

PHYTOLACCA DECANDRA IN THE TREATMENT OF BRONCHOCELE.

Dr. J. D. Ely thus writes in the *Medical Age* :

Of course it is taken for granted that notice of any agent that is superior to iodine, biniodide of mercury, and other time-honored and much-used remedies in the treatment of bronchocele, and especially one that is free from the deleterious effect—such as iodism, derangement of the stomach, etc.—as frequently noticed and regretted of them, will be received by the profession with interest and profit.

Therefore it is with pleasure that I offer a few facts in regard to phytolacca decandra, which, I believe, is as near a specific for that troublesome disease as we have for any other.

In doing so, I wish it understood that I have tested thoroughly about all the remedies recommended by leading authors, and after comparing the effects and results of phytolacca with them, much prefer it.

It has been a favorite remedy with my father more than twenty years in the treatment of all glandular diseases.

It has never failed, in his hands, to cure all cases of bronchocele, curable by any means, upon which he has used it, and he has, because of his success, had more than the usual number to treat.

Before giving the report of a case illustrating its use, which I select from a number I have treated successfully during the past two years, it is important to note that much of the tincture and fluid extract of phytolacca on the market is worthless, and I have, from necessity rather than choice, prepared most of the tincture which I have used.

I would advise those who have given phytolacca a trial and condemned it, and any who may try it and not get satisfactory results from the article purchased, to prepare their own tincture.

The following method has always given us a reliable and satisfactory article; but before it I may note, for the benefit of those not acquainted with phytolacca, that it grows in abundance in nearly all parts of this State, and is known to most farmers by its common name, "poke root."

Procure the fresh roots, and, after washing them clean, slice and put to dry where they will get the sun, till the water is as nearly dried out as possible, then pack in a percolator—a fruit jar will answer—and cover with absolute alcohol, full strength.

(It is probable that many manufacturers of it do not get a good article because they use old, dry roots, and diluted alcohol as the menstruum.)

Let it stand at least fifteen days, press out, filter, and it is ready for use. Dose, from three to ten drops.

It should be borne in mind that it acts slowly, and is designed to, and in the doses recommended, as experience has proven, that in so using it the specific alterative effect desired is more safely and satisfactorily obtained.

Recent cases yield readily to the remedy, and are cured in from one to three months. Difficult cases of long standing, of which the following is a sample, will need treatment for a year or more :

Lizzie M., aged 16 years, consulted me June 17, 1885, for treatment of a bronchocele, the first appearance of which was noticed eight years previous. On examination, I found both glands and the isthmus involved, and so great was the enlargement that the circumference of the neck measured nineteen and one-fourth inches.

It was more uniform than generally seen, was very hard, and so tightly filled the skin that it could not be moved. Pressure upon the laryngeal nerve was so great that the patient wheezed as if suffering from asthma, and could not walk rapidly because of the interference with respiration.

She presented the characteristic appearance peculiar to scrofulous diseases, and there was history of similar troubles among the relatives.

Bowels were regular, kidneys all right, and menstruation, which had been properly established at 13 years of age, was regular, and had always been so.

I may add here that the menstrual irregularity, mentioned by some authors as always to be noticed in these cases, has not been found, by me, to exist in any I have treated, and I do not believe it is common or that the disease is, in any way, connected with disease of the reproductive organs, as claimed by some.

Recognizing this as a most difficult case, my prognosis was unfavorable; but the patient being anxious to try treatment, I consented to give it, and prescribed the following, which was used for about one year and with success :

R. Tinct. phytolac. decand., 3 ss.
Syr. simplicis, 3 iijss.

M. Sig.—One teaspoonful in water 3 or 4 times a day.

Also—

R. Ferri dialyzati 3 j.
Glycerini puris.
Syrup simplicis, aa 3 iss.

M. Sig.—One teaspoonful in water after each meal.

Ordered applications of the tincture to the glands night and morning, to be diluted with pure rain water if it caused much irritation—as it will sometimes—and, if necessary, to discontinue it for a few days, and take plenty of outdoor exercise.

The only change noticed the first two months was that the glands had softened slightly. After that they decreased in size quite rapidly, and the improvement was marked in every respect, continuing till the neck became normal in size, the difficulty of breathing disappeared, and the patient considered herself cured, one year after beginning treatment.

She continued the application and tonic for a short time longer, at my request, however, to make