

THE BLACK BOX TREASURES (#19)

Many of us probably don't know that in our Archives here in Rome we have more than 200 black boxes. Some of those treasures have seen the light of day in many publications, but there are still others waiting to been seen...

(An air guitar #19)

Do homeopathic remedies really work? While many doubt the effectiveness of such a treatment, others strongly believe that this "medicine" really works miracles. From what we have learned reading the letters of Fr. Peter Semenenko, it seems that he leaned more toward the latter group. Moreover, as we read in his letters, he also, on a few occasions, was trying to convince others about the benefits of homeopathy... In his letter to Fr. Valerian Kalinka he wrote, "I'm convinced, or at least I have a

strong desire, that homeopathy can help you. I know homeopathy well and I know what it is able to do [...] with homeopathy you could live four and five times longer than you now think you would live "(ACRR 3111). However from the next letter, it seems Fr. Valerian wasn't so eager to follow Fr. Peter's advice (ACRR 389).

Are there any particular cases which show that Fr. Peter was successful using homeopathy? In his diary on May 3, 1881, he wrote, "Fr. Antoni Lechert, arrived from Vinnica in the morning. He was seriously sick to the stomach, he had some bleeding. I gave him homeopathic Merc. Viv. 6. [a name of the remedy]. After two hours he was well again, after an 8-day painful illness. Deo gratias. Truly the Lord Jesus guided the choice of medicine". But on another occasion (Fr. Peter) telling of his suffering from fever and ague, he says that after taking some remedies he was still sick for fourteen days".

So did homeopathy really work? Looking at the principles of this alternative "medicine" and at the way its remedies are prepared, it is so difficult to "believe" that it could work more than as a simple placebo. It seems that this is the point: homeopathy is not really about science and hard facts, it is a question of believing in a certain doctrine based on some unproven axioms. Since the medical treatment in the 19th century was to "a large extent crude and ineffective" homeopathy causing no harm, made the patients less likely to be harmed by the treatment that was supposed to be helping them (cfr. Ernst E., *Homeopathy Revisited*, Arch. Intern. Med., 1996). Because of that, it would appear that homeopathy seemed to be more effective than the orthodox medicine at that time.

In my opinion, and I'm just repeating those of others, homeopathy is nothing more than the "air guitar" of medicine. It seems to be one of the most absurd forms of fake medicine out there. Would Fr. Peter be happy with this strong opinion? Probably he would tell us what he wrote to Fr. Thomas Brzeska: "I will not say anything more about homeopathy, because I see once and for all that you do not believe in it." (ACRR 2111, this letter is attached below).

o. 211

Boussn, 15 Wnes. 1884.

Najorozszy Ojere Comatruz

Gylko co wystatem list do O. Anto= migo, a pinage to niego, i me chige rosponynac Orngiege lister de Cubie, pornolitem sobie whomtym liscie dac Ci nicktore polecenia, surgohnej co do Amerupi. Cymerasem po wyprouvieniu, wroeiwry to mienskania, rastation list of O. Antoniego, w Promyon mi dage wis somorcie o rorowin O. Stef= faria, i rorem lego zyværie zeby Halepnego wyabrowienie me Rarac me braca'e de Keymen, de porwohie prnujechai do laryza. - Oloz redaje misig Lebolquie morna maynic; rapare om benie tu a mie O. Wtadystaw, ponuvie 2 mm o tem. hopebarry Nrema wtem nic spinnego. -Ale co jun spiennego, to wypard O. Jehren-Vacher Do ameryki. Ojeowie amerykansky berg-Vendre rozzaleni, i vie ber powodn, jezih 2a miast Iwas Ojow thorys sis grodiewali tego roku me leva mieli ani jednys. Whice moving dol. Antomyo

powiedriatem ze rostaurium tokie osovine cry zaran my provice O. Febronbashe, can tex crepai na odpo = wieiz & amery kis Ale im wigcej o tem mysle, tem barding misis way se pour to types crassing fran, a odpowiely & amery n' rawne beene taka re toreda Vedrie Jostac O. Jana. Wige leging karan go postac. deuz no takim rarie wielka biedo z Kollegiuso, Volkkien, jezelily O. Grabowski envorat semu Ko= marme treta koges drugiege. I mme sig zdage ze Rugos pohrebo, sam mu datem nato tomenbacha; ale known meredajo mini aby to tak meres gones byc mado, in bestego mez kika menery niemornaby rislayto obejoc. Operieworm sie bedy se re strong Q. Goabourkiege me aquie Matermiertrudnom, a prone goo to.

Ojca Jehrenbarha zas prosre aly wity okaryj Dal foryhtad croty. Wim zemise chiejerie porostac w Raymiezale view pomystike juz by Oonic worymie, - a dobro ogolne powimo ustapić pred jednorkoven. Bog go ra to myna prodri.

Za tuvoj link to Workinia, barden Ci Inelands moj Drogi Ojere. Onivipation go w kij chivili raz jenere, ak rdoje mi siz se nie ma sadnej nevry, pompajmini va sunigsnej, na ktoraby no nie odpisa. Jedna mnie nev mie pociesnyta; ta, ze mi piserzo

febre khora Ci wraca. Juz Ci o homeopatyi nic me powiem, bowing nal dobre se wing nie wie nysz. Wege tylko mode in Dobana ferusa Rely Sam to licho febry ad Cithic adjedint. Juz wien re po pari dri das portanowilom unjeehoe'; av 229 Do 25 mysle bye weldednin, apolion de Pan Dog we Woodwewie-Arowie moje, drigki Boga, tryma ne Blecam ne twijin dobrym i Serdennym modlitwom, ponycirkam ai do sercer, moj dragi i Kochany Ojcze, brogostannie vernyrthisz tam woomn, dobre : i roshaje Wmitom flourai Maryi najeddaning

Him

Orny Tacram Citecile de O. Ohntonige, Along prong preuglace.

An extract from the letter of Fr. Peter Semenenko to Fr. Thomas Brzeska, dated September 15, 1884, ACRR 2111)

"[.,..]One thing did not console me - that you are writing to me about the fever that comes back to you. I will not say anything more about homeopathy, because I see once and for all that you do not believe in it. So, I'm just praying to Jesus that he would drive the fever away from you."