

In the etiology of this troublesome malady, therefore, modern classification recognizes only the indirect or intermediate causes; e. g. (1) those operative through the nervous system (centric excitomotor), and (2) those operative through the blood, as in gout, syphilis, renal disease, etc. The diathetic nature of asthma is a fact now quite generally accepted, the theory of Haig being that the causative factor of the symptoms, in the majority of cases, is uric acid in the blood and the high arterial tension it produces,—a condition brought about by a disturbance of the equipoise between the functions of nutrition and excretion, i. e., a faulty metabolism.

After five years of the most terrible sufferings, the writer, having carefully studied the disease, is firmly convinced that asthma is due to an abnormal biochemia of the blood, which impairs its oxygenation; that the lungs and nerves take no active part in its etiology other than the performance of their physiological duty; that the blood dyscrasias which figure most prominently in the causation of asthma are the anæmic, lithæmic and leukæmic.

About six years ago I developed asthma, which soon assumed such proportions as to compel me to relinquish active practice altogether. Attacks became more and more frequent and increased in severity,—relief coming only when I had reached an extreme degree of exhaustion. One attack followed another, and in turn was treated by every remedy known to the regular as well as the advertising physician, with only temporary relief. After many months' suffering of this character, I observed a series of prodromal symptoms warning me of an approaching attack,—such as headache, occipital pain, stiffness of muscles of the neck, muscular pains, neuralgias, great mental depression, etc., these symptoms recurring and recurring until it seemed as though there was no place for me on Earth.

I finally learned that, when a severe attack of asthma came on, a full dose of calomel followed by a draught of Hunyadi water gave me quicker and more substantial relief than anything yet I had previously obtained, and it dawned upon me that my trouble was perhaps due to deficient elimination, that my asthma was produced by a condition of lithæmia, not sufficiently marked to be called "gout," but all sufficient to account for the symptoms heretofore mentioned.

It seemed to me, after every relief obtained from the diuretic and cholagogue action of the drug employed, that I must have been suffering from the effects of certain toxins absorbed into the circulation from some portion of the alimentary tract, or, perhaps, left in the system from inefficient action on the part of the excretory organs. In other words,