

bil - low, The co - sy woods, the com - ing morn, The rose, the tas - sell'd wil - low.

I yield thee to them for the night, With lit - tle care or

sor - row, But mind thee, sweet lips with the light My claim is on the mor - row.

TONIC REMEDIES, AND HOW TO BENEFIT BY THEM.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.



PROBABLY no class of medicines in the Pharmacopœia is more liable to abuse at the hands of the uninitiated, than the remedies called tonics. "Every man his own doctor" is a most dangerous motto as far as they are concerned. On the other hand, when judiciously prescribed and administered, we have no more valuable or reliable curative agent than a well-selected

tonic, in cases where we wish to re-invigorate a relaxed system, brace and strengthen the nerves, and restore tone to the secreting organs.

I will even claim a higher virtue than this for well-chosen tonic medicines. Under their use the mind becomes more cheerful, however desponding it might have been previously, and much more vigorous, and there is at the same time an increased aptitude for exertion and work; actions which were previously performed listlessly, not to say painfully, now giving far more of pleasure than of pain.

I am sorry to say however that, from all I see and hear in my daily walks of life, tonics are most incautiously used by people in general, and in thousands of cases are productive of very serious injury to the system. You see it is a popular fallacy—and a dangerous and wide-spread one too—that this class of remedies is not only quite harmless in itself, but that the taking of a tonic for some little time is certain to be followed by re-invigoration of the whole system. But I beg to assure the reader that Mr. Tonic, mild and angelic and all as he may seem, can behave like a very fiend if he be improperly tampered with.

Most intelligent men now-a-days have some slight knowledge of medicine as an art. I am very pleased to be able to say as much, though I am sorry to add that most men are more given to the study of individual remedies than to therapeutics. To give you an example:—I met a friend of mine the other day during one of my rambles. He was “doing a constitutional,” as he termed it; a six-horse constitutional a Yankee would have called it, so fast was he walking. He wanted, he told me—and I assure you he seemed a little proud to air his medical knowledge—to give his liver a lift. “I want to stir up my secretions a bit, don’t ye see, doctor. I know perfectly well what is the matter. It is entirely *hepatitis*, accompanied, of course, with slight cerebral congestion. Brain always sympathises, don’t it, doctor? And I want a tonic, something to pick me up sharp, you know—quinine, nux vomica, nitro-muriatic acid, and all that sort of thing.” I was amused.

“Yes,” was my reply. “You have been going in for a little mild dissipation during the festive season, and this is the result. What sort of a tongue do you carry? Thought so. The secretions you talk of are entirely depraved, there is extreme irritability of the mucous coat of the digestive canal, and under these conditions you want me to prescribe you tonics instanter. Not so fast, friend F——. We don’t put new wine into old bottles in that higgledy-piggledy kind of fashion. But we’ll do it like this: we’ll first and foremost correct your system a bit; when that is in tolerable working order and your tongue clean, and weakness only remaining, we’ll see if we can’t restore you to your former self.”

Now, if you asked me what a tonic really was, I should reply that it was a medicine somewhat akin to a stimulant in that it rouses the powers of life to increased action, but its action is much slower, and it is not followed by reaction or collapse.

But if there be anything of a stimulating nature about tonics—and undoubtedly there is—it follows that a certain degree of depression would be the sequence to a course of such remedies; but inasmuch as we usually prescribe them in debility and relaxation, or want of tone of the body, we get the full benefit of them and avoid the collapse. first, by giving them in small doses extending over a period of weeks or months, and, taking advantage of the increase of appetite they produce, by restoring the weakened frame by the exhibition of good, nutritious, non-irri-

tating food; and secondly, by combining their use with a sufficiency of open-air exercise, and probably the bath in some form, whether cold or tepid, fresh or salt water.

My advice, then, to those who think they need the aid of tonics is this. 1. Do not commence the course if there seems any disorder of either stomach or bowels, as indicated by a foul tongue, headaches, pain, thirst, &c. 2. If there be this irritability of the digestive organs, first endeavour to remove it by temperate living, moderate out-door exercise, early hours, and a short course of mild aperients (see article on the abuse of medicine in the May number of this Magazine). 3. It is always as well to commence the use of tonics by a laxative of some kind, and as many of them are astringents, to repeat the medicine now and then during the course. 4. Do not take tonics if you are in your average state of health.

Let me now say a word or two regarding tonics individually, and I promise you to recommend nothing that is not perfectly safe.

A whole volume, and an interesting one too, could be written on that most valuable of all tonics and febrifuges, Cinchona bark, and the valuable preparations obtained therefrom.

There are a variety of kinds of Cinchona or Peruvian bark, and in purchasing the sulphate of its alkaloid, usually called quinine, one ought to be careful to procure it from a highly respectable chemist, for, like everything else of value in the form of either food or medicine, it is very liable to adulteration. In debility of the system, either chronic or following long illnesses, quinine is a most valuable tonic. It is also called an anti-periodic, a word descriptive of its power of checking those ailments that are apt to recur at stated intervals. For this purpose it must be given in the stage of intermission—that is, between the attacks; hence it is invaluable in cases of ague and that painful complaint, periodical neuralgia. To those who believe more in the bark itself than in its essential part, quinine, I would recommend its use in doses of about fifteen grains twice or thrice a day, taken either in a little port wine or in half a glass of good stout. On some stomachs, however, neither the crude bark nor quinine itself lies easily; in such cases try the following:—Get fifteen ounces of the infusion of yellow bark and one ounce of the compound tincture, mix them, and filter through strong blotting-paper. It will now be perfectly clear, and the dose is a tiny wine-glassful twice a day. From one to two grains of quinine itself, made into a pill with confection of roses, is an excellent tonic; and there are many elegant preparations of this drug sold in the shops—such, for instance, as the tincture of quinine, and quinine wine, and the citrate of quinine and iron. And this leads me to say a word or two about iron itself as a tonic.

