



THE BLACK BOX TREASURES (#17)

There is an interesting term called the “black box theory”. It speaks about an object which can be analyzed in terms of its input and output, but there is no knowledge of its internal workings. 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 be seen...

(Arsenicum needed! #17)

In the last newsletter I mentioned a mysterious small black box that contains about thirty small vials. In one of his letters, Fr. Peter probably speaks about it saying that he received a homeopathic medicine box from the brother of

Fr. Jelowicki in 1861 (ACRR 960). In the same letter he says that this homeopathic kit is a “very good” one, however he notices that some remedies are lacking. So he asks Fr. Alexander Jelowicki to buy them for him in Paris and to send the package to Rome through Princess Odescalchi...

Today Fr. Peter’s medical box belongs to the museum of the Sisters of the Resurrection in Rome and it contains small vials. Each vial has a label on it with Latin names. For example, we can find the vials that Fr. Peter mentioned were in short supply like “Aconitum”, “Arsenicum” or “Nux Vomica”. It is interesting that when we look at the picture of the kit it seems that almost all vials are full, almost as if they had never been used. This certainly, wasn’t the case. When we read Fr. Peter’s diary he mentions his homeopathy practice and his patients on many occasions. On September 11, 1853 he noted: “I’m again in Albano. Last evening I again went to visit some patients that I have been treating. I have more than 100 such cases. Many come to me, others I visit myself. What misery! But how much good!” (Semenenko P., *Diary*, September 11, 1853). On another day he wrote “They urge me to treat homoeopathically, which causes me a lot of trouble. Canon priest Se Santis from Albano brought Marq. Serlupi to me. In the house of Princess Odescalchi, I have been helping Mr. Bourdon, for a few days. He is the tutor of her children, and so forth” (Semenenko P., *Diary*, September 26, 1853). It is fascinating that we can find the same names that Fr. Peter mentions in his diary, in his “patient files”. I showed you such files in the last newsletter!

So today you can see pictures of Fr. Peter’s mysterious black box and one vial. However, one fundamental question is still not answered... namely, was Fr. Peter successful in his homeopathic efforts? Enjoy and stay tuned!

