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Nebraska Folk Cures

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NEBRASKA FOLK CURES

BY
PAULINE MONETTE BLACK

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA
1935

PREFACE

Many contributors have aided in the preparation of the following study, and for their interest I am very grateful. I wish to make particular acknowledgment, however, to Dr. Louise Pound of the University of Nebraska. A large number of the cures listed here came from her collection of Nebraska folklore, or were reported by students from many parts of the state who were enrolled in her classes. To Oswald R. ("Oz") Black, cartoonist for the *Nebraska State Journal*, I owe an especial debt. For several weeks early in 1935 Mr. Black sketched cartoons depicting Nebraska traditional cures in order to arouse interest in the subject. Many new cures were brought in through his efforts. I am indebted also to Mr. Foster May and Mr. Emerson Smith who broadcast their program "The Man on the Street" every day from radio stations KFAB and KFOR in Lincoln. In response to their requests, letters containing folk cures, which were later turned over to me, were sent to these radio stations from various parts of the state. Dr. Vera Rigdon of the Department of Geography of the University of Nebraska deserves appreciative mention for her constant encouragement and aid. I appreciate also, the contributions of my father, Fred J. Black, of Thomas county, Nebraska. He is deeply interested in preserving the traditions of Nebraska, and through his associations with many of the oldest residents of the state, he has been able to give me much help, and to make my collection of cures better represent Nebraska as a whole. Last, I wish to express gratitude to the list of contributors printed at the end of this study, to whom I owe many cures. Unfortunately this list is by no means complete, for it was impossible to secure the name or the place of abode of every informant from whom I had assistance.

PAULINE BLACK

Lincoln, Nebraska

CONTENTS

Preface

Introduction

I. Cures for Aches	9
II. Colds and Related Ailments	11
III. Eye Trouble	15
IV. Inflammation and Infection	17
V. Kidney and Bowel Trouble	19
VI. Rheumatism	20
VII. Toothache	22
VIII. Warts	24
IX. Wounds	30
X. Bites and Stings	32
XI. Miscellaneous	34
XII. Dung and Related Cures	39
XIII. Preventives and Cure-Alls	41
XIV. Cures for Animal Diseases	43
Bibliography	48
List of Contributors	48

INTRODUCTION

Folk cures form a conspicuous part of Nebraska lore. Nebraska pioneers from many states and many countries brought with them certain remedies which they believed particularly efficacious, and which became a tradition in families or communities throughout the state. The cures in the following collection have come directly from the residents of the state and are not limited to any specific locality. They have been recorded as nearly as possible just as the informants gave them. Some alterations have been made in diction and sentence structure to clarify ambiguity. The collection is doubtless incomplete, but it lists, I believe, most of the folk cures now prevalent, or used at one time, in Nebraska. Only a few suggestions have been made concerning the origins of the remedies. In these instances the informant knew the immediate source of the cure which he reported. Obviously in a state where the population is as mixed as in Nebraska, any attempt to trace all folk cures to accurate sources would be futile.

The remarks prefacing each section reveal that some of the diseases for which there are folk cures lend themselves more readily to strange remedies than others. I do not know the explanation for their greater popularity. Nor do I know how widely the cures listed in the following pages are believed in and made use of at the present time. Many have been reported to me as currently employed here and there over the state with faith in their efficacy. Some are cited by their contributors as traditional cures of doubtful value. Others are kept alive in the mouths of persons who repeat them with unmistakable jocularity or skepticism.

The cures are classified in general under specific ailments. A departure from this plan was made in only the last three sections, one of which is concerned with dung as a widely used pioneer cure for many ailments, another with general preventives and cure-alls, and the third with cures for the diseases of animals.

I

CURES FOR ACHES

Headache and earache seem to be the most frequent aches for which folk cures have currency. Toothache cures, which are also common, are treated under a separate heading.

Although there seem to be no explanations in Nebraska for the origin of earache or headache, one informant from Table Rock, Nebraska, submits a curious explanation for chronic headache. She affirms that the combings of hair from the head of a person who has headache always must be burned, lest some bird find them and build its nest with them. If the latter happens, the person from whose head the combings were taken will suffer from headache until the fledglings leave the nest.

HEADACHE

1. Blow smoke in the ear of a person who has headache.
2. Carry rattlesnake rattlers in your hat band to cure headache.
3. Wear earrings to cure headache.
4. Cure headache by rubbing a stone on your forehead.¹
5. Tie a red bandana handkerchief around the head to cure headache.
6. Let your hair grow long to cure and to prevent headache.
7. A person born in October has power to cure a headache by rubbing the forehead and temples.
8. Paste a leaf of cottonwood on each temple and leave it there until it falls off and takes the skin with it. The patient will never again be bothered with headache.
9. Put a mustard plaster on the back of the neck and one under each foot. Let them stay on about five minutes and then remove. The headache will be gone.
10. If a man has headache, put a bowl on his head. Then cut his hair around the bowl, and burn all the hair. This will stop headache.
11. Soak the feet in hot water to cure headache.

EARACHE

12. Heat a seeded raisin very hot over a kerosene lamp or a fire. Put the raisin into the aching ear and close the entrance with cotton.
13. Drop one drop of very cold water into an aching ear. This is a permanent cure for earache.
14. Bake a potato, split it and put it over the ear to let the steam go into the ear.
15. Thin out a piece of cotton and fill it with black pepper. Make a small ball of it and put it into the ear.
16. Drink camomile tea to act as a sedative when you have earache or headache.
17. Melt a grubworm and use the warm oil in the ear of a person who has earache. The aching will stop.
18. The wax in the ear of a person who does not have earache will cure the earache in another person's ear.
19. Chop onions and strong tobacco together, using half as much tobacco as onions. Wrap in a wet cloth and roast in ashes. Squeeze out the juice and put three or four drops into the ear. It gives almost instant relief to earache.

¹ Reported as an Indian cure.

20. Put human milk in the ear to cure earache.
21. Pour a teaspoonful of warm water into the ear. Let it remain awhile, then let it run out.
22. Put mare's milk in the ear to cure earache.
23. Put sweet oil or olive oil in your ear to cure earache.
24. Have someone blow smoke in your ear to cure earache. The smoke must be from a pipe.
25. Have someone spit tobacco juice in your ear to cure your earache.

II

COLDS AND RELATED AILMENTS

It is not surprising that more cures are available for colds than for any other ailment. There are few persons who have not at some time experienced one or more symptoms of a cold, thereupon finding themselves the center of interest to solicitous friends, each of whom volunteers the best and only home remedy which will exterminate the cold germ. Their suggestions may range from wearing a soiled, black cotton stocking around the neck with the heel always placed directly over the Adam's apple, to plasters made of mustard, lard, turpentine, or onions. There are many variations of these remedies. Some persons prefer a clean silk stocking to one of soiled, black cotton. Others advocate the healing propensities of a red, wool sock. The plasters themselves vary much in the number and proportion of each ingredient used and the exact location of the plaster to assure the best results to the patient.

This section includes both minor troubles, such as coughs and cold sores, and the more serious diseases of pneumonia, whooping cough, or sore throat. Colic and hiccoughs are also treated here for convenience, although strictly they do not belong in this section.

COLD

1. For a chest cold, make a flaxseed poultice and put it on the chest.
2. For a cold on the lungs, put heavy brown paper over the lungs.
3. Wear a mustard plaster made from a mixture of mustard and white flour, then mixed with water and spread between two cotton or wool cloths.
4. Put three tablespoons of asafetida into one quart of whiskey. Shake well. For children the dose is one tablespoonful. Adults should use their own judgment as to the amount.
5. Make a tea from the leaves of the mullein plant. Gather the leaves when the plant is in bloom.
6. A mixture of turpentine and lard rubbed on the neck and the chest will cure a cold.
7. Gargle a solution of salt and vinegar for a cold.
8. Rub on goose grease. It must be goose grease rather than any other kind to cure the cold.
9. Drink whiskey with rock candy dissolved in it to cure a cold.
10. Wear a clean, silk stocking around your neck to cure a cold.
11. Grease the chest and neck with hot skunk oil to cure a cold.
12. Drink a tea made of sage and catnip to cure a cold.
13. Eat asafetida as well as wear it around your neck.
14. Gather the red seeds of the sumac bush. Make a tea of them and sweeten well with honey or sugar. Drink to cure a cold.
15. Eat fried onions to cure a cold. Put fried onions around your neck also.
16. Put some honey on a sheet of heavy paper. Hold it over a kerosene lamp until the honey boils, then eat the honey. This will cure a cold.
17. Spread a woolen cloth with butter. Sprinkle it with pepper and put it on the chest to cure a cold.

18. Drink horehound tea for colds.
19. Wrap a cold wet cloth around the neck, then a dry cloth over the wet cloth before going to bed.
20. Rub a mixture of camphor and lard on the neck and chest.
21. Drink hot ginger tea to cure colds.
22. Slice a lemon, rind, seeds, and all, and boil it in a cup of water until there is about a cup of pulp left. Let it set all night and eat it in the morning before breakfast. Repeat this for three days.
23. Soak the feet in hot water to which mustard or ginger has been added.
24. Wear an onion plaster on your chest to cure a cold.
25. Rub goat tallow on the neck and chest.
26. Skin a skunk. Then cut the ribs and legs from the rest of the body. Put the body in a pan over the fire in the open. Cook until no more grease will come out. Then take out the meat which is left, and give the grease by teaspoonfuls to the sick person.
27. To cure colds, rub the chest, the palms of the hands, and the soles of the feet with goose grease.

COLD SORES

28. Rub earwax on cold sores to cure them.
29. Rub the head of a match over them.
30. When you think you are getting a cold sore, rub behind your ear and then rub your lip. Do this three times in succession. Cold sores will not come then.

COUGH

31. Gather the blossoms from elderberry bushes and dry them. Make them into tea to give as a cure for a cough.
32. For a tickling cough caused by getting the feet wet, take one-half of a teaspoon of plain coal oil straight down. It gives instant relief.
33. Make a syrup of kerosene, sugar, and onion juice, and take as often as necessary to cure a cough.
34. Make a syrup of flaxseed for cough medicine.
35. Make a syrup of vinegar, butter, and molasses.
36. Make a syrup of slippery elm bark steeped in water and mixed with honey and licorice.
37. To cure a tickling cough, cut all the fuzz off a feather, leaving only a brush-like surface. Tickle your throat with it to counteract the original tickle.
38. Mix sulphur, molasses, cream of tartar, flaxseed syrup, and slippery elm bark to make a cough syrup.

