

A PROVING OF TRIOSTEUM PERFOLIATUM

DR. J. R. RAESIDE, M.B., CH.B. (GLAS.), M.F.HOM.

A proving of *Triosteum Perfoliatum* was carried out from November 1958 till June 1959.

Fifteen people took part in the experiment, most of whom were missionary students, and three others were doctors. It was conducted in the three separate terms of the students' curriculum. Eight of the volunteers were men and seven women. Thirteen of the provers took the drug for at least one term of the proving, and eight provers took control powders during one or more terms. The potency used throughout was 8C and each prover took a powder every morning before breakfast until symptoms began to appear. They were instructed to stop the powders if the reactions became too troublesome, or interfered with their daily lives and duties.

Each prover had a number to ensure that the chemist supplying the powders could identify which powders had been taken by which provers. This was, of course, unknown to us all during the provings, as was the name of the drug, until June when the experiments were completed.

Each day those taking part were asked to write down in their diaries all sensations and reactions which they believed were due to the powders. Each week they were seen and questioned regarding their notes and additions and comments were made to clarify the entries. The diaries used were marked with the Hahnemann schema for ease of collation. From each diary a list was completed of all the symptoms from Mind to Generalities and these in their turn were used to give the final lists used in this article. The symptoms shown with emphasis occurred in more than one prover so that some idea of the important symptoms can be formed. At the end of the list the more frequent symptoms are given with the numbers of provers recording them shown in brackets.

THE PLANT

Triosteum Perfoliatum belongs to the natural order of the

Caprifoliaceæ which contains Sambucus and Viburnum amongst other plants.

Its common names are:—

The red flowered fever root

Fever wort • •

Horse gentian and

Wild coffee

It was named by Linnæus—Triosteum spermum which means three bony seeds to the fruit.

Triosteum is a perennial herb of *North America*, although varieties of the plant occur in the Himalayan regions and in Japan. It grows to a height of between 2 and 4 feet with a strong, straight, thick stem which is often hairy. The leaves are large, ovate or oblong, dark green in colour, with short stalks. The flowers are small, dull red, sessile and tubular growing singly or in twos, or four in a bunch at the axis of the leaves. Flowering occurs in early summer.

It is reported in some of the books that the early American settlers used the roasted berries as a substitute for coffee (hence the name Wild coffee). No mention is made of it being used medicinally in any of the botanical books which I consulted. There is also no record of it having been analysed in the *Chemical Extracts of the American Chemical Society* from 1907 onwards. In a French volume on Chemical Analysis one short note occurs to the effect that the wood or cork of the stem contains *Calcium oxalate*.

DRUG PICTURE

The most outstanding mental condition produced in our proving of *Triosteum* was *depression* and this occurred in more than half of the provers. As one might expect there was in some cases a period of well being or stimulation preceding the depression: for example No. 4 had four days of feeling "happy and benevolent", then on the sixth day depression descended. (In her first term of proving she had depression only and it began on the fourteenth day).

No. 11 felt exhilaration for five days and by the eleventh day, she was irritable and argumentative. She described the

medicine as the "hot and happy drug" for the first few days only!

The depression had no outstanding features, being < alone or < with people, accompanied by lethargy or irritability. *Irritability* and *hypersensitivity* were common symptoms. No. 6, a tall and gentle young man found himself "unreasonably irritable and depressed, hypersensitive to small things which annoy him."

No. 12 on the 10th day—"irritable"
on the 11th day—"very irritable"
on the 12th day—"I feel in a rage, have to control myself"!

The *headaches* were, of course, very common, mainly throbbing or pressing as though the head were congested. However, all varieties occurred and in all areas of the head, although more *frontal* and *occipital* generally, < heat, < open, < evening.

No. 3 "wakened with a violent headache which lasted all day".

No. 8 "dull throbbing headache in the evening in the centre of the brain, < heat and movement, < pressure".

Eye symptoms occurred quite frequently, mainly itching and irritation, or soreness and burning of the eyes or eyelids.

A few provers had *flushing* of the face, and in those who had coryza, the sinus pains were especially prominent on the right side of the face.

Dryness and heat in the lips, mouth and throat were recorded several times, e.g.

No. 2 "hot and dry mouth like parchment, relieved by drinking ice cold drinks".

Many others had *thirst* for ice cold drinks.

Stomach symptoms were not outstanding except *Nausea* (6 provers) and flatulence. Nausea was < evening, < pc.

In the *lower abdomen*, however, our proving produced some of the most strongly marked symptoms.

No. 13 "a lot of rumbling in the abdomen with much flatus all night".

