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COLD APPLICATIONS IN CROUP.

BY THE EDITOR.

On perusing the excellent remarks in the Chicago Medical Examiner of December last, by Dr. Taylor, of Iowa, on cold applications in croup, and other affections of the throat, one cannot but be reminded of the truth of the remark, that our profession constantly bringing forward old forms of treatment, and that our knowledge of them is increasing by the attention. I well remember, years ago, being instructed by a clergyman's wife concerning this cold water treatment of croup: her children were always having croup, she said, and yet she never had a doctor for them; a cold wet cloth and little syrup of squills being all she ever required. A few years ago, I was called to what afterwards proved to be a very serious case of this disease, in which the mother, a lady from Minnesota, at the outset, begged me to employ cold water, and gave her reason, that this very boy had before been cured of croup by its means alone. It was a New Zealand doctor, she said; and he wrapped the child warmly all but the throat, which he kept very wet for two or three hours, by means of wet towels; when the child went off into a quiet sleep, and rose the next morning as well as ever. She insisted that he never gave it any medicine, and that he told her, it was the only way he ever treated croup. Was this true? She seemed seriously in earnest about it, but I did not dare to trust her, and therefore insisted on leeching and antimony, and the child but barely recovered. My attention, however, as may be imagined, was now fully aroused to the subject; and taking down Mason Good, (I always begin with old Nosology,) I found that as early as 1822, Dr. Hardin, of St. Petersburg, after trying every remedy without avail, in a fit of despair, placed his dying child into a tub, with its head on a cushion of hay, and dashed a pailful of cold water (60° F.) over it, from the head along the spine, rather harsh treatment certainly for an infant of 18 months, but it stopped the croup, and though he was compelled afterwards to repeat the operation ten times, (so says the book,) it was as successful; and the child got well. He afterwards employed it frequently with like success, and strongly recommended it, particularly in the early stages of the disease. His plan must doubtless have been adopted by other physicians of his time, as we read of a Dr. Miller, who was then a physician at St. Petersburg, being extremely fortunate with the child which he treated in this manner. The application of ice in a bladder was canvassed by Dr. Elliotson's time (1839), for he mentions it in his lectures, and gives it his sanction, provided it be after leeching. Dr. Wood in his Practice of Medicine (vol. 1, p. 100) says that Dr. Fithian, of Woodbury, New York, has been very successful in his treatment of croup by means of cold wet towels kept constantly applied to the throat and upper part of the chest.

Harden, Schmidt, and Copeland, speak well of cold affusion to the head, to relieve the congestion produced by the impeded respiration of croup.

In Rankin for 1853 (vol. 2, p. 276) Dr. Borchman recommends the employment of ice to the neck, in place of leeches, in the early stages of croup; and gives the results of three cases, one of which was his own son, a child of two years of age. A handkerchief, folded as a cravat, was dipped in iced water and wrapped round the neck; a small bladder containing fragments of ice, was applied to each side of the neck, the limbs at the same time being wrapped in warm flannel, and kept warm by bottles full of hot water. These applications were renewed every half hour. Immediately after the first, the heat of the head, with the agitation and distress diminished, the cough ceased, and the patient fell asleep. This treatment was persevered in for five hours, when the cravat alone was continued, and wet at more distant intervals, until the next day. The results were the same in the other two cases; the relief being equally immediate and effectual.

In Rankin, 1859 (vol. 1 p. 49) Dr. Luzinsky, director of a children's hospital in Vienna, gives, daily, from a half to two drachms of carbonate of potash, with syrup, in divided doses, till the cough becomes soft and loose; and directs the whole body to be kept warm and dry, whilst the neck is bared, and assiduously fomented with ice-cold water, the patient getting, at the same time, a constant supply of ice-cold milk and water, in small quantities. This treatment is continued from one to three days, when the cold is gradually left off, and more nourishment allowed.

My own experience of cold applications to the throat, for croup, is likewise decidedly favourable. I have rarely omitted their employment for several years past, and can truly affirm, that I have never witnessed a single instance where they have not produced a marked good effect on the breathing. And I now constantly order pieces of ice to be held in the mouth, and the cold water to be swallowed, in all inflammatory affections of the throat. Coinciding as I do, so heartily, with Dr. Taylor, I feel that I would be wanting in my duty to my readers were I not to give his article insertion, as, in addition to the above, another valuable testimony to its usefulness. It is short and good. I give it unabridged.

ICE IN AFFECTIONS OF THE THROAT.

By M. K. TAYLOR, Surgeon U. S. Vols., Professor of the Theory and Practice of Medicine, in the Medical Department of the Iowa State University.

DEAR SIR,—I have noticed several paragraphs in the public journals lately, referring to the employment of ice, by some French gentleman, whose name I do not at this moment recollect, in certain affections of the throat. His mode of applying the ice seems to be that of allowing it to be dissolved