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LYCOPODIUM CLAVATUM

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Reprinted from

THE BRITISH HOMŒOPATHIC JOURNAL

Vol. LI, No. 4. October 1962

ARSENICUM ALBUM

A STUDY

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PHARMACOGNOSY

The background of this remedy is a remarkable one. It illustrates in a striking manner the homœopathic contention that what a drug can cause in the way of symptoms it can also cure when used as a therapeutic agent in suitable doses. Put succinctly in this particular instance it is a case of "The Killer Cures".

Arsenicum album, arsenious oxide, has indeed a galaxy of cures to its credit, but this harmless looking, tasteless, colourless, white powder possesses a most sinister background of lethality. For decade after decade white arsenic held the pre-eminent role as the first choice of the homicidal poisoner.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries those "Olympic" poisoners, the Borgia family, made full use of arsenic in their cantarella, aqua di Napoli and other subtle poisons that could kill quickly or by slow degrees, as seemed most expedient. There was no Marsh Test to detect the presence of arsenic and the victims appeared, as far as symptoms went, to have died of natural causes. Such was at any rate claimed to be the case.

A famous vendor of poisons in the seventeenth century was La Tofania who distributed her "Acqua Tofa'na" to "distressed, adulterous, neglected or jealous wives over wellnigh all Europe. Apparently her poison was merely crystallized arsenic compounded, for no apparent reason, with the herb cymbalaria." She was executed at the age of 70. "After La Tofania's death fewer husbands died suddenly in Italy."

So common was death by poisoning in the glamorous era of Louis XIV, Le Roi Soleil, that the period was known as the Age of Arsenic.

The popularity of arsenic as a convenient and not too readily suspected poison extends into the present century. Sir Sydney Smith records that murder by poisoning was very common in Egypt, where he was Principal Medicolegal Expert to the Ministry of Justice from 1927 onwards. He states, "I do not think there was a day during my 11 years in Cairo in which no case of arsenic poisoning was under examination in my laboratories."

A twentieth-century epidemic of poisoning took place in a district in Hungary enclosed in a loop of the river Tisza. An old witch-like woman, known as Auntie Fazekas, dispensed doses of what she called the "water of inheritance" for a charge of 80 pengo (worth about £3). She did a steady trade in these fatal doses for about 20 years until in 1929 the authorities took belated action. A sample batch of 50 bodies were exhumed, of which no less than 46 were found to contain arsenic. Her brew was made by stewing a few pennyworth of arsenical fly-papers.

In *Strong Poison* by Dorothy Sayers, that master of meticulous detail, there is an excellent description of acute arsenic poisoning in the opening chapters. The plot centres round the fact that a dose of arsenic which can be swallowed by an arsenic habitué with impunity will be lethal for an unprotected individual.

Arsenic does in fact provide a striking example of the phenomenon of acquired drug tolerance. Small doses of the substance administered to horses will encourage a sleek glossy coat. Small doses are given to turkeys as an aid to breeding and to combat turkey disease. The birds become immune to the poison but their flesh if eaten inadvertently might prove deadly.

The term poison is, of course, a relative one. The degree of toxicity will depend on several factors—the size of the dose, the form in which it is administered, the portal of entry into the body, and, of special significance, the susceptibility or otherwise of the dosee.

Schenk, in his book on poisons, records—"I have seen and spoken to many arsenic eaters in Styria, Lower Austria and Carinthia. Woodcutters, hunters and mountain guides in these districts believe that arsenic makes the breathing easier and the step more certain. I myself saw a porter in Deutsch-Landsberg at the foot of the Kor Alp consume a lump of arsenic the size of a pea. I estimated it at almost half a gramme = four times the fatal dose."

It is obvious, therefore, than in *Arsenicum album* we are dealing with a drug of no mean potentialities.

PHARMACOLOGY

Cases of acute and, also, of chronic arsenic poisoning provide a wealth of information on the tissue affinities of the drug and the symptoms it is capable of causing. These are very varied and only too easily apt to be ascribed to "natural causes".

In *Acute Poisoning* the main symptoms are a burning sensation in the mouth, followed in about half an hour by nausea, faintness, burning in the throat, severe pain in the stomach, increased by pressure, shortly accompanied by frightful retching, vomiting, diarrhœa and tenesmus. Dehydration and cramps with collapse ensue and death occurs in some 6 to 12 hours. A picture of acute gastro-enteritis, with involvement of the vasomotor system resulting in rapid exhaustion, anoxia, and collapse.

