

THE Hindu Message

A Weekly Review of Indian and World-Problems
from the Hindu Standpoint.

Medical Supplement

‘चिकित्सितात्पुण्यतमं न किञ्चिदपि शुश्रुमः’ । ‘विभेत्स्वपश्रुताद्वेदो मामयं प्रहरिष्यति’

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NOTES AND COMMENTS.

In the course of a discussion on malaria at the Calcutta (Bengal) Rotary Club, Dr. Bentley, Director of Public Health, Bengal, referred to the relationship of railways to malaria and alluded to the views expressed by various persons on the subject. He said that malaria being admittedly an economic disease, its remedy should be on economic lines, otherwise it becomes a financial impossibility. He did not agree with the opinion that the measures employed at Panama, or the extended use of quinine, or mosquito nets or even the improved village sanitation would suit this country, the cost and expense of carrying out sanitary measures at Panama was very great and the other measures if effectively carried out would cost equally so heavy as to render their carrying out a financial impossibility. He says that experience has shown that the loss of the flood spill of muddy water of the Ganges has resulted in decreased fertility. This decreased fertility means decreased agricultural outturn and the latter means a decline of agriculture and a reduction of population, and as the loss of the flood water also leads to a great increase of malaria carrying mosquitos, the changes referred to are accompanied by an appalling increase of malarial infection.

According to Dr. Bentley the only remedy for all these associated evils therefore lies in restoring to the country the flood water of which it has been deprived. This can only be accomplished by irrigation systems designed for distributing and controlling the flood water in a manner calculated to further the improvement of the peculiar form of agriculture suited to the country. In my opinion we can best learn the system of irrigation most likely to achieve favourable results by studying the methods in vogue in Tanjore and Godavari deltas in Madras and the delta of the Nile in Egypt. Both of the Madras deltas referred to have been rescued from agricultural depopulation and epidemic malaria by their irrigation systems. "There is cultivable land in the Burdwan

and presidency divisions of Bengal which at present uncultivated owing to soil impoverishment and lack of water, equal in amount to the whole cultivable area of Egypt. Bengal rivers, moreover, contain the fertilising water necessary to restore the prosperity of these areas. And, provided this water can be brought to the land by our engineers malaria will eventually be eradicated as certainly and as completely as has already been the case in the deltas of Tanjore and Godavari in Madras." The paper was followed by an animate discussion in which several speakers disagreed with the author. Whether right or wrong, Dr. Bentley has certainly raised an important point for the minute and thorough consideration of thinking persons and there is no doubt that something profitable will result from this discussion.

A conference of the Medical Practitioners and leading gentlemen of Bankura was recently held at the M. E. School premises in Bankura under the auspices of the Bankura Sammilani. Many distinguished persons were present. It was resolved to start a Medical School at Bankura of the standard of the Campbell Medical School of Calcutta from the month of July next. A Provisional Committee with Dr. Barendra Kumar Roy, M.B., as Secretary has been appointed to convene a general public meeting at Bankura to elect representatives of all the Municipalities and villages to constitute a general committee and to elect a working committee in order to give effect to the first resolution.

The subject of Hygiene is mentioned at great length in Ayurveda. Not only there is the general hygiene, but personal hygiene as well as full directions for prevention of several diseases occurring in different seasons, are described at great length, which assists one, who follows the rules laid down there, to lead a very healthy life, and guard against several kinds of epidemics. Bacteriology also is a part of the Ayurvedic science mentioned in Vimana Shikha of Charaka, and the author has explained there the germinal origin of several diseases occurring as epidemic or endemic.

Patent Medicines.

BY DR. S. L. KATZOFF, M.D., L.L.B., PH. D.

Eminent Physician; President of the Connecticut Medical Liberty League; Author of "Timely Truths On Human Health," etc.

