

H. B. Fellows

1871 - A Study of Podophyllum

"*The Action on the Vital Powers*, as exhibited by this drug, is depressing. This is shown by the following symptoms:

- (a) *Sensorium* : Giddiness, with sensation of fullness over the eyes; depression of spirits; sleep with eyelids partially closed.
- (b) *Voluntary muscles*. It depresses the general mobility, causing pain, soreness and stiffness of the nape of the neck and legs, and weakness of the joints; inclination to breathe deeply; sighing; feeling of fatigue on awaking in the morning.
- (c) It weakens the involuntary muscles and sphincters, producing slow pulse, or palpitation of the heart from exertion or mental emotion; prolapsus ani; and involuntary enuresis.
- (d) It retards and renders imperfect the digestion.

Action on the Organic Substance. - This is marked by the copious salivation ; offensive odor from the mouth ; the chalk-like, offensive stools; the yellowish, mucus stools, smelling like carrion ; and the greenish, watery stools. These symptoms show a tendency to produce a low state of the system by the deranged action of the vegetative and glandular organs. A more thorough proving is necessary to define exactly in how great a degree the organic substance may become affected.

Sphere of Action. - The vegetative and reproductive systems seem to be principally affected. But we find the nervous and circulatory also modified, though perhaps in a subordinate manner, as shown by these symptoms: The eyes partially open during sleep; the rolling of the head of teething children; the restless sleep of children, with whimpering; and a condition I have seen relieved in several instances by *Pod.*, of heat in the back of the head, which accompanies the above symptoms. The two cases of inflammation of the lungs, published by Dr. Bell, and one in which I saw the beneficial effects of *Pod.*, would also go to prove that its effects are of greater range than appears in any provings accessible to the writer at present. The pains through the ovaries, the symptoms of prolapsus uteri, the leucorrhoea, and the retarded or suppressed menses, prove that the reproductive organs of the female are within the sphere of action of this remedy. But its most marked action is upon the vegetative organs. The digestion is depressed, as we see from the indifference to food, loss of appetite, the sour eructations, either of food or of hot flatus. The bowels, as well as the stomach, seem affected, as we see from the diarrhoea and the rumbling, principally in the ascending and transverse colon. The stitches and fullness in the right hypochondrium, as well as the discharge from the bowels, show the liver is also one of the sufferers. The sense of weight and dragging in the left hypochondrium would call attention to a congested condition of the spleen. The mucous membrane of the whole alimentary tract seems to partake of the effect of the drug. The action appears to be excited primarily upon the vegetative sphere, and the other parts become affected in a more subordinate manner; or at least we find the symptoms of the stomach and bowels accompanying or alternating with most of the conditions in which it is indicated; e. g., in prolapsus uteri, we get the rumbling gas in colon, or muco-gelatinous stool ; or prolapsus ani; or headache alternating with diarrhoea.

Sensations. - *Pod.* has sudden shocks of jerking pains, soreness to touch, weakness of joints, stiffness, and what is simply expressed as pain.

Periodicity. - The symptoms generally are aggravated in the morning, especially the abdominal, while some of those attending uterine difficulties are worse on motion and better from lying down (*Sep.*).

Peculiarities. - The most marked peculiarity is the morning aggravation. In this we are reminded of *Bry.*, *Natr. sul.*, *Nux*, *Sep.*, *Sulph.* The half-closed eyes, the rolling of the head, the grinding of the teeth at night, are symptoms which often occur with such conditions as we find pictured under *Pod.*, and it is seldom they are thus associated when this remedy will not be indicated. We also often find with them a marked sleepiness, and moaning while asleep, or restless sleep. The sleepiness is more in the forenoon, partaking of the morning aggravation. These symptoms suggest again, for comparative study, *Sulph.* Softness of the flesh.

Special Analysis.