In *Chronic Poisoning*, which may be homicidal with sublethal doses, or accidental, even perhaps iatrogenic, the symptoms are multiple and reveal a variety of affinities with different tissues, notably mucosa, skin and appendages, peripheral nerves, bone marrow.

The oral, nasal and pharyngeal mucosa becomes progressively dry and unusually red in colour. Constant thirst is an accompaniment.

The eyes become red and injected, smart and burn, and the eyelids show œdematous swelling. Dimness of vision is complained of.

Both acute and chronic gastro-intestinal symptoms occur, leading to confusion in diagnosis.

Neuralgias occur in various sites and tend to be persistent. Peripheral neuritis may result in the onset of paræsthesias or localized paresis.

The skin may exceptionally be clear and transparent-looking. More usually it acquires a dry, dirty appearance with associated pigmentation and keratosis, the latter change especially affecting palms and soles.

There is a great liability to urticaria with long weals which itch and burn unbearably. Later actual eczema may supervene. Hair and nails become brittle and may be shed.

Progressive loss of weight, malnutrition and anæmia lead to cachexia and myocardial degeneration. Finally death ensues, being ascribed to progressive ill-health, probably accompanied by gastro-intestinal disorder.

This sequence of pathological events may result from one large but not, at the time, lethal dose or, what is more likely, from oft-repeated smaller doses.

PHYSIOGNOMY

Typically the *Arsenicum* individual is spare, stylish, neat and well-groomed, possibly of rather sallow complexion.

There is a general air of tension, unease and restlessness—the restlessness of

the hard-pressed executive rather than the fidgetiness of the dilettante, suggesting *Phosphorus*.

The *Arsenicum* patient makes quick movements, walks across the floor rapidly and takes a quick look round the room; on sitting down seems fidgety, doesn't calmly wait to be questioned but starts straight in to relate his tale of symptoms.

The countenance appears lined and drawn. Skin and mucosa look shrivelled and dry. Face and hands look skinny. Expression is anxious, worried, even perhaps terrified.

The physical restlessness is obvious even in grave illness with marked prostration.

The picture may be one of collapse with pale, cold, clammy skin and a pervading cadaveric odour. Discharges are acrid with an offensive putrid smell.

Puffy œdema may be noticed affecting the lower lid or of the limbs.

Speech is apt to be rapid and precipitate with special emphasis on accuracy and detail.

PSYCHOLOGY

The *Arsenicum* subject is restless in mind as well as in body, unduly anxious and worried about many things, sure there is something definitely, even seriously, wrong.

May be rather hopeless and despairing about the situation, doubtful if there is much point in relating the symptoms as it will not be possible for anything to be done.

Is excessively tidy to the point of tiresomeness, fastidious, fussy, addicted to fads.

Is extremely sensitive to circumstances and immediate surroundings, irritated beyond measure by slackness or idleness on the part of others, given to alternations between hilarity and despair. Oversensitive to pain, noise and odours, especially the smell of food. Severe pain may cause fainting.

Fear is a prominent and important feature. Apt to be full of apprehension and dread, gets all worked up if anything goes wrong or over fear that something will go wrong; especially liable to panic at night.

There may be a sudden wave of fear, especially when alone, fear of death, or fear of being alone, especially in the dark; may search the house for robbers. Fear too, possibly, of doing hurt to someone, especially if a knife or other weapon is lying handy.

Despair of recovery may result in actual fear of death with certainty of same so that both medicine and food are refused—"What's the use anyway!"

All this fear, horror and apprehension tends to get worse in the evening as darkness comes on.

Causeless fear of impending evil may be associated with utter weariness of life accompanied by suicidal feelings.

Features mentioned by a French author are—critical of everything and discusses the faults of others; scruples of conscience, feels has offended "tout le monde", goes round asking everybody's pardon; subject to sharp regrets and bitter remorse; likes to cause suffering both to people and to animals.

May see ghosts both by day and at night. May complain of a feeling as if the bed was turning over and tipping him onto the floor. May have delusions of vermin.

PHYSIOLOGY

Inadequacy of the cutaneous circulation and irregular distribution of blood-flow produce an extremely chilly individual, sitting over the fire in the winter,

wanting to be well wrapped up, subject to ice cold waves which surge through the body and give place to sensations of burning heat from scalp to soles.

