

Horace P. Holmes

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“There are few things which will more effectually advertise a homoeopathic physician in a community than to help a few cases of so-called “sick headache.” They are to be found everywhere, and our step-brothers of the old school do not pretend to do anything for them. Consequently the physician who succeeds in making a favourable impression on one of these cases (usually the mother of the family) soon becomes established as the family physician. The fact soon becomes patent that a physician who can handle a sick headache that every one else has failed on *must* understand his business. I think it a fact generally conceded by our school that sick headache can be handled, and very nicely too, by the proper homoeopathic treatment. Such has been my experience, and I claim nothing for my successes except honours for the grand law of homoeopathy, and thanks for the good men who have placed so rich a *Materia Medica* at our disposal.

With this prelude I wish to report my experience with one of our new remedies, *Epiphegus Virginiana*. This remedy is indicated in that form of sick headache where the trouble is very evidently due to nervous exhaustion or neurasthenia. Its use was first brought to my notice by Dr. Morden in a short article in Boericke and Tafel’s Bulletin of January, 1884, page 788. I was struck at once by the remarkable similarity of the provings of this remedy and its indications to a case of sick headache in a lady friend. This lady had for years been a martyr to sick headaches. Almost without exception she would have an attack every time she went from home. Let her go to church - which she did regularly, - go shopping, take a day’s visit, entertain company at home, or in fact do anything which called for a little extra or unusual exertion on her part, and the headache was sure to follow. The pain was located in the forehead, there was a blurring of vision, inability to sit up or go about, and great nausea attended by vomiting. A period of rest, like a night’s sleep, always dissipated the trouble. Here was a case for experiment which plainly called for *Epiphegus*. The remedy in the third dilution on discs was sent to her with the directions to take one disc for a dose when the first symptom of headache was felt. Repeat the dose every twenty or thirty minutes until three doses were taken. Then stop and await results. For years this lady had seldom missed having an attack of sick headache once a week, and very frequently several times a week. What was my surprise and delight to hear at the end of two months that every attack had been warded off by taking a few doses of *Epiphegus*! Added to this was the statement that it had helped every case in which it had been tried, and there were orders for the remedy from three other parties, one of them the bitterest opponent of homoeopathy in the community. *En passant*, I might add, the latter party has twice since ordered a supply of the medicine, and declares they cannot be without the remedy in the house. My friend, who has now used the remedy for over two years, reports that she has had but one attack of sick headache since using the remedy, and that was when she was out of it.

The many orders coming in, and the almost universal good results, make me feel it a duty to help to put the remedy more prominently before the homoeopathic profession, and to extend the good work which Dr. Morden has started.

The following are a few facts concerning our new remedy:

It is known as *Epiphegus Virginiana* (Michaux), *Epifagus Americanus* (Nuttall), Orobanche Virginiana (Linnaeus), Beech Drops, Cancer Root, etc. This little plant grows in the rich soil in the beech woods, and, as the name implies, is usually found growing parasitic on the roots of that tree, although it may be found growing away from these trees in the rich compost of decayed beech leaves. About the only thing known of its medical history is concerning its supposed virtues in a cancer powder. This is the only reference made to it in the United States Dispensatory. But were there no other place for it than its use in certain forms of sick headache, it is of enough importance to hold first rank among our homoeopathic remedies. From the short series of provings given it by Dr. Morden we find it causes severe pain in forehead, with fulness; dull heavy pain, becoming more severe; tight feeling of scalp; blurred vision; eyes smart; makes wrong letters and uses wrong words; nausea and general languor; almost constant desire to spit; *saliva viscid*; worse by rising up and going about, and always better by rest in a supine position and by sleep. The kind of cases in which it proves beneficial are those who bring on the headache by any unusual demand upon the system. Undoubtedly it is the headache of nervous exhaustion, as rest or sleep invariably brings relief. For bilious headaches, or those due to menstrual troubles, it is not reliable, and seldom gives any relief. In the cases of such nature where it has seemed to do some good, I am inclined to think there was an element of nervous exhaustion playing a certain part.

I should be pleased to have the readers of the *World* give *Epiphegus* a trial, and report the result. Like our other remedies, it is not a cure-all, and it must be indicated, or no good can be expected from its use. A thorough proving of the remedy is needed, and without doubt it will be valuable in other cases where neurasthenia lurks at the bottom of the trouble or complicates it."

