DURING recent research trips to Old Economy Village, the last home of the Harmony Society, several remnants of the past were brought to my attention that so far escaped relocation to the archives in Harrisburg. Among them were memos, notebooks, labels, and the like, all of them written or printed in German in the old German script. I became interested in a handwritten journal on medicine and decided to translate it. The journal does not show the name of its author, but it does show the date.

Reading the journal, I became convinced that it must have been written by a professional. Careful comparison of handwritings in the music library at Old Economy proves that Dr. Christopher Müller, the society’s first physician and its music director, was the author. Müller composed and copied music. He also wrote poetry. Therefore, sufficient material for the handwriting test was readily available. Furthermore, we find his conviction, so frequently repeated in this journal — namely, that a patient needs purgation first before any other medication should be given — expressed in a letter that Müller wrote to Father Rapp: “the malignant fever is still sneaking about . . . . Hydrochloric acid is an excellent remedy in the treatment of it if used soon enough and after the patients have been purged and given laxatives.”

Fortunately, the journal shows a date: December 8, 1814. This date, scribbled in a speedy, careless handwriting on the front page, matches the handwriting of the last chapter: “What is a fever and what are the symptoms?” The rest of the journal is written in a more styled calligraphy.

In 1814, the Harmony Society was on the move. In the spring of 1814, the society had bought land in Indiana on the Wabash River, and in June the town of Harmony was for sale. There were several reasons for George Rapp and his followers to leave Pennsylvania, among them the difficult transportation of surplus goods by land or water to the markets in Pittsburgh, a hostile climate for the cultivation of wine and fruit, and a short pasture season for the precious Merino sheep.

1 Karl J.R. Arndt, A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade of the Harmony Society, Volume 1, 1814-1819 (Indianapolis, 1975), 89.
On the Wabash, Rapp found the conditions to his liking, and during the summer of 1814 several groups of his best people left Harmony for Indiana in order to build shelter for all of them and to prepare for the move. Rapp, however, had not foreseen that the climate on the Wabash was unsuitable for the average European used to colder temperatures and a lower humidity. The swamp fever took a terrible toll on the Harmonists in this first summer and fall. In September, matters became so desperate that Rapp himself boarded a boat for Indiana, arriving on the Wabash on October 1.

Rapp found matters worse than he had anticipated. His flock was not only short of proper medicine but also in need of nutritious food. "In medicine we would need the following articles very much and these should be brought first: cinchona, opium tincture, Hoffman drops, epsom salt, opium, glasses, saltpeter, vitriol oil, ammonia solution, medical plaster, Dovers powder, [and] an emetic would be chiefly needed." In a later letter to Frederick, his adopted son and manager of worldly affairs, Rapp remarked: "I report that it, to be sure, looks miserable here and that the fever through neglect had become very bad, since it easily could have been eliminated immediately at the start by good medicine . . . eggs and butter are not to be had here, except 15 miles away, but we have no one to get them . . . . If one wants to cook for the sick, one has nothing . . . ."

George Rapp blamed Dr. Müller for most of the disaster: "All kinds of medicine are lacking. It is very bad that the Doctor provided us so poorly with medicine . . . . The people would soon be well if we had enough good medicine." Rapp also felt that the doctor's place in a situation like this was at the front, that is, on the Wabash, not back home in Pennsylvania: "Christoph writes and also speaks of peace, there is no danger, and meanwhile the people die away. If he had immediately mounted a horse and been here in 14 days all would have been well . . . . but now it is scarcely worth it for those who are dangerously ill will die before someone would come."

In early December 1814, Frederick Rapp decided to visit the new settlement on the Wabash, and on December 15, he was bound down the Ohio River with the badly needed provisions. Again, Müller stayed in Harmony in spite of Father Rapp's distress. But it seems that Frederick urged the doctor to send some information along with the medicine on how to treat certain illnesses and how to treat a fever.

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2 Ibid., 42.
3 Ibid., 52-53.
4 Ibid., 50-51.
5 Ibid., 78.
According to the handwriting, Müller added the chapter on the fever on December 8 and dated the journal at the same time, a journal that most probably had been begun for a different purpose, but was sent to Indiana.

