

## Homœopathic Materia Medica as Applied to Surgery.

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Upon a prominent page of the transactions of the New York Homœopathic State Society and also upon those of the American Institute of Homœopathy the definition of a Homœopathic physician has stood for a number of years.

Ever since I first saw that definition, I have wanted to try my hand at defining, for the reason that I believe that there is something lacking therein and that it could be bettered. This opportunity now presents itself and so, in order to try how it works, I wish to offer a definition of a Homœopathic surgeon and to do so, of course we must not find too much fault with the other one, lest we fail. The one I would offer is as follows:—

A Homœopathic Surgeon is one who adds to his knowledge of surgery a special knowledge of Homœopathic therapeutics and practices his calling in conformance with that knowledge.

That there is such a thing as Homœopathic surgery, I need not tell the gentlemen who have graduated from, or who are now in attendance at the New York Homœopathic College. However, in these days of aseptic surgery, a surgery that has been wonderfully revolutionized since the days of two-and-twenty years ago when I sat upon the benches of this institution, in these days when surgery does so much, it would almost seem that there is very little left for the super-added knowledge, and application of Homœopathic therapeutics to do. This is, however, believed by very few, if by any, of the surgeons of the Homœopathic School. It is, however, a remarkable fact, and one that offers a proof of the value of this super-added knowledge, that the more serious the case, the more does the conscientious Homœopathic surgeon fly to his materia medica. Instead of the old cry that Homœopathy is good enough in mild cases, we find that those who know and have had experience, assert it is in the severe cases that Homœopathy is most successful.

Previous to the year 1855 there was no treatise in the Homœopathic School devoted exclusively to surgery. That year was made memorable by the publication of two works on the subject of Homœopathic surgery ; first, the one entitled "Surgery and its Adaptation to Homœopathic Practice," by William T. Helmuth, M.D., of Philadelphia, now the honoured dean of this institution, and the same year, but two months later, appeared "The Homœopathic Practice of Surgery," by Drs. B. L. Hill and James C. Hunt, who were professors in the Western Homœopathic College of Cleveland, Ohio.

I might remark in passing that, inasmuch as Professor Helmuth, soon after the publication of this work, accepted the chair of surgery in the Homœopathic College of St. Louis, Mo., the East, then as now, looked to the West for inspiration ! (Professor Royal asked me to say this.)

These works on surgery only differed from others in the adaptation of the Homœopathic remedy to surgical practice, and from that day to this, the success and eminence of Homœopathic surgery over that of the Old School is due to a practice in accordance with a knowledge of Homœopathic therapeutics ; for without this we would be no better than our brother surgeons of the Old School, and we will never admit that for a moment.

In order to give a more practical turn, perhaps, to what I may have to say and in order to conform to the title of my subject, namely Homœopathic Materia Medica as applied at Surgery, I will, at the risk of being exceedingly tiresome—and I can be that no one knows better than myself—give some points about a few of our surgical remedies ; remedies that are, and should be, in daily use by men who wield the scalpel—every-day surgical remedies.

A distinguished Edinburgh professor Dr. Macintosh, once said : "A pure surgeon is a man who prides himself on his knowledge of cutting and his ignorance of everything else." (He was not a Homœopathic surgeon who said that). The application of this saying you will have no trouble in making,

for, although I do not pride myself on a great knowledge of materia medica. I am proud of having once had a good knowledge of surgery, for I sat for three years under the teaching of our beloved dean, but that was over twenty years ago. I will first invite your attention to the Homœopathic Treatment of Wounds.

