

“Puzzle of Potency”—A Study.

DR. C. ROY, M. A., CALCUTTA.

In the November issue of *The Hahnemannian Gleanings*, there appears an article termed “*Puzzle of Potency*,” written by our venerable colleague, Dr. J. N. Chowdhury, M. B. H., Calcutta. In the said article, Dr. Chowdhury has tried his best to remove the apparent anomaly and misconception in the matter of Potency, and he has concluded his article by saying that the Roman letters X, C, M, CM, DM, MM, etc., should represent the *scale* of the potency, and all numerals standing before such letters, the *degrees* thereof. Thus, according to him,

LX = 1	drop of mother tincture	with 9 drops of spirit.
IC = 1	do	99
IM = 1	do	999
ICM = 1	do	99999
IDM = 1	do	499999
IMM = 1	do	999999

and so on. In this way, he wishes to establish order and uniformity in the field of Potency, so that no body may have any doubt and difficulty about the matter. He has also quoted some of Dr Nash's applications of M potencies which he has wrongly interpreted to support his views noted above.

Though we much appreciate his arguments and reasonings, and his noble desire to enhance the interest and serve the cause of Homœopathy by thus solving an apparently puzzled problem, we beg humbly to state that his efforts in this direction seem to be rather mis-guided, and that the time-honoured usage and custom on the subject categorically preclude the possibility of his proposed reform. Not only the entire Homœopathic literature, but also the profession as a whole will receive a very rude shock if the proposed solution of the *supposed* enigma be put into force. We beg to give below the said time-honoured usage and custom on the subject :—

DECIMAL SCALE.

1X = 1 drop of mother tincture with 9 drops of spirit.

CENTESIMAL SCALE.

1 (C) = 1 drop of mother tincture with 99 drops of spirit.

(The Roman letter C is usually omitted)

30 = 30th potency in the Centesimal scale, as distinguished
from the Decimal.

200 = 200th	do	do
1M = 1000th	do	do
50 M = 50,000th	do	do
CM = 100000th	do	do
DM = 500000th	do	do
MM = 1000000th	do	do

and so on.

Though it is easy to quote various authorities to show the established usage and custom, we like to quote Dr. Kent who is absolutely unambiguous on the subject. He says—"I observed that *after the good action of a 200th*, although I gave the 300, 500 and 800, the 1M acted much more strongly; and the 300 or 500 generally failed. * * * Frequently I gave the 45M with excellent results; but after it has done all it would, I would give an 80M, or a 73M, or a 60M, with failure, but nearly always the CM would work as the 45M had done * * * Many times I used to give first a CM, but found that when then going lower, the action was seldom so strong as when climbing upward. Again, I often observed sharp aggravation when beginning the CM, but seldom observed aggravation when beginning low. Of late years I always begin lower and gradually go higher and thereby avoid shocking even the very sensitive women and children. After long observation in the range of potencies, going up and going down, I have settled upon the octaves in the series of degrees as,—30th, 200th, 1M, 10M, 50M, CM, DM, and MM. Many of my patients' records indicate that the patient has steadily improved after each potency, to the highest, with symptoms becoming fainter, and he him-

self growing stronger, mentally and physically"—Lesser Writings, pp 358-359 (The Italics are ours). In this connection, we would recommend our readers to go through the entire article "*Series in Degrees*," by Dr. Kent, as published in his said work, pp 356-360.

On the basis of Dr Chowdhury's proposal, the above remarks of Dr Kent, especially those italicised by us, become quite meaningless. We take them up *seriatim* to show how and why they become meaningless.

(1) After the good action of a 200th, the 1M acted much more strongly, though the 300 or 500 generally failed.

On our friend's supposition, the 1M having received, say, only one succussion or (trituration) cannot be expected to act "much more strongly" than the 300 and 500 which have evidently received 300 and 500 succussions (or triturations) respectively, as the working and curative powers of drugs (simple substances) increase in proportion to the increase in the number of their succussions (or triturations),—in fact, these succussions (or triturations) draw out and expand the latent and inherent powers of drugs (simple substances) thus succussed (or triturated), the spirit, sugar of milk or anything else being only the medium by and through which the said powers of drugs are drawn out, developed and expanded.

(2) The 45M gave excellent results; but after it, the 80 M or 73 M or 60 M failed, though the CM (given later) worked as the 45 M had done.

On our colleague's supposition, the CM receiving only one succussion can not work better than the 60, 73 or 80 M, which have received 60, 73 or 80 succussions. Thus the proposed reform will make Dr. Kent (in fact the whole Homœo. literature) meaningless.

(3) First giving a CM, then going lower, the action was seldom so strong.

On our friend's supposition a CM is the lowest potency under the so-called "Cente-millennial" scale, and the expression "going lower" conveys no meaning on this theory.

(4) Sharp aggravation when beginning the CM, but seldom observed aggravation when beginning low.

Our remarks under (3) apply well here too.

(5) I have settled upon the Octaves (intervals) in the series of degrees as—30th, 200th, 1M, 10M, DM, and MM.

These are Dr. Kent's Octaves (intervals) in the series of degrees (potencies) *rising up*, but the suggested solution of the so-called potency-puzzle will make the standard Homœo. literature quite un-meaning and un-intelligible. Therefore, the time-honoured custom affixing the Roman letter x to potencies in the Decimal Scale, and of leaving aside the potencies in the Centesimal scale unaffixed with the Roman letter C, does not require any reform at all but is quite clear and intelligible to all the true and faithful servants of Homœopathy and mankind.

It may be noted here that the abbreviations 1M, 10 M, 50 M, 80 M, CM, DM, MM, etc., have come into use for the sake of convenience, as it is always easier to say and write 1M than 1000, 50M than 50000, CM than 100000, DM than 500000 MM than 1000000, and so forth, but no true and faithful servant of Homœopathy ever mis-reads, mis-conceives mis-interprets these abbreviations in the lines suggested by Dr Chowdhury.

In fine, we beg to state that there is no question of meeting "the individual difficulties" in grasping the suggested solution. Our friend's line of reasoning is quite clear, and the suggested modes of making potencies under the various scales do not require any explanation to fully understand them. Of course, the suggested method of making and marking potencies would have introduced order and uniformity in the subject, but, we regret, at the cost of upsetting and revolutionising the established usage and custom in this behalf. Therefore, such a reform at this stage is not only un-necessary, but will be, if introduced, practically and positively harmful, for reasons noted above.