Appetite is often poor with desire for fat, vinegar and pickles, but aversion from fat is just as likely. May go off all food.

Thirst is characteristic with a desire for frequent sips of water rather than a long drink. Keeps water by the bedside at night. Prefers warm or hot drinks. Children may not be thirsty at all. In fever may develop an unquenchable thirst for quite large quantities during the sweating stage, and ditto in states of severe dehydration.

With regard to sleep, although drowsy by day is apt to be extremely restless at night, being driven from bed to get up and wander about, make a cup of tea and so on, perhaps several times during the night. Dreams are often terrifying.

Apt to wake about 1 a.m., thirsty, agitated, with fear of death, and possibly sweating. May sleep with hands raised above the head.

With regard to *modalities*, cold in any form *aggravates*, cold air, cold food, cold fluids, as do also alcohol, the least draught and wet weather. An important *chronological aggravation* occurs at or after midnight up to 2 or 3 a.m.

Relief is obtained by warmth, local heat, warm or hot drinks; by sitting bolt upright, standing erect; by movement; after sweating.

PATHOLOGY

Certain general features should be noted. Pains are characteristically burning, whether in stomach, bladder, vagina, lungs—as if coals of fire were burning one's vitals. Or the pains may be described as like "hot needles or hot wires piercing the flesh".

Typical is the rapid onset of grave prostration, seemingly quite out of proportion to the rest of the symptoms or even without any very apparent cause at all.

Secretions and excretions tend to be excoriating, causing burning and redness, and to have an offensive odour of putrefaction and decomposition.

There is a tendency to the development of gangrene in inflammatory conditions or erysipelas of severe type. Inflammations are of sudden onset, violent and prostrating in nature.

Periodicity of symptoms is an important feature, with a tendency to recurrence at the same time each day, at intervals of one, two or more weeks, or at the same season of the year.

There is a liability to hæmorrhage with easy bleeding from any surface, but especially from mucous membranes. The blood tends to be black and offensive.

Serous or synovial effusions may occur, or œdema may develop in various sites. Symptoms tend to be right-sided.

In the *Head* there are two main types of headache associated with *Arsenicum album*. One is a periodic congestive headache of migraine type, accompanied by throbbing, burning, anxiety and restlessness and also possibly by severe nausea, retching, and vomiting. It is aggravated by light, noise and movement, and there is a desire to lie quietly in a dark room, with the head raised on pillows, and for cool air and cool applications.

The headache may be unilateral or there may be a dreadful pain in the occipital region which makes the sufferer feel dazed or stunned. These headaches are apt to occur soon after midnight, or be triggered off by excitement, over-anxiety, over-exertion, or by becoming over-heated when walking. They may come on in the afternoon, get gradually worse and last all night. The pain is paroxysmal. Prostration is marked. Pallor is usual.

The other type of headache is a neuralgia of the frontal or supra-orbital region. It is associated with extreme sensitivity of the scalp—comb or hairbrush seems to penetrate to the surface of the brain—possibly a sensation as if "the

brain flaps against the inside of the skull when walking". This type of headache is aggravated by cold and relieved by warmth.

Eye symptoms for which *Arsenicum* may be needed are acute conjunctivitis with swelling of the lids, excoriating sanious discharge, and much redness of the canthi with burning sensation. There is bag-like swelling of the lids or below the eyes (this in contrast to *Kali carbonica* with bag-like swelling above the eyes).

Pain in the eyes on first opening the lids after sleep, aggravated by turning the eyes to one side or the other; severe photophobia; corneal ulcer; these also are mentioned under this remedy.

In the *Respiratory System* there are a number of conditions in which this remedy may be curative. Acute coryza, as in hay fever, with paroxysms of violent sneezing and profuse watery discharge which is excoriating to nostrils and upper lip.

Old chronic nasal catarrhs, with a tendency to constantly take fresh colds of acute type with rapid spread to throat and larynx, accompanied by hoarseness and burning pain, which is increased by drinking cold fluids and relieved by taking something warm.

The catarrh may spread downwards and cause a dry cough, aggravated by either eating or drinking and worse out of doors.

There may be a suffocative cough at night with wheezing respiration and much frothy white sputum. In actual asthmatic attacks also *Arsenicum* may be curative, especially when the attack occurs soon after midnight and causes the sufferer to sit bolt upright in bed or even get out of bed and walk about in search of relief. The asthma is liable to be of psychogenic type, attacks being precipitated often by some emotional stress such as hearing bad news over the phone.