CROUP

39. Apply a flannel cloth saturated with lard, kerosene, and turpentine to the chest to cure croup.
40. For croup, drink a mixture of alum and sugar. Boil the leaves of the horehound plant. Take the liquid and make a syrup of it by adding sugar or home-made syrup or rock candy.
41. Pour hot water over mullein leaves. Let it steep a few minutes, then draw the water off and sweeten it a little. This cures croup.
42. Eat a teaspoonful of kerosene to cure croup.
43. Render lard from a skunk and apply it to the throat and chest of a child who has croup.

SORE THROAT

44. Touch the tongue with a drop of oil of wintergreen for an instant cure for sore throat.
45. Boil the inner bark from an oak tree until you obtain a dark brown fluid. Cool, and gargle three times a day.
46. Cut bacon in strips and dip it in vinegar. Then tie it around the throat to cure sore throat.
47. Eat raisins to cure a sore throat.
48. Wear a slice of fat pork under a flannel cloth around your neck.
49. Wear a necklace of amber beads to cure or to ward off sore throat.
50. Make sliced tomatoes into a bandage and tie them around the throat.
51. Wear a red woolen sock bound around your throat. The sock must have been removed recently from the foot so that it is still warm.
52. Wear a soiled, black, cotton or wool stocking around the neck to cure sore throat.
53. Wear a rubber band around your arm to cure sore throat.
54. Wear some red wool yarn around your neck to cure sore throat.
55. Put a slice of fat salt pork on your throat. Be sure to cover it with your own dirty stocking, and put a piece of flannel on the outside. Some persons sprinkle pepper on the pork.

INFLUENZA

56. To cure influenza, the Indians in Nebraska placed the sick person in a little tent and packed hot rocks around him. Friends outside the tent kept heating rocks and packing them around the sick Indian. As soon as he was wet with perspiration he leaped out into the ice-cold water to chase the evil spirit away. Many of the Indians died from this "cure".

PNEUMONIA

57. Fry sliced onions with rye flour and make a poultice of it. Apply this to the chest and lungs to cure pneumonia.
58. Cut a live chicken in two and place it over the lungs of a sick person to cure pneumonia.
59. Rub the chest and the neck with kerosene and lard.
60. Cook onions thickened with cornmeal, and place the mixture while it is warm over the lungs.
61. Wilt large cabbage leaves over a fire to make them soft, then put them over the sick person's chest, sides, and back. Wrap a thin cloth around them to hold them on and pour on hot vinegar. It will make the person sweat and break up the pneumonia.

WHOOPIING COUGH

62. Drink warm mare's milk to cure whooping cough.
63. One drop of belladonna taken on sugar three times a day will cure whooping cough.
64. Make a drug from the buttercup to cure whooping cough.
65. Chestnut leaves made into syrup will cure whooping cough.

COLIC

66. Take a teaspoonful of soot in a cloth. Pour over it three tablespoonfuls of hot water. Let it steep awhile, then give the baby a teaspoonful every half hour.
67. Have the baby's mother chew caraway seed and blow her breath in the face of the child who has colic.

68. Feed a baby a few drops of peppermint on a teaspoonful of sugar, or a lump of sugar, to cure colic. Sweetened water fed to the child will also cure colic.
69. Blow tobacco smoke in a spoonful of milk and give it to the child.

HICCOUGHS

70. Let someone scare the person who has hiccoughs and the fright will cure him.
71. Drink nine swallows of water, holding the breath. Then think of the person with whom you are in love and take the tenth swallow. The hiccoughs will be gone.¹
72. When you have hiccoughs think of a member of the opposite sex. If that person loves you, the hiccoughs will go away.
73. Fill a dessert spoon half full of sugar and fill the rest with vinegar. Swallow this to cure hiccoughs.
74. If you have hiccoughs, think of someone. If that person is thinking of you, the hiccoughs will leave.
75. Hold the breath and count to ten and the hiccoughs will be gone.
76. Drink ten swallows of water without drawing a breath.
77. Eat a teaspoonful of sugar and follow it immediately with a drink of water.
78. Have someone pull your tongue hard until your mouth bleeds a little. This is a sure cure for hiccoughs.

OTHER CURES

79. Smoke mullein leaves in a pipe to cure catarrh.
80. To cure chills, wear nutmeg on a string around your neck.
81. Drink warm animal blood to cure consumption.²
82. Eat quantities of watercress as a salad to cure lung trouble.
83. To cure quinsy, gargle gunpowder and glycerin mixed.

¹ This cure usually is practiced by children.

² This cure is used widely along the Dismal River in Thomas county.

III

EYE TROUBLE

Eyes lend themselves readily to superstitious cures based upon charms and incantations. The most widely circulated eye cure is for sties. Despite the fact that sties are now much less common than they once were, one can find many suggestions for curing them or transferring them from one person to another.

The most popular cure is to rub the sty with a gold wedding ring. The ring has long been the symbol of eternity, possessing extraordinary remedial powers. "But the real merit of the wedding ring is not because it is of gold, but because it is something which, once given, cannot be reclaimed. In the West Indies if you give a thing away and take it back, you are sure to have a sty, you will be told."¹ Thus, the wedding ring, which can never be taken back, has in that region, special powers to cure sties. Although Nebraskans cling to this use of the wedding ring to cure their sties, they offer no explanation for its curative powers. It may be that the Nebraska cure is an outgrowth of the superstition prevalent in the West Indies and widely accepted in the Old World.

There are two current explanations in Nebraska for the coming of sties. One is that if a person urinates in the road he will get a sty. The other is that sties are caused by a chair which is so held above the eyes that the legs point toward the eyes. Persons believing this are careful when carrying a chair never to lift it so high that the legs point toward them. This belief is common in Swedish communities and is of Swedish origin. The word "sty" in Swedish is *stolsteg* which literally means "stool step." In other words, if the stool or chair "steps" on you, you will get a sty. It was suggested in Oakland, a Swedish community in Burt county, that perhaps fear of the chair's hitting the eye may cause eye strain eventually leading to a sty.

1. A wedding ring rubbed on a sty in the eye will cure it. The ring may be either gold or brass.
2. To cure a sty, rub it with a cat's tail.
3. Rub turpentine on a sty that has just started.
4. Spit on a sty to cure it by rubbing a moistened finger over it.
5. Startle the person who thinks a sty is forming on the lid of his eye, and the sty will never come.
6. Walk to the first corner and repeat:
 Sty, sty go off my eye
 And take the first that passes by.
Be careful that you are not the first to go by that corner yourself or you will get the sty back.

¹ Black, W. G., *Folk-Medicine*, London, 1883, p. 173.

7. Rub scraped potato on your eye.
8. Go for a ride early in the morning. Stop at the first crossroads and say:
Sty, sty, come off my eye
And go to the next passer-by.
Do not look at this spot again until you are sure that someone has gone by.
9. Bathe sore eyes with tea made from mashed mulberry leaves to heal them.
10. For inflamed eyes, make an eye wash from the root of wild roses.¹
11. Rub the eyes with saliva every morning before breakfast.²
12. For sore eyes, bathe the eyes and the head with cold water night and morning, and bathe the feet at night in cold water.
13. For sore eyes, do not use any water about the eyes or the face.
14. For swollen eyelids and sore eyes, apply a poultice of flaxseed.
15. Piercing the ears strengthens the eyes.
16. To remove a foreign object from the eyes, slip a wet flaxseed under the eyelid. It will catch the object on its sticky surface and carry it out.
17. Put cow's milk in a baby's eyes to cure sore eyes.
18. Avoid wearing rubbers in the house because to do so causes one to develop weak eyes.
19. Peel potatoes and put the peelings over the eye to cure inflammation.
20. Bathe sore eyes in rain water and sugar to cure them.
21. Apply raw beefsteak to black eyes to draw out soreness.
22. Wearing gold rings in pierced ears will cure weak eyes.³
23. To cure cataract in the eyes, grind up egg shells into a fine powder and sprinkle them into the eye.
24. Rub a black eye with a silver knife to draw soreness out.
25. To remove an object from the eye, make a loop from a long horse hair. Put it into the eye and close the lid. When the hair is pulled out, it will bring the object with it.
26. To cure cross-eyes, pierce the child's ears and insert gold hoops.
27. A baby's first tear will cure a blind man of blindness.

¹ This cure was reported as of Pawnee Indian origin.

² Reported by a Canadian woman now living in Nebraska.

³ A cure practiced daily by a person in Lincoln.

IV

INFLAMMATION AND INFECTION

Folk cures for inflammation and infection are homemade poultices which have power to draw out the poison or the soreness. No charms are connected with these cures. If a superstitious element enters in, it lies in the strict adherence of some persons to one specific poultice and their firm belief in the efficacy of that particular concoction above any other. An informant from Custer county relates the following incident:

A woman of seventy, our next-door neighbor, was cutting sunflowers in her front yard with a sharp knife. The knife slipped in her hand, cutting her thumb nearly off. Refusing to see a doctor, the woman gathered some weeds from her yard, mashed the leaves to make a poultice, and bound them on the wound. Not only did she ward off blood poison, but she healed the thumb entirely by her continued applications of mashed weeds.

Cures for burns are more numerous than those for other ailments in this group. Remedies for inflammation and infection are drawn from such sources as one would expect of Nebraska pioneers, namely, animals and plants common to Nebraska.

INFLAMMATION

1. Make a poultice of bread and milk to draw out inflammation.
2. Make a poultice of boiled onions for swollen joints or inflammation of all kinds.
3. Make a poultice of tumblebugs. Mash the bugs up and put them on raw.
4. Mix turpentine, vinegar, and eggs and apply to a swelling.
5. Put raw beefsteak on a bruise to draw out inflammation.
6. Tie a piece of salt pork upon an inflamed or infected surface.
7. Mix brandy, soft soap, and salt and rub the part affected thoroughly once or twice a day.

BURNS

8. Spit on a burn to cure it.
9. Burns can be cured by persons who have the miraculous power of "blowing the fire out of the wound." A woman can teach a man the trick and a man can teach a woman.
10. Rub grease on burns to cure them.
11. If you burn your finger, stick it in your ear and the soreness will go away.
12. Put soda on a burn to cure it.
13. Boil about fifty strong red pepper pods. Strain the solution through cheese cloth. Reduce this to a small quantity by heating it, then pour it into a pint of melted buffalo tallow. Lard is nearly as good as buffalo tallow. The pain will leave five minutes after the application of this remedy.
14. If you rub the white of an egg over a burn, the burn will heal and not leave a scar.
15. Put salt on a burn to cure it.
16. Put pepper on a burn to draw soreness out.
17. Put ice on a burn.

