

## **Blood poisons / by Alfred Schofield.**

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# *Health at Home Tracts.*

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BY

ALFRED SCHOFIELD, M.D., M.R.C.S.,  
ETC.

*MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH SOCIETY.*

No. 3.

BLOOD POISONS.

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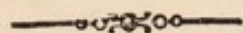
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# HEALTH AT HOME.



No. 3.

## ON BLOOD POISONS.

BY ALFRED T. SCHOFIELD, M.D., M.R.C.S., ETC., MEMBER OF THE  
NATIONAL HEALTH SOCIETY



### GERMS.

THIS tract deals with some sections of an army so dangerous, so numerous, so widely distributed, that it is perpetually attacking with fatal success large numbers of the human race. Till recently these foes were merely matters of speculation; but since the introduction of more powerful microscopes, they have been seen, their shape is known and drawn, and fresh forms are being discovered every day.

The numbers of our tiny foes are perfectly appalling. Every thing on the face of the earth where man is found is covered with germs—our clothes, our houses, our streets, the air, the earth, the water. Below the depth of a yard in the solid earth they are not found, nor above the snow line in lofty mountains, but practically they exist everywhere, and increase at an almost incredible rate per hour. A large majority of them

is absolutely harmless to human beings in health; but though the number of those that are strong enough to attack and overcome a healthy man is comparatively small, the number immensely increases if he gets ill; and if he dies, myriads more attack him, leaving in a short time nothing but a bare skeleton.

Blood poisons are of two kinds—living and dead. The dead are chemical poisons, which being received into or formed in the body, cause various diseases. Before, however, considering either the living germ or the chemical poisons of the blood, we must first of all very briefly see in what way the blood itself moves and reaches in turn every part of the body.

### THE CIRCULATION.

Three different systems of pipes in the body convey the blood to every part; they are called arteries, capillaries, and veins.

Arteries are strongly made elastic tubes or pipes through which the bright red (or arterial) blood flows laden with fresh oxygen and dissolved food towards the different parts of the body. Soon after the main tube leaves the heart, two branches are given off for the head, and two for the arms; and then running downwards, the tube terminates at length in two branches, one for each leg. When an artery arrives near the part it is intended to nourish, it breaks up into a perfectly inextricable maze of hundreds of tiny channels, far smaller than the finest line that can be seen by the naked eye—called capillaries, whose walls are so thin that a brisk exchange takes place between the blood within and the tissues outside; the latter receiving what the blood brings, and returning in place the used-up air or carbonic acid gas and other refuse.

These pass still onward in the blood current, which, however, is now beginning to return in a slower stream to the heart. The capillaries soon reunite in a single tube, not so thick as an artery and called a vein, which conveys the bluish blood back again. These veins are easily seen at the back of the hand, in the wrist, and elsewhere; the arteries can be felt beating deeper down (as in the pulse), but are not necessarily seen. Some of the blood, as from the heart to the feet and back, has a long way to go; but on an average the whole round is accomplished in less than a minute. When it returns to the heart, it arrives at the right side (having started from the left), and from the right side this impure blood is then passed by another system of vessels through the lungs, to be purified with fresh air before being returned to the left side of the heart, and sent out again. The food is mainly added to the blood just before the returning current reaches the heart.

The heart itself is a two-sided pump, both sides acting together, so that the one squeeze or beat sends the blood from the right side into the lungs, and from the left side out into the body.

Understanding then the general principle of the circulation, it will be seen how quickly any substance once introduced is carried over the whole system: and we are now in a position to consider the action of some of the leading poisons both chemical and living. We will take the former first.

#### ALCOHOL.

This is a powerful blood poison, although, like many other poisons, such as opium, &c., it is a most valuable medicine in small quantities. The latest researches in physiology have clearly shown that it has but little

claim to be considered a food in a strict sense. It has a twofold effect on the tissues of the body. On all nerve tissues it has a paralyzing, and on all other tissues an irritating, effect. We are aware that this description is not perhaps quite scientific, but nevertheless it is accurate enough.

