

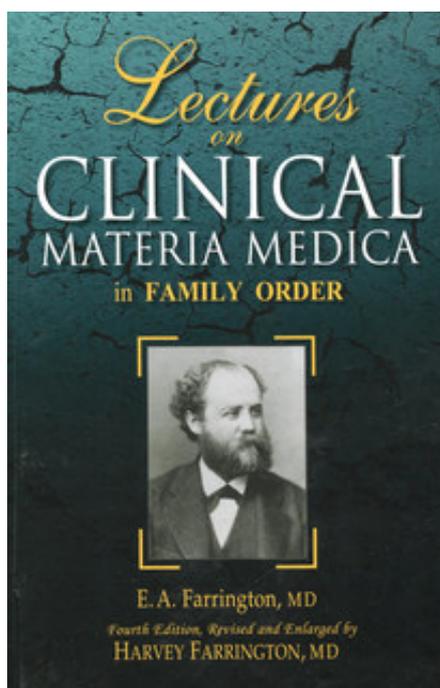
# Ernest Albert Farrington Lectures on Clinical Materia Medica

Extrait du livre

[Lectures on Clinical Materia Medica](#)

de [Ernest Albert Farrington](#)

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## Lecture 52

# SILICEA

Asaf., Phosphorus, Conium, Graphites.  
Silicea Sulphur, Calcareo ostr., Lycopodium.  
Gettysburg water. < Mercurius.

SILICEA in its crude state is inert. It is insoluble, and hence has very little effect on the system. When potentized according to the formula of Hahnemann it becomes one of the most valuable drugs in our materia medica. It is a grand illustration of the efficacy of potentization.

The great and important effect of Silicea lies in the nutritive changes which are made by it. As nutritive changes are more evident in the growing child than in the adult, you will find Silicea symptoms appearing mostly in children from infancy up, not that it is contraindicated in the adult, but its use is shown more evidently in the young. The child, then, is imperfectly nourished, not from defective quality of the food it takes, but from defective assimilation. The head is disproportionately large; the fontanelles, especially the anterior, are open; the body is small and emaciated, with the exception of the abdomen, which is round and plump, as is often the case in scrofulous children. The head, including the scalp, neck and face, is covered with an offensive sweat. The face is pale, waxen, earthy or yellowish. The bones are poorly developed, as are also the muscles, consequently the child is slow in learning to walk. *Silicea* is especially adapted to rachitic children. The fibrous parts of the joints are inflamed, swollen or ulcerated. This gives the joints, especially the knees, a knob-like appearance.

*Silicea* is complementary to *Thuja*, especially in nervous affections and for the bad effects of vaccination. Whatever we may say in favor of the necessity of vaccination, we do know but that this operation may be followed by unhappy symptoms, and that, too, when the purest of virus has been used. Hence, at times, you have to counteract the bad effects that may follow the operation. We know that in Paris some 30,000 or 40,000 children were vaccinated after each was given a dose of *Sulphur*, and this is supposed to prevent the outbreak of any other disease than the vaccinia itself. If such bad effects as erysipelas, convulsions or diarrhea should follow, then you will give *Silicea*, which will cure the case. *Thuja*, itself, is complementary here, and comes in very well for diarrhea following vaccination, and also when the vaccination fever is high. Pustules, like those of smallpox, together with a rash, appear all over the body. *Melandrinum* is also useful for ill-effects of vaccine, but as yet it has been only imperfectly proven.

You notice that to the right on the board I have placed *Mercurius*, prefixed by a "crescendo" mark. That means that *Mercurius* does not follow well after *Silicea*. Their symptomatologies are apparently similar, and yet they do not seem to agree, although *Silicea* will antidote some of the effects of crude mercury, but, as potentized medicines, they do not follow each other well, hence you must be careful in deciding between the two drugs.