#### HOMŒOPATHIC TREATMENT OF WOUNDS.

There is a remedy, I believe, oftentimes neglected in in surgical practice, and this remedy is *Hypericum*. We are taught to regard it as the Arnica of the nerves and to look for a nerve injury when it should apply. A noted surgeon of our School once remarked to me that he could not practice surgery without *Hypericum*. "I give it," said he, "in all cases of irritable wounds and I find that it acts magically in allaying irritation in wounds of the superficial structures made by the knife." That is the keynote of its action, wounds of parts rich in nerves, hence we will find the remedy more applicable to some parts of the body than to others. Yet, no matter where the wound, if there be an intense hyperesthesia of the same, so much so that even though the deeper structures be incised the patient complains of the great sensitiveness of the *external* wound, give *Hypericum*. In all lacerations when the intolerable pain shows that the nerves are greatly involved, the remedy is well indicated. It suits the nervous depression of these painful wounds and it is a preventive of the condition known as tetanus. It does not matter whether this disease is caused by a germ or not, if so caused, it will remove the soil upon which these germs thrive and so act beneficially. Oftentimes there is a great nervous excitement consequent upon operations besides the painfulness of the cut, this is often marvelously subdued by *Hypericum*. There is no better remedy for a mashed finger, given internally and applied externally, than *Hypericum*, for where are the nerves more sensitive than in the finger ends? *Hypericum*, seems to me, to be an every-day remedy in surgical practice.

If you will turn to your symptomatology, you will find this symptom put down against *Staphisagria*: Mechanical injuries from sharp-cutting instruments. How this symptom got into the materia medica I do not recall, but I do not know that throughout *Staphisagria* is found an irritability of fiber and that a colic after an operation for stone in the bladder is often speedily benefited by a few doses of the remedy. Its special field seems to be in pains following abdominal operations, laparotomies, etc. With *Hypericum* it should always come to mind when severe pains follow these operations.

I do not intend to give all the remedies useful in wounds and so will pass over *Ledum*, which is said to be good in punctured wounds, and, by the way, I recently read in an Old School journal that *Ledum* was useful for mosquito bites—a variety of punctured wounds—and pass at once to our great vulnerary, *Arnica*. The use of *Arnica* in surgical practice is an old one. Dr. Von Grauvogl, the celebrated German surgeon and oculist, recommended its use after every operation on the eye, an application that seems reasonable, for the delicate structures of the eye are rich in capillaries, and injuries to these form the special field of the remedy. We need not dilate upon the value of the *Arnica* in injuries to the soft parts, contused wounds with hot, hard, shining swelling of the affected area, as these facts are as common as household words in a Homœopathic family. But it has a wider use than all this; in fractures it comes in frequently and Grauvogl used it before and after every bloody operation in the domain of surgery, ophthalmology and obstetrics in the third centesimal potency. Another use of *Arnica*, and this brings us to what are now-a-days termed infected wounds, lies in the power it possesses in delaying and preventing suppuration. It will prevent pyemia; in fact many good Homœopathic authorities look upon *Arnica* as a pyemic prophylactic and believe that it exerts a specific action upon septic poisoning. We all know its indications in boils and in abscesses. It has also proved useful where the limbs start continually after fractures, not a cramping as in

Cuprum, but a continual jerking with great soreness and sensitiveness of the parts.

Akin to Arnica in the field of septic poisoning stands *Rhus-toxicodendron*, whose action is more pronounced. This remedy presents in its pathogenesis a perfect picture of blood poisoning, or infection. It is a far more septic remedy than Arnica. It has a special affinity for the lymphatics and glands and it is in these structures that the sepsis is generally manifested. In purulent infiltration of cellular tissue it is first on the list and will be the most frequently indicated remedy and you are all familiar with the special indications. It corresponds well with the febrile disturbances of the pyemic state and is most useful in a fresh case. It is also a wonderful remedy for the after treatment of dislocations. Here the ligaments are involved and the affinity of the remedy for the fibrous tissues is well known.

In a case of Pyemia where there is great prostration, of course Arsenicum is the commonly used remedy and it is a good one. The greater the prostration and depression, the swifter the downward progress, the more urgent is the call for Arsenicum. It is a wonderful remedy in carbuncle, but here do not forget *Tarentula Cubensis*, which presents a perfect picture of sloughing carbuncle. The intense thirst immediately following an operation, where there has been much loss of blood, is most satisfactorily removed by Arsenicum. Do not forget the intense nightly aggravation of the remedy.