Head. (a) *Sensorium.* - 1. Giddiness and dizziness, with sensation of fullness over the eyes. The vertigo appears while standing in the open air - and with inclination to fall forward. 2. *Intellect:* We find in the intellectual sphere delirium and loquacity, which occur during fever. 3. The *memory* shows the characteristic defect, that while the patient is conscious, he can not talk because he forgets the words, a condition observed during the chill (and in some of the headaches).

(b) *Headache.* - 1. The localities of the head which the pain affects are principally the forehead, temples, and the vertex. 2. The sensations are stunning, pressing, momentary darts of pain, and heavy, dull pain. 3. These all occur or are worse in the morning or the forenoon, and have as concomitant conditions, heat of vertex, or giddiness. The darting pains through the temples oblige one to close their eyes, while the pressing pains in the temples are accompanied with a drawing in the eyes, as if strabismus would follow. The stunning headache is relieved by pressure. Headache alternating with diarrhoea. In my experience, when the diarrhoea sets in the headache and all symptoms accompanying it will be relieved. The dose to relieve this headache does not require to be so crude as to produce catharsis by its direct action.

Organic Changes. - Rolling of the head during difficult dentition. Perspiration of the head during sleep, with coldness of the flesh while teething. This first symptom is one of great importance from its frequent occurrence, and having proved so characteristic of this remedy. It is often accompanied by a heat in back of the head, so marked that it will cause the mother to direct attention to it. The physiological condition may be an incipient congestion of the brain, for the symptom is often accompanied by a sleepiness bordering on stupor; with eyelids half closed, and moaning; with more or less harshness or heat of the skin, and with it we find a more or less marked depression of the general system. The same children which suffer with the above group of symptoms, will often have perspiration of the head during sleep, with coldness of the flesh while teething. This symptom would suggest *Calcareo carb.* and *Silicea* as remedies which have certain similarities to be studied with *Pod.* While the above symptom, rolling the head, etc., often occurs in a group of symptoms that seem marching toward brain disease, and consequently makes *Pod.*, one of our most valuable remedies in the irritation arising in teething children, we must use it with a thorough knowledge of its action. After administering it for such a group symptom, a diarrhoea will often set in in a few hours, even if the remedy is given pretty high. This diarrhoea is generally a signal that the other symptoms will be relieved; and even if it is quite profuse, will be accompanied by a marked relief to all the other symptoms, and the strength and brightness of the child will return. It is best not to interfere with the diarrhoea without caution, especially as long as the general symptoms improve. This same symptom occurs in other groups, and may therefore be considered as one of the characteristics of the remedy.

Eyes. - The pains in the eyes, which accompany the headaches, have already been mentioned. Smarting of the eyes, and a remark reported by Dr. Hering to Dr. Hale from Dr. Barton (Allopath), that after the administration of *Pod.*, "the next morning the eyes would appear

inflamed," would suggest it in certain ophthalmias, and confirm also the general morning aggravation.

Ears, Nose, and Face. - Nothing marked.

Teeth. - Grinding of the teeth at night, especially during dentition. The teeth are covered with dried mucus in the morning.

Mouth, Tongue, and Taste. - Copious salivation. Dryness of the mouth and tongue on waking in the morning. Offensive odor from the mouth at night, and perceptible to the patient. Taste of fried liver in mouth at night. Sourness of the mouth. White fur on the tongue, with foul taste. Tongue coated yellowish.

Most of the mouth symptoms are but concomitants of the symptoms of the stomach and bowels, and will best be studied in that connection.

Throat. - Soreness in the left side of the throat, especially when swallowing liquids, and worse in the morning. Sore throat commencing on the right side, and then going to the left. Soreness of the throat extending to the ears. Dryness of the throat. Rattling of mucus in the throat. The sore throat beginning on the right side and going to the left, is marked as curative, while the sore throat on the left side is pathogenetic. This would seem to support the observation of Dr. Hering, that the direction of the remedy must be contrary to the disease. It calls to mind such remedies as *Bell.*, *Lyc.*, and *Sulph.* There are, however, obvious differences by which the selection can be made between them.

