

A Character Sketch.

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The State Homœopathic Society, being wearied by its annual repetition of city meetings, decided to celebrate its twohundredth anniversary by convening in the Materia Medica Woods.

When the day arrived, absent-minded Dr. Rhus Tox. climbed upon a stone wall and immediately forgot why he climbed there. Dr. Ranunculus Bulbosus, who could never stand changes of temperature donned her yellow picture hat and sat protected in the grass at his feet. A little farther on at the edge of the woods stood the changeable Dr. Pulsatilla, guarded by Dr. Lycopodium, her knight, good and true, while old Dr. Silicea, well wrapped to keep himself warm, leaned against the wall near by, and all awaited with different degrees of patience, the train which should bring their medical brethern to this, their first convention in the Materia Medica Woods.

At length the whistle sounded. Dr. Rush Tox. stiffly climbed from his elevated position, placed his hands upon his back and with a wry face, slowly assumed an erect posture and hobbled off toward the station. Dr. Ranunculus Bulbosus, who hated to move and couldn't even bear to change her position, carefully readjusted her hat and sat still in the grass awaiting the appearance of the crowd. Dr. Pulsatilla started for the station, then changed her mind and went back, then changed her mind again and started on. Then she began to cry for no-reason at all and didn't know what to do until Dr. Lycopodium took off his hat—Dr. Lycopodium always felt better from uncovering his head—and offered her his right arm and led her forward to meet the oncoming friends.

Dr. Silicea had been a stone-cutter in his early days, but the work didn't agree with him so he studied medicine. He was a queer old fellow, always chilly and the changes of the weather always found him complaining. He had a habit, with reason, of washing his feet at every opportunity and he was

noted for going into fits at the new of the moon. Dr. Silicea didn't care to move, so remained with Dr. Ranunculus Bulbosus.

The train stopped and doctors by the hundred alighted. Dr. Rhus Tox. soon found his old classmate and chum, Dr. Bryonia, and they walked together from the station. Dr. Rhus Tox. grew better every step of the way, but with every step Dr. Bryonia grew worse. Dr. Rhus Tox. gradually lost the stiffness from his lumbar region and Dr. Bryonia just as gradually developed a stiffness in the lumbar region, until by the time they reached the woods Dr. Bryonia could hardly move for the pain and stiffness and Dr. Rhus Tox. was as lively and limber as any young graduate. Dr. Rhus Tox. soon found a mossy bank for Dr. Bryonia to recline upon while he himself sat upon the swinging branch of a tree where he could keep himself in motion as he talked and so prevent the stiffness returning to his muscles.

The assembly having reached the woods, Dr. Rhododendron, the weather prophet, perched himself upon the highest crag he could find to watch for storms. Dr. Rhododendron considered himself authority upon the weather. He could predict the approach of a storm long before any one else suspected it. Every one was hungry by the time the woods were reached, so it was agreed to dine first and have the feast of reason afterward.

Dr. Plumbum was willing to assist in spreading the table but Dr. Sepia, who had taken charge, noticed his wrist drop and he was afraid he would break the dishes, so ordered him to go and rest. Dr. Hydrophobium was asked to take a bucket and go and hunt for a spring of water, but such a look of horror came over his face at the thought of water, that Dr. Natrum Muriaticum went instead. Dr. Natrum Muriaticum's extreme thirst would make him find water if any one could. Hearing a blood-curdling shriek as he was starting out with the bucket, Dr. Natrum Muriaticum followed the sound and found that Dr. Bufo's little boy had discovered the spring for him but had fallen in a fit.



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Dr. Lachesis was so hungry she couldn't wait for dinner, so offered to prepare the oysters, thinking to help herself while so doing. Dr. Lachesis was such an inveterate talker that Dr. Sepia didn't want to be bothered with her, so told her that handling oysters would ruin her dinner gown. Dr. Lachesis insisted that all of her gowns should be made decollete, for she could never understand why fashion should dictate those suffocating high collars. Dr. Sulphur was more hungry than Dr. Lachesis, so he said he would open the oysters, for nothing could hurt his clothes, and Dr. Sepia agreed that his clothes were too dirty already to be injured by added dirt. Dr. Carbo Vegetabilis disliked work, but even if she had enjoyed it, she was too timid to offer her resistance, so she sat upon a pile of brushwood and fanned herself. Dr. Calcarea Carbonica, fair, fat and full of anxiety lest the dinner be delayed, hurried up to help, but her exertion immediately brought on palpitation and a profuse perspiration started out all over her so that she had to stop and quiet herself.

