

The Holly and the Ivy

The Holly and the Ivy
When they are both full grown
Of all the trees that are in the wood
The Holly bears the crown.

This is a medieval song, sung at the time of Christmas.

Both Holly and Ivy are primitive symbols for female and male and the words probably derive from an ancient fertility dance. The flower of the holly represents a lily, the red berries are blood, the sharp and prickly thorns mean damage of some kind and the bark has a bitter gall. Ivy creeps and clings and grows everywhere you don't want it to ☺

But to us they are *Ilex aquifolium* and *Hedera helix*.

ILEX AQUIFOLIUM is prominently a rheumatic and digestive remedy.

The rheumatics are varied but often involve a rheumatic inflammation of the eye. This could be commonly called 'dry eye' but would either be Keratitis (inflammation of the cornea) or Scleritis (inflammation of the sclera. Periostitis of the frontal bone and staphylomas (protrusion of the globe of the eye) might come into play with the degeneration of the cornea.

Gout is another rheumatic state of this remedy.

The digestion involves the whole alimentary canal – colic; purging; jaundice; mucous diarrhoea and Sprue – this is an old fashioned name for Dermatitis herpetiformis, which is a painful skin eruption associated with Coeliac disease and other digestive diseases. Psilosis (falling of the hair) might also accompany these symptoms.

The lungs are also involved (Pleurisy) and there are pains in the spleen and it is thought that *Ilex* matches *Cinchona* for its importance in intermittent fever.

Not surprisingly all symptoms are >>> in winter.

When both the spleen and the liver are implicated in this way it is easy to understand how deep pathology such as Coeliac disease (liver) and a rheumatic disease such as Rheumatoid Arthritis (spleen) take hold.

HEDERA HELIX is all about movement and drainage of watery discharges through gravel and sand.

Movement comes in the form of anxiety, constant worrying, restlessness with a craving for fresh air which >>>.

This is because Hedera is a thyroid remedy – hyperthyroidism.

Along with this extreme anxiety and restlessness comes insomnia, morbid hunger and a general feeling of constriction, especially in the throat.

This constriction is seen, not only in a need to move around, but also as a form of hardening – substances becomes hard when the flow of softening agents are prevented access. So, there is gravel that forms gall stones; a sensation of sand in the eyes; ovaries become cystic; bowels become constipated and the throat closes with a swollen thyroid.

Constriction is also a closing state and thus there is bronchial asthma; emphysema and the heart feels as if it has to fight against a resistance.

Chronic hydrocephalus is also associated with this remedy and the drainage takes place through the sinuses and on down to the kidneys where there is copious urination. There is a general >>> from any discharge, especially menses as this keeps the flow going. But once the flow is stopped the constriction begins and the hardening sets in.

Many other organs are affected as well as the brain, ovaries, sinuses, thyroid, gall bladder and lungs.

Liver = cirrhosis

Pancreas = inflamed

Menses = either absent or painful

Nose = Hay Fever, chronic rhinitis

Eyes = cataracts

Heart = angina, myocarditis, tachycardia

Limbs = rheumatism, rickets, Raynaud's

Rectum = diarrhoea and/or constipation

Skin = herpes, pruritis, urticaria, skin is icy cold.

Thanks for reading. Joy Lucas RSHom. December, 2004