*Fluoric acid* antidotes the over-use of *Silicea* in bone affections. *Hepar* also antidotes some of the effects of *Silicea*. We are now ready to take up the effects of the drug. First, on cellular tissue *Silicea* has long been known as a valuable drug, because of its affinity for cellular tissue. It produces inflammation of this extensive tissue of the body, going on to suppuration, and suppuration, too, which is rather indolent or sluggish in type, not necessarily malignant, but tending to perpetuate itself and become chronic. The termination of the *Silicea* cellulitis, then, is in suppuration, which is persistent, in ulceration which is persistent, or in induration. I have already illustrated this in the application of *Silicea* to the tonsils when these glands suppurate and refuse to heal, *Silicea* is more than ever the remedy when this occurs in rachitic children. You will see it also in the treatment of boils or furuncles, furuncles which occur in crops and which do not heal readily, but continue to dis-

charge a rather thin, watery and even ichorous pus, usually having a foul odor, or less commonly a thick pus. *Silicea* may frequently be suggested as a remedy to prevent boils, on account of its tendency to produce inflammation of the connective tissue.

So, too, it would be suggested in that dread disease, carbuncle, particularly when it is situated between the shoulder and nape of the neck, a common site for carbuncle.

*Silicea* may also be used for induration. For instance, following the treatment of boils and abscesses, or other inflammations of this kind involving the parenchyma of an organ, you may have plastic exudation, which results in induration. This induration *Silicea* will cause to be absorbed, thus placing *Silicea* alongside of *Graphites*, a drug which you will remember tends to absorb indurated surfaces, even going so far as to effect the obliteration of cicatrices.

The same has been said of *Phytolacca*, but I think that this lacks confirmation. It certainly lacks the confirmation that *Graphites* has had.

Sometimes you will find that *Silicea* is unsuccessful in these indurations. Then a dose of *Sulphur*, interpolated, makes *Silicea* act better.

*Silicea* may be given with good result in all forms of ulcers, both benign and malignant. Its distinctive features are ulcers from bone diseases, as caries or necrosis, scrofulous ulcers which appear about joints, ulcers which appear in the back from vertebral caries, and ulcers which appear about the hip in hip-disease, particularly if connecting with fistulae. The pus is thin and offensive, and often mixed with blood and sometimes with little particles looking like cheese. There is very little tendency to heal spontaneously. These ulcers are relieved by warm and aggravated by cold applications.

*Silicea* acts upon the bones. We find it indicated in scrofulous children where the bones are curved, as for instance in spinal curvature. Not only is it indicated in lateral curvature, but where there is caries of the vertebral column itself.

It may also be indicated in diseases of the hip, or knee-joint, when the discharges are thin and offensive, and when there are fistulous tracks opening into the joint. The patient is of a scrofulous

diathesis, and presents the constitutional characteristics that I have already mentioned as belonging to the Silicea patient. In addition to the symptoms there enumerated, the Silicea patient may have an offensive foot sweat, and this tends to make the toes sore and even raw. Sometimes there is an offensive axillary sweat. (I believe that the best remedy for axillary sweat is *Petroleum*.) The child also has tendency to swelling of the glands, which suppurate. Now with these symptoms there is a peculiar susceptibility to touch. I would here compare it with Lachesis, which as you will remember has extreme hyperesthesia of inflamed parts. I dwell on this symptom for two reasons; first, because it will help you to differentiate from the closely allied lime salts, and secondly because it illustrates a property of *Silicea* which you will see when we come to speak of its action on the nerves.

Let us now stop to compare *Silicea* with its related remedies. *Asafoetida* has offensive discharges from the bones. It is distinguished, however, by the intolerable soreness around the ulcer. For instance, in caries of the tibia, with an external outlet and discharging pus, the parts around the ulcer are so sore and tender to the touch that the patient cannot bear the softest dressing.

Phosphorus is very similar to *Silicea* in bone disease. It resembles it in abscess, particularly in mammary abscess, with fistulous openings. It is similar, too, in the caries of bone, particularly in necrosis. Phosphorus, like *Silicea*, has over-excitability of the nervous system.