No. 8 "bloated feeling in the abdomen with a lot of flatus".

Altogether 9 provers had distension, intestinal movements

and excessive flatus, and six of these had *constipation*, sometimes extreme, e.g.:

No. 12 "constipation is extreme. No desire for stool".

No. 8 "constipation—hard dry stool and much flatus".

Some others, however, had loose stools, and several had abdominal pains, e.g.:

No. 4. Pain in R.I.F. This prover was subsequently admitted to hospital where Mesenteric Adenitis was diagnosed.

In the *chest* and *heart* several provers had pains or heaviness in the substernal region. One of these had bad rheumatic fever during the last war. He recorded—"gripping pain in the chest sometimes on waking in the night", and again "pain like a heaviness in the heart region wakens him at 5-6 a.m. must get up and walk about for relief". He stopped the drug, of course, but his symptoms went on. His last powder was taken on February 6th, but he was still making entries in his diary at the beginning of May.

In the *extremities* and *back* we find a long list of symptoms, more than half of which are on the skin of the limbs. Itch and irritation, rash and redness, warm tingling and flushes of heat. The itch was, as one might expect, < night, < heat. The palms of the hands and soles of the feet seemed to be especially affected by the itch.

There were no outstanding eruptions, although some of the provers had red spots or just redness, and some of them described the itch as a burning itch. Burning, flushing and throbbing sensations were common amongst the other symptoms of the extremities, indicating some disturbance of the circulatory system.

The *skin* symptoms generally were numerous and, of course, overlap those mentioned in the extremities. Again we had itch, irritation, crawling sensation, itchy rash and hypersensitive skin all over the body. It was well described (and experienced) by one of the Indian doctors who took part in the proving. His skin symptoms did not begin until the second term of proving, then he records on the seventh day: "When eating spicy or hot food an itch develops in the scalp all over the head; have to scratch". Two weeks later he says: "Itch-

ing and scratching has come down to the shoulders, < warm room." He took no more powders, but two months later the itch had reached the back although it was less severe on the head. By May, i.e. four months after his last powder, the irritation had almost gone and had disappeared in the classical manner, from above downwards.

Other skin symptoms of importance were excessive perspiration in three provers, and flushing in two.

Restless sleep was a common symptom, but with no outstanding modalities. A general sense of weakness or sudden weariness occurred in a few provers but again it was not outstanding.

KEYNOTES

(1) Itch and irritation of the skin of the whole body from scalp to feet. < heat.

(2) *Alimentary* disturbances mainly—nausea, thirst, abdominal distension, excessive flatus, constipation.

(3) *Disturbance* of the cardiovascular system: including pain or heaviness in the heart or chest. Throbbing and congestive headaches. Flushing and perspiration.

(4) *Mental symptoms*. Mainly depression or irritability and hyper-sensitivity.

CONTROLS

There were eight controls amongst our fifteen provers. Of these eight, two had control powders only, during the whole time of the proving experiments. One of them produced three slight symptoms, and the other one had throbbing frontal headaches, with a few other unimportant symptoms.

Six of the eight controls had the drug during one or more terms and had placebo during the other terms. Of these six, three had practically nothing to report in the terms they took placebo but had many entries in their daily diaries during their terms of *Triosteum* powders.

Two of the six had many complaints as controls but many more symptoms as provers of the drug. None of the control symptoms were outstanding, and most of these were present in a more marked degree during the drug-taking terms.

One control, however, was a black sheep! She managed to fill out the pages of her book with all sorts of sensations, which alas, were while taking sugar, and not half so many under the powerful influence of the potentized fever wort. She had: depression, irritability, fear, headaches, flushing, sore throat, abdominal pains, cough, palpitation, itch all over the body, perspiration and nightmares!!

She was a rather unstable young woman, who discussed her symptoms with the other students, so that her recordings are suspect.

It raises the interesting question of whether her symptoms were due to an overactive imagination or to the sac lac powders.

COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS PROVINGS

Triosteum was proved during the last century in America by Drs. Williamson, Neidhard and Tallmadge. The symptoms are described in Allen's *Encyclopedia* and in Hale's *New Remedies*, 1875. Hale says the root is the officinal part, but mentions later that a tincture was made of root and berries. The three provers appear to have taken "a few drops of tincture in water every day for three successive days" and recorded over sixty symptoms.

Their symptoms can be considered in three groups viz:

- (1) Stomach and bowel symptoms.
- (2) Extremities.
- (3) Skin symptoms.

(1) Stomach and bowel symptoms were: anorexia, nausea, thirst, vomiting, epigastric pain, flatulence, frequent watery stools.