The *immediate* effects of the excessive use of alcohol ; the extra beating of the heart, the flushing of the face, the heat and sweating of the skin, the confusion of the mind, and the subsequent loss of consciousness,—all these and many more are due to progressive nervous paralysis. On the other hand, nearly all the *permanent* effects which bring in so many sorts of disease and suffering, and may eventually end in a miserable death, are due to its irritating effects on the different structures of the body. The distinction between its direct and indirect results is important. The poison is carried all over the body by the blood very rapidly after being received into the stomach. One of its properties is that it is a great preservative. Any animal substance placed in spirits of wine is preserved from decomposition. This appears at first sight a good quality, but is really a very bad one for us ; for our bodies are alive, and they do not want preserving as if they were dead, but to be continually rebuilt and renewed, and the old material burnt up. Now alcohol hinders this, and hence the blood becomes darker from the amount of dead material which is preserved instead of being burnt up. The parts that suffer most from its secondary or hardening effects are the digestive organs. Alcohol hardens animal tissue not only on account of its irritating qualities, but on account of its love for water, which it draws out of any damp substance near, thus making this substance so much harder. In this way, after a time, the stomach of a drunkard becomes like a piece of very thick wash-

leather, and loses by degrees nearly all of its digestive powers ; and, if the spirit be taken neat, it may eventually be ulcerated as well. Most serious changes take place also in the liver, which shrinks up until the greater part of its functions is hopelessly destroyed. In this condition death invariably ensues from incurable dropsy. The blood vessels themselves suffer greatly from having to convey this poison about the body. They are all thickened, rendering it more difficult, by giving less room, for the blood to flow, which, in the case of the brain, is especially serious. All excess in alcohol is therefore carefully to be avoided on medical grounds as well as social grounds.

#### GOUT POISON.

The poison that produces gout is urate of soda, which is a substance composed of innumerable very sharp crystals like bits of glass. It is caused by too much rich, sugary, or animal food, such as old port, beef, and general rich living. It also occurs in a wasted and badly nourished state of the body, when it is known as poor man's gout. In these cases, however, the cause is more frequently the amount of beer that is taken. This crystalline substance, then being formed in the body itself, is carried round by the blood, and by it left generally in that part of the body farthest from the heart, namely the great toe. As the blood here gets rid of it and it is poured into the flesh, the pain is of course excessive, the toe gets red and swollen, and an attack of gout comes on. More and more of this urate of soda continues to circulate, and possibly the finger gets affected or some other part of the body. Not only, however, does gout attack the joints, but, like alcohol, these particles have an extremely irritating effect, and

thicken the walls of all the tubes themselves very much, so that it is now much more difficult for the heart to pump the blood through. This strains the heart and injures it. The lungs too get their share of this poison, and the breath often gets short and difficult.

There can, I think, be no doubt that if less beer or wine were drunk and less beef eaten, that gout would soon become a rare disease; although, as it is strongly hereditary, it would take a generation or two to get it out of the blood altogether. Once an attack occurs, it is very apt to recur, and is eventually the cause of incurable disease. Like most real blood poisons, it affects more or less every organ of the body.

### RHEUMATISM.

The poison in this dread disease is supposed to be lactic acid, but we are by no means so sure of this as we are of the poison of gout. Anyhow, animals fed with lactic acid get rheumatism, so that this poison will produce it.

This acid is largely formed by imperfect digestion; but in order that the disease may be developed, it seems necessary there should be exposure to damp and cold as well. Damp produces it even more than cold. We call it a dread disease, because when it attacks the young, as it so often does, it very frequently flies to the heart, and by forming deposits upon the edges of the beautifully made valves, prevents them from closing properly ever afterwards. The result is as follows: The heart propels at every beat say four table-spoonfuls of blood. Now if one of these leaks back again because the valve does not shut close, it is evident, to get the right amount of blood properly round the body, the heart must beat more frequently or send more at a

time. Owing to the beautiful principle of compensation in nature, this accident, which would at once otherwise lead to fatal results, is met in this very way. The heart does get both larger and stronger, and a person with heart-disease of this nature may thus live on to his full term ; but he will never be perfectly strong.