Another septic remedy is *Lachesis*, and its use in poisoned wounds has been known and tested from the moment of its introduction into our materia medica. It was to this remedy and its successful use in a dissecting wound that won to Homœopathy Dr. Carroll Dunham, a former dean of this Institution, and one whose memory will ever flourish in immortal green for his services to our cause. It will be indicated by the sensitiveness, the purplish colour, the great burning and an unhealthy appearance about the wound. In boils, carbuncles and abscesses, where there is a tendency of the process to take

on a malignant condition, it may be used with confidence. In gangrene, following wounds, it is eminently curative, traumatic gangrene is especially its field.

In almost every field of operative surgery there is not only a chance to employ the remedy, but we are neglecting the best interests of the patient if we fail to use it. In gun-shot wounds, the fore-going and other remedies may be used and may often assist nature in restoring injured tissues. I would recommend the careful perusal of a pamphlet by the late Dr. E. C. Franklin, entitled "Homœopathic Therapeutics in Gun-shot Wounds and the Sequelæ of Operation." It will make you wish that President McKinley could have had the benefits of the Homœopathic remedy.

Bleeding after operation is a condition that is sometimes reached by our remedies. *Phosphorus* and *China* are well tried drugs and will often correct a hemorrhagic diathesis, or a worn out and weakened system, which predisposes to easy hæmorrhage. Their administration will oftentimes be followed by a marked improvement secondary hæmorrhage prevented and new and better strength added to the patient, and this will lead to a more satisfactory recovery.

#### HOMŒOPATHIC TREATMENT OF INFLAMMATION AND ITS TERMINATIONS.

It would be superfluous to tell a Homœopathic audience of the value of our remedies in inflammation, suppuration, ulceration, or in gangrene. Our remedies for these states are well known, their indications precise, and they are used by all surgeons. The treatment of accumulations of pus is somewhat different now-a-days than it was twenty years ago, but the use of *Mercurius*, *Hepar* and *Silicea* will continue even though changes come about. It is the great beauty of our system that it is not founded upon the shifting sands of pathology. Lawson Tait said that he had to learn and unlearn five different theories of inflammation. The Homœopathic remedies, *Aconite*, *Belladonna*, *Apis*, etc., are just as useful now

as they were before the days of Lawson Tait and his five theories required five different treatments.

#### HOMOEOPATHIC TREATMENT OF BONE DISEASES.

There are in the domain of bone diseases certain remedies that appertain almost exclusively to a surgical side. Inflammation, suppuration, caries and necrosis of course, may require the same remedies that are used in like conditions of other tissues, but here we have some special remedies. In fractures we have *Calcaria Phosphorica*. In 1834, in Philadelphia, a wealthy old gentleman fractured his femur and as it had not healed together, an operation was determined upon by eminent surgeons. Before the time for the operation arrived, Dr. Hering was consulted. One grain of the phosphate of lime divided in five doses was given to the patient with the advice to put off the operation. Several weeks after this he came in his carriage to see the doctor. The callus was felt by the surgeons about ten days after the powder was given. The callus contained certainly 50 or 60 times as much phosphate of lime as had been taken. As he had not even allowed the two ends of the bones to be cubbed together, there was no doubt that the phosphate of lime given him as a nutritive remedy had acted as a functional one; that is, it had acted as a stimulant to the organism to draw from the food of the patient the necessary pabulum required, or phosphate of lime. *Calcareo phosphorica* is not a remedy for a complete absence of phosphate of lime or perhaps for even a deficiency of it in the system. There may be plenty of it and it may even be in excess in the urine, but it is a remedy for non-assimilation of phosphate of lime, there may be plenty of it, and yet it is not assimilated. In case of fracture where this non-assimilation is present, the remedy will work wonders. Also in rickets, osteo-malacia, etc., it is a valuable remedy. Then, too, there is *Symphitum*, which is an excellent remedy for irritability at the point of fracture. In caries we have *Asafetida* and *Aurum* and what surgeon could do without such remedies as *Calcareo*

*fluorica, Fluoric acid, Hecla lava, Platinum, Stillingia and Strontium?* It seems to me that these remedies are essentially necessary to the surgeon's materia medica armamentarium.

HOMŒOPATHIC TREATMENT OF TUMORS.

