not a greater, man than he was. Born before the establishment of schools and colleges, Doorga Charan had managed to give his nephew as excellent an education as was practicable under the circumstances—a very respectable one indeed. His fondness for education was unique, as might be seen in the great family Library founded by him, the best of its kind in the metropolis and the respectable education he gave his nephew and children. He wanted his nephew to learn English with English boys and withal to learn French and the classics like English boys. So he sent his nephew to the foremost English seminary of the age, managed by an able Scotchman of the name of David Drummond.

Rajendra was not long allowed to remain with Mr. Drummond. The Hindu College was then rising in popularity and repute. Thus Rajendra, with the other Dutt boys, joined the Hindu College. After mastering the language course, comprising French and Italian and the classics, he continued his study of the latter in particular. Soon he became a sound Latin and Greek scholar and then advanced to the Hebrew class. He read the Christian scriptures in the original tongue. Such a linguistic learning sounds like a myth.

(to be continued)