We have reason to believe that Müller's journal later was copied, perhaps by members who traveled a lot and needed to help themselves. Hilda Adam Kring in her thesis, "The Harmonists: A Folk-Cultural Approach," mentions an "1814 manuscript medicine notebook" and forwards some translations. She may have used Müller's copy or, more likely, a partial copy, because the important part on the treatment of a fever is missing.

The Harmonists learned to live on the Wabash. No severe later epidemics were reported. Many of them reached a biblical age. They lived a balanced, temperate life and adhered to Dr. Müller's remedies.

ABOUT MEDICATION WHICH INDUCES VOMITING AND WHEN AND HOW TO USE IT

Symptoms which require vomiting are as follows: a feeling of nausea, fullness of the stomach, a slimy tongue, sticky, greasy eyes, and a bitter taste in a slimy mouth at awakening. If those symptoms are evident, a vomiting powder prepared from Tarter Emetic (Brechwein-stein) should be given regardless of how the patient feels otherwise.

This vomiting medication should never be given all at once. Also, it is mainly intended to serve adults, with one powder containing six to eight grains of Tarter Emetic; whereas for a two-year old child two grains are already sufficient.

The powder should be dissolved in luke-warm water. An adult should take barely half of the liquid. Later, in half hour intervals, a third or fourth of the rest may be taken as needed.

After each occurrence of vomiting, a little luke-warm water should be consumed. This is best. Children should take one teaspoon of the liquid every fifteen minutes until satisfactory vomiting has occurred.

Diarrhea or cramps should be treated by taking the vomiting powder Ipecac. This medication should also be taken by and by and not too much at a time.

LAXATIVES

They are necessary to cure constipation of the abdomen. If it is only a constipation without cramps or fever, one teaspoonful of a laxative called Laxans should be taken in any kind of tea or broth every two
hours. The intake should be stopped as soon as results are obvious.

To cure diarrhea, some teaspoonfuls of rhubarb are helpful. If a fever, headaches or the like accompany constipation, only half of the amount of a cooling laxative is recommended, according to the prescription in the back of this book. During the intake of laxatives, only light and liquid food is permitted which may be consumed together with the medication.

CRAMPS (SPASMI), ARTHRITIS, MENSTRUAL CRAMPS

Persons with sensitive nerves and who are weak are especially prone to these disturbances. High blood pressure and a choleric temperament (scharfes Geblüt), worms, colds, and constipation are the most common cause for these diseases.

In whatever way the symptoms of arthritis and cramps are visible, they require in most cases the same treatment; in other words, in whatever way the symptoms break out, they are seldom as dangerous as they seem to be. However, frequently the patient suffers great pain and one feels pity for him. Light attacks may be cured by the intake of cramp drops, Hoffmanns Tropfen, and warm liquids prepared from bitters or aromatic herbs. However, to cure long-lasting, painful cramps accompanied by fever and constipation, a variety of treatments is recommended.

CRAMPS

The attacked parts of the body should be washed with warm water. One or two Dover's Powder should be given until vomiting occurs several times. Liniment should be rubbed into the skin. In case of constipation, enemas should be given and especially the oil mixture, two tablespoonfuls every half hour or even more. This mixture not only eases the cramps, but also cools down the fever and is poison for the worms. It is completely safe and may be taken with confidence at any time. When the cramps have eased but constipation remains, a laxative should be taken according to the instructions at the end of this book. If the cramps are too severe, half of one Datura Powder should be given and after half an hour the second half. However, more than one Datura Powder is not allowed within 24 or 48 hours; otherwise, the consequences might be severe.

If it is not possible for the patient to swallow any medicine, cramp ointment should be applied to the chest, the abdomen, the stomach, and the spine. However, since cramp ointment is very expensive, it should only be used if everything else has failed.
LONG-LASTING HEAT, FEVER, AND HEADACHES IN GENERAL

First, look out for symptoms which require the inducement of vomiting. See page one. If necessary, give Tarter Emetic. In addition, every two to three hours, give one teaspoonful of cooling powder dissolved in barley or oatmeal porridge. Six to twelve Sour Drops (Saure Tropfen) may also be given. If there are symptoms of constipation accompanying the fever, one teaspoonful of Glauber’s Salt is in order with or without the cooling powder, depending how severe the heat is. If the pulse is too rapid and vigorous, cooling powder with Digitalis should be given. See end of this book. If the symptoms require it, repeated inducement of purgation should not be forgotten, and so forth. The only recommended treatment for children suffering from a fever is the inducement of vomiting. A cooling powder or cooling liquid affects children much more than adults.

