

Charles G. Mohr



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"About two years ago, I read in some medical journal a short extract from a paper, calling attention to the fact, that the Strawberry plant had been found, accidentally at first, experimentally afterwards, to lessen materially the secretion of milk in cows. Otherwise the health was not affected.

May 12th, 1878, I delivered Ms. N. of a healthy female child. In due time the breasts filled with milk, of which there was a plentiful supply until the sixth day, when the secretion was so much diminished, that the child did not get enough nourishment. I ordered a more nutritious diet for the mother, but without effect. Silicea did no good. On May 20th I visited her, fortunately just as she was about to eat a large dish of strawberries. I then learned that the nurse had commenced to give her the fruit on the fifth day; being fond of it, she ate very plentifully daily. Remembering the article I had read some months before, and ascribing the loss of milk to the berries, I ordered the discontinuance, and prescribed Bryonia, the antidote to bad effects of strawberries. In a few days the milk was again plenty, and lactation continued to the weaning period.

On August 8th, 1878, Mrs. B. consulted me for loss of milk. She was nursing a seven months old child. The milk had quite suddenly diminished eight days before, and, at date of consultation, the mammae looked shrunken. She was not pregnant, and general health was good. As an experiment, I ordered her to eat after each meal, for one week, a little strawberry preserves. The milk was re-established, and she continued to nurse her child until it was a year old.

In the fall of 1878 I met with a similar case; the babe, though, was only two months old. I likewise ordered this patient to eat of the preserved berries, and for several months, until another pregnancy occurred, the supply of milk was pretty good.

I mentioned my experience thus far to Drs. C: Hering and C. B. Knerr, the latter of whom found an opportunity last spring (1879) to make a test with the ripe, fresh berries, prescribing them to two cases of Agalaxia, with excellent result. Since then vol. X, of Allen's *Encyclopaedia of Materia Medica* has appeared, and in it I found it stated, that a Dr. Cutsem gave an infusion of the root for a few days to two women who were nursing children fourteen months old, and had milk in large quantity, with the following effects: "The breasts diminished in size, and the secretion of milk ceased."

My next step was to try the *Fragaria potentized*. Last week an opportunity presented itself. Mrs. L. gave birth to a boy on August 1st. Had plenty of milk until about the 12th or 14th day, when it began to decrease. Excepting that she complained of a slight fullness in the head and giddiness occasionally, the health was very good. Various dietary measures were recommended, and, on August 23d, I prescribed *Urtica urens*, but all to no purpose. On August 27th, I succeeded in obtaining from Dr. E. A. Farrington some of the 3d centesimal dilution of *Fragaria*, prepared from the ripe fruit, prescribed it on that day to my patient, and at this writing (September 1st) the lady has a good supply of healthy milk.

My experience, therefore, warrants me in recommending to the profession the use of *Fragaria vesca* in cases of Agalaxia, when there has been a sudden arrest of the normal secretion, without other symptoms of ill health."

(Charles Mohr, M. D., Philadelphia, *Fragaria vesca* in Agalaxia, Transactions of the Homoeopathic Medical Society of Pennsylvania vol. 15 (1879), p. 83-85)

1907 - Tabacum

TABACUM - Natural Order - Solanaceae: common name - Tobacco.

ORIGIN AND HISTORY. - The tobacco plant is indigenous to tropical America, but the land of its origin cannot be learned, since tobacco is not found in the wild state. At the present day tobacco is extensively cultivated in temperate and sub-tropical countries, requiring deep, rich soil, which must be well manured annually.

As a medicine tobacco was first used as a depressant nauseant, and as a local sedative; but so many serious poisonings resulted, that its use, either internally or locally, was abandoned, and now the agent is no longer official in the United States pharmacopeia. Various treatises, however, recommend a poultice of fine-cut tobacco and ground flax-seed for epididymitis, and in non-smokers, tobacco mixed with stramonium, belladonna, etc., by inhalation, to relieve asthma.

In the homoeopathic school tabacum was introduced by provings made in 1831, and published by Hartlaub and Trinks in the *Arzneimittellehre*. These provings are believed to have been made by administering substantial doses to healthy persons.

Tabacum receives official mention in the Homoeopathic Pharmacopeia of the United States, which directs the recently dried leaves, preferably those imported from Havana, to be converted into a tincture of 1-10 drug strength.

CONSTITUENTS. - Tabacum contains a large amount of sulphates, nitrates, phosphates, and malates of potassium, calcium and ammonium, and nicotine, a colorless, volatile, oily alkaloid, smelling and tasting like tobacco leaves, darkening with age, and soluble in water, alcohol and ether. This oily liquid was named after Jean Nicot, the French ambassador to Portugal, and who is said to have introduced tobacco into Europe in the year 1560.

