

AURUM METALLICUM

WILLIAM GUTMAN, M.D., New York

Gold stands out among the metals as the most malleable and ductile, resisting therefore any mechanical destruction; chemically not attacked by air or water, which wear down and dissolve everything else in the earth's crust. Never oxidising, rarely combining with other elements, it shines with indestructible splendor.

Widely diffused in nature, it occurs in traces in all rocks, drifting into the soil, reaching through plant life to the human organism where it is a regular trace element. The brain, heart and testis regularly contain some gold. Nothing is known about its possible function. We have to turn to the experiment of a proving to learn about its specific affinity with certain organs and organ systems, and to discern the specific regulating power which it is able to develop in the organism.

Outside of provings, little is known of the toxic effects of gold which is, if not potentised, a rather inert substance. Our toxicological knowledge derives exclusively from the side-effects of the various gold-sulphur compounds, but these effects are still, at least in part, characteristic enough to shed some light on the organ relationship of the metal. Apart from the effects of these compounds on the skin, they produced, in lethal cases of intoxications after injection of such gold preparations, an enormous congestion of the blood vessels of inner organs leading to numerous small hemorrhages. The basis of the toxic effect is a paralysis of the contractile elements of the blood vessels, particularly of the capillary system. The consequence is local and general congestion and disturbance of the normal blood circulation.

"Sudden rush of blood to any part" (Guernsey); "Pulsation in various parts of the body; sensation as if blood boiled through the arteries" (Farrington); "erratic ebullitions and congestion" (Boger); "violent palpitations of the heart; irregular violent heart beats"—all these characteristics of the experimental effects of *Aurum* express the same pathology through symptoms as the side-effects in cases of gold intoxication: an uproar in the whole circulatory system. This "erethism" following the use of gold preparations was already known to the old school of "auralists," which used the metal for the treatment of syphilis.

Irregularity within the circulatory system will occur more easily in organs which, under physiological conditions, are subjected to a frequent change of the flow of blood, where congestions occur normally with a flow and ebb of the blood stream and the blood supply. These are, in the first place, the vascular system itself and its center, the heart, with its ever-changing blood content; further, those organs with erectile tissue, ready to adapt quickly to changing blood flow, like the interior of the nose, the

genital organs, penis, testes, ovaries and uterus, the latter particularly subject to a more or less rhythmical change of blood supply, where local congestion occurs already physiologically. Also those large glands of the body which participate in the changing regulation of the blood stream, the liver as storage organ for great amounts of blood, and the particularly highly vascularised thyroid, influencing the speed of blood circulation through its hormone, are more apt to be subjected to changes of blood supply with its consequences.

On the other hand, there are parts of the organism where blood supply and consequent changes in the content of blood are less strong than in all the other organs and where additional vascularisation with increased blood supply occurs only under pathological conditions. These are the bones and the cornea of the eye. Inflammations of bones and of the cornea bring about a sudden flooding with blood, a kind of imbalance of their physiological circulation which is weak in comparison with other organs.

When we perceive disturbance of circulatory balance, "sudden rush of blood to any part" as the central physical gold effect, we can easily see the predominant field of action of gold: the organs mentioned before with a physiologically "unbalanced" circulation: the nose and the naso-pharynx (one of the first symptoms which Hering produced with gold in a doubting student was intense reddening of the nose). Rhinophyma, ozaena are indications for the therapeutic use of *Aurum*. A case of rhinoscleroma, cured with *Aurum*, is reported in our literature (Stauffer); the heart and the arterial system: irregularities of the heart beat, pulse soft, full, rapid or feeble, irregular, are produced and cured by *Aurum*. Hypertrophy of the heart, angina pectoris, hypertension with red face and heat flushes are clinical indications for the use of gold, if the leading modalities are present. Strong erections, increased sexual desire, swelling and inflammation of the testicles as well as under-development of the testicles in young boys are accordingly under the influence of *Aurum*. Congestions, hypertrophy of the uterus, ovarian cysts, frigidity and sterility are indications for its use in the female. Wolter (*Klinische Homöopathie in der Veterinärmedizin*) found *Aurum* indispensable for the treatment of sterility in cows, particularly when associated with nymphomania. He found cystic changes in the ovaries which after treatment with *Aurum* also disappeared. Certain cases of swelling of the thyroid gland with hyperthyroidism and protruding eyes can be also beneficially influenced by the use of *Aurum*.

Disturbances of the circulation of the liver, leading to congestion, fatty degeneration and scirrhus with ascites consecutive to chronic heart failure, or of primary origin, are further clinical indications for the use of gold, when symptoms agree.

