

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SYSTEM

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Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of homoeopathy, tells us that 'the state of disposition of the patient—commonly known as mind symptoms—often chiefly determines the selection of the remedy and that we shall never be able to cure if we do not select a remedy covering, along with the patient's other symptoms, those relating to the changes in his state of the mind and disposition.' He further observes that 'mental symptom is decidedly a characteristic symptom.' (Sections 213 and 211 of *The Organon*.)

This is so because cure has to take place 'from above downwards.'

The system of Flower Remedies founded by Dr. Edward Bach of London, fulfils this requirement of Hahnemann. But, there is one important difference. In this system, remedies are prescribed on mental symptoms only. No physical symptom can be found in the *Materia Medica* of flower remedies.

There are many homoeopathic practitioners at home and abroad who are using the flower remedies and the following sketch is provided for the benefit of such of the readers as would like to know about the system.

Discovery. Dr. Edward Bach studied medicine at the University College Hospital, London, and got his M.B.B.S., M.R.C.S., and L. R. C. P. Later, he also studied Homoeopathy and obtained his diploma. As every homoeopathic physician knows,

the search for the remedy, the simillimum, in Homoeopathy is sometimes a laborious process and, if the practitioner does not find the simillimum, he is helpless. Even if he hits on the right remedy, he is again confronted with the problem of potency and repetition. Dr. Bach was not satisfied with the elaborate and sometimes intricate methods of repertorisation in Homoeopathy. *"As Nature works constantly towards perfection she should have some remedial means in Her kingdom which would be simple and at the same time very effective but without side effects. The patient should be able to prescribe such remedies for himself without elaborate medical knowledge, just as he takes water when thirsty and food when hungry."* These thoughts induced Dr. Bach to do research. After six years of search he found, perfected and put into use in the year 1930, a system of medicine as simple as it has proved effective.

In this system there are only thirty-eight remedies which are very easy to select and present no potency problem.*

How the remedies are prescribed? Homoeopaths know very well the value of mind symptoms; one strong mental symptom can overrule many physical ones. In the system of healing by flower remedies discovered by Dr. Bach the medicine is selected for the man, the individual, that is, his feelings only are considered. From this the reader must not at once rush to the conclusion that the remedies described in the following pages are for psychic cases only. The point is that *"the mood and disposition is always altered in every corporeal disease"* and it is the altered disposition of the sick individual that has to be considered. On correcting which all bodily troubles will simultaneously disappear. Therefore, whatever be the physical suffering, flower remedies are not prescribed for the body, but only the mind of the patient is considered for selecting the remedy. *If this is not understood the newcomer will be apt to wrongly conclude that these remedies are for mental cases only, particularly when he reads the Materia Medica and its Repertory.*

*See the author's book *Beginner's Guide to Bach Flower Remedies*.

For example, a person of 35 complained that he had the delusion that a rope was thrown around his neck and he was being pulled with the other end. This unwanted thought occurred to him several times daily. Naturally every time it occurred he was filled with fear. Now, the two things in this case are (i) fear of a known thing (pulled by a rope) and (ii) this unwanted thought circled round and round interfering with his routine activities. For 'fear of known thing' there is only one remedy viz., *Mimulus*; for 'circling of the same disagreeable thought' the remedy is *White Chestnut*.

The two remedies were mixed and given in two drachm pills, with instructions to take three times a day. The patient was seen after three months and on inquiry he said that after one month's course the thought occurred only once or twice a month and also he was no longer filled with fear. After telling this he removed his shirt and showing his body said : "Doctor, I was having ringworm all over my chest and back for the last fifteen years, but after your bottle it has disappeared. Did you give medicine for ringworm also ?"

From the above case it will be clear that medicine is prescribed on the basis of symptoms of mind only. The reader must not think this signifies mental derangement; it refers only to the mood and disposition.

