

## Myrica Cerifera in Hepatic Derangements.

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In our Materia Medica we have a number of remedies which have a special affinity for the liver, but Myrica Cerifera is one that is seldom mentioned.

The wax myrtle, as it is commonly called, is a shrub growing in sandy soil at the seaside and on the shores of the great lakes. Provings were made by Chase, C. Wesselhoeft, Krebs and others and were reported in 1864.

Many conditions for which we are called upon to prescribe, are surgical, and we are reminded of Hahnemann's injunction to discern "what is curable in disease." This is especially true in hepatic diseases where we meet the medical case, the borderline case, the surgical case, and the malignant case, therefore great care must be exercised in discriminating.

Patients having liver affections present many symptoms in common: jaundice of varying shades; frequently great mental depression; dark-colored to mahogany-colored urine; grayish-yellow or clay-colored stools. It is utterly impossible, however, to base a homœopathic prescription on common symptoms, there must be some characteristic or peculiar symptom or some modality to guide us in the selection of the remedy.

Myrica Cerifera seems to be especially indicated in the catarrhal type of jaundice. There is catarrh of the mucous membranes in general; naso-pharynx, bronchi, bile ducts, etc. The tongue is thickly coated; the mouth dry, with tendency to crust formations. Thirst is present, and a craving for acids. The stools vary from clay-colored to light yellow and ashygray. There are two characteristic symptoms which will lead to the selection of Myrica.

1. Accompanying the jaundiced sclera, there is an abnormal redness of the eyelids, with some swelling, and a

smarting of the eyes with burning and a sensation as of sand in them.

2. An intense itching of the skin without definite eruption, accompanies the jaundice. In Hering's Guiding symptoms it is described as "itching as from flea bites."

The essayist has used Myrica Cerifera in cases of catarrhal jaundice attended by intense pruritus, with prompt relief of the itching, and a gradual removal of the jaundice. The eye symptoms may or may not be present. In a recent case in which both the skin and eye symptoms were present, brilliant results were obtained from the administration of Myrica Cerifera 3x; the severe pruritus was greatly relieved within twenty-four hours.

A few comparisons will be presented in conclusion:

*Chelidonium*—There is marked jaundice of the skin and sclera. The tongue has a thick yellowish coating showing the imprint of the teeth, and there is a bitter taste in the mouth. A gnawing and oppression in the stomach is relieved by eating. Stitching pains occur in the liver and extend to the lower angle of the right scapula.

*Chionanthus*—The liver is enormously enlarged and sore. Jaundice is present. The tongue is heavily coated and there is loss of appetite. The stools are ash or clay-colored.

*Digitalis*—This remedy is indicated in jaundice that is associated with passive congestion of the liver when dependent upon heart disease. The pulse is slow, weak, irregular and intermittent. The liver is enlarged, sore and painful. The stools are white or grayish, and pasty. There is nausea and vomiting, worse from the mere sight or smell of food (Colch.). The tongue is clean and thirst is present.

*Hydrastis*—This is another remedy useful in catarrhal jaundice with passive congestion of the liver. The tongue is large and flabby and shows the imprint of the teeth. There is loss of appetite and a constant sensation of sinking or gone-ness in the epigastrium, which is not relieved by eating and is accompanied by a sensation of pulsation.

*Mercurius* is indicated in acute and chronic hepatitis with jaundice. There are sharp pains in the region of the liver, aggravated by lying on the right side. There is intense thirst while the tongue is coated, moist, large and flabby, and shows the imprint of the teeth. The patient is worse at night and has profuse sweat which affords no relief. The breath and body having a foul odor.

*Podophyllum* which some one has called "vegetable calomel," is indicated in chronic hepatitis with jaundice when attended by the characteristic, usually painless, diarrhoea. The evacuations are yellow to green in color, very offensive, very profuse, each movement leaving the patient prostrated. Pro-lapse of the rectum usually accompanies the diarrhoea. The time of aggravation is 4 to 9 A. M.

Many other valuable remedies might have been discussed in this comparison. Bry., Calc. Carb., China, Crotalus, Lach., Lycop., Nux. Vom., Phos., Sang., Sepia and Sulph. are all worthy of study in the patient having hepatic derangement, and each one of the remedies will be found to have an individuality and characteristics of its own.

#### DISCUSSION.

Dr. Willam B. Griggs: That has been one of the neglected remedies in liver conditions. It was first introduced to me by a doctor in a malaria case with jaundice symptoms. The characteristic symptoms were jaundice, swollen and itching eyes and a catarrhal condition. I was able to make a very prompt cure with *Myrica Cerifera*, and therefore I can confirm to the letter what Dr. Wan Tine has said about this *Myrica Cerifera*.

He has given the characteristic guiding symptoms, and given them very accurately in his paper. There is no comparison between *Myrica Cerifera* and Phosphorus in the treatment of malignant jaundice.

A remedy which Dr. Van Tine has not mentioned which may appropriately be discussed is *Dolichos*. I had a case in

the Children's Hospital, with almost a chalky white stool, violent itching, particularly at night; asking for cold water for relief, and when cold water was given, it set up a most incessant burning. With these characteristic guiding symptoms I have been able in several cases to use Dolichos when we failed with our common remedies, such as Myrica, Crotaulus and Chelidonium.

The majority of people when they see a case of jaundice immediately fly to China, Chelidonium or possibly Hydrastis, and forget to look for the uncommon remedies. And you may have an uncommon case. And we never can expect to make a cure in a haphazard or empirical way. We must at all times get the exactly indicated remedy.

Myrica Cerifera has been very much neglected, I believe, in catarrhal conditions, as well as in liver conditions.

There is very little that can be added to the paper of Dr. Van Tine.

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