

exchanged for the bismuth again, with a quarter of a grain of opium night and morning. Afterwards, a few grains of the pulv. kino comp. were added to the bismuth. By the end of May the improvement was manifest, and the patient, who had previously been confined to her bed or arm-chair, was able to walk out. The complexion was healthier, the appetite improved, the nights were good, and the pain in the epigastrium ceased.

June 2d, the record says, "improving daily; no pain in epigastrium; took a long walk yesterday." June 3d, she was discharged, "much relieved."

This case was a typical one in all respects. The emaciation, the pain on pressure below the ensiform cartilage, extending to the dorsal region, the pain after taking food, relieved by vomiting—the vomiting of blood, the amenorrhœa and the constipation, form a group of symptoms which is perfectly characteristic. The emaciation of the patient was very great, as may be imagined from the fact that her weight, in health 125 pounds, was reduced to 85 pounds at her entrance, though she was but slightly under the medium height. She was, in fact, literally half starved. From the sensations which the patient experienced on swallowing, it was inferred that the ulcer (or one of them, supposing more than one to exist), was situated near the cardiac extremity of the stomach.

ON BRYONIA ALBA.

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[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

THIS remedy was well known to the ancients, and its use has been revived in modern practice. It was formerly much prescribed as a hydragogue cathartic, deobstruent and diuretic, especially in rheumatic, bilious, congestive and dropsical cases.

It is generally regarded as very similar to jalap in its effects, and Pearson thought it might be used as a cheap substitute for this medicine; but Wood and Bache say that it has been properly superseded by jalap, because the latter is not only more certain, but less acrid than fresh bryony, and not so liable to lose its strength by age. I am very confident that it more nearly resembles colchicum in its action than any other remedy, and possesses few or no powers which are not attributable to that well-known and much more useful medicine. Thus, Lindsay says bryonia is an acrid purgative, producing, in large doses, violent vomiting and purging, with more or less tormina, profuse watery evacuations, and fainting. It has also been used almost exclusively, and from time immemorial, in those diseases in which colchicum has been found most useful. Galen relied upon bryonia in gout. Alexander Trallian, in rheumatic pleurisy, stitches in the side, sciatica, and swellings of the joints. Louriger, in rheu-

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matic bronchitis, asthenia and spitting of blood. Culpepper says it wonderfully helps many old and tedious coughs (which are generally rheumatic, catarrhal in their nature), and those who are troubled with rheumatic shortness of breath, and cleanses the chest of "rotten phlegm." In Frank's Magazine, three cases of inflammatory rheumatism are reported cured in a few days with from two to five or ten-drop doses of the tincture of bryonia.

As a simple or bilious purgative, it was used by Cælius Aurelianus in jaundice; by Dioscorides in vertigo, melancholy and epilepsy; by Sydenham in delirium and mania.

The action of colchicum in suppressing the secretion of milk is well known. The same power was attributed by some ancient authors to bryonia. In France it is in common use, in large and dangerous doses, for the purpose of stopping the secretion of milk in recently confined women. It is also given in inflammations of the breast. It has been supposed to rival aloes and black hellebore as an emmenagogue. Estmuller says it brings on the menses and sometimes causes abortion. Paulli says it has been used as a specific in diseases of the uterus of every kind, either to induce the menses, or expel a dead foetus, or remove obstructions of the womb, and cure hysteria.

Stephenson and Churchill say that the dried root of the bryonia dioica, or red-berried bryony, is a remedy of no little value [like the apocynum cannabinum] in dropsical cases, as they can testify from pretty extensive experience. They infused half an ounce of the dried root in a pint of boiling water, added one ounce of spirits of juniper, and gave a wineglassful every four hours, till numerous watery evacuations and copious secretion of urine took place. But, like all irritating purgatives, it occasionally acted too powerfully, when opiates and cordials were required to counteract it. Arnaud also used it in passive dropsy. Trautman used the bryonia alba in arthritic hemicrania and in rheumatic deafness; Hartmann in rheumatism of the womb; Montgarni in [rheumatic] dysentery, diarrhoea and colic. According to Tyrrell, the black bryony is the best application in bruises, black eyes, and ecchymosis of the conjunctiva, and is much employed by professed pugilists. It should be deprived of its outer bark, then finely scraped and mixed with bread crumbs or flour and water into a proper consistence; the whole to be enclosed in a thin muslin bag and placed over the injured part. In most cases, the discoloration will disappear in forty-eight hours, or more quickly than when arnica is used; but a fresh application is required every six or eight hours. It is considered so efficacious in France, that it is vulgarly called the "herb for bruised men."

In all the above diseases and others, colchicum will generally be found more useful than bryonia. Rheumatic headaches may be cured and prevented by from five- to ten-drop doses of tinct. of colchicum, aided or not by an occasional pill composed of extract of colchicum,

calomel and aloes, one grain each. Rheumatic ophthalmia, scleratitis and iritis may be cured in the same way. Rheumatic sore throat, in which the muscles of the pharynx are more involved than the mucous membrane, is often thus relieved. Rheumatic bronchitis is almost as frequent as rheumatic pleurodynia, lumbago and sciatica; and many cough mixtures are rendered more efficacious by the addition of a small quantity of colchicum. The use of colchicum in rheumatic neuralgia is well known. Some diarrhœas and dysenteries arise from taking cold, and may be followed by acute inflammatory rheumatism. Inflammations of the mammæ and excessive secretion of milk are often controlled by colchicum. It also deserves attention in rheumatic dysmenorrhœa.

THE FEVER THERMOMETER.

To the Editors of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

As facts gathered from the use of the so-called fever thermometer are engaging the attention of the profession at the present time, you will confer a favor by calling the attention of Dr. Paige to his report in the JOURNAL a short time since of his case of the "young man 18 years of age," who came to him after "feeling badly ten days," with some diarrhœa, &c., and whose symptoms three days after indicated a case of typhoid fever of "*rather more than usual severity*," and in whose case, six days later, "there were perceptible signs of convalescence," after which "the case progressed (in convalescence) finely" for four more days. In the evening of the thirteenth day from the date of the patient's first call, his brows were corrugated, pupils contracted, disagreeable feeling in head, &c.; and in less than twenty-four hours "death ensued," confirming the Doctor's prognosis and the value of the thermometer in diagnosis!

This is really a striking case, and shows how one attracted by a novelty may lose the way to truth. Looking with confidence on his "fever thermometer," the Doctor saw signs of convalescence the *ninth day* of the fever.

Now may we not reasonably doubt his diagnosis in this case? We certainly need more light on several points. How long before the patient's first call had he "*some diarrhœa*"? Did it continue? What was the nature, &c. of the discharges? What was the condition of the brain and of Peyer's patches, &c. after death? Were there rose spots, &c. &c.? Did he have one reliable typhoid symptom?

Whether this case was one of typhoid fever, or one of those hidden, insidious instances of meningitis from the start, I fail to see any marked advantage gained by the use of the thermometer. In the first place, the general appearance of the patient and the fact that he had been ill ten days with diarrhœa, would be quite sufficient to excite suspicion that he was under some specific influence; and