

## CLINICAL CONFIRMATIONS OF SOME OF THE LESSER REMEDIES\*

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The polychrests and well proven remedies of our materia medica are amply sufficient for the cure of the majority of cases met with in general practice. Nevertheless, the homoeopath who prescribes consistently on the totality of the symptoms must acquire some knowledge of the so-called lesser remedies which may prove curative in the case whose *similimum* cannot be found among the old line medicines. For Homoeopathy admits of no substitutes.

The term 'lesser' is applied to those drugs of which only meagre provings have been made, or whose indications are based solely on clinical experience or cases of poisoning. Take *Vipera torva*, for instance. Practically all we know about this drug is derived from the records of its toxic effects. And yet it has been used extensively and with remarkable success in conditions involving the veins in various parts of the body, especially of the lower extremities, in a variety of skin affections, varicose ulcers, erysipelatous inflammations and other serious ailments.†

*Castor equi*, the 'rudimentary thumb nail' of the horse, is another remedy with a very limited pathogenesis. Yet it has healed about one-third of my cases of sore nipples after parturition. It has an affinity for the female nipples, the nails, the hair and the bones, especially the right tibia and coccyx. The nipples are cracked, ragged, and so sensitive that the least touch of the clothing causes pain. The breasts may be swollen and sensitive to touch, but this is not always the case. Whenever I get a case of this affection with no definite indications for one of the polychrests I prescribe *Castor equi*, usually with excellent results.

Thyroidin, familiar to students of materia medica of four decades ago, has been neglected of late. We are indebted for a knowledge of its uses to John H. Clarke, of London, who collected a large number of toxic symptoms and published them in a schematic form, together with cured symptoms, in the *Homoeopathic World*, Volume XXIX. Several years ago a mother wrote to me about her thirteen-year-old boy. She stated that he was *heavy, listless, averse to any mental or physical effort and had lost his habitually good appetite*. He seemed to be growing *mentally dull* and did not do well in school. There were no other symptoms except a slight dyspnoea from every little exertion, and a small soft swelling in the region of the thyroid gland. Thyroid, 30, nine powders, were followed by a definite improvement of both the mental and the physical states. The boy began to

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† See Farrington, *Journal of the American Institute of Homoeopathy*, March 1937.

grow more rapidly and his averages at school showed improvement. A repetition of the same potency six months later completed the cure.

Fred H., *act*, 27, furnishes a clinical picture which is characteristic of *Rhus venenata*. Fine vesicular eruption *between the fingers* of both hands; *itching* so violent that he *could not refrain from scratching*. This was followed by watery discharge which caused *burning*. Symptoms worse from the *warmth of the bed* and washing. A single dose of *Rhus ven.* 10M was given. Soon the itching began to subside, the serous oozing ceased, and the eruption became scaly, and then cleared up.

Another case illustrating the action of *Rhus ven.* is that of E.C.B., 47 years of age. He was brought up on a farm, milked the cows and did other chores about the place. One day he noticed that a red burning itching eruption was forming about his mouth. In a few days it spread upward over the face, and then to the hands and arms. Salves, lotions and ointments relieved for a time but the trouble soon returned. Then he happened to notice that when he sat on the milking stool to milk a cow, his face immediately began to burn. He gave up farming and secured a position as teacher of mathematics at Purdue University. His affliction soon disappeared. He was allergic to cows, although neither he nor his doctors called it that, for allergy was then in its infancy. Indeed, it is not very well understood even now. That he was not cured is proved by the fact that the eruption returned in an aggravated form twelve years after he left the farm. He was now in business in Chicago and he had not even paid a visit to the stock-yards! Was he allergic to some other form of emanation, or did the original invasion of bovine effluvia stir up some latent psoric taint, which had not been cured in the first instance? I bothered my head not at all about allergies and took the symptoms, which were as follows:

Red, rough, oozing eruption on the backs of the hands, especially toward the inner aspect. Burning worse from the touch of hot water and after scratching. Severe itching, < by the warmth of the bed.

Sulphur 1M relieved the itching and burning for a few days, but the eruption became more scurfy, began to spread between the fingers and a large bleb formed on the palm of the right hand. There were dryness and a drawing sensation in the lips but no eruption. He received one powder of *Rhus ven.* 50M. After a sharp aggravation the symptoms began to abate and gradually disappeared. The 50M was given again for a slight recurrence about a year after the first dose, and the patient has been free of his ailment now for a period of three years.

I would like to remind you of the efficacy of *Vinca minor* in alopecia. Our information regarding this remedy is based on Roscnberg's proving (*Archiv. hom. Heilk.*, V. 17 pt. 2; *Alg. hom. Zeit.*, V. 29), and clinical cases scattered through the literature. Despite a rather meagre proving, there are a number of peculiar and striking symptoms. Great weakness after stool, with passive uterine haemorrhages and other conditions. Lachrymose,

quarrelsome, sadness with fear of death. Whirling vertigo with flickering in the field of vision. Badly smelling eruptions on the face, head and behind the ears. The hair falls out and is replaced by grey hair. Bald spots covered with a *fine white woolly fuzz*. Plica polonica. Empty feeling in the stomach relieved by eating (Boger). Sensation as of cold wind in the ears. The nose turns red if the patient gets angry. My own experience, however, is limited to alopecia areata, a few cases of which I shall relate here.

M. McH., *aet.* 41, came to me first for chronic sinusitis of long standing. This was cured by Calcarea sulph. He happened in one day to report the excellent condition of his nasal passages, and remarked casually about three bald spots on the back of his head. He said that he had been 'cured' of a very troublesome eczema by a celebrated dermatologist, who, however, said he could not cure the baldness by the usual ointments because "he was afraid that the treatment might cause a return of the eruption. He would have to use the x-ray". The patient's hair was jet black, so that the spots, about the size of three five-cent pieces, were very conspicuous. They were covered with a woolly down which contrasted sharply with the natural hair. Vinca 30; followed by the 200th, grew black hair in three weeks. The specialist said it would take three months.

Mrs. H. S. *aet.* 60, rather stout and plethoric. Subject to *weak spells*. *Constipated; stool hard. Two bald spots*, one about the size of half a dollar on the left vertex, another smaller one on the occiput. Vinca 30 was given on April 24th, the 200th on June 5th, January 9th of the following year, May 31st and again in July and December. This case was not a complete cure. Fluoric acid had to be given after a reasonable wait on the last dose of Vinca.

L. M. W., 35 years old, had a several spots of baldness on the scalp, which were cured with the 30th and 200th of Vinca minor in a couple of weeks. The recurrence of one spot eight months after quickly responded to a single dose of the 200th.

In closing I wish to relate an incident which establishes a clinical indication for Aconitum ferox. The late Dr. Tyrrell of Toronto was known throughout the country as a master of homoeopathic prescribing. It seemed at times as though he were actually clairvoyant. His knowledge of the polychrests was unequalled, and he also had at his command the indications for many of the lesser or unusual remedies. He was in coma most of the time during the last days of his final illness. One evening a physician called up saying that he had a very serious case and asked for the doctor's remedy for Cheyne-Stokes' respiration. The attendant explained that the doctor was unconscious, but that if there were a lucid moment, she would see if she could obtain the necessary information. In a short time Tyrrell opened his eyes. She asked what remedy he used, and he murmured, Aconitum ferox. If I am rightly informed, those were the last words he ever uttered.

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