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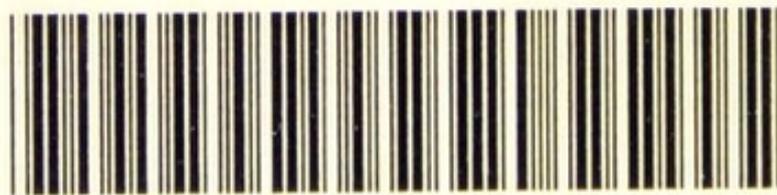
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ON  
THE SKIN  
—  
GRIFFITH.

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ON  
DERMATOLOGY  
AND THE  
TREATMENT OF SKIN DISEASES.



ON  
DERMATOLOGY

AND THE  
TREATMENT OF SKIN DISEASES

BY MEANS OF HERBS, IN PLACE OF ARSENIC  
AND MERCURY.

BY  
SAMUEL C. GRIFFITH, M.D.



LONDON:  
JOHN CHURCHILL AND SONS,  
NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

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TO

MY FRIEND AND FATHER-IN-LAW,

GEORGE YEATES HUNTER, ESQ.,

SURGEON, MARGATE,

IN TESTIMONY OF

MY PERSONAL AFFECTION, AND HIGH ESTEEM

OF

HIS MEDICAL SKILL.



## PREFACE.

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“Opinionum commenta delet dies, Naturæ judicia confirmat.”

Time destroys the illusions of opinion, but confirms the decisions of Nature.

GEORGE HERBERT, one of our early poets and writers, says, in his book called ‘The Clergyman’s Instructor’: “In the knowledge of simples, wherein the manifold wisdom of God is wonderfully to be seen, one thing should be carefully observed, which is to know what herbs may be used instead of drugs of the same nature, and to make the garden the shop; for home-bred medicines are both more easy for the parson’s purse and more familiar for all men’s

bodies. So, where the apothecary useth, either for loosing rhubarb, or for binding bolearmena, the parson useth damask or white roses for the one, and plaintain or shepherds' purse, knot-grass, for the other, and that with better success. As for spices, he doth not only prefer home-bred things before them, but condemns them for vanities, and so shuts them out of his family, esteeming that there is no spice comparable for herbs to rosemary, thyme, savory, mints; and for seeds, to fennel and carraway seeds. Accordingly, for salves his wife seeks, not the city, but prefers her garden and fields before all outlandish gums. And surely hyssop, valerian, mercury, adder's tongue, yarrow, melilot, and St. John's wort, made into a salve; and elder, chamomile, mallows, comfrey, and smallage, made into a poultice, have done great and rare cures. In curing of any, the parson used to pre-

mise prayers; for this is to cure like a parson.”

In earlier ages there is no doubt that simple medicines and fresh decoctions of plants and herbs were in common use. When men lived in the country, and were surrounded by the lovely flowers and beautiful plants given them by their great Creator, for their use as well as their pleasure; and when, at the same time, medical skill was not so quickly obtained as now, they turned their attention to plants and herbs, and from them very many valuable and wholesome medicines were obtained, which, for the purpose of curing those diseases and disorders to which the human constitution is liable, are far superior to mineral preparations. But as civilisation progressed, and towns and villages arose in all directions, as a natural consequence these plants disappeared, and men, immersed in

business, trusted to the skill of medical practitioners, who were unable to obtain fresh infusions and decoctions of plants, which they themselves own are far superior to most preparations now in use, losing, as they often do, their power with their freshness. Thus many of the simple, and at the same time powerful and successful, remedies of our forefathers have been almost lost sight of and forgotten. The author of this little treatise desires to bring before the public the result of many years' research and careful study.

The remedies now used for the cure of disease, but more especially skin diseases, often fail to achieve a cure, or fail to eradicate the causes of such diseases; or, if they remove the diseases themselves, frequently injure the general health.

