

OF CUTANEOUS DISEASES.

In Dublin we meet with considerable variety of those cutaneous diseases, which though sometimes connected with a vitiated secretion in the stomach and other viscera, yet are not attended by any specific fever; which are of uncertain duration; and which, if cured, may again return as often as the system is exposed to the operation of the same cause which produced them at first. Of this description the most common and general are the following.

PSORA, OR ITCH.

This complaint is purely cutaneous, and has little effect upon the constitution, except where, by becoming neglected and inveterate, it produces such a general irritation, as is inconsistent with sound health.

The appearances of psora are well known: they consist of distinct vesiculæ filled with a slightly opaque fluid, and caused by animalculæ that creep along under the cuticle. The eruption is attended with intolerable itching, which is always most distressing when the warmth of the affected parts is increased by being close to the fire, or by being heated in bed. As the animalculæ creep on, new vesicles are formed, the fluid of the old ones

ones concreting into small crusts or scabs; and thus in a short time each distinct eruption consists of a line, at one end of which is the most recent vesicle, and at the other the driest and darkest part of the crust: and in several of these eruptions the crust at one end becomes detached from the skin, a new cuticle being formed underneath, whilst there is a vesicle at the other end still filled with a fluid serum.

These eruptions are principally seated between the fingers, upon the inside of the wrists, about the axillæ, and the knees; but by degrees they spread over the thighs, legs, arms, loins, and the fore part of the belly. The old marks dry up and new eruptions appear in increased numbers; and thus the complaint gains ground until it disfigures the greater part of the body. In process of time the crusts become larger; and a quantity of purulent fluid is discharged from beneath them. If the crust be removed, the fluid soon concretes into another crust, under which new matter is produced.

The severity of the itching is now very troublesome; the whole skin acquires a disgusting and dirty look; at length the eruption spreads over the chest and back, and last of all over the jaws and cheeks; and the patient begins to decline in health and flesh very sensibly.

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The regularity of the pustular lines already mentioned is not to be found in every place where the eruptions appear; because the itchiness is so troublesome that the nails in scratching lacerate and destroy the cuticle, and frequently cause a severer degree of inflammation and a more extensive sore than would otherwise have existed: and this is, at least in part, a reason why in cases of inveterate itch the inflammation is greater, and the crusts larger than when the complaint is recent.

CURE.

Sulphur is the safest and most certain cure for psora. In infants the sulphur may be given internally, and thus it will effect a cure, though slowly, if the nurse uses sulphur ointment at the same time: but it is evident that it will be useless to give medicines to the infants, unless the nurse also has recourse to them. Brimstone will communicate to boiling water a sufficient impregnation to cure infants; the affected parts being bathed with the water when tepid: indeed when the nurse rubs sulphur ointment for her own cure, the sulphur vapour issuing from her will of itself commonly cure an infant who lies with her. The speediest method of completing the cure is to rub strong sulphur ointment to the affected parts every night until the complaint disappears: and it is adapted to every age after the first two or three years.

During

During the use of this remedy the patients ought to be careful to avoid all danger of catching cold. For the greater convenience of banishing the complaint in the most satisfactory manner, they should be directed to wear the same clothes, as much as it could be done, throughout the whole progress of the cure; because the impregnation of the clothes becomes so strong, as to assist greatly in effecting a cure; and the sulphur taints them to such a degree that it becomes nearly impossible to use them afterwards. When the sulphur has completely penetrated the system, the eyes generally become slightly sore; this, however, is but a trifling and temporary inconvenience; as they get rapidly well when the use of the medicine is laid aside. In most cases of recent itch about a fortnight's rubbing will be sufficient to remove it.

When the itch becomes inveterate, and puts on those appearances of superficial sores, covered with large crusts, already mentioned; the sulphur alone will prove ineffectual. We must then have recourse to mercurial alteratives. I have found the pills, No. 96, and the warm bath used once a week, completely answer in the cases of this sort that I met with; and I suspect that this treatment will remove the worst kinds of itch which offer themselves to our notice.

Itch

Itch is contracted by poor, crude, and unwholesome diet; by foul and dirty clothes and habits; and by contagion: it will therefore be necessary to avoid those occasional causes in order to guard against a return of the disease.

DISTINCT SCABBY SORES OF ADULTS.