Brief notes on some remedies. There are two remedies for fears. One is for known fear—*Mimulus*, and the other is *Aspen* for unknown and vague fears. Fear of darkness, thieves, animals, etc., all can be removed with *Mimulus*. The patient expresses fear of death (as in *Acon.*, *Ars.*). But for sudden and extreme fear, terror, such as terror of bombing, of air-riads, floods, etc., the remedy is *Rock Rose*.

Walnut. Here is a remedy to help one overcome the difficulties encountered by changes due to change of place (say sleeplessness in a new house) or change of profession. "Link breaker" would be a better term to describe the usefulness of this remedy. When a change of office (due to transfer, promotion

or new job) takes place the person is unable to cope with the new people and surroundings. He would prefer the old job to which he is accustomed. He is unable to cut that link and adapt himself to the new atmosphere.

The newly married young woman starts to live with her in-laws. Though they treat her nicely, she feels the difference. She is unable to come away from the old surroundings and people. Walnut will help her to adjust herself to the changed atmosphere.

The use of the remedy can be extended to the following conditions : Change of life—puberty, menopause, and teething period in children. The system is unable to cope with the changes taking place in the growing body. All these troubles will be taken care of by Walnut which can be prescribed in a routine way along with other indicated remedies.

A person wants to cut his cigarettes and liquor but is unable to do so. He has formed a habit of it and is unable to be without it. The hand automatically goes to the cigarette packet. Walnut will help him to give up such bad habits. Here we should distinguish it from another remedy, *viz.*, *Cherry Plum*. In the latter, it is not the habit but only the temptation. He knows that liquor does not agree with him and the doctor has warned him not to continue it. He has made a resolution not to take it. But when he sees the stuff in somebody's house he is *unable to resist the temptation*. *Cherry Plum* will help him to overcome the temptation.

Crab Apple. In the text-book this is known as 'cleanser' and is recommended for skin diseases where the patient feels he is unclean in his skin or blood. But this does not convey the full significance of the remedy. One doctor not well-versed in flower remedies told me : "People say Crab Apple is a cleanser and it is good for skin diseases. I gave it to a skin patient but it did not help." The doctor had obviously concluded that flower remedies are not as effective as homoeopathic remedies. On page 41 it has been described how a case of ringworm in a patient was cured. Were those two remedies prescribed for

ringworm? No, both the remedies were given on *mind symptoms*. Let us now see the mental picture of Crab Apple. This is useful in skin diseases or any disease for that matter provided the patient feels "some poison has entered my blood. Will it become septic?" He should be sensitive about the uncleanness. He should want intensely to get rid of it because he feels it may infect others. On the other hand, suppose he does not particularly care about it, then Crab Apple cannot cure him. Some other remedy indicated by his mind symptoms will do it.

Remedies for weakness. For this we have *Hornbeam*, *Olive* and *Centaury*. The Hornbeam type patient feels he has no strength to accomplish things and hence ordinarily makes no attempt, but once he begins everything goes on well and he accomplishes the undertaking. The patient feels that some part of body or mind is "to be strengthened", and asks for 'tonics.' (The Pulsatilla patient too feels a desire for tonics).

The Centaury patient has the characteristic of being unable to refuse the demands of others and by doing work for them he becomes exhausted.

Holly. Holly is a remedy for jealousy. A married man was having illicit relations with another married lady for many years. When his wife came to know of this, she became furious (due to jealousy) and wrote to her father about this. When he arrived, the husband was afraid of him and stayed away from the house to avoid him. The husband was given *Mimulus* for fear, after which he lost the fear and faced his father-in-law as if he had not committed anything wrong. When he thus talked boldly his father-in-law began to doubt the report of his daughter and so he packed and went back. After this, Holly was given to her in water and this banished her jealousy.

Thereafter, Holly, Cherry Plum and White Chestnut were given to her husband and he discontinued his illicit relations with the other lady. Holly for sexual mania, Cherry Plum as he was unable to resist his having relations with the other lady

(though he knew it was bad) and White Chestnut to put an end to the thoughts of the lady circling round and round in his mind.



Note :—Any questions and/or doubts of the readers may be clarified with the author at 7, Srinivasamurthy Avenue, Adyar, Madras 600 020.

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