Dr. Capsicum, who was very fond of coffee, even though it did nauseate him, took the mill and began to grind the coffee which Dr. Angustura had brought. Dr. Arsenicum, too restless to keep still and glad of a chance to get warm, hastened to build the fire. Dr. Nux Vomica, who never was quite happy unless he was angry about something, looked upon the coffee-making with disapproval. He preferred brandy, but Drs. Hyoscyamus and Rhus Tox., belonging to the Temperance Fraternity, were opposed to alcoholics of all kinds and insisted that none be allowed at the meeting. Dr. Calendula, the specialist in lacerated wounds, thought they were paying altogether too much attention to the dinner. He was never hungry, but things tasted all right when he did eat them.

The dinner was finally announced. It was in the nature of a collation, each bringing what food he most enjoyed, and such a collection never appeared at table before. Dr. Calcarea had brought a basket of boiled eggs and raw potatoes and

wheat. Dr. Calcareo was one of the originators of the raw vegetable diet fad. She even approved of chalk and coal at times. Dr. Mezerium and Dr. Sanicula had brought a nice fat ham, but insisted upon eating all of the fat themselves. Dr. Natrum Muriaticum contributed fish. Dr. Ant. Crudum, he of "ecstatic love in the moonlight" fame, brought pickled cucumbers. Dr. Allium Cepa brought onions, and Dr. Hepar Sulphur furnished the vinegar, and Dr. Natrum Muriaticum furnished the salt for them. Dr. Belladonna was exceedingly fond of lemonade, and as Dr. Arsenicum had brought some lemons, he hunted up Dr. Argentum Nitricum, who had the reputation of being such an inveterate sugar-eater that he was always making himself sick by it. Sure enough, Dr. Argentum Nitricum had brought a bag of sugar, so Dr. Belladonna made the lemonade. Dr. Alumina brought rice, but did not stop to cook it. She was one of the raw diet converts. Dr. Pulsatilla's appetite was so indistinct that she didn't quite know what she did want, so brought nothing at all. Dr. Chamomilla brought saucer kroust, and then lost his temper when some one told him he would have the colic if he ate of it. Dr. Magnesia Carbonica brought meat sandwiches, and Dr. Ignatia brought cheese sandwiches. No one living outside of the Materia Medica world will ever know all that was upon that table. An outsider might even wonder why that pile of slate pencils lay beside Dr. Nitric Acid's plate. Just after every one was seated at the table Drs. Calcareo and Phosphorus came bringing the cans of ice-cream that had been forgotten.

It was amusing to note how in seating themselves at the table like had attracted like. At the end of the table sat Dr. Symphytum, the noted army surgeon. He really is not so warlike as his name sounds, but he knows all about bruises, sprains, gunshot wounds and fractures, and he can make broken bones grow together when they don't want to. At his right sat little Dr. Calcareo Phosphorica. Dr. Calcareo Phosphorica had rachitis as a child, which, being

improperly treated, left her with a lateral curvature of the spine; in fact, it left all of her long bones curved also, but in spite of her deformity she is a successful specialist in bone troubles. She can stop the suppuration of bones and joints, and it is said that she can make fractures unite after every one else has failed in the attempt. Next to Dr. Calcareo Phosphorica were the noted surgeons, Drs. Hepar and Silicea. It is said that they can remove foreign bodies from the patient without the use of knife. Next to Dr. Phosphorus, the great necrosis specialist, were Drs. Arsenicum and Mercurius, who work along the same line. Dr. Hypericum sat beside Dr. Ledum and discussed punctured wounds, though Dr. Hypericum's province was in wounds where the nerves had been lacerated. Dr. Sulphur, the philosopher, is consulting physician for almost everybody. If anyone has a case that doesn't improve as it should, Dr. Sulphur is called in to help. It is really wonderful how he can help almost everybody. He sat at the table with his grandson, Dr. Nux Vomica, on one side of him, and his grandfather, Psorinum, on the other, forming quite a family party. These three were much interested in diseases that had been suppressed by drugs. Drs. Allium Cepa, Euphrasia and Merc. Cor. attracted much attention by their tears. Dr. Euphrasia and Merc. Cor.'s eyes were red from them, but they were not tears of grief, for Drs. Allium Cepa, Euphrasia and Merc. Cor. were only eye specialists who had taken cold. Drs. Lachesis, Lycopodium, Merc. Iod. Rob. and Merc. Iod. Flav., the throat specialists, sat together and discussed the merits of sore throats that began on the left side or on the right. Drs. Tellurium and Pulsatilla, ear specialists, talked about acrid and bland discharges from the ears. Overworked Dr. Digitalis, the noted heart specialist, had been so extremely busy that he had feared until just before the train started that he would be unable to attend, but there he was with his friends, Dr. Cactus, the grand, and Dr. Kalmia Latifolia and Dr. Spigelia, and all the lesser heart specialists sat near and listened to the words of the big four.

