

# The Development and Formation of the Repertory

by James Tyler Kent

## The early repertories

Not so many years after I was first a homœopath, there fell into my hands the first Boenninghausen's *Repertory*, Lippe's *Repertory*, Biegler's *Diary*, Minton's *Diseases of Women*, and Jahr's *Repertory*, which in form was very good. And Lippe's *Repertory*, in characteristics and form was very good.

I carried Lippe's *Repertory* with me for a number of years, until it was not only interleaved but doubly and trebly interleaved, the pages so closely written upon that it was impossible to find what I had written into it; so that ended in confusion. But this was the one upon which my earlier reliance rested.

Then came the time, when I began to teach *Materia Medica*, in 1883, when I could readily see that we ought to have more.

The *Symptom-Register*, of Allen's great *Encyclopaedia*, was so limited that it lacked half of the symptoms. Jahr's *Repertory* was placed next in importance because it was a repertory of the grand old remedies. It was very good for these, but our pathogenesis had increased so much that it was no longer a satisfactory work; it did not fill the requirements of my practice. So I began taking up these works and effecting a compilation.

Eventually I had a large manuscript of most of the repertory. I talked with Lee, of Philadelphia, as Lippe's abridged form of a new repertory was in his hands and Lippe desired me to enter upon the work of helping or uniting with Lee to produce a complete repertory.

At that time I had completed a *Repertory of the Urinary Organs*, of Chill, Fever and Sweat, with other sections partly complete. Lee went to work and got out *Mind*, and later I helped him to get out *Head*, but they were very incongruous. The

modalities in each rubric in *Mind* were given at the end of the book, and later the modalities of *Head* and the *Generalities* were placed at the end of the book. This was done in accordance with the understanding of Boenninghausen's ideas of *Generals*.

## Boenninghausen's repertory

The chief difficulty with Boenninghausen's *Repertory* was that the modalities of the parts and those of the patient himself were all mixed together, so that the book was very unsatisfactory. I did not use it successfully. It was the best thing that we had given to us, but it was not equal to Jahr's old repertory.

Boenninghausen's first idea was that the modalities were satisfactorily arranged in connection with the symptoms to which they belonged. He finally put out that condensed form, the *Pocket-Book*. This, to my mind, was not properly homœopathy; but some of the doctors were able to use it. They would grasp the idea, and of course the book was better than no repertory. I always used it, for there were times when I could find something in it from which to work out, when I could not find the modalities belonging to the symptom itself, separate from the *Generals*.

We found it to be very unwise for us to think of a *patient worse from lying down* confounded with the modality of all the particulars throughout the book, whether headache, pain in the eyes, pain in the back, difficulty in breathing, pain in the stomach after eating, not specifying whether the modality referred to this, that or the other thing, or whether it was the patient himself. When we really stop to think it over, we know we ought to have the *general aggravation* or *ameliora-*

Reprinted from *The Homœopathician*, 1914; 4:7-8. and *Resonance*, Journal of the International Foundation for Homeopathy Seattle WA, 1990; 12:3, by kind permission of the Editor, Dean Crothers.

tion by lying down set in one place with its causes, apart from all else. The entire Boenninghausen book is arranged with modalities, general and particular, all together. Those of us who have used better things see how it was as it fell into my hands; yet with many good things in it.

Boenninghausen was a grand old man, but that was simply his idea and it was defective for my method of practice; because I soon grasped the idea that Hahnemann considered the mental symptoms and the physical symptoms. He took the patient himself; said, the patient has modalities that are related to each of his individual parts by itself: 'put them together, and let them come out as they will.'

In a short time I saw that the plan started upon by Lee was not what I had expected it to be; I told him so, and abandoned my effort to help him improve the repertory. Then he became nearly blind, of both eyes, and said that his health was nearly ruined, that he could not go on with the work, and would have to give it up.

Taking up what had been started, I then revised it thoroughly and formed it according to my own plan, which you now have in my repertory.

### A compilation

This is a compilation of all the repertories, so far as I was able to make it, upon the plan which I arranged and adopted. The plan followed chiefly Lippe's, as shown in his small handbook of *Characteristics*, gradually enlarging upon that work until it became what it was when the first fascicles were completed.

After that, I took up the clinical symptoms which I had recorded, and compared them with the provings as I had them; very many of them were contradictory of the provings, and so were rejected. Those that were consistent with the provings I admitted to the repertory, setting them into the various passages where they belonged.

A section in typewritten form was by that time several inches in thickness. That typewritten form was gone over many, many times; so many times, because, as the compilation continued, things kept coming up that were bound to be more and more effective, and we were constantly modifying the provings, including in the provings such symptoms as were found verified.

At one time Dr. Biegler, of Rochester, was in my office, looking over the pages, and some of the Boston doctors coming to me in Philadelphia wanted to look it over; they said: "Why can't we have this Repertory?" I said, "Because it will cost too much money. I have not made it for publication, but for myself, for my own use. It was made because of the demands of my business, and is the outgrowth simply of my own personal requirements. But I am willing that everybody should have it."

### Publication and cost

Then they insisted upon my making some plan for the publication of it, and Drs. Kimball, Thurston and Biegler sent out circulars to see if they could secure enough subscriptions to justify the publication. I consulted Dr. Boericke, president of Boericke & Tafel, and showed him the manuscript. He said: "It is a great and useful thing. I wish we had it; but it will cost too much money to publish, and we could not undertake it" . . . The first figure that I obtained was about \$9,000 for the mere printing. I did not feel like throwing away so much money. As I had talked it over with several other doctors, I did not believe there were more than three or four hundred, at the outside, who would have use for the work, or would want it.

The circulars brought in a subscription list of between one hundred and ninety and two hundred, not more than two hundred, at \$30 per copy. So I concluded that I would meet the rest of the expense and get it out, with hope that it might prove useful to the world.

So it was issued, section by section. When the second section was out, I was notified by all except ninety of the original subscribers that, as the book was not what they expected to have, I might cancel their subscriptions. Ninety stuck to their pledges and their signatures and took the Repertory.

Well, things went on from bad to better – not to worse – and the Repertory was born, with much suffering in eyes and heads and bodies of both myself and my wife; but of this you need not hear at length.

The book is now very extensively used, to the number of about 1,600 copies, throughout the world, in India, England, the United States, a few in Germany, quite a number in France and also in Australia.

It is, of course, a compilation; I did not manufacture the symptoms, but wrote them the best way I knew.

I do not know how there will ever be a third edition; neither myself nor my wife could read the proof, and I do not know who would. There are still over four hundred copies of the second edition unsold, and I am quite well satisfied that at least sixty percent of those who use this repertory will never wear theirs out and need to replace them.

### Discussion

Dr. Thatcher: I have the proud distinction of being the possessor of the first signed copy of the Repertory, of the First Edition. I went over to Dr. Kent's office by chance one night, when some of the copies had just come in from the printer, and he asked me what I thought of it. I said it was great; I should like to have one; how much was it? "Thirty dollars" made me hold my breath, but when I looked through it again I thought I could not do without it for thirty times that sum, and said: "I will take that." The doctor said: "George, that is the first one that has been sold!" No one can buy that Repertory.