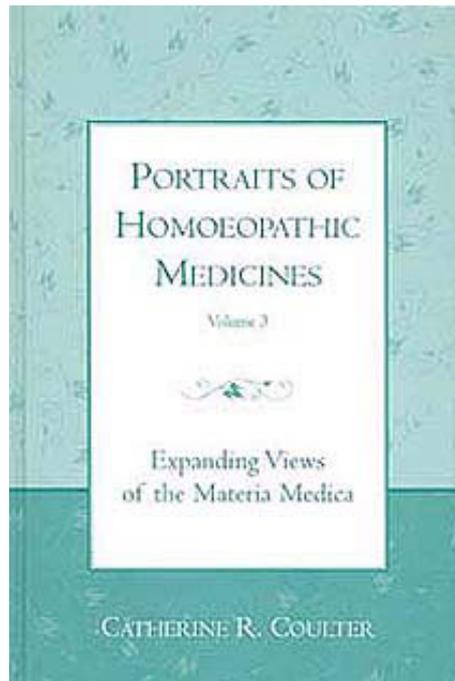


Catherine R. Coulter
Portraits of Homoeopathic Medicines Vol.3 - Imperfect
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Aurum Metallicum

The Legacy of Homoeopathic Gold

A *URUM METALLICUM*, or potentized gold, comes to the homoeopath more heavily laden with associations than any other medicinal substance in the entire *materia medica*.

Throughout the history of recorded civilization a rich and variegated gold legacy has been handed down to mankind in Biblical parables and Greek myths, folk tale allegory, and poetic imagery; by way of similes and metaphors to portray man's spiritual welfare, and metonymy to signify the wealth of nations.

The precious metal has been linked with sovereignty, leadership, and authority, whether secular (the royal brow is crowned with gold) or religious (the pope's miter is adorned with gold); and gold has ever been symbolic of worldly achievement and success. Gold medals are awarded for courage as well as for superior performance; the finest master of any craft is said to possess "golden hands" or the "golden touch." Similarly, the very highest praise that can be accorded a singer is to describe his voice as "golden" (how many golden-voiced tenors has this century produced?). In addition, the child smiled upon by fortune and favored above others is referred to as the "golden-haired boy."

Gold is likewise symbolic of stability and solid value. The gold standard guarantees a healthy national economy, and a country's influence and power are largely calculated according to the amount of bullion in its possession. Certainly, from time immemorial, gold cur-

rency has been honored as the most reliable legal tender. Even in a less material sense, it is no accident that this precious metal, unaffected by the ravages of time and connoting as it does imperishable value, is the preferred choice for wedding rings. And in the imagery of myth and fairy tales, gold signifies hopes and wishes come true, when stars—symbols of hope—fall to earth in a shower of gold coins.

Gold also stands as a metaphor for rectitude, integrity, and moral worth. No sounder encomium of a person's character can be proffered than to say that he is "worth his weight in gold"—while, conversely, glitter (or false gold) is the pretense that conceals the absence of true worth. Furthermore, gold is associated not only with kindness and generosity (as in the expression "a heart of gold") but also with balance, reason, and good judgment—as perceived in the urgings of the classical philosophers to seek and cultivate "the golden mean" (Horace).

In the realm of the spirit, gold has ever been illustrative of man's highest moral aspirations and has been equated with spiritual enlightenment. The saint's halo is of gold, angels are represented with wings of gold, heaven has been denoted as the "City of Gold," and the time when humanity, recognizing its errors, will shed its false values and begin to honor the proper ones—a time when all creation will live in harmony with universal beauty and truth—is looked forward to as the Golden Age. Furthermore, it is as the Golden Rule that the most fundamental guiding principle of ethical conduct, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you," is honored.

And so on, *ad infinitum*.

