

ARISTOLOCHIA CLEMATIS

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This paper introduces a drug into our English *Materia Medica* which deserves a place foremost among our polychrests. *Aristolochia* is one of the oldest medicinal herbs. It has been used in ancient Egypt, in medieval Europe, as well as by the aborigines of the Americas, particularly against snake bites. The name which the Egyptians gave it is "anti-snake". The name *Aristolochia* is supposed to have been introduced by Paracelsus and means "excellent for labour", thus referring to its relation to the female genital function. It also has had a widespread use in popular medicine as a vulnerary. In animal experiments, carried out by Madaus in Germany, it proved effective against experimental gas gangrene infection. This effect seems to be due to an increase of the defensive forces of the organism since no bacteriostatic action *in vitro* could be demonstrated. Toxicologically, it causes menorrhagia, abortion, hæmorrhagic nephritis, gastro-enteritis, fatty degeneration of the liver and internal massive and capillary hæmorrhages; it also affects the central nervous system, producing nausea, dizziness and convulsions.

Systematic provings upon healthy individuals were carried out by Julius Mezger of Stuttgart, Germany. The complete *Materia Medica* of the drug is published in his book *Gesichtete Homœopathische Arzneimittellehre* (Sifted *Materia Medica*), Karl Haug Verlag, Stuttgart, Germany.

The following presentation is based upon Mezger's symptomatology. Some amplifications are added based upon my own clinical experiences with the drug. Wherever they occur they are specially marked as such by asterisks.

The main directions of action of our drug are:

1. *Urinary tract* (irritation, inflammation, cystitis, pyelitis, polyuria).
2. *The female genital tract* (ovary, amenorrhœa, oligomenorrhœa, hypomenorrhœa, delayed menarche, menopausal arthritis, pregnancy, labour, sterility).

3. *Male genital tract* (prostatitis and epididymitis, G.C.); similar to *Pulsatilla*.
4. *Gastro-intestinal tract* (colitis, diarrhoea with tenesmus and feeling of unfinishedness); similar to *Mercury*.
5. *Vulnerary* (infected wounds, blisters from mechanical causes—rowing, riding, etc.).
6. *Skin* (chronic and acute eczemas, dermatitis, infections and ulcerations).
7. *Veins* (varicose veins, phlebitis).
8. *Nose and sinuses*.

The medicine strikes us as a hybrid of *Sepia*, *Pulsatilla* and *Arnica*, if it is permitted at all to express something new, different and unknown in terms of something already familiar. This should not cause us to use the drug as a combination medicine, so to say, when we fail to differentiate between *Sepia* and *Pulsatilla*; remembering those related medicines may help us to grasp the spirit of the new substance by relating it to something already well known. The physical symptoms bear a striking resemblance to *Pulsatilla*. The mentals and the personality type seem nearer to *Sepia*.

Mentals and personality type. In some provers there was depression; in other instances, an existing depression became markedly improved and yielded to a rather cheerful mood particularly before the menstruation. Among my own patients observed so far, the striking observation was the prevalence of extremes of moods, namely either a marked depression or a rather forced or unreasonable exhilaration and cheerfulness, even in alternation. Also found were extreme states of extroversion or introversion in the same person. We may be tempted to classify the *Aristolochia* type as characterized by emotional instability of the manic depressive kind. Tearful depression,* fear of people* (rather than the active spiteful aversion of people), easily offended,* hypersensitive,* lack of self-confidence,* complaints of anticipation* (?). They are not easily comforted like *Pulsatilla* but rather inconsolable* and cross* when in the depression, yet not actively aggravated by consolation like *Sepia*.* Depression improved with return of suppressed menstruation (after hysterectomy).

General symptoms. Extreme chilliness not better by external heat. Insatiable hunger. Great tiredness and exhaustion or/and alternating with unusual activity and ability to perform—again the manic depressive response pattern. Great exhaustion with dizziness and chilliness not relieved by outer warmth. Extreme hunger in spite of indigestion. Tendency to cold extremities and bunions. *Amenorrhœa, oligomenorrhœa, suppressed menses*, weak and short menses. Poor circulation and local congestion (venous). "Venous type." The *modalities* show a close similarity to the pattern of *Pulsatilla*. The patient is extremely chilly and most local symptoms are better from local heat and worse from cold (particularly the facial neuralgia, toothache and cough). However, the headache and coryza are better from cool air and cool applications. In turn the whole patient desires and is better by cool air, better from motion, better from onset of any discharge; worse before menses and better with onset of menses; the general aggravation is in the morning upon rising and at 2-4 a.m. (sleep, cough).