(H. P. Holmes, M.D., Sycamore, Ill., *Epiphegus* in sick headaches, *The Homoeopathic World* vol. 21 (1886), p. 491-493)

1893 - Tuberculinum

"Tuberculinum is one of those remedies which has come up to us along with the outgrowth of that peculiar system of therapeutics known as isopathy. Where the therapeutic idea of isopathy originated is impossible to trace. Paracelsus wrote in such a way as to give little room for doubt that he believed in the occasional application of the therapeutical law that "the same cures the same." Instances are not wanting to trace a chain of evidence of the occasional use of isopathic remedies from the time of Paracelsus, early in the sixteenth century, down to the present day.

In regard to the particular isopathic remedy here chosen for a subject - Tuberculinum - we have many references, and more history than would be supposed at first thought. If one were to ask the great world who was first to use the disease products of consumption as a cure for that malady, the universal answer would be, Koch. And yet we have records going back 250 years when an English physician, Dr. Robert Fludd, wrote: "sputum reiectum a pulmonico post debitam praeparationem curat phthisin." Here Koch and his theory was antedated 250 years. But as far as we are concerned, and for all practical purposes, we need to go back but sixty years, to the time when our own Constantine Hering wrote, in 1833, that of the many remedies which would cure isopathically, he would advise "Phthisin for phthisis." Here again Koch was antedated sixty years. The man, however, who has done more to put Tuberculinum,

as a remedy, in the hands of his professional brethren and who, as far as the writer can ascertain, was the first to actually prepare and use it for tuberculous troubles and to have his work reported in regular publications, was Samuel Swan, M. D., of New York city. We should give all "honor to whom honor is due," and detract nothing from the helpful hints of those who have here and there thrown out suggestions which have been as rays of light to the followers. Hering suggested; Swan acted. Swan's work once established, Dr. Burnett wrote his excellent monograph on the New Cure of Consumption. Dr. Swan was some twenty years ahead of Koch, and when the latter famous scientist was paralyzing the world with the brilliancy of his supposed discovery, J. Compton Burnett, M. D., was writing his "Five Years' Experience in the New Cure of Consumption by its own Virus." In our homoeopathic literature we have a report of a case in the July, 1879, number of the *Organon*, a journal which was published for a short time in England. In the number referred to, Dr. Samuel Swan gives an exhaustive report of a complicated case where he deemed tuberculous influences were at work in his patient. The record says he prescribed Tuberculinum on the 18th day of November, 1877, and repeated the doses once a week until four doses in all were given. The permanent, curative results were something wonderful. The above article bears the date of January 17, 1879, and, as stated, appeared in the July issue of the journal of the same year. In the same volume is a second article on Tuberculinum by Dr. J. A. Biegler, of Rochester, New York, in which that gentleman reports the cure of a case of tubercular meningitis. The diagnosis had been confirmed by an eminent old school physician, so there can be no controversy on the point of diagnosis. Tuberculinum was administered on November 2, 1878, and repeated at irregular intervals. Improvement was prompt and positive and the cure complete and permanent.

The two principal preparations of Tuberculinum are Swan's and Burnett's. The latter is prepared by Alfred Heath, and 'is sold under the name "Bacillinum Heathii." Dr. Swan made his Tuberculinum from the rich creamy pus, the contents of a freshly ruptured vomica from the lungs of a man in the last stages of phthisis tuberculosis. It was a patient of Dr. A. W. Pierson of New York city, and the pus was potentized early in the '70s. A record of its use as early as 1874 is in existence. Dr. Burnett draws a comparison between the two preparations which seems ludicrous. He says of Swan's Tuberculinum: "The mode of obtaining it I felt to be too nasty."

His own aesthetic preparation was from a portion of a lung taken from an individual who had died from genuine tuberculosis. This post mortem specimen, of course, contained all the morbid products of such a diseased condition - "bacilli, debris, ptomaines and tubercles in all stages," and Dr. Burnett naively adds: "there is, moreover, nothing disgusting in this, which can hardly be said of sputal tuberculinum - one instinctively shrinks from it." Well, this is a matter of taste, and the writer is unable to draw a line as to the palatability or aesthetic position of one remedy over the other.

