

Characteristics of Opium.

JULIA C. LOOS, M. D., H. M., HARRISBURG.

The Homœopathic prescription is based upon the symptoms, strange, rare and peculiar, in the individual patient and in the remedies. The peculiar symptoms in the patient are those distinguished from the ordinary symptoms, from the common features, of the disorder which he suffers. The peculiar symptoms of the remedy are those which distinguish it from all other remedies, even from those most similar, in their effects.

One very strong hindrance to prescribing the Homœopathic remedy is the difficulty in perceiving the peculiar, characteristic symptoms of the patient; selecting them from all those gleaned from the patient's and the attendant's reports and the personal observation of the doctor. From all the pains, modalities, tissue alterations, desires and aversions, notions and functional derangement, to select those that especially mark the individual case, that sketch the image of the disordered individual, and hence the image of the remedy needed for his cure, in one of the fine arts to which the homœopath, is trained. No difference how carefully the remedies are prepared, nor how accurately their keynotes be memorized, without this training, they cannot be used successfully, either in high or low potency.

To the mind imbued with the desire to explain all symptoms in a so-called scientific diagnosis, satisfied to determine localized congestion or inflammation, somewhere, a particular blood alteration, or other tissue change, some particular diathesis or mechanical or chemical irritation; to such the search for the characteristic features is almost impossible. From such a point of view it is most difficult to accept the strange desires and circumstantial influences as anything but whims or notions of the patient, to be ignored or controlled by his own will.

Acquaintance with a remedy includes familiarity with its entire nature, especially the characteristics by which it is distinguished from all other remedies, even those most similar. Some remedies are characterized by the selection of certain tissues for their influence. Bryonia acts especially on fibrous tissue, Belladonna, on the vascular system. In some remedies, the mental sphere expresses the peculiar features as exemplified in the anxiety of Arsenicum and Aconite, the tearfulness and depression of Pulsatilla. The pace of action in addition to rapidity.

In some remedies the characteristics are found in modalities, *e. g.*, Bryonia aggravation from motion, Nux aggravation from noise, time aggravation of Lycopodium, and Kali Carb. Some peculiarities are expressed in the painful sensations, as the burning of Arsenicum, the stitching of Kali Carb., the prickling of Nitric Acid and Hepar Sulph. In some remedies the concomitants, apparently unrelated to the most troublesome or pathological symptoms, prove the characterizing tone, as in Zinc, the fidgety feet and in Rhus, the nightly restlessness.

In the OPIUM patient, the following characteristics portray the nature of the remedy, sketch its image, in the proving and in the suffering patient who applies for relief and cure of varied disorders, of easy or difficult diagnosis.

LACK OF IRRITABILITY is a prominent feature of Opium. He suffers slightly or no pain from many complaints usually painful. Ulcers, inflammation, even suppuration in various parts, are peculiarly devoid of pain. The nerves are not sensitive, do not respond to the stimuli, as normally. With this there may be definite, functional inactivity, with the organs in a do-nothing condition. Parturition pains cease, contents of bladder are retained, digestion fails, yet no pain is experienced therewith. Remedies, selected according to apparent leading symptoms, do not arouse reaction. This torpor extends also to the mental sphere, occasioning deception in taste, touch and other senses, lack of realization of

surroundings, perversion of senses. A sort of mental and physical numbness exists.

Sluggishness and painlessness are most prominent, but there is also an oversensitiveness in special senses. Hearing is accentuated, small sounds being distinct and exaggerated. There is sensitiveness to light and odors.

Drowsiness is another prominent characteristic. However the individual may explain it, however much he may rest and sleep with whatever he does he is sleepy and sleeps easily when normally expected to be awake. The parturient woman sleeps in the midst of her expulsive pains; the worker dozes at his occupation; the house-wife sleeps when sitting; the child sleeps when nothing has occasioned fatigue. Unnecessary and unaccountable sleepiness with any complaints, even when pain is present, is remarkable.

There is in Opium also a sleeplessness quite as unaccountable. With all surroundings conducive to sleep, in the midst of fatigue, with no exacting influences, she cannot sleep. Night after night she retires and remains awake or sleeps lightly with long wakeful intervals.

The vascular system is burdened by continued congestions. Internal and external congestions exist. The face is besotted, flushed, bloated, the brain is engorged as expressed in all the symptoms of mental stupor and cerebral pressure. The apoplectic condition is presented, and in the event of clot formation the usual paralytic symptoms supervene.

Paralytic conditions form another prominent feature of this remedy, manifested in the overaction or weakness of sphincters, the inactivity of abdominal organs. In spite of most concentrated voluntary efforts evacuations are retained, with sensation of closure of the rectum. After long periods of no inclination, or long-continued straining, there is evacuated a single, hard, large, dark ball of feces, the characteristic Opium evacuation. This tendency is expressed also in paralysis of the tongue, difficult articulation and other paralysis.

