

of the surface capillaries quickly removes from the part the blood pressure by bringing the blood to the surface of the body and thus equalizing its circulation. In order to accomplish this practically I have prepared a tub or pail partially filled with hot mustard water. Seating my patient on a chair, or the edge of the bed, I have him thoroughly covered with blankets. Then I have the feet, legs, thighs and arms thoroughly rubbed with the hot water, using it as hot as it can be borne and gradually working the feet into it, rubbing them until quite red; then putting the patient into bed and covering warmly with blankets, with a rubber bag or jug filled with hot water at his feet. I then have made three large, hot poultices of flaxseed meal, or rye flour well sprinkled with mustard and a little ginger and covered with a piece of thin muslin. One I have placed over the thorax in front, one behind, between the shoulder blades, and the third upon the affected side over the region of the pain. I keep my patient well covered with an extra quantity of bed clothing, being very particular to have him keep his arms and hands well covered, and watch results. In from one-half hour to two or three hours he will be in a profuse warm perspiration, and in from twelve to fifteen hours the pulse, respiration and temperature will be reduced to nearly normal. In the great majority of cases I believe this treatment alone sufficient to break up the congestion and pyrexia if adopted early. But it has usually been my practice as soon as my patient is in bed after the foot bath to give a powder composed of equal parts of nitrate of potassa and Dover's powder—for an adult five grains of each, and repeat in three hours if free perspiration does not occur. I have recently obtained good results from a powder of fifteen grains of antipyrin used once, but not repeated, as I have found the repetition apt to produce an unfavorable action upon the stomach and great depression. In fifteen minutes after giving the powder I commence with tr. aconite rt., in doses of from gtt. ss. gtt. iss., with spts. æth. nit. gtt. xv and water to one teaspoonful. These doses I give every half hour or hour as the urgency of the case demands until I have given six or seven doses, then repeat at intervals of two hours. With children, instead of the poultices of flaxseed and mustard, I have used onions and lard with excellent results. In other respects their treatment has been precisely similar. This treatment, when used early, I have never known to fail, and I have sometimes used it with success two days after the initiatory chill. When called to a patient in the afternoon or evening I have found the next morning the pulse reduced from 120 to 80 or 85, the temperature from 103° to 99° and all symptoms of fever disappearing within the next twenty-four hours.

## THE TREATMENT OF SPASMODIC ASTHMA.

*Read in the Section of Practice of Medicine and Physiology, at the Forty-second annual Meeting of the American Medical Association, held at Washington, D. C., May 5-8, 1891.*

BY J. F. JENKINS, M.D..

OF TECUMSEH, MICH.

In dealing with this subject, it will be unnecessary for me to enumerate the many remedies which are in vogue in the treatment of this obstinate and distressing disease; neither will it be necessary to mention the beneficial results which are often produced upon the patient's health by a change of climate.

My object in the preparation of the paper is to bring to your notice a remedy which has, within the last few years, been prescribed for the purpose of mitigating the attacks of asthma. The remedy alluded to is *euphorbia pilulifera*, a plant which grows by the way-side in Australia, and which, according to Australian medical literature, has been used as a domestic remedy in the treatment of asthma and bronchial affections by the inhabitants of that island.

The universal experience of all who have practiced the healing art for a number of years is, that old and tried remedies frequently fail to give relief, and we are frequently driven from one remedy to another, in order to mitigate the sufferings of a patient who is undergoing an attack of spasmodic asthma, and who is bound to get relief, if not from the profession, he will seek the advertised charlatan, or the quack nostrums of the day.

In order to make my remarks as brief as possible, and to make this paper practical without being verbose, it will be necessary to give the clinical history of a few of the cases which have come under my observation, and have been treated by this drug.

*Case 1.*—George S., age 45 years. Came under my observation January 9, of this year. He states that he has had frequent attacks of asthma during the past ten years, years, and during the last three years, the paroxysms have been more frequent and severe. After a careful examination of the chest, there was no evidence of structural changes in either heart or lungs. The kidneys were in a healthy condition, the appetite good, and the bowels regular. In fact, he was in the enjoyment of good health (as he expressed it), if it were not for these periodical attacks of asthma. He was ordered a mixture of equal parts of the fluid extract of *euphorbia pilulifera* and glycerine, with directions to take a teaspoonful every four hours during the day, and to report in the course of a week or ten days. When he returned to my office, he stated that he slept well at night; has had no return of paroxysms of asthma; found one or two teaspoonfuls

a day sufficient to ward off the attacks. States that he has not slept so well for years.