COLIC OR PAIN IN THE ABDOMEN

Half a Gill [four fluid ounces] of stomach tincture or bitters should be taken with rather hot liquids, such as rye tea or the like. The patient should relax and stay warm. If matters do not improve decisively within the next half hour, two to four tablespoons of the oil mixture should be taken every half hour. This is a very reliable medicine; however, if the pain is too severe, some teaspoonfuls of cramp drops are in order and lots of hot tea. Enemas also improve the course of the treatment decisively. After matters have improved, the oil mixture should be given at greater intervals, finally only every four to five hours. The patient has to avoid any rich and constipating food for several days.

DIARRHEA AND PAIN IN THE ABDOMEN

Diarrhea usually is a consequence of an upset stomach. Half a teaspoonful of rhubarb should be taken at intervals. Then it will stop. Sometimes, however, diarrhea is combined with heat and fever, especially if nasal mucus and colds affect the stomach. In this case rhubarb is not sufficient as a treatment. First vomiting powder prepared from Ipecacuanha called Ipecac should be taken. Six hours after vomiting has begun, one teaspoonful of a laxative should be taken every two hours, but the intake should be stopped as soon as results are as desired. In addition, the patient should drink now and then a cup of hot broth in order to make the laxative more effective. Several hours after the laxative was taken, half of the amount of the diarrhea tea
should be cooked and consumed according to the prescription. This treatment assures results. *Saure Tropfen* are also helpful in the treatment of diarrhea.

**CATARRH**

If coughing is accompanied by a headcold and insomnia, vomiting powder should be taken first according to the formula. Six hours after vomiting, either half of the breast tea, mixed according to the prescription should be cooked and drunk, or the patient should take one teaspoonful of breast powder, dissolved in a cup of barley tea, every two hours. If constipation is evident, a laxative should be given.

By the way, vigorous coughing may be eased by taking the following medication: 1. Dover’s Powder. This is especially recommended for a good night’s sleep. 2. Cramp Drops. One or two teaspoonfuls in a liquid are recommended. However, since those increase fever and constipation, they should only be taken if absolutely necessary. 3. Digitalis Powder. Every four hours a fourth part of a powder should be taken dissolved in tea. This powder not only eases coughing, but also the fever and the vigorous heart-beat. In addition, it promotes the urine.

Light chest pain may be cured by *Saure Tropfen*, China powder, or the patient’s own water, one or the other.

**STITCHES IN THE SIDE — PLEURITIS*6*

The liquid to cure stitches in the side should be given according to the prescription. If relief does not come soon, a bladder plaster may be applied to the aching part of the body. If the symptoms call for it, vomiting should be induced and a laxative given. Both should never be neglected if the symptoms, namely, a slimy tongue, crusted teeth, and sticky eyes, indicate that there are impurities in the stomach or the intestinal membranes. If those are not removed, they become malicious and rotting and make matters worse to the point that no medication will take effect. *Saure Tropfen* may also be taken to cure stitches; however, one has to watch out. Sometimes they increase the fever, the coughing, and even the stitches. If females at the time of their monthly purgation complain about stitches, the above-mentioned medication is not permitted. They should take Lochein powder instead, and lots of herbal tea. *Saure Tropfen* may be in order. More about this later.

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*6* Müller uses the word Pleuritis for stitches in the side. He gives both the German term Seitenstiche and Pleuritis. Obviously, the term Pleuritis at that time was not limited to inflammation of the lungs.
BED-WETTING — ENURESIS

The appropriate liquid should be given according to the prescription. In addition, sixty to eighty drops of sweetened Nitric Acid every two hours in any tea are recommended. This will help.

RETAINED, INSUFFICIENT, OR PAINFUL MENSTRUATION

Four to five times a day, the patient should take twenty to thirty Saure Tropfen. She also may take one teaspoonful of China Powder three to four times a day. This will gradually help. If the patient menstruates too vigorously, she should take two teaspoonfuls of Dover’s Powder B every two hours in any liquid. If, however, the bleeding does not stop, half of a powder called T4 [?] should be taken every two hours, but only until the bleeding stops. In general, however, no medicine should be taken during menstruation unless the purgation is insufficient, painful, and accompanied by headaches and fever. In this case, the Lochien Powder is in order.