The mental sphere expresses a strong characteristic in susceptibility to emotional excitement. Complaints of various sorts result from excessive joy, anger, shame and especially from fright.

Headache and other congestions, spasms or other manifestations may develop, but the most peculiar symptom is the persistence of the sensation of fear, remaining after the occurrence of that which has occasioned the fright. The fear of the fright remains.

There is a strong tendency to spasms in this image. There are twitching, trembling, spasms of one part of the body, cerebro-spinal spasms, worse from heat, either warm air or hot bath, epileptiform or true epileptic spasms. Spasms occur frequently during sleep, when the victims are unconscious of their occurrence. During or after the spasm purple-red flush of skin, dotted with bright red spots, on swollen, distorted face. Spasms from fright or emotional excitement, from shock or injury.

With these symptoms or any complaints there is aggravation from heat. Complaints develop from heat. Patients averse to heat with desire for cool air and cold applications. Perhaps the most painful condition of Opium is the intense intestinal pain, griping, cutting, squeezing, spasmodic pain, resembling the poison effects of lead, for which it is an antidote.

Much more is to be said of the detailed symptoms of this valuable remedy, but mingled with them will be found the strong characteristics mentioned. In an array of symptoms that we fail to recognize as any definite image some one of these features may stand prominent and direct the attention to this remedy, when further study reveals that the entire symptoms sketch is harmoniously similar and use of the remedy eradicates all the troublesome condition with its symptoms, major and minor.

Opium is said to be especially suited to the aged and the

very young, because in these periods the Opium conditions are prone to develop.

The mal-nutrition, known as marasmus, and the spasms of childhood sometimes take on this form, manifesting these characteristics. In advanced life the vascular weakness affords opportunity for congestive conditions with apoplectic manifestations. In the middle aged as in the very old, when the peculiar symptoms are present, this remedy has promptly effected reaction, relieving the cerebral congestion within an hour and restoring normal activity within a few days, leaving practically no trace of the distressing appearance present at the time of its administration.

There is, however, no limitation that shall exclude it from the needs of those in any period of life. When, during parturition, a period is reached when nothing appears to be accomplished, delivery is delayed and the woman has no complaints and expresses no desires, except perhaps to sleep, this remedy in potency arouses re-action, delivery is properly completed, the retained faeces and urine are evacuated, and activities are restored even to natural expulsion of placenta and membranes, without mechanical interference.

The patient with unmistakable symptoms of brain involvement, too weak to rise unaided from the pillow, helpless and without ambition or pain, temperature ranging from 100° - 103° , sleepless, with ugly visions or or dozing intermittently with characteristic Opium rectal evacuations will be started on the road to perfect recovery by the use of this potentized remedy, even after days of unsuccessful use of only partially indicated remedies.

The patient, suffering recurrent headaches for years after fright, in whom the old fear returns with the pain, associated with mental depression, will be released not only from the fear but the periodic headache and all other concomitant troubles after receiving a few doses of Opium.

The intense inflammation, such as occurs in felons or other suppurations that involve increasing areas of tissue,

when accompanied by the drowsiness, the relief from cold applications or absence of pain even on pressure, calls not for surgical interference and bacterial antiseptics but demands Opium, under whose influence the violent inflammation and suppuration are checked, the part healed and the patient generally improved more worthily than by any injections to raise the theoretical opsonic index.

When in the absence of menstruation, the girl in her teens is seized during sleep by epileptiform spasms whose stertorous respiration rouses the household, calling the members to aid the unconscious victim, these seizures are checked and the pelvic function is restored with general order, by Opium, when the characteristics are present.

Whatever the condition, with these guiding symptoms, Opium is needed to start the curative action in the patient, manifestly improved in every way by its use. Thus it is evident that in the hands of the Homœopath, who can perceive its guiding symptoms. Opium is a most valuable curative agent, when indicated. In its crude forms, as a narcotic, it but destroys the opportunity of the doctor to detect the needed remedy image and abuses the economy by forcing the disorder more internally while it hushes the natural expressions of that disorder.

DISCUSSION.

DR. RICHARD BLACKMORE : A couple of years ago I had an experience with Opium in a case of eclampsia, it was a case that I feared for very greatly. The labor was one of the easiest that I had even seen. I saw the attack at 6 P.M., at which time the symptoms looked like Opium. I gave a dose of Opium and watched for results. At 8 the people in the house were getting nervous, and sent for an old school doctor. I told him not to interfere with the dose of Opium which I had given. The next morning the patient was very much better. A single dose brought back the patient which, one might say, was dead.

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