Stomach. - 1. *Locality* is defined only in general terms. Sensation of hollowness, and a sensation of throbbing in the epigastrium, the latter followed by diarrhoea. Stitches in the epigastrium from coughing. Heat in the stomach. Heartburn. 2. The *Sensations* need no further specification than they have received under the above head 3. *Organic changes:* We find from the above symptoms, and some that will follow, that the stomach suffers from a catarrhal condition, even extending to acute gastritis. In the (4) *special functions modified*, there is (a) appetite which is modified in the alternate ways, being either increased, craving, or lost. There is a desire for something sour. (b) The *thirst* is increased, and in the feverish conditions calling for *Pod.*, may vary from moderate to excessive. It is moderate in the chills, and increases during the heat. Such a thirst for sour drinks would be still more characteristic. (c) *Nausea* is often extreme, and continuing for several hours - following even a small quantity of food - and is sometimes, not always, attended by vomiting. The appetite may be craving directly after the vomiting. The digestion is depressed, and acid fermentation takes place. (d) *Vomiting*, in the severer grades of the action of *Pod.*, causes the stomach to contract so hard and rapidly that the wrenching pain causes the sufferer to utter sharp screams. On the other hand, we find simply regurgitation of food, or eructations. As to the matters ejected from the stomach, the record shows they are acid; hot, frothy mucus; food with putrid taste and odor; "bilious matter mixed with blood, the bile dark green and very thick, the blood dark and coagulated." With these symptoms of the lighter grades of action will often be associated those of the head, especially the fullness and dullness, and a depression of spirits; sleepiness; restless sleep or too heavy sleep at night, with the foul taste and coated tongue, and some of the bowels symptoms to be mentioned. We have in this a good description of certain forms of catarrh of the stomach, or that condition so vaguely termed by the lay people "biliousness." In many of these conditions *Pod.*, will be found the curative remedy. Similar conditions are found under *Iris*, *Merc.*, *Nux v.*, *Puls.*, and *Sulph.*, but the concomitant symptoms will point to the exact remedy.

Hypochondria. - 1. *Right:* There are certain abnormal sensations referred to this region in the proving, and certain conditions which have been cured, have their location here. Fullness, with pain and Soreness in the right hypochondrium, and stitches in this region, are symptoms which point to a deranged liver. The stitches were worse whilst eating. When we consider the

symptoms of the alimentary tract, the discharges, etc., as they occur under the action of *Pod.*, we must conclude that it does exert some specific influence on the liver. The exact condition of the liver which requires it, is not well shown in the provings by its local symptoms. Here the general concomitants and conditions must be studied. It has been advocated as a remedy in gall stones, but the evidence of its specific action in this trouble is yet too meagre to fix its value with positiveness.

2. *Left Hypochondrium.* - The sensation of weight and dragging in this region would suggest its study in congested condition of the spleen. This symptom may appear as a concomitant in some cases of intermittent fever.

Abdomen. - 1. *Location of action* : The action, begun in the stomach, extends through smaller bowels, and in a less degree through the colon. The lower part of the rectum and anus, the ascending and transverse colon, show especially marked effects.

2. *Sensations*: Colic, with retraction of abdominal muscles. (*Plumb.*) Pain in bowels; pain in transverse colon (*Bell.*) - in ascending colon. Twisting pain in right hypochondrium, and sensation of heat. Rumbling of flatus in ascending colon. (*Lyc.* descending.)

Anus and Rectum. - Prolapsus ani. Secretion of mucus from anus.

Stool. - Constipation with great difficulty; faeces hard and dry. This condition is accompanied by the flatulency of *Pod.*, and often, also, by prolapsus ani. The more usual condition is a loose state of the bowels. The stools are watery, hot, with a meal-like (corn meal) *sediment*. Greenish watery. 2. Mucus, dark yellow, which smells like carrion; muco-gelatinous, small and unfrequent (?), faecal, yellow (See *Nux*). 3 White, slimy, dark green, or brown; chalk-like and very offensive. (We have seen these chalk-like stools tinged with green, the green tint always being present, even for months, in the case of children, whether diarrhoea or constipation was present, and *Pod.* relieve the whole condition in a few days) Undigested stools. The stools are generally profuse, often very markedly so, especially the faecal and watery stool.