Other chest indications are stabbing pain like hot needles in the upper third of the right lung; gangrenous pneumonitis with hæmoptysis and horribly offensive prune juice sputum containing clots.

The *Alimentary System*, as would be expected, presents many indications for the remedy. Ulcerative stomatitis with easily bleeding gums. Blue discoloration of gums.

Acute gastritis, everything taken being vomited immediately, even water. A sip of hot water may be retained for a minute or two but cold fluids are returned promptly. By comparison with *Phosphorus* when cold fluids are desired, but are vomited as soon as warmed up in the stomach.

With the *Arsenicum* gastritis there is burning in the œsophagus whether swallowing or regurgitating. The stomach is extremely sensitive and the least touch is resented. Local heat is comforting.

Enteritis is associated with tympanites, great tenderness to touch, marked restlessness with endless tossing till too exhausted to move. Stools are dysenteric, blood-stained, watery, colour of prune juice, smelling like putrefying flesh. Every stool burns like fire in the rectum and there is in fact burning throughout the whole length of the bowel.

Despite the burnings the pain is ameliorated by warmth and by the application of external heat. It is, however, aggravated by the least amount of food or drink, from taking a deep breath, and from least touch or pressure on the belly wall.

A very similar state of affairs is recorded under *Secale* but it is distinguished by a desire for ice-cold drinks, wanting to be uncovered, preferring a cool room and open windows, and relief from cold water sponging.

Vomiting and diarrhœa may occur together, with the typical pallor, restlessness, prostration and cadaveric odour, fearful anxiety and expectancy of death.

Other conditions to note are, piles which protrude like grapes, burn like fire, are hot, dry and bleeding; anal fissure; pruritic eczema around the anus.

In the *Cardio-vascular System* the remedy may be called for in relation to heart failure associated with great weakness and prostration, a very irregular pulse, and relief by sitting bolt upright. Palpitation may occur on least exertion. The remedy is especially effective when agonizing precordial pain occurs while walking, even on the level.

A curious symptom is a sensation as if "waves of ice cold blood were flowing through the vessels, or of boiling hot water ditto".

In the *Urinary System* acute nephritis with suppression of urine, possibly resulting from excessive loss of fluids by vomiting and purging, may respond to the remedy. It has also proved effective in chronic renal disease when orthodox remedies have failed.

In the *Genital System*, the remedy is called for in acute inflammation of the external genitalia associated with œdema, erythema of erysipeloid type, and much burning, smarting and stinging.

It is also related to vaginitis with a whitish, thin, watery discharge which excoriates the skin and is so profuse as to run down the thighs.

Incidentally the remedy has been found palliative in connection with carcinoma of uterus and also of breast.

In relation to the *Nervous System*, neuritic symptoms are met with, burning neuralgic pains with numbness and tingling—fingers feel "like sausages"—also localized pareses with resulting disability. The remedy may be considered in connection with chorea, also with epilepsy.

The *Locomotor System* does not present a great many indications for this remedy. It may be of use when there is a complaint of severe drawing pain in the back between the shoulder-blades, relieved by lying down. Also when great unease in the lower limbs prevents sleep, impossible to lie still or get comfortable at night in bed.

Skin eruptions of various types may call for the remedy, especially if accompanied by much burning and itching with desire to scratch, but scratching only makes matters worse—psoriasis, urticaria, herpes, and other scaly dermatoses.

Ulcers that burn, become phagedenic, and tend to spread in all directions, and exude very offensive discharges.

Itching and burning of the skin; after rubbing the itching is relieved but the burning remains.

POSODOGY

This is a remedy of very wide usefulness. The characteristic physical and psychological features and the modalities are the chief guides to its selection.

It is said to be incompatible in sequence with *Pulsatilla*. Complementary remedies are *Carbo vegetabilis* and *Phosphorus*, notable for states of collapse and prostration respectively.

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A STUDY

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MANY of the plants employed as remedies in Homœopathy may be described as strong poisons, menacing in their very appearance and nature, violent in their manner of growth and in their toxicity, but each of them in its individual characteristics separate and distinct.

Such, for instance, are Aconitum, Belladonna and Nux vomica. One can well imagine that these plants with their obvious propensity for poisoning living cells and tissues, and thus creating disorder and disharmony within the body, may be transmuted into valued remedies, able to cure the symptoms they cause in accord with the homœopathic principle—"The Wounder Heals."

