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## Original Communications.

### SCARLET FEVER AND CROUP.

BY WM. KERR, M.D., GALT.

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Dr. Copeland has stated that "the treatment of scarlet fever is unsatisfactory, and, in the worst cases, most unsuccessful."\* In the greater part of the following instances, I trust that this opinion may be reversed. I do not venture to say what proportion such will generally bear to the whole number, but I cannot allow myself to believe that they will be exceptional. The remedy is the same as I have recommended in this Journal (August, 1873) for dysentery, omitting opium, which is to be added only when diarrhoea is present. When a number of the cases occurred, the bisulphite of soda combination, the bisulphite taking the place of digitalis or squills, was being tried in the hope that it would be adapted to those cases of disease of the mucous membrane where my older combinations displayed no potency; but farther experience has shown that where they fail, it also fails.

I have often been asked—Why use so many ingredients, especially why put together several not previously known in medicine? Suffice at present to say, that the result of this investigation comprising an examination of thirty-two plants or their products, and extending over five to six years, was a conviction, that though a medicine composed of a few of the ingredients might in some instances be adequate to cure, yet that the proportion of failures was very much reduced when all were employed. The acknowledged necessity for more than a single nutritive principle in diet is

suggestive that we may be wrong in relying upon a single medicine in disease. As far back as the year 1812, Dr. Paris, in his "Pharmacologia," insisted that increased power is gained by combination of medicines of the same class; but, possibly owing to the discovery of the vegetable alkaloids, simplicity in prescription has prevailed, and the views of Dr. Paris have been overlooked.

The medicine now recommended is founded upon the principle that power is gained by combination, each component apparently possessing some property not contained in the others, the combined effect of these properties being necessary to combat the disease. In accomplishing this object, another of considerable importance has been obtained; owing possibly to the small quantity of each ingredient, in general no deleterious effect is produced, and the patient is sensible only of relief. In the various affections in which this medicine, or combination of medicines, has been tried by my medical friends or myself, its action is to heal ulceration of the mucous membrane, and the vascular and tender state which precedes it; often in the course of half an hour to induce refreshing sleep, gradually to bring about better digestion, and in scarlet fever to keep the bowels sufficiently open without causing uneasiness, and usually without requiring the aid of any other aperient. The digitalis combination, in some constitutions, produces delirium, dimness of vision, and giddiness; in others, pain or oppression in the region of the heart. The squill gives rise to no unpleasant effect, and, as a general rule, is suited to children.

The mucous membrane being affected in dysentery, and also in scarlet fever—diarrhoea likewise being a not unfrequent attendant of the latter—I entertained a hope that a medicine which has now for many years been eminently beneficial in dysentery, in the hands of my medical friends as well as my own, would also be valuable in scarlet fever. Excepting, however, a few slight cases at an early stage of the investigation, I saw none till the combination had reached its maturity. Thirteen years ago a young woman, on the second day of the eruption, had vomiting of fluid like coffee-grounds—always regarded as a fatal symptom—together with ulcerated sore throat, headache, and sleeplessness. In a few hours, after two doses of six grains each (without opium), she was asleep, and every symptom relieved; recovery was rapid.

\*In the year 1864 there were 40,000 deaths from scarlet fever in the United Kingdom.