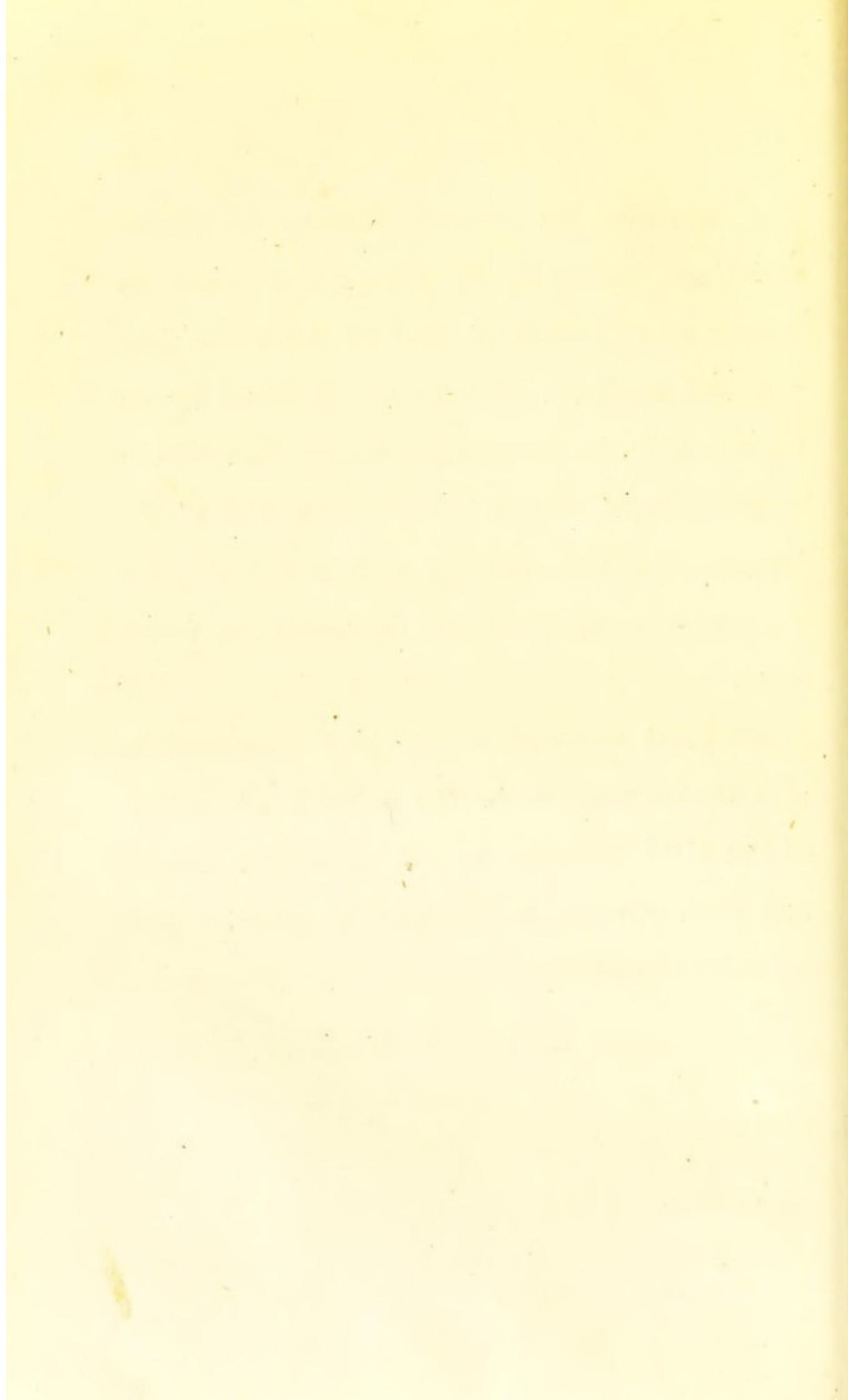
As a student of botany the author has selected those plants, which are given in the appendix,

from amongst an immense variety of plants, which are reputed by the old medical writers on botany to be medicinal, and at the same time safe and salutary. The benefit received by an improvement in the general health, in addition to the cure of certain diseases by means of the infusions and decoctions, is such as will surprise any who have not previously witnessed the treatment.

The great secret of success in the application of remedies consists in the suitable adaptation of the right medicine to the particular case—and such success is obtained by practice and attentive observation.

SAMUEL C. GRIFFITH, M.D.