TOOTHPAIN — ODONTALGIA

A slice of horseradish should be applied between the aching tooth and the cheek. The temples should be washed with cold water, and Yellow Drops should be rubbed into the crown of the head and temples. Some drops should also be put into the ears. Dover’s Powder should be taken and tobacco smoked. Toothpain Drops should be taken into the mouth and later swallowed down; however, not more than one tablespoonful may be swallowed. Tooth Powder should also be applied to the aching tooth.

INFLAMMATION OF THE EAR — OTITIS

The most effective way to ease the vigorous pain is, according to my own observation, the inducement of vomiting. In addition, a bladder plaster should be applied to the neck, and cotton, soaked in olive oil, placed into the ear. The smoke of tobacco puffed into the ear brings relief as well.

ROSE OR ROTHLAUF — ERYSIPELAS

A painful red color develops on the foot or any other part of the body, increases steadily, and sticks out a little above the healthy flesh. The skin finally becomes light-red to brown-red. The heat around it and the pain are extreme. If one applies greasy ointments or plasters to
the affected areas, matters get worse, suppuration begins, and sometimes it takes months before the patient can be healed. However, if one applies dry sacks of roasted bran or warm ashes as hot as the patient may tolerate, he will be healed within three to five days without any problem. If fever and headaches accompany erysipelas and a reddish color appears in the face, vomiting should be induced, a cooling powder given, and also a laxative. Frysipelas is a consequence of an overproduction of the gall bladder fighting impurities in the bloodstream. Therefore, vomiting powder is, in this case, especially helpful.

INFLAMMATION OF THE EYE — OPHTHALMIA

If the edges of the eyelids are red and the corners purulent, a piece of eye ointment the size of a pea should be applied. Moist cotton balls soaked in eye tincture should be applied if the white of the eye appears reddish. The eyes should be washed with cool water four to eight times a day. If the disease is accompanied by headaches, fever, and insomnia, Cooling Powder and Potassium Bitartrate are in order.

PRESCRIPTIONS

VOMITING POWDER — IPECACUANHA

If a vomiting powder such as Ipecac is necessary, an adult person should first take half of it in warm water and later every half hour a third of the rest, if necessary. After each vomiting, luke-warm water should be consumed. Later on, a light soup or tea is in order. Too much vomiting may be cured by well-salted soups, tea, sweet milk, or cramp drops.

LAXATIVES

One teaspoonful of a laxative should be taken every two hours in any liquid. As soon as things normalize, the intake should be stopped. Another laxative, which should only be given if constipation is accompanied by cramps or fever, is prepared by cooking down half the amount of the appropriate tea from three parts to two parts. One cup should be consumed every one and a half hours until results are evident. Later on, half a cup should be consumed every three to four hours in order to maintain the status achieved and in order to fight the fever.
WORM TEA

The tea is prepared by cooking down three parts of the appropriate water-tea mixture to two parts. Two to five tablespoonfuls of the sweetened tea should be offered every two hours, depending on the patient's tolerance. In addition to the tea, half of the accompanying powders should be given dissolved in any heavy sugar lotion or in honey. When results are evident, the intake should be stopped. No cold water should be consumed the same day. Also, children should not eat much while taking the worm tea. Especially bread, flour, and meat are forbidden. Leftover tea may be filtered and stored for further use.

A TEA TO CURE BRONCHITIS — BRUSTTRANK

A quarter of the package should be cooked down with water from six parts to four parts. One cup should be consumed every two to three hours, and so forth. Or, one teaspoonful of breast powder dissolved in a cup of barley tea should be consumed every two to three hours. In the meantime, purgation should not be neglected. If cooling powder is given, with or without Digitalis, one teaspoonful should be dissolved in barley or oat tea and consumed every two hours. One fourth of the Digitalis Powder should also be given every two hours until results are obvious, that is, coughing stops, heartbeat slows down, and headaches and the like ease.