These symptoms were not really confirmed in our proving, as only one of our provers vomited once.

The vomiting of the American provers was, no doubt, due to the heroic doses which they took. So many of our homœopathic drugs have vomiting in the provings which may often be merely a result of the amount of the drug taken, as perhaps is so in this case.

In our potency proving of *Triosteum* the stomach symptoms were more nausea, thirst, flatulence; and in the lower bowel,

flatus, distension and constipation instead of diarrhoea and abdominal pains.

(2) The *symptoms in the extremities* recorded in the old proving were mainly stiffness (mentioned five times), pain in the joints, numbness and tingling. We had one ache and stiffness, a few joint pains, and a few reports of numbness and tingling. Again not really a confirmation of the old proving, but could this be due also to our different doses?

(3) The skin symptoms agree much more. In the American proving there is "violent itch generally", a "very great itch at night" and "a vesicular eruption on the forehead, chest and arm". Our skin reactions were equally severe subjectively, but no proper eruptions appeared, only redness in a few.

The two outstanding points of difference in the two provings were firstly in the gastro-intestinal tract, and secondly the limb and joint symptoms. Of course the mental symptoms were almost absent in the old proving, indeed they record only one, namely "greater cheerfulness first day". This we confirmed.

COMPARISON WITH RELATED REMEDIES

Sambucus

The N.O. of Caprifoliaceæ contains only *Sambucus* and *Viburnum* as plants in homœopathic medical use. *Sambucus* is mentioned by Nash as a remedy for "snuffles" in children, and for asthma, neither of which are listed in Allen's *Encyclopedia*, where the drug appears to be more of a fever medicine, with profuse sweats, heat and chilliness. The gastro-intestinal symptoms of *Sambucus* agree fairly well with our new proving of *Triosteum*, namely rumbling and distension of the abdomen and flatus but no constipation. The skin symptoms of *Sambucus* are not very important, however, so that one could say the two plants *Sambucus* and *Triosteum* do not really correspond in their overall drug pictures.

Viburnum

Viburnum seems to have its main sphere of action in the pelvis as a remedy for dysmenorrhœa, neuralgia, colic, cramp, and the prevention of abortion. No such symptoms occurred

in our recent provings of *Triosteum* so that we find the three plants of the same natural order showing no similarity in their respective pictures of symptoms.

Triosteum seems to be mainly a skin remedy, resembling in its heat such drugs as *Sulph.*, *Psor.*, *Merc.*, *Urtica*, and *Lyc.*, to mention a few. Secondly, it undoubtedly affects the alimentary tract, especially the lower bowel, in a way similar to *Lyc.* and perhaps *China*. Then there are the groups of symptoms which might be ascribed to its action on the cardiovascular system, namely—throbbing and pressing headaches suggesting vascular congestion, the flushing, sudden weakness, perspiration, and the heart and chest pains. It is conceivable that all these symptoms would occur in some febrile or influenzal condition which may then justify its name—fever root, but this as a whole picture did not occur in any of our volunteers.

Hale in his *New Remedies* mentions various diseases for which *Triosteum* has been used; these are typhoid and gastric fever, bilious fever, asthma and "urticaria from gastric derangements". This last condition certainly covers the main symptoms which emerged from the proving of the drug. Urticaria from gastric derangement or from various food allergies is very common today, and it may well be that *Triosteum* will find its proper place as a remedy for this kind of disease.

I would like to thank Dr. McCrae for his help and guidance during the proving of *Triosteum*, and also to thank Messrs. Nelson for their helpful co-operation in supplying the powders.

TRIOSTEUM PERFOLIATUM PROVING

(Medicine 13, Control 8)

MIND

DEPRESSION (7).

Mentally active when beginning to take the powders.

Exhilaration on first 5 days of powders.

Feeling of happiness and benevolence for first 4 days of powders.

Depression began on 6th day of powders.

Depression < alone.

Depressed by people.
 Depressed and lethargic.
 Depressed and nervous.

LACK OF CONCENTRATION (3)

Mental heaviness and lethargy.
 Mentally exhausted.
 Tired mentally.
 Mental reactions are all slow.
 Every thought needs great effort.
 Drowsy at 4 p.m.
 Feels detached in thought.
 Homesick.

IRRITABLE (5).

Irritable in the evening.
 Irritability < noise.
 People make him unreasonably irritable.
 Sensitive to noise > alone.
 Hypersensitive to small things which annoy him.
 Feels tense in the evening "as if something would happen".
 Argumentative.
 Worried about his health.
Feels in a rage, has to control himself.

