

Preface

Dr Douglas Gibson was born in 1888 and educated at Cheltenham College. He studied medicine at St Thomas' Hospital, later taking the Edinburgh FRCS. Twenty-seven years as a medical missionary in China was brought to a sudden end by the Second World War, and he then worked for four years at a large tuberculosis hospital in Canada.

He was introduced to homeopathy in 1936, and in 1946 came to study it at the Royal London Homeopathic Hospital, where he became first a Member and then a Fellow of the Faculty of Homeopathy, and joined the Outpatients staff of the hospital. He also had a private practice. In 1972 he retired to Canada, where he died in 1977, two weeks before his eighty-ninth birthday.

Dr Gibson was a remarkable person, with strong convictions and a lively sense of humour. His many interests ranged from music and literature through natural history to Rugby, football and cricket. He was a prolific writer, and contributed the series of Studies in Materia Medica to the British Homeopathic Journal in forty-seven instalments between 1963 and 1977. In this he was strongly encouraged by Dr Ralph Twentymen, the Editor throughout that period, and to whom therefore is due the credit of being midwife to this remarkable offspring.

The studies appeared in groups of two, or occasionally three, connected through their action or source (for example *Belladonna*, *Hyoscyamus*, *Stramonium*). For the reader's convenience we have rearranged them in alphabetical order, but a list of the original groups, in the order in which they were published, appears as an Appendix.

Each remedy is described under a number of different headings:

- 1) The *Source* gives the origin and nature of the remedy, whether animal, vegetable or mineral; a description of it and of its ecology, not only with regard to the physical world, but also in myth, literature and history. Dr Gibson devotes more attention to this aspect than the authors of previous materia medicas. Sometimes he draws a parallel between the external manifestations of a plant, mineral or animal, and the mental and physical symptoms which make up the drug picture of the remedy. He does not however suggest a causal relationship nor invoke any philosophical principle.

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A world of nature and symbolism is concentrated into each homeopathic remedy. This is significant, and cannot lightly be dismissed by quoting Hahnemann's warning against the Doctrine of Signatures. Dr Gibson says: 'These parallels and correspondences are sufficiently numerous and striking to deserve mention, as well as being an aid to the understanding and memorising of the materia medica picture of each remedy.'

2) *Pharmacology* describes the gross chemical effects produced by the remedy in its natural state before potentisation.

3) *Proving*. A reference has been inserted here to the earliest published proving of the remedy.

The above three headings relate to the remedy itself, whereas the remainder are devoted to its effect upon the patient.

4) The general physical *Appearance* is described, together with mannerisms, gait, and so on. It is not suggested that a remedy will give rise to particular physical characteristics; rather that people of a certain build and temperament have been found to be sensitive to some remedies, and that they respond well to those remedies in a clinical situation.

5) *Psychology* includes the mental and emotional symptoms which are so important in homeopathic prescribing. They can range from traits of personality, such as the untidiness and argumentativeness of *Sulphur*, to symptoms of toxic psychosis, for example, mania in *Belladonna* poisoning.

6) *Physiology* refers to the general symptoms such as patterns of sleep, food likes and dislikes, reactions to climate, and so on.

7) *Symptomatology* describes particular symptoms relating to the different systems of the body, listed in the order adopted by homeopaths. *Modalities* have been included at the end of this section.

8) Finally, *Clinical Notes* covers details of dosage and treatment, relationships of remedies, and otherwise unclassifiable items of interest.

We have added remedy pictures of four nosodes – *Medorrhinum*, *Syphilinum*, *Tuberculinum* and *Carcinosin* – which we feel to be so important that they should not be left out of any practical materia medica.

M.E.H., B.K.

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Arnica montana

SOURCE

Arnica montana is a member of the vast *Compositae* family. It is known as Leopard's bane, fall herb, Panacea lapsorum. Its value in relation to wounds was known to the Greeks and Romans. Mountain dwellers especially appreciated its value in this respect. It was reported of the dwellers in the Andes that it was customary in the event of an accident to gather the herb, which grows conveniently at high altitudes, pour on boiling water and give the resulting infusion to drink to the injured person.