It is, however, surprising that an apparently inert and innocuous little plant like the club moss can produce one of the most powerful therapeutic agents in the whole materia medica homœopathica. Such nevertheless is the case.

PHARMACOGNOSY

Lycopodium clavatum, Wolf's Claws, is also known as Club moss, Lamb's tail, Fox tail, names suggested by its appearance. The classification of the plant is somewhat indeterminate: it is said to lie between the mosses and the ferns. Incidentally one of the characteristics of the *Lycopodium* subject is extreme diffidence, the being in two minds, like the plant itself which cannot decide whether to be a fern or a moss.

The plant is described by C. P. Johnson, 1861, thus: "This plant is found abundantly on heaths and mountain pastures, throwing out long straggling stems, thickly coated with hair-pointed leaves, and extending often to the length of many yards, rooting at intervals by means of long fibres. The fructification is in erect scaly spikes growing in pairs on the extremities of stalks".

The prickly character of the plant and its persevering manner of growth are also suggestive of other *Lycopodium* features, namely a capacity for biting sarcasm and unkind speech and a proclivity for pig-headed over-conscientious application to a given task or pursuit.

From the creeping, prostrate branches arise aerial stems, often forked at the summit, with slender bristle-tipped bracts. These stems bear the fruit, sporophylls, which when mature contain spores which can be shaken out and sieved to provide a mobile powder of light yellow colour and devoid of odour and taste. It floats on water, and when boiled with it, sinks. It burns with a quick flash when thrown into a flame.

This seemingly inert powder, utilized as a dusting powder to prevent excoriation of the skin in babies and, in the process of pill-rolling, to prevent the pills from sticking to one another, nevertheless possesses this surprising capacity to explode when sufficiently heated. The *Lycopodium* subject, although to outward appearance a fairly mild and plodding type of person, can nevertheless "blow up" under provocation, and frequently does.

The spores contain about 50 per cent of fixed oil, chiefly lycopodium-oleic acid, also sugar, phytosterin, traces of alumina, phosphoric acid, and silica. Regarded as medicinally inert in the natural state, these spores become a powerful and deeply acting remedy with a wide range of application when potentized.

PHARMACOLOGY

We are told, "*Lycopodium* acts profoundly on the entire organism". This seems a somewhat sweeping statement, but the tissue affinities of the potentized drug are certainly extensive. An effect on the *endocrine glands*, notably the gonads, is evidenced by physical weakness, hypotonia and circulatory stasis, a combination which tends to the development of an inferiority complex in the psychobiological sphere.

Affinities with *mucous membranes*, respiratory, alimentary, and genito-urinary, and for *the skin* lead to degenerative changes, impaired function and progressive ill-health. Ultimate changes include necrosis, abscess formation, ulcerations and extreme emaciation. All this is presumably secondary to inadequacy in the circulation with resulting oxygen deprivation in the tissues involved.

PHYSIOGNOMY

This remedy is related to a very definite type of psycho-somatic make-up. Quite a plethora of physical features are mentioned as being characteristic of *Lycopodium* subjects.

They tend to have a sallow complexion, often with flushed cheeks and a rather red nose; perhaps a yellowish spot in the temporal region and multiple pigmented plaques and moles, especially in the region of the upper chest and dorsum.

They appear lean, even emaciated, about the face, neck and chest, but are quite well-covered in the lower part of the body.

Freckles are common on the face. The brow tends to be wrinkled with a marked vertical frown above the root of the nose. Spasmodic contraction of the facial muscles can be observed in a steady alternating rhythm, and the face tends to twitch at every jar or bang. A notable feature is a curious quivering of the *alae nasi* and these movements do not synchronize with respiration.

Poor muscular development is evidenced by such signs as toneless stance, head-nodding, side to side movements of head, clumsy awkward movements of limbs, even staggering gait. There is also a tendency to quite definite muscle tremor after extra exertion or when upset emotionally.

Speech may be stammering, with delay in finding the right word, or it may become vehement and violent when heated in argument. There is a tendency to whistle softly when not talking, and to do so unconsciously.

The head hair is plentiful but body hair is scanty and the belly smooth. Early greying of the hair may occur. A peculiar physical sign that may be present is marked coldness of one foot while the opposite member is warm or hot.