18. Suck a burn to draw out the fire.
19. If you have a burn, the best thing you can do to cure it is to burn the same place over again immediately.
20. Apply the lining of an egg shell.
21. Make a paste of lard and baking soda and apply freely.
22. Slices of new potato applied to a burn heal it.
23. Cover a surface which has been burned with a lather of soft soap.
24. Men working with stock frequently "burn" their hands on a rope. The best remedy for this is to wash the hands in strong salt water at body temperature.
25. Pulverize the root of the cat-tail plant and spread it on burns as a salve.¹
26. Apply wet tea leaves to burns to cure them.
27. Applications of turpentine and gunpowder cure a felon.
28. Strong lye soap and tobacco boiled together and thickened with cornmeal make an excellent poultice for felons.
29. Use common rock salt that is used for salting pork or beef. Dry it in the oven and pound it very fine. Mix it with equal parts of turpentine and put it in a rag. Wrap around the affected parts and as fast as it gets dry put on more. This cures a felon in twenty-four hours.

INFECTION

30. Put a piece of fat bacon over the infected part.
31. Apply a poultice of slippery elm bark to draw out infection.
32. Make a poultice by putting bacon grease and salt on a rag and wrapping the rag around the infected part.
33. Make a poultice from the cactus plant and apply it while hot. It will draw out thorns, sandburrs, boils, or splinters.²

OTHER CURES

34. To cure erysipelas, apply a poultice made of beets mixed with fresh-cut chewing tobacco.

¹ Reported as of Pawnee Indian origin.

² Reported to be of Mexican origin.

V

KIDNEY AND BOWEL TROUBLES

Like the cures in the preceding section, the remedies for kidney and bowel troubles seldom involve charms. For the most part these cures are various liquids or teas carefully prepared from herbs or weeds, or they are mixtures of many home ingredients. It is possible that these remedies do alleviate the pain somewhat, and benefit the patient in this way. Even though there may be no actual medicinal value in the tea, the warmth may have a propitious result.

Under the heading of the present section are grouped such diseases as diarrhea, dropsy, bladder trouble, dysentery, and piles.

1. For bladder trouble, drink much tea made from watermelon seeds.
2. To cure bladder trouble, boil a quart of cockleburrs and drink the tea.¹
3. To cure dysentery, cook the pink bark of a live oak tree for half an hour. Take a tablespoonful of this liquid every half hour as long as it is necessary.
4. Apply the white of an egg externally to the abdomen to cure dysentery.
5. For dysentery drink water in which white writing paper has been soaked.
6. To cure dysentery, brown a teaspoonful of flour, add milk, and boil until the mixture is smooth. Drink this.
7. Feed a baby the white of an egg to cure dysentery.
8. Drink tea made from mullein leaves to cure dysentery.
9. To cure bed wetting, feed the patient the hind legs of a rat fried crisp.²
10. Eat radishes with rock candy to cure kidney trouble.
11. Eat asparagus to cure kidney trouble.
12. Eat raisins to cure kidney trouble.
13. To check diarrhea, make a concoction from the leaves of horehound.³
14. Drink tea made from red-root or the inside bark of a live oak to cure diarrhea.
15. To cure diarrhea, put one tablespoonful of flour into a glass. Add water until it is a thin solution. Add a lot of cinnamon and cloves. Pour it back and forth until the mixture foams, then drink.
16. Put one beef gall in a quart of whiskey and shake well. Drink a swallow three times a day, half an hour before eating. This will cure dropsy.
17. Carry a buckeye in the pocket at all times to cure piles.
18. To cure piles, apply buffalo tallow mixed with salt.

¹ This advice was given by a trained nurse to a man in the Sand Hills.

² This cure was brought to Nebraska by a Mexican.

³ Reported as an Indian remedy.

VI

RHEUMATISM

Rheumatism cures abound in Nebraska. Many of the oldest residents in the state, ordinarily non-superstitious, still cling tenaciously to charms to ward off or to cure rheumatism.

The cures most frequently practiced in this state are those involving the wearing of copper or brass rings or the carrying of an amulet in the pocket. It is believed that persons who carry a rabbit's foot in the left pocket are never troubled with rheumatism; but if they lose the talisman or neglect to carry it in the proper pocket, they are immediately seized with excruciating pain.

One Nebraska farmer living in the Sand Hills tells his experience with rheumatism as follows:

For years I've been wearing a copper wire around my finger and I've never suffered from rheumatism. One afternoon I was working with a team in the field too far from the house to go in for repairs. Suddenly a harness strap broke and without thinking I wired it together with the copper wire from around my finger. In just a little while I was seized with rheumatism, and it didn't quit till I put that wire back on.

The use of the ring to cure disease has been cited in connection with eye trouble. Its remedial powers are accepted so widely by folk of all countries, that it is difficult to trace its origin in Nebraska where the population is so mixed.

Cats and snakes both play an important part in folk remedies for rheumatism. Belief in their efficacy is doubtless a legacy of the old, almost universal belief in the use of cats and snakes for mysterious healing by witches.

1. Bare your back or arm and let someone shake a drove of bees on it to sting you. This will cure your rheumatism.
2. Wear a brass belt to cure rheumatism.
3. Sleep with a cat on the foot of your bed. When the cat gets your rheumatism, you will not be bothered with it any longer.
4. To cure rheumatism, put a raw, skinned herring under your left foot.¹
5. Rub snake oil on the patient's joints.
6. Take a teaspoonful of common soda three times a day in half a glass of water.
7. Wear a paper sack around the neck to cure rheumatism.
8. Rub rattlesnake oil on the affected parts. The oil must be from a rattler.
9. Wear the rattles of a rattlesnake or carry them in your pocket to cure rheumatism.
10. Boil two gallons of cockleburs and mix the juice with lard. Rub this mixture on the affected parts.²
11. Rub on skunk oil, well tried, and heat it in with hot packs. This oil will cure immediately when all other oils fail.

¹ Reported as brought from Sweden.

² Used much by a woman in Shubert, Nebraska.

12. Get some dirt from a graveyard and walk over it for ten nights and your rheumatism will be cured.
13. To cure rheumatism, allow a bee to sting the affected joint.
14. Sleep with a dog to cure rheumatism. When the dog catches rheumatism from you, yours will be gone.
15. Wear red flannel to cure rheumatism. No other color will work.
16. Carry a lucky bean in your pocket to cure rheumatism.
17. Use tincture of cat to cure rheumatism.³
18. Put a piece of snake skin in your hip pocket.
19. An Irish potato carried in the pocket will cure rheumatism.
20. Carry a rabbit's foot in your pocket.
21. Bind a small potato upon the painful surface. After a while the potato will become hard as wood. Then put on a fresh potato.
22. Boil potatoes and then soak the feet in hot water to cure rheumatism.
23. If you carry a buskeye in your pocket, it will cure rheumatism. It must be carried in the left pocket, according to some persons.
24. Put copper plates in your shoes to cure rheumatism.
25. Procure the fat from an entirely black cat and use it as a liniment.
26. If you wear a ring made of silver, brass, or copper on your little finger, it will cure rheumatism.
27. Boil cactus roots to make juice. Mix juice with red clay and pack it on the affected parts.
28. Carry a horse chestnut in your pocket.
29. Make a ring from a horseshoe nail, wear on finger.

³ In Omaha, a negro sold a preparation called tincture of cat to cure rheumatism and other ailments. To advertise his wares, he used a cat's skeleton mounted in a glass case.

VII TOOTHACHE

Cures for toothache are must less extensive in Nebraska than one would expect in view of the fact that the tooth has been the subject of much curious lore from the earliest records of ancient history. Folklore of the teeth has developed prolifically in all countries. W. G. Black cites many instances of its use on the British Isles.¹ The Nebraska remedies include the use of magic and charms and home "medicines." Although the cures for toothache are not abundant in this state, those which are in use or have been used point to many superstitious beliefs concerning the teeth.

Cures for teething as well as for toothache are included in this collection. Most of them are of a superstitious nature.

TOOTHACHE

1. Hold bruised horseradish leaves on the face with a heavy hot flannel cloth over them to cure toothache.
2. Stick a red hot needle in the center of the cavity in an aching tooth and the tooth will stop aching.
3. Slice a little piece off the frog of a horse's front hoof and put it between the aching tooth and the one next to it.
4. If you have a toothache, put a horseradish poultice on the wrist opposite the side the tooth is on, and the ache will go.
5. Chew tobacco to cure a bad toothache.²
6. Put gunpowder on an aching tooth to ease it.
7. Wear a piece of string around your neck.
8. Stick a toothpick into the aching tooth or the gum until the gum bleeds. Remove the toothpick and put it into the bark of a tree. No one must see you do this or the tooth will not stop aching.
9. Cut the first skin off the frog of a horse's front hoof and put the skin over a fire until it chars. Crumble it and put it on the aching tooth.
10. Put a drop or two of clove oil in the tooth cavity.
11. Hold whiskey in the mouth to deaden the pain.³

TEETHING

12. Put a string of beads (Job's tears)⁴ around the child's neck and the teeth will come through without pain.
13. Put a rattlesnake rattle in a tobacco bag and hang the bag around the child's neck during teething.
14. When a baby is fretful while teething, string three large snake rattles on a red cord and put it around the child's neck. Do not remove until child is through teething.

¹ *Folk-Medicine*, London, 1883.

² This cure is prevalent in the Sand Hills.

³ The informant said that it was difficult to get the patient to hold the whiskey in his mouth.

⁴ "Job's tears" are large, gray seeds.

15. Give the baby cartridges from a six-shooter to chew while it is teething. They must be from a six-shooter.
16. Let the baby chew rattlesnake rattles to help his teeth through.
17. Give the child Job's tears to cut teeth on.
18. Rub the baby's gums with an ivory ring or a celluloid ring.
19. Rub the baby's gums with a silver thimble to bring teeth through.
20. In order to cut teeth without pain, a baby must wear a red, flannel vest.
21. Rub the swollen gums of a teething child with the brains of a freshly killed rabbit to bring the teeth through.

VIII

WARTS

Cures for warts are more numerous than are those for any other ailment with the exception of colds and other diseases grouped under that heading in Section II. Considering the fact that warts are seldom found now, this seems strange. The oldest living settlers of Nebraska tell of early days when warts were common, and there was much debate as to the cause of this affliction and the best means of getting rid of it.

It was a commonly accepted belief that handling toads was responsible for the appearance of warts on one's hands. Some persons went so far as to say that the number of warts which appeared would correspond definitely to the number of protuberances on the toad. This belief concerning the origin of warts is upheld now mainly by children, who are responsible for the perpetuation of many superstitious cures. Children are fascinated by charms, and warts seem to yield themselves readily to charm cures. By charm is meant "a treatment whose action is not apparent even to the people who use it. It is taken as a cure on faith, and the possibility of curative action never questioned."¹ The latter part of this statement is essential. One must have absolute faith in the cure before any healing will result. Thus, it is possible to dismiss the person who has no luck with a specific cure as one who shows a positive lack of faith.

