

MEZEREUM

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On one of my strolls through some of the charming villages hidden among the beechwoods in the Chilterns in the very early spring a lovely scent was wafted across to me from a tiny cottage garden. "Ah, there it is," I exclaimed—the bare boughs of a low shrub thickly covered with tiny pink flowers. It seemed hardly possible that those few could produce a strong aromatic odour at a time when the year was young and Mother Earth was still sparing with her gifts of beauty. Yes, *Daphne Mezereum* is a lovely thing. I fell in love with it when I saw it flowering at one of the horticultural shows in Vincent Square and promptly had to own it. I cosseted it and loved it in my little London garden, but it would not be deceived. This is not a cottage garden, it whispered to me; just a make-believe town patch, too much soot and smoke and it gently gave up its ghost after the second winter. I never tried again to make the lovely little stranger feel at home in grimy London, but went out into the country to feast my eyes on it during its short season of loveliness.

Mezereum is not only a thing of beauty, but has served me well and truly in various skin cases.

There is a troublesome type of infantile eczema of the scalp which is met frequently in young babies of a few weeks' old which makes the mothers feel ashamed; they like to hide the little tots. One always tries to cheer up the unhappy mothers by assuring them that this skin trouble usually spontaneously disappears after the first year of life, and that it is foolish to drive it in by applying local ointments and lotions. They do not usually believe me, and it needs constant reassurances and constant admonitions and even then a fond grandparent will whisk off the unfortunate infant to hospital, and in a few weeks the mother proudly reappears with a baby with a clear skin, a nice pink scalp, and as a rule very shortly bronchitis sets in and in my experience bout after bout of bronchitis follows a so-called cure of eczema of scalp. And very few mothers and certainly no trained orthodox doctor connects the disappearance of the skin rash with the subsequent bronchial or pneumonial or renal disease. I have seen so many beautiful, fat, bonny children with diseased scalps and as soon as the scalp had healed up with ointments, the child began to lose weight and go downhill.

I recall a mother who had pyelitis—inflammation of the kidneys—during the last months of her pregnancy; she was well dosed and injected with various drugs during her month in hospital, and when the baby came its scalp was one mass of corruption, but such a nice happy, smiling baby. Soon the 'skin' spread behind the ears, down the forehead and crept further and further over the face, deep raw cuts with many crusts and scales formed. And the

baby was getting on well, gaining weight steadily. The mother wept, farther scolded, the neighbours jeered, the district nurse, full of the latest medical knowledge, was indignant that the skin was to be left alone—and combined public opinion—how few are strong enough to withstand the opinion—often so wrong—of the herd!—took the mother to the skin hospital. Coal tar ointment was applied, the cracks were healed with silver nitrate, and the child's head showed no blemishes any longer. Three weeks later a severe attack of bronchitis followed; two months later, at the age of seven months, the child was in hospital with albumen in her urine, for weeks and weeks. She never gained an ounce for months after skin trouble was dealt with so drastically, and what was very obvious, too, instead of being a happy, smiling baby, it was always fretful and grizzling. At the age of eighteen months it had been in hospital three times with pyelitis, and at 2½ years it died of inflammation of the kidneys.

The mother had been warned in the early days; but she preferred a clean outside and a diseased inside followed by ill-health and an early death. "What the eye does not see, the heart does not grieve over."

There is a classic tale in the writings of the late Dr. Dunham, who cured a case of almost complete deafness in a youth aged seventeen years which had come on immediately after infantile eczema of the scalp had been 'cured' by a coal tar cap, which tore off the scabs when it was removed, after which the new areas of the scalp were painted with silver nitrate. Dr. Dunham gave him Mezereum 3c, on the history of suppressed eczema of the scalp, which was repeated several times at intervals of several weeks. In a few months the hearing was completely returned. Dr. Dunham gave Mezereum, not because the boy was deaf, but because the scalp was covered in childhood with thick white scabs, hard and almost horny, with fissures, through which oozed offensive yellowish pus on pressure.

The doctor was lucky to find an intelligent mother who after an interval of many years could remember the appearance of the skin. This happened in 1857! My experience to my sorrow is that the powers of observation among some of the people I come across are poorly developed, and the memory of past incidents in their lives, past illness, is lost, and therefore the physician finds it more difficult, perhaps, in these days, to find the right remedies. The wonder is really that a cure is ever found at all for so many chronic diseases which are due to accumulation of years of drug poisonings, wrong feeding, and suppression of skin diseases, catarrhal troubles and subsequent dosing with vaccines or serums.

Let me return to my story of the action of Mezereum on the skin. I saw a boy on October 12th, 1939, when he was just three weeks old. His left eye was nearly closed and inflamed, it had been weeping and moist since birth and there was a moist eruption in both groins and over the penis. Two weeks later, a thick red rash came out on the face, which soon spread to the eyebrows and the edges of the scalp. The mother rushed him off to hospital,

where he was ordered calamine lotion. I had given the child Lycopodium 30 on October 12th for windy spasms, and it had gained 19ozs. in three weeks on the breast. As soon as the calamine lotion was applied to the skin the child ceased to gain, and from November 2nd until January 1st, 1940, it only put on 7ozs. in two months. On January 8th the eczema had spread all over the face and over the head; thick yellow discharge was oozing from underneath the crusts on the scalp, the weight was just an ounce over 11lbs. at four months. It was then given a dose of Mezereum 1000th potency. Seen a month later, he had gained 17ounces, face quite clear, no discharge from scalp, eczema drying up, only some seurf left in the hair. On March 11th, two months after the dose of Mezereum, it had gained 2lbs. 14ozs., and the face and scalp were clear. April 8th, 1940, a further gain of 17ozs., the hair is beautifully silky and long, face and head clear.

