

## ARSENIC IN CHOREA, DIABETES, AND ASTHMA.

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I hold it to be the duty of every practitioner, who has time and opportunity, to publish the results of his work. In doing this he lays himself open to the criticism that "all this or something very like it has been said before"; but this does not destroy the value of his effort, as he is at any rate confirming the work of others, and, generally speaking, the presentation of his facts will possess some features peculiar to the mind of the observer. The following notes are mere scraps culled from thirty years' work, and although they convey but little if any light on the virtues of the host of new remedies which have crowded the market of late years, they deal with some new observations on the value and administration of old and well-tried drugs. It is much more difficult to extract a new virtue from an old remedy than to point out the salient features of new ones. The former lies hidden under the crust of a well-trodden path, the latter lie scattered on the surface, to be picked up by him who tries them first. Let me draw attention to a very old drug which has been given for good or ill in a vast number of all sorts of cases and conditions.

### ARSENIC IN CHOREA.

Although so long and widely used, there are still a few conditions in which arsenic has yielded results which are as yet foreign to most text-books on therapeutics. First of all, as to its value in chorea. So little stress has been laid on its efficacy in large doses in this disease that a short historical sketch of my experience of it may help to impress its value. The late Mr. Ralph Linton, of Chester-le-Street, enjoyed a wide reputation for the cure of St. Vitus' dance. I have seen the desk in his surgery covered with letters from all parts of the North of England, asking for a bottle of his infallible cure. He often assured me that he rarely failed to cure the disease in a week, so that one 12-oz. mixture (half an ounce three times a day) was sufficient for the purpose. I could never extract from him even a hint of his method until I was called to see him professionally on his death-bed, when he told me his secret (please note this was nearly twenty years ago) which was simply this: "That Fowler's solution in fifteen or twenty-drop doses might generally be given to children for a few days without disturbing the stomach, and that so given it was an almost infallible cure for chorea within a week." The first case of chorea in which I tried this plan was an extremely bad one, and I was quite startled by the rapid and successful result I obtained. Not long after this first case of mine I was asked by an old friend Mr. Sang "to suggest a remedy for a bad case of chorea, which had