It is possible to classify the cures for warts under eleven headings, namely: bean-, bone-, corn-, meat-, pebble and stone-, pin and needle-, potato-, rag-, string or thread-cures, cures for transference, and miscellaneous cures. Under the first nine headings the cures are chiefly variations of the same cure; for instance some persons maintain that meat which has been rubbed on a wart to cure it should be buried; others assert that unless the meat is thrown over the left shoulder, no cure will take place. Still others insist that only when the meat is fed to a dog will the warts disappear.

Associated with warts is a belief in the transference of disease which is seldom found with regard to other ailments. Warts may be "sold" to a person who becomes afflicted immediately and in turn must sell them to another to rid himself of them. Warts also may be transferred to someone by putting pebbles in a sack and leaving the sack for some unwitting person to pick up. Anyone unfortunate enough to pick up a stick which has been rubbed on another's warts may find himself the immediate recipient of these annoying little tumors.

¹ Walter R. Smith, "Animals and Plants in Oklahoma Folk-Cures," *Folk-Say*, Norman, Oklahoma, 1929, pp. 72-73.

It is probable that this idea of transference of warts came from the British Isles. W. G. Black in his chapter on "Transference of Disease" says, "In Cheshire the absolute transference of warts is worth noting."² Black also cites similar examples found in Lancashire and Scotland.

BEAN

1. Face the front door at home. Bite a bean in two and rub it on each wart. Then throw the bean over the left shoulder and never look for it. The warts will disappear.
2. Cross a wart with a bean and feed the bean to a rooster. The wart will soon leave.
3. Select a large, dry bean either navy, Boston, or lima bean. Rub it gently over the afflicted area and plant the bean. If it sprouts and grows, the warts are guaranteed to be removed. If it fails to sprout, repeat the treatment.
4. Split a bean. Cut the wart and put a drop of blood in the bean. Then bury the bean at midnight. Turn around three times and walk home without speaking to anyone on the way. The wart will disappear. The blood on the bean draws the wart toward it.
5. Toss a bean over your left shoulder into a well. Your warts will soon leave.
6. Take a leaf from a string bean vine and rub it on the wart. When the wart is green, hide the leaf. The wart will disappear.
7. Split a bean in two and rub one half on the wart, then bury it. Throw the other half of the bean as far as possible. When the buried half decays, the wart will disappear.
8. Steal some white beans from your neighbor and bury them. When they rot, your warts will be gone.

BONE

9. Walk in the woods until you find the bone of an animal. Rub the bone carefully over the wart with the side which was next to the ground. Then dig a hole in the ground and bury the bone. When it decays the warts will disappear.
10. Rub the wart with a bone which you find under a tree. You must hunt until you find the bone under a tree, then after rubbing the wart with it, put the bone back in its identical position.
11. Pick up a bone from the ground and rub the warts with it. Then throw the bone backwards as far as you can. Do not look back at the bone, and your warts will come off.

CORN

12. Steal a grain of corn and destroy it so that its owner will never have it again, and your warts will leave.
13. Rub the warts with a kernel of corn and feed the corn to a rooster. Be sure the rooster gets it and your warts will disappear.
14. Touch seventeen different kernels of corn to each wart, then feed the corn to the chickens. If they eat the corn, the warts will disappear.
15. Bury a small bag of corn. When the corn decays, the warts will leave.
16. Throw away a grain of corn for each wart, and the warts will soon disappear.
17. Cut a corn cob crosswise and take out the white pulp center. Put this on the wart. Then fill the inside of the cob with soda and add a drop of vinegar to boil the soda away. Hold this over the warts. Repeat two or three times a day until cured.

² *Folk-Medicine*, London, 1883, p. 38.

18. Pick the wart open and rub it with the pulp inside of a kernel of corn. Then feed the corn to a chicken.
19. Throw a handful of corn in a well to cure warts. When the corn decays, the warts will disappear.

MEAT

20. Rub the wart with a piece of raw meat. Bury the meat under a stone upon which water drips. When the meat decays, the wart is gone.
21. Put a slice of fat pork between two boards and put the boards under the eaves. Eventually your warts will be cured.
22. Rub a piece of meat over the warts, then feed the meat to a dog. Warts will soon leave.
23. Throw a piece of fat meat over your left shoulder and never go back to hunt for it.
24. Tie beefsteak on warts.
25. Rub a piece of bacon on a wart and then bury the bacon in the ground. By the time the bacon has decayed the wart will have disappeared.
26. Steal a slice of bacon from your mother and fry it. Put it between two bricks and bury it. When the bacon rots, the warts will fall off.

PEBBLE AND STONE

27. Touch every wart with a pebble. Put the pebble in a bag and bury the bag at night.
28. Rub the wart with a smooth stone, then hurl the stone without looking at it, over the left shoulder. The warts will be gone before long.
29. If you make a little bag, drop a white pebble in it for every wart you have, and bring it at midnight to the cross-roads without letting anyone see or know of it, your warts will disappear.

PIN AND NEEDLE

30. Prick the wart with a needle. Run the needle into a grain of corn and bury the grain of corn.
31. Stick a pin through the wart and burn the end of the pin.
32. Pick a wart with a new pin and then throw the pin away. The warts will soon leave.

POTATO

33. Carry an Irish potato in your pocket to cure warts.
34. Cut a slit in a potato. Pinch it over the wart, so that the wart is in the slit. Then bury the potato. When it decays, the wart will disappear.¹
35. Cut a potato in half. Rub each piece on the wart and fit the pieces together again. Then throw the potato over your shoulder. Do not watch where it goes. When the potato rots, your warts will disappear.
36. Cut a potato. Rub it on the wart and then bury the potato. When the potato decays the warts will be gone.

RAG

37. Rub a dish rag on the wart, and bury the rag under a rock.
38. Rub an old, much-used rag on the wart and then bury the rag in the ground secretly. The wart will soon disappear.
39. Rub a stolen dish rag over the wart and bury the rag behind the barn. When the rag decays, the wart will be gone.

¹ Reported as brought to Nebraska from Germany.

40. If you have a wart, have someone else hide your dish cloth. You must not know where it is hidden. When it decays your wart is gone.
41. Steal your neighbor's dish rag. It must be your neighbor's or the cure will not work. Bury the rag, and when it rots the warts will be gone.
42. Steal a dish cloth, preferably from your mother. Dampen it and pass it over the warts. Take the cloth in a paper sack and bury it by the light of the moon. The warts will disappear within the week.
43. Rub a dish rag on the wart and bury the rag anywhere in the ground. When it decays, the warts disappear.
44. Steal your mother's dish rag, and bury it in the damp ground on the north side of a building before the sun rises and before you eat breakfast. When the rag has decayed your warts will disappear.

STRING OR THREAD CURES

45. To cure a wart, let someone tie a thread around it three times and then bury the string in the ground where human foot cannot tread, as under a stone wall or a building. No word must be spoken during the ceremony. As the string decays, the wart will disappear.
46. Tie a silk thread around a wart. Burn up the rest of the thread and the wart will go away.
47. Tie one end of a string around the wart and the other around a door knob. Shut the door hard in order to yank the wart off.
48. Tie a knot in a string for each wart and bury the string under a hog trough. Let no one see you do it or know of it.
49. Tie a silk thread around the wart and keep pulling it tighter and tighter until the wart comes off.
50. Tie knots in a string for each wart. Bury the string under the eaves where the rain can drip on it. When it rains, the warts will go.
51. Rub the wart with twine and bury the twine under the eaves.
52. Tie as many knots in a string as there are warts on the hands. Bury the string in the ground. When it decays the warts will disappear from the hands.
53. Tie a knot in a string for every wart. Walk backward to a stone and lay the string under the stone. When the string rots the warts will be gone.
54. At night bury a short, white string in the ground. When you awaken in the morning, the warts will be gone.

TRANSDUCENCE OF WARTS

55. Rub the wart with a penny and give the penny away. The wart will go with it.
56. You may sell a wart for any amount and the purchaser will get the wart.
57. Count off the number of warts you have on another's hands, touching the person's skin for each wart. Your warts will soon disappear and the other person will have them.
58. Put one pebble in a box for each wart. Wrap the box in paper and place it in some conspicuous place where someone is sure to pick it up. The person who picks it up will have the warts and yours will disappear.
59. Pick the wart until it bleeds, then rub the blood on a smooth rock. Tie the rock up in a package and drop the package in the road. The person who picks it up will get the wart.
60. Count your warts with the point of a pin. Hide the pin. If anyone finds it and uses it, he will get the warts. If you bury the pin, the warts will disappear later.

61. Stick a pin in the wart, wrap the pin in a corn shuck, and put the shuck in the road. The first person who steps on the shuck will get the wart.

MISCELLANEOUS CURES

62. Rub your wart with a wedding ring to cure it.
63. Rub the wart with a penny and throw the penny as far as possible.
64. Sell the wart for a penny and hide the penny in a clock.
65. Tie a horsehair into as many knots as you have warts. Insert it into a bottle of water and secrete it in some damp, dark place for nine days. The warts will leave.
66. Tie a horsehair around the warts. They will soon leave.
67. When the moon is full, pull up a green weed, any kind of weed that is green, rub the wart with it, and throw the weed away without looking at it.
68. The first Friday of every new moon for three nights, look at the moon and repeat the following three times: "What I see increase and what I feel decrease." Rub the wart and it will disappear.
69. Burn the wart with a match and it will disappear.
70. Let someone rub a match over the wart until the match smokes. When this happens, hide the match. If the person who has the wart ever finds out where the match is, his wart will return.
71. Rub two sticks over the warts. Take the sticks to the forks of the road and put them down in the form of a cross. Do not look back at the sticks and the warts will go.
72. Cut notches in a stick corresponding in number with the number of warts. Throw the stick away and the warts will disappear.
73. Steal a fish head, rub it over your warts and then bury it, so deeply that no animal can dig it up. Warts will disappear in a week.
74. Pick open a wart until it bleeds, then let a hen pick it. It must be a hen and not a rooster or the wart will not leave.
75. With a sharp knife, preferably clean, carefully cut off the top of the wart. Wash this dissected part, tie it in a cotton bag and throw it away. If someone picks up the bag, the wart will leave, otherwise it will remain.¹
76. Rub the warts over a dead body and they will soon disappear.
77. Cut a raw egg in two and then throw a dishpan over your left shoulder. This will cure warts.
78. Rub your warts with butter to cure them.
79. Apply olive-oil externally to the warts to cure them.
80. This is called the wishing, wart-removing treatment. After a rigid period of concentration, wish that the wart be removed to some other living animal, such as a dog's ears or the back of a cat.
81. Bathe warts with vinegar to cure them.
82. Take a broom straw and break it at the joint. Then rub it on the wart to cure the wart.
83. Milkweed applied to a wart as often as you think necessary will get rid of the wart.
84. Throw your gum in the cistern and your warts will disappear.
85. Go to the cemetery at midnight with a dead cat. Go to the grave of a friend, stand on it, and rub the cat across the wart. The wart will leave.
86. Take as many peas as there are warts, toss them into a well and run under a roof before the peas hit the water. (Someone else may throw the peas for you.) When the peas decompose, the warts will come off.

