

Lycopodium Clavatum.

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Lycopodium might truly be called the Atlas of Homœopathy, for upon its shoulders rests one of the most complete and convincing proofs of the theory and law of homœopathic practice. Disprove the action of Lycopodium and you destroy with one fell stroke the truth of the law of dynamization, and the whole superstructure of the homœopathic materia medica would necessarily fall, and be buried at the very bottom of the ocean of failures and false theories which have marked the history of medicine even down to the present time. Does minute subdivision, either by trituration or dilution, develop any extra medicinal qualities in a drug? Lycopodium stands out conspicuously as one of the proofs that such is the case, which fact represent that wide gulf that separates the two schools of medicine, and which can never be successfully bridged, no matter how assiduously some of our men work for such a therapeutic monstrosity, for, as Dr. Clarke has so well said. "They will make the bridge higher at the homœopathic end, and—*facile descensus Averno.*" Should this professional amalgamation eventually be accomplished, however, we should remember the biological fact that "hermaphrodites are usually short-lived, and always sterile."

It was Hahnemann who rescued Lycopodium from its ignominious use as a coating for allopathic pills to one of the great polychrests of the homœopathic materia medica. Lycopodium is a long-acting and a deep-acting remedy, and seems particularly adapted to the extremes of life, *i. e.*, the ailments of children and old age. Probably the most difficult thing is to know where to begin in dealing with such an important remedy.

Thus we may say to the oculist that Lycopodium is the chief remedy in hemeralopia (night-blindness), and has

probably cured more cases than any or all other remedies in the materia medica, especially when the trouble has been brought on by exposure to the eyes; but it is not so much to the specialist as to the general practitioner that my remarks will be directed.

Lycopodium affects the *right* side of the body just as characteristically as Lachesis does the *left*. Most complaints, whether of an inflammatory or catarrhal nature, will invariably show this tendency to be *worse* on the *right* side, or to travel from *right* to *left* when Lycopodium is the remedy. Another prominent characteristic is that most complaints of the Lycopodium patient are worse from 4-8 o'clock P. M. Now these things are very peculiar, and I do not know of any philosophy which can explain why any given drug should select a special time or place for its sphere of action, so I leave these things to be explained by those persons who are continually seeking causes for everything in the realms of bacteriology. But some one will say, "I do not believe these things." It is sufficient to say that neither Homoeopathy nor any other great thing was ever built by unbelievers. Generally speaking it may be stated that any remedy which, when internally administered, produces a profound action on the skin, must certainly possess great value as a curative agent in disease, acting as it does from center to circumference, which, as you know, is one of Hahnemann's *directions* of cure. Lycopodium does this, for it has a very decided action on the skin. I have cured some of the worst forms of eczema with it.

The eruption may be *dry* or *moist*; if dry, the scales may cover the entire scalp, and from beneath them will ooze a yellowish, watery, or viscid secretion, with a very offensive smell, like foul meat. If the eruption be moist, the surfaces will be raw and inflamed looking, sometimes ulcerated, and the offensive odor will be present. The itching is intense, and I have seen patients dig deep holes into the flesh with the finger-nails, causing quite profuse bleeding. Now

this itching is worse at night, especially from the warmth of the bed, which is like *Sulphur* and *Mercury*. *Natrum sulph.* also has great itching of the skin, which is worse while the patient is undressing. The only use I know for the crude Lycopodium powder is in chafing of the skin, which condition it will cure very quickly when applied externally.

The Lycopodium eruptions are very apt to *begin* on the *right* side of the body (behind the ears, for instance), or at least be *worse* on the right side.

Another sphere in which Lycopodium has a deep action, is in the gouty or lithæmic patients. We have all met them—the wandering pains, now here, now there, soreness and enlargement of the joints, sensitiveness to cold or to weather changes, sandy deposits in the urine, and when these deposits grow less the joints begin to inflame and enlarge, the pains throughout the body become worse, and the patient is generally miserable, but as soon as the deposit reappears in the urine there is a sense of general relief. There are drawing, aching pains in the lumber region, and the joints become very stiff. The patient moves with difficulty, but these pains are relieved by *warmth* and *motion*.

