

# SIMILLIMUM

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# SOME LIGHT ON THE (MIS)UNDERSTANDING OF AURUM METALLICUM

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Probably there will be less difficulty in answering the following set of questions: Which remedy is dictatorial and industrious? Which remedy has profound sense of responsibility and is also highly religious? Which remedy has marked amelioration (in mentals and generals) by music? One may unhesitatingly reply: *Aurum metallicum*. My skepticism about this answer is based on the study of drug-provings, which is supported by the great masters T.F. Allen, C. Hering and J.K. Kent.

I always see risks in the understanding of any remedy arising from sources other than the drug-proving. Hahnemann has stated very clearly in aphorism 110 that the only source of the materia medica should be the drug-provings and accidental provings.

Let us turn to the source literature (Allen's *Encyclopaedia*, Hering's *Guiding Symptoms*) to review and investigate some aspects of the *Aurum* mind. T.F. Allen writes in the *Encyclopedia* in the chapter on *Aurum metallicum*:

"Constantly imagines he neglects something and deserves reproach in consequence ... He appears to carry this uneasiness about the mind." These lines have been translated repertorially by Kent as: "Delusion, he has neglected his duty." Kent rewrites the above description in his *Materia Medica* as: "He has neglected something, his friends, deserves reproach in consequence of having neglected his duty." Hering writes the same thing: "Imagines he is neglectful and deserves reproach in consequence." It should be noted that Allen and Hering state (from the drug-proving) that *Aurum* feels that he has neglected something. They do not use the word "duty", which seems to have been introduced by Kent. That one who constantly feels that he has neglected something, does not necessarily mean that he feels guilty about neglecting his duty. The great sense of duty cannot be derived from the description by Hering and Allen.

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The sense of guilt cannot be overemphasized in *Aurum*, as the term “guilt” is used neither by Allen nor Hering. Kent seems to have used the word “duty” quite casually, as any teacher would do, but I wonder how he gave the highest grade to *Aurum* in the rubric: “Delusion, neglected his duty: *AUR, Lyc, cycl, hyos, puls.*”

Self-reproach does suggest a sense of guilt in *Aurum*. But, it does not essentially mean guilt about neglecting his duty.

An understanding of *Aurum met* as a dominating type has no support from any source. T.F. Allen, Hering and even Kent do not use the term dominating or dictatorial. J. Kunzli has admirably located and very nicely corrected the printing error in the Kent’s Repertory and replaced *Aurum* by *Apis*. It should always be questioned how the idea of dominating personality erupted in *Aurum*.

Another mysterious entry in the repertory for this remedy is “Industrious.” Again, none of the above sources describe the state of being industrious or hardworking in *Aurum*. Kent does not discuss anything featuring the hardworking nature of *Aurum*, in his Materia Medica. Amazingly, he has entered *Aurum* in bold capitals under the rubric “Industrious.” Most likely, a printing error . . . It will be interesting to note that a similar thing has happened with the rubric “Remorse,” where you find *Coffea* in bold capitals but do not find a similar description in Kent’s Materia Medica!

Allen, Kent and Phatak do not describe the well-known religiousness in *Aurum*. Drug provers of *Aurum* did not produce any religious feelings. As Hering puts it: “Religious mania.” It seems that the current understanding of *Aurum* as religious is overstretched from Hering’s remark.

In discussing the religious aspect, George Vithoukias of *Aurum*, said that *Aurum* has “desire to pray” and not “religious.” The difference is obvious between “praying” and “religious.”

Would it not be quite sad to discover that *Aurum met* mind is not better by music?! Allen, Hering, Kent (Materia Medica), Boericke and Phatak do not give the symptoms “> music” or “sadness > music”. Please go to the text to discover it yourself. Kent writes under *Aurum* while describing the ear pathology: “Oversensitive to noise but music relieves” (page 198). And further he discusses more of the ear sensitivity symptoms. It sounds as if “> music” is purely a local ear symptom and not a mental characteristic. This is an example of our tendency to stretch the symptoms to the extent of distortion.

Who would not be upset by discovering that *Aurum* does not really have a sense of responsibility? I, too, was taken aback when I found

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it myself! I had even treated some cases successfully considering this aspect of *Aurum*!! But the facts have to be accepted as facts. *Aude sapere!*

The so-called sense of responsibility in *Aurum* is not found in the work of Allen, Hering, Kent, Boericke and Phatak. Kent mentions at one place: "The causes of this state of insanity are prolonged anxiety, unusual responsibility, syphilis and loss of property." He never described anywhere in the materia medica about any sense of responsibility in *Aurum*. He has just stated some causes of insanity and included "unusual responsibility" as one of them. Very logically, such a causal indication (which has no relevance with the drug proving) cannot be generalized, in my humble opinion. Phatak has taken up these two words "unusual responsibility" in his materia medica and generalized them as "unusual responsibility aggravates." in his repertory (page 292). It should also be noted here that Phatak did not describe this feature under the mind section. Somehow, those two words are responsible for this grave misunderstanding of the remedy. Any description indicating the sense of responsibility in *Aurum* does not originate from Hahnemannian proving.

The picture of *Aurum* described by Kent is that of a person who has perverted affections: "The fundamental love, which is the love of living, of self-protection, is perverted and he loathes life, is weary of life, longs to die and seeks methods to commit suicide." All the negative emotions such as self-contempt, loathing for life, suicidal thoughts, hopelessness, hatefulness, quarrelsomeness, violence, sadness, etc. are displayed in *Aurum*, rather than positive emotions such as a sense of responsibility, positiveness, industriousness, etc.

This incisive study on *Aurum* throws a warning light on how any remedy could be misunderstood and distorted, when not studied in coherence with the drug-proving. It also alerts us not to form images of homoeopathic remedies based on some vague clinical/empirical symptomatology not found in the drug-proving.

I would also like to point out to our learned readers that the understanding of the materia medica based on mere personal experiences but without a basis in the drug-proving, may turn out to be very dangerous. I strongly feel that the time has come to stop passing on distorted understanding to the next generation.

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