

For further investigations into the nature of chronic miasms and chronic diseases space forbids us to continue here. It will be discussed in succeeding editorial remarks.

B. K. S

BROKEN DOWN CONSTITUTIONS

ARSENICUM ALBUM

BY NEMO

No series of articles on broken down constitutions would be complete without mention of *Arsenic*, that most virulent of poisons and most potent of healers. It is a remedy which is frequently indicated and which can do wonderful work when the symptoms agree. All the well-known effects of arsenic poisoning, the terrible anguish, the suffering and the hopelessness, are brought out in the provings. Kent says that *Arsenic* impresses the whole economy and disturbs all the functions. Clark quotes Teste as saying that it acts better on vegetarians than on meat-eaters, and that it strengthens the muscles of limbs and the breathing apparatus.

Being a heavy element, the action of *Arsenic* is primarily anti-syphilitic, but is also antipsoric. It can palliate sycotic conditions, particularly where asthma is present, but it is not sufficiently similar or homœopathic to sycosis to effect a lasting cure.

Dr. Roberts puts *Arsenic* in a group with *Phosphorus*, *Silica* and *Sulphur*—all very powerful remedies. It has been called the twin brother of *Phosphorus*, to which remedy it is complementary.

Arsenic is nearly always administered in the form of the oxide, *Arsenicum album* or white arsenic, chemical formula As_2O_3 . The iodide of *Arsenic* or *Arsenicum iodatum* AsI_3

is frequently used in tubercular conditions, but as it has a rather distinct symptomatology of its own we will confine ourselves here to *Arsenicum album*.

The general appearance of the *Arsenic* patient is waxy, pale, thin and cadaveric, inclined to be baggy about the eyes, and especially under the eyes, and with a tendency for his skin to shrivel. He is cold and clammy. He is very neat, spruce, well groomed and tidy—the very opposite of the *Sulphur* patient. He also likes everything round him to be tidy, and cannot bear to see anything out of place, such as a picture hanging crooked on a wall. He is generally fastidious and has been called the gentleman with the gold-headed cane. All his senses are acute especially smell, taste and touch.

The *Arsenic* patient is chilly, and worse in cold damp weather. He hugs the fire and likes to be wrapped up warmly. His headaches, however, being of a congestive nature, are relieved by the cool open air. It has been said that the *Arsenic* patient is only comfortable when his body is in an oven and his head sticking out of the window.

The mental characteristics are very marked, the most important being the sadness, the anxiety, the fear, the impatience and the restlessness. He is quite certain that something dreadful is going to happen—if he is ill that he is going to die, or that his business will fail leaving his wife and family to starve. He endeavours to make money quickly as a safeguard against these dreadful possibilities and is often of a miserly disposition. He worries himself so much that eventually he becomes exhausted and great prostration follows. With the anxiety there is restlessness. When ill in bed he tosses about, finding no place to rest. He tries another bed or gets up and walks about. All this time tormenting, gloomy thoughts are pouring through his head—of imminent death (he greatly fears death) or of his incurability. Sometimes the anxiety affects his heart and he gets palpitation and dyspnoea. Asthmatic symptoms may develop.

The complaints of *Arsenic* are periodic, but the interval itself may vary considerably. Some complaints may come on every other day, others every four days, every seven days, every fourteen days, or at longer intervals. The more chronic the complaint the longer is the cycle. There is a pronounced nightly aggravation, especially from midnight till 3 a.m., with the characteristic restlessness, which points to the use of the remedy in syphilitic conditions.

Burning is a feature running through *Arsenic*. Burning sensations are felt in all parts of the body, including the head (internal), the throat, the lungs, the stomach, the limbs and all mucous membranes. During heat following a chill, the blood feels like boiling water flowing through the vessels. The burning sensations inside the head are relieved by cold applications, but all other burning sensations are relieved by heat. This rather peculiar symptom is shared with *Carbo veg.*, *Lycopodium* and *Capsicum*.