Most prescribers will immediately think of *Rhus tox.* for such a condition, but *Rhus tox.* will only help such cases if they are of recent origin; the old chronic cases having those modalities require Lycopodium, as it is capable of going to the bottom of these conditions.

If we have similar modalities, and the case is sycotic, *Thuja* is the remedy. One important characteristic of Lycopodium occurs in the urinary symptoms, viz.: "Copious urination at night, scanty by day. The night urine is of *low sp. gr.*, and the day urine of *high sp. gr.*" Now you all know the diagnostic importance of this symptoms, as it occurs in Bright's disease, and in Diabetes at certain stages. I firmly believe that there is a stage in both of these disease when Lycopodium will step in as a curative remedy. One note of warning: It is a very dangerous thing to try to remove the

sandy deposits from the urine of a gouty patient, unless the whole system is turned into order by the curative remedy. The gouty deposits will cease, but sugar will almost certainly appear in the urine, or calculi will form in the kidneys.

Another symptom that I have found of great value in prescribing is: "Pain in the back, relieved by urination." I believe only one other remedy has it, viz.: Medorrhinum; I have made dozens of cures on this symptom. In little children you find the symptom occurring like this: "The child cries before urinating." If in addition to this you find red sand on the diaper, or even a reddish stain, you may give Lycopodium with every confidence of curing your patient.

Lycopodium is one of my main-stays in *renal calculus*; it should here be compared with Berb., vulg., and Thlaspi bursa. We can also see how Lycopodium may be very useful in the symptoms arising from *vesical calculus*.

Another use that I make of Lycopodium is in Pneumonia of children, in which either the case continue to grow worse, notwithstanding well selected, or had been allowed to go on without medical aid until conditions became serious. A more unpromising case than such a Lycopodium picture, I cannot well conceive. As you enter the room probably the first thing to attract your attention is the rapid and labored breathing; every muscle of respiration seems to be working to the limit; the alæ nasi have a "fan-like" motion even more rapid than the respirations. The child lies with his eyes half closed, the face is pale and drawn, there may be hectic flush on one cheek, the forehead, bluish rings around the eyes, the lips are dry, the tongue may also be dry, and there is a bluish-white color of the skin around the mouth. Emaciation is extreme, especially of the face, neck and upper extremities. The chest seems to be completely filled with mucus, even as if the whole parenchyma of the lung were softened (compare, Ant. tart.). I have seen Lycopodium come in as a life saver in several cases when the

above conditions were present. There are cases of Pneumonia in which the mental state of the patient leads to the remedy. The child wakens extremely cross and irritable, striking at those around it, kicking off the cover screaming, and making itself generally disagreeable. The child awakens as if frightened (compare also Cuprum, Bell., Stram. and Zincum). Lycopodium is also a useful remedy in Phthisis Pulmonalis, especially when it is the result of neglected or maltreated Pneumonia. "Emaciation beginning in the body, and extending downward," seems to be characteristic of Lycopodium in lung troubles. We must here compare *Natr. mur.*, which also has emaciation beginning above and extending downward (*Arg. nitr.* has the reverse). Another point that may be brought out at this time is this: When you have a boy with a dry, hacking cough, who is very much emaciated, who shuns his companions, and who has a sort of "hangdog" look about him, you may almost certainly suspect him of practicing secret vices to excess, and Lycopodium will give you excellent results.

The stomach and bowel symptoms of Lycopodium are quite prominent. Lycopodium belongs to a group of flatulent remedies of which *China*, *Carbo. veg.*, and *Arg. nitr.*, are also prominent members.

Nash says, in differentiating these remedies, that: "*China* bloats the whole abdomen; *Carbo veg.* prefers the *upper*, and Lycopodium the *lower abdomen*." Also, that "the flatulence of Lycopodium is usually associated with some chronic liver trouble." This latter observation has been frequently confirmed in my experience with the drug.

Further points in differentiating the foregoing drugs are these: In *Arg. nitr.* the eructations are very violent, rushing out with a loud noise which can be heard over the whole house, but afford *no relief* to the patient. In *Carbo veg.*, distention is great and eructation *relieve*. In *China* the eructations not only *do not relieve* the patient gets no relief from passing gas upward or downward.