Dr. Burnett's change of name from the Tuberculinum of Swan to Bacillinum is one open to serious criticism. It is not only unfair to the man who has done so much to bring the remedy into general use, and to whom Dr. Burnett is indebted for what little he first knew of Tuberculinum, but it is scientifically incorrect as far as a specific name is concerned. Bacillinum is a term which might with equal propriety be applied to any cultures of bacilli or any morbid product containing them. It in no way specifies the one applicable to tuberculosis and might with equal propriety apply to the disease products of septicaemia, typhoid fever, cholera, glanders, leprosy, syphilis, malaria and many other diseases in which bacilli are found. To be correct it should particularize the disease from which it came, and this Tuberculinum does. Moreover, Tuberculinum had been adopted and in use for more than sixteen years before Dr. Burnett wrote his first little book on the subject and in which he took the liberty of changing the name. Another error lies in the implied assertion that as bacilli were not found in Swan's first preparation they were probably not there, and as they were found in Burnett's material it

must follow that his was the more reliable of the two. It may seem unfortunate that Dr. Swan prepared his Tuberculinum and verified its efficacy some ten years before Koch discovered the Bacillus Tuberculosis. But such was the case. Had Dr. Swan waited until his work was co-eval with Dr. Burnett's the bacillus would undoubtedly have been easily found in his first source of Tuberculinum. But as all the microbial scientists today agree that tubercle bacilli are found in the expectorate of typical cases of tuberculosis and as that was the source of Swan's Tuberculinum, it is idle talk to intimate that the preparation is not so reliable as the one in which bacilli were found. It is an evident effort to appropriate the honor which belongs to another and to detract from Dr. Swan's work the merit which is due him.

Koch's Lymph is prepared from the tuberculous material in such a way as to make it of little use to the homoeopathic profession. The principal objection to it is that it is a compound, and not only that but the chances are exceedingly probable that its composition may vary in character. In the first place it is derived by artificially cultivating the tubercle bacilli in a suitable media in order to obtain a quantity of the microbes and their products. This culture fluid with its contents is filtered through porcelain and then heated to a baking temperature. To this is added enough carbolic acid to thoroughly obliterate the germ action and it is then mixed with glycerine. Strange as it may seem, this preparation was found to have a most virulent action when diluted one thousand times, or to the third decimal attenuation. Whether the supposed curative action was due to the dynamic influences of the bacillic culture or to the action of the carbolic acid and glycerine, similar to the phenic acid preparations with which Dr. Declat thought to revolutionize therapeutics, still remains to be settled. The remedy seemed to alleviate a few, killed a great many and proved non-curative in almost every instance in which it was used according to Koch's instructions. But when Koch's Lymph fell into the hands of homoeopathic practitioners and was diluted to the 6th or 10th decimal attenuations a curative action was developed which already promises wonderful results. Not only has the tuberculous lung affections been brought under a very decided control but in other maladies as well, the action of the remedy has proved its value. Dr. Marc Jousset, of Paris, has cured acute parenchymatous nephritis where there was one gram of albumen per litre, the albumen disappearing in a very few days under the influence of Koch's Lymph. In experiments made on the lower animals, it has been demonstrated that Koch's Lymph produces acute parenchymatous nephritis and hence the curative action of this remedy in Bright's disease and its homoeopathicity to it.

The field of action to which Tuberculinum is applicable presents a wide range, not only for tuberculous affections of the lungs, but for all maladies which owe their origin or their chronicity to a tuberculous taint. Since the researches of those scientists who have devoted so much study to the microbial theory of diseases has incontestably proved that the so-called scrofulous affections of the glands known as chronic adenities, are, as a rule, but a latent tuberculosis, we are entitled to carry the reasoning a step farther and claim that other inveterate chronic troubles, such as skin diseases, kidney difficulties, nervous affections, etc., are often but other forms of latent tuberculosis. It must lead us into a very close relationship with the psoric theory of Hahnemann and cause us to make a new differentiation. If psora is to be a name which expresses in a broad sense a dyscrasia which gives diseases a chronic foothold, then we must subdivide psora into different families of which tuberculosis will be one. Others will be found to have for their origin a syphilitic, gonorrhoeic, or some other taint for which psora will be too indefinite a term and for which a closer differentiation is necessary in diagnosis and prescribing. What Psorinum has done in its broad field of usefulness, Tuberculinum must do in those particular conditions where tuberculosis is the fundamental feature in the malady.

