

The BULLETIN

OXFORD, NEW JERSEY

PUBLISHED

By

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Pastor

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



Oxford Historical Record

(from back cover)

The most repugnant treatment I can recall was termed "Giving him a good sweat." It was usually given when temperature was indicated, with sore throat, 'splitting' headache, and the patient weak, sore all over and chilly. A cane seated chair with large openings was placed in the center of the kitchen floor, and under it on the floor a saucer of alcohol. In front of the chair was a pail of scalding hot water to which salt or soda was added. Draped around the chair were several blankets. A dose of castor oil having been given, the victim already exhausted, and wearing an old-fashioned night gown, was led in. When seated the skirt of the night-gown was modestly raised at the back so that the flesh of the victim contacted the cane seat with no other surface intervening. Still another blanket was thrown about him and he was directed to place his feet in the hot water in front of him. "It's too hot I can't" exclaims the patient. "But you must". As father or mother take hold of his feet and give them a quick plunge when a howl went up from the patient. "But you must be a good boy--do you want to be sick? It's cooler now and it won't do any good if it isn't hot."

Next through an opening in the blanket at the rear, the alcohol in the saucer was lighted and the blanket closed, leaving only a small opening for the operator to watch that clothing did not catch fire.

Then the heat began to rise, hotter and hotter; and squirming and yelling did no good, for the patient just had to stick.

On the side lines were gathered the other members of the family, some snickering and others looking sadly at their poor brother. The patient was next rolled up in thick blankets given a big bowl of hot ginger tea or lemonade and put to bed. And what of the night? Well, we were never very boastful about that.

But this is not the only Medicine Chest. Come on Sam and Frank, Clin and Court, Florence, Lizzie, Rosalie, Mary and Amanda; tell us how you were "done good," or something a lot more interesting.

Bulletin No. 499. February 4th, 1940

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.....

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong. Let all your things be done in charity.

I Corin. 15:58-16:13

"O God, who hast commanded us to be perfect, as Thou our Father in heaven art perfect; put into our hearts a continual desire to obey Thy holy will. Teach us day by day what Thou wouldst have us do, and give us grace and power to fulfil the same. May we never, from love of ease, decline the path which Thou hast pointed out, nor, for fear of shame, turn away from it. Amen."

We may as well give all of this issue over to Mr. Perkins, who enclosed this note: "I am of the opinion that Clin is the liveliest, most ambitious colt in the herd, scampering about as he does, handing out jobs to every body. Why that man could easily kill a depression and put a whole army of unemployed to work. I hope the readers will take seriously Clin's suggestion. What a joy it would be to have a lot of contributors--not meaning all of them long like most of mine, but a flock of short newsie items, or reminiscences. I always look for these. I enjoyed immensely having Geo. Weber tell us how he 'got plastered' down in Birmingham. Yes, the bulletin is the most human piece of literature that comes into my home. I hope it may be kept so."

The agitation for more contributors to the Bulletin is having its effect, as we have more articles on hand now than at any other time.

But not enough short items of a personal interest. Perhaps Mr. Weston's plan may not be worked out but it will stir up many, we hope, to write notes or letters which will enrich and vary the contents of each issue.

## Home Remedies---Reminiscences

By Edwin E. Perkins

Thoroughwort Syrup for Spring Tonic  
Catnip Tea for Colic.  
Sage Tea for Colds.  
Tansy Tea for the stomach.  
Rhubard Root for "Costiveness".  
Boneset Tea for rheumatism.  
Burdock leaves for swellings.  
Composition Tea. (Grandma Lukens' cure for colds.

It seems a far cry back to the day of mustard plasters, hot hop bags, and sassafras tea. Yet with with but a few steps we are brought face to face with all these. For they were a part of the medical care under which we, as young people, grew through sickness to health. For with no telephone or automobiles for quick communication, and with the family physician covering a wide area in his practice, it became necessary for some member of every household, or nearby neighbor, to become familiar with these simple remedies provided by nature; and so gain skill in caring for the sick. And as these early Oxford people gathered, family by family, from many parts and some from foreign shores, they brought with them these home treatments on which they had grown to rely.

Another large group came from Massachusetts, in and about Plymouth Colony, and were descended from the old Revolutionary stock. They were quite familiar with the last remnants of the Massasoit, Asawampset, and King Philip tribes of Indians, who were peaceful, and communicative and it is quite possible that from this source came many of the home remedies used by them. The happy thought, if any, about some of these rigorous treatments is that "we all" survived, while the Indians perished.

Some of these herbs were raised in the family garden and others were gathered from the fields and woods, while probably many were bought at "Jim" Allen's drug store. And here hangs a tale or two. In those days the drug store seemed a long way off being located up beyond the Ohas. Scranton residence--a dark walk late at night. The only display in the two front windows was of two huge glass globes, filled with a red and a gold liquid. How cold and lonesome

they looked. The limited supply of confectionary carried in this store consisted of those barrel shaped small black licorice drops (so good for the throat) peppermint lozenges (so hot one could eat but few of them licorice root (to chew and imagine it was good), and rock candy with a string through the middle. The chewing gum was plain paraffinesweet and molded and sold for a penny a stick.