Dr. Rhus Tox. left his friend, Dr. Bryonia, for a while, and engaged his enemies, Dr. Anacardium and Dr. Croton Tig., the skin specialists, in a heated discussion in regard to the proper treatment of vesicular eruptions. Dr. Agaricus and Dr. Actea Racemosa, nerve specialists, discussed chorea with Dr. Cicuta, who sometimes treated chorea, though he preferred epilepsy. The alienists, Drs. Stramonium, Hyoscyamus and Belladonna, knowing so well the success of Homœopathy in mental diseases, discussed the advisability of urging the society to demand of the state a few more homœopathic insane asylums. Dr. Stannum and Dr. Tuberculinum, lung specialists, agreed that there was altogether too much emphasis placed upon the open air treatment for consumptives. Homœopathy was the proper weapon with which to fight the great white plague, and there was every reason why there should be homœopathic hospitals for the consumptives. On either side of Drs. Sepia and Kreosotum were grouped the specialists in women's diseases, and on either side of Drs. Cannabis Sativa, Nitric Acid and Thuja were the specialists in men's diseases, and so on all down the tables, those in sympathy with each other were gathered together, while here and there was a general practitioner, the good old family doctor, who listened to all the woes of all of his patients and cured them whatever the trouble.

Just as all were seated in rushed Dr. Aconite full of feverish anxiety, and threw himself into a seat beside Dr. Spongia. He had just come from a violent case of croup and wanted to talk it over.

In the midst of the dinner Dr. Colocynthis, who had been exceedingly angry about something a short time before, became doubled up with colic, and Dr. Cuprum assisted him from the table. Just as everything was quiet again, Dr. Drosera, who had difficulty in swallowing, was unfortunate enough to have some bread crumbs catch in his throat, after which he kept up an incessant hacking cough, which ended in vomiting.

When dinner was over, Dr. Phosphorus, the toastmaster, arose and called upon Dr. Lachesis to answer the toast "to the ladies." Dr. Lachesis was a proud woman but was fond of talking. She usually went from one subject to another with great rapidity, but for once she kept to her subject. She said she thought women should go into the professions, but they should never marry. If women never married they would never have cause for jealousy and much unnecessary sadness would be left out of their lives, etc. Dr. Phosphorus then called upon Dr. Chamomilla to answer the toast "to the children." Dr. Chamomilla said he didn't agree with Dr. Lachesis, for if the women didn't marry there would be no dear little spunky babies that made you walk the floor all night with them when they had the colic. The first sad chord was struck when Dr. Ignatia was called upon to answer for "the absent members." Dr. Ignatia was highly sensitive and conscientious and when she spoke of those who would never again meet with the State Society, Dr. Natrum Muriaticum, Dr. Pulsatilla and several others had to get their handkerchiefs to wipe away their tears.

I would like to tell you how Dr. Sulphur responded to the toast, "The passing of the general practitioner," and how Dr. Chininum Sulphuricum responded to "Homœopathy." I would like to tell you about Dr. Malandrinum's paper on "Vaccination" and the discussion it brought forth. I would like to tell about all the other papers that were read at that meeting, but time forbids. Therefore I will leave you to meet again next year in the *Materia Medica Woods of Pennsylvania*.

Transaction of the H. M. Society.