TO CURE STITCHES IN THE SIDE

To prepare the tea, half a package of the appropriate mixture should be cooked down with six parts of water to four parts. The patient may drink as often and as much as he likes and is able to tolerate.

URINARY DIFFICULTIES — ENUREISIS

Pick the right species of tea and cook down seven parts of the water-tea mixture to five parts. The patient should drink one cup every one and a half hours. In addition, forty to sixty drops of sweetened nitric acid should be consumed every two to three hours.

LOCHIEN POWDER WAS INTRODUCED ABOVE
DOVER'S POWDER B

May be taken the same way as cooling powder; a little more or less is in order, depending on the circumstances. Toothpain and menstrual cramps are two diseases which require immediate help. Therefore, two tablespoonfuls are in order every two hours. If too much is consumed, vomiting will follow, which never helps.

THE TINY POWDER NAMED T4 [?] LEAD ACETATE

The intake of four grains should not be continued over twenty-four hours. Otherwise, the medicine is harmful. It is the most powerful medication to stop menstruation and may be used to stop Blauen Husten as well, if it becomes too vigorous. A child, four to six years of age, may take a fourth or a third part of a powder every four hours. However, this treatment should not exceed two days. In between, China Powder and Digitalis are in order.

APPENDIX

CHINA POWDER

Cinchona Bark or Quinine is one of the best medications to strengthen a weak patient. However, it causes some heat, as every strengthening medication does. Therefore, it should be avoided if the patient suffers from heat and fever. Later, when the temperature is normal but the patient still weak, or if the patient suffers from coughing without fever, from menstruation or shivering fits, one teaspoonful dissolved in water should be given every two hours. A fever may be prevented if several teaspoonfuls of China Powder are taken during the day.

WHAT IS A FEVER AND WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

The symptoms are: A rapid and vigorous pulse, a glowing face, headaches, restless sleep, lack of appetite, rapid breathing, and feebleness. Those symptoms are preceded by shivering fits and pain between the shoulder blades.

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7 This probably means whooping cough.
Nobody knows what a fever really is. Our predecessors thought it to be a fermentation of the body juices, after those juices had been attacked by heterogeneous or foreign elements which had sneaked into the system. Our contemporaries insist that a fever is an overload of the system after the body has undergone general weakness.

I consider a fever a revolt of nature against foreign and unpleasant elements in our body. The stronger the fighting elements are, namely, nature and the sickening elements, the more vigorous and dangerous the fever will be. If the sickening elements are strong and present in large quantities, the patient, thus weak and exhausted, may die quietly and unexpectedly. On the other hand, if the patient is strong and there is little of the sickening elements, he will get over it quickly by transpiration and purgation. If both parties are strong, acute diseases may develop, and the stronger party will finally win.

During a fever, the blood circulates three to four times as fast as normal, and the secretion of the gall bladder and other glands as well as the discharge of excrement from the body become irregular because of the rapid blood circulation.

The secretion of the gall bladder is higher than normal during a fever and in this case, so-to-speak, poisonous. This may cause additional unwanted maladies and confusing symptoms. Very seldom nature is able to eliminate this secretion by helpful bowel movements or voluntary vomiting. However, if all this poison remains in the body, matters get worse. Therefore, in order to support nature, a physician is needed. He will help to eliminate constipation, to decompose slime and the secretion of the gall bladder, and he will calm down the stomach and the intestines, which both have become upset by the heat. Frequently, nature would be defeated if men would not come to its rescue by applying the appropriate and necessary medication. For example, the skin needs to be strengthened. It either becomes brittle by the heat at a time when it needs to transpire, or it becomes too soft and spongy, releasing all body fluids by transpiration. Also, the urinary passage needs to remain open, which is achieved by the use of cooling and diuretic salts. High blood pressure needs to be regulated, and the flow of natural juices, that is, the lymph, needs to be encouraged by the intake of Digitalis and Nitrum and Potassium Bitartrate. Finally, the decaying body juices need to be spiced and renewed by the use of Camphor and Saure Tropfen.

Unfortunately, in many cases all our efforts are in vain, especially if important organs, such as the lungs, the heart, or the liver have been seriously weakened and do not perform anymore. Here we miss the right Lebensgeist and the right tinctures. We still do not know enough, but we hope for the future.
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