[We are enabled to give below a chapter from the writer's *Timely Truths on Human Health*, by his kind permission.—Editor, *H. M.*]

Among the common, fraudulent methods of exploitation to-day may be mentioned the patent medicine game. Patent medicines have placed many a person on the operating table; have produced weak hearts, weak stomachs, and weak kidneys; in fact, have dug many an untimely grave. Patent medicines have helped materially to keep us doctors busy. Still the people keep on taking all kinds of patent medicines and keep on being sick, also.

Now let me say right from the outset: I do not believe that *every* patent medicine is bad or harmful. There are a number of patent medicines on the market that are, in themselves, harmless. I may even say further, that some of them are no more harmful, perhaps, than some ordinary prescribed medicines, which sometimes are adulterated, substituted or needless.

The trouble is that the "virtues" of the medicines are terribly exaggerated. They are supposed to be good for about forty different ailments, from "the pip" and bunions to scarlet fever, cancer, and tuberculosis.

If the patent medicine manufacturers would, along with advertising the medicines, teach the people how to live properly, and how to prevent being sick, and how not to need this same medicine later, they would at least do *some* good. Instead of teaching the people self-reliance and clean, natural, simple living, for maintenance of health, they teach them to depend exclusively upon the bottle, capsule, or pill for health, strength and life. What a farce! What a commercial outrage! "Timely Truths on Human Health" teaches the people not to depend for health on a capsule, a trip to Palm Beach, Venice or Nova Scotia, nor to create "a Savior" in the form of a pill, but to seek for health in *correct methods of living*. In other words: fresh air, sunshine, good food, clean water, exercise, good cheer and interest in one's work, form the best "capsule" and "tonic" for efficiency, health and longevity and are the best preventives of any disease.

We are a race of "pill-swallowers" and "tonic-guzzlers"—and that is the very thing that the writer is pointing out and is against. By living properly—in conformity with nature's laws nobody will need medicines at *any* time. To-day, if one is really sick has tried simple methods himself first, such as rest, elimination, cleansing or spraying the nostrils, and, sponging the body, and does not improve, and believes that he needs medicine, by all means let him call his physician—and call whatever kind he likes best (homeopath, eclectic or allopath). If medicines should happen to be indicated, then get them only on the advice or under the care of the physician.

This modern deception, popularly known as patent medicines, is a great scheme by which the people are beguiled, duped, and deluded out of their hard-earned dollars and cents. It is heart breaking to notice how people have lost their self-reliance to the extent that they are depending on artificial "tonics" and "appetizers" as aids to digestion. The

fact that one imagines he "needs something" for his digestion—or indigestion, rather—is sufficient proof that something is wrong; some important tissues are debilitated, injured, or overworked. It is possible that a rest for his overworked, abused stomach and intestines is all that is needed. However, Mr. Glutton says: "Oh, no! I must continue to eat no matter if I burst," and therefore resorts to a stimulant, tonic or digestive agent which whips his system into submission for a while, but which comes back at him with renewed irritation a little later. It would be more sane to find out the cause and remove it, instead of treating the effects.

THE SPRING TONIC CRAZE.

A "stylish" way of getting certain medicines before the public is to teach that "you need a Spring Tonic," just as "U-Need-A-Biscuit." People begin to believe they need a spring medicine for their blood, stomach, and the like, when in reality what they need to do is to change their winter underwear to summer weight; to begin to bathe more freely and to eat less heartily and more carefully. Many a twenty-five cent piece or dollar bill has gone into this Spring Tonic for the patent medicine manufacturers' bank accounts, when it could have been utilized by the invalid, mother, and other members of the family for a number of real necessities. But remember what Barnum said: "The American people want to be humbugged."

It is laughable when we stop to think of this "Spring Tonic" idea. Why a "spring" tonic? Why not a "fall" tonic? A "winter" tonic? Are the people perfectly normal or well after a hot, tiresome summer? Do they not overeat in the summer-time? Are they not more apt to neglect exercise and to eat excessive sweets and candies in summertime? Winter, it seems, would be the ideal time for a "tonic" if at all.

