

Drug Proving.

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Since the time of Hippocrates individual drugs have been used empirically in disease conditions, which were similar to the effects of their poisoning; but it remained for Hahnemann, the greatest mind in the whole medical world, to see the necessity for observing and recording the effects of drugs on healthy individuals, so that we might more accurately prescribe them to the sick. Hahnemann made many provings and it was through his careful observations that we have the very thorough instructions to be followed in the proving of drugs. Our present knowledge of our remedies is wholly due to his initiative and vision in putting these provings on a firm basis, and we owe much to Hahnemann's marvelous power of observation and his ability to blaze new trails which man had never before trodden, in giving us the thoroughly tried and reliable rules for measuring the action of our remedies. We must remember that Hahnemann started his work with drugs in very crude form, and his work in proving shows a continuous growth and development through deductions from his own observations.

We heard a great deal today about the re-proving of old remedies. Re-proving of old remedies will avail nothing, except possibly to give some idea of the chemical action of the remedy as shown by urinalysis, in the effect on the circulation, and as revealing some of the inner workings through metabolism and the X-ray. However, all the symptoms thus produced are objective symptoms, and for really curative effects the subjective symptoms are immeasurably more valuable.

There is great need of having more provers of those remedies that have been imperfectly proven, in order to bring out the finer points of the remedies. It must be remembered that one prover is not enough; there should be at least a dozen provers for each remedy. The susceptibility of one

individual toward a remedy may be almost nil; whereas another individual of the same age and type, for some unknown reason, is exceedingly sensitive to the remedy.

At the present time much interest is being shown in the homœopathic world in proving remedies, and several committees are giving their attention to this work. It is well at this time to review Hahnemann's instructions in the *Organon* (sections 121-144) in regard to provings, so that the provings may be produced according to standardized methods.

There are certain standard rules that must be observed in order to make a satisfactory proving. First, the authenticity of the single drug must be established. If chemical, it must be ascertained that it is a strictly chemical element in its purity; if a metal, it must be a pure metal. If the drug to be proven is from the vegetable kingdom, the tincture must be prepared from the whole plant gathered in its native habitat, in the period of its greatest activity. If the drug is derived from the animal kingdom, make sure that there is a supply from the same source as the original proving is to be made. If the animal is by nature wild, provings should not be made from the animal in captivity.

Second, the preparation of the prover. The prover should have a thorough physical examination. The history should be carefully taken, including the family history; the illnesses to which they have been susceptible; the peculiarities and susceptibilities of the patient, and an observation of what is normal with him. This observation should be kept very closely for at least a week before any proving should be attempted. This should not be trusted to memory, but the *case taken* as though he were an actual patient. During this week he should lead a normal life, free from any excesses in eating, drinking or narcotics, and should obtain the normal amount of exercise and sleep. In other words, the prover should be put on an athletic training regime.

Now as to the regime during the proving. This same regime should be maintained throughout the proving, and any

deviation should be noted in the prover's notebook. As many individual provers as possible should be used in making the proving. The list must include both sexes, of as varied types as possible. People who have shown peculiar idiosyncracies toward certain drugs or other substances make the best provers. No one prover will produce all the symptoms of a drug, but a symptom well developed in any one of a dozen provers, without being present in the others, may be a very valuable symptom; therefore we need a great variety of provers to obtain a complete picture of the drug.

Drugs act on human beings differently in different doses. When the crude drug is used, it produces a chemical reaction, like the action of bichloride of mercury or arsenic uniting chemically with the tissues.

We have the mechanical reaction, which causes the system to eject the drug before it is absorbed, as it is with large doses of ipecac and many other drugs.

Then there is the dynamic action of drugs, which manifests itself through the vitality, producing peculiar reactions of the drug according to the susceptibility of individuals. It is this dynamic action that gives the homœopathic prescriber the better knowledge of the remedy; therefore the symptoms produced through the dynamic reaction are the valuable part of the proving. These are always produced by the smaller doses.

Again, the dynamic action may be still further divided, according to the size of the dose that is given, into the generic type, which causes symptoms of a dynamic type, yet classes drugs according to family types. To illustrate, consider the effect of moderately large doses of *Arsenic*, which produce vomiting; diarrhœa, cold sweats and cramps. This is a dynamic reaction, but it is very similar to such remedies as *Cuprum*, *Veratrum*, and so on, but it does not distinguish the finer grades of arsenical action from *Cuprum* or *Veratrum*.