Before stool, pain in the transverse colon. Rumbling of the bowels. Loud gurgling, as of water. Pain in the bowels (colic). Sensation of heat in the bowels.

During stool - (Gagging.) "The motion of gagging is made with the mouth, and not accompanied with the effort in the stomach, even in retching." Colic (or absence of pain). Pains in the sacrum; prolapsus ani; screaming, and grinding of the teeth in children during dentition; strong urging in the bowels, with heat and pain in the anus.

After stool. - Prolapsus ani. Extreme weakness and cutting pain after stool. xxx 552

Conditions. - These symptoms, like nearly all of those of this drug, are worse in the morning, or latter part of the night. More rarely, we get an evening aggravation. Worse in hot weather; after taking milk and acid fruit together; from eating and drinking; during dentition; and the colic, from lying on the back. It is ameliorated by external warmth, by bending forward, and whilst lying on the side. Painless stools.

Concomitants. - The pain in the bowels is first attended by coldness, which is followed by heat and warm perspiration. The symptoms already mentioned, especially the mouth, stomach and head, and the half-open eyelids while asleep, will help to make the relation of this remedy definite, and distinguish it from *Bry.*, *Sulph.* and *Natr. sulph.*, all of which have morning diarrhoea. *Sulph.* has also half-open eyelids. The very profuse stools, watery and gushing, occurring frequently, notwithstanding each one seems to drain the subject dry, I have verified in practice. Such a stool, in cholera morbus, would be an indication for *Pod.* The watery stool, with meal-like sediment, is quite characteristic of it. In dysentery, it will be found useful in those cases which begin as diarrhoea and become dysenteric, and are attended by prolapsus ani.

Urinary organs. - The proving of this drug is quite meagre in urinary symptoms. A thorough proving would, no doubt, develop symptoms of these organs which would help to individualize its actions. We find a diminished secretion of urine recorded, but it had, notwithstanding frequent voidings, and even involuntary discharge during sleep.

Genital Organs.- No important symptoms of the male recorded.

Female. - Retarded or suppressed menstruation. Leucorrhoea of thick, transparent mucus. Symptoms of prolapsus uteri, with pain in the sacrum ; unfrequent (?) flatulence, and mucogelatinous stool.

The conditions and concomitants of the genital symptoms are like those of other parts of the system : they have their aggravation in the morning; rumbling of flatus in the ascending colon; a disposition to strain at stool, often resulting in prolapsus ani. While these symptoms occur more frequently after confinement, they may occur at other times. It resembles *Lilium* and *Sepia* ⁽¹⁾ closely in this relation. *Lilium tig.* - After pains, with strong bearing down, with heat and flatulency; “in its morning diarrhoea, coming suddenly and with tenesmus, resembles *Pod.*, and *Pod.* has, likewise, a general bearing down in the pelvis, confined, however, to the lumbosacral region, while the mental and moral symptoms produced by *Pod.* have no resemblance to those of *Lilium*. Moreover, in so far as my observation goes, *Pod.*, both produces and removes these pelvic symptoms, only when they occur in connection with certain symptoms of the digestive tract, such as *Lilium* has no relation with. *Sepia* produces certainly a bearing-down sensation upon the lumbar region, together with dragging and even sharp pain, from the region of the ovaries extending downward to the pudenda; but, besides that, *Sepia* presents us no symptoms of diarrhoea, and irritation of rectum and anus.”

(1) See p. 121, Vol. VIII., Medical Investigator: Dr. Dunham on *Lilium tig.*

Ovaries. - Numb aching pain in the region of left ovary, with heat running down the left thigh, in third month of pregnancy. Pains in region of ovaries, especially the right.