The Regal Personality

The classical homoeopath honors the extensive network of "correspondences" existing between the homoeopathic medicines and the material world (correspondences which, as Hubbard caustically remarks, "hold much light for those into whom they can pene-

trate").* Thus, all these images and associations of gold, together with well-attested listings in the provings and oft-observed characteristics in clinical practice, have given rise to a certain picture of the *Aurum metallicum* patient. He is a serious, conscientious, self-respecting individual of solid values, who harbors delicate scruples and a strong sense of responsibility and is the personification of trustworthiness, sound understanding, and innate authority.**

Hahnemann states that *Aurum* "is anxious to reflect deeply about this or that subject" and that one of his principal delusions is that he is "neglectful of his duties"; Clarke, that he has "excessive scruples of conscience"; Kent (in his *Lectures on Homoeopathic Materia Medico*), that "his intellectual nature is intact; he has been sound in his business affairs . . . He has been a good father, he has been observed by others around him to be intelligent." Building on these foundations, Whitmont elaborates:

The type of people that require gold as a medicine are would-be rulers, "kings" in their own limited domains, who feel responsible for the destinies of their "subjects" and for the rigorous carrying out of the responsibilities they themselves have assumed. They tend to be active, strong people, in the center of things, executive types, heads of families or businesses •who take on or feel [that] they bear heavy responsibilities, often more than they can or should handle.

The Hubbard quotations in this chapter have been taken from two articles, "The Planets" and "Mental Portraits of Remedies Familiar and Unfamiliar," found in the volume of her collected writings, *Homoeopathy as Art and Science*.

**Once again the reader is reminded that for stylistic purposes (to honor the King's English so to speak) the masculine gender is employed throughout this volume when referring to patients in general, as -well as to the physician in charge of a given case.

Although this traditional picture by no means fits every patient requiring *Aurum* as a constitutional remedy, it is sufficiently accurate to serve as a starting point for the present analysis.*

A gold imbalance may thus occur when a fundamentally capable, reliable, stable person finds himself discouraged in a worthy endeavor. Typically, *Aurum* was the hard-working man who suffered from digestive disorders and high blood pressure. From a sense of duty and good citizenship, he had left private business to lend his managerial skills to a municipal job, specifically to manage a sector of the New York City Department of Transportation. There he found himself in the thankless position of always pushing himself to work harder than was good for his health, yet always conscious he was not doing enough. No matter how scrupulously he applied himself to his duties and fought bureaucracy—how diligently he tried to keep within the budget and still provide adequate public transportation to a city teeming with restless millions—his Herculean efforts were merely palliatives, and one difficulty overcome inevitably generated another even more insurmountable. But he was committed to his job and determined to persevere ("At least no one can fault me in idealistic fervor!").

For a long time he resisted taking the radical step of consulting a homoeopath ("Whatever that may be!"), but eventually he succumbed to the importuning of a colleague and allowed himself to be dragged to a doctor who prescribed for him *Aurum metallicum* 200c together with a change of diet. By adhering to the diet and receiving the remedy at judicious intervals, both the digestive symptoms and

* *Aurum metallicum* (like *Ignatia* or *Thuja*), while undeniably a "constitutional" remedy in its own right, is frequently prescribed to patients of other personality types who, at a given point in time, are passing through an *Aurum* phase or temporary emotional state. Throughout this chapter *Aurum's* two roles (both as a chronic and an acute remedy) are addressed interchangeably since their distinction is, to all intents and purposes, irrelevant for a fuller understanding of the nature of homoeopathic gold.

the hypertension of the patient improved, despite the continued pressure at work.

Discernible in this case are three additional characteristic features. First, as befits the "regal" personality (or one in a position of sovereignty), *Aurum* tends to be conservative in his tastes and preferences. The male, especially, respects the status quo, with its conventional values, and is far from eager to espouse anything that savors too strongly of sedition or "New Age." In contrast to, for example, *Natrum muriaticum*, the type is, as a rule, well-adjusted to this world and marches in step with the rest of humanity. Second, since framework and regularity are clearly fundamental to the authoritative individual, *Aurum* functions best within a structured environment (organizations, corporations, institutions; cf. *Lycopodium* in *PT*). And third to be noted is his dedication. This attribute is the healthy expression of an inherently devotional nature (the unhealthy expression being the type's well-known religious melancholy or anxieties of conscience) and further strengthens his desire to protect the existing social order.