HEAD

Dull headache all day, < L. side, < cold weather.
 Dull headache on R. side, > pressure, > cold,
 < heat.
 Throbbing headache.
 Throbbing frontal headache, < heat, > open.
 Throbbing in the temples, > pressure.
 Constant pressing headache like a weight, < heat,
 > open.
Pressing headache from occiput to frontal, < evening, < heat, > open.
Headache on L. temple sometimes spreading to the L. face.

Headache on R. temple in the evening.

Frontal headache.

Intermittent R. frontal headache as sharp pains.

Occipital headache, < evening, < L.

• Occipital headache, < a.m., > open air.

Wakened with violent headache from occiput to vertex.

Pain in the back of the neck and occiput, < R.

Headache on the vertex and frontal, < on waking.

Headache over the L. eye.

Headaches after thunder.

Stitching pains in the head.

Sharp splitting headache with a cold.

Momentary pains in the head all day.

Light headed and hot in the head.

Hair is sensitive to touch.

EYES AND VISION

• *Irritation of the eyelids, < R.*

Itching of the eyes.

Eyes smarting and hot.

Eyes sore when closed.

L. eye swollen, red and hot.

Feeling of grit in the eyes.

• *Eyes feel tired, < evening.*

Pain in the L. eye or R. eye momentarily.

Ache in R. eye, < moving the eyes.

Eyes water.

Eyes heavy and difficult to focus.

Twitching of R. eyelid in the evening.

EARS AND HEARING

• Earache and discharge from L. ear.

Dull constant pain in L. ear.

Sharp stabs in ears, < R. ear.

Pain behind the ears.

• Noise in the ears, < lying down.

Pressure in the ears.

- Buzzing in the ears.
Itch round the ears.
- FACE *Flushing of the face at time, > open.*
Pain in R. sinus during a catarrhal cold.
Painful R. sinusitis.
Hyperæsthesia of L. side of the face.
Brown pigment patches on cheeks and forehead.
- NOSE *Thick green nasal catarrh.*
Sneezing from dry tickle in nose and ears.
Coryza with running nose, > open, < lying.
Smell of blood in the nose during cold.
Nose bleed.
Constant dull ache behind the root of the nose.
Spots on the nose.
- MOUTH *Dryness of the lips.*
Tingling of the lips.
Crack in the lower lip.
Sore patches on palate, in the mouth and lips.
Hot dry parched mouth, > cold drinks.
White tongue.
Tongue feels swollen.
Bitter taste in the mouth.
Upper teeth painful.
- THROAT *Sore throat on waking and in the night.*
Sore throat, > eating or drinking.
Throat feels constricted and tight.
Tickle in throat causes cough.
Hot dry throat on waking.
Difficult to swallow.
Sore and red throat, > cold drinks, > after meals,
< swallowing.
Pain in L. tonsil.
- STOMACH *Nausea, < in evening, < after meals.*
Thirst for ice cold drinks, < on waking, > drinking.

Loss of appetite.

Flatulence < after milk.

Pain in the stomach in the evening.

Empty pain in the epigastrium extending to chest and throat like a hole.

Hunger pains, < 11 a.m.

Abdomen distended and bloated with much flatus.

Rumbling in the abdomen from wind, < milk.

Colicky pains in left iliac fossa at night and on waking.

Sharp pains in the lower abdomen.

Sharp pains in R. iliac fossa comes and goes.

Abdominal pain < evening, < pressure.

Sharp pain in L. groin.

RECTUM AND STOOL

Constipation with great straining. No desire for stool.

Constipation, stool passed with great effort.

Constipation followed by diarrhoea.

Small dry hard stool.

Loose stools with a sour smell and much offensive flatus, < milk.

Diarrhoea in the morning.

Bowels loose and watery.

Large amount of flatus, < in the evening.

Stabs of pain in the rectum, < straining at stool, < after stool.

Drawing pain when bowels open.

Burning in the rectum.

Bleeding painful piles, < L., < after stool.

Itch round anus, < night.

Soreness of anus.

Pain in coccyx.

URO-GENITAL. Ammonia smell in the urine.

Frequency of passing urine.

M.P. late, heavy, painful.

M.P. early, excessive.

M.P., scanty, painless.

LARYNX AND TRACHEA

Hoarseness, < talking, < open air.

Choking and tightness causing cough.

CHEST AND HEART

Pain like a heaviness in heart region, < lying on L.
Heart pains waken him at 5-6 a.m. > getting up
and waking.

Pain in substernal region on waking, < exercise.

Gripping pain in chest sometimes on waking in
the night.

Pain on R. side of chest.