It is therefore a dread disease, because it is a disease of youth, and as a rule the results are life-long. Besides its effects on the heart, it of course attacks the limbs ; differing from gout, however, in showing a preference for the larger joints of the body, such as the knee. As in gout, there is intense pain, and general fever occurs all over the body, with profuse sweats, by which it is believed that nature is endeavouring to get rid of the poison through the skin. Every joint of the body may in turn be attacked by rheumatism, for here again it differs from gout, in moving from one part to another, instead of keeping generally to the one spot. The older a person is when he has the first attack of rheumatism, the less danger is there of heart disease. One bad feature of rheumatic fever is that it tends to return again and again, and each time weakens the person more and more.

So far we have only spoken of one sort of rheumatism—rheumatic fever, but there are many other sorts scarcely less formidable.

#### RHEUMATIC GOUT, &c.

There is rheumatic gout, which, instead of attacking a joint and leaving it at the close just as it was before, deforms it more or less, producing curious thickenings of the finger joints and elsewhere, and in the end making the joint quite stiff, and creaking like a new boot. Then again there is simple chronic rheumatism, constant weary pain in some joint or joints, or in the

bones of the body, often worse at night in bed than in the daytime. Then there is muscular rheumatism, that does not touch the joints or bones at all, but lays hold of the muscles, especially those of the back, when it is called lumbago.

The great feature of all sorts of rheumatism is the pain attaching to it. Fortunately an antidote to this poison is now found, and one that can speedily relieve the pain, though as yet no way has been discovered of preventing the disease from reaching the heart, where its ravages are generally painless, and hence all the more dangerous ; for pain is one of our greatest safeguards, calling our attention to any injury that is being inflicted on us.

#### RICKETTS.

Rickets is also believed by most to be due to a poison circulating in the blood of children through an excess of starchy or floury food, and a deficiency of animal diet.

We must remember we are born flesh-eaters and not vegetarians. Milk is an animal and not a vegetable food, and contains a great quantity of nitrogen, that material which mainly builds up the growing body ; hence children need, strictly speaking, more animal food than adults, only not necessarily in the form of meat.

If a child when weaned is kept too exclusively on flour and babies' foods of different sorts, and does not continue to take a large amount of milk in the day, or to supplement it with porridge, beef-tea, or broth, and later on with pounded meat, it is likely to develop rickets, which can be recognised by some of the following signs. The child's wrists and ankles will be much thickened, as if there were bracelets round them

beneath the skin. This is caused by the irritation produced at the growing ends of the bone. A row of knobs may be felt down each side of the breast-bone in front, from the same cause. The head will be found to perspire profusely at night, and the child will probably kick the clothes off. As the disease goes on, a little cold in the chest may be developed; and the bones being soft, the legs will bend and the child become bow-legged or knock-kneed, and perhaps walk on the side of the foot. The ribs may bulge outwards and the child becomes pigeon-breasted, and its forehead will be square. This disease is common, through mistaken feeding, amongst both rich and poor; and the best cure, in addition to the needed medicine, is a properly varied animal diet, with plenty of milk and oatmeal as well; and in addition salt water baths, to harden the soft limbs; and very likely the child will be required to be kept off its feet altogether for a while to let the bones straighten. This disease is all the more serious, as the deformities it produces are permanent and likely to produce, especially in women, serious difficulties and dangers in after life.

### SKIN ERUPTIONS.

There is a large number of obscure poisons, the nature of which we do not as yet exactly know, that circulate in the blood and produce a great variety of skin eruptions. One of the most familiar is also one of the most harmless—nettle rash. This arises commonly from some poison that resides in shell-fish or decomposing food entering into the blood. The curiously figured eruption that results is doubtless an effort on the part of the body to throw off the poison by the quickest channel. Many skin eruptions, indeed, are the result of parasites, and not of internal poisons at all.

Whenever, however, the whole body is covered, or when it occurs symmetrically as on both arms and legs, and in the same places, we may be pretty sure it arises from some blood poison.

### INFECTIOUS FEVERS.

The various infectious fevers, scarlet fever, measles, small-pox, chicken-pox, typhus fever and typhoid fever, afford good illustrations of blood poisons. This class of disease is so important, and it is so necessary that all should understand how to deal with its infectious character, that we will specially consider it.