Respiratory Organs. - Dry cough, and loose hacking cough.

Chest. - Pains in chest increase by taking a deep breath ; shortness of breath; inclination to breathe deeply; sighing ; sensation of suffocation, when first lying down in the evening ; snapping in the right lung, like the breaking of a thread, when taking a deep breath. These symptoms, while showing that this remedy has some action on the lungs, do not define its action definitely. Two cases of pneumonia, published by Dr. Bell, and one in which I used it with great benefit, would go to show that it may have a place among remedies for some severe cases of this disease. In these cases there were the characteristic rolling of the head, with the moaning while asleep, half-open eyes, and, in the one I treated, loose morning stools. Dr. Bell says, “The rolling of the head must exist with the moaning in the sleep, with the eyelids half closed.” (*Hahnemannian Monthly*, vol. I., p. 102.)

Heart.- Palpitation of the heart. Sticking pain in region of the heart. Slow pulse.

Conditions. - The palpitation is worse from exertion or mental emotion.

Concomitants. - Clucking sensation rising up to the throat, which obstructs respiration in persons subject to rumbling in the ascending colon; heavy sleep, and a feeling of fatigue on awaking in the morning, followed by drowsiness in the forenoon.

Back. - The pains affect the loins, between the shoulders, under the right shoulder-blade, and the nape of the neck. There is a sensation of the small of the back bending inward.

Conditions and concomitants.- The pains are accompanied by soreness, and are increased by missteps or walking over uneven ground, or even by standing.

Upper Extremities. - Weakness of wrists, with soreness to the touch.

Lower Extremities. - The pains may affect the hip, thigh, knee, leg, or foot. They are accompanied by weakness and stiffness and cracking, especially of the knees.

Conditions. - Stiffness on beginning to move; worse from going up stairs; worse at night; left side mostly affected. The action is depressing, and resembles that of *Rhus* and *Lyc.*

Sleep. - The sleep may be disturbed, especially the fore part of the night; distress after first sleep; moaning in sleep, with eyelids half closed; sleep, with whimpering, or grinding of the teeth; rising up in bed during sleep, without waking; drowsy and difficult to wake in the morning, and is unrefreshed by sleep; sleepiness in the day-time, especially in the forenoon. Some of these symptoms are among the most characteristic of this remedy, and are generally present in cases calling for this remedy.

Fever. - The chilliness of *Pod.*, is worse on moving about. The shaking and a sensation of coldness continue for some time after the heat begins. There is some thirst during the chill, which increases much in the fever. During the chill, the patient is conscious, but can not talk, because he forgets the words he wishes to employ. During the fever, delirium and loquacity, with forgetfulness afterwards of all that has passed. The pains may begin in the back before the chill. During the chill, pressing pain in both hypochondria, and dull, aching pains in the knees and ankles, elbows and wrists. During fever, violent pain in head. During the perspiration, sleep. During apyrexia, loss of appetite. Beside the intermittent fever, of which the above symptoms give an accurate picture, *Pod.*, has proved useful in bilious and typhoid fevers, with such bowel symptoms and aggravations as have been mentioned."

Discussion on Podophyllum

"At the regular meeting, Aug. 16th, 1871, Dr. H. B. Fellows read an elaborate paper on *Podophyllum*.

Dr. Duncan spoke of the absence of urinary symptoms in the provings, and cited a case of dysenteric diarrhea that was worse in the morning, in which there was a scalding sensation on passing urine, similar to that caused by *Merc. Podophyllum* cured the case.

Dr. Fellows thought if fully proven, *Podophyllum* would develop more urinary symptoms.

