

A MANUAL OF BANDAGING.

CHAPTER I.

UPON CATAPLASMATA.

HOW TO MAKE A POULTICE.

Linseed meal is the substance usually selected for the basis of cataplasmata. We find this meal in the shops in two forms: 1st, the "crushed;" 2d, the "ground." The former is frequently employed, though it is not as handy to use as the "ground," which is the finer, adheres less to the integument, and retains its heat the longer, and takes up a larger amount of water.

A sufficient quantity of the meal having been measured out, pour upon it *boiling* water, in small quantities at a time, stirring the mass, meanwhile, thoroughly with a spatula or spoon. Keep adding the water till the mass assumes the consistency of thick cream; it is now ready for "spreading."

HOW TO SPREAD A POULTICE.

The batter of the poultice having been prepared, it is necessary to have a piece of thick cotton cloth, or linen, two or three inches wider than the surface you wish to cover with the cataplasm. Spreading this smoothly out upon a flat surface, you pour the batter upon it, and with a spatula you spread it, to a proper thickness, evenly over the cloth, having care that it does not come to within an inch or two of its edge. You then fold each edge of the cloth evenly over the edge of the applied batter, thus leaving a clean, neat margin to your cataplasm, as well as effecting a sort of a confinement of the batter to the cloth. You now spread a very thin piece of muslin (the thinner the better) over the whole surface of the poultice;

this prevents any of the meal from drying upon your patient's person, and ensures him a neat, clean and comfortable dressing.

Some surgeons, however, prefer a coating of sweet oil over the spread poultice-batter to the thin piece of muslin. This also keeps the meal from adhering to the skin.

HOW TO APPLY A POULTICE.

Everything being in readiness, the poultice is lifted from the table, and *one end* gently laid upon the tender and inflamed surface, and the remainder of the poultice suffered *gradually* to cover over the diseased member; with this little care you will often save your patient much needless pain and suffering, that would else be caused by "slapping" your dressing upon a tender and sensitive part. The same gentleness should be used in lifting a poultice; otherwise, from the quick relief of pressure, a severe throbbing pain will ensue.

After the cataplasm has been properly placed, it, and a portion of the member, should be covered with a piece of oil-silk, thin table oil-cloth, or oiled muslin, and over this should be thrown a layer or so of flannel, or thin layer of cotton-wool, the whole, finally, being lightly confined by a proper bandage. The oiled silk, or muslin, serves a double purpose: that of confining the heat and moisture to the part, and of protecting the bed clothes, or clothing, from the water in the poultice-batter.

MEDICATED POULTICES.

The linseed-meal poultice, as just described, may be medicated with various substances, as occasion requires. Thus, if an *anodyne effect* is desired, sprinkle over the top of the poultice, when spread, a teaspoonful of tincture of opium, or a grain of morphine.

If an *astringent effect* is desired, a little sulphate of zinc, or pulverized alum, should be dissolved in the water of which the batter is made.

If a *disinfectant action* is wished, carbolic acid can be added to the water of which the poultice-batter is made. Other

medicines may also be incorporated in the water, as the occasion may seem to demand.

CATAPLASMA CARBONIS—(Charcoal Poultice).

FORMULA.*—Take of wood charcoal, in powder, one-half an ounce; bread crumbs, two ounces; linseed meal, one and one-half ounces; boiling water, ten fluid ounces. After macerating the bread in the water for ten minutes before the fire, mix well, and then gradually add the linseed meal, and intimately incorporate this with the mass. To this add one-half the charcoal, stirring it well in, and then sprinkle the remaining charcoal upon the surface of the cataplasm, when spread.

The bread is not a necessary ingredient of this poultice, though advised by the *Pharmacopœia*. It is quite as well if dispensed with, and the poultice is so made by most American dressers.

If the water is taken at the temperature of boiling, as the *Pharmacopœia* recommends, the poultice, when spread, is generally of as sufficient high temperature as the part can well stand. Should the poultice have become cool, however, it should be heated by placing upon a stove, hot-air or steam-pipes.