The eye symptoms in the provings of *Aurum* are quite numerous and characteristic. The eye is an organ which has to adapt itself quickly and often during the day to changing requirements and therefore to a changing

blood supply. It belongs quite naturally in the group of organs which are susceptible to the influence of *Aurum*, which governs, as we have seen, particularly the rhythmic distribution of blood. The choroidea, the blood-vessel-carrying layer of the eyeball, has a similar sponge-like structure in some ways as the interior nose and part of the genitals. Chorioretinitis will therefore be among the clinical indications for *Aurum*. The proving symptom "half sightedness, as if the upper half of the field of vision were covered with a dark body" has been clinically confirmed and cured in cases of Chorioretinitis. It was found in such a case (Burnett, *Gold as a Remedy in Disease*) that fluid had settled, obviously following gravity, beneath the retina to the lower portion of the eye, causing a detachment of the lower retina. When sudden abundant vascularisation takes place around and on the cornea, producing a pannus, again gold might exert its regulating influence on a disturbed circulation.

Finally, numerous proving symptoms show a relationship of *Aurum* to the bones and the periosteum with shooting, drawing, tearing pains in the extremities and in the bones of the skull, as the zygoma, the mastoid, nasal bones. These normally poorly vascularised structures seem to be particularly sensitive to the unaccustomed onrush of blood in pathology and under the influence of gold. Periostitis, osteitis, exostosis, specifically mastoiditis and destruction of the nasal bones are logical indications for the therapeutic use of *Aurum*, which here again exerts its regulatory power in the field of blood circulation.

If we turn to older textbooks on pharmacology and therapeutics like Potter's *Handbook of Materia Medica*, or an even comparatively modern book like Solis-Cohen's *Pharmacotherapeutics*, we will find to our astonishment a great number of indications for the use of *Aurum* (usually as the chloride) very similar to homœopathic clinical indications: Insomnia, priapism, chronic metritis, amenorrhea, menorrhagia, sterility due to frigidity (considered better than anything else), habitual abortion, impotency, exophthalmic goitre, sclerosis of liver, jaundice due to duodenal catarrh ascites. The great value of gold in sclerosis of the liver and kidneys, and in the treatment of sterility due to frigidity, is quoted in Solis-Cohen. Besides, the age-old indication of gold in depression is mentioned.

Having perceived circulatory imbalance and a specific affinity with the vascular system as the leading clues for the understanding of the effects of *Aurum* in general physiology and pathology, we turn to the field of specific pathology to look for its relationship to specific diseases, keeping in mind its principal action. We find such relationship logical, particularly where the circulatory system is involved. This is, as far as non-infectious diseases are concerned, local or general congestion, either due to failure of the heart or, as in hypertension, of the circulation, followed by sclerosis of the organ subjected to prolonged congestion. As far as infectious diseases are concerned, the field of *Aurum* will be only, logically, syphilis. All

pathology of syphilis follows the blood vessels, it is in fact a generalized inflammatory infiltration of the wall and the perivascular tissues of the blood vessels. It is here that *Aurum* actually has unfolded its specific curative powers. The other old indication is chronic mercurialism, which, as we know, imitates syphilis. Syphilis (as we seldom see it nowadays) with its slowly progressive destruction of the body, devouring it to the bones, and its equally destructive power over the mind, has been the main field of action for *Aurum* as far as specific pathology is concerned.

Destructiveness of the self marks the mental state and symptoms of *Aurum* as well. Although the characteristic mental symptoms must not be invariably present in the case with *Aurum* pathology, if other symptoms agree, they still hold the center of the stage of the *Aurum* picture. Deepest depression, despondency, disgust for life, suicidal tendency in the strongest degree are the earmarks of *Aurum metallicum*. The symptoms of self-devaluation and -depreciation, so typical of the clinical picture of depression, are to be found throughout the proving records of gold: "Imagines that he is unfit for this world," "that he cannot succeed in anything," "that he does everything wrong," "that he has lost the affection of his friends," "imagines that she is irretrievably lost." Seeks solitude, timid, apprehensive, vexed are further logical symptoms.

Again we find other symptoms, closely allied to the typical picture of severe depression, such as: "Choleric and quarrelsome," "peevishness, vehemence, the slightest contradiction excites his wrath," "Violent anger and vehemence." We find in depression at times an alternation of melancholy and rage. Analytic observation has shown that suppressed anger and resentment are among the contributing factors of depressive states. These emotions may at times come to the surface, interrupting the purely melancholic state. We find the interrelationship of these two sets of emotions very clearly expressed in the drug proving picture of *Aurum*.

