

HISTORY OF SUN CHOLERA MIXTURE.*

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As teacher of that fascinating subject, "History of Pharmacy," in the Department of Pharmacy of the College of Jersey City, the writer had occasion to investigate the origin of a great many galenic preparations with which the pharmacist should be familiar. For particulars of the history of Sun cholera mixture in this paper, I am indebted to Mr. Grant M. Overton, one of the editors of the New York Sun.

The Sun cholera cure and its origin were described in an article printed in The Sun, September 11, 1892, stating an interview with George Washington Busted, of 162 East Twenty-third Street, who compounded the original prescription. It was in June, 1849, in the early days of the cholera excitement, that The Sun published the cholera mixture recipe which Busted sent to the paper. He prepared the prescription by the advice of the Health Officer of the Port and a prominent city physician, having long known the efficacy of the ingredients. Busted sent a copy by a messenger to Mr. Moses Y. Beach, the publisher of The Sun, asking him to print it for the "benefit of humanity," and it appeared in print the next day. The Health Commissioners adopted it and engaged Busted to compound it for all the city hospitals.

While the plague was at its height, patients were brought into Busted's pharmacy daily by citizens who had found them in the streets. Those attacked by the malady would often drop in their tracks. It was his good fortune to save every patient who was brought into his pharmacy. Busted first soothed their fear and then administered The Sun cure and rubbed their bodies with hartshorn liniment. This allayed their cramps, and proper attention to diet after that brought them around all right. Cholera can be handled successfully if taken in hand promptly. The only danger is personal uncleanliness and carelessness as to diet. It was in the fall of 1849 before the epidemic ended.

The Sun republished the recipe many times during the cholera epidemics of 1855 and 1866. All told, it has been published in The Sun's columns over 1000 times, and here it is again.

ORIGINAL FORMULA.

Tincture of Opium,
Tincture of Rhubarb,
Tincture of Cayenne,
Spirit of Camphor,
Essence of Peppermint, equal parts.

Mix well.

Dose: Fifteen to thirty drops in water, to be repeated in fifteen to twenty minutes, if necessary.

This formula was included in the Preliminary Draft of a National Formulary of Unofficial Preparations at the Providence meeting of the American Pharmaceutical Association, September 7-9, 1886 (Proc. A. Ph. A., vol. 34, p. 253). The same formula is included in N.F. I (1888) and N.F. II (1896). Owing to the increase in strength of capsicum, from 5 to 10 percent in tincture of capsicum, and of rhubarb, from 10 to 20 percent in tincture of rhubarb, in U.S.P. VIII, the formula

* Read at the New Jersey Pharmaceutical Association, Long Branch, 1916.

for "Sun mixture" in N.F. III (1906) has been modified accordingly. The same formula will also survive in N.F. IV, now in print and official from September 1, 1916.

MISTURA OPII ET RHEI COMPOSITA.

Compound Mixture of Opium and Rhubarb.

Sun Cholera Mixture.

Tincture of Capsicum	100 mils
Tincture of Rhubarb	100 mils
Tincture of Opium	200 mils
Spirit of Camphor	200 mils
Spirit of Peppermint	200 mils
Alcohol, a sufficient quantity,	

To make

1000 mils

Mix and filter.

Average dose: 2 mils.

Let this story of the history of Sun cholera mixture serve as an inspiration to many pharmacists, so as to investigate and to record the origin of other galenic preparations, and thereby make historical pharmacy of practical value.

ANCIENT ROMAN METHOD OF TESTING WATER.

It is gathered from classical authors that the Romans attached great importance to certain properties in water used as sources of drinking supply, and were particular to select a soft water for this purpose. How highly these waters were esteemed is evident from the enormous labor expended on aqueducts to convey the water of the chosen spring to a distance and the pains taken to protect it from pollution during distribution. It has been noticed that the known Roman wells and the springs, which, from their Roman remains, were evidently sources of drinking water for camps or settlements, are at the present time invariably the softest water in the district. It has not been very clear what test was applied to determine the comparative degree of hardness. Some writers mention, without describing, a wine test for water. Hippocrates is slightly more explicit, stating that soft waters are distinguished from hard waters by being tinted by very small quantities of red wine. Following this clue, it is found that by adding red wine drop by drop to a given volume of water a very fair approximate determination of the temporary hardness may be obtained. Thus, 100 Cc. of rain-water is tinted pink by 1 to 2 drops of a red wine; a water with 2 degrees of hardness by 2 to 3 drops; one with 15 degrees by 9 to 10 drops; with 25 degrees, 20 to 22 drops; and so on. In other words, the coloring matter of the wine reacts as an indicator, the red color not showing until acidity is established. It is known that the Romans had a whole series of deep red wines. It is likely that some of these were used in some such list as above indicated.—A. Trillal (*Comptes rend.*, 1916, 162, 486).