The putrid and offensive nature of the secretions and excretions is one of the most important *Arsenic* features. The discharges excoriate the parts, causing burning sensations. The discharge from the nose and eyes causes redness round these organs, the stool excoriates the parts round the anus and the discharge from ulcers excoriates the parts round them. The odour of these discharges is putrid. Eructations are also putrid, like rotten eggs. The stool smells putrid, like decomposing flesh. The discharges from the uterus and from ulcers, and the urine and expectoration all have this putrid smell. In severe cases gangrenous inflammation sets in, and if this condition is present and is relieved by heat and is accompanied by the characteristic restlessness and fear of death, *Arsenic* is almost sure to be the remedy.

Ulceration is another important feature. Colds which affect the eyes, catarrhal troubles in the nose, sore throats, inflamed mucous membranes, indeed any local trouble has this tendency to break down into ulceration. *Arsenic* can cure this condition. It can also cure the anæmic condition

which follows cauterization to heal up ulcers or to stop leucorrhœa or other discharges. In addition to ulceration, sudden inflammations such as erysipelas are also common, and they are apt to take on a gangrenous or malignant character.

The remedy has a tendency to puffiness which is liable to degenerate into œdema or dropsy. We have already noted the bagginess of the lower eyelid (*Kali carb.* has bagginess of the upper eyelid, between the lid and the brow) and there may be dropsy of the scalp and head with erysipelalous inflammation, and the scalp may be so sensitive that it cannot be touched. Dropsical conditions may occur in any part of the limbs and usually come on after spasms of weakness.

Arsenic headaches show several peculiar characteristics. They are usually periodic, and a frequent time for them to commence is from one to three o'clock in the afternoon, after the mid-day meal. They grow worse towards evening and last all night. They may affect any part of the head. Sometimes they are in the forehead, sometimes in the occiput, and sometimes on one side only of the head. They are often of a congestive type, accompanied by nausea and vomiting, and the usual burning sensations and restlessness. They are worse from light and noise, better from lying down in a dark room, and better from walking in the open air, although the jarring of walking sometimes aggravates.

The catarrhal state of *Arsenic* usually involves mainly the throat and the nose. The patient takes cold easily and the cold begins in the nose with a thin watery acrid discharge. The mucous membrane of the nose bleeds easily and the discharge becomes mixed with blood. The cold goes down to the throat, producing an inflammatory condition which may ulcerate if it becomes severe. The catarrhal state also goes down to the larynx and produces hoarseness, and then into the trachea, producing a dry hacking teasing cough with no expectoration. Asthmatic

symptoms then appear with dyspnoea and the patient expectorates a thin watery sputum.

Arsenic affects the whole of the digestive tract. The mouth is dry with parched lips and frequent thirst for small warm drinks and the saliva is inclined to be frothy. The whole stomach and intestines are in a state of inflammation with the characteristic burning sensations everywhere, including the rectum and anus. The abdomen is distended, dysentery is common, with straining and a dark watery offensive stool. In severe cases peritonitis may develop.

The sexual organs have many important symptoms. In the male the organs tend to a dropsical condition and are sometimes so swollen as to look like a water bag. In the female there is suppressed menstruation, or a very acrid menstrual flow, and both menstrual flow and leucorrhœal flow excoriate the parts. In addition, the external organs may be hard and swollen, with great dryness and burning pains.

A tendency to bleeding is also strong in the remedy. Haemorrhages are usually of bright red blood, but bleeding from mucous membranes becomes black and clotted, and the membrane tends to become ulcerated and gangrenous.

To sum up, there is no drug like *Arsenic* to cause rapid failure of strength, degeneration and ultimate destruction of the bodily tissues. Where these conditions threaten and where the mental symptoms agree there is no remedy like *Arsenic* to affect a cure.

—*Heal Thyself*, March, 1951.

TUBERCULINUM IN NERVOUS DISEASES

H. A. NEISWANDER, M.D.

Kent says :

Persons on the border-land of insanity. It is true that phthisis and insanity are convertible conditions, the one falls in to the other. Many cases that are treated and cured,