

## HYDROCYANIC ACID—FRIEND OR FOE

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Here is a remedy with a reputation of death and sorrow, if there ever was one in the orthodox, scientific sense and usage. In Homoeopathy however, the exact opposite holds true. A remarkable example of the perfect application of the process of attenuation and conversion of a markedly lethal, toxic chemical agent into an humble, beneficent aid to man's health when and if it is correctly used homoeopathically. To us homoeopaths there are many other useful lethal, toxic substances, snake venoms (*Lachesis*, *Crotalus*) being among the better known. Also animal poisons such as the bee variety (*Apis mellifica*) and the strange, terrifying so-called arrow poison (*Curare*) of the South American Indian which the allopathic school has recently tried to discover and bring to its own terms, namely, to control certain muscle spasms. These and many others have for generations (some less) been studied, prepared and used by the homoeopathic school of practice successfully, not as toxic, destructive agents but as real therapeutic agents.

What a remedy to conjure with—think about—recall its history, for good or evil. True, it is not one of our tried, proven and true polychrests, yet one which may deserve an increasing amount of thought and developmental study. We had hoped to obtain some useful facts about the terminal effects of this lethal agent from the warden of one of our penitentiaries, but he failed to respond to our letter. We had hoped to obtain from him post mortem and other data predicated upon the use of this drug in legal executions. It may be just as well to let the legally dead rest in peace.

There were several good reasons for choosing this remedy, namely, the striking benefit a number of our coronary cases have seemingly derived from it, and the fact that it is but slightly dealt with in most of our homoeopathic literature, being of course but sketchily proven. Therefore, we hoped to call attention to this very important agent in planning your treatment of coronary cases particularly. These poorly proven remedies need our help to fill out their useful picture and our patients in turn need them. More could properly be written along this line but would serve no good end here.

The *Organon* gave us the best philosophic reason as found in paragraphs 105, 106, 107, 108, 109 and 110 inclusive as follows:

105—"The second point of the business of a true physician relates to *acquiring knowledge of the instruments for the cure of the natural diseases*, investigating the pathogenetic power of the medicines, in order, when called on to cure, to be able to select from among them one, from the list of whose symptoms an artificial disease may be constructed, as similar as possible to the totality of the principal symptoms of the natural disease sought to be cured."

106—"The whole pathogenetic effects of the several medicines must be

known; that is to say, all the morbid symptoms and alterations in the health that each of them is specially capable of developing in the healthy individual must first have been observed as far as possible before we can hope to be able to find among them, and to select, suitable homoeopathic remedies for most of the natural diseases."

107—"If, in order to ascertain this, medicines be given to *sick* persons only, even though they be administered singly and alone, then little or nothing precise is seen of their true effects, as those peculiar alterations of the health to be expected from the medicine are mixed up with the symptoms of the disease and can seldom be distinctly observed."

108—"There is, therefore, no other possible way in which the peculiar effects of medicines on the health of individuals can be accurately ascertained—there is no sure, no more natural way of accomplishing this object, than to administer the several medicines experimentally, in moderate doses, to *healthy* persons, in order to ascertain what changes, symptoms and signs of their influence each individually produces on the health of the body and of the mind; that is to say, what disease elements they are able and tend to produce, since, as has been demonstrated (Paras. 24-27), all the curative power of medicines lies in this power they possess of changing the state of man's health, and is revealed by observation of the latter."

109—"I was the first that opened up this path, which I have pursued with a perseverance that could only arise and be kept up by a perfect conviction of the great truth, fraught with such blessings to humanity, that it is only by the homoeopathic employment of medicines that the certain cure of human maladies is possible."

