

PODOPHYLLIN THE HEPATIC AND FEVER MAGIC.

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When I was a small boy decoction of may-apple was the purge on the slave plantations of my father and neighbors, and I adopted the extract at first and the podophyllin later into my practice, absolutely, as a substitute for calomel and its sequent, castor oil, with unvarying success.

For many years I employed it in strict conformity with text-book rules; till once in Central America I left twenty half-grain pills with a ranchman who had double pneumonia, whom I could not possibly see again in less than a week, with instructions to take two every night, feeling confident that he would be dead in less than twenty-four hours, as the fever was high and the lung involvement alarming.

Sunday was the day I could return. Saturday afternoon I went to the office of vital statistics and was astounded not to find his death reported.

But when I reached his house I was far more surprised to find him weeding his garden.

He came in smiling, and told me that as soon as I was out of hearing the previous Sunday he told his wife I had no expectation of ever seeing him again, and that if those little pills would benefit him in the least in nightly doses of two, all taken at once should be more effective or end his agony promptly. She protested, but he swallowed them all, and inside of two or three hours he began to vomit copiously, and to purge in a stream, till the next day, when there remained nothing more in him but a ravenous hunger, the fever and the cough being entirely at an end.

This was a startling revelation to me, and that poor mountaineer, who would have reposed in the silent churchyard, obedient to my academic attainments, sat there in front of me, with a sarcastic twinkle in his big black eye, as humiliating to my professional dignity as

"And his eyes have all the seeming
Of a demon's that is dreaming,"

in Poe's "Raven," and he never had a fee bill of mine presented for payment, not even for subsequent useful service.

I began experimenting on the line of the accidental knowledge then mine, gradually increasing my dosage, till at length