There are other forms of eruptive complaints, in which the striking features are an inflamed margin, most commonly of a circular form surrounding a superficial abscess, which is covered over with a dark coloured crust or scab; upon pressure there issues from under the crust a reddish coloured thick pus. These sores begin like inflamed red papule, which soon enlarge into pustules of the same colour, and commonly of a conical shape; these are filled with an opaque purulent fluid, and surrounded by a slightly inflamed border, which enlarges as the pustule increases in size. The pustule, if broke or abraded, leaves underneath a raw surface, which becomes covered with a scab, and under this matter is soon collected; and so on, as often as the contents are discharged, or the incrustation removed, there is more matter formed and covered again with a crust similar to the former. These eruptions are most commonly seated upon the thighs, and buttocks, over the glutai muscles, and upon the legs
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and feet; and after some months, continuance they will spread over different parts of the arms and trunk of the body.

They are not crowded together or confluent like the crusts of inveterate itch, but continue scattered and detached from each other, with large intervals of sound skin between them; they have each a larger base than any of the incrustations of the itch; and they are seldom attended by itching, at least to any considerable degree.

The itch is rarely found except amongst the lower orders, who live in poverty and dirt, and are much exposed to its contagion; but these distinct circular eruptions are found amongst persons of the cleanliest habits, and in the most comfortable ranks of life; they do not seem to affect the general state of the health; but it appears that like itch they may be propagated by contagion.

These eruptions, as well as many others, have a great connection with the state of the alimentary canal, and therefore a principal part of the treatment must consist in a proper attention to the regularity of the bowels.

CURE.

The cure in those eruptions is effected by mercurial alteratives; by purgatives calculated to remove

move bilious acrimony and morbid secretions ; and by the warm bath.

The pills No. 96 will in most instances prove excellent alteratives and open the bowels ; but should they fail to operate as purgatives, then we may employ the medicines No. 1, 2 or 3, assisted if necessary by liquid cathartics. The medicine 96 should be regularly exhibited until the eruptions entirely disappear. The warm bath used twice a week will greatly assist in forwarding the cure. I have found this treatment uniformly successful, except in two cases, in which the eruptions had spread to the legs and feet ; in those cases too, in consequence of the method here recommended, the eruptions had entirely disappeared on all other parts, but still continued obstinate on the upper part of the legs ; here I had the sores dressed daily with the ointment No. 97, and then applied a flannel roller about the feet and legs, beginning at the toes and coiling it upwards to the knees. This method, along with the alteratives and warm bath, soon effected a complete cure. Here it may not be improper to observe that one of those obstinate cases occurred in a married young lady, who had been treated with mercurial unction in the country, until she had been plunged into a profuse salivation, which had no other effect but that of injuring her teeth and weakening her constitution for the time.

PUSTULAR

PUSTULAR ERUPTIONS OF CHILDREN.

This is a cutaneous foulness of a peculiar and distressing kind. At its commencement it consists of a crop of papulary eruptions which soon fill with a serous fluid ; the cuticle being elevated into a conical vesicle in which the fluid is contained. Here the vesicles are distinct, though spread pretty thick over the skin, without that line or continued mark which is peculiar to the itch. When the cuticle is abraded, a tender surface is exposed, which becomes soon covered with a crust formed of the oozing matter of the pustule ; these crusts are in a little time renewed after being rubbed off, and spread thick over the surface of the body ; on the face ; behind the ears ; and at length over the hairy scalp ; and as the disease becomes inveterate, they encrease in size, so that in many places from approaching close together they become confluent ; and the scabs covering them unite into a large convex incrustation in many places, which when lifted up discharges a great quantity of a yellowish fluid, and leaves an extensive surface raw and sore : these eruptions are but slightly itchy. On many parts of the body, the bases of the sores are so much inflamed as to exhibit the form of running ulcers, very painful, and of a dirty aspect. This disease in many instances leaves no part of the surface free ; even the soles of the feet and the
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hairy scalp become covered with pustules; and on the feet it causes the appearance and all the distress of chilblains, completely crippling the little patient.

This is the most universal eruptive disease unconnected with fever, that is perhaps to be met with. When it becomes inveterate the sores are surrounded in several places with a troublesome inflammation; and the health is sensibly undermined.

Most of the instances of this kind which occurred to me, were in the comfortable ranks of life, where good air, cleanliness, sound food, and proper clothing were used: they have also occurred in large and otherwise healthy children; so that the complaint could not be fairly ascribed to those circumstances which are generally supposed to produce the itch. In some of those too, the sulphur ointment had been used very liberally without any benefit.

CURE.

In this eruption the cure is effected without the aid of sulphur; indeed that remedy appears to have no power whatever in assisting to remove the complaint.

