

A New Science - Osteopathy.

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It is a significant fact in history that all philosophies relating to natural phenomena, all movements for reform, all evolutions into a higher plane and a larger life, trace their inception to the minds of individuals. In narrower spheres the peculiarly is noticeable. When we investigate the history of human health and man's methods for combatting disease, we are not surprised to find that single minds have fathomed the mysterious phenomena relating thereto, and have given to mankind the underlying principles around which other minds less original may group facts and philosophies less fundamental. Do we have not Harvey who gave to us the important fact of Blood Circulation; Hahnemann, who gave to us the system of "small doses", and the theory that "like cures like"; Pasteur develops the great germ theory; Lister applies the principles of antiseptic surgery; while Mrs. Eddy advances her belief that sickness cannot exist in living matter because matter itself cannot exist except in the realm of imagination.

Osteopathy is no exception to the rule.

It not only had its origin in the brain of one man, Dr. Andrew Taylor Still, but for nearly twenty years it was cradled and nourished and perfected within the boundaries of its birthplace, entirely unknown to the outside world, till, with sufficient strength and confidence to withstand the buffet of an unappreciative people, it was launched forth as a candidate for favor, among the numerous systems of healing.

The history of Doctor Still reads like that of many a pioneer who came from the east in the young days of Kansas to help her out a new commonwealth. His father was a physician, and this profession the son took up with an earnestness which was the foreshadowing of a successful career. As a practicing Allopath and surgeon, he won distinction in the times of "bloody Kansas", and later in life won quite a local reputation. But being a man of acute observation and with a mind of great-analytic and synthetic power, he became dissatisfied with the workings of the drug system of healing, and began the search for a philosophy that did not depend for its success on outside influences. Why is not the human

body capable of running smoothly by itself? Did an all-wise Creator fashion a machine which would not work without the internal application of some external and inorganic substance? If the body be a machine what need for anything but fuel? Such questions as these began to occupy his thoughts daily. This, in connection with the observed inefficiency of drugs and always of the uncertainty of their action, finally led him to lose all faith in drugging as a system of healing. As his mind rejected the old theories his reasoning along the above lines began to fashion itself into a philosophy of health and disease.

It was in 1874 that the first dawn of a new day in this philosophy made its appearance in his consciousness. Thenceforth a new idea was central in his study and in his practice - the idea that man must be recuperated from within, and Nature, unobstructed, must do the healing. And what were the conditions necessary to this work of nature? Simply that each part of the mechanism in the body should be in normal relation to each other part. But how was this happy condition to be realized? The question demanded much for an answer. With the

main principle firmly fixed in his mind, Doctor still quickly realized that the all-important factor in solving this problem was the thorough acquaintance with Nature herself as manifested in the human body. So he applied himself anew to the study of anatomy, physiology, and physiological chemistry - absolutely essential in the practice of the new method. For years he labored. As each new application of his system proved successful, he threw aside his drugs. Consequently his practice narrowed and people began to regard him as slightly unbalanced; so that he soon found his practice limited to those who were persuaded that he possessed a "gift" for healing. But as the results of his new method began to show themselves in widening fields, and indisputable cures were being effected, his practice began to increase, so that he now for the first time took another into his confidence with the intention of demonstrating that if his was a "gift," it was one which could be transferred to others. Thus his son became the first pupil in the first school of Osteopathy. Nor was the father mistaken. After months of study and practice under the direction of

the "old doctor", the son became almost as proficient as his father. With this experience the new science began to attract the attention of prominent and intellectual people of the neighborhood. They reasoned that if this so-called "gift" could be transferred by teaching, then it could not be a "gift", but must be in the realm of actual science. Applications as students now came in so rapidly and to such an extent that it was deemed advisable to open a school, and the first of the kind in the world was inaugurated at Kirksville, Missouri, in 1892. From this time the growth of the science and of the institution at Kirksville has been phenomenal. Only a brief reference can be made to it, however. From the half dozen or more six years ago who constituted the student body with Dr. A. P. Still as faculty, there has developed a college at present consisting of over four hundred students, and a faculty comprising fifteen instructors. From a small cottage has developed a magnificent, four story structure containing sixty-seven rooms and costing \$80,000 in its present form - two additions having been built in as many years.

In close connection with the college and its rival in phenomenal growth, is the Infirmary. Here are to be found constantly from four to six hundred patients from every clime, afflicted with diseases and malformations of every character, and in every stage of sickness and convalescence;— the lame, the halt, the blind, — dyspeptic, consumptive, epileptic, insane, deformed, — old and young, rich and poor, — a great heterogeneous mass of suffering humanity awaiting — and not in vain — for relief.

But in other fields the new science has borne the palm of victory. Knowing from experience and from a knowledge of human nature that any physician flying a flag not authorized by any regular school, would be subject to persecution and ostracism, the influential among the graduates have carried the banner of Osteopathy into legislative battles. The history of these struggles for state recognition would alone furnish material for a respectable volume. Suffice it to say that thru the influence of numerous friends, five states, — Missouri, Vermont, Michigan, North Dakota, and Iowa, — now recognize by statutory enactment the right

to practice, of any regular graduate from any legally chartered school of Osteopathy, who has complied with all the conditions named. These enactments place the Osteopath on an equal footing with the "regular" practitioners. And this is all that they have asked, knowing, again from experience, that if placed in the field in fair competition results would favor the Osteopath. These legislative campaigns are being pushed in other states with many encouraging signs of success, and it appears that time is all that is necessary to break up throughout the United States the giant medical trust, thus giving to individuals the right to choose who shall heal their ills and those of their loved ones.

