

Medicine.

THE HYPOSULPHITE OF SODA IN SCARLET FEVER. WILL IT PREVENT THE DISEASE?

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There is a great popular dread of scarlet fever in all civilized communities—more than of any other of the so-called ordinary exanthemata. Vaccination has wonderfully mitigated the fear of small-pox, and measles is generally looked upon as a complaint of little moment. But scarlatina, having cut down the favorite flower of so many families, and left its incurable sequelæ to mar the physical powers or appearance of so many other loved ones, has come to be looked upon as a lion in the path of life by fond parents the world over. Whatever, then, may be found in the way of treatment to lessen its virulence or prevent its occurrence, will be hailed by the public, as well as by the profession, as of vast importance.

Belladonna has been claimed as a prophylactic, and very likely does exert some influence in that direction; but it is so uncertain in its effects as to have almost entirely fallen into disrepute and disuse. Domestic remedies to "prepare the system for scarlet fever," or to prevent it, are as numerous almost as the cases themselves. Some seven or eight years ago I was attending a family, when one of the children was taken sick with this disease, and, as usual, the child was medicated before the "doctor" had been sent for, and in this case "cream of tartar and sulphur" was the cure-all, and the patient had had its dose, and I was, upon my arrival, called upon for permission to have it given the other (healthy) children as a preventive. I assented, and to my astonishment, and to the great gratification and pride of the "friend of the family," who had suggested it, none of the other of the numerous children of the family were attacked by the disease. As, however, that was no uncommon occurrence, and knowing that scarlet fever does often attack one or more members of a family and not all, I thought very little of the circumstance until in the same neighborhood I saw and heard of the same thing being repeated several times with the same result, when I thought it worth while for me to try it. Accordingly I began giving the "cream of tartar and sulphur" also, to "prevent scarlet fever;" and, though it often failed in its work of prevention, I could but think that it sometimes had prophylactic power; and believing it to be the sulphur, I concluded to combine that drug, in its precipitated form, with the extract of belladonna, and give it in all cases where children coming under my care had been exposed to the scarlatinal poison, and I believe often with the effect of preventing the disease.