¹ Used by a woman in Lincoln who says the cure worked.

87. To cure warts, cut a patch in them.
88. Cut a hole in the top of a turnip and put salt in the hole. Then put the sap on the wart.
89. Pick the wart so the skin is broken. Put on a grain of concentrated lye the size of a pin head. When the lye eats the wart, pull off and put on pure vinegar to keep the lye from eating on through the hand.²
90. Rub a wart on the bottom of a shoe sole. When the sole wears out the wart will be gone.
91. Wash your hands in water found in a hollow stump to cure warts.
92. If you spit on a wart every morning just after you wake up, the wart will disappear in time.
93. Wet your hand, cover it with salt, and let a horse lick it. The warts on the hand will disappear.³
94. Count your warts as you touch them with your finger. Do it several times every day and they will soon leave.⁴

² A woman in Kearney, Nebraska, says that she removed seven warts in this way.

³ A citizen of Lincoln says that his warts disappeared after this treatment.

⁴ A woman in Buffalo county says her warts left in one month after this treatment.

IX

WOUNDS

Included in this section are remedies to stop the flow of blood from cuts and sores, from a nail in the foot, and from nosebleed. In the first two instances these cures are not of a superstitious nature, but for the most part they consist of adaptations of various home products, such as poultices of weeds or animal fat, sugar, and flour. In the case of nosebleed, however, nearly all of the remedies are superstitious with little in them to effect a cure except the user's faith in their potency.

1. Stop bleeding by applying spiderwebs to the wound.
2. If an artery is cut, sear it with a hot iron. If it is a vein, apply a mixture of charred feathers and cobwebs and bind it on the cut.
3. If anyone bleeding from a cut will hang a bunch of keys around his neck, the blood will stop flowing instantly.
4. Put soda on a cut to stop its bleeding.
5. Mix brown sugar and whiskey, and put the solution on the bleeding surface to stop bleeding.
6. Put sugar on a cut to stop bleeding and heal the wound.
7. To stop bleeding, apply a handful of cobwebs to the wound.
8. Apply flour to a cut to cure bleeding.
9. Use milkweed lotion (the sweet juice of milkweed) on cuts and sores to heal them.
10. Put the cut in kerosene to stop its bleeding.
11. Put the cut in mud to heal it.
12. To stop a wound from bleeding, apply the lining of an egg shell.
13. Apply sheep tallow to heal sores and cuts.
14. Soak arnica leaves in alcohol and apply to cuts.
15. Tie a chew of tobacco on the wound.¹
16. The root of the hop vine (crooked root) is used to heal wounds.
17. Apply puff balls to the wound to stop bleeding.²

NOSE BLEED

18. If a woman has nose bleed, have a man read a chapter in a book to her to cure it. If a man is afflicted, have a woman read to him. The charm will not work if the two are of the same sex.
19. Hang a butcher knife down your back to cure nose bleed.
20. Stand with your back to a mulberry tree. Measure your height on the tree, and then bore a hole in the tree there. Cut a lock of your hair, put it in the hole, and drive a rusty nail in it. Your nose will never bleed again.
21. Put a nickel in the roof of your mouth and hold it up with your tongue. At the same time hold both hands high up in the air.
22. Wear a wool thread around your big toe to cure nose bleed.
23. Wear a red necklace around your neck to cure nose bleed.

¹ This was used on a citizen of Lincoln when he cut his foot badly with a garden hoe. The wound healed in a short time.

² Puff balls are similar to toadstools.

24. Put a folded piece of cardboard under your upper lip.
25. Put a small piece of brown paper under your upper lip to stop nose bleed.
26. Put a penny under the upper lip and a cold key down your back to cure nose bleed.
27. Wear a blue bead on a single thread around the neck to cure nose bleed.
28. Apply cold wet cloths to the back of the neck.
29. Mash a lead bullet flat around a string and put the string around the neck.
30. Let the blood fall on an axe or knife and stick the weapon in the ground. The nose will soon stop bleeding.
31. Wear a red string around the neck to cure nose bleed.
32. Put a cold coin on the back of the neck.
33. Put a key on a red flannel string and hang it around the neck.
34. Put a wet cloth to the nostrils to clot the blood.
35. Put a half dollar under the upper lip.
36. Put ice on the back of the head or on the forehead.
37. Put a dime on the back of the tongue.
38. Put a nickel under the upper lip.
39. Put a brown cigarette paper in the roof of the mouth to cure nose bleed.
40. Put a penny in the mouth.
41. Hang the head over the back of a chair.

NAIL IN THE FOOT

42. Pull the nail out, grease it, and throw it in the fire. This will keep the foot from ever getting sore.
43. Put a slice of fat salt meat over the wound.
44. Make a poultice by scraping raw beets and apply it to the wound.
45. Soak the foot in kerosene.
46. Soak the foot in hot water into which has been dissolved a lot of Epsom salts.
47. Hold the foot in hot ashes.
48. Let a pup lick a sore that will not heal. It stops the bleeding and cures the sore.
49. When medical aid was not available, Nebraska settlers used to keep a wet rag on a gunshot wound until the wound healed.
50. Indians split cactus leaves, burned the thorns off, heated the leaves thoroughly, and bound them on the wound.

X

BITES AND STINGS

When the early settler "homesteaded" in Nebraska one of the cures which he needed most to know was a remedy for the deadly bite of a rattlesnake. Because most available to him, his most frequent cures were poultices made from such plants as the cactus or the soapweed, or grease or lard from animals, or their warm intestines applied to a wound to draw out poison. Tobacco afforded the most popular poultice. Captain Lute North of Columbus, Nebraska, a resident of the state since 1856, told of a man whom he once saw cured of a rattlesnake bite by application of tobacco. Another man chewed quantities of it and kept the hand well poulticed. According to Captain North, the man who was bitten recovered from the bite without getting sick, but the man who chewed tobacco for the poultices became very ill.

The rattlesnake, which corresponds to the viper of other folklore, has been used much in Nebraska as a cure for such diseases as goiter or headache. Strangely enough, however, only in one case was it reported to have been used as a cure for its own bite. In this instance, a man from Thomas county who was bitten, immediately cut off the snake's head, and then split open its body, cutting it into three-inch pieces. These he applied immediately to the wound, discarding each piece as it became saturated with the poison. In this instance the snake was not used because of any charm which the man associated with the snake, but as a poultice in an emergency.

Classified in this section with snake bites are also insect stings and stings received from such plants as nettles, poison ivy, and cactus.

SNAKE BITE

1. Cut a snake bite criss-cross, then spit tobacco juice on it or empty a pipe on it.
2. If there are any chickens available, cut one open either after it has been killed or while it is still alive, and put it over the snake bite. Before long the chicken will be all green from the poison which it has drawn out. It takes nearly a dozen chickens to draw all the poison from the wound.
3. For rattlesnake bite in an emergency, beat cockleburrs to a pulp and apply the pulp as a poultice to the wound.
4. Kill an animal, preferably a cow, and slit a hole in its abdomen. Bury the snake bitten area into the middle of the animal. Leave it there until the carcass becomes cold and then remove. The poison from the bite will be drawn out.
5. Suck a snake bite to heal it.
6. Apply the warm flesh of an animal to draw out poison.
7. Drink all the whiskey you can hold to cure a snake bite.
8. Pack mud on a rattlesnake bite to cure it.¹

¹ This cure was used by a citizen of Logan county when he was fourteen years old. He was alone in a cornfield when a snake bit him. He sat down immediately and began to pack mud on the bite until the pain was gone. Then after packing fresh mud on it, he went home. The process took him half a day.

9. Soak the bite in coal oil for a long time.
10. Puncture the skin around the bite with the sharp points of the soapweed to let the poison run out.
11. Keep jabbing the swollen places with sharp knives until the black blood and water come out. This will be the poison.
12. Cut the outside prickles off the cactus found in the Sand Hills. Mash the inside of the plant and apply it to the bite as a poultice. Keep it moist with water and change as often as it becomes warm.
13. Apply hog lard to the wound. Heat the lard and have the patient drink all he can.
14. Scarify the flesh as deeply as the fangs went and make at least two incisions. Then apply table salt.
15. Apply a mixture of turpentine and gunpowder to a rattlesnake bite to cure it.
16. Bury that part of the body bitten by the snake in the ground and soak the earth with sweet milk.
17. Mash the roots of the milkweed and apply it to a rattlesnake bite. Also give the patient half of the milk internally.²

DOG BITE

18. Rub axle grease on a dog bite to cure it.
19. When it was thought that the dog was mad, a stone called a "mad stone" was rubbed over the bite to cure it. This stone was found inside a deer.

STING

20. Pack mud on the part which has been stung by a bee or a wasp.
21. For the sting of a bee or a wasp, wrap the leaf of a tomato vine over it.
22. Hold a sting in turpentine to cure it.
23. For stings, pull the stem from a pipe and put the excess nicotine collected there on the sting.
24. Apply common soda, moistened, to cure a sting.
25. Mash the leaves of any kind of vegetation and apply them to insect bites or stings.
26. Apply soda and vinegar mixed to stings.
27. Put tobacco juice on a hornet sting to cure it.

POISON IVY

28. Mix nightshade berries with cream and apply to parts affected by poison ivy.
29. Wash the affected parts with strong salt water.
30. Wear an ordinary fishing sinker around your neck on a string to cure or to prevent poison ivy.
31. Pack mud on poison ivy sting to cure it.
32. Carry a pocketful of cartridges in your pocket to prevent or to cure poison ivy. The lead in the cartridges effects the cure.
33. Rub the poisoned parts with pure apple vinegar.

NETTLES

34. Take the slime off a fish that you have just caught and put the slime on the stinging surface.
35. Pack mud on nettle sting to cure it.
36. Put tobacco juice on nettle sting to cure it.

² Reported as an Indian cure.

XI MISCELLANEOUS

There are numerous cures which cannot be classified conveniently in the foregoing sections, nor are there enough for any one disease to justify their segregation into a separate division. It seems expedient, then, to treat them collectively here. Even in this section a certain amount of classification is possible, and seven divisions may be distinguished, namely: cures for asthma, boils, complexion and skin trouble, corns, goiter, ringworm, and a large group of unclassifiables. Many of the cures for the complexion, and for asthma, goiter, and ringworm are decidedly superstitious. Boils and corns are treated with home remedies, some of which may have healing propensities. The unclassifiables, listed under Other Cures, are especially representative of Nebraska folk cures as a whole, and range from cures for tears caused by peeling onions to cures for muddy drinking water, insanity, vermin, stammering, cracks between the toes, and seven-year itch.