Short, dull pain in chest R. or L.

Dull pain in chest, < excitement.

Pain or weight or tightness in sternum.

Tearing pain below L. scapula or in L. scapula.

Dull constant pain above R. clavicle.

Dry cough from tickle in the throat.

Cough after eating.

Cough in the evening < warm room.

Must take a deep breath.

Palpitation on waking or at 8 a.m.—comes sud-
denly goes gradually.

Slow pulse.

Swollen glands in R. axilla.

EXTREMITIES AND BACK

Itchy rash on shoulders and between scapulæ, <
in bed, < warmth, > open. •

Itch on soles of feet in the evening and in bed, <
heat.

Itch of palms of hands and fingers with dry erup-
tion.

Irritation of back.

- Itch of arms and legs < L.
- Burning itch of trunk in bed.
- Itchy, red spots on legs, < evening and night.
- Itch of legs in the evening, < warmth.
- Rash on the calves, red and itchy, dry and scaling < in bed.
- Redness of thighs and scrotum, itchy and irritable, < heat.
- Red spots on the L. wrist.
- Warm tingling or numbness of the feet.
- Momentary burning of the feet.
- Numbness with pins and needles in thighs when sitting and in the hands.
- Flushes of heat to R. foot and L. foot.
- Burning of the upper arm at night.
- Throbbing pain in R. shoulder 4 p.m., short stabs of pain.
-
- Throbbing, burning pain in R. axilla.
- Dull ache L. shoulder.
- Pain in L. arm.
- Pain in R. finger, R. leg.
- Ache and stiffness, R. calf, < cold.
- Stitching pain in R. scapula.
- Pain in R. arm, R. leg.
- Ache in R. knee and L. hand, < movement.
- Sharp pain in L. foot.
- Cramp in L. foot, thigh and R. calf.
- Cold feet.
- Backache.

SKIN

- Itch of the scalp.*
- Scalp itches at night.*
- Crawling sensation on the scalp.
- Itch on forehead, temples and scalp.
- Itch began on the scalp after food, spread down to shoulders chest and abdomen, < heat, > cool, > open (improved from above downwards).
- Itch of skin in various places, especially face,

neck and elbows, hands, thighs and legs.
 Itch all over body.
 Itch in back and lumbar region < evening.
 Itch of trunk < in bed.
 Itchy rash on waking.
 Itch of the skin after hot bath.
 Skin hypersensitive all over, especially on the upper body.
 Peeling of skin of abdomen.
 Brown patches on the skin.
 Profuse perspiration at night.
 Perspiration on palms of hands.
 Flushed in a warm room.

SLEEP *Restlessness at night with unpleasant dreams.*
Restless sleep, no position is comfortable.
 Sleeps badly from terrible dreams or nightmares.
Wakens early, 4.30-5 a.m., with silly dreams.
 Cannot sleep on right side.
 Wakens between 5-6 a.m., with pain in the heart.

GENERALS Sudden weariness at 9 p.m.
 Sudden weakness at 4 p.m., feels hot, > sitting down.
 Lethargy in morning.
 Feels hot all day.
 Pins and needles through the whole body when warm.
 Aggravation from milk.

KEYNOTES (with numbers of provers, total 13)

Depression	(7)
Lack of concentration	(3)
Irritability	(5)
Dull headache all day	(3)
Throbbing headache	(3)
Pressing headache	(4)

(Continued on Page 565)

quickly. Tendency to fall backwards. Cardiac and nervous symptoms temporarily better by sleep. Cough worse on lying down or on entering a warm room, better in the open air. Meteorism better passing odorless flatus, bending backwards. Menstrual bleeding worse at night. Emptiness in the stomach worse 11 A.M. Motor restlessness worse at night. Premature waking at 2-6 A.M.

—*Jourl. of the Am. Inst. of Homœopathy, May-June, '60.*

A PROVING OF TRIOSTEUM PERFOLIATUM

•(Continued from Page 554)

Frontal headache	(7)
Occipital headache	(8)
Headache on temple	(4)
Irritation of eye and eyelids	(5)
• Pain in the eyes	(7)
Flushing of face	(2)
Painful sinusitis	(3)
Dryness of lips and mouth	(5)
Nausea	(6)
• Thirst for ice-cold drinks	(2)
Abdomen distended	(5)
Pain in L.I.F.	(2)
Constipation	(6)
Pain in chest and heart	(5)
Dry cough	(6)
Itch or irritation of extremities	(8)
Itch or irritation of scalp or body	(9)
Restless sleep	(7)

—*The Brit. Homœo. Jourl., Oct., '60.*