

QUEBRACHO IN DYSPNŒA AND DIARRHŒA.

The accounts which we get from foreign observers as to the action of quebracho continue to show that this drug is a valuable addition to the *armamentarium therapeuticum*. Berthold has published in the *Berliner Klinische Wochenschrift*, No. 52, 1879, an account of several cases of severe convulsive asthma where this remedy seemed to produce a very happy effect. In one, a gentleman of sixty-five was found in a violent attack, pulse 108, respiration 64. A teaspoonful of the tincture was given every hour, and at the end of three hours the respiration was reduced to 30, and the patient rapidly recovered without other medicine. In some fourteen other cases a similar happy result was attained, though not always with the same promptitude. In the case of a lady of sixty, suffering from mitral insufficiency, with stenosis and frequent attacks of frightful dyspnœa, where digitalis had failed, quebracho gave relief. Berthold also recommends the alcoholic extract of quebracho as an excellent remedy in diarrhœa. In the case of children, he gives the extract in the dose of $1\frac{1}{2}$ grains in pill form, to the number of ten a day. No ill effects have been observed. In the same number of the *Wochenschrift*, Dr. Picot relates some experiments made upon himself to ascertain if quebracho would prevent dyspnœa from the exertion of climbing, and found that by taking a previous dose of about a tablespoonful of Penzoll's tincture he could climb a considerable acclivity without losing his breath. He has also administered the tincture to two obese and short winded individuals, with the result of markedly diminishing the dyspnœa felt on extra exertion.—*Philadelphia Medical Times*.

TREATMENT OF NIGHT SWEATS IN PHTHISIS PULMONALIS.

A lady suffering from phthisis pulmonalis had been tormented with profuse night sweats for upwards of a year. All other means having failed to relieve this distressing symptom, Dr. Köhnhorn applied the remedy employed in the army for sweaty feet—viz., Acid Salicyl 3 parts, Amyli 10, and Talc 87—with the best results. The mixture, in fine powder, was sprinkled over the patient, and the sweating ceased. With a second patient the same result was also obtained.—*Berl. Klin. Wochenschr.*, No. 1, 1880.

A NEW THEORY OF THE ACTION OF MERCURY.—In a thesis on this subject, Dr. S. V. Clevinger (*Chicago Medical Gazette*, 1880, p. 81) regards the action of mercury upon the system as in no small part mechanical. Blue mass contains metallic mercury in a finely divided form, examinations under a low magnifying power showing not less than 200,000 globules in a gramme. Dr. Curtis has estimated the diameter of these globules at from $\frac{1}{80000}$ inch to infinitely smaller. Dr. Carpenter has asserted that metallic mercury finely divided can be absorbed by the blood-vessels from the alimentary canal. Dr. Clevinger suggests that these globules drop into the gland tubules and force out the contents of the latter, thus causing a mechanical sweeping out of the glands with consequent restoration of normal secretion. He considers the specific action of mercury upon the salivary glands and its accumulation in the jaws causing caries as explainable by mechanical laws. Mercury, according to Dr. Clevinger, is not a tonic; but if it increases secretion, removes obstructions, and sets the corpuscular manufactories in order, as it does the biliary, it induces tonicity, as the bromides induce sleep. Mercury in poisonous amounts produces ulceration, neuralgic pains, paralysis agitans, epilepsy, often melancholia. Ischæmic softening of cerebral tissues, infarctus, mania, aphasia, even hemorrhages, have, according to Dr. Clevinger, been caused by mercury, these hemorrhages having often heretofore been ascribed to syphilis. The "specific" action of mercury in syphilis cannot as yet be exactly explained. The disposition of the virus being to centralize itself upon and destroy certain areas, it seems likely that the metal may, by attacking such weakened points, not only break them down, but prevent the static degeneration necessary for the ulcerative processes. This, with the antagonism the metal has for occlusion anywhere, except what it induces itself in great doses, would suffice as a tentative view until we demonstrate exactly both the disease and its cure. Syphilis in the blood may not manifest itself if sufficient globules are chasing it from forming nuclei. Dr. Clevinger continues at some length, discussing the action of the various compounds of mercury and detailing a number of interesting experiments. The thesis, though not arranged in a perfectly clear and intelligible manner, contains much curious information.