On June 6th weight is now 17lbs. 14ozs. at just over eight months; he has two teeth which came through without any trouble; he is standing and there is no sign of any skin disease. The child looked weakly and pale and miserable, while he was being constantly dabbed with calamine lotion, and the improvement after the Mezereum was immediate. No further external treatment was given; in fact he has not required any further internal treatment, and he is now the pride and joy of his mother. One dose of Mezereum! could do this. Why waste starch poultices and bandages and pots of ointments and lotions, if a few granules of the indicated, the right medicine, can do so much better?

The interesting thing was that his mother had also suffered from eczema of the face and eyebrows as a child, which was dealt with in the orthodox fashion. The mother had puerperal fever after the birth of this child and suffered much from backache and an irritating discharge from the vagina, and pains in the shoulder and constipation after leaving hospital. On December 11th, 1939, the mother had had two attacks of severe menstrual haemorrhages with nasty headaches. On March 11th, 1940, she still had backache, and gets fixed easily when trying to rise from a sitting position, also profuse creamy discharge which burns and makes her raw, irregular frequent haemorrhages—the pain from the back extends down the outside of the legs. She was pale and anaemic, felt the cold and from my dealings with her I knew she was snappy and easily irritated by people. Therefore a kali carb. person, and Kali carb. 30 proved her remedy, which was given on March 11th. Seen again on April 8th, when she reported that the backache she had for nigh on seven months had gone, the periods were again regular at monthly intervals, and the vaginal discharge had gone, but there was a rash and many spots on face and neck, and scurfy patches on chin and round the neck. Presumably a return of the original skin trouble which had been suppressed by ointments in childhood. Since April the mother has felt well and looked flourishing. There have been no further complaints, the skin rash cleared up promptly without any other treatment.

This is just by the way—a return of old skin trouble after many years which returned after the deep acting chronic remedy was given for latent sepsis of the womb, and subsequent clearing up of the 'skin' while still under the action of the same remedy.

I often find that patients develop 'skin symptoms' while under the action of the constitutional remedy. This means an elimination of the stored-up toxins in the deeper seated vital organs, such as liver, kidneys, lungs, etc., through the skin. This is usually only a temporary reaction and will have to be dealt with by either continuing the same constitutional remedy or giving one or more according to the symptoms as they arise.

There was a middle aged lady some seven or eight years ago, she was given Calc. sulph. 6, night and morning for three weeks for rheumatism in her extremities; which after that interval brought her out in a most alarming condition of skin irritation. She was covered almost from head to foot with an angry rash, thick weals and blebs all over which irritated and itched and tingled. The more she scratched, the more she had to. It was particularly bad in the warm bed and unbearable after a hot bath and agony when sitting near a warm fire. The skin was so tender at night, she could hardly bear the weight of the bedclothes near her and had to wear thin silk garments, as woollen or cotton garments were unbearable. These vesicles burnt like flames of fire. She was in a state of misery; when she was cold the pains in her body were worse, and when she tried to get herself warm her skin began to give her agonies of suffering due to the heat, dark red rash which she had to scratch and irritate which tingled and burnt and went from place to place on being rubbed. She bore this agony for several weeks, and then she was given Mezereum 30, which to her great joy and comfort removed her skin irritation and the rash all over and she could sleep again in the warm bed and could sit by the warm fire without enduring the sufferings of the damned. Yes, a severe Mezereum rash is most uncomfortable, and one would not wish one's worst enemy to have to go through these tortures. And how quickly Mezereum cleans it up!

The mezereum patient shows different reactions according as to whether the skin affection is uppermost or whether he is suffering from neuralgias. There are terrible bone pains and neuralgias of the head and face and limbs which are very tender to touch and when the patient feels easier in a warm atmosphere and which comes on in cold, damp weather. But if the skin manifestations are out, then he likes to hug the coldest part of the house, and flees from fires and hot baths and warm beds.

So you have to study each remedy and learn its idiosyncrasies, and the deeper a physician can get into the peculiarities of his patients, one by one, the sooner he will be able to spot the correct remedy and will thus be given power to ease the suffering.

And Mezereum, the little, blushing maiden of the spring in the cottage garden of the farm-worker and artisan, is another example of the truth of Homoeopathy. It produces a vesicular, burning eruption on the body when

applied locally in strong doses, and when you find a similar rash in the sick, a similar burning irritation when the patient hates to sit near the fire and hates warm application, Mezeureum will cure it promptly in a very short period of time. Indeed, like cures like, as our master, Hahnemann, has it. Yes, and think of Mezeureum, too, in old cases of bone diseases, periostitis of the left tibia. People who have been suffering for years, have become shrivelled and worn-out in the process of putting up a fight against ill-health, people who are discontented, quarrelsome, indolent, who have become melancholic, have no rest when by themselves, and dislike talking to others. You sometimes get a history of suppression of eruptions in such a case of melancholia, and Mezeureum will set such an individual on the right road to recovery. Deafness and melancholia coming on after suppressed skin eruptions, neuralgias, bone diseases, late syphilitic manifestations, eczemas in infants, what a variety of diseases our Daphne Mezeureum can deal with!

—*Heal Thyself*, July, 1940