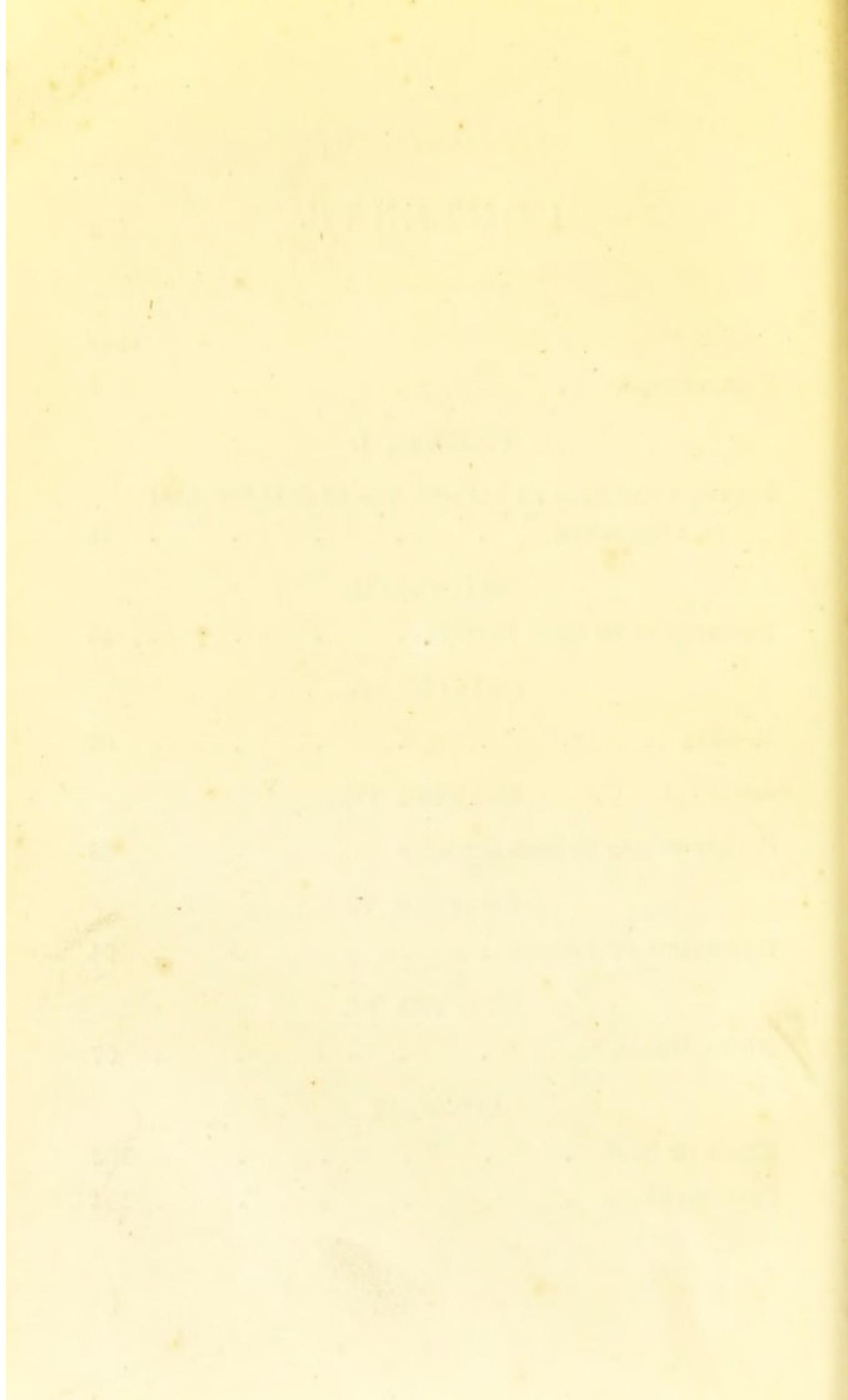
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ON  
DERMATOLOGY;  
AND  
THE TREATMENT OF SKIN DISEASES.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN turning over the records of past medical writers, both ancient and modern, we cannot but observe, as a fact worthy of note, that until we come to very recent writers, little seems to have been known concerning "diseases of the skin." When the student turns to modern authors for information respecting these unsightly diseases, he feels surprised and mortified at the scant and imperfect manner in which they are discussed.

