

Remarkable remedies.

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After the term of my tenancy expired, the charming house let for a more suitable rent; and ever since, I believe it has formed an adequate source of income to its worthy owners.

REMARKABLE REMEDIES.

MAN is a physic-taking animal. Her Majesty's lieges alone dispose of a prodigious but unknown quantity, in obedience to the orders of orthodox practitioners; while their annual consumption of patent medicines is at the rate of half a box or bottle for every man, woman, and child in the United Kingdom, at an expenditure of something very much more than a million pounds.

There are, however, plenty of real and fancied invalids who have no faith in the apothecary's wares. Some believe in hydropathy, of which Lamb wittily said: 'It is neither new nor wonderful; for it is as old as the Deluge, which killed more than it cured.' Others are of Burke's opinion, that hot water is a specific for every bodily ill; while others, again, loudly vaunt the triumphs of the hunger-cure, so called because the patient has to subsist upon two or three ounces of white bread and one wine-glass of water every twenty-four hours, so long as he remains uncured.

The hunger-cure is after all only a dangerous extension of Dr Ratty's prescription of a dinner of bread-and-water, as a sovereign remedy for indigestion. Dr Johnson's prescription for the same ailment was a pleasanter one. Learning that Miss Boothby was troubled that way, he wrote to his 'dear angel': 'Give me leave, who have thought much on medicine, to propose to you an easy and, I think, a very probable remedy for indigestion and stomach complaints. Take an ounce of dried orange-peel finely powdered; divide it into scruples, and take one scruple at a time. The best way is perhaps to drink it in a glass of hot red port; or to eat it first, and drink the wine afterwards. Do not take too much in haste: a scruple once in three hours, or about five scruples a day, will be sufficient to begin; or less, if you find any aversion.' The remedy certainly is a simple one, and worthy a trial, being, as its proponent says, 'not disgusting, not costly, easily tried, and if not found useful, easily left off.'

At an inquest held at Bradwell, Bucks, on the body of a five-year-old girl who died of hydrophobia, one of the witnesses deposed that two days after the child had been bitten, the buried dog was disinterred, its liver extracted, and a piece of it, weighing about an ounce and a half, frizzled on a fork before the fire until it was dried up, and then given to the child, who ate it freely; but nevertheless died.—A Chinaman, charged before a New York magistrate with stealing a duck in a stage of decomposition, explained that he took the bird for medicinal purposes. 'You savey,' said he, 'one duck, hal lotten; takee, boilee him; lub mattah on leg; him all light; cue plucy.'—Not an overnice remedy for pleurisy, but hardly nastier than magpie-dust, which no less a personage than the Princess Bismarck apparently deems an infallible specific for epilepsy; since, no longer ago than January last, the President of the Eckenfoerder Shooting Club addressed the following circular to the members of that association: 'Her Highness Princess Bismarck wishes to receive, before the 18th inst, as many magpies as possible.

from the burned remains of which an anti-epileptic powder may be manipulated. I permit myself, therefore, High and Well-born Sir, to entreat that you will forthwith shoot as many magpies as you can in your preserves, and forward the same to the Chief Forester Lange, at Friedrichruhe or hither, without paying for their carriage, down to the 18th of this month.'

The winter of 1876-7 was exceptionally severe in Detroit, and marked, moreover, by a visitation of smallpox, proving especially virulent in the Polish quarter of the city, the denizens of which were obstinate anti-vaccinationists, whose only method of keeping the scourge at bay was to close their doors against all comers. About Christmas-time, a young Pole, fresh from Europe, found his way to Detroit, and naturally made for the quarter wherein dwelt his compatriots. One of them gave him friendly greeting, but had no sooner done so, than seeing unmistakable signs of the dreaded disease on the stranger's face, he hustled him into the street without any ceremony. Friendless and penniless, the poor fellow struck out at a venture for a place of refuge; and reaching a barnyard, made his bed on some straw at the end of a shed. There he lay sick and starving for three nights and two days, tormented by the itching of the pustules, until in desperation he plastered face, neck, and hands with the fresh cattle-manure about him. At last, hunger drove him to the farmhouse to beg a little food. There he was supplied with soap and water wherewith to cleanse himself; and his ablutions over, stood before the pitying family apparently free from any sign of smallpox. Next day, the farmer was down with the disease, through which his visitor nursed him, without apparently thinking of applying the remedy that had proved so efficacious in his own case; a case on which the chronicler commented thus: 'The stranger certainly had smallpox, for he gave it to another. He certainly recovered, for here he is, walking about. If the fresh manure did not absorb the disease from his system in the short time, what else did? If burying a patient up to his neck in the earth, as practised in some countries, has a beneficial effect on diseases, why should not fresh compost have double the strength as a healer? It is a straight plain case, and though not discovered by Jenner, the cure may one day rank with his preventive.'

Sir Walter Scott's piper, John Bruce, spent a whole Sunday selecting twelve stones from twelve south-running streams, with the purpose that his sick master might sleep upon them and become whole. Scott was not the man to hurt the honest fellow's feelings by ridiculing the notion of such a remedy proving of avail; so he caused Bruce to be told that the recipe was infallible; but that it was absolutely necessary to success that the stones should be wrapped in the petticoat of a widow who had never wished to marry again; upon learning which, the Highlander renounced all hope of completing the charm.