ASTHMA

1. Drink tea made from jimson weed to cure asthma.
2. Blindfold the asthma sufferer, lead him into the woods, and bore a hole at his exact height in a tree. Put a lock of hair in the hole and plug it up. When the child grows taller than the plug, his asthma is supposed to leave.¹
3. If you have asthma, keep cats around you. When nine cats have caught asthma from you, you will be cured.²
4. Go down to a river and catch a frog. Pry its mouth open and blow your breath into it. This must be done before daylight. The frog will die before sundown with asthma, but the person will never have it again.
5. Make a drug from the buttercup to cure asthma.
6. Make a tea from the leaves of sumac and drink it.
7. Mix bee's honey with sulphur and take a teaspoonful every hour until relieved.
8. Stand the child up to a tree which is as tall as he is. Pound some of the child's hair into the tree. If the tree outgrows the child, he won't have any more asthma. If the child outgrows the tree, he will always have asthma.

BOILS

9. Make a bread and milk poultice with saffron fried and flour mixed in it.
10. Put a strip of bacon on the boil. It will soon bring the boil to a head.
11. Apply a poultice made of soft soap and strained honey.
12. Apply a poultice made of plantain leaves.
13. Apply a poultice of sugar and soap.
14. Swallow nine shots from a shot gun shell to cure boils.
15. Apply a poultice of flaxseed meal. Keep it moist and as hot as can be stood.
16. Apply bread and milk.
17. Make a poultice from the cactus plant. Bake the plant and then split it and apply to the boil while hot.

¹ Practiced by a Nebraska attorney upon his grandmother's request. The asthma left him but returned in twenty years.

² Practiced by a doctor in Thomas county.

COMPLEXION AND SKIN TROUBLES

18. Wash the skin in buttermilk every day to cure freckles.
19. To remove tan, soak wild tansy in buttermilk for several days. Wet a cloth in the solution and apply it to the tan several hours a day.
20. Put some oatmeal in a little bag of cloth and soak in half a cup of milk. When the milk gets syrupy, rub it on the tan or freckles. Repeat until freckles and tan disappear.
21. Apply beef tallow or mutton suet, rubbed well into the skin, to heal chapped hands. Do not wash until healed.
22. Rub buffalo tallow on chapped hands to heal them.
23. Wash the hands in strong, hot, salt water, then in soap and water, and then dry them.
24. For chapped hands, rub vaseline on them and then coat them thoroughly with dry oatmeal and put on cotton gloves.
25. To remove freckles, slice raw cucumbers and rub them on the face.
26. To remove freckles, tie a horsehair into as many knots as you have freckles. Insert the hair into a bottle of water and put the bottle in a damp, cool place. After nine days the freckles will disappear.
27. Arise at dawn, bathe the face in dew, and say while doing this:
 "Beauty come. Freckles go.
 Dewdrops make me
 White as snow."
The freckles will all disappear.
28. To cure freckles, go through the following ceremony: Arise early on the first day of May and without saying anything to anyone, bathe the face at dawn in the dew. Then rub the hands on another part of the body, repeating at the same time, "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." The freckles will leave.¹
29. Brown egg shells in a pan in the oven. Take them out and roll them into a fine powder. Eat the powder and it will immediately clean your system and clear your complexion.
30. Wash the hands in the first snow and it will prevent them from becoming chapped.

CORNS

31. Put onion skins on a corn to heal it.
32. Put raw pork on a corn to cure it.
33. Tie a piece of fat salt pork on a bunion. Put a fresh piece on every night for a week.
34. Put wood ashes in hot water and use the solution as a foot bath to heal corns and bunions.
35. Cut cranberries in two and put the halves on a corn to cure it.
36. Rub kerosene on a corn to cure it.
37. Put a slice of salted lemon on your corn for ten nights, then your corn will disappear.
38. Spit on corns every morning just after you awaken, and they will disappear.

GOITER

39. A string of any kind of heavy beads worn around the neck will cure goiter.
40. Wrap a snake around the neck and allow it to creep off, and the goiter will disappear.

¹ Brought to Nebraska from Germany by the informant's grandfather.

41. Wear a piece of velvet ribbon around your neck to cure goiter.²
42. If a person who has goiter will go into a room where a corpse is lying and take the hand of the dead person and rub it over the goiter, the goiter will disappear.
43. To blow in fire gives one goiter, but to inhale smoke will cure it.
44. Wear a gold chain around the neck to cure goiter.
45. A string of amber beads worn around the neck will cure goiter.

RINGWORM

46. Rub a cigar stub on the ringworm and it will disappear.
47. Press the open end of a thimble around ringworm to cure it.
48. To cure ringworm, take a copper one-cent piece and place it in enough butter to cover it. Let it stand twelve or fourteen hours. When the butter is green around the copper, take this green stuff and place it on the ringworm. It eats in and kills the germ.
49. Use an egg shell for a measuring cup. Take one measure of these ingredients: beaten egg yolk, turpentine, coal oil, vinegar, and salt. Rub the solution on the ringworm.
50. Apply wet gunpowder three times daily for four or five days to kill ringworm.
51. Rub a green walnut skin on ringworm to cure it.

OTHER CURES

52. Let a cow lick straight hair to make it curly.
53. To make straight hair curl, eat charcoal from burned food.
54. To make a cowlick part the other way, put raw egg white on it.
55. To cure measles, eat a roasted mouse, well done.
56. To cure measles, drink lots of cold water and lemonade.
57. For indigestion, eat the dried lining of a chicken gizzard.³
58. For stomach trouble or poisoning, chew tobacco well. Then swallow tobacco, juice and all.⁴
59. To prevent crying while you are peeling onions, cut the onions under water.
60. To prevent tears while peeling onions, peel them over a flame.
61. To prevent tears while you are peeling onions, hold a darning needle dipped in kerosene in the mouth while peeling.
62. For cramps in the legs and feet at night, turn your shoes upside down under the bed when you go to bed.⁵
63. For cramps in the feet, put the feet in hot ashes.
64. Soak frozen feet in kerosene to cure them.
65. For frost-bitten feet, fingers, or ears, apply scraped Irish potato.
66. Chew slippery elm bark to cure or to ease menstruation pain.
67. Drink a tea made from tansy as a relief for menstruation pain.
68. To regulate menstruation, eat beet juice which has been thickened with corn starch and seasoned with sugar and vinegar.
69. To cure a fever, make mustard plasters and put one on the bottom of each foot and one on the back of the neck.
70. Rub pepper on a patient when his temperature is below normal.⁶

² Practiced regularly by a woman in Kearney, Nebraska.

³ Old settlers used to save old chicken gizzards in a bottle so that the linings would be available for indigestion.

⁴ Reported as an Indian cure which was supposed to drive out devils.

⁵ The informant said he had proved the truth of this cure at least seventy-five times.

⁶ Practiced by a practical nurse.

71. For labor pains, boil a gold ring and drink the tea from it after it has cooled by having the early morning dew settle on it.
72. If during pregnancy, the mother will concentrate on any quality or talent which she wishes her child to have, the child will be blessed with this trait.
73. Have the patient blow through a turkey quill as hard as she can to ease her labor pains.⁷
74. Hold the edge of a sharp axe against the abdomen of a woman suffering from labor pains. This will take her mind off her trouble and ease the pain.
75. Spit on a birthmark every day to cure it.
76. If someone will get up out of bed early in the morning and lick the baby's birthmark three times for nine successive mornings without saying a word to anyone, the mark will disappear.
77. Rub the birthmark with a piece of raw meat and then bury the meat. When the meat decays the birthmark will be gone.
78. To cause the wind to blow so that the windmill will pump water for cattle, get up on the windmill tower and whistle. The wind will soon begin to blow.
79. To alleviate suffering from lack of water, put a bullet in your mouth. A dime or a piece of copper will also do. The cactus plant is also especially effective.
80. To cure a person who has ague, dig a ditch in the ground big enough for him to sleep in. Have the person strip off all his clothes and lie down in the ditch. Cover him all up with dirt, leaving only his head uncovered, and in the morning he will be perfectly well.
81. To cure backache, fold a big piece of red cotton flannel six feet by two feet wide, and cut a hole in the fold and fasten the side with safety pins. Backache will soon leave and never return if you leave the flannel on.
82. To cure a person or an animal who has eaten strychnine, give him a large dose of salt swallowed with grease, or if grease is not available, a little water. If the person lives five minutes after the salt reaches his stomach, he won't die from the poison.
83. Drink tea made from the fruit of the cactus plant to cure gall-stones.
84. Hold an onion to the nose of a person about to faint, or to one who has fainted to revive him.
85. To cure lockjaw, make a tea from cockroaches and drink it.
86. For tape worm, feed the patient ground glass to cut the tape worm up.
87. To cure stammering, get a child near an animal that is being butchered and as soon as the lungs are out of the animal, rub them vigorously into the child's face, especially around the mouth.
88. If you get a pain in your side any time you are outdoors, pick up a rock, spit on the side of it that lay next to the ground, and put the rock back as it was when you first found it. The pain will disappear.
89. If the bark of the elderberry bush is scraped in one direction, it acts as a laxative. If it is scraped in the other direction, it acts as an emetic.⁸
90. For pain, apply a hop bag rung out in hot water.
91. Feed a sick baby on cow's milk with sage tea mixed in it.⁹

⁷ This was called "quilling" and was used by some of the oldest settlers of the state.

⁸ Reported as an Indian remedy.

⁹ Mrs. H. O. Skiles of Lincoln said that her grandmother fed her six weeks old granddaughter on this prescription. She asserted that it cured her after doctors had said she could not live.