Head.—Headaches better open air, cool applications, worse before and *after* menses, better beginning of coryza, worse bending forward.

Eyes.—Sensation of scratchiness, burning, lachrymation, worse reading, strong light.

Ears.—Tinnitus with otalgia and headaches. Promotes epithelialization after radical operation of middle ear. Acute otitis media.

Nose.—Coryza with stuffy nose and headaches, better in cool, open air. Violent headaches better with onset of coryza. Watery coryza with much sneezing, worse 8-9 a.m. Nasal polyps with secretion, congestion (local application). Hay fever,* anosmia (?).

Face.—Facial neuralgias.

Mouth.—Cracked corners of mouth. Herpes labialis. Toothache, apical swelling, worse from cold food, better from warmth.

Throat.—Dry throat, sore throat. Yellow coating of tonsils, hoarseness.

Gastro-intestinal.—Ravenous appetite or loss of appetite. Feeling of squeamishness with empty stomach; faintness, dizzi-

ness forcing to lie down. Intense nausea with chilliness. Sour, bitter vomiting; vomiting after sauerkraut, better after milk. Gastritis. Ineffectual desire for stool. Diarrhœa with sudden call, so that toilet is but barely reached. Virus enteritis with tenesmus; evacuation of mucus without stool. Tenesmus causing rectal prolapse not even better by evacuation of mucus. Chronic enterocolitis with constant rectal pressure soon after evacuation. Diarrhœa after each meal. Neurospastic intestinal states.* Emotional,* anticipatory enteritis* and colitis.* Constipation with much flatulence (improved during proving). Bleeding hæmorrhoids. The intestinal symptoms are attended by much freezing and chilliness.

Respiratory.—Asthma bronchiale.*

Urinary.—Frequent desire for urination with pain in bladder and urethra. Painful, frequent urination worse at night. Involuntary dribbling of urine. Enuresis nocturna, cystitis, pyelitis from exposure to cold (soldiers). Sudden pain in kidney area. Albuminuria. Whitish sediment in the urine.

Male genitals.—No proving symptoms, but clinically efficacious in prostatitis, epididymitis worse from cold. G.C.

Female genitals.—Abdominal cramps before menses. Heaviest dysmenorrhœa. Amenorrhœa, oligomenorrhœa, etc., delayed menarche. Restores menstruation which is too weak or suppressed, even in cases of amputation of uterus. General symptoms better as menses reappear. Amenorrhœa due to confinement in prison, camps, flight or travel ("Lager amenorrhœa"). Amenorrhœa of lactation. Menses weaker and shorter. Too early menopause. Leucorrhœa, mucous, brownish before menses. Mentals and generals worse before menses. Sensation of pain and hardness in left breast. *Itching, voluptuous, of vulva and rectum. Eczema. Swelling of feet and ankles before menses.*

Extremities.—Tearing-sticking pains of joints, better at onset of menses or mucous bloody leucorrhœa; worse from sewing or knitting. Menopausal arthroses. Upper arms painful upon pressure. Legs feel heavy like lead. Excessive swelling of the extremities before menses, better onset of menses. Cold extremities.

Varicose veins.—Congestion and varicosities of pregnancy. Feeling of tension in varicose veins.

Skin.—Pimples and vesicles at various places. Acne* worse before menses; furunculosis.* Extensive dry eczema on neck, arms, etc., itching-burning. Crusty eczema of scalp, labia, vulva, around navel* with intense itching. Erysipeloid eruption on trunk. Dry cracked skin.* Weeping eczemas. Poorly healing skin. Poorly healing wounds; infected wounds. *Blisters from rubbing shoes, rowing, garden work, horseback riding, etc.* Infected blisters from marching (soldiers). Also external injuries from rubbing, pressure and contusions. Chronic ulcers and supuration of hands and feet. Phlegmon, infected ulcers, dermatitis (10 per cent. ointment or 1-2 tablespoons of tincture to 500 c.c. water. For the more acute infections or inflammation rather the watery application).

Prevents infection of fresh wounds and promotes granulation. Painful contusions, burns, frozen extremities. For external applications it seems to be superior to *Calendula*. All sorts of suppurations, septicæmit (??).

Temperature regulation.—Chilliness over the whole body. Night sweats. Chilliness during menses. Fever with tonsillitis. Cold extremities. *Excessive flashes of heat with perspiration** (menopause).

In routine office work, first consideration is to be given to *Aristolochia* before any other remedy (unless definitely indicated) in any case of *suppressed or deficient menstruation* (such as usually associated with *Pulsatilla*), as well as in the average case of *cystitis*. As a vulnerary, it seems to be superior to *Calendula*.

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