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The following is the method which I have experienced to be uniformly successful. The body is to be kept clean and comfortably warm, with a view to promote the healthy and natural action by the surface. The head to be shaved two or three times a week; to be afterwards bathed with spirits, and dressed every morning with pepper ointment, and then to be kept covered with a warm cap. The medicine, No. 101,* along with this discipline, is the only mode of treatment necessary for the removal of this disease: by persevering in this mode, the sores soon manifest a disposition to heal and dry up, and the crusts to fall off, leaving underneath a sound but at first a tender cuticle, which by degrees recovers its natural qualities and colour. The sores on the feet have a disposition to heal more slowly than on other parts of the body: they may be then dressed daily with the ointment, No. 97, spread on soft linen; and the limb should afterwards be covered with flannel rollers, coiled from the toes to the knees. Immersion in the tepid salt bath once a week is a pleasant and useful auxiliary.

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* The dose ordered in this formula is fit for children from two to four or five years old, and may be repeated every third morning; or, in cases where they do not affect the bowels severely, every second morning. In robust children too, it will be necessary to augment the dose; but these particulars can only be regulated by seeing the patient, and ascertaining from experience the nature of his constitution.

By persevering for some time in the treatment above recommended, the worst species of the complaint disappears.

LEPRA, OR DRY SCALY ERUPTIONS.

Lepra is a disease sometimes met with in Dublin: the severest instances I have seen were in dispensary patients, and consequently among the poor; but it occurs also in the better ranks of society. It consists of circular or oval patches, from the size of a silver shilling to that of half a crown piece, and sometimes they are larger; I have seen some larger than a crown piece, but they are rarely of this size. The affected part is covered with whitish thick scaly crusts, and circumscribed by an inflamed margin, slightly elevated above the surrounding skin: when any part of the scales is forcibly removed, it exposes to view a purple coloured sore and inflamed surface. They fix at first commonly upon the arms and legs; and advance nearly in the same manner along the corresponding limbs of both sides; thus if the arms are the seat of the disease, the eruptions appear equally situated, and equal in number on both arms; but this resemblance does not exist in every instance, though it is the most usual occurrence: they afterwards break out on the thighs and on the trunk of the body; and if neglected, they spread to the hairy scalp; indeed

indeed when they attack this part, they are more crowded and the crusts more thick and more elevated upon it, than upon any other part of the body. I could not ascertain that this complaint was contagious, or necessarily connected with any derangement of the system. The severest instance of it which fell under my observation was in a young woman, about twenty years of age, in whom the catamenia had been suppressed for many months before I saw her, but the lepra had been of long standing; and in others the general health was perfectly good.

Most of those in whom I met with this complaint were females, occupied in sedentary pursuits, exposed considerably to impure and damp air, and to want of cleanliness.

CURE.

The method of cure which I found successful was the following. The head, when that was affected, was shaved and regularly dressed with strong pepper ointment: the sores on the body were dressed with citrine ointment; or in cases where the soreness was severe, with equal parts of citrine and spermaceti ointment. The alterative pills, No. 96, were regularly exhibited at bed-time, and the alkaline infusion, No. 100, taken every morning. The regularity of the bowels was preserved,

preserved, if necessary, by the use of sulphat of magnesia, phosphat of soda, rochelle salt, or some other purgative of quick operation; and if there was any uneasiness experienced from griping or tormina, a dose of castor oil soon procured relief. The warm salt bath was used when practicable, at least once a week.

TINEA, OR SCALD HEAD.

This bears a very striking resemblance to the preceding disease; the hard and thick crusts of both are very like one another: but in the lepra the head becomes seldom affected, and the tinea is commonly unattended by an eruption upon any part of the surface except the head.

Tinea is a well known complaint, and consists of whitish hard thick crusts, clinging firmly to some part of the hairy scalp, extremely difficult to remove, and strongly attached to the bulbs or roots of the hair, which is but thinly scattered over the diseased surface. The whole part affected is hard and stiff. This complaint does not appear to have any sensible effect in injuring the general health. It is seldom met with but in young persons.

CURE.

The most effectual method of cure perhaps yet discovered, is to shave the head regularly, at least

least every second day, and to dress the diseased surface every morning with strong pepper ointment; the ointment is made by mixing finely powdered round black pepper with spermaceti ointment: it will be proper to keep the whole of the hairy scalp very clean, and therefore it might be washed previous to the dressing with soap and spirits. To this simple treatment the severity of the complaint soon gives way; but in order to eradicate it completely, the shaving and dressing ought to be persevered in for some months after the last particle of crust is removed; because if any particle of the crust remains the complaint will be speedily renewed.