EFFECTS. - The essential effects of tobacco may best be illustrated by the employment experimentally of fractional doses (1-120 gr.) of nicotine taken in water. There is produced a burning in the tongue, salivation, hot acrid feeling in the fauces, and rawness throughout the esophagus, heat in the stomach, chest and head with nervous excitement. Larger doses (1-20 gr.) produce heaviness, giddiness, torpor, sleepiness, diminished vision with sensitiveness of eyes to light, partial deafness, laborious breathing, and dryness of throat. Within an hour after the larger doses a sense of great debility ensues, the head drops, pulse is markedly depressed, the face becomes pale, features are relaxed, the extremities seem paralyzed, hands and feet become cold, and faintness ends in loss of consciousness. The digestive system is greatly disturbed, eructations, nausea, vomiting and retching, distended abdomen, flatulent discharges, urgent desire to defecate, and profuse and watery stools are among the pronounced effects. With these symptoms diuresis is also present. When the debilitating effects are fully developed the nervous system is disturbed by muscular spasm, including the respiratory muscles, resulting in oppressed breathing, gasping or sighing respiration, and asphyxia. The function of the blood as a carrier of oxygen is impaired, and the red cells are dark, disaggregated and show crenated edges, the white cells are broken up, but on recovery from the toxicity, the blood regains its normal character.

Next to prussic acid, nicotine is one of the most rapidly fatal poisons known, but the minimum lethal dose is not yet known. In fatal cases death may be caused by asphyxia, or by direct paralysis of the heart.

It is very apparent that the effects of nicotine (and of tobacco itself) as above presented are the results primarily of action upon the spinal and sympathetic nervous systems rather than upon the brain. While it is true that the habitual use of tobacco deprives it of its most deleterious effects, as is the case with other agents affecting the nervous system, especially in individuals

who may be considered healthy with strong resistive or recuperative powers, it is nevertheless true that many subjects are readily influenced by tobacco and cases of serious illness and death are on record, as before stated, as a result of the use of tobacco infusion as an enema, or of tobacco ointment or lotion to the skin in eruptive diseases, or to the joints in rheumatism.

CHRONIC EFFECTS. - During the past decade, the habit of cigarette smoking, especially by boys and young men before the age of maturity, has given rise to so many cases of chronic tobacco poisoning as to cause state legislatures to enact laws preventing their sale to the youthful. Among the chronic effects may be mentioned those produced by the cigarette, cigar or pipe, or by chewing tobacco when inordinately indulged, namely, impaired digestion, insomnia, cardiac palpitation, tendency to faint suddenly, faucial and laryngeal catarrh, lowered sexual power, and neurasthenia. Usually and unfortunately young adults who use tobacco excessively also indulge in alcohol, and in these subjects the conjoint use of both poisons often produces atrophy of the optic nerve or retina, and other evils. Specialists have found it difficult to determine which factor, tobacco or alcohol, is operative in production of nervous and visual defects, and it therefore behooves physicians to give as careful study to the phenomena of tobacco poisoning as they do to those of alcoholism. It is well known, however, that physicians who indulge in the weed on every opportunity, do not often go to excess in the use of alcohol, and as they enjoy their smoke, rarely see any evil in the tobacco habit in their patients. Smoking indeed is often advised on the supposed ground that it aids digestion and that after the first meal of the day it promotes the daily movements of the bowels. Some advise it because it is believed to stimulate the mental powers and to induce a feeling of serenity in irritable subjects. It may be conceded that many men use tobacco to a moderate extent for years with apparent impunity, nevertheless its use should be the subject of study even in these, under the purview of the medical adviser.

Burton in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* says: "Tobacco, divine, rare, superexcellent tobacco, which goes far beyond all the panaceas, potable gold, and philosopher's stones, a sovereign remedy in all diseases. A good vomit, I confess, a virtuous herb if it be well qualified, opportunely taken, and medicinally used, but as it is commonly abused by most men, which take it as tinkers do ale, 'tis a plague, a mischief, a violent purger of goods, lands, health; hellish, devilish and damned tobacco, the ruin and overthrow of body and soul."

