Carroll Dunham
Lectures on Materia Medica

Reading excerpt
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of Carroll Dunham
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Narayana Verlag GmbH
Blumenplatz 2
D-79400 Kandern, Germany
Tel. +49 7626 9749 700
Fax +49 7626 9749 709
Email info@narayana-publishers.com
http://www.narayana-publishers.com

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CARBO VEGETABILIS.
CARBO LIGNI. VEGETABLE CHARCOAL.

CHARCOAL possesses the power of absorbing gases in large quantities in vastly greater proportions than the relation of its bulk. It condenses the gases within its pores. It does not act equally upon all gases in this way; absorbs but little hydrogen; more oxygen; large quantities of sulphuretted hydrogen, and still more of ammonia. It is used as a disinfectant and to purify water; to remove the foul smells from ulcers, etc. It is inferior as a disinfectant to volatile substances, because it can act only on the air which comes in contact with it. Not so good in poultice on sores as in bags, dry and granulated.

It is used in the old practice to relieve heart-burn, flatulence, etc. In does, six to ten grains.

Hahnemann says: "The disinfectant action of Carbo vegetabilis is purely chemical. The mouth rinsed with charcoal and made sweet soon becomes foul again. So do the ulcers and the excretions treated with charcoal. It is not," he continues, "until charcoal has been reduced to a state of minute subdivision by trituration, according to the
rules of homoeopathic pharmacy, that it produces specific effects upon the organism." The proving which Hahnemann presents us was made with the third centesimal trituration.

These symptoms may be summarized as follows:

.Head. Sensorinm. Indifference is the characteristic symptom. The irritability noticed seems to be a protest against disturbance of the quiet which the patient desires; and the sensibility and peevishness of disposition to be another phase of the same protest.

Memory is feeble, the course of ideas slow, with tendency to fixed ideas.

Vertigo is a marked symptom. It occurs in the bed, when sitting up after sleep; and is especially induced by quick movements of the head, stooping, walking, sitting, etc.

Headache is a marked symptom of Carbo vegetabilis. The general character is heaviness, pressure, dull ache. Thus provers complain that the head is "as heavy as lead;" that there is a weight in the occiput; or a pressure across the forehead weighing down the eyelids, etc. Even the weight of the hat seems to aggravate this symptom. A feeling of tension, as if the integuments of the head were too tight; as if a strap were drawn tightly across the forehead. Sometimes after a meal and at evening, the pain is a throbbing, with heat in the head and fullness. But generally the headache, like the vertigo, is attended with weak-
ness and tendency to faintness. Sometimes the pains, if acute, extend to the upper maxilla. The hair falls out.

_Hyes._ In the eyes we notice, first, itching and bitting, especially in the canthi, with lachrymatioa and soreness in them. The prominent sensation is pressure and aching in the globe of the eye. As regards vision, black spots and flames and rings and shortness of vision have been observed.

_Ears._ Tearing and aching from within outward. External ear swollen and hot. Parotids swollen. Ringing in the ear accompanies the vertigo. Also, there is roaring and singing. Deafness.

_Nose._ Epistaxis copious and frequent; black blood, generally at night. Paleness before and after it.

_Face._ Complexion pale or yellowish. Drawing and aching pains in the facial nerve.

_Mouth._ The teeth feel long, and are sore. Tearing ache. The gums are swollen and bleed, and recede from the teeth. Vesicles appear on the gums, and they bleed on suction by the tongue.

_Tongue._ Whitish or yellow coat. Dry mouth. Burning and biting sensation in the fauces, and scraped feeling in the throat. Aching in the throat and oesophagus as if from a swelling, which hinders deglutition, as if the throat were constricted.

_Digestion._ The taste in the mouth is saltish, sometimes bitter.

Appetite vanishes.

Frequent and abundant eructations, with great
accumulations of flatus in the stomach. Nausea after eating, yet no vomiting. Most of the digestive symptoms are aggravated after eating. For example, hiccough, irresistible sleepiness, with lassitude and heaviness of the legs; but especially the feeling of fullness and great distention of the abdomen.

As regards sensations, burning in the stomach, with a creeping sensation up to the throat, is very characteristic.

Also, spasmodic pain in the stomach, compelling to crouch forward, and impeding respiration. One of our best remedies in gastralgia, especially when there is much flatus and a burning ache. Similar achings and burnings in the abdomen.