This patient has been under observation up to within a few days, and has been thus far relieved from the annoying paroxysms of asthma.

*Case 2.*—Mrs. Z., age 50 years. An American by birth. Has usually had fair health, but during the past seven years has had frequent attacks of asthma. During the past year, she states that the attacks have been more frequent and severe, especially during the autumn and spring. No organic disease of either heart or lungs could be detected upon examination of the chest. There were no structural changes in the kidneys. Appetite and digestion fair. This patient had been previously under treatment for asthma, and at that time the paroxysms were mitigated by a combination of *grindelia robusta* and iodide of potassa. At this time she was given a mixture of the fluid extract of *euphorbia pilulifera* and glycerine, equal parts, of which she was to take a teaspoonful every four hours during the day, and in the course of a week to report. When the patient returned to my office she stated that the paroxysms of asthma had ceased under the influence of the medicine, and that she had rested quietly all night in the recumbent posture, while heretofore it was impossible to sleep without being propped up in bed.

*Case 3.*—Mrs. A., age 43 years, weight about two hundred pounds. American by birth. Has frequent attacks of asthma. Heart and lungs sound. Appetite and digestion good. Suffers more from asthmatic attacks during autumn and winter than any other seasons of the year. Frequently obtains relief by inhaling the fumes of burning nitre of paper. Prescribed the fluid extract of *euphorbia pilulifera* and glycerine, equal parts, of which the patient was to take a teaspoonful every three hours. Her husband reported that the medicine had no effect on the paroxysms of asthma, and that his wife's asthmatic breathing was relieved by smoking cubeb cigarettes.

*Case 4.*—Miss R., age 13 years, has suffered from asthma from early childhood. Has received treatment from all sorts of physicians, from the cultured physician as well as the travelling mountebank, and has obtained very little benefit from any of them. No organic disease could be detected of either heart or lungs, upon examination of the chest. No structural changes in the kidneys. Appetite and digestion fair, and the patient well nourished. She was prescribed a mixture of equal parts of the fluid extract of *euphorbia pilulifera* and glycerine, with directions to take a teaspoonful morning, noon, and night. Her mother reports that the daughter has breathed better, and suffered less from asthma than at any period for several years.

Within the past year thirteen cases of spas-

modic asthma have come under treatment, and in each case the fluid extract of *euphorbia pilulifera* has been prescribed with satisfactory results, except in one or two cases where it failed to relieve, although no cause could be assigned for its failure. There were no complications, but the drug failed, like many others which have a decided influence in the treatment of spasmodic asthma. In one instance, where mitral lesions were present, a pill containing one one-hundredth of a grain each of trinitrin and strophanthin, night and morning, in connection with half a drachm of the fluid extract of *euphorbia pilulifera* every four hours during the day, gave the patient relief from the paroxysmal attacks of asthma, which were no doubt of neurotic origin.

Finally, permit me to briefly state the conclusions arrived at by Dr. John Aulde, of Philadelphia, who has prescribed *euphorbia pilulifera* in twenty-five cases of spasmodic asthma: "Euphorbia is a remedy of special value in the treatment of all forms of asthma. In the absence of organic changes in the pulmonary and renal structures, and when the atmospheric conditions are favorable, relief will usually be afforded after taking the first dose. Being excreted largely by the liver and kidneys, the condition of these organs must be taken into consideration when estimating the probable effect of the drug. It has no special action in controlling the sudden attacks, but may be depended upon in young and robust individuals to effect a radical cure, providing they will continue to reside in an atmosphere that is dry and bracing, situated in a moderately elevated locality, where there are no, or comparatively few, sudden changes."

## FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE.

### LETTER FROM LONDON.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

*The late Mr. Richard Middlemore—The Statistics of the German Government on the Koch Remedy—The Oldest Living Surgeon—Prof. Victor Horsley on Hydrophobia—The Effects of Fog on the Manchester Atmosphere—Discussion on Strangulated Hernia—Report of the Trustees of the Peabody Fund.*

Mr. Richard Middlemore, of Birmingham, who died in his eighty-seventh year, was a leading ophthalmist, and author of a treatise regarded as the handbook of ophthalmology, to promote the knowledge and practice of which in Birmingham he contributed with his efforts and his purse. In 1877 he founded a prize to be awarded triennially by the Council of the British Medical Association, for the best essay on "The Scientific and Practical