PSYCHOLOGY

In this sphere too the *Lycopodium* subject presents a wealth of characteristic features. Noticeably conscientious and orderly he cannot bear to be corrected or found fault with or opposed, and becomes frantic if chivvied. He is a poor arguer.

He is intellectually active, must be occupied, finds relief in action, movement, and active exercise, especially out of doors. He is extremely self-conscious, shuns crowds, parties, children en masse, but is also averse from complete solitude and likes to have someone around.

He is apprehensive before an ordeal, from diffidence and lack of self-confidence, but rises to the occasion when it arrives. Apt to worry about the future and may seem parsimonious as the result.

He is fearful of the dark, of ghosts, of failure, of strangers, shrinks from appearing in public, and hates being watched when at work. He is also averse from the effort of undertaking anything new.

Temper is a problem. The child flies into tantrums or goes berserk if provoked

or ticked off. Quick to take umbrage at any slight, insult or rebuff, the *Lycopodium* subject tends to dwell on injuries, real or imagined, to harbour resentment and exaggerate trifles. When sick he becomes domineering, imperious and impatient.

There is the ever-present liability to sudden explosions of wrath. The silent, sallow, rather sombre individual suddenly erupts into brilliant talk or blazing wrath, neither of which are sustained for long.

There is also a tendency to want to get on with the job and get it finished. In a hurry he pushes past other pedestrians, runs words together when speaking, drops letters out of words or gets them jumbled when writing or typing.

Black moods are common, and satiety of life, especially on waking in the morning. Moist eyes or a "lump in the throat" are easily produced from sentimental emotion, as when thanked for a gift, at partings, reunions, confronted with sad or touching situations.

There is great sensitivity to music, to noise, especially loud or sudden noises, and to pain. A desire for open spaces is associated with an aversion from being shut in and confined or restricted. There is also intolerance of tight clothing, especially round the neck, and of being approached or touched.

A noticeable attribute is lack of aptitude for finance and commerce—not good at either argument or arithmetic.

Mental weariness may ensue with confusion of thought, indecisiveness, forgetfulness of names and misanthropy.

It is evident, therefore, that there is a certain inadequacy in the *Lycopodium* individual, especially in relation to physique and circulation. With this is associated a temperamental diffidence, a haunting fear of failure under stress, set off to some extent by hyper-conscientiousness and a penchant for meticulous attention to detail.

PHYSIOLOGY

A definitely chilly individual, hates the cold and feels paralysed thereby in both mind and muscle, but also tends to flag in great heat, which embarrasses the not too active circulation.

While liking to be comfortably warm is oppressed by too much clothing or a hot stuffy atmosphere.

Appetite is apt to be capricious. Starts a meal quite hungry but feels satisfied after a few mouthfuls. Or may feel ravenously hungry almost immediately after taking quite a heavy meal. May have no desire for food, but appetite returns on starting a meal. There may be complete anorexia for solid food, only fluids being acceptable. Sometimes there is hunger at night associated with an empty sinking feeling.

In the matter of food preferences and dislikes, there is a definite fondness for sugar and sweet things and a marked preference for hot meals and hot fluids, also for savouries. There is a tendency to eat too fast. Vegetables and stodgy foods are unattractive, and there is intolerance of cabbage, peas, beans, milk, pastry, onions, oysters, and rechauffé dishes which tend to upset the digestion.

Sleep tends to be dream-ridden, often with nightmares entailing a feeling of being suffocated or held down. Limbs may give a sudden jerk when dropping off to sleep, possibly accompanied by a sensation of falling. Wakes from sleep cross, "ugly", and depressed, but improves when up and about with consequent acceleration of blood flow.

May perspire on quite slight exertion—a cold clammy sweat with odour of onions. Easy nervous sweats under emotional stress. Sometimes a curious inability to sweat, which tends to clear up after taking the remedy. Severe sweats may be followed by intense thirst.

PATHOLOGY

The *Lycopodium* subject is prone to chronic types of ill-health or to exacerbations of symptoms. These are manifestations of the widespread lack of tone in the musculature not only of the skeletal system but even more of the plain muscle of the walls of blood vessels and the gut, leading to circulatory inefficiency.

Sudden fluctuations in the blood-flow in one site or another may produce sudden flashes of heat, sudden satiety of appetite, sudden onset of pain or discomfort with sudden cessation of same.