In the region of the liver, stitching pain; also in the epigastrium, and thence to both sides, increased by deep inspiration.

Excessive flatulent distention, with rumbling. Flatus not always offensive. Sometimes very much so, and evacuation gives relief.

In the rectum and anus, burning, both independently of, and during, the evacuation of flatus and stool. Itching and burning, stitches and cutting pain at stool.

Stool. Ineffectual urging to stool. Stool scanty and difficult, even when not hard. Stool solid and enveloped in mucus. Before stool much pressure with, at same time, pressure on, the bladder and in the back (frequent in women); at last with pains like labor-pains, and great straining; a soft stool.
CARBO VEGETABILIS.

Exudation of moisture from the anus; and soreness of the penaeum, with itching. (Hence used in haemorrhoids with epistaxis.)

_Urine_ increased; dark and red, as if mixed with blood. Pressure on the bladder. Tearing in the urethra, and the last drops are of mucus.

Sexual instinct suppressed.

_Female Sexual Organs._ Burning and smarting and soreness, with abundant leucorrhoea, most abundant in the early morning. Menses are too frequent, preceded by spasmodic colic, and attended by violent headache and colic.

_Respiratory Organs._ Catarrhal symptoms. Frequent sneezing and dry nasal catarrh; nares obstructed. Sneezing, caused by tickling and creeping in the nose, with lachrymation and biting pain in and above the nose. Sometimes an ineffectual desire to sneeze, which is very troublesome.

Hoarseness, especially toward evening. Cannot speak a loud word, or the voice becomes deep and rough, or fails. Compare Causticum, Phosphorus, Rumex, Lachesis.

A tight feeling in the chest, and constant desire to cough, from a scraped feeling and a tickling in the throat and trachea.

In cases of obstinate hoarseness, worse in the evening; in tracheitis, and asthmatic affections dependent on hydrothorax, it is very useful. Ruckert.

The cough is mostly hard and dry, and hoarse or rough-sounding; is most apt to occur after a
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...full meal, and ends in vomiting (indication in whooping cough). It often produces pain in the chest and stitches through the head (and the pain in the chest after the cough is a burning as from a coal of fire). Sometimes there are tough and greenish sputa.

Chest. Aching and tearing pain and the burning after coughing. Constriction and short breath, increased at evening in bed. The breath is short, and the chest tired on waking. Cases of suspected slow tuberculosis.

Back and Loins. Aching and tearing, extending to the hips. Pain in the scapular region. Rheumatic drawing and aching from the loins to the coccyx. Burning externally about the hips and the scapulae, and aching along the spine.

In the extremities, aching and burning pains, but especially lassitude, heaviness and even numbness; generally diminished by repose, but often in the legs a restlessness, so that one knows not where to place the limbs.

As regards the skin, fugitive itching when warm in bed. Nettle-rash, painless papules and fine itching eruptions on the hands and the salves. Ulcers are offensive; old ones break out afresh. They burn and easily bleed.

As regards sleep. Great sleepiness by day, with yawning and stretching, both in the morning and afternoon. Early sleepiness in the evening; but cannot go to sleep early after going to bed. Anxiety, restlessness; congestion of the head early
Fever. Coldness and chilliness at night, followed by heat. Great disposition to sweat, which occurs early in the morning, and is often sour.

Dr. Guernsey gives the following indications for intermittent: Chill, with a marked degree of thirst. No thirst, or but slight during the fever, but the patient wishes to be fanned constantly, as if to compensate for the lack of thirst.

Before the chill, often throbbing headache. During the chill, often much languor and apparent losing of strength.

General Characteristic are depression, not preceded by erethism or excitement.

[Carbo vegetabilis (wood charcoal) was not used in medicine until the discovery of its power to absorb gases and hold them confined in its pores, to an extent several hundred times exceeding its own volume, suggested its use, both internally and externally, in cases of decomposition, whether of food within the intestine, or of tissues and excretions of ulcerating surfaces on the intestine or the integument, evolving offensive gases. In such cases charcoal was given in large doses, or applied to the ulcerating surface. We owe our knowledge of its specific, pathogenetic and therapeutic properties to Hahnemann and his pupils, who proved it.]
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