

BLACK COBOSH—CIMICIFUGA.

IS RHEUMATISM AND CHOREA.

The *Cimicifuga Racemosa* is a tall, stately plant with large leaves, growing from four to eight feet in height, and bearing long spikes of small white flowers. It is a native of Canada and the United States, and may be found throughout our woods delighting in the shady places of the high as well as of the low lands. Both the flowers and the seed have been employed for medicinal purposes, but the root is considered the most efficacious. It should be given in the form of powder or tincture, as the decoction does not contain all its virtues. The tincture is made by steeping four Troy ounces of the bruised root in sixteen ounces of diluted alcohol for a week or ten days; the dose when thus prepared, is from one to two drachms. When given internally, black cohosh produces vertigo, dimness of vision, and depression of the pulse, the latter remaining for some time after its discontinuance.

Chorea.—Since the period of its introduction as a remedy for chorea, by Dr. Young, of Pennsylvania, many eminent practitioners have attested to its merits; Dr. Stillé says, that, without doubt, it is one of the most valuable agents we possess for the cure of this nervous affection, especially when it appears to be independent of any definite disease.

He directs the powdered root to be taken in doses of twenty grains every two hours; the late Dr. Physick, however, gave but ten grains; whilst Dr. Jessé Young, preferring larger doses, less frequently prescribes a teaspoonful three times a day. All however, agree, that to prove successful, it must be pushed to the development of its specific effects, particularly vertigo and dimness of sight.

Prof. Simpson, of Edinburgh, in speaking of this remedy, tells of a case of severe anomalous chorea, which had resisted all the usual modes of treatment, zinc, iron and arsenic not being omitted, but which yielded at once to the *Cimicifuga*.

Rheumatism.—Dr. N. S. Davis, of Chicago, who has had a large experience with black cohosh, considers it remarkably efficacious in the earlier stages of acute inflammatory rheumatism, giving the powdered root in doses of from one to two drachms every two hours, until it acts powerfully upon the system: he finds it invariably to soothe the pain, allay the irritability, and cut short the disease, and has never noticed any injurious effects from its employment in these large doses. The late Dr. Hildreth, of Ohio, likewise lends his valuable testimony to the harmlessness of such doses in rheumatism. Dr. F. N. Johnson, whilst corroborating all this, remarks in addition, that he has found metastasis to the heart or other organs much less frequent with this, than with any other mode of treatment.

Both Davis and Simpson agree in considering it an antidote to the rheumatic poison, and this too, without stimulating the system or producing diuresis, diaphoresis, or any other discharge.

In chronic rheumatism it is not so favourably spoken of, but Prof. Simpson has found it, in his own case, repeatedly to cure an attack of lumbago with wonderful rapidity.

Considering, as I do, that the rheumatic diathesis, by producing some change in the spinal cord or its membranes, is the most frequent cause of chorea, I cannot but look upon the beneficial effects of the *Cimicifuga* on both affections, but as another proof of the correctness of the opinion; and I think that, in many cases, instead of giving

spinal disease as another cause of chorea, it will come much nearer the truth to ascribe the affection to the effect of the rheumatism, and to regard the chorea a symptom of the latter; and should most decidedly style all forms of chorea rheumatic, that prove themselves so, synthetically, by being amenable to rheumatic treatment. Those arise from sympathy with other irritated or diseased organs cannot be so affected, and must necessarily constitute a distinct class, and require other modes of treatment. Edw.

HEMORRHAGE FROM THE RECTUM.

By JAMES SYME, PROFESSOR OF CLINIC SURGERY, THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

Internal hemorrhoids are so generally the cause of bleeding from the rectum, that hardly any other appear to have been noticed by writers on the subject. But having frequently met with the most profuse and obstinate hemorrhage, when there was not the slightest trace of internal piles, I think very important that attention should be directed to the morbid states of a different kind, which give rise to this occurrence. Of these, the one most frequently concerned, is that of external hemorrhoids.

That pendulous flaps of skin hanging round the anus, should give rise to a serious flow of blood, seems in the highest degree improbable, and is indeed to be deemed altogether incredible, were it proved beyond the possibility of question, by ascertained facts. It is now more than thirty years since I became aware that external piles, independently of any other morbid condition, might be the cause of bleeding, through the observation of a case in which, although the patient had been repeatedly almost exsanguine, the most careful examination failed to detect any other derangement, and complete relief was afforded by its removal. I then, both in public and private practice, had very many opportunities of observing similar facts, and of these, may select the two following sufficiently illustrative for the purpose:—

Mr. Cochrane's Case, to Mr. Syme.

SIR,—The operation performed on Mr. D., in 1845, was most successful: he was then 47 years of age, and looked quite anemic, having for several weeks lost a large quantity of blood at stool. The amount had daily increased, but the most careful examination of the anus and rectum revealed nothing more than a quantity of loose skin extending to the orifice. When he sat upon the stool in my presence, pure blood to the amount of several ounces was speedily discharged, and formed a mass of coagulum in the utensil. Yet merely removing the whole of the loose skin by scissors, saying you had reason to believe this would prove sufficient, and the result was a complete and permanent cure, as the patient never passed any more blood, and is still in good health. Yours, &c.,
JAMES SYME.

Ratio, 1861.

Dr. Paterson to Mr. Syme.

DEAR SIR,—The Rev. Mr. — laboured with large and exhausting discharges of blood from the rectum, which had been going on for years. There were some external hemorrhoids, you considered that these were most likely the cause of the hemorrhage. They were accordingly removed; and when there has been no bleeding whatever,