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Homeopathic Medicine

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Flight From The City

By Ralph Borsodi

(first published 1932)

We landed in the country on April 1, a little late in the season, we have since learned, for starting chickens. But since raising chickens was almost the first item in our food raising program, we went ahead anyway. Eggs had always been an important factor in our dietary, we wanted to have plenty of them, and the supply of fresh chicken which would accompany egg production would, we felt, cut down what we had been in the habit of spending for meat of all kinds.

We knew nothing about chickens. For instructions we turned to the bulletins of the Dept. of Agriculture in Washington and of the state agricultural university. We pored over bulletins dealing with incubation, with raising chicks, with feeding hens for egg production and fattening poultry for the table. We followed in a general way the instructions in the bulletins about equipment and housing them. But we nevertheless decided to feel our way and to try out our book-taught knowledge before venturing on any considerable investment in our poultry-yard. Unless experienced personal guidance is available, no amount of mere reading can prevent the beginner from making mistakes. If the initial venture is a large one, the mistake may prove financially disastrous. Some years after we moved to the country, a small, completely equipped farm near us was purchased by another city migrant. Ill-health and inability to keep up his work in the city (he was a newspaper man) had forced this move upon him. It was his idea to raise chickens for a living. He, too, started out knowing nothing about chickens and having to rely upon book knowledge for information. But unlike the Borsodi family, he started out on a large scale, buying 500 day-old chicks from commercial hatcheries to begin. The poultry books told him that the chicks were to be fed grit and water before they received their first regular feed. To a countryman, the word grit would have been self-explanatory. No doubt the author of the bulletin upon which this man relied did not feel it necessary to explain what grit was, or, if there was such an explanation in the book, its significance did not register on our neighbor. At any rate what he did do was to go to his barns and look for a sack of grit. Having found what he thought was grit, he proceeded to feed it to his chickens as instructed. Within a short time the chickens began to die right and left. He began to lose chicks in batches of 50 in a single day. And he had hardly any of his original 500 chicks left when he discovered that what he had thought grit, in reality was linseed meal. Here was the first of what proved a series of catastrophic losses for this family. Precious money and even more precious time was lost, owing to this mistake. Before this man learned enough about living in the country to produce with any degree of efficiency (though I believe nothing could have enabled him to produce profitably for the market), his losses were so great that he had to abandon the place he had purchased and to return to the city, broken in pocket and even more broken in spirit. I cannot, therefore, make this point too strongly—the only alternative to experienced guidance is experimenting on a small scale. Mistakes then can be considered part of one's education.

It is difficult today, when the care of our poultry-yard takes so little original thinking on our part, to realize how bewildered we were when we first began with chickens. There was, to begin with, the problem of breeds. Roughly, all the various breeds of chickens fall into three categories: egg-laying machines, like the Leghorns; meat-making chickens, like the Jersey Giants; and all-purpose breeds, like the Plymouth Rocks and the Rhode Island Reds. The Leghorns do lay more eggs than the other types, but they are small and wiry birds, hardly fit for the table. As we wanted plenty of eggs, we decided against the Jersey Giants. To secure both eggs and decent meat, we finally decided on one of the all-purpose breeds, Rhode Island Reds, a decision we have never regretted. The Reds are probably no better than others of the same general type; there was no special reason for selecting them unless it was that it was easier for us to get hens and eggs of this breed in our neighborhood than the others.

We started operations that first spring with a broody hen and a setting of eggs which we purchased from a neighbor. Later, we repeated this purchase three or four times. But the first hen had not finished hatching out her setting (it takes three weeks) when we decided that hatching eggs out nature's way wouldn't give us enough chicks for our needs. We purchased a 60-egg incubator, heated by a kerosene lamp. While we still set hens, perhaps because "breaking up" broody hens each year is almost as much trouble as setting them, we believe a good, small incubator an essential part of an ideal homestead. We purchased eggs enough to fill the incubator twice that year from farmers who had flocks of Reds. And we managed to hatch out an exceptionally large proportion of them. My recollection is that we started our poultry-yard that first year with about 150 chicks.