Uses.—In a general way all poultices have the same use; that of retaining warmth and moisture to a part, thus accelerating sloughing and the discharge of inflammatory products; also that of protecting the surface from the air, and changes of temperature. Besides these more general uses, each kind may have a specific purpose of its own, as in case of the poultice under consideration. A charcoal poultice is, in fine, an antiseptic and disinfective poultice. The *Pharmacopœia* has recommended *wood* charcoal; animal is still better, as it has greater power for absorbing the infecting material thrown off in the slough. It prevents noisome odors from foul, or gangrenous surfaces, by absorbing the gases. It must be frequently applied, and should be used in all cases of gangrenous ulceration.

* NOTE.—The Formulæ of most of these cataplasms are taken from the *British Pharmacopœia*.

CATAPLASMA CONII—(*Hemlock Poullice*).

FORMULA.—Take of powdered hemlock leaves, one ounce; linseed meal, three ounces; boiling water, ten fluid ounces. Mix the hemlock and meal intimately together, and then gradually add the water, constantly stirring.

Uses.—As an anodyne dressing for cancerous and syphilitic ulceration. As there is danger of the drug being absorbed too freely from the wounded surface, the patient should be watched closely that no poisonous symptoms may arise.

Opium and Belladonna may also be made use of in making these anodyne dressings, using them, however, in much smaller amounts than is recommended to be taken of the conium.

CATAPLASMA FERMENTI—(*Yeast Poullice*).

FORMULA.—Take of beer yeast, six fluid-ounces; wheat flour, fourteen ounces; water (100° F.), six fluid ounces. Mix the yeast with the water and stir in the flour, afterwards placing the mass before the fire till it rises.

Uses.—As a sort of an anodyne poullice. The carbonic acid gas evolved has something of an anæsthetic effect upon the inflamed skin. It corrects the fetor of the discharges, and stimulates indolent ulcers. The dressing is not now much made use of.

CATAPLASMA SINAPIS—(*Mustard Poullice*).

FORMULA.—Take of powdered mustard-seed and linseed, each, two and one-half ounces; boiling water, ten fluid-ounces. Mix the linseed meal gradually with the water, and then stir in the mustard.

Uses.—More especially as a rubefacient. The *Pharmacopœia* has directed that boiling water be used. It would be better not to employ water at so high a heat, as it deteriorates its rubefacient power in some varieties of mustard. The laity often make an addition of vinegar; but this is a mistake, in case the *black* mustard be used, as it defeats the very action it was put in to enhance.

Care should also be had in the application of this rubefacient to the very young or very aged; for if left too long applied, epidermal sloughing may occur.

CATAPLASMA SODÆ CHLORINATÆ—(*Chlorine Poullice*).

FORMULA.—Take of solution of chlorinated soda, two fluid-ounces; linseed meal, four ounces; boiling water, eight fluid ounces. Mix the linseed meal, gradually, with the water, then add the solution of soda, with constant stirring.

Uses.—This is properly a disinfectant application, and makes a most excellent dressing for foul and gangrenous ulcers.

Carbolic, or, perhaps better, Salicylic acid, is a useful adjunct to the common linseed, and bread-and-milk poullices, having both an antiseptic and disinfectant action, besides a therapeutical and anæsthetic one. Tar is also sometimes incorporated in these styles of dressings, and makes an important ingredient in a certain class of eczematous cases.

CATAPLASMA PANIS ET LACTIS—(*Bread-and-Milk Poullice*).

Description.—Take the inside of a loaf of stale bread, crumble it well up in eight or ten ounces of sweet milk, and, after soaking a few minutes, let it come to a boil, and then stir in a bit of lard, or a few drachms of sweet oil.

Uses.—As an emollient dressing. Anodynes may be added as suits the case. Is not a very commendable poullice, as, from the heat, etc., of the inflamed part, the milk soon becomes rancid.

POULTICE OF OAKUM.

Description.—Take a sufficient quantity of oakum, loosely picked, and place in a thin piece of muslin, and wrap loosely up, then immerse the whole in boiling water. It is then wrung out and covered by a thin layer of muslin, and is thus to be applied to the member diseased, with oiled-silk over it all.

Uses.—As an antiseptic and absorptive dressing. The water may be charged with antiseptics or anodynes.