In the mean time we must attend to the state of the bowels, and have recourse occasionally to such laxatives as are indicated by the present symptoms: if the tongue is foul, calomel purgatives are best; but if not, and there is simply a slow state of the bowels, cooling saline laxatives, as Epsom salt, &c. or sal polychrest and rhubarb, will be sufficient.

ULCERATED AND SORE LEGS.

This complaint is so common, and in several instances attended with such little injury to the health, that it is scarcely considered a disease: we frequently find persons who labour under its most
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troublesome shape still persevering in those irregular habits which gave it birth, notwithstanding their own irresistible experience of the mischievous consequences, which follow from those irregularities. There are many likewise who will not admit of a cure, from a rooted notion, that the drains from the legs are a kind effort of nature, to relieve the system from an acrid or morbid humor, which if retained might fall upon more vital parts, and occasion some dangerous or fatal disease. It is true that where the system has been long accustomed to any particular evacuation or drain, it may be dangerous to put a stop to it without substituting some other discharge especially in full habits: but it is also certain, that independent of the pain and lameness with which this complaint is attended; it has a tendency gradually to break down the strength of the constitution; to lay a foundation for chronic complaints; and thus to shorten life. It is likewise proper to observe that those sores are often but symptoms of obstructed and diseased viscera, but most commonly of diseased liver; and that a determination to resist the use of medicines has the effect of allowing the primary complaint to prey upon the system without interruption.

I thought it necessary to premise thus far, in order to dissipate a delusive and dangerous notion.

SYMPTOMS.

SYMPTOMS.

There are some varieties in these sores. Sometimes they have the appearance of small pustular points crowded upon the diseased surface, the skin of the affected part being considerably thickened, so that the limb is large beyond its natural size, and its colour darker than that of the sound skin. If the tops of these pustules be abraded, they exhibit a number of small oozing and shining spots, from which drops arise in the form of serous or watery globules. This appearance of the complaint is attended by a troublesome itching. In other instances the skin is sound, except in a few places where slight inflamed pustules, not unlike small boils, break out, but without suppurating kindly like those little phlegmons; the tops come off, and leave an abscess which spreads wider and sinks deeper into the skin, until in some instances it penetrates quite through its substance; the inflamed edges become more livid, and these morbid changes gradually spread wider and wider, until sometimes a very large portion of the integuments of the leg becomes thick, hard and dark coloured. In some cases there is but one large and deep ulcer seated on one of the legs surrounded by this diseased skin; but in others there are more than one, distinct from each other.

In other cases of sore legs, the natural colour and softness of the skin, on one spot, are changed, so that it becomes a thick hard substance, over-spread by thin branny laminae which are easily rubbed off, and soon succeeded by a new crop: upon the removal of these laminae, the skin appears occupied by a vivid erysipelatous inflammation. The diseased spots enlarge, in some persons rapidly, in others more slowly; new spots break out at a distance from that first affected, but by degrees the old and new, by spreading, become continuous. From different points of this diseased surface arise globules of thin serum, attended with intolerable itching. All the varieties of sores upon the legs are often accompanied by partial dropsical swellings of the limb in the neighbourhood of and below the affected part; but this dropsical appearance is peculiarly connected with the species of eruption last mentioned.

In most instances there is but one leg diseased at a time; but it sometimes happens that both are affected together.

These sores are most commonly seated upon the small of the leg above the ankles; but they sometimes appear upon the upper part of the foot about the instep: I have met with only one instance where they broke out upon the upper

upper fleshy part of the leg; but in this instance there were ulcers also upon the small of the leg, which was the part first attacked, and from which they spread after long standing to the part above.

This complaint mostly attacks those who are most subject to liver diseases, as persons of sedentary habits; hard livers who drink largely of spirituous liquors and who keep late hours; those who are subject to depressing passions and great anxiety of mind; and persons of corpulent and apoplectic figures, and of habitual costiveness. It is likewise sometimes met with in temperate persons; but then there are commonly marks of a scrophulous constitution.

CURE.