92. Apply kerosene to the head to kill vermin, such as lice.
93. A dead hand touched to a cancer will cure it.
94. To purify muddy drinking water, peel off the skin and stickers of the cactus plant. Slice them and scatter the pieces over the top of the water. They will soon sink to the bottom carrying all sediment with them.
95. To keep the feet from getting cold, put pepper in the bottom of the shoes. Red pepper is hotter than black.
96. For cracks between the toes, tie a string through the middle of the cracks and leave it there until the crack heals.
97. For appendicitis, apply hot pans over the region of the appendix.
98. For enlarged joints, wrist bones, or knuckles, go to the prairie or pasture. Then seek a well-bleached animal carcass. Take one of the bones from the carcass and rub it against the affected parts. Walk slowly away, throwing the bone over the left shoulder. Do not look back at the bone ever.¹⁰
99. For neuritis, empty whole mustard seeds into sweet cider and drink a lot of the solution.
100. For night sweats, put a pan of water under the bed before you go to bed and you will not be troubled with the ailment.
101. For summer complaint, string allspice around your neck.
102. Put salt on the tongue of a person who is dying of apoplexy and he will get well.
103. If a person is in bed with a fever, burn black feathers in a pan under the bed to cure him.
104. To avoid giving a child a hairlip, a pregnant woman should not see an axe in a chopping block. If she does see this, her child will be born with a hairlip.
105. To cure seven-year itch, mix gunpowder and lard and rub it on at bedtime.
106. If a person is insane, stick his head in a furnace and he will be normal.
107. To cure mumps, take the tonsils from a squirrel and bind one tonsil under each jaw where the mumps are.¹¹
108. To cure hay fever, smoke coffee grounds in a pipe.
109. For dandruff, rub kerosene on your head.
110. For perspiring feet, put powdered alum in the shoes two or three times a week.
111. Apply fish oil to cure stiff joints.

¹⁰ Reported to be of German origin.

¹¹ This cure was used by a citizen of Nebraska City, Nebraska.

XII

DUNG AND RELATED CURES

Many folk cures involve the use of dung. In fact traditional cures of this sort are so numerous that they need a special section, although the groupings of other sections are based on the types of diseases rather than on methods of curing them. The testimony of residents of long standing from different counties in the state seems to indicate that dung was probably the most widely used cure in the earliest days of the settlement of Nebraska. That it is still used in some localities is certain.

There is no better way to illustrate the acceptance of dung as a cure than by citing instances in which it was used. The following incidents were told to the present writer's father by Dick Rutledge, a pioneer who fought Indians on the Platte with Buffalo Bill. He was also with Kit Carson two years.

When he was a boy, Rutledge was hitching a horse to a post when suddenly he caught his finger between the rope and the post with the result that his finger was severed completely from his hand. His sister immediately picked up the severed member, applied fresh, warm cow dung to it, and bound it back on the hand. The pieces grew together again, although the finger remained a little crooked.

At another time Rutledge was a sheriff. He and his posse were chasing train robbers with whom they had a fight. A deputy's leg was shot off just above the foot, leaving only a little skin on it. The nearest doctor was three days distant by horseback, a fact which necessitated instant treatment with materials at hand. Rutledge picked up a blanket, took a man with him, and walked until he found some sleeping cattle. Gathering up their fresh dung in the blanket, the men took it back to the wounded man and bound up the stump of his leg with it. Then after putting him on a horse, they rode three days to a doctor, who marvelled at the perfect condition of the wound. Six months later the man was well and able to go out with the next posse. There are any number of similar stories which old settlers can tell.

No attempt has been made to classify the cures of this group since the diseases for which dung is used are too heterogeneous.

1. For inflammation, pack fresh, warm cow dung on the inflamed surface.
2. To cure wounds, apply a mixture of lime and pulverized cow chips.
3. For snake bite, apply fresh, warm cow manure.
4. To cure milk leg, apply cow dung over the inflamed part.
5. For inflammation of the breast in nursing mothers, called "caked breast", put on warm cow dung. Change the applications frequently enough to keep warm dung on.¹

¹ Used by a woman in Omaha.

6. Pack fresh cow dung on sunburn to cure it.
7. Children who run barefooted and stub their toes, tearing the skin, immediately put their feet in warm cow dung to cure the sore.
8. Pulverize dry cow chips and apply to a bleeding wound to stop the bleeding.
9. Spit under a cow chip and walk around it three times to cure hiccoughs.
10. For ant bites, apply mud or fresh cow dung.
11. To cure measles, make a tea from sheep dung. This is called "nanny tea".
12. To cure earache, make a tea from sheep pellets and pour while warm into the ear.
13. To cure hives, make a tea of sheep manure and drink a lot of it while it is warm.
14. To cure chilblains, cook chicken manure and pour off the liquid. Make a poultice of the residue and apply.
15. For rattlesnake bite, apply buffalo manure to the wound.
16. To cure earache, pour warm urine into the ear.
17. To cure bladder trouble, follow a coyote or a badger until you see him urinate on the brush or the grass on a prairie. Gather only the wet brush. Boil it and drink the tea. The cure is almost instantaneous.
18. Application of human excrement as a poultice on a felon is a never-failing cure.
19. To cure freckles and tan, wash your face in human urine every night.²
20. Wash rope-burned hands with cowboy urine to heal them.
21. To cure saddle-sores on horses, wash them with cowboy urine.
22. Wash the sore eyes of animals with human or animal urine to heal them.

² Practiced in Thomas county.

XIII

PREVENTIVES AND CURE-ALLS

Somewhat different in nature from the cures for specific diseases is the collection in this section which comprises means of preventing disease. In most cases the preventive is very inclusive, and is for any and all disease. In some instances it is supposed to ward off some special trouble, such as smallpox, rheumatism, or keeping a child from growing a dog's tooth. In most cases, however, it is for general contagious diseases.

It was the belief of many families until a few years ago that every spring the blood becomes sluggish and unclean, thereby making a person highly susceptible to disease. Such families, therefore, had their own spring tonics which were taken regularly by each member to insure his resistance to disease. In most cases these remedies were a concoction of herbs and weeds, mixed according to the prescription handed down in a particular family.

Two cure-alls guaranteed by their advocates to cure anything, are mentioned at the beginning of the list.

CURE-ALLS

1. One or two medicine peddlers appear in Omaha every year selling snake oil supposedly from Indian formulas. This Indian snake oil cures everything, but is especially good for rheumatism and rejuvenation.
2. As a general cure-all, many people used to "let the blood", which meant cutting the patient's skin to let the blood run freely.

PREVENTIVES

3. Carry a rabbit's foot around the neck to prevent contagion.
4. Until a baby is six months old his clothes must be put on over his feet rather than over his head to prevent stunting his growth. His nails, until he is a year old, must be bitten off instead of cut or he will steal when he is grown.
5. Wear a bag of garlic around your neck on a string and it will keep away all infectious diseases.
6. Wear a bag of asafœtida around the neck to ward off infectious diseases.¹
7. Nebraska people used to keep a billy goat in the yard always as a preventive or cure-all.
8. Sleep with the windows tightly closed at night to prevent the bad night air from bringing in illness.
9. Do not eat fruit at night or it may make you ill. "Fruit is gold in the morning, silver at noon, but lead at night."
10. Put a few drops of camphor on a handkerchief when you are going to a public gathering to keep contagious diseases away.
11. To prevent still-birth, get all children in the neighborhood to beat tin pans in the sick room to drive the devil away.²

¹ Some persons say the asafœtida must be on a blue yarn string; others that it must be on a red string; and others that the bag must be of red flannel.

² Used in Kearney, Nebraska.

12. Plant sunflowers around the house as a preventive for all disease.
13. For a general antiseptic to prevent disease, use very strong soap suds of yellow or home-made soft soap.³
14. Do not eat chokecherries and then drink milk within three hours. It will cause horrible swellings and probably death.
15. Punch a hole in a dime and run a string through it. Wear the dime around your ankle always to prevent all sickness.
16. Wear a bag of camphor around your neck to protect you against all ills.
17. Wrap a spider in silk and seal it in a nutshell. Then suspend it around the neck on a string. This will prevent or cure disease.
18. Burn orange peelings on the stove to cure or to prevent influenza.
19. Hang a bag of sulphur around your neck as a general cure-all and preventive. This is especially good to prevent a cold.
20. If there is contagion or influenza in the neighborhood, slice onions in a dish and place them in some part of the room. The onions will absorb any germs there may be in the room.
21. Burn sulphur right on top of the cook stove to ward off influenza.⁴
22. A string of greased yarn worn around the neck will prevent colds, croup, and other infectious diseases.
23. Wear a string with three knots tied in it around the neck to prevent croup.
24. To prevent influenza or colds, put a few drops of eucalyptus oil on the handkerchief.⁵
25. Drink sassafras tea to prevent spring fever.
26. To prevent summer complaint, drink tea made from horsetail leaves.⁶
27. To prevent spring fever, drink red clover tea.
28. To prevent spring fever and to purify the blood, drink tea made from dock roots.
29. Drink molasses and sulphur to purify the blood and prevent spring fever. Take it three evenings in succession, then skip three evenings.
30. To prevent crooked teeth, put a tooth in a crack as soon as it is pulled.
31. When a child's tooth was pulled, the tooth was kept so that a dog or cat wouldn't get hold of it until another tooth came in. If a dog or a cat did get the tooth then the child would grow a dog or a cat tooth in place of his own, depending upon which animal found the tooth.
32. Do not throw a tooth away after it is pulled, for if you do and a dog should step on it, a dog's tooth will come in where that one has been pulled.
33. Wear a lump of asafœtida around the neck to ward off smallpox.
34. Wear a string of rattlesnake rattlers around your neck to prevent smallpox.
35. Carry a buckeye in your pocket and you will never have rheumatism.
36. To prevent insanity caused by a bite from a mad dog, kill the dog immediately.
37. To prevent sneezing, look at the sun when you feel inclined to sneeze.
38. Put asafœtida in a sock around one's neck to ward off disease.

³ The informant gave the following testimony with regard to preparing this soap: "Everyone had an ash hopper built in the back yard. Wood ashes from a stove were poured in. Then water on this until the ashes were saturated and began to leak out the bottom into a pail placed there to receive it. Then all old grease scraps or cracklings were put in and boiled together until a smooth soft soap was formed."

⁴ This cure was used by the grandmother of Mrs. H. O. Skiles of Lincoln, in 1918.

⁵ Reported to have been used during the World War when the influenza epidemic was severe.

⁶ Horsetail weed is found in the Sand Hills.

XIV

CURES FOR ANIMAL DISEASES

No collection of Nebraska folk cures could be complete without a section dealing with the diseases of animals. Nebraska is an agricultural state given over, since the beginning of its settlement, to farming and to stock raising. Farmers and ranchmen representing many nationalities and many states in the Union have drifted into Nebraska, bringing with them their diverse methods of taking care of their livestock. With a few exceptions the following list of animal cures was contributed by the writer's father, F. J. Black. He has ranched in Nebraska most of his life, and many of the cures were used by men working on his ranch on the Dismal River in Thomas county, or suggested to him by other ranchmen. The Mexican cures cited were brought to Nebraska by three Mexicans who worked on the Black ranch from 1878 to 1900. Many of the cures are originally from Texas, and were recommended to Mr. Black by Colonel Charles Goodnight of that state. Later some of his cures were published by the Texas Folk Lore Society in its collection of "Ranch Remedies."¹

Although many of these cures are distinctly superstitious, the greatest number of them are applications of simple home remedies which may or may not actually help an animal. Originally they were used when there were no trained veterinaries, and now they are well established on most farms and ranches.