Platinum mur. is also a valuable drug in caries of the bones.

Another is *Angustura*, which is particularly useful in caries of the long bones, as the humerus, tibia, femur, etc.

*Strontiana carbonica* is especially useful in caries of the femur with coexisting watery diarrhea.

Gettysburg salt is rich in carbonate of lithium, and is very useful for symptoms precisely like those of *Silicea*, namely, carious ulcers, or ulcers about joints, such as occur in hip-disease or in caries of the vertebrae. The discharge is acrid and excoriating.

Sulphur, *Calcarea*, and *Lycopodium* are similar to *Silicea* in the scrofulous diseases of children. The distinction between *Calcarea* and *Silicea* is as follows : the *Calcarea* head sweat is confined to the

scalp, and is sour rather than offensive. The feet also are damp from sweat, but the sweat does not, as in *Silicea*, make the feet sore or raw. *Calcarea* lacks the sensitiveness to touch of *Silicea*,

In this sweating of the head, the body being dry, *Silicea* is exactly opposite to *Rhus tox.*, which has sweating of the body, the head being dry.

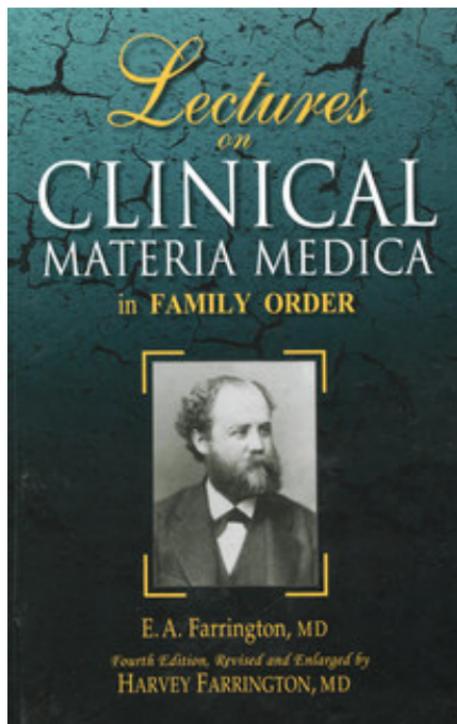
The mucous membranes do not escape the action of *Silicea*. We have otorrhea, the discharge from the ear being offensive, watery, and curdy. Often you find the membrana tympana perforated, the purulent discharge thence containing little pieces of bone, the result of involvement of the mastoid process or the ossicles of the middle ear by the disease.

There is keratitis, especially with tendency to the formation of sloughing ulcers, which tend to perforate the cornea like those of Nitric acid. In the *Silicea* child they are not vascular, so there is not much infiltration of the surrounding tissues. Hypopyon is present. The lids are swollen and covered with suppurating styes.

The nose is also affected. *Silicea* is especially useful in nasal catarrh when ulcers exist on the mucous membranes, and these discharge a thin, bloody excoriating matter; or they may be dry, and then there is annoying dryness of the nose. It is also useful when the catarrhal process extends backwards and involves the outlets of the Eustachian tubes, producing an intolerable itching and tingling in this locality.

We also find *Silicea* indicated in some forms of hay-asthma, especially that which begins with itching and tingling in the nose and violent sneezing and excoriating discharge from the nose.

*Silicea* has also an action on the lungs. It produces hoarseness and roughness and dryness, with a tickling cough which seems to come from the supra-sternal fossa very much like *Rumex crispus*. There is also a feeling as if a hair were lying in the throat, larynx or trachea. The cough is excited by cold drinks, as under *Rhus tox.* and *Scilla*, by the very act of speaking, as in *Phosphorus*, *Rumex*, *Ambra grisea*, etc., and worse at night when lying down, just like *Rumex*, *Phosphorus* and *Lycopodium*. Sometimes it ends in the vomiting of mucus.



Ernest Albert Farrington

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