This number dwindled down, as is to be expected, to about 100 chickens—half of them pullets and half of them cockerels. The first year we killed a good many of the cockerels for fries in the course of the summer. But the second year we came to the conclusion that this was a most wasteful proceeding, and ordered a set of instruments for caponizing. Eventually every member of the family learned how to caponize the cockerels. The operation is rather interesting; it need never be bloody; and by fattening the capons for six or eight months, we had eight and nine-pound capons to eat. A luxury which we had never enjoyed at home in the city. Indeed when I came across Philadelphia capons on restaurant menus, I hadn't the least notion what a capon really was; vaguely I thought them some particularly choice breed of chicken.

(continued next month)

Homeopathic Medicine

Royal D. Rood*

[Editor's Note: Beginning in November, we published a three-part article on nutrition by Dr. Ruth Rogers, a homeopathic physician in Daytona Beach, Fla. To satisfy questioning of readers about this branch of medicine, Mr. Rood supplies some answers.]

Most of today's generation has never heard of homeopathic medicine. It may be more correct to say that they have not been permitted to hear the term. In the early part of this century, practitioners of homeopathic medicine—who were also students of allopathic medicine—were the elite in the medical profession. The drug manufacturing and patent medicine industry grew, and organized in their own interest. With the aid of radio and television they became a profitable part of our economy, and have endowed medical schools with hundreds of millions of dollars. These interests have, in effect, dictated the curricula in the direction of drugs and surgery, yet allowing graduates the license to monopolize the degree, Doctor of Medicine. Such is the power of money and the prestige which the public allows it.

Origin of Homeopathy

In Christian Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843) we find the beginning of homeopathic medicine. He was born some 200 years ago in the middle of the century in which the science of chemistry took over the field previously held by alchemy. He received his degree in medicine, August 1779, from the University of Erlanger, and entered the practice of medicine. He was proficient in seven languages, and read his graduation paper in Latin. He supplemented his livelihood as a student-teacher and librarian.

In his medical practice, he soon found that therapeutic methods taught and used by physicians of his day were disappointing. As time went on his disillusionment grew. Eventually he gave up his medical practice, and supported himself and family as a chemist and translator of medical literature of other countries and more ancient days.

Hahnemann began his work with a pharmacist at whose place, on entering medical practice, he had established residence. He married the apothecary's daughter, and later wrote a four-volume *Apothecaries' Lexicon*, which won him great fame as a chemist.

A New Direction

In his reading of the ancient literature Hahnemann learned of controversies and teachings, not current among other physicians, that persuaded him to begin experimenting upon himself. In this way he became convinced that better results would follow if, instead of the usual practice of treating patients with progressively heavier and heavier doses of medicine when their ailments failed to yield to first treatments, he would go the other direction. He would use smaller and ever smaller doses and avoid entirely the large doses and multiple-medicines relied upon by other physicians.

So gratifying were the results of this opposite practice that he began to treat other members of his family along these lines. Gradually he re-entered medical practice. He even obtained a position among the professors lecturing in medicine at the University of Leipzig. There he gathered around him younger students preparing to follow his techniques.

With his continuing study of

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the more ancient writings and the use of progressively smaller and smaller doses of medicine, he began to suspect—from the minuteness of the doses that seemed to give best results—that something other than the substance of the medicine was the effective factor in the cures. In that day they had not yet used the word "energy." The word he felt compelled to use has been translated from the German as "spirit" of the medicine.

Preparation of Medicine

The care that he used in preparing his medicines enables one to understand his puzzled reference to the spirit of the medicine, because of the minuteness of the doses to which he had progressed. A grain of medicine—dried root, dried leaves or dried juice of some herb—was squeezed onto a bit of sugar. Then he would add nine grains of pure sugar, and rub the mixture together hard in a mortar. Then he would throw away nine grains of this mixture, and substitute nine grains of pure sugar in its place, and rub again.