Thus wrote Burton 300 years ago, and since that time many have been the disquisitions defending and condemning its use. In later years especially by educators and physicians interested in the welfare of the young, many observations have been made to determine the baneful effects, and perhaps much of exaggeration has found its way into scientific, sociological and medical journals. Notwithstanding possible extravagant statements, it is well to pursue a study of all the phenomena of ill health said to be the result of smoking, so as to know when to interdict and why, and in order to intelligently remove the evil effects by remedial measures. This action is certainly apparent when we hear the statement made that "no boy who smokes cigarettes before the age of 10 will ever learn to spell correctly." While we have intimated that nicotine shows little action on the brain, if the above quoted statement is true, then it must be that tobacco when smoked retards brain or intellectual development. We should remember that nicotine is not the only factor in the development of chronic poisoning by tobacco, for it is well-known that besides the volatilized oily alkaloid when smoking is indulged in, the combustion generates pyridin, and various other empyrematic substances, as well as carbon-dioxid, and that pyridin is known to produce effects similar to cocaine, not only benumbing the sensibilities of the surfaces over which the smoke passes but exhibiting an inhibitory effect on the brain, thus restricting the range of thought. In a thorough test covering periods of six months to as many years in the higher schools for boys and young men in Chicago and Paris, and also in North Western University, Harvard, Yale and Amherst, it was clearly proven that those boys and young men who smoked lacked power of concentration,

were inattentive, lost self-control, and memorized poorly, besides showing a condition of the heart that debarred them from participating in athletics. And as to the effect of smoking on the heart, students are frequently rejected by the U. S. Naval Academy because of cardiac irregularity and want of stability. These effects in adolescence and early manhood are, of course, attributable to the greater susceptibility of nerve structure in these young subjects. To those who have investigated this question of retarded physical and mental development during childhood and youth it is plain that the use of tobacco should be wholly avoided until adult age has been reached. But, there arises the question, if the narcotizing effects upon the cerebro-spinal nerve structures and the organized elements of the blood are sufficient to retard mental and physical activity and growth before the age of 21 years, will not these same evil influences as certainly lessen the activity of structures at any time after the age of twenty-one, and lessen the vital resistance to morbid agents, and shorten life?

Tobacco is found to lessen the efficiency of respiratory movement and the internal distribution of oxygen, and according to all authorities, exerts a specially deleterious influence on the heart, disturbing its rhythm, and impairing its force, and not infrequently causing death by cardiac paralysis. A sad case is here recalled. A brilliant theological student, addicted to the smoking of tobacco, after several years of various symptoms attributed to over-study, recovered entirely from his persistent symptoms of bad health, especially visual and circulatory, on quitting the use of the weed. He then studied medicine, practiced it for a number of years, was a successful teacher, but despite his experience of his early life, took to smoking again, and continued it excessively for a few years, and though he spoke of his respiratory inefficiency at times, and at other times of impaired heart action, he did not heed the signs, and at the age of about 65, when in apparently good health, dropped dead on the street with a cigar in his mouth.

But to return to the young. Besides the ascertained facts, that the excessive use of tobacco, especially in the form of cigarettes, dulls the intellect, impairs nutrition, seriously affects the eyes, causes functional and organic heart disease, and in other ways contributes to physical and mental degeneracy, it also alters the moral nature and makes moral degenerates. Boys who smoke cigarettes much are prodigious liars and thieves, have been found unmanageable at home and at school, and judges of the Juvenile Courts have declared "that of the incorrigible and criminal class of boys not a boy has been found who did not use cigarettes."

USES AND ABUSES. - To many male adults the moderate use of smoking cigars may be allowed, or at any rate should not be forbidden, but the benefit to be derived, if any, will come when smoking is restricted to hours of leisure and those immediately following a meal, then the pleasure of the indulgence is also more perceptible. On the other hand, the use of tobacco in any form should be absolutely prohibited by those who have not attained full growth and strength, for the developing youth will most certainly be unfavorably affected.

Chewing tobacco cannot be defended, it is a filthy habit, causes waste of the salivary secretion, and is probably the cause of the pyrosis often found in chewers. Indigestion may be caused by defective teeth, dental caries being one of the results of excessive chewing, although there is a false assumption entertained by many that tobacco is good for the teeth, because it may relieve toothache as a sedative.

Physicians sometimes advise their patients to smoke during treatment, and it is hardly questionable that harm may result. While there may occasionally be indications for the use of tobacco by the sick, there are many more contra-indications. We of the homoeopathic school believe that the sick are much more susceptible to toxic agents than the well, and those of us who have studied closely the effects of tobacco, know that even habitual users when well show a repugnance to the accustomed smoke when ill, and in some cases toxic effects of tobacco may be readily induced. It has been found that tobacco is contra-indicated, and

therefore should not be allowed in any form, in most surgical operations and in long convalescence after operations where repair or tissue building is necessary to recovery. It is quite a common practice among surgeons to use morphia to induce sleep after surgical operations, especially if the sleeplessness is occasioned by pain, and it has been frequently observed, because of the synergy between opium and tobacco, that a man who has been given morphia will be made quite sick by smoking a single cigar. This may account for the tardy recovery from grave operations observed in some men who smoke, as compared with the ready recovery of women and children after equally serious operations, who do not smoke.