Symptoms tend to be right-sided, or start on the right side and then extend to the left, spreading either horizontally or from above downwards. There is a tendency to physical unease, with complaint that chair or couch feels uncomfortably hard.

With regard to *modalities*, in general symptoms are *aggravated* by impact of cold air, by taking cold food or drink, in a stuffy hot atmosphere. Physically they are made *worse* by touch, pressure, the weight of clothes or bed-covers, by over-exertion and when lying on the right side.

Aggravation also results if emotionally hurried, harried or worried, also if idle or unoccupied. Chronologically the worst times are on first waking in the morning, and from 4 to 8 p.m.

Conversely *relief* is afforded by reasonable warmth, by taking hot food or fluids, by loosening the garments, by uncovering and in the open air. Active movement and active occupation also help.

In relation to the *head region* giddiness may be noticed in the morning, both on and after rising from bed, also at times while talking, eating or drinking. This may be accompanied by a feeling that with every movement the brain seems to oscillate inside the skull.

Severe headaches occur in the temples, as if the skull was being crushed in a vice. These are made *worse* by heat, by the warmth of the bed, by getting hot and by lying down. They are *relieved* by cool air, uncovering the head, by open air and gentle movement.

A hunger headache, often present on waking in the morning is relieved by taking food. This in contrast with a similar headache related to *Cactus* which is made worse by eating.

Eye symptoms worthy of note are pain in the eyeballs, swelling of the lids with sticky discharge, styes toward the medial canthus; also sparks, flickerings before the eyes and distressing awareness of *muscae volitantes*.

Quivering of the eyelids may be troublesome. Looking intently at revolving objects causes a sensation as if something was going round and round inside the body. Vertical hemianopia may occur, only the left half of the object being seen.

Ear conditions that may call for *Lycopodium* are otitis media with thick, yellow, offensive discharge; chronic deafness; various forms of tinnitus; sensations as if "hot blood is rushing into the ears"; eczema of the pinna and skin behind the ear with the presence of crusts and fissures. This will be specially so if the symptoms are right-sided.

In the *Respiratory System* there are many important indications for the use of this remedy.

A tendency to take cold at the least provocation, with involvement of the frontal sinuses and obstructive nasal catarrh. The nose is blocked at night with compulsive mouth-breathing.

The catarrh may become chronic with formation of yellow or green crusts, and much thick tenacious post-nasal discharge. The nose becomes swollen and sore.

Sore throat, possibly with ulceration, starts on the right side, is *aggravated* by swallowing cold fluids and *relieved* by warm drinks.

There may be complaint of a sensation as if "a ball was rising up into the throat", causing a choking feeling, or a tight feeling in the throat when swallowing, associated with a constant desire to swallow saliva. Various other odd sensations related to the throat have been noted, mostly referred to the right side, e.g. "presence of sulphur fumes in the throat".

Lycopodium has been found of value in post-diphtheritic paralysis of the soft palate, with regurgitation of fluids through the nose.

Other chest symptoms related to this remedy are a feeling as if the chest were constricted by too tight a waistcoat (this in keeping with the general objection to any form of constriction); a sudden violent cough from a tickle as if there was a feather or a crumb in the larynx; a cough which causes a severe headache, is *worse* at night and productive of scanty, greyish, salty sputum; the cough is *aggravated* by taking a deep breath and by empty swallowing.

The remedy is indicated in pneumonia which is slow to resolve, and associated with flapping alae nasi and much wrinkling of the forehead.

Other possible indications are severe dyspnoea and wheezing, made worse by walking fast or climbing a hill; stubborn bronchitis with rattling respiration; burning and soreness in the sternal area.

The *Alimentary System* is a sphere in which *Lycopodium* comes very much into its own. In the mouth there is often a salty or putrid taste; the teeth tend to become yellow and discoloured, or covered with a gummy deposit, and to be tender to the touch so that chewing is painful. The tip of the tongue may feel "scalded and sore".

An important symptom is severe heartburn extending up to the pharynx. It is prolonged and almost intolerable and probably associated with pyloric spasm. Pyrosis is common with eructations which taste of food ingested, and burning pain like hot coals between the shoulder-blades. These symptoms are aggravated by cold fluids, but helped by heat.

Food tends to be bolted too rapidly with resulting bloating in the epigastrium which becomes distended like a drum, perhaps after a mere mouthful or two of food. Gastric distress may come on immediately after a meal, possibly with a "whirling sensation in the stomach" or as feeling as if "the stomach would fall down."

