

3.



Shakspeare's Family as Patients.—"Master John Hall, Physician," who was in practice at Stratford-on-Avon, married Shakspeare's daughter, Susanna, in 1607. In Latin he wrote details of the illnesses of many of his private patients, whose names he gives in full in the clinical records which he published. Under the title of *Select Observations on English Bodies of Eminent Persons in desperate Diseases*, his book was translated by James Cook, of Warwick, author of the *Marrow of Chirurgery*. The notes of many of Dr. Hall's cases are interesting, not only on account of the family association of the patients, but because they are additional instances of the diagnosis and treatment then current. Polypharmacy was in fashion then, almost more than at the present time, although we have not to go very far now to find those who, like Dr. Hall and his contemporaries, seem to think that there exists a drug to be appropriated to each individual symptom. Although Dr. Hall's diagnosis is often open to criticism, his treatment was based on sound principles. Not seldom his success was obtained by the induction of copious vomiting, and nearly always by very free purgation. In these days of elegant pharmacy we are in danger of forgetting the value of this mode of treatment, and we might do well to follow the example of our ancestors somewhat more often and, on their lines, secure quickly very good results by methods which produce much less discomfort to the patient than in those times of crude therapeutics.

In an attack from which Dr. Hall's wife suffered, a less quantity of nauseous medicine was required than was usual. Here is her husband's account of the illness:

"Mrs. Hall of Stratford, my Wife, being miserably tormented with the Cholick, was cured as followeth. R. Diaphæn. Diacathlic. ana ʒi. Pul. Island ʒii. Ol. Rutæ ʒi. Lact. q. s. f. Clyst. This injected gave her two Stools, yet the Pain continued, being but little mitigated; therefore I appointed to inject a Pint of Sack made hot. This presently brought forth a great deal of Wind, and freed her from all Pain. To her Stomach was applied a Plaister de Labid. Crat. cum Caran. & Spec. Aromat. rosat. & Ol. Macis. With one of these Clysters I delivered the Earle of Northampton from a grievous Cholick."

The virtues of sack have been celebrated by Jack Falstaff in a well-known passage, although he would no doubt have considered that to use it by this route was a deliberate waste of his favourite liquor. But it seems to have done more good when directed by the hands of Dr. Hall than it ever did in the mouth of Jack.

The health of Dr. Hall's daughter, when she was sixteen years of age, was a source of anxiety to her parents. Her father thus records the difficulties:

"Elizabeth Hall, my only Daughter, was vexed with *Tortura Oris*, or the Convulsion of the Mouth, and was happily cured as followeth: First, I exhibited these Pills: R. Pil. Cck. & Aurear. ana ʒi. f. Pil. 10. She took five the first day, which gave her seven Stools; the next day with the other five she had five stools. I fomented the part with *Theriac. Andr. mac.* and *Aq. Vitæ*. To the Neck was used this: R. Unguent. Martiat. magn. ʒi. Ol. Laurin. Petrolei, Castor. & Terebinth. ana ʒss. de lateribus ʒss. Mijc. By this she had great advantage, her Courses being obstructed. Thus I purged her: R. Pil. succid. ʒi. Castor. ʒi. de Succin. Rhab. agaric. ana ʒi. f. Mass. She took of this five Pills in the morning, of the bigness of Pease; they gave eight stools. The next day she took *Aq. Ophthbalm.* see *Objer. 3*, as *R. Tutivæ.*, &c., her Courses flowed. For an *Ophthbalmia*, of which she laboured, I used our Ophthalmick Water, dropping two or three drops into her Eye. Her Courses staying again, I gave the following Sudorific Decoct. R. Lign. Vitæ ʒii. Sassafras ʒss. Sassa. ʒi. Chin. ʒvi. macerat. per 24 hor. in Aq. fontan. lb. viii. After boyl them to lb. iv. After the use of these, the former form of her Mouth and Face was restored (there was not omitted *Ol. Sarsap.*, which was above all to anoint the Neck.) Jan. 5, 1624.

"In the beginning of April she went to London, and returning homewards, the 22d of the said Month, she took cold, and fell into the said Distemper on the contrary side of the Face; before it was on the left side, now on the right; and although she was grievously afflicted with it, yet by the blessing of God she was cured in sixteen days, as followeth: R. Pil. de Succin ʒss. Aurear. ʒi. f. Pil. v. She took them when she went to bed. The same night her Neck was anointed with Oil of Sassafras. In the morning I gave ʒss. of *Pit. Napp.*, and again used the said Oil with *Aqua Vitæ*, and dropped into her Eye the Ophthalmick Water. The aforesaid Oil being wanting, I used the following: R. Pul. Castor. Myrrh. Nuc. Moch. Croci. ā ʒi

Ol. Rutæ, Laurin. Petrol. Tereb. a ʒii. Ungu. martiat. ʒfs. Ol. Coffin de Peper. ā ʒi. Mijc. But first the Neck was fomented with *Aqua Vitæ*, in which was infused *Nutmegs, Cinnamon, Cloves, Pepper.* She eat Nutmegs often. To the Noftrils, and top of the Head was used the Oil of Amber. She chewed on the found side, Pellitory of Spain, and was often purged with the following Pills: *R. Pill. fœtid. ʒi. Castor pul. ʒfs. Pil. Ruffi. ʒ de Succin. ā ʒi. f. Pil. N^o v.* And thus she was restored.

