

GERIATRICS*

DR. AUGUSTO VINGALS

FAILING MEMORY

One of the more constant phenomena of old age is the diminution or failure of memory, remembering remote events, but forgetting: where did I lay that book? where are the scissors? etc.; absence of intellect. *Baryta carbonica* 30 or 200 is indeed the friend of such old people, especially if they are of the obese type. Other remedies for this condition are: *Anacardium*, which cannot remember the names of friends; cannot find the adequate word; cannot fix attention; is inclined to hypochondriasis. *Glonoinum* forgets the streets which he knows so well. *Natrum muriaticum* weeps because he cannot remember the story he started to tell. *Cocculus*, *Zincum*, *Kali phosphoricum* and others also have this altered memory.

MENTAL SYMPTOMS

In the aged there appear mental perturbations which require the study of many remedies in order to find the *similimum* for each case. Here we sometimes meet a woman who formerly was very particular about everything, who did not allow a piece of furniture to be out of its place, etc., she had become careless, even indifferent to everything, at times including her feeling toward her family, until *Sepia* 200 changed the entire picture. Other patients become irascible, and some turn hypochondriacal or jealous of their friends or neighbours, and embitter life with sad presentiments. *Ignatia*, *Hyoscyamus* and *Phosphoricum acidum* have many times restored the tranquillity of the disturbed internal ego.

ASTHMATIC AFFECTIONS

Asthmatic affections are found in old people and in those who have aged prematurely. One time it is 'cardiac asthma' which makes us think of *Adonis vernalis*, which has irregular action from a weak heart; *Digitalis* has the very slow pulse; *Crataegus* is a great heart tonic. Again it may be a 'cardiorenal asthma' with uraemia, which is relieved by *Strophanthus* and *Apocynum* in low potency.

In many cases we find asthma associated with a bronchitis: humid asthma relieved by much expectoration, where *Senega*, *Tartarus* and sometimes *Carbo vegetabilis* are of much service. Dr. Cartier recommends in alternation *Naphthalinum* 6 and *Grindelia* 6 to help the tenacious expectoration, dyspnoea and poor circulation. And in how many cases of senile asthma proper in which dyspnoea is caused by pulmonary arteriosclerosis

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has Baryta carbonica or muriatica admirably complemented Tartarus in pulmonary paralysis of the aged!

Arsenicum is indicated in these periodic asthmatic attacks at midnight, or early around 3 o'clock. Natrum sulphuricum comes in question where attacks are worse when the weather changes from dry to damp, or at the seashore. Dr. Jones of Buffalo recommends in alternation Gelsemium and Sumbul eight drops in a tablespoonful of hot water every fifteen minutes, and states this has never failed him when given at the beginning of the attack.

CATARACT

I am not claiming that all such cases can be cured by Homoeopathy, but as their evolution can be retarded many times, so also an acceptable improvement is possible. Calcarea fluorica 6, according to Schuessler, is the chief remedy with its marked action on the crystalline tissues. Calcarea carbonica 30 and 200 is for hard cataract in the beginning, the phagosclerosis type, with concentric opacity. Phosphorus has a cloudy film or nucleus, and patients have better vision in dim light. Euphrasia one drop in boiled water for external use, and internally in low potency, is indicated in capsular opacity. Colocynthis is helpful in soft cataract.

Cannabis sativa is of advantage in corneal opacity, and where there is painful pressure in the orbit from front to back. The Causticum patient rubs the eye to relieve the pressure.

Secale is indicated in cataract with fine peripheral filaments, while Natrum muriaticum has irregularly distributed peripheral striae. Magnesia carbonica has cataract with large irregularly distributed striae, thick at the base; can see best in bright daylight.

Cineraria maritima has been much recommended for external application, one or two drops instilled (quite painful), but I have never seen any real cure from it. Nevertheless I believe that in some cases it may aid the action of the internal remedy. The similitum must be chosen conscientiously, properly individualized, as also applies to Conium, Euphrasia, Naphthalinum, Silica, Scpia, Thiosinaminum and many others which, chosen according to their particular indication, can aid and relieve in many cases.

URINARY APPARATUS

Another of the old people's nightmares is the loss of bladder control, when the urine escapes involuntarily, and the bladder feels full, not relieved by urination: Gelsemium and Causticum in various potencies and repetitions, and Equisetum hyemale tincture in frequent doses is of advantage in most cases.

Frequent night micturition in the aged, Causticum 30; frequent micturition of small quantities, Kali phosphoricum; if the urine is of strong odour like horse urine, Benzoicum acidum; if of violet odour, Terebinthina; fishy

odour, Uranium nitricum: If urine escapes while coughing, walking, or while passing flatus, or in bed, Pulsatilla, Verbascum, etc.

