

## RARE BUT NOT PECULIAR

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What is peculiar, characteristic or uncommon about a burn that we so confidently prescribe Cantharis for it? What is so strange and peculiar about the effects of a head injury ever so remote that we immediately jump to Nat. sulph. as a sure medicine? Why do we prescribe on these common place symptoms that are mere diseased conditions? As a student I was never taught the difference between a peculiar symptom and a rare symptom. No difference was known and hence no difference was taught. Hahnemann himself gave equal importance to both these categories of symptoms. He laid equal emphasis on both symptoms whether peculiar or rare and directed that for the purpose of prescribing strange, peculiar, rare, uncommon individual characteristic symptoms were the ones that were important in the patient and the drug. They were the ones to be brought out in the patient and to be studied in the drug for the purpose of individualisation. The practice continued ever since Hahnemann. All these adjectives are used as if they were synonyms. As if one can do for the other. Even Kent for the purpose of repertorization gave both rare and peculiar symptoms equal value and gradation as against the common symptoms. Both types were labelled as uncommon. Nobody ever thought that a subtle distinction existed between the two types. As a teacher I continued to pass on this wrong impression to my students. Most of our colleagues still do the same. The ignorance continues. It was in recent years that it occurred to us that a symptom which may be rare may not be peculiar and that a peculiar symptom may not be quite so rare.

What then is a peculiar symptom? A peculiar symptom is one that is found when not expected when judged by standards of anatomy, physiology, medicine, pathology or even weather etc. What is expected to be present is common but what is present against expectation that is paradoxical and hence strange, peculiar, uncommon and characteristic. Thirst with dry mouth is quite a common phenomenon. Similarly if one covers during chill it is expected. But the thirstlessness in spite of dryness of mouth like we find in Puls. and Nux. mos. and covering during heat as we find unexpectedly in Nux. vom. are paradoxical phenomena and hence peculiar. As against peculiar, unexpected and paradoxical symptoms, we do have to prescribe often and quite successfully certain medicines for symptoms and painful conditions that are simply anatomical or pathological. They are neither peculiar nor strange, yet we prescribe on these symptoms all the same and quite confidently. And results justify these pathological prescriptions.

Why do we do this? That is because such symptoms are not easily avail-

able in many medicines. There are symptoms rarely found in many medicines. Only one or two medicines produced them and hence these symptoms though merely diagnostic or pathological were covered by and demanded those rare medicines only. It therefore followed that such a commonplace symptom could be characteristic and a safe point to such a medicine because that is the only medicine that produced it. Though judged from the standards of pathology, diagnosis etc. it was not peculiar yet it was useful for prescribing the medicine that was a rare one to produce it. A popular example of this kind of symptom is pain in the right hypochondrium extending to the medial side of the inferior angle of the right scapula. This is a symptom due to gall bladder involvement. It is a pathological and common symptom and not a peculiar symptom. But it is still a dependable guide for prescribing Chelidonium, even though this is deviation from the general principle of basing a medicine only on uncommon and peculiar and strange symptoms. That is because this symptom is not found in many medicines. Chelidonium is a rare medicine having this symptom. If you are not happy with this example another very common and popular example is Arnica which is so popular and quite often relied on for sore and bruised feeling after injury or over exertion. Not many medicines produced this symptom. Arnica is a rare medicine that produced this pathological or physiological state. Similarly stony hard glands along the lower jaw and in the neck point towards Bromium not because of any peculiarity of the symptom but because not many medicines produced it. Bromium is just the one. Old cases of high temperature occurring periodically point towards Fl. acid for the same reason.

Let us give some more examples of medicines for such rare but not peculiar symptoms. Only one or two medicines have had them and this makes it rare and a safe indicator for that medicine.

A few more examples of rare (but not peculiar) symptoms:

Alcoholism with sleeplessness—Avena sat.

Asthma worse feather pillow—Mang. acet.

Atrophy of retina—Carb. sulph, Iodoform.

Atrophy of retina esp. after abuse of liquor, tobacco or drugs—Nux vom.

Bleeding from eyes on blowing nose—Nit. ac.

Burns—Pic. acid 1% solution on lint to be applied until granulations begin to form.

Burns even of third degree—The parts should be washed with sterile water and dried, then paraffin should be sprayed over them and covered with cotton.

Complaints from eating melons and drinking impure water—Zingiber.

Detachment of retina—Naphthalin.

Dizzy while crossing stream of water—Brom.

Eyes stick while sneezing—Gambogia.

Gland stony hard on lower jaw of the neck—Brom.

Heart agitation and excitement—Anemopsis californica.

- Hollows of knees painful on motion—Nat. c.  
Inability to walk during pregnancy—Bellis p.  
Itching between fingers or in folds of joints—Acid. phos.  
Male hair in females—Oleum. j. as.  
Nausea after abdominal operation—Staph.  
Neuralgia of stump after amputation—Allium cepa, Acid phos.  
Obesity and fatty deposit around abdomen—Amm. mur.  
Oedema and swelling after ankle sprain—Strontium carb, Bellis p.  
Old night temperature recurring periodically—Fl. acid.  
Pain in spermatic cord after an embrace—Arundo.  
Painful urination and constriction of urethra accompanied by backache—  
Cucurbita cit.  
Post nasal catarrh in puberty—Penthorum.  
To prevent thickening of blood—Ceanothus.  
Profuse diarrhoea due to rectal cancer—Card. mar.  
Severe pain after abdominal operation—Staph.  
Shock and collapse—Camphor  $\phi$ .  
Sinus after mastoid operation—Hecla lava.  
Tarter on tecth—Calc. renalis.  
Tendency to abscesses after fever—Acid phos.  
Tender ft. of shop girls—Squilla.  
Tonic after exhausting fevers—Alstonia s.  
Urticaria without itching—Uva ursi.  
While flesh decreases, muscles become harder & firmer (pseudo hypertrophic muscular atrophy)—Calotropis.  
Women with large breasts—Chimaphila.

—*Bulletin* of Federation of Homoeopathic Physicians on the occasion of  
2nd All India Conference, 14th & 15th Jan. 1984

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