Its bright yellow flowers make it conspicuous; the ligulate florets, notched at the tip, are in such untidy disarray as to give the impression that the head of the plant had been bashed, perhaps by the mountain gusts. The stem is a foot high or somewhat less, with twin ovate opposite leaves; it springs at the base from a rosette of dark green leaves, the reverse side of which are of lighter colour. The root is woody, with a number of small radicles; when macerated it has a peculiar odour like apples and an astringent taste.

The mother tincture is prepared from root, flowers and leaves after removal of the larvae of the Arnica fly, which are commonly found on the plant.

Although recognized primarily as the remedy par excellence in wounds and injuries, *Arnica* has also been proved in the accepted manner and has its own materia medica picture.

PHARMACOLOGY

There is a marked affinity with blood vessels, leading to dilatation, then stasis and finally increased permeability. As a result of these changes purpura and various types of haemorrhage can ensue. Alterations in tone of the walls of blood vessels may produce either pallor or flushing.

Involvement of the alimentary system induces nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea or dysentery. Action on the central nervous system gives rise to agitation, prostration, visual disturbance, tremors or even convulsions.

Affinity with muscle tissue causes over-contraction and hypertrophy, e.g. enlarged heart. A further effect is to produce myalgia with a bruised sensation and tenderness, the result of localized hyperaemia. A local action on the skin

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is to cause severe irritation and eruptions which are erysipeloid, vesicular or pustular in type.

PROVING

Arnica was proved by Hahnemann, and is described in the first volume of *Materia Medica Pura*.

APPEARANCE

Both pallor and flushing are described. A peculiar feature is a hot head and face associated with a cold nose and body; or the upper part of the body is hot and the lower part cold.

Mottled areas like bruises may be observed in various sites.

Backward jerking of the head may be present. There is constant turning and twisting in bed; this is not due to restlessness, but to the odd and characteristic sensation that the bed is distressingly hard and full of lumps.

PSYCHOLOGY

The patient is morose, wants to be left alone and in peace, is unwilling even to be spoken to. Pain is intolerable and there is great fear of being touched or even approached.

There is inability to concentrate and aversion to any kind of effort, even talking. Normal self-confidence is lost.

Forgetfulness is frequent; he has to go back and see if he has turned off the gas. Is easily startled. May develop a horror of imminent death.

Characteristic is a curious mental attitude when seriously ill – says, ‘I’m all right. Why bother to get the doctor?’

A French physician describes the *Arnica* subject thus: ‘Over-excitabile, laughs without cause, when told something disagreeable gets mad and shouts at the top of her voice. Capricious; wants a whole lot of things and then has no use for them. Quarrelsome, up against the whole world. He wants to know better than everybody; no one can take him up; is disdainful and imperious. Worried about the present and the future; in despair; becomes indifferent towards everything, lazy, averse to and incapable of all forms of work; extremely opinionated and obstinate. Foolishly gay, fickle, mischievous.’

Altogether quite a mixture, with ill-humour predominating. Agoraphobia is also mentioned.

PHYSIOLOGY

There is a general hypersensitivity to heat and cold, not to mention touch.

Appetite is variable. There may be a loathing of food, with definite distaste for meat, broth, milk.

Anorexia may be present, or easy repletion. Canine hunger is recorded. As also desire for vinegar, for alcohol.

Thirst again may be excessive, especially for cold water, or may be absent altogether.

Sleep may be delayed till 2 or 3 a.m., and then liable to being disturbed by anxious or horrific dreams. Drowsiness during the day is accompanied by much yawning.

SYMPTOMATOLOGY

General

Feels bruised all over, as if suffering from multiple blows or knocks. Moreover, the bruised sensation is accompanied by great exhaustion and weariness. There is widespread hypersensitivity and soreness, also throbbing and burning with muscular twitchings. The condition is aggravated by any sudden movement or jolt. Haemorrhages from various surfaces are of dark venous blood; spontaneous bruising and purpura are characteristic. Sepsis may be a feature, especially of the putrid variety. Stuporous states occur, with incontinence of urine.

Head

Whirling giddiness occurs chiefly on rising after sleep, on moving the head or when walking. It may be accompanied by nausea; there is a tendency to fall to the left; it is worse on closing the eyes. Headache can be severe, as if the head was being distended from within or as if a nail was being driven into the skull; it is often unilateral, worse in the morning, and accompanied by fibrillary twitching of facial muscles. A neuralgic type headache is aggravated by the least movement of the head.