Tobacco should also be interdicted in throat, nasopharyngeal, and pharyngeal catarrhs, in organic heart disease, in cardiac neuroses, in gastric neuroses, in peritonitis, and in appendicitis.

REMEDIAL MEASURES. - When it has been determined that any sick subject does not readily yield to treatments, and the use of tobacco is continued as a habit, study its effect on that particular individual. If there is only a suspicion that tobacco may be an active factor in retarding recovery, stop it. If there is amblyopia in a subject who uses both tobacco and alcohol, stop the alcohol first, and if the amblyopia continues, suspect it to be occasioned by tobacco, and stop it. To more quickly overcome the effects of tobacco amblyopia (gradual loss of vision, slight ophthalmoscopic change at disk and sluggish pupils) prescribe kali jod. or nux vomica, according to indications, and use hot water as an eye-wash.

If the characteristics of a tobacco heart are in evidence, i. e., nervous palpitation, waste of vital force, irregularity of action, or hypertrophy of the left ventricle, or even of the entire heart, from long-continued disturbance of innervation and over-action, stop the use of tobacco, and prescribe any indicated remedy. But even without any remedy, the hypertrophy may disappear, if the use of any tobacco is discontinued. Phosphorus may be used if tobacco heart is associated with sexual neurasthenia, especially if, after stopping the tobacco, nausea at the smell of tobacco is constantly observed.

In acute tobacco poisoning use sparteine sulphate (1-4 gr.) which causes elevation and regulation of heart's functions and combats the neuropathic conditions.

According to circumstances and conditions the evils of tobacco may be removed by resorting to such remedies as arsenicum (in tobacco chewers) ignatia and nux vomica (in tobacco smokers), sepia (in dyspeptic and neuralgic subjects), lycopodium (in impotency), camphor and veratrum (in diarrhetic conditions), calcarea carbonica (in frequent fainting), ipecacuanha (in continual nausea), antimonium tartaricum (in persistent vomiting and collapsic symptoms), clematis (in toothache from caries), plantago major (in severe headache, nervousness and constipation).

HOMOEOPATHIC THERAPEUTICS. - Nicotine and tabacum are conceded to be great poisons, the alkaloid very rapid and pronounced in its action; the effects of the plant, as used by smokers and chewers, slow and insidious. A great poison may also be a great remedy, rapid in its curative effects in acute conditions, sure in its beneficent results in chronic diseases, providing only the principles of prescribing are understood and the poison employed secundum artem. This has not been fully realized in the case of tabacum, perhaps because it is so very common, and rarely considered in any light, even by physicians, except as a luxury or necessity from habit. Hahnemann first called the attention of practitioners to the homoeopathic indications for some uses of tabacum in "The Lesser Writings," where he spoke of its efficacy in cases with a chronic disposition to vomiting and colic, and in subjects with epileptic and hypochondriacal phenomena. Later, after the provings had been published by Hartlaub and Trinks, tabacum was found useful in neuralgic headache, when periodical, attended by much sick stomach and sudden pains, as if the head were struck by a hammer.

In insomnia with dilated heart, especially when anxiety and cold clammy sweat of face are present.

In angina pectoris, when pain extends down left arm.

In nausea, morning sickness, and the vomiting of pregnancy, especially with much spitting.

In gastralgia and enteralgia.

In seasickness.

In cholera infantum when child is icy cold and yet wants abdomen uncovered, the stools being watery, and sweat on forehead and face is present.

In minor epilepsy, sudden attacks of unconsciousness, without aura, lasting but a few seconds.

In renal colic - ureter of left side the seat of such intense pains as to produce spasms, with great sweat, and collapse as if dying.

SUGGESTIONS. - In view of the facts presented in this paper is it not incumbent on the medical profession to wield its great power among the people to lessen the evils of the tobacco habit?

If there were no direct evils occasioned by tobacco itself on the human body, is it not patent that physicians and sanitarians should exert all the influences that can be brought to bear, to prevent the filthy habit of spitting in public places, where clean people must congregate, and so limit the possibility of engendering disease?

If the homoeopathic school believes in a law of cure, and de sires to be guided by the rules of practice under that law, is it not desirable that the American Institute for Drug Proving should reprove tabacum, according to its methods, to give us a reliable pathogenesis, and to settle forever disputed questions, and, if possible, to arrive at the anatomical or structural lesions on which its subjective phenomena depend, and thus to enlarge its therapeutic sphere?"

(Charles Mohr, M.D. Philadelphia, Professor of Materia Medica in The Hahnemann Medical College and Hospital of Philadelphia, Tabacum, The North American Journal of Homoeopathy vol. 55 (1907), p. 71-77. Read before the Homoeopathic Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania)