

## Selected Articles.

### THE TREATMENT OF ASTHMA.

BY ROBERT C. KENNER, A.M., M.D., LOUISVILLE, KY.

THERE is, perhaps, no disease which is more distressing to the patient than asthma.

The paroxysms of dyspnea are very agonizing and often persist for a considerable length of time. The burden on the heart is very great when the attacks are frequently repeated, or continued for a long time.

It is entirely foreign to the purpose of this paper to discuss at length the etiology of asthma.

I hold with Biermer that the true explanation of the symptoms is a "spasm of the muscular tissue of the small bronchi." The causation of this condition has both constitutional and exciting elements. The constitutional elements of causation comprise a neuropathic tendency, nerve lesions, epilepsy and other affections of the nervous system. According to the best observers males have the disease more frequently than females, although my notes show about an equality in the number of males and females. Exciting causes comprise climatic influences and individual susceptibilities to certain odors. Some patients are at once seized with an attack of asthmatic dyspnea when they inhale the odor of ipecac and other drugs. Others cannot bear to have certain animals, flowers or vegetables brought near them. All these are factors which may be said to be true of individuals, but which cannot be classified.

In about 20 per cent. of my cases I have found chronic bronchitis associated with asthma, and emphysema was present in about 15 per cent.

The treatment of asthma should be considered under two heads: First, relief of dyspnea; second, systemic.

To carry out the first indication is a matter of great importance since the burden on the heart during an attack of dyspnea is very great. To relieve these attacks surely and speedily must therefore be our first aim. To accomplish this purpose reference to the textbooks will show that a great number of remedies have been employed. Bromide of potassium, spirits ether comp., belladonna and all of the sedatives, anodyne and anesthetic remedies have been used. Many physicians give chloroform by inhalation to relieve the dyspnea. Ipecac and lobelia were the remedies which the