Not without some trepidation do I approach this subject which has been the cause of many an acrimonious debate in our medical gatherings. Works have been written on the subject, the entire literature of the school has been gone over and hundreds of cases have been cited to prove that our remedies certainly exert an influence on morbid growths. Materia medica men are apt to accuse the surgeons of being too anxious to use the knife and on the other hand surgeons accuse the materia medica enthusiasts of procrastinating its use until so much valuable time has been lost that they are really handicapped in their work. It seems to me that by combining the two ideas that the safest course, namely the middle one, is to be reached, and our patients offered the best chance. There is no doubt in my own mind of the power of certain of our remedies in curing tumors and in preventing their development. Let us consider for a few moments the drug *Conium*. Pliny states that the leaves of *Conium* keep down all tumors, and Stoerck found it effectual in curing scirrhus, ulcers, etc. We possess in *Conium* a remedy of precious value in antidoting the scrofulous, tuberculous and cancerous cachexias and diatheses. Tumours of a suspicious nature in the mammæ have been caused to disappear by the use of *Conium*. If there is any one thing that I am certain of in the domain of Homœopathic therapeutics, it is the power of *Conium* in the 30th potency to cure certain lumps in the female breast; it has been my experience to see tumours that were most suspicious disappears by the use of this remedy. Of course, the indications must be present here, as always, when a remedy is prescribed, and they are the piercing pains, tender glands fugitive stitches here and there, etc. More espe-

cially is it indicated if the lump dates from some injury as from a blow. I do not know whether other potencies would do the same, but I have found the 30th satisfactory and could cite a number of cases where it worked well.

I am fully aware of the disasters brought on by procrastination in such cases and that to the great injury of the patient, but in most cases of mammary tumours in the early stages the waiting of a week or two will not harm if the case be watched. This brings us to the consideration of cancers. Conium has undoubtedly checked, if not cured cancers of the breast, lip and stomach. Its special field, however, seems to be on glandular structure and so it is especially useful in breast cases. The history of Conium in cancer is a very old one, but it should be remembered, at the time when this history was forming, every hard swelling in the mammary gland was regarded as cancer, hence it is probable enough as Professor Benedikt says, it does not cure true scirrhus. But now and again we meet with a hard tumour in the breast, often enough doubtless mistaken for cancer, which Conium certainly does cure. Of this, several cases have come under my own personal observation. Sir Astly Cooper drew attention to this fact many years ago.

Another invaluable remedy is *Hydrastis*. This is of undoubted value in cancer, being often palliative if not curative. The great debility, the emaciation, the cachexia, all correspond to the field of the remedy. We have records where tumours of the stomach and pylorus have disappeared under the continued use of *hydrastis*, of lupus, epithelioma and malignant ulcers. In cancer it removes the pain, modifies the discharge and improves the general health to a marked degree. In the early stages of scirrhus, when it is in a gland or near one, it has worked well. Compare the diathesis, the worn, faded look, the swollen complexion, the hidebound state of the skin, the low spirits, the loss of appetite and the constipation, and see how close is the similitude.

There can be no doubt that remedies chosen according to the law of similars can cure tumors. Too many cases are on

record of patients who have had the knife held out to them as their sole relief and yet who were permanently cured by subsequent Homœopathic treatment. The art of curing tumors can be learned by each of us by following out the law of selecting the remedy *for the patient* rather than for the exact pathological state as expressed by the tumor. This is but one symptom, valuable, but not the chief one. Remember that tumors cannot be cured very rapidly, they are slow in developing, and as a rule, equally slow in disappearing. They are vital products, living growths. Speaking broadly, the tumor takes proportionately as long to be cured by medicines as it has taken to grow. And then remember that a tumor has often existed a long time *before* it is discovered. It had a life-history, a formative stage, before you diagnosed it.

But even if it is an operative case, the remedy may be used for the condition of the patient which permitted its growth and in recurring cases it will exert an influence to prevent its return. It is important to remember this in the more malignant tumors. Of course these two mentioned remedies are not the only ones for tumors; we must not forget *Phytolacca*, *Baryta Carbonica*, *Kreosote*, *Asterias* or *Arsenicum* and many others may suggest themselves from the symptoms of the patient, not the tumor.