110—"I saw, moreover, that the morbid lesions which previous authors had observed to result from medicinal substances when taken into the stomach of healthy persons, either in large doses given by mistake or in order to produce death in themselves or others, or under other circumstances, accorded very much with my own observations when experimenting with the same substances on myself and other healthy individuals. These authors give details of what occurred as histories of poisoning and as proofs of the pernicious effects of these powerful substances, chiefly in order to warn others from their use; partly also for the sake of exalting their own skill, when, under the use of the remedies they employed to combat these dangerous accidents, health gradually returned; but partly also, when the persons so affected died under their treatment, in order to seek their own justification in the dangerous character of these substances, which they then termed poisons. None of these observers ever dreamed that the symptoms they recorded merely as proofs of the noxious and poisonous character of these substances were sure revelations of the power of these drugs to extinguish curatively similar symptoms occurring in natural diseases, that these their pathogenetic phenomena were intimations of their homoeopathic curative action, and that the only possible way to ascertain their medicinal powers is to observe those changes of health medicines are capable of producing in

the healthy organism; for the pure, peculiar powers of medicines available for the cure of disease are to be learned neither by any ingenious a priori speculations, nor by the smell, taste or appearance of the drugs, nor by the employment of several of them at one time in a mixture (prescription) in diseases; it was never suspected that these histories of medicinal diseases would one day furnish the first rudiments of the true, pure materia medica, which from the earliest times until now has consisted solely of false conjectures and fictions of the imagination—that is to say, did not exist at all."

As demonstrable proof we wish to offer the following case: Mr. F. R., age 51, a chauffeur, clean-living, industrious family man, seized with typical cactus symptoms localized in cardiac area, while on an errand with his elderly employer. Upon entering our office he presented the characteristic picture of the acute anginal patient for which Cactus 200 was prescribed. Within the hour the first of a series of electrocardiograms was made from which the following partial interpretation is taken: "The size and shape of the heart are considered as normal, but the rate is slightly faster than usual and the rhythm is slightly irregular due to a few ventricular extra systoles. There is evidence of some myocardial damage and left axis deviation is shown. No definite coronary pathology can be seen at this time. A progress examination again in a few months is suggested." A second impression or summary made some days later reads as follows: "There is evidence of a recent coronary occlusion and there has been some infarction with considerable myocardial damage. Numerous ventricular extra systoles are shown in lead II. The condition is not nearly as good as shown on the first tracing. The outlook now probably should be regarded as grave. Recommended continued observation and treatment with rest in bed and a progress examination in a week." Three days later comes this report: "There is continued and definite evidence of a recent coronary occlusion and there has been some moderate myocardial damage. The infarct which was shown at the previous examination now shows some improvement. Numerous ventricular extra systoles also are shown. The outlook still would have to be regarded as uncertain." Finally, an interpretation made some months later yielded the following: "The rhythm of the ventricles is rather irregular due to many extra systoles. There is evidence of only moderate myocardial damage, but there had been definite coronary changes and the lumen of the coronary arteries is much smaller than usual."

It might be of interest to point out that during the acute anginal phase, the electrocardiogram yielded but little information and incidentally that was the time that Cactus was indicated and seemed to do its best work. Later on with the pathology more evident through the subsequent electrocardiograms, Hydrocyanic acid, in potency, of course, came into the picture and remained there.

The story of this patient's blood pressure might offer an added note of interest. When first taken the systolic reading was below 80 and the diastolic

in the high fifties. This has steadily but gradually risen to a normal of 120/78 as of the present moment.

Whenever the need for an acute remedy has arisen the blood pressure invariably drops to a point slightly below a hundred then gradually comes up to normal under constitutional treatment. The potency of HCN was from 200 to 50M.

We have in recent years had the opportunity of dealing with a number of these coronary cases, some acute and some chronic, and have found that sooner or later with but a few exceptions Hydrocyanic acid has become one of the remedies of cure.

In conclusion, we call to your attention—

(1) Hydrocyanic acid as a curative agent when prepared and used under homoeopathic auspices, and

(2) While it is but poorly proven, we have found ample justification for its further study and use in spite of our present limited knowledge of it in paragraphs No. 105 to No. 110 inclusive of the *Organon*.

(3) We have pointed out the highlights of one of a series of coronary cases which in themselves have pointed so strongly toward hydrocyanic acid as their similia.

(4) It is our earnest desire and hope that some of us may be stimulated to carrying on the research which this remedy so richly deserves.

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