

bearable both to himself and to those charged with his care. He died in a few months. Cause of death? . . .

* * *

Our latest tragedy, which came to our knowledge within the last two months, presents another and very glaring example of the use of caustic paste by a cancer quack operating in this province. It has so many features which parallel the first case cited here, that it would simply be repetition to state them. Just another poor fellow with his chances for cure stolen from him by a cancer quack, and with his remaining days made miserable by someone's misguided adventure without training into a highly scientific field. It is mentioned to bring us up-to-date, and to show that those atrocities are not taken from medieval history but that they are being re-enacted from day to day and that they are still going on among us. It gives me opportunity also to connect with it the fact that this is the kind of practice that we are virtually subsidizing, since at least one cancer quack receives a tidy sum each month through the check-off, in the office of one of our major corporations, for just such work.

Grasp the significance of that, gentle reader, and weep for our stupidity! For this is Nova Scotia, the province that has given so much brains to the rest of the Dominion and to parts beyond. Have we been *too* generous?

Ancient Medicine and Surgery

THE following receipt comes from a gentleman of undoubted veracity in Ireland, as Mr. Plunket's celebrated remedy for extirpating cancerous tumors. "Take crows-foot which grows in low ground, one handful; dog-fennel, three sprigs, both well powdered; crude limestone in powder, three middling thimbles full; white arsenic, the same quantity; all incorporated and made into small balls the size of a nutmeg, and dried in the sun. These balls must be powdered and mixed with the yolk of an egg and laid over the sore or cancer upon a piece of pig's bladder, or stripping of a calf when dropped, which must be cut to the size of the sore, and smeared with the yolk of an egg. This must be applied cautiously to the lips or nose, lest any part of it gets down; nor are you to lay it on too broad on the face, or too near the heart, nor to exceed the breadth of half a crown; but elsewhere as far as the sore goes. The plaster must not be stirred until it drops off itself, which it will in a week."

LONDON PRACTICE OF PHYSIC
(date unknown).

* * *

In all dropsies the diet should be dry and solid; the liquids should be sparingly used; and these should consist of good old rich wines, or medicated beer, in order to strengthen the solids and to promote the renal discharges.

MARRYAT, 1777.

The whole necessary apparatus being provided the next business is for the Surgeon to dispose the Patient, Assistants and himself in a proper Posture to begin the Operation. First therefore the Patient must be fixed in a low Chair or Stool in the midst of the Room, the Surgeon standing betwixt his legs, and six Assistants at least around him; one of which should stand behind the Patient to hold his Body, another on the side of the affected Arm which he is to hold fast by grasping the part of the Cubitus; a third Assistant must hold the Hand about to be amputated; a fourth stand on one side with the Apparatus or Instruments, to hand them as they may be wanted by the Operator; a fifth Assistant must stand ready with the Dressings, Compresses and Bandages, necessary to combat the Deligation; and the sixth or last should be at liberty to assist the Patient or Operator occasionally in handing Wine, Cordial or any other thing they may want. The Surgeon should have a Napkin before him to wipe his hands on when there be occasion. The Surgeon now encourages the Patient with good Words and Wine or Cordial before he enters on the Operation.

HEISTER, 1752.

* * *

To tell me that Milk is a specific Remedy to correct the Acrimony of the Blood, will give me little Light in the Course of Practice; unless I be likewise informed by Authors what Method, Cautions and Precepts, I ought to observe in prescribing it; and be advised, for instance, that 'tis safer to give Milk in Spring and Autumn, than in Summer, in which season it's Whey is of good use; that during the use of Milk, Wine and Acid Things should be avoided; that Milk is not proper while the first Passages are crowded with acid Humours; that it ought not be exhibited in a looseness occasioned by the Crudity of the Stomach; that 'tis very nocive (*harmful*) in the Disorders of the Nerves and the Head. Pursuant to this last caution, I was called lately to a very learned Man, who avoiding all other food, for about Twenty Days, was seized with a dismal Distortion of the Mouth, accompanied with a painful Distention of the Muscles of the Neck, and almost the whole Body. I tried several sorts of Remedies, and recovered him in Two Months' Time. Milk is an Enemy of the Head and the Nerves, friendly to the Breast, and raises Wind in the Abdomen. To prevent souring of Milk in the Stomach, you ought to mix Sugar or Honey with it; and if it does turn soure, you must not presently reject Use of it, but exhibit Testaceous Powders now and then. After the taking of Milk you ought to sit still or walk very gently, taking Care to avoid Sleep, for by such Means it rises in a crude State to the Head, and disposes it to divers Disease. These and other Cautions you ought to know before you exhibit Milk; Cautions that Practitioners find out, not by racking their Brains, but by a long Observation of the Events of Remedies. He who sets down the use of Milk without such cautionary Instructions, is equally criminal with those who chuse to walk in the Dark, without striking a light or staying for Daylight.

BAGLIORE—1723.

(The above quotations were collected from old Medical and Surgical Textbooks by J. A. Webster, '38.)