"In the same year, May 24. she was afflicted with an Erratick Fever; sometimes she was hot, and by and by sweating, again cold, all in the space of half an hour, and thus she was vexed oft in a day. Thus I purged her: *R. the Roots of Parsly, Fennel, each Mfs. Elder Bark Mii. Roots of the vulgar Oris, of Madder, each Mi. Roots of Sparagus, Mii. Boyl them in sufficient quantity of Water to six pints. To the Straining, add Rubarb, Agarick, each ʒfs. Sena ʒvi. Mechoacan ʒii., Calamus Aromaticus ʒi. Anijeds ʒi., Cinnamon ʒfs. Infuse them in a Vessel well stopd according to art: strain it again, and to the straining add Sugar sufficient to make a Syrup. of this take ʒiv. Rubarb infused in ʒv. of Cichory water ʒii. Mix them, and give seven spoonfuls every day fasting. It gave seven or eight stools without pain. R. Sarzap. ʒi., Sassafr. ʒii., Guaiac ʒi., Liguoris ʒfs., Herb of Succory, Sage, Rosemary, each Mfs. Boyl them in ten pints of Water till half be waisted. Of which she took a draught hot in the morning. The following was used to anoint the Spine: R. Gum. Galban. Bdel. dissol. in Aq. Vit. ā ʒfs. Benzoin. ʒi. Styrac. liquid. ʒi. Fol. Rut. Chamæpith. Flor. Stœchad. Lavendula, ā ʒii. Rad. casti. ʒfs., Castorei ʒi. infund. mijc. ʒ pulverisat. in Aq. Vitæ. It is to be infused in some hot place for some days. Before it was used, the Spine was rubb'd. An hour after it was used, all the Symptoms remitted daily till she was well. Thus was she delivered from Death, and deadly Diseases, and was well for many years. To God be praise."*

The *Aq. Ophthalm.*, concerning which Dr. Hall's reader was referred to Observation III., was made thus:—"R. Sarcocol wath'd, ʒij. Prepared Tutty ʒij. Aloes ʒj. White Sugar-candy ʒifs. Saffron gr. iv. Rosewater ʒiv. Mix them, letting them stand a day, shaking them oft."

Dr. Hall did not shrink from administering drugs to himself as freely as he gave them to his patients. When fifty-six years of age (he was only twelve years younger than his father-in-law) he had "an immoderate Flux of the Hemorrhoids," the sequelæ of which nearly killed him. His remedies had, however, done him much good before the arrival of the two physicians for whom his wife sent.

The identification of much of the *Materia Medica* in Dr. Hall's prescriptions is difficult, and any information about the less known things would be welcome.

The abbreviation M. was used to signify a handful.

Amongst Dr. Hall's other patients was Mrs. Nash, probably the mother of his daughter's first husband. She had "of a long time laboured of a Consumption, and now afflicted with Wind of the Stomach, as also Heat thereof, with sweating from the Pit of the Stomach to the Crown of the Head, having great Pain of the Head, especially after Meat." He used remedies which "freed her from Wind, and she was able to eat, and said she was very well for a long time after."

It is also likely that the husband of Shakspeare's other daughter, Judith, came under Dr. Hall's care, for he attended "Mr. Queeny, labouring of a grievous Cough, with vomiting abundance of Phlegm and Meat, having a gentle Fever, being very weak, and had red Urine without sediment." His malady was not amenable to the evacuant treatment which was generally so successful in Dr. Hall's hands; and although the illness somewhat abated, "being not wholly freed from it, he fell into it again the next year, and all Remedies proving successles, he died. He was a Man of a good Wit, expert in Tongues, and very learned."

It is of further interest to note that another of Dr. Hall's patients was the author of the *Poly-Olbion*, whose monument in Westminster Abbey shows by its inscription how highly he was esteemed by his contemporaries, but whose fame was already dim in the days of Goldsmith, who, upon seeing his grave in the Abbey, exclaimed, "Drayton! I never heard of him before." Upon one occasion Dr. Hall quickly brought him round from an illness which is thus described: "Mr. Drayton, an excellent Poet, labouring of a Tertian, was cured by the following: R. the Emetick Infusion ʒi. Syrup of Violets a spoonful: mix them. This given, wrought very well both upwards and downwards."—*Bristol Medico-Chirurgical Journal*, September, 1891.

