

THE SIMILIMUM

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We are supposed to know paragraph 153 of the Organon, which says the correct choice of the homoeopathic remedy depends al-most solely upon the presence of such strikingly peculiar symptoms as actually individualise the case in hand. They are moreover expected to stand out from, rather than conflict with its general aspect.

Aside from stressing a few symptoms of the text Hahnemann said little concerning relative values; so that an abstract symptom may be said to be almost. with out rank, yet on becoming clinical it takes its proper position in the symptom complex. From this it arises that any symptom may occupy any rank whatsoever; all depending upon its connections, associations, etc. A case in point. A patient awoke from his afternoon nap in great mental confusion, with severe internal trembling, vertigo and slight external tremor, also; all very common symptoms of themselves, yet the combination is unusual, while their separate repertorial values are high, pointing strongly toward Gelsemium. A single dose of the MM soon helped, also gradually removing a partially suppressed malaria of forty years standing. Time to examine the latter factor was hardly available, but its indications also pointed to the same remedy. The latter and coarser development was evidently part and parcel of a much older, but finer Gelsemium picture.

Two principal ways of finding the indicated remedy are in common use. The earlier method picks out the odd, strange or peculiar symptoms from among the general morbid ones and then tries to find i their counterpart within the text of some of the provings; success depending upon the ability to see the peculiarities incident to the sickness, as well as of grasping the true inwardness of the correspond-ing pathogenic record. The method demands good powers of discrimination, so that the right emphasis may always be properly placed. The neophyte is apt to be a poor judge of values, usually making more of remedy characteristics than of those of the patient. In doing so he soon becomes a mere lopper off of symptoms, yet making occasional cures, at that.

This has much to do with the poor therapeutic showing made by most doctors. Finding remedy key-notes in the patient has been too easy, as compared with corroborating their position by means of the other symptoms at hand. This method has most insidiously misled many well meaning prescribers, especially because it so easily leads to frequent and dangerous remedy changing, the end of which is inevitable failure.

The other method finds the names of all the remedies which read clear through the largest possible number of generalities and then chooses for reference the one having the peculiarities of the case in hand. The labour of wading through the massive general rubrics down to the particulars was prodigious before the advent of the slip system which later developed into what we now know as the card index. Hahnemann spoke of these generals belonging alike to almost every disease as well as almost every remedy. The real benefit derived from their use is however greatly enhanced by the mechanical sifting made possible by the use of these cards.

The first method starts from particulars while the second ends with them, while both finally depend upon corroborating evidence for a decision. In this confirmatory evidence lies the crux of the whole matter, and in its fullness this is only found within the symptoms of the patient as compared with those of the materia medica, which fact takes us right into the mental aspect of things, where after all lies the definitive expression of every sickness.

Bringing into apposition these two groups of findings affords the nearest approach to the totality of the symptoms, while still leaving the way open for viewing the sickness

from either angle. While it may, in its present development, not always point to the similitude the approach to it is close enough to be a material aid in further investigations. Its frequent use also tends to correct and stabilise our point of view, in other words, to limit the personal equation; a very valuable help, I assure you. When we must look further the concordances usually give us the right hint.