It is manifest that in order to establish a sound method of cure, our first object should be to ascertain whether the complaint be connected with diseased viscera. Should there be decisive marks of such disease, the best cure must be that which has in view the removal of the primary complaint. It certainly occurs in many instances without any evidence of a primary disease for its origin or foundation, particularly in plethoric persons and in scrophulous constitutions. In all cases the best method of cure is founded upon the principle of correcting morbid secretion, of restoring the healthy action of the viscera, of improving the state of the discharge, and of disposing the ulcers or sores

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to heal at the same time. These effects are produced by the pills No. 96, which should be exhibited in such a manner as to preserve a regular state of the bowels; one of the draughts No. 87, might be taken every morning; and the sores dressed with the ointment No. 97, and after the dressing, a flannel roller coiled round the foot and leg, from the toe upwards, and continued after arriving at the knee down again until the limb be cased in a double covering of the roller. In old and in plethoric persons, and in those who had the complaint a long time, an issue to hold a number of peas proportioned to the circumstances of the case ought to be made in some convenient place above the seat of the sore. In apoplectic habits the issue had best be made in the neck close to the head. Where there are evident marks of scrophula, unconnected with any other cause which might appear to have brought on the complaint, the whole of the above treatment may be employed with the exception of the mercurial alteratives, but here too the bowels must be preserved in a regular state, by means of appropriate purgatives; and if the state of the tongue points out a foulness of the stomach and intestines, calomel purgatives will be highly proper.

I have met with several instances of this complaint, which uniformly yielded to the above treatment,

treatment, where it was allowed to be fully carried into effect. If bad habits have laid a foundation for the complaint, it is evident that they must be abandoned.

RING WORM.

This eruption at first appears in the shape of a red itchy vesicle, which, spreading in a manner more or less circular, soon after its commencement consists of an enclosed space with a few of these vesicles thinly scattered over it, and surrounded by a red margin elevated above the skin and composed of these vesicles crowded together. This circular blotch increases by the margin receding farther and farther from the centre, and in many instances acquires a very considerable size; in some instances the vesicles of the enclosed space become more crowded, and give to the whole part affected a more uniform redness. From all the vesicles of the eruption there proceeds an oozing of a serous fluid accompanied by a slight itching. This complaint seems to be very much connected with the state of the stomach and intestines, and occurs most frequently in children and young persons; it appears upon different parts of the body, but most commonly upon the face.

CURE.

The general health is so little injured by this eruption that in most cases it may be left to nature, the

the affected person only attending to cleanly habits, and taking care to keep the bowels regular with some mild laxative and absorbent, such as a moderate dose of calcined magnesia and rhubarb taken in the morning and repeated every second or third day; but when it is inveterate, and accompanied by a foul state of the alimentary canal, the powder No. 104 is a proper medicine, and may be taken once or twice a week, the dose being increased or diminished according to the age, &c. of the patient, and the tepid sea-bath occasionally employed. By means of this treatment the complaint will in most instances be soon banished.

DARK COLOURED SCALY BLOTCH.

In this eruption a small spot of the cuticle loses its natural softness, and is changed into a brown, dry, and somewhat thickened lamina, which gradually spreads wider, and cracks or splits into fragments accompanied by a mixed sensation of slight itchiness and pain; from those cracks there oozes a scanty serous discharge, which concretes into brown scales similar to those first formed. The first laminae by degrees entirely separate from the skin underneath and fall off, and the laminae which form next after them proceed through the same course and drop off in their turn; and thus, in some troublesome cases, the complaint goes on for a long time; but in many cases the skin after
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the first crop disappears is left smooth, red and tender, and it soon acquires its natural healthy colour and appearance.

These eruptions are most frequent in cold weather, are most commonly met with in persons of fair and delicate skins, and are principally seated on the hands, the fore arms, and the face. They disappear in many instances in mild and warm weather, even without the aid of medicines; but in obstinate cases it may be proper to have recourse to laxative and absorbent medicines, such as are recommended for the preceding eruption, called ring worm.

VENEREAL ERUPTION.

There are some appearances of venereal eruption, which are more frequently than any other the subject of dispensary and of private practice. This consists in purple coloured spots nearly circular, somewhat elevated above the skin, and slightly painful on pressure. The cuticle over these spots is for the most part perfectly sound; they spread thick and crowded over the limbs and trunk of the body, and are sometimes found upon the glans penis; their diameter is nearly that of a common garden pea.

In some instances the venereal eruptions are large blotches of a light rose colour, with which
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the face and trunk of the body principally are marbled; the coloured parts are slightly elevated and in a small degree painful to the touch; when either of these kinds of eruption spreads to the jaws, the effort to shave the beard causes intolerable pain. If this marbled eruption or discolouration be long neglected, it becomes darker, extends over the extremities, and is soon followed by distressing pains of the joints and muscles, very like rheumatic pains. As far as I have been enabled to judge, the deep seated pains are more commonly connected with the light coloured marbled eruption, than with the deep coloured crowded spots first mentioned. When the pains commence, they are accompanied by a sallow complexion, loss of appetite, and wasteful general hectic; and these symptoms of general health impaired are frequently found also, previous to the commencement of the pains, and when the cuticular discolouration is the only symptom of the disease. The pains of inveterate lues are commonly confined to the bones which are superficially covered, and often accompanied with nodes or swellings upon the bones; but they sometimes put on the resemblance of every sort of rheumatic pain, even that of sciatica; and this assemblage of venereal pains, hectic, and loss of appetite, are met with too in many instances without any concomitant eruption.