Then still smaller doses produce specific dynamic action, and make the peculiar symptoms of the individual remedy

stand out in distinction to the generic reaction. Again to illustrate with *Arsenicum*: this remedy will still produce these phenomena of vomiting, diarrhoea, and so on, but these are accompanied by characteristic symptoms that are quite different from those produced by *Cuprum* or *Veratrum*, thus making the distinction between them.

The specific dynamic action is further divided into the central and peripheral reactions. The central symptoms appear very quickly after the administration of the drug, and are usually produced by larger doses than the peripheral. These central symptoms are usually connected with the alimentary canal and the organs immediately related thereto.

This is well illustrated in my experience in proving *Lycopersicum esculantum*. In fact, this proving illustrates all the different reactions of the drug. I found I was peculiarly susceptible to tomatoes and had to be extremely cautious in eating them, for they would produce a diarrhoea and a very greatly increased flow of urine. I proved the remedy in the third potency, and produced a chain of symptoms having to do very largely with the alimentary tract, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea, which did not distinguish the remedy from the other members of the great *Solanum* family; but when this individual remedy was proven in the 30th. potency, I obtained none of the intestinal disturbances, but in due time there were produced a fever, which raised the temperature to 103 degrees; a throbbing, beating headache; delirium; aching of the entire body; but in distinction from the other members of the *Solanum* family, the pupils were contracted instead of being widely dilated. These are the peculiar and unusual symptoms that make it possible to recognize the individual identity of remedies.

These peripheral symptoms, which are slow in developing, are the most valuable symptoms we obtain from a proving, and usually appear as manifestations of the disturbances of the bones, the skin, the glands, the thermic reactions, and the

co-ordination of the phenomena of life. It is here that are revealed the dyscrasias and cachexias.

These are the manifestations of the reactions of drugs according to the dose that is administered, and we must be familiar with these types of reaction if we are to use our remedies to the best advantage. It is my belief that herein lies the secret of the law governing the choice of the potency. This seems simple. However, it is not so always. For instance, such remedies as *Lycopodium* and *Natrum muriaticum* do not easily produce the first chain of symptoms mentioned, and it is only in the higher potencies that such reactions manifest themselves. In proving we must take into consideration the susceptibility of the provers, who show marked individual reactions to the same drug in the same potency. Many of these susceptible individuals are very capricious. Where we expect the high potency to react, it is often found that nothing but the low will have an effect, and *vice versa*. There is no way whereby the susceptibility of the patient can be determined until the proving is being made. It is of the utmost importance that we detect the susceptibility of provers, and the greatest care should be exercised in these provings to avoid perverting this susceptibility.

Now with what potencies shall we begin the proving? Hahnemann taught the thirtieth gave the best results. We should never start a proving lower than the thirtieth, for observation has shown that provings in the lower potencies destroy the possibilities of provings from the higher. We should administer at first, then, not lower than the thirtieth, and if after daily administration no results are obtained, then it is safe to proceed downward to the lower potencies. In fact, we can start even with the 200th. potency, or higher. One of the best provings of *Lachesis* is that made with the 75,000th. Some length of time should elapse before following the first potency with a lower, so as to get the generic, and possibly the chemical manifestations, although these are not as valuable. As nearly as possible all the symptoms should

be recorded in the vernacular, and there must be a careful evaluation of all the symptoms produced.

Susceptible individuals should be proven by high potencies; then a long interval must elapse before another proving with a high potency is attempted, so that we may evoke the whole chain of symptoms possible in that drug. No proving should be made in haste, and a long duration of time is necessary to bring out the best provings. In fact, the best provings will cover a period of nearly two years, especially with the deeper acting metals.

The proving of remedies is a great undertaking; a fascinating adventure, for we never know what we will find; full of interest; fraught with development. It calls into use the greatest powers of observation for symptoms produced, and requires careful weighing of their relative value. When a proving is thus conducted, we will have produced a living monument that will be of valuable for all time and in all climes.

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