Eyes

Eye symptoms relating to the remedy are subconjunctival or retinal haemorrhage; diplopia following injury; Conjunctivitis with burning tears; eye strain from watching television or over-use in other ways.

Ears

Shooting pains occur in and around the ears. Deafness and buzzings after a blow.

Respiratory System

Much tingling inside the nose may precede nosebleed. Epistaxis may follow injury, or occur during whooping cough or in association with typhus fever. Stitches in the chest are felt, especially on the left side, and are aggravated by respiratory movements and by coughing. A dry tickly cough is accompanied by blood-stained sputum; it is worse in the morning. In whooping cough the child cries before the paroxysm.

Alimentary System

Lips may be chapped with a sensation of burning heat. There is a foul taste in the mouth and foetor oris. Tongue shows a slimy yellow coating. Eructations have the odour of rotten eggs. Salivation is excessive. Dysphagia is associated with nausea, possibly with empty retching and gagging. Epigastric pain and pressive discomfort extends to the back. Vomit may contain dark coagulated blood. Cutting or colicky pains occur in the abdomen. Flatulence with odour of rotten eggs. Diarrhoea is associated with tenesmus, offensive brown or blood-stained stools, possibly involuntary; has to lie down after every stool. Dysentery symptoms are accompanied by ischuria; there is a considerable interval between stools. A 'typhoid state' may supervene with foul eructations, tympanites, tender belly, decubitus as if moribund, horribly offensive stools, often passed in sleep, melaena.

Cardiovascular System

Cardiac pain as if the heart was being squeezed. Heart action becomes irregular and feeble. Palpitation occurs at night.

Urinary System

Dysuria is caused by spasm of sphincter at base of bladder. There is frequency of urge and delay in starting the act. Nocturnal enuresis may occur during sleep. Actual retention of urine may occur after exertion. Haematuria may be present.

Genital System

Severe soreness in the uterine region may prevent the patient from walking in the erect position. During pregnancy foetal movements are especially painful at

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night and interfere with sleep. The menopause is associated with great fatigue and extreme asthenia, palpitations, heat of head, coldness of body and bruising on least contact.

Locomotor System

A curious symptom is a deathly coldness of the forearm. Pain in muscles is accompanied by a bruised feeling; it may result from over-use or unusual use, or from exposure to cold and wet; it is aggravated by any movement. The pains are sharp and shoot down the limb. Feet or hands may become swollen and feel sore and bruised. The wrist or the hip hurts as if dislocated. Limbs feel very heavy as if from fatigue. Spinal hyperaesthesia is accompanied by sudden spasms in the neck and the paraspinal muscles. Muscular weakness may affect grip and gait.

Skin

Various lesions may be met with: eczematous, pustular, papular, psoriatic, or ulcerative such as bedsores. These eruptions are apt to show a symmetrical distribution. Important are successive crops of small, extremely painful boils.

MODALITIES

Is worse in damp cold weather; from exposure to hot sun; from movement and any exertion; from least contact; from wine.

There is amelioration when lying down with the head low (although the bed still feels hard).

CLINICAL NOTES

The uses to which this remedy can be put are multiple. Paramount, of course, is its unique and outstanding value in relation to every variety of wound or injury. Not only does it aid in the arrest of bleeding and promotion of healing, but it is also of value in allaying shock and counteracting the emotional trauma associated with the injury.

It has a limited use as an external application in contusive types of injury where the skin is not broken. For this purpose a lotion is prepared of five or ten drops of the mother tincture, or preferably of the 1c potency, to a pint of water

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or weak alcohol. Contact with the skin should not be prolonged beyond twenty-four hours lest an erythematous eruption be caused.

The remedy should be given before and after dental or surgical operations. It is also of value for the effects of a remote injury.

It is of special value in cases of concussion with or without fracture of the skull, in muscle trauma resulting from sudden strain, in all cases of fractures to reduce swelling and allay pain.

It is a remedy for persistent tiredness, whether physical or psychological. It is called for in cerebral haemorrhage, gout with fear of being approached, and after childbirth.