Lady Duff Gordon once gave an old Egyptian woman a powder wrapped in a fragment of the *Saturday Review*. She came again to assure her benefactress the charm was a wonderfully powerful one; for although she had not been able to wash off all the fine writing from the paper, even that little had done her a great deal of good. She would have made an excellent subject for a Llama

doctor, who, if he does not happen to have any medicine handy, writes the name of the remedy he would administer on a scrap of paper, moistens it with his mouth, rolls it up in the form of a pill, which the patient tosses down his throat. In default of paper, the name of the drug is chalked on a board, and washed off again with water, which serves as a healing draught.

These easy-going practitioners might probably cite plenty of instances of the efficacy of their method. Dr John Brown of Edinburgh once gave a labourer a prescription, saying: 'Take that, and come back in a fortnight, when you will be well.' Obedient to the injunction, the patient presented himself at the fortnight's end, with a clean tongue and a happy face. Proud of the fulfilment of his promise, Dr Brown said: 'Let me see what I gave you.' 'Oh,' answered the man, 'I took it, doctor.' 'Yes, I know you did; but where is the prescription?' 'I swallowed it,' was the reply. The patient had made a pill of the paper, and faith in his physician's skill had done the rest. Faith is a rare wonder-worker. Strong in the belief that every Frank is a doctor, an Arab, who had been partially blind from birth, pestered an English traveller into giving him a seidlitz-powder and some pomatum. Next day the chief declared that he could see better than he had done for twenty years.

A sea-captain, when one of his crew craved something for his stomach's good, on consulting his book found 'No. 15' was the thing for the occasion. Unfortunately there had been a run on that number, and the bottle was empty. Not caring to send the man away uncomfited, the skipper, remembering that eight and seven made fifteen, made up a dose from the bottles so numbered, which the seaman took with startling effects, never contemplated by himself or the cribbage-loving captain. That worthy jumped too hastily at conclusions, like the Turkish physician of whom Mr Oscanyan tells the following story. Called in to a case of typhus, the doctor in question examined the patient (an upholsterer), prescribed, and departed. Passing the house the next day, he inquired of a servant at the door if his master was dead, and to his astonishment, heard he was much better. Indoors he went, to learn from the convalescent that being consumed with thirst, he had drunk a pailful of the juice of pickled cabbage. Soon afterwards, a dealer in embroidered handkerchiefs, seized with the same malady, sent for the physician, who forthwith ordered him to take a pailful of pickled-cabbage juice. The man died next day; and the doctor set down this memorandum in his book for future guidance: 'Although in cases of typhus, pickled-cabbage juice is an efficient remedy, it is not, however, to be used unless the patient be by profession an upholsterer.'

Lady Barker's New Zealand shepherd found a somewhat similar potion of infinite use. When his mistress expressed her surprise at his possession of a bottle of Worcestershire sauce, Salter said: 'You see, mum, although we gets our health uncommon well in these salubrious mountings, still a drop of physic is often handy-like; and in a general way I always purchase myself a box of Holloway's Pills—of which you do get such a lot for your money—and also a bottle of Painkiller. But last shearing they was out o' Painkiller, so they put me up a bottle o' cain pepper, and likewise

that 'ere condiment; which was very efficacious, 'specially towards the end o' the bottle. It always took my mind off the loneliness, and cheered me up wonderful, especial if I added a little red pepper to it.'

One of the same lady's Kaffir servants suffering from a bad bilious attack, declined to be treated in a civilised way; and in a very short time reported himself perfectly well, a native doctor having bled his great toe. Still more extraordinary was the remedy concerning which Lady Barker writes: 'Tom had a frightful headache, which is not to be wondered at, considering how that boy smokes the strongest tobacco out of a cow's horn, morning, noon, and night, to say nothing of incessant snuff-taking. The first I heard of Tom's headache was when Charlie came to ask me for a remedy; which I thought very nice on his part, because he and Tom live in a chronic state of quarrelling, and half my time is taken up in keeping the peace between them. I told Charlie that I knew of no remedy for a bad headache except going to bed, and that was what I should advise Tom to do. Charlie smiled rather contemptuously, as if pitying my ignorance, and asked if I would give him a box of wooden matches. Now matches are a standing grievance in a Kaffir establishment; so I, failing to connect wooden matches and Tom's headache together, began a reproachful catalogue of how many boxes of matches he had asked for lately. Charlie hastily cut me short by saying: "But ma'm, it for make Tom well." Of course I produced a new box, and stood by to watch Charlie doctoring Tom. Match after match did Charlie strike, holding the flaming splinter up Tom's exceedingly wide nostrils, until the box was empty. Tom winced a good deal, but bore this singeing process with great fortitude. Every now and then he cried out when Charlie thrust a freshly lighted match up his nose, but on the whole he stood it bravely; and by the time the matches were all burned out, he declared his headache was quite cured, and that he was ready to go and chop wood. "It very good stuff to smell, ma'm," said Charlie; "burn de sickness away."'

Whatever virtue there may be in any of the remedies of which we have written, not one among them all is so sure of effecting its end as this old 'cure for a love-fit':

Tye one end of a rope fast over a beam,
And make a slip-noose at the other extreme;
Then, just underneath, let a wicket be set,
On which let the lover most manfully get.
Then over his head let the snicket be got,
And under one ear be well settled the knot.
The wicket kicked down, let him take a fair
swing,
And leave all the rest of the work to the string!

THE MONTH.

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

THE *Anthracite*, a steam-yacht of seventy tons, has crossed the Atlantic from England to America in eighteen days on a consumption of nineteen tons of coal. This is the smallest steamer that has ever made the voyage under steam; and the satisfactory result is due to a persevering endeavour to construct an engine capable of working with high-pressure steam. There are, as in Colonel