[On the Measles]

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Publication Format
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Type
Medicine

Symptoms
fits
loss of appetite
white tongue
cough
heavy head
drowsiness
running nose
swollen eyelids
blindness
vomiting
looseness
green stools
itchiness
bleeding nose
spots
sweating
urination
delirium

Ingredients
licorice
marshmallow root
sarsaparilla
linseed
elder flowers
milk
whey-barley water
honey
chamomile tea
mana
spermacetti
sugar candy

oil of sweet almonds
wine
cordial
spirits of vitriol
Jesuits' bark
syrup of poppies
rhubarb
buttermilk whey
asses milk

Places
Nova Scotia

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Description

Considers causes, symptoms, the regimen, and the medicine for the measles. Vol. 13, No. 893. Microfilm Reel 8156.

Transcription

As the MEASLES are now in Town, and probably may in time spread into the country where people in general are ignorant of the Nature of that Disease and Method of Cure, the publication of the following Dissertation, it is hoped may be of public benefit.

On the MEASLES.

THE Measles appeared about the same time with the Small Pox, and are nearly related to that disease. They both came from the east, are both infections and seldom attack people more than once. The disease, itself, when properly managed, is seldom dangerous, but its consequences are often fatal.

CAUSE--This disease, like the Small pox, proceeds from infection, and is more or less dangerous, according to the constitution of the patient, the season of the year, the climate, &c.

SYMPTOMS.--The Measles, like other fevers, are

preceded by alternate fits of heat and cold, sickness and loss of appetite. The tongue is white, but generally moist. There is a short cough, a heaviness of the head and eyes, drowsiness, and running of the nose. Sometimes, indeed, the cough does not come before the eruption. The eye lids frequently swell so as to occasion blindness. The patient generally complains of his throat; and vomiting or looseness often precedes the eruption. The stools in children are commonly greenish; they complain of an itching of the skin, and are remarkably peevish. Bleeding at the nose is common, both before and in the process of the disease.

About the fourth day, small spots, resembling flea-bites appear first upon the face, then upon the breast, and afterwards on the extremities: These may be distinguished from the Small-pox, by their scarcely rising above the skin. The fever, Cough, and difficulty of breathing, instead of being removed by the eruption, as in the Small-pox, are increased, but the vomiting generally ceases.

About the sixth day, the Measles generally grow dry on the face, and afterwards upon the body, so that by the ninth day they entirely disappear. The fever, however, and difficulty of breathing, often continue, especially if the patient has been kept upon too hot a regim. Petechiae or purple spots, may likewise be occasioned by this error. A violent looseness sometimes succeeds the Measles, in which case the patient’s life is in imminent danger.

Such a die of the Measles generally expire about the ninth day, and are evidently carried off by an inflammation of the lungs.

The most favourable symptoms are a moderate looseness, gentle sweats, and a plentiful discharge of urine.

When the eruption suddenly falls in, and the patient is seized with a delirium, he is in the greatest danger. If the Measles turn of a pale colour, it is an unfavourable symptom, as are also, great weakness, vomiting, restlessness, and difficulty of swallowing. Purple, or black spots appearing among the Measles, are very unfavorable. When a continual cough, with hoarseness, succeeds the disease, there is reason to suspect a consumption of the lungs.

Our business in this disease is to assist nature, if her efforts be too languid, in throwing out the morbid matter, by proper cordials; but when they are too violent, they must be restrained, by evacuations, and cool diluting liquors, &c. We ought, likewise, to endeavour to appease the most urgent symptoms, as the cough, restlessness and difficulty of breathing.

REGIMEN--The regimen in this disease should be of

the same kind with that recommended in the small-pox, viz. cooling and diluting. Acids however, do nor answer to well here as in the small-pox, as they tend to exasperate the cough. Small beers, likewise, though a good drink in the small-pox, is here improper. The most suitable liquors are decoctions of liquorice, with marsh-mallow roots, and sarsaparilla, infusions of linseed, or of the flowers of elder with milk, clarified whey-barley water or such like. These, if the belly be bound may be sweetened with honey; or, if that should disagree with the Stomach, a little mana may occasionally be added to them.

MEDICINE--The measles an inflamatory disease, without any critical discharge or matter, as in the small pox, bleeding is commonly necessary, specially when the fever runs high, with difficulty of breathing, and great oppression of the breath. But if the disease be of a mild kind, bleeding may be omitted.

Bathing the feet and legs in lukewarm water, both tends to abate the violence of the fever, and to promote the

eruption.

The patient is often greatly relieved by a vomiting. When there is a tendency this way, it ought not to be stopped, but encouraged, by drinking lukewarm water, or weak camomile tea.

When the cough is very troublesome, with dryness of the of [sic] throat and difficulty of breathing it will greatly re-

lieve the patient, if he holds his head over the steam of warm water, and draws the syrup into his lungs. He

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may likewise lick spermaceii and sugar-candy pounded together; or take now and then a spoonful of the oil of sweet-almonds, with sugar-candy dissolved in it; these will soften the throat, and relieve the tickling cough.

In case the Measles should suddenly disappear, the patient must be supported with wine and cordials. Blistering plaisters must be applied to the extremities, and the body rubbed all over with flannels. Warm poulties may likewise be applied to the feet and palms of the hands. When purple or black spots appear, the patient’s drink should be sharpned with spirits of vitriol; and, if the putrid symptoms run high, the Jesuits bark must be administered in the same manner as directed in the Small-pox.

Opiates are sometimes necessary, but should never be given except in case of extreme restlessness, a violent loose-

ness, or when the cough is very troublesome. For children the syrup of popies is sufficient. A tea spoonful or two may be occasionally given according to the patient's age, or violence of the symptoms.

After the Measles are gone off, purging is absolutely necessary.

If a violent looseness succeeds the Measles, it may be checked by taking, for some days, a gentle dose of rhubarb in the morning, and an opiate over night; but if these do not remove it, bleeding will seldom fail to have that effect.

Patients recovering after the Measles, should be very careful what they eat or drink. Their food for some time should be light, and in small quantities, and their drink diluting, and rather of an opening nature, as butter-milk, whey, and such like. They are also to beware of exposing themselves to the cold air, left a suffocating catarrh an ashma, or a consumption should ensue.

Should a cough, with difficulty of breathing, and other symptoms of a consumption remain after the Measles, we would recommend small quantities of blood to be frequently let at proper intervals, at the patient's strength and constitution will bear. He ought, likewise, drink asses milk, to remove to a free air, if necessary, and to ride daily on horseback. He must keep close to a diet, consisting of milk and vegitables; and, lastly, if these do not succeed, let him remove to a warmer climate.

Annotations

mana

This is probably manna, defined in one instance by the OED, as "A dried, sweet exudate or gum produced by various plants when cut, damaged, or punctured."

spermaceii

This seems likely to be spermacetti, which is according to the OED, "A fatty substance [...] found in the head (and to some extent in other parts) of the sperm-whale [...] and some other whales and dolphins; it is used largely in various medicinal preparations, and in the manufacture of candles."

Jesuits bark

The OED defines Jesuits' bark (n): "the medicinal bark of species of Cinchona, Peruvian bark (introduced into Europe from the Jesuit Missions in S. America)."

On the Measles recipe from Early Modern Maritime Recipes: https://emmr.lib.unb.ca/recipes/54