A symptom upon which many prescriptions have been based is, the patient has an entire lack of appetite, or has a desire for food, but the *first mouthful fills him up*, as it were, causing a sense of satiety, and he can eat nothing more. We must remember that Lycopodium has an opposite state also, viz., the patient has a ravenous hunger, especially at night; must get up at night and get something to eat. Canine hunger, his head aches if he does not eat. The eructations of Lycopodium are *sour*, rising from the stomach to the throat, and are so acrid that the burning sensation remains for hours afterward.

Many articles of food disagree with the Lycopodium patient, but I wish to call your attention especially to two.

Do not allow any patient who is taking Lycopodium to eat either onions, (Thuja), or oysters, for they will surely hinder the cure as well as cause a lot of trouble for yourself and patient. Idiosyncrasies are rather hard to explain, so I will not attempt to do so.

One practical point is, that you will often find persons who, upon eating oysters too early in the season, in hot weather, will come down with a violent diarrhœa, and vomiting, with severe crampy pains in the bowels; there is probably no better remedy for this condition than *Alæs*, but when the patient gets sick every time he eats oysters, the remedy is *Lycopodium*. We might say, therefore, that sickness from eating *oysters in season* calls for *Lycopodium*, and sickness from eating *oysters out of season*, *Alæs*.

Another symptom which sometimes leads to Lycopodium as the remedy is: "Sensation of constriction, or as if a cord marked the diaphragmatic attachments" (compare, Ars., Alumina, Cactus grand., and Arg. nitr.). As might be expected from the action of Lycopodium on the liver, it has great constipation, but the symptom I wish to call your attention to, is: "Ineffectual urging from spasmodic constriction of the sphincter ani, preventing stool." This symptom I have most frequently found in women of a highly neurotic.

temperament, and I have cured it with Ignatia, Sepia, and Natr. mur., but you see that Lycopodium has it also. The Lycopodium patient suffers from headaches. If he goes beyond his accustomed meal-time, on comes a headache. In headaches with *hunger* compare: Psorinum, Phos., and Cactus grand. The Lycopodium headache is *relieved* by *taking off the hat*, showing the aggravation from *warmth* (compare, Glon., Ledum), while *Silicea*, another great headache remedy, is *better from covering up the head*.

- Lycopodium is sometimes indicated in diphtheria. It corresponds to very severe cases, in fact, just as low a zymotic state as Lachesis. The trouble usually begins on the right side, and travels toward the left, and the symptoms are *ameliorated by warm drinks*. This is directly *opposite* to Lachesis, whose symptoms begin on the left side of the throat, and go toward the right, and are decidedly *aggravated from warm drinks*.

The mental and nervous symptoms of Lycopodium present some peculiarities. The Lycopodium patient is avaricious, hence Lycopodium might be a good remedy for misers. Very sensitive to sudden noises, as the slamming of a door or the ringing of a bell (Natr. mur.), and the patient wrinkles his face. There is also much twitching of the muscles of the face. The patient wrinkles his forehead, especially in disease of the chest (Pneumonia), but if we find this same symptom in brain troubles, I always think of *Stramonium*. The Lycopodium patient is a very fearful and apprehensive person; fear when alone (compare, Ars., Phos., and Bismuth), but also the opposite state, i. e., wants to be alone, "Dread of men," the text says. "Very sensitive, even cries when thanked." The Lycopodium patient may also be very sad and melancholy, and the text says, "Satiety of life, particularly morning in bed—wants to die." We find this patient also very tearful, like Puls., but unlike Puls., the Lycopodium patient scolds, is extremely irritable, and imperious in her manner. You will note that many of the

Lycopodium symptoms are worse after sleep (Lachesis). There is mental feebleness, and confusion of mind; uses wrong words, or omits parts of words when writing—threatened paralysis of the brain. Now you see that we have a fairly good image of what occurs in old people, or in one prematurely old, when softening of the brain is threatened.

Lycopodium causes *burning* in the spine from the base of the brain to the coccyx, and this burning is worse when patient *lies down*; wants some one to fan his back, it feels so hot.