Other symptoms of the proving, such as "Extreme disposition to be offended, deeply affected and provoked by the least thing that seemed to grieve him," "Slightest affection excites his wrath," show again the connection with the tendency for self-devaluation, characteristic of deep depression, leading to an inferiority feeling which makes him so highly sensitive that the slightest remark or contradiction may set off a reaction of resentment out of all proportion.

Devaluation of one's self becomes finally a tendency toward self-destruction, toward suicide. "Great anguish, increasing unto self-destruction," the anguish of the psychotic depressive state is also a characteristic proving symptom, completing the typical picture of psychotic depression.

The dreams of the *Aurum* provers express all these symptoms and tendencies through the symbolic picture language of the unconscious. "Frightful dream about thieves, with loud screams while asleep" reflect the feeling of being robbed of something, of what belongs to one, which is the

self, which finds itself deprived of its value in the typical daytime attitude of the depressive. "He dreams that he would fall from a great height," a dream which again symbolizes the "fall" of the self and its devaluation tendency in severe melancholia. "She dreamed the whole night that she was in darkness." Can the emotional state of a melancholic be better symbolically expressed?

Looking for a link between what we found to be the central physical effect of *Aurum*, its effect on the circulatory system, and its main effect in the sphere of the psyche, depression and resentment, we find such link confirmed through the study of seventy cases of disturbances of the cardiac rhythm by Stevenson and Dunsan (quoted by Flander Dunbar in *Emotion and Bodily Changes*) "disturbances occurring in relation to anxiety, resentment and depression evoked by life strain."

Another physical basis for the depression of *Aurum* we might find in its relation to the sex glands, ovaries and testes. Its indication in frigidity and impotency is very old; in homœopathic clinical experience we find only from Burnett the indication, "testes like pendent shreds, verging on atrophy in pining boys, lacking any boyish go." Involutional melancholia, characteristic of the climacteric age, might have a physical endocrine basis, which is also present in the *Aurum* picture.

The typical *Aurum* patient is heavy set, the pyknic type, with red or easily flushed face and dark complexion. Workers with gold preparations show at times yellowish discoloration of the skin of their hands which later turns violet and even black. The mucous linings of mouth, esophagus and stomach often become brown in these cases. In the typical *Aurum* case the skin is olive with brown spots. The patient is worse in the morning, from sunset to sunrise, after lying down and rising up, sensitive to cold air. He is better from moving, walking in the open, fresh, cool air, cool baths. He is often over-sensitive to pain. Sudden rush of blood to any part with accompanying sensation of fullness and heaviness denotes the basic disturbance in the circulatory system. Its center, the heart, is particularly affected, irregularities, sudden strong beats, sensation of heaviness up to a feeling of a crushing weight under the sternum are among the *Aurum* symptoms.

Heaviness runs through the whole picture. Heavy build, a heavy gait, heaviness of the heart, a heavy mind. Darkness is the main color of this picture, a dark complexion, darkening of vision, dreams of darkness, a dark mind. Destructiveness is its meaning, slow destruction of the body, of the big glands, of the bones, finally destruction of the self through suicide.

Gold, potentised, seems to impart to body and mind when afflicted through disease symptoms, which in strong doses it is able to produce itself, all the qualities which are associated with the metal, indestructibility, which it gives to the mind to resist its urge for self-destruction and to restore the healthy urge for self-preservation. It acts as a great harmoniser of the blood circulation, relieving congestions and their consequences, so that the blood

can flow freely again. It transmutes the "heavy heart" to a "light heart," darkness to light, the light with which gold shines, indestructible in its splendor.

DISCUSSION

DR. ALLAN D. SUTHERLAND : (Brattleboro, Vt.) One point might be of interest with respect to the mental symptoms of *Aurum*, especially the depression of *Aurum*. Patients thinking of self-destruction, wish to commit suicide by throwing themselves from a height. I had a patient who attempted this. He was cured by *Aurum*.

We sometimes see it in childbirth, where the patient is extremely restless, continually sitting up in bed and throwing herself down with violence against the pillow, which is analogous to the desire to throw one's from a height.

DR. GARTH W. BOERICKE : (Philadelphia, Pa.) I particularly appreciated the detailed analysis of the pathological in Dr. Gutman's paper. I think we can all carry away with us the fact that we have so many cases of irregular circulation, rushes of blood. *Spongia* has that, too, I think, particularly the headaches. I recall that the late Dr. Golden, who was a teacher with me about thirty years ago, at Hahnemann, almost empirically used for his hypertension cases what would correspond to the 2X of *Aurum muriaticum*.

—*Jourl. of the Am. Inst. of Homœopathy, Mar.-April, '61*