He repeated this a third or fourth time, and eventually through the thirtieth and even past that. Each time he applied the friction vigorously. Obviously the actual amount of the herb received in a dose of the medicine given the patient would be minute indeed. A third such decimal dilution would mean a product of which the grain used for a dose to the patient would contain only a thousandth part of a grain. It was described as the 3X potency. If thirty such mixtures were prepared for a patient, it was described as 30X. Such was Hahnemann's generally favored potency.

Energy

Today it is recognized in every physical laboratory that what Hahnemann called the spirit of the medicine is in fact the particular energy characterizing the medicinal herb, awakened by the friction. The word energy is only a different spelling of the word motion. In his booklet, *Thirty Years That Shook Physics*, George Gamow puts it in simple terms: Energy is proportional to the number of vibrations per second. In another booklet, *Near Zero*, on the physics of low temperature, the author, D. K. C. MacDonald, shows the reader that every atom in the universe is in constant vibration. In a famous little book, *The Secret of Life*, by Georges Lakhovsky, the most fundamental fact brought out is the different vibratory frequency unique to every different kind of molecule. As a living tissue, the word life is again only a different spelling of the word energy.

Increased Energy and Potency

Hahnemann recognized that it is the energy of the herb, absorbed and carried by the sugar, not the substance of the herb, that is the effective principle in medicine. It is easy enough to recognize next that Hahnemann's method of diluting the medicine while applying friction must always in fact increase the potency of the medicine. The effectiveness of the energy increases with every successive application of friction on the discard of nine-tenths of the mixture and substituting nine units of sugar. Hahnemann did not claim to be the first person to notice this.

Earlier Paracelsus (1493?-1541) had written: "If death can slink about to lie in wait for us and slay us, physics can do the like. It is not the body of physics that avails so to do, but the strength. Therefore it is contrived that we make half an ounce out of twenty pounds, and the half an ounce shall exceed the twenty pounds. Therefore the less the body the higher be the physic in virtue." (Quoted by M. Gumpert in his biography of Hahnemann. Paracelsus had never heard the word energy, but spoke, says Gumpert of the "essence of the physic." If in the foregoing quotation one will substitute "substance" for "body," "energy" for "strength," and "potency" for "virtue," one will be using the image of today's physical laboratory.)

(to be continued)

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The Bay, cont'd

same way by the American Indian.

The Diggers

There is a beautifully written run-down on some of the main features of the San Francisco Hippie scene in the March *Ramparts*. In this account the Diggers, a social action group, are the heroes. "They are bent on creating a wholly cooperative subculture and, so far, they are not just hallucinating, they are doing it," says *Ramparts*. "Not since Brook Farm, not since the Catholic Workers, has any group in this dreadfully corruptive, consumer society been so serious about utopian community."

Among the Diggers, better known activities are the providing of free clothes and daily free meals. A "free store" is being planned, complete with "gifts-men" to help the shopper select his merchandise.

Return to the Land

Since beginning this article, I have come across a whole new development, though there is a hint in the *Ramparts* article. In issue No. 6 of *The Oracle*, a resplendent tableau of Hippie life, there is a column called "Sounds from the Seedpower Sitar."

I will quote from this article to give you the gist: "The return to the land is happening. Many of us . . . need to return to the soil, to straighten our bodies with healthier foods and Pan's work, toe to toe with the physical world, just doing what must be done—to perfection, because it's what we want to do." There follows requests for people with experience in farming, crafts, and/or communal living, for tools and seeds and for ideas and money. Then there are items "in the wind": one 130-acre ranch and one 80-acre farm, a cooperative crafts and produce mart in San (continued on page 4)

Young People Prepare for July Weekend

Young members and friends of School of Living are invited and urged to come to the Youth Weekend, at Heathcote, July 22-23. Teenagers and early-twenties (in or out of school) will ponder the difference between *Rebellion and Independence*.

Mr. and Mrs. Will Samuel. Quaker teachers and youth leaders in Baltimore, are the adult leaders. A resource leader on the

"college scene" is David Knoke, a writer and staff member of the University of Michigan daily newspaper. Other youth counselors, on the draft and alternative service, religion, etc., will be present. Committee members Evan Lefever and Dave Pettie urge young people to be part of the July 22-23 weekend—and to come to Heathcote for picnics and outings before then.