The preparations of iron, then, when administered for some time, are very highly beneficial in cases of weakness of the muscular system, especially that form of debility characterised by a pale, bloodless condition of the body, for iron enriches the blood and invigorates

the system. It is, however, liable to produce constipation: *verbum sap.* It should not, on the other hand, be given in too large doses, or over-excitement may be the result; and in no case should it be administered, except under medical advice, when there is the slightest determination of blood to the head. Equal portions of the aromatic mixture of iron and the compound aloetic mixture make not a very pretty remedy, as far as colour goes, but, in my opinion, it can hardly be too highly extolled. The dose is an ounce and a half twice a day. In cases where the digestive organs are somewhat weak, but where iron is indicated, two or three grains twice or thrice a day of the powder of iron (*pulvis ferri*) in the form of a pill make a very handy and very excellent tonic. Again, we have in the granulated carbonate of iron of the shops a most valuable tonic, especially for anæmic females, or indeed for the delicate of either sex. If the digestive powers are pretty good, I should also recommend a trial of the *green* iron mixture, dose one to two ounces twice a day.

I may here observe that, though many medical men advise the taking of tonic remedies three times instead of twice a day, I think it safer for you to be content with two doses a day, morning and afternoon, for towards night the digestion is not so strong, and tonics are therefore more likely to disagree. The citrate of iron and quinine is a capital tonic-chalybeate, and may be taken for a long time without producing constipation; it is also a good appetiser.

Phosphorus here claims a word or two. It is a very excellent tonic remedy, and exerts its influence especially on the nervous system and on the vascular; it quickens the pulse after a time, increases the temperature of the skin, braces and gives tone to the nerves, and exhilarates both mind and body. Probably Parrish's syrup of the hypophosphites is about the best and most elegant method of exhibiting it.

There is a kind of atonic dyspepsia, with irritability of the stomach, without any actual disease, but resulting in the vomiting of the food some time after it has been taken. This complaint is greatly ameliorated by five-grain doses of purified ox-bile made into the form of a pill. It is a remedy well worthy of a trial.

In some states of debility, such as that produced by recent illness of an acute character, Iceland moss does much good, it being not only a good bitter tonic, but also a highly nutritious one. The dose of the decoction is about an ounce and a half twice or thrice a day; and it may thus be prepared:—To make a pint, you take one ounce by weight of the moss, which you must first wash well in cold water; this is then boiled in a pint of *distilled* water for ten minutes in a covered vessel. It is then put into a strainer while hot and gently pressed, and afterwards as much water poured over the contents of the strainer as will make up the pint.

The last mineral tonic I shall mention in this paper is bismuth. It has been spoken of unfavourably by some and favourably by others. I myself belong to its category of friends. I will not pretend to say how it acts, whether as a sedative to the coats of the stomach, or a tonic, or both; but in cases of dyspepsia accompanied with pain, and perhaps water-brash, it has in my hands effected no little good. The dose is from five to ten grains three times a day, but many practitioners give very much larger quantities. It may be taken in a little milk, or the dose simply placed on the tongue, and a little milk taken afterwards.

From the vegetable kingdom we have various bitter barks and roots of great worth as tonics. Of the value of dandelion I have before spoken, and I have also extolled the good properties of camomile flowers as a tonic and stomachic. Calumba root is a very good bitter tonic, and is exceedingly useful in weakness of the stomach, with an inclination to vomit. A tea-spoonful of the tincture may be taken before meals, with a little infusion of oranges. Calumba is not astringent; but if there is constipation combined with the dyspepsia, the tincture of chiretta, mixed with equal parts of the compound tincture of gentian, and a tea-spoonful taken before meals, will be found an appetising tonic of great value.

In Cascarilla bark we find another useful tonic, which, however, is rather astringent than the reverse, and therefore would be more useful where there was a tendency to relaxation of the bowels, and so we give it as a corroborant in long-standing cases of diarrhoea. It—and the same may be said about most of these vegetable bitters—forms a capital vehicle for the administration of more powerful remedies.

This paper would be incomplete if I did not mention that most valuable bitter tonic, quassia. It is found exceedingly useful in cases of indigestion where there is a want of tone in the stomach, and probably little or no appetite. It is one of the tonics with which I "finished off" my friend F—, as it is the best tonic I know in debility caused by—or shall we say succeeding?—festivity. Quassia also possesses some power in destroying, if not expelling, worms.

Let me repeat, in conclusion, that no one may expect benefit from a course of tonic remedies unless taken under the conditions I have mentioned. Tonics, too, if they are to do any good, must be taken for some considerable length of time, and with great regularity. It is also a good plan to change them at times—we have plenty to choose from—and their usefulness is greatly aided by temperance in eating and drinking, salt-water bathing, an occasional mild aperient, such as Friedrichshall water, and plenty of open-air exercise, never amounting to fatigue, but just suited to the patient's strength. Hurry and worry of all kinds should also be avoided as much as possible.