For convenience these cures are grouped under the following headings: bellyache, blackleg, bladder trouble, bloat, botts, choke, colic, distemper, eye trouble, fistula, founder, lampers, lump jaw, saddle sores, snake bite, splint, sprain, stifle joint, sweeny, miscellaneous.

BELLYACHE

1. For bellyache in a horse, rub turpentine in the small of his back and then grease it with bear's grease.
2. Bathe a horse's belly with strong red pepper tea, and then make him drink half a pint of it. He will probably stampede, but it will cure his ache.
3. To cure bellyache in a horse, set fire to a gunnysack. Place the sack in a bucket and hold it under the horse's nose so that he breathes the smoke.

BLACK LEG

4. Run the animal around until he gets very warm to cure black leg.
5. For black leg in cattle, lift up the tail and on the under side cut the loose skin which makes a little pocket. Into this pocket put a small section of garlic.²
6. Cut a hole in the brisket and tie a piece of rope or cord through the hole.

¹ Frost Woodhull, "Ranch Remedies," *Publications of the Texas Folk-Lore Society*, Vol. VIII, Austin, Texas, 1930.

² Before vaccination was known, one of the first state veterinaries told this cure to Mr. F. J. Black and showed him an animal which was still stiff, but cured after he had nearly died from the deadly disease.

BLADDER TROUBLE

7. Saturate cloths with turpentine and hold them across the animal's loins to cure bladder trouble.
8. Break off a match head and insert it into the horse's penis. Relief will be sudden.

BLOAT

9. For bloat in cattle, stick the animal with a pocket-knife between the second and the third rib and insert a quill to let the gas escape.
10. Drench the animal with a pint of raw linseed oil. If relief does not come in half an hour, repeat.

BOTTS

11. Drench the horse with tea made from tobacco.
12. If a horse has botts, bleed him under his right eye at the cord of the eye.
13. Drench the horse with a cup of strong coffee.
14. Jab a pocket-knife into the third bar of the roof of the horse's mouth.
15. Make a strong tea out of tobacco and mix it with sorghum molasses. Drench the horse with about a pint. The tobacco makes the botts sick.
16. To cure an animal of botts, cut off part of his tail.
17. For botts, put a rider on the horse and run him around the corral or pasture.
18. If a horse has botts, drench him with one-half an ounce of chloroform and one-half an ounce of spirits of niter.
19. Drench the horse with a pint of kerosene.
20. Dip a corncob in turpentine and roll up the animal's upper lip. Rub the cob vigorously on the lip and relief will come soon.

CHOKER

21. Hold the flat part of an axe against the lump in the animal's throat. Hit the axe with a hammer and break the lump.
22. When the choke is caused by eating dry oats, tie the horse's head up in a tree, pour six raw eggs down his throat, then close his mouth.
23. Pour water into a horse's ear so he will shake his head and stop choking.
24. Jump the horse off a high place to make him stop choking.
25. Make the horse jump over the wagon tongue to cure choking.
26. Drench the animal's nose with a quart of linseed oil to stop his choking.

COLIC

27. Mix a pint of vinegar and a package of soda. Bridle the horse and pull his head over a limb of a tree, and pour the mixture into his nose. If there is no relief, repeat, and in ten minutes do the same thing with a pint of linseed oil and a quart of molasses.
28. To cure a horse of colic, put one or two tablespoons full of turpentine in a shallow saucer and hold the dish to the horse's navel. The turpentine disappears instantly and cures the colic.
29. Keep the animal moving continually.
30. Drench with soda water and half a pint of kerosene oil.
31. Tie the horse down and whip his belly with a wet rope.

DISTEMPER

32. Make a good smoke, preferably of pine tar and feathers, and let the horse inhale it.
33. Burn feathers and tar in a tin can and hold it under the horse's nose. This is also used to cure distemper in cattle.

34. Cut the end off a large cow horn to make a funnel of it. Make a smoke of rags and chip off horn and let it go through the funnel into the horse's nostrils.
35. For distemper in dogs, mix gunpowder and corn bread and feed the dog as much as he will eat.
36. Put a teaspoonful of coal oil in each ear and then ride or drive the animal.

EYE TROUBLE

37. For pink eye, wash the eyes of the animal with salt or sugar solution.
38. For film over the eye, pulverize dry salt or sugar and blow it into the animal's eye with a paper quill.
39. For film over the eye, put salt in the eye, and lard on the outside in the hole above the animal's eye.
40. For cancer-eye, when it first starts cut off the upper or the lower eyelid, which ever is affected, and burn the eye well with a hot iron.
41. Blow powdered calomel in the animal's eye to cure film over the eye.

FISTULA

42. Heat a sharp, pointed iron red hot, and run it through the infected or swollen part. Begin low down and burn clear through to the mane.
43. Rub turpentine on the affected parts. Cover with a thick wool rag or blanket and iron it with a hot iron.
44. Run a circle around the spot with a hot iron.
45. Cut the fistula out and let the horse run in the pasture for a year.
46. When the fistula has come to a head, tie the horse down. Then take a small lump of concentrated lye and push it into the wound. Leave it until fresh blood starts to run. Then pour melted lard into the wound to stop the lye from eating any more.

FOUNDER

47. To cure a horse of founder, cut his hoofs down short in front and file them until they bleed. Then soak each foot well in hot tallow heated to about 110 degrees. Do not give him any grain.
48. Clean the foot out thoroughly and fill it full of turpentine. Light a match to the turpentine until the turpentine burns out.
49. Cord the horse's leg until the vein puffs out, then cut the vein. Use hair from the horse's tail to cut off the flow of blood.
50. Stand the horse in water two or three feet deep for several hours a day for a few days.

LAMPERS

51. Cut the lampers in three places.
52. Cut them out and sear with a hot iron.
53. Grease the horse's tail and croup with old bacon rind and grease.

LUMP JAW

54. Tie the animal down and burn a cross on the lump with a red hot iron.
55. Pull the teeth of cattle to cure lump jaw.
56. Cut the lump open, insert salt and lime. Next allow screw worms to eat awhile. Don't let them eat too much for worms can kill an animal.

SADDLE SORES

57. Apply axle grease to a saddle sore to cure it.
58. Spread strong bacon grease over the sore.
59. Wash saddle sores with strong salt water at body temperature.

SNAKE BITE

60. Drench the animal with warm lard out of a bottle to cure snake bite.
61. Make a fire right away and hold a chunk of it up close to the wound, not touching it. The heat will draw out the poison.
62. When a horse is bitten by a rattler, take a sharp knife and scarify the wound until it bleeds freely. Cut the tips from five or six blades of soapweed, stick them all around the wound under the skin, and leave them for twenty-four hours.³

SPLINT

63. Rub the splint with tallow and a hot mutton or calf bone.
64. Rub the splint with a hard twisted rope every two or three days for thirty days.
65. Split the skin and remove the splint with a chisel.

SPRAIN

66. Sprain or bruise on a horse may be healed by applications of bacon.
67. For bad sprained ankles that cannot be cured in other ways, bathe with turpentine, then light with a match and fan the flame out with your hat after a little while.
68. Make a pouch out of cloth. Fill with salt and tie it up. Then wet the salt and tie the pouch around the horse's ankle. This will cure a sprain.
69. Apply tallow and rub with a hot mutton bone.

STIFLE JOINT

70. Burn a circle around the stifle joint about four or five inches in diameter and burn a dot in the middle. Apply kerosene to the wound afterward.
71. Bleed the horse all around the top of his hoofs.
72. When all other methods fail, try this one: Tie one end of a rope sixty feet long to the sore leg and the other end to a gate post. Open the gate and let the horse run out as fast as he can. It will snap the stifle back into place.
73. Let the horse stand in a creek for twenty-four hours.
74. Tie a strong, buckskin string between the ankle and the knee of the leg that is not affected. In a while this will make the horse throw his weight on the other leg and slip the stifle back into place.
75. Swim the animal in the river or lake.

SWEENEY

76. Fill a shingle full of rather long tacks. Spank the affected shoulder with this sharp surface. Then apply liniment made by beating eggs in vinegar.
77. Slit a place on the shoulder and insert a piece of leather.
78. Puncture two holes through the hide on the shoulder. Pass string through the holes and leave long ends so that you can pull the string back and forth every day.
79. Mix a dozen raw eggs with coarse salt until very thick. Then add bacon grease and rub the mixture over the shoulders. Leave for twelve hours.
80. Pull the horse's hide loose from the shoulder and knead the shoulder each day.

³ Used by Escapula Gyagus, a Mexican, on the Black Ranch.

81. Bathe the affected parts with caustic balsam every other day for three days. Don't use the animal for at least a month.
82. Slit the horse's skin and tie mane or tail hair through the slits.
83. Split a small hole at the top of the shoulder and put a dime in it. Take a quill and blow the hole full of hair. Then sew it up with thread to hold the air in.
84. Rub the shoulder regularly with a corncob.
85. Rub with a hot iron after rubbing the animal with a solution of five parts of castor oil to one part of croton oil.

MISCELLANEOUS

86. To cure any illness in cattle, hang bittersweet around the animal's neck.⁴
87. As a cure-all for the flu epidemic, hang a bag of asafetida around the cow's neck.
88. After a horse has been castrated, pull the horse's tail three times and the horse will never die.
89. For wire cuts on stock, throw lime or puff balls in the cut.
90. If a dog gets poisoned, feed him washing soap suds diluted with water by forcing it into his throat through a bottle or powder horn. Vomiting occurs.
91. When poll-evil first starts, rub a solution of one part of castor oil to one part of croton oil on the wound. If the wound has broken, insert bulk lime into it.
92. For scours, bind the horse's tail about six inches from the root. Use a stout cord or hair from the horse's tail and let it stay bound not longer than four hours.
93. For hoof-splits, bore a little hole in the hoof at the upper end of the split with a knife. This keeps the split from running on up.
94. For horse blemish, apply tallow with a hot bone.
95. Bacon applied to a horse will make hair grow where it has quit growing.
96. If a dog is sick, even though you do not know just what has made him sick, feed him a tablespoonful of gunpowder, charcoal, sulphur, and salt petre.
97. For chicken cholera, feed the chickens dry clabber and soda, half and half, to cure it.
98. If an animal is bleeding to death, apply mashed mushrooms, puff balls, snuff, cobwebs, or soot.
99. If a dog has running fits, feed him four doses of gunpowder.
100. Feed a dog four doses of chewing tobacco to cure its fits.

⁴ Reported to have come to Nebraska from England. Now used in Lancaster county.

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