In general, the type does not actively seek power or prestige. There is no need for him to do so. With his aura of rectitude and authority it comes to him naturally.** But by the same token, not having had to struggle seriously for his position, he is the more shocked by losing it.

Such was the case of the self-respecting businessman in his forties who was laid off with a pension when two oil companies merged. There was no hint of blame; it was the inevitable conse-

*To avoid repetition of character traits already discussed in greater detail in this author's *Portraits of Homoeopathic Medicines*, volumes 1 and 2, henceforth the symbols (*P1*) and (*P2*) refer the reader to the volume where the remedy appears.

"As Shakespeare says of Greatness in *Twelfth Night*, "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them," and *Aurum* is one of those seemingly born to power or, at least, prestige.

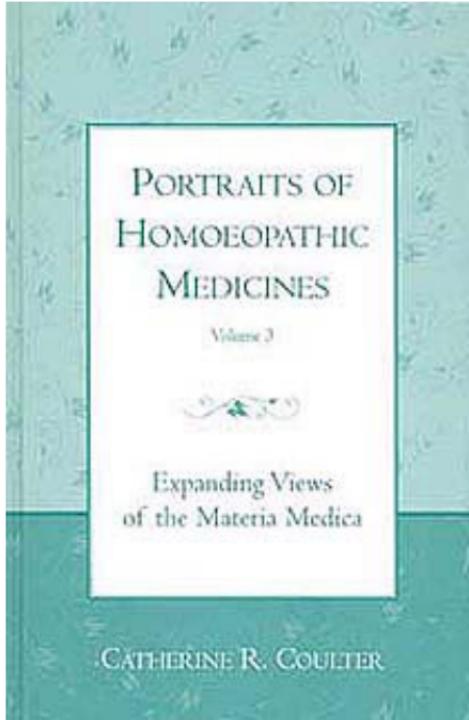
quence of a major recession. However, the shock to the man's pride was severe, particularly in view of a gross misjudgment on his part. When he learned that he was being called into his superior's office he had told his family and colleagues that he sensed that he was going to be offered a promotion (so secure felt he of his position). This error of judgment gave rise to the classical *Aurum* self-condemnation: "I am entirely to blame. I don't seem to do anything right these days. It's not surprising I was fired. I deserved to be. And now I've let down my family . . ." and so forth ("imagines he deserves reproach": Hering).

Furthermore, with the loss of a lucrative salary and a job that he liked, the man's life became devoid of all meaning. He was unable to sleep, hardly touched food, and could not exert himself to combat his apathy and try for another berth in the business world ("Why bother? What's the use of trying? I'll just blow my next opportunity the same way I did this one. Might as well live off my pension for the remainder of whatever days I have left"). Like a native of the Polynesian Islands who makes up his mind to die and then curls up and does so, this patient seemed to be settling into a self-imposed decline.

Daily doses of *Aurum metallicum* 30c for one week, then less frequently as improvement in sleep and appetite set in, helped the sufferer to curb his overactive self-reproach and rally his spirits sufficiently to carve out for himself a satisfying (if financially less remunerative) niche in a friend's accounting firm.

Gold is one of the principal remedies for individuals suffering from a blow to their self-esteem or threatened with loss of face, whether merited or not ("mortification": Hahnemann). Indeed, the hermetic tradition equates gold with the ego:

In the alchemist's view, metals influence or represent different planes of the human economy: *Aurum* the [masculine] Ego . . . When the Ego needs fortifying [*Aurum*] brings it in, strengthens the spirit. (Hubbard)



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