Those fevers are most dangerous which are accompanied by any skin eruption, because they are as a rule most "catching," that is, something—"the germs of the disease"—passes from the diseased person to those around. This is what is meant by the infection spreading.

The greatest natural preventives against infection, those that destroy the disease germs the most readily, are: Fresh Air, Water, Heat. Close air and all dirt favour the disease. Hence in every case of fever keep yourself very clean; have the windows open, and see that all food and drink are clean and served in clean vessels, and let no milk or water for drinking stand in the sick room. These are general precautions to avoid the disease, but to prevent its spreading the following special rules should be attended to:—

Separate the sick person from all others the moment you suspect the disease to be infectious; and, if possible, place him in a room at the top of the house, and as far from the rest as possible.

Take out of the room all curtains, carpets, bed-hangings, and all unnecessary furniture, leaving it quite bare; for all these things will receive and retain the germs of the disease perhaps for years.

Let the fresh air freely into the room. Keep the window frequently open, and light a fire to make a draught up the chimney and burn up the foul air. If it is very cold and there is too much draught, have a window board about six inches broad fixed to fit the lower window-frame so that the window shuts down on it and can never be closed further. A constant current of air then enters the room between the two sashes.

Outside the door a sheet kept constantly wet with carbolic acid solution (one part to fifty of water) must be hung so that no draught laden with the germs can pass into the house from the room.

Only one person should take care of the sick person. She should wear a cotton dress, which should be slipped off at the door whenever she leaves the room, which should be once a day only for a period of two hours.

All discharges from the sick should be received into vessels containing diluted carbolic acid or some other disinfectant.

Permanganate of potash costs sixpence an ounce, and is a good disinfectant, but stains all linen. It is used in the quantity of one tea-spoonful of the powder to two gallons of water. Carbolic acid is stronger. It does not stain when diluted (1 in 50), but has a disagreeable smell.

Sanitas is a pleasant disinfectant, having an agreeable smell, but is not quite so strong as carbolic acid. Of these three, carbolic acid is the most generally useful for all purposes.

Soft linen rags should be used, and then burnt, instead of ordinary handkerchiefs.

No food from the sick room must be eaten by any one else, and all crockery, &c., used in the sick room must be put in a vessel with diluted carbolic acid, and pushed outside the door.

All the clothing and bed-clothes sent to the wash from the sick room must first be soaked in carbolic solution.

After the person is well, application must be made to the Sanitary Authorities at the Vestry or Town Hall, to properly disinfect the room with the fumes of burning sulphur.

### SCARLET FEVER, ETC.

SCARLET FEVER is one of the most catching of all fevers, and in its case all the above directions must be most faithfully carried out. The signs are a sore throat, a fever, and a rash on the chest, of small red points close together.

If you cannot give the person a separate room, and all the above care, he had far better go away to the hospital than infect all the rest of the house and neighbours. The disease is very infectious after the rash has gone, for a period of three or four weeks, or even more, when the old skin is peeling off. During this time the person should be well rubbed all over with carbolic oil. A person who has had scarlet fever is not safe to mix with other people sooner than from six weeks to two months.

SMALL-POX is very fatal, but thanks to continued vaccination, is now quite a rare disease. The person feels a pain in the back, and spots appear on the face and arms like small shot. All people in the house should be vaccinated immediately, and the person should be at once removed to the Small-Pox Hospital, if there is one; if not, nursed as directed in a separate room and with every precaution.

TYPHOID FEVER is an infectious disease of quite another character. The disease is not carried directly from the person; all the germs pass away in the discharges, which are highly infectious. The great point in this

disease therefore is to have them thoroughly disinfected before leaving the room, and to be sure that all milk and water is boiled before use; for curiously enough this disease is generally received through food or drink. All W.C.'s and drains should be washed down with carbolic solution or chloride of lime. There is not here the same need for personal isolation, but the greatest possible need for the perfect disinfection of all articles used in any way by the sick person.