Then again, how about the large quantities of alcohol in patent medicines as "preservatives"? What a successful way of evading the prohibition laws! Is there any wonder that our insane asylums are overcrowded and the undertakers have such busy seasons?

There was a time when "those who knew" thought that an ill person was possessed of devils or spirits, and they used to blow horns, clash cymbals, yell, make noise, and beat drums, and sometimes beat the patient, in order to beat the devil out of the fellow? Now they also beat the devil out of a fellow by permitting him to dope himself with any kind of concoction under the pretense of guaranteed cure for every known ailment.

Another bad habit the public got into is the "running over the drug store" for "a little of this and a little of that." For example, many a woman will become a victim of aspirin, which weakens the heart when taken continuously; others will call for a "bromo" (bromo-seltzer), and still others for a few tablets of strychnine, "when they think it is necessary." Some seem to talk as if quinine can cure malaria, the itch, mumps and infantile paralysis. Others use calomel for the liver, sores, complexion and summer complaint. And so it goes, in the name of science, health, love and mercy!

It is needless to enumerate the popular headache, cathartic and cough remedies that flood the market to-day. Those who take these are strangely more often ill than well and a constant source of practice for physicians and surgeons. Enough said.

Science and Sex.

At the Royal Society of Arts recently, Mr. Julian Huxley, Fellow of New College, Oxford, lectured on recent advances in the biological theory of sex.

Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, F. R. S., who presided, in introducing the lecturer, said that he was the grandson of Thomas Henry Huxley, one of the greatest figures in the history of British biology; that he had voluntarily resigned a professorial chair in the United States, and returned to serve his country with distinction during the war and that, by his investigations at Oxford, he was rapidly gaining a reputation as one of the rising younger men of science.

Mr. Huxley limited his subject to the determination of sex, which, apart its practical interest, was a meeting point of cytology and genetics, zoology, and physiology. Mendelian research, he said had shown most of the hereditary constitution of an animal or plant to consist of actual chemical unities the hereditary factors or genus. It was almost certain that these were lodged in the chromosomes of the nucleus, where each had its appointed station. When the time of reproduction approached the chromosomes arranged themselves in pairs and before fertilizations, each gamete or sexual cell, by a reducing division, was left with only one member of each pair. The union of the male and the female gametes, the essential act of fertilization, restored the proper number of chromosomes, half coming from each parent. This machinery provided for the mingling of the parental and maternal characters in the offspring, and operated so that it could seldom happen that two children received precisely the same allotment of characters from father and mother.

It was probable that, in the higher animals at least the sex was determined at the actual moment of fertilisation. Human twins were usually as unlike as any two children of the same family, and in these circumstances they might be of identical or of different sexes. But some times they were almost indistinguishable in which case they were always of the same sex, and evidences from the foetal membranes pointed to their being the product of a single fertilized egg. In an armadillo, four young were always produced at a birth; they were of the same sex, and the membranes showed that they were all four the product of a single egg.

In the case of insects and some other animals, there was evidence that the male had one chromosome less than the female. If, as was now supposed, this extra chromosome was the carrier of the sex, then the determination of sex followed the determination of many other characters as worked out by Mendelian experiments. This suggested the possibility that if some means were found of inducing the casting out of the additional chromosome, the sex ratio might be artificially modified. The experiment had actually been made in the case of a mother where it was found that the proportion of males was markedly increased by exposure to high temperature during the reduction division, or by causing the retention of the eggs in the body of the female for an abnormally long time.

There was at least a suggestion that a similar influence on the determination of sex could be produced in birds by altering the chemical metabolism. Active metabolism led to small eggs, and in these the additional chromosome was usually retained, leading to a high proportion of males. The normal additional chromosomes arrangement

was designed so as to give an equal proportion of the sexes, but science was approaching the stage at which it could modify the normal arrangement and so suit the sex ratio to its wishes.