But the question is often asked "What is Osteopathy?" A specific answer cannot here be given. That only is secured by a thorough course at the school where the science is taught in all its relations. But we may indicate the working hypothesis of the system. The Osteopath reasons that, primarily, man is a machine, planned and constructed by an all-wise Creator who never makes mistakes. Within the body are found every substance necessary for the

harmonious working of the machinery. If every part of the machine be in its proper position, every organ and tissue be free to perform its natural function, allowing an unobstructed flow of all vital fluids, harmony and health follow as a necessary consequence. If any of these parts be displaced, any organ be interfered with, if in any way the natural flow of vital fluids be obstructed, discord and disease follow. The discovery of the abnormality or the irregularity in the body depends on the knowledge of anatomy and delicacy of touch of the operator. The irregularity being discovered, its removal becomes the concern of the Osteopath. This is done entirely by mechanical manipulation, varied to suit individual cases. Having adjusted the machinery, normal physiological processes will again obtain, and Nature herself will renovate the system and once more assume her right of way.

The foregoing is what Osteopathy is; the following, what it is not. These are given for the reason that many persons get the idea that Osteopathy is an old method of practice, with merely a new name.

Perhaps the earliest error made in confounding the new science with other movements was that

faith on the part of the patient was the all-important factor. Nothing is farther from the truth. The treatment being entirely physical, Osteopathy has no care whether the patient believes in the science or not. One modification of this statement is necessary, however. Osteopathy recognizes the fact which is becoming more established as it is better understood, that the mind and the body are intimately connected. And insofar as mental conditions affect life processes in the body, therefore best results, the mental condition should be one of naturalness and repose. If this state is secured by faith in the science and in its opponent - and it often undoubtedly is - then faith is a very desirable ally.

A common error is made in confounding Osteopathy with Massage. If comparison is to be made at all, the correct position to take would be that massage may be employed by the Osteopath as one of the numerous applications of the Osteopathic principle. The Osteopath will use the procedure termed massage if that procedure will bring about the desired end, i. e., the removal of obstruction to life processes. The breeding of the Masseuse, on the other hand, is directed only toward the stimulation of shivering organs, and the exer-

curing of sluggish tissues - treating the effects of abnormal conditions rather than removing the cause.

As odd as it may seem, the new philosophy is often confounded with Christian Science. In their primary assumptions the two are antipodes. In removing causes of disease by adjustment of machinery, Osteopathy certainly recognizes the materiality of the machinery to be adjusted. Christian Science, on the other hand, recognizes only the presence of Spirit - the body being only an "apparent seeming," and hence, by charging the patient that as a necessary consequence his sickness is also a mere "seeming", the "scientist" would have him cure himself by burying his infirmity in forgetfulness.

Such are some of the numerous misconceptions which have been current among the people since the work of the new system has been making itself felt thruout the communities where ever it has gone; and misconception will continue to be the rule till people are willing to investigate the science and discover for themselves if it has sufficient foundation to be classed among the sciences, and if it possesses, as is claimed by its author, the capability of exact mathematical demonstration.

But what of its future? Is it not a mere passing whim which springs up in a time of uncertainty and is seized as a possible savior of suffering bodies, but which must follow in the footsteps of many a "fad" which has gone before? Such is unlikely to be the case for the reasons based on the following facts:-

1- Its undoubted effectiveness in curing disease with the fact that the "why" of the cure appeals to all reasoning minds.

2- Its remarkable hold upon the legislation of the country. No system without great promise for the future could secure the legislative recognition that Osteopathy has secured in spite of the organized opposition by the medical trusts in the various states.

3- The present and growing facilities for its propagation are excellent, tho inadequate to the demand. There are in existence, besides the parent school at Kirksville, institutions for teaching the science, in the states of Minnesota, California, and Illinois, all of which have been making rapid strides in improvement. The requirements of these schools are strict. A twenty months course of study is required, covering the various departments in anatomy, physiology, phys-

ological chemistry, hygiene, symptomatology and diagnosis of disease, minor surgery, and of course the principles and practice of Osteopathy, in all of which the greatest proficiency is required.

4- The social and intellectual standing which it has received argues for its permanence. For it counts among its personal friends President William McKinley, Senator Foraker, the governors of Vermont, Michigan, Missouri, Iowa, North Dakota, and hosts of others of more than ordinary renown.

Finally, what rank will the new science take among the systems of healing? Its author and its most ardent friends expect to see it outrank all other systems at present in vogue. And the position seems to be well taken. For when we consider the remarkable success it has achieved in the world of suffering, the entire harmlessness of the treatment even if the treatment be productive of no good results, the actual experience already gained in competition with other systems, we must admit that the new system has a bright prospect. The test of every system is its ability to cope with difficulties. If, as indications are at present, the new shall be able, thru greater efficiency, to displace the old, then the rank gained thereby cannot justly be assailed.

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