Dr. Mann then detailed a case of morning diarrhea in which there was a meal-like sediment. The child in whom it occurred was a *Calc. c.* subject, and he hesitated between that drug and *Podophyllum*, but decided to give the latter, one dose of which, in the 30th potency, cured the case. He had also found it a curative in a wide, open condition of the anus; the bowel protruding (prolapsus ani). He also stated a case of morning diarrhea occurring in a child where each stool seemed to drain the patient dry. *Podophyllum* was given, but the child died. He reported a case of an involuntary proving of *Podophyllum*, in which there was profuse sweating, so much so that it dropped off of the prover's finger ends." (...)

"Dr. A. G. Beebe thought *Podophyllum* useful in congestion of the liver with colic. He also related a case under his care of chronic hepatitis contracted in the tropics, in which an ordinary cold taken reproduces an acute attack. These are always relieved by *Podophyllum* 3x.

Dr. Duncan contributed the following pathogenetic symptoms: Total loss of taste continuing for hours - could not tell sweet from sour; restlessness and sleeplessness all night. These were produced by a teaspoonful of the whisky tincture of *Podophyllum*.

Dr. Beebe added the symptom of "sour taste of everything."

Dr. Duncan inquired what were the best antidotes to this drug?

Dr. Fellows suggested *Nux v.* as an antidote.

Dr. Mann spoke of having heard of the recommendation of giving a high attenuation to antidote the effects of the crude drug, and asked if there had been any experience on that point by any of the members. He had a case of mercurialization in which he had given the 6th of the

same drug, but there was marked aggravation following its administration.

Dr. Fellows also detailed a similar case where *Merc.* 30th also caused decided aggravation.

Dr. Gilman stated that during a conversation with Dr. Swan, of New York, while on a visit East recently, this question came up, and he asked the Doctor "if called to a case of *Arsenic* poisoning, if he would give a high attenuation of *Arsenicum*?" "Most assuredly I would," was his answer.

Dr. Fellows, on the question of the duration of action of *Pod.*, cited the following case from practice: A child presenting brain symptoms calling for *Podophyllum*, that remedy was administered. In a few hours a diarrhea - several loose stools each day - set in, which lasted two weeks, but as soon as it appeared the cerebral and general symptoms rapidly subsided, and the child made a good recovery.

Dr. Duncan had given *Pod.* for a child (at the Foundling's Home) in which there was rolling of the head, grinding of the teeth, etc. A green diarrhea had followed, and the cerebral conditions abated. This diarrhea had given him considerable concern, but as the child steadily improved otherwise, it was not interfered with.

Dr. Mann raised the question as to whether this diarrhea should be checked.

Dr. Fellows thought not, as long as the general improvement continued.

He thought *Pod.*, in some of its symptoms, closely related to *Apis*.

Dr. Evans observed that the headache relieved by diarrhea spoken of by Dr. Fellows in his paper, is also similar to *Apis*.

Dr. Gilman stated that *Phos.* also had the wide, open condition of the anus.

Dr. Fellows explained that with *Pod.* the bowel, as well as the sphincter, was affected, producing prolapsus ani, which is lacking under *Phos.* He also said that the bearing down on passing urine and straining at stool in parturient women, was relieved by *Pod.* This condition was due to a general relaxation in those parts.

Slight paralysis of the left side has been cured by Dr. Jeanes with *Pod.*

Dr. F. thought that the cerebral condition in children was congestive, and secondary to the irritation of the stomach and bowels or to dentition. He then quoted the case of Dr. Bell, of Augusta, reported in the N. Am. Jour, of Homeopathy, for Aug., 1871." (...)

"Dr. Duncan remarked that the report of Dr. Bell shows that *Podophyllum* has a much wider range of action than the pathogenesis furnishes us at present.

Dr. Fellows observed that in his study of the remedy he felt convinced that a thorough proving would develop symptoms and characteristics where none now appear, its present pathogenesis being quite disjointed."

(A Study of *Podophyllum*, by H. B. Fellows, M.D., Chicago, Ill., The United States Medical Investigator vol. 8 (1871), p. 529-537; and: The Materia Medica Society of Chicago, Discussion on *Podophyllum*, The United States Medical Investigator vol. 9 (1872), p. 14-17) [Abridged]