Lycopodium has a special relation to the colon, with much flatulent rumbling, irregular spasm giving rise to peristaltic tumour, incarceration of flatus causing a feeling of something pressing outward in the right inguinal region. There may be an actual right inguinal hernia present.

The clothing has to be loosened for relief and leaning forward gives some comfort, as does also the passage of flatus, but only pro tem. The flatus passed is non-odorous.

The remedy is often indicated when the liver is affected with local tenderness in the right hypochondrium and, possibly, evident jaundice. Also when there are recurrent bilious attacks or actual bile duct spasm.

Lycopodium shares with *Crocus*, *Pulsatilla* and *Thuja* the rather common complaint of "something alive moving about in the belly". It shares with *Belladonna* sensations of clutching—"œsophagus being clutched and twisted", "a hand in the abdomen clutching the guts".

A further indication for the remedy is constipation resulting from the abuse of purgatives associated with anal spasm, a sensation of incomplete evacuation after passage of stool, which is at first lumpy then changing to soft and narrow. The diameter of the stool varies according to the degree of spasm in the anal sphincter muscles.

There may be absence of any desire for stool for days, followed by much ineffectual urging, a symptom shared with *Nux vomica*.

Other rectal symptoms are pressure and tearing pain in the rectum, piles which tend to prolapse, bleed, and become very painful, and pruritus ani.

In the *Cardio-vascular System* the circulatory atonia associated with the remedy results in a tendency to get short of breath and distressed on exertion. Irregular alterations in blood-flow may cause a sudden rush of blood to one site or another, or the reverse, with the result that fingers or toes "go dead".

The remedy is mentioned in connection with aneurysm, varicose veins, varices of external genitalia, nævus, and anasarca of the lower half of the body.

The *Urinary System* shows a number of symptoms associated with the remedy. Aching pain in the loins before urination which is relieved by emptying the bladder. A tendency to shiver at the close of urination. Much frequency with the passage of large quantities of pale urine. At other times highly concentrated urine is passed containing a sediment of "brick dust" or "red sand" appearance.

There may be delay in starting the act of urination with a slow stream. Nocturia is common, the bladder having to be emptied several times during the night. The remedy may be called for in renal lithiasis with colic, especially if right-sided, also possibly in connection with chronic nephritis with anasarca.

In the *Genital System* in the male *Lycopodium* has proved of value in relation to psychogenic impotence, and also in pruritus affecting scrotum and groins.

In women, irregularities of menstruation, severe menorrhagia with clots, metrorrhagia with passage of dark blood and large clots may require the remedy. Also mentioned are great depression with irritability before the menstrual period which are relieved when the period starts, as is the case with *Lachesis*. A curious sensation may be complained of as if "gas was discharged per vaginum".

In the *Locomotor System* a number of symptoms are recorded as being related to *Lycopodium*. A tearing pain in the right side of the neck extending downwards to shoulder, arm and fingers. Drawing and tearing pains in the lower limbs. Restlessness in the limbs at night interfering with sleep. Severe back pain, aggravated by any movement and relieved by the passage of large quantities of urine and by heat.

Knees feel as if they would "give out", a symptom shared with *Ruta*. Soreness and swelling of joints, especially small joints, associated with nodular deformity, and relief of pain by gentle movement.

Skin affections may call for the remedy and the following conditions are mentioned. Chronic indolent ulcers which are painful, stinging, burning, and smarting, aggravated by heat and soothed by cool applications. Urticaria in weals or nodules which itch and burn, and are *aggravated* in a warm room or by warmth of bed. Eczema behind the ears with tendency to spread to the scalp and exude a sanious, watery discharge. Eruptions of various types which itch violently. Intertrigo of persistent nature. Dryness of the skin, especially of the palms.

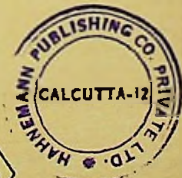
POSOLOGY

A main guide to the use of the remedy will be such characteristics as physical mediocrity associated with intellectual alertness, emotional diffidence and hyperconscientiousness, circulatory inadequacy, tendency to liver complaints and flatulent dyspepsia. The higher potencies, especially the 200 c, are apt to cause quite severe aggravation. In chronic disease it may be wise to start treatment with another anti-psoric remedy, e.g. the sequence *Sulphur* → *Calcarea carbonica* → *Lycopodium*.





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