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The bones on which syphilitic nodes most commonly appear are the tibia, the outside of the fibula near the ankle, the lower part of the radius near the wrist, the middle of the upper bone of the arm, the clavicles, the sternum or breast bone, and the upper bones of the scull; in some instances too they fix in and destroy the alveolar process of the jaws, or those bony sockets in which the teeth are lodged.

The eruption on the face, if neglected, encreases, and at length assumes the form of fiery and sore boils; the nose likewise swells and inflames, and by degrees its cartilages and lastly its bones are destroyed.

Sometimes the first appearance of venereal eruption on the face is a number of small purple phlegmons or boils, so crowded as to give it an uniform complexion.

Along with those eruptions the maxillary and cervical glands are often affected; they swell, inflame, and suppurate, with a discharge of an offensive ill conditioned matter. If those symptoms are long neglected, the suppuration extends to other parts of the body, particularly where lymphatic glands are seated; and, having once commenced, it rapidly spreads, sinks deeper, and is surrounded by a hard, purple, highly inflamed,
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and unequal margin; the whole of the internal surface of the sore within the border of this inflamed margin is foul, yellowish, and uneven: this purulent foulness is peculiar to sores of this description, and cannot be wiped off or cleansed by any mechanical means which can be devised; and indeed one of the most favourable appearances in the progress of the cure is its giving way and leaving a clean, smooth, and red surface.

We frequently meet with persons labouring under those eruptions and pains, who obstinately maintain that they cannot have a venereal taint; but when we are acquainted with the hardy assertions which many are inclined to make in defending themselves from the imputation of ever having been visited by this disease, we will fix our attention on the symptoms before us, regardless of those assertions, and treat the case with a liberal use of mercury.

Notwithstanding the resemblance between the pains of syphilis and bad chronic rheumatism; in distinguishing one from the other, our judgment may in general be guided by the eruption, when that occurs; by the venereal pains continuing undiminished or rather increased from the heat of the bed; by the appearance often of a profuse and general sweat without any mitigation of the pains; and sometimes by a circumstance which occurs

occurs and is then decisive, namely the torturing pain that attends the effort to shave, where there is neither ulcer nor sore to account for that pain.

CURE.

It is obvious that all those symptoms must be treated as venereal symptoms of the secondary kind, or such as arise from an infected system. In the choice of medicines we have a great range to select from. In most cases, the strong mercurial ointment alone will effect a complete cure. Sometimes the symptoms disappear more speedily by combining with the ointment the saline preparations of mercury internally, as in No. 98, 99. In obstinate cases sarsaparilla broth is very valuable, and contributes to support the vigour of the constitution, and to cure symptoms, which resisted the use of mercury alone in its various preparations. There are instances sometimes met with in which the system is charged with mercury, and yet the venereal sores will not assume a healing appearance, but rather spread, and become more painful, the constitution in the mean time sinking under a wasteful hectic. Here we must drop the mercurial medicines, recommend the continuance of the sarsaparilla broth, give some good cordial mixture to improve appetite, remove our patient to some healthful situation in the country, and employ the warm bath now and again. The mercury

cury then resumed will rapidly cure those sores which proved refractory whilst the patient remained in town. This fact is well entitled to attention, as it frequently happens that venereal sores, both recent and secondary, which are incurable in this town, shall, upon the patient being removed to the country, easily yield to judicious treatment.

WHITE BLISTERS, OR BURNT HOLES.

This disease, though not often met with, yet in consequence of its severity and danger deserves serious attention. The abilities and industry of Dr. Stokes, professor of the practice of medicine in our university, have been so successful in ascertaining its history, and proposing the best method of cure, that I shall merely extract from his account those passages which more immediately relate to its symptoms and treatment.

A very severe disease is to be met with occasionally, among children, in various parts of Ireland; and, if I can depend on the information of unprofessional persons, in England also. This is, an eruption of vesicles often behind the ears, followed by ulcers with copious discharge, loss of substance, and rapid tendency to mortification.

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This disease is known by various denominations in different parts of Ireland, as might be expected. In the counties of Dublin and Wicklow it is called, the white blisters; in the counties of Down, Antrim, Derry and Monaghan, the eating hive; in the counties of Waterford and Tipperary, the burnt holes: I would propose to call it *Pemphigus gangrænosus*.

