

American Materia Medica, Therapeutics *and* Pharmacognosy

Developing the Latest Acquired Knowledge of Drugs, and
Especially of the Direct Action of Single Drugs Upon Exact
Conditions of Disease, with Especial Reference of the
Therapeutics of the Plant Drugs of the Americas.

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WITH A PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF
PHARMACY AND PHARMACOGNOSY

By

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CANNABIS.

CANNABIS INDICA.

Synonyms—Cannabis Sativa, Indian Hemp.

CONSTITUENTS—Cannabin, Cannabinine, Volatile Oil, Gum, Sugar, Potassium Nitrate.

PREPARATIONS—Extractum Cannabis Indicæ, Extract of Cannabis Indica. Dose, one-sixth to one grain.

Extractum Cannabis Indicæ Fluidum, Fluid Extract of Cannabis Indica. Dose, one to five minims.

Specific Medicine Cannabis. Dose, one to ten minims.

The strength of preparations varies, and some may be inert. If the precipitate formed when the drug is added to water be olive-green, it is active; but its strength should always be tested by tentative doses.

Physiological Action—Cannabis indica is narcotic. Bartholow classed it as a cerebral excitant. In some persons the drug causes excitement tending to acts of violence and crime; in others it excites merriment, or a maudlin state. In general it produces hallucination, perverts the natural perception of objects, intensifies the perception of sound, dilates the pupils, abolishes pain, and, in poisonous doses, causes spasms, convulsions, collapse, pale, clammy, insensible skin, extreme debility, feeble pulse, and finally paralysis of respiration. The habitual use of the drug causes bloating of the face, weak, tremulous limbs, injected eyes, imbecility, and ultimately death from marasmus.

Those who use cannabis regularly, believe that in medicinal doses it is not poisonous. It can be safely given in full doses, the tincture in from ten to twenty minims, and the solid extract in from one-half to two grains. It seems to be a true sedative to the stomach with few undesirable influences. Its best effects are secured when given in conjunction with alkalies in full doses or with mild aperients.

Therapy—Cannabis Indica is sedative, narcotic, anodyne and, to a limited degree, anti-spasmodic. It acts upon disturbed function of the nervous system.

It is a remedy for **disordered mental action.**

It is a remedy for **disorders of motility**, involuntary, irregular, muscular movements, especially if of a distressing character.

It is a remedy to arrest or control **pain**, often acting advantageously in conjunction with other pain-quieting agents, intensifying, modifying or favorably influencing their action.

It is a remedy for excitable and irritable **hyperæsthetic** conditions of the **genito-urinary organs**, with increased functional activity and uterine disorders.

In many forms of **urinary irritation**, its action is prompt and satisfactory especially, Quincey says, where there are only a few drops passed frequently, constant unsatisfied desire, burning pain and vesical tenesmus.

In the **wakefulness** of old age, in the **restlessness** of nervous exhaustion, and in **melancholia**, it is an important remedy. It is useful in the treatment of **neuralgia** and **hemicrania**. It takes high rank in affections of the brain and nerves of the head, especially if nervous vertigo be present, and in those attacks of hemicrania which occur periodically, very distressing, causing delirium and much prostration. It is especially applicable in **sub-acute inflammation** of the **brain**, in **delirium tremens** and in the **hypochondria** of the menopause.

This remedy has received a great deal of attention in its adaptability to **cerebro-spinal meningitis**, and with varying but encouraging results, especially in the earlier stages of irritation and congestion. It is useful also in **hydrophobia**, and in large doses it is sometimes palliative to the distressing symptoms. Minute doses will cure some cases of **tinnitus aurium**.

It is useful in the distress of **Potts' disease** and hip joint disease and in general rickets. In **epilepsy**, either alone or combined with the bromides, it has been given very extensively for several years.

Dr. Cook of Seattle suffered from **nervous breakdown** with extreme exhaustion; **tremor** on awakening in the morning, with active **functional heart disturbance**. He took five drops of specific cannabis three times a day on the tongue, followed by a sip of water. On extreme occasions, he would repeat the dose once in half an hour. Not only was the whole nervous excitability controlled, but the heart was restored to its normal action and the urinary irritability was overcome.

It is of much use in **paralysis agitans**, in relief of the lightning pains of **locomotor ataxia**, and especially in chorea and in general muscular tremblings. In chronic conditions accompanied by persistent pain, it ameliorates the pain.

In **functional disorder** of the **stomach** accompanied by pain, it is an excellent sedative, and in intestinal disorders it is equally applicable. It does not suppress secretions or disarrange the functional operations of the organs.

In aching and painful irritation, or in the passage of **gravel**, it is a most soothing remedy. It is beneficial here also in painful hematuria, whether from cancer or tuberculosis, from profound congestion or nephritis.

It is a soothing tonic to the uterine muscular structure, and in inertia and **subinvolution** it increases muscular power and energy and promotes contraction. It is useful in **menorrhagia** and **metrorrhagia**. It is a valuable sedative adjuvant to combine with the well known uterine tonics in general disorders of the pelvic organs amenable to medical treatment not of a surgical character, especially if the pains are of neuralgic or spasmodic character. It will allay **abnormal sexual appetite**, and will overcome the **hysteria** and emotional excitement which occur in some women at the menstrual period.

In **neuralgic dysmenorrhœa** it will occasionally cure patients who have been treated by other methods without results. There are few remedies that will excel it in this disorder, but the remedy must be given continuously, beginning before the expected paroxysm some little time and continued for a time after the paroxysm is relieved.

It is an excellent remedy in **gonorrhœa** with sexual hyperæsthesia. Here its influence is prompt; it arrests chordee, **priapism** and **spermatorrhœa**.

It controls violent erection and soothes the mental anxiety which aggravates the symptoms. It cures many **irritable** states of the **bladder**. It is curative in **strangury** and **painful urination** with burning and scalding. In spasmodic stricture, with gelsemium or macrotys, it relieves quickly. It is a remedy for functional **impotence**.

It is soothing to irritable bronchial **coughs** and laryngeal spasm, and in coughs from tickling in the throat; also in whooping cough and in spasmodic coughs of whatever character. It is a common ingredient of cough syrups.

Co-operatives—The agent acts similarly in a general way to opium, gelsemium, passiflora, the bromides, chloral and hyoscyamus.