Now *Phos.* has burning all the way down the spine also, but is worse when the patient *moves*. Another peculiar symptom found under Lycopodium is, milk in the breasts of young girls, and in boys. "Burning and stinging in the mammary glands" (compare, *Apis*, *Carbo an.*, *Phos.*, and *Laurocerasus*).

In recapitulation, we may characterize the action of Lycopodium in one word—WEAKNESS. Weakness from top to bottom; weakness *worse* on the *right side* of body. The symptoms of Lycopodium are aggravated principally from 4 to 8 P. M., and many symptoms are worse after sleep (Lachesis). Lycopodium has aggravation from a warm room and we ought to compare *Puls.*, and *Apis mel.* All these remedies have also *evening aggravation*:—*Apis mel.*—the symptoms are worse from 3 P. M. until late in the evening; Lycopodium: worse from 4 to 8 P. M., and *Puls.* also has evening aggravation of many of its symptoms.

Puls. and *Apis* are characteristically *thirstless* remedies, while *Lyc.* also has the symptom, or thirst with disgust for drink, *i. e.*, a few mouthfuls fill him up.

The inflammatory states of the throat and stomach are *relieved* by *warm drinks*, (*Ars.*). The headaches are worse from warmth, as are also the skin symptoms. Now, as to the general appearance of the Lycopodium patient I have most success when I have a thin, emaciated person, of dark complexion, dark hair and eyes, who is morose, melancholy,

and very irritable, or I should perhaps say very sensitive as to his disposition ; brown spots on the skin ; much accumulation of gas with distention of the abdomen, and sour eructations.

The text says that Lycopodium is complementary to *Iodine*, and I would think it should be complementary also to *Lachesis*.

When we see the marked emaciation, the ravenous hunger, the dark complexion, the aggravation from warmth, etc., of *Iodine*, we can readily see the similarity of action in these two remedies.

Lycopodium belongs to a trio of remedies which follow each other well, especially when given in the order named, *i. e.*, Sulph., Cal. Carb. and Lycopodium. These drugs should not be given in a routine way, but prescribed according to indications. Other groups which follow each other well may be named as for instance : Puls., Silicea and Fluoric ac., or Arnica, Rhus tox., and Calc. carb.

Thus we see that some remedies seem to follow each other quite naturally, and with better effect than if the order were changed. Herein lies one of the successes in prescribing, for we may readily interrupt the action of the properly selected remedy, and hinder the cure, by prescribing a remedy out of its natural order or sequence.

Several years ago I presented a paper on *Lachesis* to this Society in which I treated of the *left side* of the body, and I have taken this opportunity to present the *right side*—Lycopodium, for I can assure you, my friends, that success in medicine, as well as in other walks of life, depends very much upon the *side* from which you approach it. If from the side of *skepticism*, then the dark clouds of failure and despair will hang heavy upon your pathway, but if from the side of *belief*, then will the golden sunshine of truth enlighten your pathway even to the highest pinnacle of success.

DISCUSSION.

Dr. H. R. Edwards : I would like to mention one fact

that interests me, and that is that when Lycopodium ceases to act, Bacillinum in the thirtieth potency acts wonderfully as an intercurrent. After a few doses go back to Lycopodium, and you will get good results. Bacillinum acts as well on the right side as on the left.

Dr. T. H. Carmichael : Away back in 1886 Professor A. S. Smith, while lecturing on remedies for gastric diseases, said, "There is a medicine which I must mention, one which homœopathsists use in troubles from indigestion in which the patient complains of feeling full after eating a few mouthfuls of food ; the symptoms are worse in the afternoon. I prescribe it very frequently and think a great deal of it."

Dr. J. J. Tuller : In the true neurasthenic state when the abdominal symptoms of Lycopodium predominate and are associated with dulness of memory, inability to concentrate the mind, loss of consecutive thought with pressure in the head, tenderness at base of the brain and down the back of neck ; these symptoms are often found in neurasthenia, and if they are associated with the abdominal symptoms of Lycopodium, they are, as a rule, very much relieved by the remedy Lycopodium. An exact counterpart of this picture can be reproduced in a hysteric, and there you can pour Lycopodium in by the barrel and it will prove to be absolutely useless ; this not only applies to Lycopodium but to every other remedy of this character. Lycopodium, however, is a very useful medicament when it is properly and systematically prescribed.

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