"An interesting experiment in surgery has just been completed in Sing-Sing Prison," says "The Telegraph" New York correspondent, "in transferring healthy glands from an executed criminal to the body of criminal epileptic. An examination by the prison officials of George Hauser, the epileptic in question, disclosed that certain glands in his body were abnormal and defective to an extent which the doctors believed tended to perpetuate and increase the general physical defective condition which had characterised him since birth. It was decided to conduct the experiment as soon as healthy glands could be obtained. Edward Persons a particularly healthy specimen condemned to be electrocuted for murder, was selected to supply the glands which were taken from his body immediately following his death, and preserved until ready to be transplanted into the body of Hauser. The Surgeons who undertook the operation report that Hauser is already showing signs of improvement, and they have every hope that the normal glands will produce normal conditions in the epileptic."

Dr. Norman Walker, the representative of the General Medical Council alluded at Lucknow to the enormous changes that had taken place in medical education especially in the curriculum prescribed for medical students. He said the expense of medical education had no doubt increased enormously and disproportionately but as America recognized he believed that one really good doctor was better than three indifferent ones. Dr. Walker seemed to be satisfied with the arrangements for medical education in Lucknow University and hoped that if the authorities tried to raise the standard of their midwifery education, the General Medical Council would certainly give them time to make up their deficiency. Dr. Walker repudiated the charge brought from certain quarters in India that the council was in any way actuated by any ulterior motives in having raised their demand for higher and more efficient training in midwifery.

A student of Ayurved has to master his Anatomy well. The study of anatomy requires dead bodies for dissection, and a proper place to do it. If such dissections are not carried on in Ayurvedic schools, it is not because they do not consider them to be necessary, but because the means and place required for the purpose are not at their disposal. But in the absence of dissections, the study of the subject is made as much substantial as possible, by showing to the student actually dissected parts, real organs of the human body, plaster of paris anatomical specimens, anatomical atlases, and other necessities, till the time, when the question of money and place could be solved, and convenience for actual dissections could be made.

In Ayurvedic science, we have Medical Chemistry where Sharangdhara, Rasa Ratna Samuchaya, and Rasa Ratnakara take a leading part. The chemistry of Ayurveda is purely medical, and the several combinations and the ways of preparing different Rasayanas, Bhasmas, Upabhasmas, and other preparations which come across a student of chemistry and pharmacy, are very interesting. Mercury, which was some years back considered

to be a poisonous substance by the western scientists, is for a student of Ayurveda, a special subject of study, and its combinations with sulphur, and its prominence in several compounds which are proved to be most efficacious, show the real value of the drug. Gold was considered to be a substance by western scientists insoluble in the juices of the stomach, and therefore incapable of assimilation in the body. This same gold, in the form of *Suvarna-Bhasma*, *Raj-Mrugank*, *Suvarna-Parpati*, *Suvarna-Vasant* and *Poorna Chandrodaya Rasa*, has been known to work wonders as medicines in Ayurveda. These are drugs which are commonly used by Ayurvedic practitioners in diseases like *neuresthenia*, *consumption*, *prue*, *chronic diarrhoea*, *long continued low fever*, *atonic dyspepsia*, and others. It is worthy of note that western scientists, who only a few years back, laughed at some one prescribing gold, are now giving it as a tonic, blood purifier, and nerve vigorator in the form of *Arseno-Aura*, *Gold chloride*, *Auriet sodii chloridum*, and other combinations. Ayurvedic practitioners giving *Abhraka Bhasma* in tuberculous diseases, is nothing else but calcium, silicon, magnesium and iron, of which *abhraka* is composed, and which are generally the ingredients of prescriptions, used by western scientists in such diseases. Further, when we go to the vegetable kingdom, we come across innumerable medical drugs of highest value in medicine, either alone or in various combinations, each preparation having its therapeutic value fully described. Efforts on the part of the government for the purpose of scientific pharmacological research of these drugs to fix their therapeutic value is welcome, though it is noteworthy to find that the results thus arrived at, quite correspond with the therapeutic values of the same drugs described in Ayurvedic works, proving beyond doubt, that the ways in which the Ayurvedic authors fixed them were quite scientific.

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