HAEMATURIA

If blood is arterial, think of Trillium and Ipecacuanha, and in some cases Millefolium; if it is venous, Hamamelis and Pulsatilla. If due to cystitis, Uva ursi, Thlaspi bursa pastoris, as also Solidago and Senecio. If of renal cause with tenesmus, Terebinthina is a valuable remedy. In frequent haematuria we must think of bladder polypi, in which Teucrium, Thuja and Phosphorus work marvellously; or it may be due to neoplasm, which is always grave.

PROSTATE

In acute inflammation with tenesmus, Pulsatilla, Belladonna and Ferrum phosphoricum are the most valuable remedies, as also Selenium in the chronic form.

In beginning prostatic hypertrophy with some inflammation and urinary disturbance Sabal serrulata 3x. produces a splendid effect, hence it has been called the 'homoeopathic catheter' because it acts quickly and markedly on congestion. Ferrum picricum follows it importantly. Do not forget Calcarea fluorica 6x. and Equisetum hyemale tincture, often indicated in hypertrophy of medium severity. If there is no undoubted improvement, or if there is advanced sclerosis, we must think of the deep-acting remedies such as Baryta carbonica 200 or Conium 1M. Often there may be an adenoma or tumour of grave origin.

In Summa: Homoeopathy has much to offer in such cases, and various remedies demanding deep study of our incomparable Materia Medica Pura, the proper application of which, with individualization in each case, gains much and many acceptable cures.

CIRCULATORY SYSTEM

Many are the circulatory disturbances: one time there is marked chest oppression with the sensation as if the heart were squeezed with an iron hand, in which case Cactus is the indicated remedy. Another time we find an irritable heart action and somewhat trembling palpitation; here Crataegus in tincture or low potency should be given, which calms the nerves and sustains the heart.

After the menopause many women get oedematous swelling of the ankles from defective circulation: Apis mellifica 3 is the remedy if also indicated by other symptoms. In other cases we are consulted for involuntary escaping of urine while coughing, laughing or sneezing, for which Causticum 30 is simply marvellous. Where we find cramps in legs, especially when lying down, we have a good friend in Magnesia phosphorica 6x.; when aged

patients complain of much burning of feet as soon as they are in bed, so they have to stick them out from under the covers to cool them, there Sulphur is a grand remedy.

VERTIGO, PRURITUS SENILIS AND SENILE GANGRENE

Endless are the habitual indispositions which molest the aged, of which vertigo is the greatest, and in which Homoeopathy gains fine laurels through Tabacum and Ferrum.

Pruritus is at times mild, but it may also become a torture, which is often nicely relieved by *Dolichos pruriens* and *Fagopyrum esculentum*. In other cases *Croton tiglium* or *Mezereum* may be indicated by other symptoms; we must also remember our remedies of more general action like *Arsenicum*, *Baryta carbonica*, *Carbo vegetabilis*, *Conium* and *Sulphur*. Yet there are admittedly cases where all remedies fail.

Senile gangrene, the graver condition, most frequently affects the great toe, is often cured astonishingly quickly by *Secale cornutum*, which is the perfect *similimum*.

ARTERIAL HYPERTENSION

Our materia medica has many indicated remedies for this trouble, of which *Aconitum* 6 heads the list for the acute condition with the hard, quick and rapid pulse so characteristic for this remedy. It has been called the 'homoeopathic lancet'. *Viscum album*, Ethyl alcohol and other medicaments selected according to individual indications should be prescribed until the physician sees the expected results. It is not always easy to determine when to stop.

When the tunica media of the arteries is damaged, *Baryta carbonica* 30 or *Baryta muriatica* 20 prove to be the grand friends of the aged with hypertension, as Hahnemann's marvellous sagacity bequeathed to us in the so precious pathogenesis.

APOPLEXY

To prevent this justly feared condition in our elderly patients *Arnica montana* is a most valuable remedy in connection with proper diet.

The preliminary symptoms in some cases are: inclination to exaggerated laughing over an unimportant joke or without any motive. Or there are present congestion to the head, vertigo with inclination to fall forward; or flushes run from head to feet; light flashes or darkness before the eyes are present, and here *Veratrum viride* 2x, a few globules on the tongue every time such symptoms occur, are a powerful aid. Many times a single dose will end such conditions, and as soon as possible a remedy for the totality of the symptoms must be selected.

During an attack Ferrum phosphoricum, Baryta carbonica, Arnica, Opium, etc., according to the case, may be indicated and remove the danger. And finally Kali muriaticum and Arnica in hourly alternation facilitate the absorption of the exudate. Some authorities recommend Phosphorus.

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