I have seen *Lapis albus* cure goitres; but it will not cure all. I have seen *Calcarea* correct a mal-nutrition which permitted adenomata and the latter disappear, therefore, it seems to be the duty of the surgeon to combine his operative treatment with a Homœopathic constitutional treatment to secure the best and most permanent results.

In hemorrhoidal tumors it has always been a question whether the various operations of removal, strangulation, etc., ever really cured the patient. It cures the hemorrhoids; but what of the cause that produced them and which without correction continues to operate? Perhaps the hemorrhoidal vessels are so defectively done away with by the operation that the patient can have no more piles in the region of the

rectum, but may they not appear internally along the intestinal tract and set up more serious disturbances?

- *Nux Vomica* and *Collinsonia* and other remedies are credited with doing much for the hemorrhoidal diathesis. Why not give them a chance?

#### THE HOMŒOPATHIC TREATMENT OF SHOCK.

It is the treatment of the condition known as surgical shock that our Homœopathic remedies have won laurels. Take for instance, *Veratrum album*, how perfectly its pathogenesis corresponds to a case of shock; the coldness of the extremities, the pallor of the face, the relaxed muscles, the imperceptible breathing and the hippocratic countenance. It requires courage in such cases to rely on *Veratrum*, that is for the first few times. Those who do rely on it, however, know that it is far safer than Strychnine injections and followed by no reaction appearing later to retard recovery. It should be given in the 3rd potency or higher, do not give it too low. The tendency to neglect our remedies in the treatment of shock is a growing one, cardiac stimulants, spinal stimulants, injections of saline solutions have well nigh superseded the older and better methods of prescribing Homœopathically for the patient. I have seen more than one case overstimulated with injections of strychnine, in other words poisoned by the drug, and it is my belief, founded upon an observation of over twenty years that, as a rule, patients have a less chance of recovery when such stimulating methods are employed than when treated with the Homœopathic remedy. The normal saline solution is not open to the objections to strychnine. *Veratrum* is by no means the only remedy in shock, there are others. *Camphora*, *Arnica*, *Cinchona*, *Carbo vegetabilis* and others are shock remedies, but I believe *Veratrum* will be oftenest indicated.

#### HOMŒOPATHIC TREATMENT OF CONDITIONS FOLLOWING OPERATIONS.

There are many conditions that follow operations such as a peritonitis following a laparotomy, complications so called.

that will demand the use of the remedy, these, however, partake of the character of traumatic injuries and are to be so treated. Much success has been had in saving lives by the post-operative application of the remedy and it is in this field great proof is furnished that there is something in the application of the remedy to surgical cases.

A FEW GENERALITIES.

There are many other places where the Homœopathic remedy will aid and supplement the work of the surgeon. In threatened uremia after abdominal operations, with renal pains and so along the ureters to the bladder with a desire to urinate, with a passage of a few drops only, *Apis melifica* will often render such procedures as a hypodermic injection of pilocarpine unnecessary. *Cimicifuga* will often relieve the backache following gynecological plastic surgery. *Bryonia* is of use in thoracic complications arising from an anesthetic, and *Antimonium tartaricum* may be needed to correct a bronchial irritation following ether. The reconstructing remedies of course will find a place in the case of the surgeon such as *Cinchona*, *Calcarea phosphorica* and *Sulphur*. In troublesome flatulence following abdominal operations we will have recourse to *Cinchona* and *Lycopodium*. And so one might go on until almost all the remedies in the materia medica might be called into requisition or suggested in surgical practice.

The foregoing is what Homœopathy can do for surgery, merely suggestive but allowing of a growth that is almost prodigious and our surgeons by availing themselves of this super-added knowledge place their results in the surgical field far beyond the surgeons of those schools of medicine which lack, or fail to use this greatest of all surgical adjuvants. There is such a thing as Homœopathic surgery and there are such beings as Homœopathic surgeons and they are the best the world furnishes.

*North American Journal of Homœopathy.*