How maddening to think that we missed out on 'Beeches', 'Spearmint' and 'Dentine'; and never got a whiff of 'Mounds' 'Hersey Bars' and 'Oh Henry'. Not to mention 'Lolly Pops' or 'All Day Sucker'. Can you imagine what any one of these would have meant to a boy whose indulgences were so limited? The amusing thing about all this is that today we are so filled with complexes and inhibitions that we fail to find the coveted pleasure in them. But I have digressed.

Here follow my personal reminiscences of Home Treatments.

In the old days every family in Oxford had a vegetable garden; and many a headache and back ache they gave us boys. When the young pea vines had reached a height to need support birch or alder brush were used. One Saturday afternoon my father, my brother Harry and I, and Clin Weston and his father, started for the woods up back of the old railroad bed to cut pea brush. We boys, feeling rather frisky at being allowed to go, began playing tag, dodging in and out around our respective fathers legs. A sudden out cry from my brother Harry revealed, on examination, a long gaping cut on the top of his head made by the sharp edge of a hatchet carried by my father in his side pocket for cutting the brush.

We all hurried back to our house, where my father made ready an ordinary sewing kneedle, threaded with a white silk thread, which was dropped into a pan of boiling water. When properly sterilized the thread was drawn through a piece of beeswax and my father then proceeded to sew up the wound amidst squirming and outcries of "Ouch, it hurts". It require about six stitches to sew up the wound. This task done, we boys somewhat subdued, all proceeded to the woods for the pea brush.

(over)

For the beginning of a cold bulk quinine, bought by the ounce at Jim Allen's drug store, was administered on a spoon, with a little water and sugar on the side and afterwards a suck or two of lemon to kill the bitterness. Before going to bed a dose of castor oil was administered and a few coffee beans given to chew to kill the taste. A worse combination I have never tasted and half a century of thinking about it has not changed my mind.

One afternoon after school our group had been in the chapel for the final rehearsal of a concert and play to be given in the Brick School house assembly room the following night.

After rehearsal we tarried in the church yard for a game of kick-the-stick. Joe Scranton was "it", and swinging the club with his left hand while I, standing too near, as he swung with great force the end of the club swept across my right cheek just below my eye. I was rushed home by the fellows, my father summoned from the Nail factory, where the rumor spread that "Eddie Perkins had eye knocked out." Great excitement as my father and several friends accompanied him home.

Well, my father proceeded as he had with Harry's cut on the head, operating on my eye and cheek, taking about eight stitches; and I wear the scar to this day.

The concert and play came the next night, and I was to take the part of a North American Indian Chief.

Believe or not, when I appeared on the stage dressed as an Indian Chief with all the make-up, added to which was my right eye entirely closed, a cheek badly swollen and the whole surface black and blue, the audience never heard "Big Injun Chief" speak at all on account of the noise and laughter at my expense. I don't think I minded it much then. I must have laughed too, and I can still hear Mrs. Wm. Scranton, who directed the play, Mr. Lukens, Ben. Walton and many others in various tones and pitches--getting their money's worth.

I used to admire the red flannel shirts worn by the puddlers and other workers in the Rolling Mill. After much coaxing I persuaded my mother to buy me one. I wore it for several days. The weather came off

and I, being rather energetic, perspired freely. When I removed the shirt that night the trunk of my body was completely covered with red dye.

Two Saturday night baths and a lot of additional scrubbing took most of it off, the rest just evaporated.

The folks in those days also believed in preventive treatments. As a preventive for scarlet fever, small pox, diphtheria etc., a cute little cloth sack was made, into which was placed gum camphor and assafoetida.

To this was attached a string and the whole thing hung around our neck, the sack dangling on our chests.

After a vigorous snow ball fight with heat and moisture generated, to be required to go into a hot school room and stoop over a desk to work, again, believe it or not, the blast from our bosoms was deadly. Where cases of disease were known to exist we were instructed to make a wide detour in passing these houses.

When pneumonia was threatened a yoke or shield of flannel (my old red shirt made several) and covered with oil silk, and the chest was saturated with Arabian Balsam (a standard household remedy for many things, then the patient was put to bed. If a temperature was indicated the patient was dosed with nitre at short intervals.

For a so called bilious attack, two big "Compound Cathartic pills" were administered before going to bed. The next day was a miserably, headachey one. When night came and my father came home, he'd look me over and say, "I'll fix that headache Ted." Taking a small quantity of tobacco and placing it on top of the kitchen stove where it would toast and dry out, he would then roll it as fine as powder. Passing me a small quantity of it he would tell me to "snuff it up my nose." I did. Violent sneezing, and my terrible headache vanished. Did I think my father was wonderful, and was I grateful?

After a course of buckwheat cakes and fresh pork partaken of for breakfast for many weeks, as February approached, a rash often appeared on our faces and bodies. This was a sign that our blood was bad. Out came the sulphur powder and molasses mixed in about equal parts, a table spoon full to be taken each second day for month. (to front cover)



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