

It has fallen to my lot to see such a case quickly relieved by substituting for the rhubarb some other laxative. Next in frequency of resort is aloes. Aloes acting upon the lower portion of the bowels is in great vogue in constipation linked with amenorrhœa (partial or complete). In consequence of this localized action aloes in full doses are not exhibited in pregnancy, except from ignorance or criminal intent. Fordyce Barker sees a certain utility in this localized action, and has from experience found that the stimulant action of aloes upon the area supplied by the hemorrhoidal arteries is good in the piles of pregnancy. Certainly the use of aloes in small doses, in combination with other laxatives, is rational practice. A certain amount of aloes should form a factor in the remedial agents employed in all forms of constipation in women, whether pregnant or not.

Then, beyond these two familiar laxatives, a host of others, which are more or less in use. Colocynth, gamboge, jalap, scammony, cascara sagrada, are perhaps those most in vogue. Castor-oil is rarely resorted to for constant use; while croton-oil might be more prescribed than is at present the case with advantage.

One matter, especially with female patients, must never be forgotten, and that is to diminish as far as possible the griping pains which activity in the muscular fibre of the intestine sets up. When the vermicular action is roused, violent contraction produces a griping pain very commonly; yet the muscular activity is essential to cure. To prevent this griping it is usual to add carminatives to the laxatives; black pepper, cayenne, and the essential oils all possess the property of taking away to a great extent these painful contractions, and so can be incorporated in the pill with advantage. One point must be borne in mind about the griping pains produced by the exhibition of laxative medicines, and it is this: griping may be due to violent contractions of the muscular fibre, which, however, may be ineffectual; and then the remedy is to increase the dose, when effectual efforts bring with them the desired relief. When the patient complains of griping pains it becomes necessary to ascertain whether the bowels are freely open or not; if not, a larger dose must be given. But if the bowels are freely open then the dose may probably be reduced with advantage.

In order to secure more energetic action in the muscular fibre of the intestine, it has become usual to add a little strychnia to the habitual laxative; and a very good practice it is. The steady use of such a compound pill will be found in time to put the bowels in a more desirable condition. But—in my experience at least—persons who suffer with habitual constipation lack perseverance. They either contrive to forget their medicine, or they give it up as soon as they are partially-relieved, and do not continue it (in lessened doses) until the new order of things is firmly established. And if the palate is offended by the medicine, abandonment of it prematurely is almost certain to happen.

Consequently humanity has declared for pills as the form of remedy *par excellence* in constipation.

A good combination would be provided by something of this kind for habitual use:

Strychniæ	gr. i.
Pulv. aloes	3 i
Pulv. piper, nig.	3 i.
Ext. cascara sagrag.	℥i. j.

In pil. xxiv div. i bis, in die.

When the bowels have become more regular, then instead of a pill night and morning, one at bedtime alone would be sufficient; and after a time the pill might be given up entirely, having fulfilled its purpose. If something more potent is required, then half a drachm of croton-oil may be added to the pill mass.

Some practitioners are fond of giving hyoscyamus to relieve griping.

Where the condition is not very pronounced a laxative pill at bed time once or twice a week is sufficient. Where the patient is of a rheumatic nature, or there are deposits in the urine, it is well to add a mercurial to the laxative. Something of this kind would be found serviceable:

Calomel	℥i
Ext. hyoscyami	℥iss
Pil. coloc. co.	℥i

In pil. xii div. i p. r. n.

When such a pill is found not quite potent enough, it may be well to assist its action by a draught of cold water on getting out of bed next morning—often itself very efficacious. Or some form of purgative water may be preferred, or a seidlitz powder, or some effervescing preparation, of which the name is legion.

If one line of attack fails, then try another. Some victims to constipation try a variety of compounds before they find what they desire. In one case it is a proprietary medicine, in another an orthodox prescription. One old lady who for half a century had been in search of a remedy paid me the compliment of asking me what I could suggest. It was in my early days, and the range of my knowledge was limited, but I hazarded the suggestion that a draught of cold water on rising often proved a very good remedy. She adopted the suggestion with the most satisfactory results, and prophesied a career of usefulness for me.

When something is taken in the morning it is uncomfortable, and for business men in cities well nigh impossible to have the bowels acting during the day. To secure prompt action it is well to take the dose of purgative water (or its equivalent) with hot water, or tea or other warm vehicle. This will usually produce the desired effect; and, if taken on getting out of bed, secures the desired operation by the time breakfast is over. When a pill has been taken previously at bed time the bowels are usually ready to operate soon after the morning draught is taken; and then a motion before breakfast, followed by a second when that meal is over, fits the bilious business man for his day's work. Where a person is depressed and liverish, to sweep