The approach of this disorder is sometimes, though rarely, denoted by a livid suffusion like that of erysipelas slightly elevated. It more frequently happens, however, that the complaint comes on in perfect health. One or more vesicles appear, mostly larger than the best distinct small pox; these increase for two or three days, burst, and discharge a thin fluid, having a disagreeable smell, limpid in most cases, sometimes whitish and sometimes yellowish, the latter less dangerous; usually the weaker the child's constitution is, the thinner is the matter. Before or after breaking, the vesicles run together, the sore becomes painful, with loss of substance and a thin fetid ichorous discharge, the edges of the ulcer are undermined, and it spreads quickly.

The more usual seats of the disease are, behind the ears, sometimes on the hands or feet, on the private parts, (seldom on the arm-pit,) the breast, folds of the thighs, lower belly, on the inside

inside of the mouth or lips. The disease, however, it is said, seldom passes from the inside to the outside of the mouth.

In the progress of the disorder, the ulcers enlarge rapidly, with remarkable feator, very great discharge, and livid edges.

If the sores are behind the ears, they destroy the connection of the posterior cartilage with the cranium; they spread to the meatus auditorius; to the eyes, the sight of which seemed, in a few cases, to have been destroyed one or two days before death; and they sometimes extend to the crown of the head.

The constitutional disturbance that accompanies this disease, seems principally the effect of irritation. When the vesicles burst, the child begins to grow peevish and fretful, pale, loses its appetite, and the flesh becomes remarkably flabby. The periods of the disorder are not very regular; but it often happens, about the eighth day, that the pulse sinks, the lividity spreads over the whole sore, the feator and discharge increase greatly. The smell is so strong, as often to be perceivable at a distance from the bed. The discharge, in one case, where the ulcers affected the armpits and breasts, was such, that the linen was completely loaded several times a day.

Death

Death takes place about the tenth or twelfth day, often preceded by convulsions, sometimes by extreme debility. Patients are apt to relapse soon after the sores are skinned over.

The causes of this malady are rather obscure. It seems exclusively confined to children. Dr. M^cDonnel saw twenty cases before the year 1795; all the patients were under four years old. Dr. Spear observed, that it was confined to children from the age of three months to that of five years; but it has been observed, near Dublin, in children of nine years old. It attacks the finest children in preference; the children of the poor more frequently than those of the affluent; and those who live in damp situations seem more peculiarly subject to it than others. The disease is more prevalent in summer than in winter. It appears to be infectious, though obscurely so, in general; but, in the year 1800, Dr. Spear observed it to spread epidemically. It has been said, that the disease oftener affects the younger from the older than the reverse. It would be interesting to determine, whether it attacks the same person twice; it certainly is apt to return after apparent recovery. Children, as is well known, are very subject to excoriations behind the ears, which sometimes produce formidable sores; these may, possibly, in a few cases, resemble the disease we speak of in its advanced stages; but in a great

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majority

majority of cases, these excoriations are far less rapid and dangerous than the complaint in question.

On the other hand, the swine pock (varicella) resembles this disease in its first stage; but the fever rarely precedes the eruption in white blisters, and pustules of varicella dry readily.

This is a disorder of great danger, but of various progress in different individuals. It often happens that a fatal change takes place about the eleventh day. The unfavourable signs are, the rapidity with which the sores spread; the blackness, first at the edges, after some time spreading over the whole sore; the quantity and factor of the discharge; its colour, the paler being the most dangerous.

It has been alleged, by empirical practitioners in this disease, that, after the blackness had covered the whole sore, death was certain; but I have observed the blackness to go off, although it had spread over the whole surface of the sores. When this appearance abates, livid streaks generally remain for a day or two. When a favourable change is effected, in bad cases, the diminution of the factor and discharge were the first signs of the abatement of the malady; appetite was afterwards restored.

As

As I had many recipes for making a green vegetable ointment, and had good grounds to suppose, that several different compositions of this kind were used with success, I determined to make an ointment of a single vegetable; and, in selecting that vegetable, I was directed by its occurring in many recipes of this kind, and having itself a character among the common people, as a useful application to obstinate ulcers. Upon this ground, I fixed on the *scrophularia nodosa*, called in the North of Ireland, rose noble; in the south, phogham, pronounced phoram; in England, great figwort. This simple ointment, I hope, is as powerful as the compound, although my success with it has not been uniform; but the failures, which have been very few in comparison of the successful cases, have been those not under my own eye, or very far advanced; and I have reason to know, that no person is so successful as to be sure of rescuing the patient in all stages.