TYPHUS FEVER is like scarlet fever, and requires the same precautions. It is highly infectious. The eruption is in purple blotches, and the person is generally more or less delirious.

A person infected with measles is not generally, but should be isolated like those we have named. It is most infectious before the rash appears at all, and hence the infection has generally already spread to some extent before the disease is recognised. After the rash goes, the disease is not nearly so infectious as scarlet fever.

CHICKEN-POX is a trivial disease as a rule, save for the danger of marking the face if the eruption is very deep.

GERMAN MEASLES is usually a slight complaint.

### CHOLERA, DIPHTHERIA, &c.

There are, however, other serious infectious diseases without a marked skin eruption, such as cholera, diphtheria and whooping-cough.

CHOLERA is frequently conveyed by water or milk. If at all prevalent, both should be boiled, and the greatest cleanliness in person and home should be observed most scrupulously.

Beware of bad drains, of bad fish, fruit, or vegetables. Anything that sets up even simple diarrhoea at such

times is to be dreaded, and a doctor should be seen at once.

DIPHTHERIA is a dangerous, disease; here the poison germs fasten on the throat. The person should be isolated as directed in fever and the doctor at once sent for.

In all infectious cases the neglect of any practicable precaution to prevent the spread of the disease, the paying of needless visits to the patients, is morally wrong and worthy of severe condemnation.

We cannot enter into further details here about this interesting and important subject; nor need we say much about remedies, for we think this is the doctor's province.

#### ONE POISON MORE.

We may, however, before closing, say just a few words about a more fearful poison still.

Just as widely spread in the souls as germs are in the bodies of our poor human race is the terrible, insidious disease of sin; recognised plainly enough in its defilement and destruction of the human soul, but nevertheless still denied by some because invisible. It dooms its victims, if not delivered from its power, to a never-ending banishment from God and His heaven; and its ravages are absolutely universal, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The great point is first of all to recognise its existence, and then when we know and feel that we suffer from the complaint, not to rest until we have seen that the Great Physician can without doubt do everything for us. Let each reader of this tract consider this disease so much more terrible than all the rest. It needs but little self-examination to see how deeply we are infected. A person who is wounded does not deny the wound because

so much of his body is still sound and untouched ; nor is it rational for us as sinners to deny our sins because in many things, it may be, we are truthful, because in many respects we are kind. It is far better, far wiser, to fix our mind upon the springs of our being, and see whether it is or is not true that *I* “ have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

### ITS CURE.

Observe it is not a question whether we have sinned as much as others, but whether we have sinned and have come short of God’s standard of perfect holiness and purity.

*We know we have*, and it does not excuse us to feel that this is equally true of others.

It is a poor and malign pleasure if we are dying in hospital of some fatal disease to find a satisfaction in the number of other victims around. Better far concentrate our thoughts on our own case, and seek the good Physician while He can be found ; and then when He has cured us, we can, both by our wish and His, spread His fame amongst our fellow-sufferers, and persuade them to try the same remedy, showing ourselves as examples ; and thus, instead of dying together, we and our fellow-sufferers may live together.

His great remedy is freely given, and it is absolutely certain to cure every variety of spiritual disease, for the blood of Jesus Christ God’s Son cleanseth from all sin. It can cleanse yours and mine, though they may be widely different in detail. We have not even to go and fetch this medicine ; here in God’s own words are the full directions concerning it :—

“ Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven ? (that is, to bring Christ down from above). Or who

shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is the word of faith, which we preach,

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead—

THOU SHALT BE SAVED.”<sup>1</sup>

Take this remedy then, dear reader, and be cured of all disease of sin; and then when you know that your own sickness is healed by the blood of Christ, go and tell others the good story, how Christ Jesus made you whole.

“Physician of my sin-sick soul,  
To Thee I bring my case;  
My raging malady control,  
And heal me by Thy grace.

Pity the anguish I endure,  
See how I mourn and pine;  
For never can I hope a cure  
From any hand but Thine.

I would disclose my whole complaint,  
But where shall I begin?  
No words of mine can fully paint  
That worst distemper, sin.