Tuberculinum will be found useful in either simple or more serious colds where there is a tendency to cause bronchitis. It is especially serviceable to those individuals who take cold

easily, and where the difficulty at once locates itself on the bronchial mucous membrane causing a teasing, troublesome cough which is slow to recover under either time or the ordinary methods of treatment. For incipient tuberculosis, and also where a case is slowly but surely dragging a patient on to a serious tuberculosis condition this remedy has proved itself to be one of most excellent merit. For well developed cases of phthisis tuberculosis, it is too much to expect that this, or any other remedy, will cure in very many instances. But it already promises to be more efficacious than any other remedy. Based upon its indications, through provings of Koch's Lymph, it has promptly relieved acute parenchymatous nephritis, as has already been noted, and removed the albumen from the urine in from two to four days. May this not be a reasonable ground for inferring that Bright's disease is an affection really based on tuberculous tendencies? Tubercle bacilli are often found in the urine, and it is not at all improbable that affections which many physicians pronounce Bright's disease are in reality tuberculous conditions of the kidneys. A closer differentiation in these cases will be necessary in order to settle upon the etiology as well as treatment.

Tubercular meningitis was one of the first diseases successfully treated with Tuberculinum, and analogous reasoning shows it indicated in tuberculous affections of the bowels. *Tabes mesenterica* and *cholera infantum* have been cured by this remedy. Tubercular affections of the bones and joints have been promptly benefited by this remedy and Dr. Burnett's experience with ringworms proves its efficacy in skin diseases and also shows that skin diseases may often be based on a tuberculous origin. Cases which have not recovered from *la grippe* and which date their ill health to the epidemic invasion of that malady, are as a rule favorably influenced by this remedy. Idiocy and cretenuism, undoubtedly based on tuberculosis, have shown wonderful improvement when treated with Tuberculinum.

Rheumatism and gout, chronic headaches, sleeplessness, general decline accompanied by amenorrhoea in young girls, chronic diarrhoea, hemorrhoids, chronic conjunctivitis and granular ophthalmia are among the many affections which have been benefited or cured with this remedy.

Provings of Tuberculinum may be found in Hering's *Guiding Symptoms*, volume X; in Allen's *Therapeutics to Gregg's Consumption*; in different numbers of the *Homoeopathic World* for 1891, provings of Koch's Lymph were published and in the November, 1892, number of the *Homoeopathic Record* is a proving of *Bacillinum Heathii* by R. Boocock, M. D. The first proving was made by Dr. Swan and is thus far the principal one at our command. In all probability other provings will rapidly be made and their additions joined to what we already have, making Tuberculinum one of the best proved remedies in our *Materia Medica*.

This remedy seems better adapted to blondes than to brunettes; to the thin, slender individuals rather than the fleshy; and to the mentally active rather than those of sluggish disposition. It is allied to Sulphur, Psorinum and Carbo veg., in being useful where the indicated remedy fails to act. It has the power of reviving the vital force so that indicated remedies may regain an action, and good authority says an occasional dose of Tuberculinum is not interfered with by the intercurrent use of other remedies.

As to doses, we can only advise the higher potencies. Koch killed with the third decimal and all the successful results, have been accomplished in our school with the 30th and higher potencies. Burnett favors the 100th and 200th and all are emphatic in advising to be infrequently given at not shorter intervals than one week. In the writer's hands the most efficacious potencies, after months of experience with different potencies of *Bacillinum Heathii*, have been Swan's highest. In many instances in the writer's experience haemoptysis with sharp lancinating pains in the lungs have followed the administration of a single dose of Swan's Tuberculinum in his highest potency. This has been too often verified to admit of doubt as to its being an aggravation caused by the remedy.

In closing, a word of caution will be apropos. We have in Tuberculinum a most valuable remedy and at the same time one capable of doing a vast amount of damage. The greatest care and judgment should be used in administering it, and the advice of those who have brought this remedy into prominence - to use only high potencies and at intervals of not less than one week, should not be ignored. There are already many physicians who will not use it because they are unable to get it in the 3x or 6x attenuation and do not believe in the higher potency of any remedy. To such physicians it is imperative to say: let this remedy alone until you can take the advice of those who know what they are talking about."

(Tuberculinum. By Horace P. Holmes, M. D., Omaha, Neb., Proceedings of the International Hahnemannian Association 1893, p. 193-200)