The following method is nearly what I have pursued for several years past, and what I advise. When the parts adjoining the sores are swelled, and strongly suffused with a dusky redness, or if the sores have been previously dressed by any dry powder, I apply a poultice of porter and oatmeal. The carrot poultice, in fermentation, if it can be procured without any delay, would perhaps be useful. After about eight hours, the poultice
 A a 2 should

should be removed, and the parts affected very gently wiped with a roll of lint or soft rag; then the scrophularia ointment should be applied. It should be as highly saturated with green vegetable matter as possible. For this purpose, the plant should be taken fresh, the smaller leaves selected, and stewed a considerable time with as small a quantity of unsalted butter as will be sufficient to prevent the leaves from being scorched. If well prepared, it is of a full grass green colour; but after keeping, it becomes the colour of box leaves, especially at the surface; yet I apprehend it preserves its efficacy, in a great degree, for many months. When applied, it should be melted, and suffered to cool to the consistence of honey; it should be applied, by a soft feather, with the utmost gentleness, to the whole surface of the sore. Through the whole of the treatment, the greatest gentleness should be used. If the ear is strongly drawn open, the parts affected are made to bleed, which produces many inconveniencies, and retards the progress of the cure. After smearing the ulcer with ointment, it should be dressed with the same ointment, with the addition of one-eighth part of wax. This last ointment should be spread on lint folded to the dry side, and cut so as to fit behind the ear; the whole should be secured by a broad bandage, drawn under the chin, and fastened over the top of the head. This dressing, in very severe cases, should be repeated

repeated every fourth or sixth hour; but as the fetor abates, larger intervals may be allowed. Hairs should be completely removed from the neighbourhood of the sore. I believe it to be necessary that the child's bowels should be kept open. I also direct the internal use of yeast, which I am of opinion is of service, but cannot decidedly prove it to be so.

Such is the treatment I propose for this disease, selected from such parts of the traditional method of cure as seem to have been most successful, with a very little addition. I do not pretend that this treatment will always succeed; but perhaps of four such cases as may occur to any practitioner, not excluding the most hopeless, it will succeed in three on an average: and if we could accurately ascertain the mortality which takes place when other methods are used, we should consider this proportion of success as very satisfactory. I have had a variety of opportunities of concluding with a high probability, that the treatment I recommend is superior to any of the following applications. The carrot poultice, although this, I doubt not, has been of use in a few cases; preparations of mercury, of lead, of zinc; powder of bark, of starch; washing with brine, with soap and water. I have named these in the order in which they are more and more objectionable. The first I believe to have been useful; although

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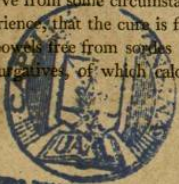
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I have pretty well ascertained not so useful as the green vegetable ointment: the last I have some reason to believe to have been pernicious.

The utility of the scrophularia ointment does not stand on my testimony alone. I have annually mentioned, at lecture, the state of my observations on this disease, and I have received favourable accounts of the use of it from several friends; some engaged in the profession, and some not.

I do not pretend to have proved, that the scrophularia has a specific effect on this disease; possibly it is only useful, by supplying the green vegetable matter; but as I and some of my friends have had a success more uniform, by means of this ointment, in a disease in which our failure was almost uniform before, I shall continue to prefer it to other vegetable matters until the subject is better understood.

In addition to this clear and satisfactory account extracted from Dr. Stokes's publication, I will observe from some circumstances within my own experience, that the cure is facilitated by keeping the bowels free from solids with moderate doses of purgatives, of which calomel forms a part.



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APPENDIX.

APPENDIX,

Containing the Medicines recommended for the several Diseases treated of in this work, together with their Doses and method of preparation. The numbers in the first column shew the Latin prescriptions; their corresponding numbers in the second column, the same prescriptions translated into English.

No. 1. R. Calomelanos grana sex.

Scammoni grana sex.

Pulveris capsici granum: probe in mortareo contritis, adde conserv: rosar: q: s: ut fiat pilula: tres.

No. 2. R. Calomelanos grana quatuor.

Pulv: radiciis jalapae grana quatuor.

Pulv: capsici granum: probe in mortareo contritis, adde conserv: rosar: q: s: ut fiat bolus.

No. 1. Take six grains of calomel, six grains of scammony, and one grain of Cayenne pepper; let the whole be well triturated in a mortar, and then made into three pills with conserve of roses.

No. 2. Let four grains of calomel, four grains of powdered jalap, and one grain of Cayenne pepper, be well triturated together in a mortar, and then made into a bolus with conserve of roses.