It lies not in a single part,  
But through my frame is spread;  
A burning fever in my heart,  
A palsy in my head.

Lord, I am sick, regard my cry,  
And set my spirit free:  
Say, canst Thou let a sinner die,  
Who longs to live to Thee?”

<sup>1</sup> Romans x. 6-9.

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78 Molly's Prayer.....	1	3		122 Do you believe that book			
79 Into the Light.....	1	3		you have been reading?	2	6	
80 Righteousness of Faith...	3	0		123 Fresh Air and Exercise	1	3	
81 From the Cradle.....	3	0		124 The Inscription over the			
82 Salvation through a Me-				Porch .....	1	3	
diator .....	5	0		125 Not I, but Christ. A New			
83 "Do as Thou Hast Said" .....	4	6		Year's Motto .....	1	3	
84 No Fear about that .....	1	3		126 Perfect Peace; or, Four			
85 Afterwards .....	2	0		Years of Work for the			
86 Kitty Waite .....	0	6		Master .....	3	6	
87 Jesus the True Messiah	3	6		127 Chalk and Lime; or, the			
88 Work of the Holy Spirit	4	6		Benefits of the Furnace	1	3	
89 Your Great Concern.....	3	0		128 The Story of a Tract.....	1	3	
90 Will He say me Nay? ...	1	3		129 Alice Brooke .....	1	3	
91 Two Lives .....	3	6		130 Value of a Winter's			
92 "It will be Good for				Evening.....	2	0	
You .....	1	3		131 Love in the Home .....	1	3	
93 Step by Step: or, Life's				132 The Parson's Little			
Walk .....	3	6		Daughter .....	1	3	
94 Restlessness .....	2	6		133 A Lost Sheep of the			
95 Only a Word .....	1	3		House of Israel Re-			
97 Take up and Read .....	1	3		covered .....	5	0	
98 The Massacre of St. Bar-				134 The Beautiful Hand .....	1	3	
tholomew's Eve .....	4	6		135 Only Trust Him .....	1	3	
99 Right to the Mark .....	1	3		136 Letter from the Duchess			
100 The Lost Screw .....	1	3		de Broglie to Auguste			
101 Man's Right to God's				von Schlegel.....	2	6	
Rest .....	4	0		137 The Negro Servant .....	6	0	
102 The Face to the Rock ...	2	6		138 A Living Dog better than			
103 A Torn Letter .....	1	3		a Dead Lion .....	1	3	
104 If You Trust in Jesus ...	2	0		139 Why I am a Christian ...	2	0	
105 Henry Bazeley .....	6	6		140 How Prayer is Answered	1	3	
106 Only Now and Then.....	1	3		141 Fast Bind, fast Find .....	1	3	
107 "Costa Hundred Pounds"	1	3		142 The Rejected King.....	1	3	
108 How Much Owest				143 The Guiding Star .....	1	3	
Thou? .....	2	0		144 Fisherman and his Fly	1	3	
109 Substitution of Judah ...	2	6		145 All I Need; or, the Chris-			
110 Reading Christians .....	1	3		tian's Confidence .....	1	3	
111 The Widening of the				146 Go Home and Think ...	1	3	
Strait Gate .....	5	0		147 Taking ourselves to Task	3	0	
112 See the Conqueror Mounts				148 What Things? .....	1	3	
in Triumph .....	2	0		149 Was He Happy? .....	1	3	
113 Comfort for the Bereaved				150 Anne Scott .....	3	6	
Christian .....	1	3		151 "I Won't Touch a Penny			
114 The Lord's Table .....	2	0		of it." .....	1	3	
115 The Great Teacher .....	2	6		152 Montague Stanley .....	5	6	
116 Tears .....	2	6		153 Watch unto Prayer .....	2	0	
117 A Corner of the Battle-				154 I Have Found the Living			
field. By Rev. G. EVERARD	1	3		Christ .....	1	3	
118 The Ages to Come.....	2	0		155 The Book Found in the			
119 Furnished for Duty. For				Wall.....	1	3	
Policemen .....	1	3		156 The Sabbath was made			
				for man.....	2	6	
				157 The Abiding Presence...	3	6	