*Difficulty of Cure of Skin Disease.*

Cutaneous eruptions do indeed rank among the opprobria of medical science, and are designated, in the words of a modern writer, as "obstinate, intractable, and even incurable." The same author observes — "It might even be made a

question whether we have not absolutely retrograded in the views which we entertain of their proper treatment."

Inexperienced practitioners frequently excuse their inability to remove these maladies by explaining to their patients that the skin forms a safety-valve when attacked by disease, and is an outlet by means of which some morbid product oozes out in the form of an eruption. It is argued that the internal and more vital organs of the body are thus saved from a diseased action which is transferred to the skin.

The sufferer is often then dismissed with the recommendation to endure a lesser evil rather than incur the risk of a greater. Such reasoning can now be shown to be as fallacious as it is comfortless, for, happily, means of cure have been discovered which render these complaints as amenable to treatment as other diseases to which our frames are liable.

Until the close of the last century there was no classified arrangement of skin diseases. And it is within a period of a quarter of a century only that a medicine long previously known, but the medicinal action of which was undetermined, was

discovered to be a specific in numerous cases of skin disease previously considered incurable.

But like imperial power, which, when wielded with a just and righteous hand, is most powerful to promote the success of those subject to its overwhelming rule, but which, when employed for the furtherance of nefarious ends, is equally dangerous to advance the purposes of wicked government, so is this remedy arsenic equally injurious as it is useful.

*Mercury—Artificial mode of Life.*

The same remarks apply with equal force to the preparations of Mercury.

It may now be asked what are the means of cure which are safe, and yet effective and permanent? What treatment should be adopted to cure diseases which are always inconvenient, often tedious, and generally distressing? The answer must be prefaced by the remark that we live in an artificial condition; habits which are not only needless but even obnoxious to our life and to the perfect health of our bodies, have become, by long-continued indulgence, parts of our nature

and almost necessary to our existence. Thus, then, many concurrent causes operate to bring out cutaneous eruptions, and to set up diseased or disordered action of every description. These disturbing and often fleeting influences frequently confound or perplex the practitioner of medicine, both in his deductions and treatment. Our artificially arranged hours of rest, the severe and prolonged exertion by which our physical powers are so often taxed, the disturbing influences of the mind which react upon the functions, and last, though not least, the blemish oftentimes stamped upon an innocent offspring, thus literally visiting the sins of parents unto the third and fourth generation, the neglect of those great renovators which God intended for our freest use and continued enjoyment, fresh air and exercise, all tend to complicate the cause and course of diseases which increase in numbers and variety with the advancement of civilisation and refinement.

*Man unqualified to remain Stationary.*

Such difficulties are thus presented to him who

attempts the scientific treatment of diseases or functional disorders so common to Man.

It must not be imagined, however, that Man, with his cumulative power of acquiring knowledge, his extraordinary intelligence, his high endowments immeasurably superior to those of all other living creatures, could possibly have remained in his primitive and simple condition of life. It is more reasonable to suppose that he is still in that state of progressive advancement which, while it throws into the shade the knowledge of bygone ages, will yet, by the same law, cause our present light to appear but dim and obscure to future generations.

#### *Caution in Treatment.*

This little treatise is intended for the people, and not to instruct in the art and science of dermatology. Two main objects are therefore kept in view.

*a.* The one to caution the public not to permit the administration of arsenic to grow into a fashion, as was actually the case with mercury some centuries ago.

*b.* The other to draw attention to the cures which can so frequently and with such readiness be effected by the employment of the simplest medicines, and by attention to diet.

The tendency of the human mind to rush from one extreme to the opposite has been witnessed by all nations and in all ages; and when those extremes become dangerous, it is the duty of every good citizen to warn men against the dangers thus incurred, and to help and lessen those evils which inevitably follow upon excess of any description. The simplest means of cure, if effective, must unquestionably be the best.

If some of the advice given in this little pamphlet appears too simple, or too common-place, it is because the treatment spoken of has not been tested, and its effects have not been witnessed.

#### *Treatment—The true Physician.*

It is impossible for every one to become a Physician.

Medicine is a science so extensive and difficult that it requires not only close and long-continued study, but a peculiar formation of mind suc-

cessfully to apply its general principles to individual and special cases. An acquaintance with the means and rules for curing diseases does not constitute a true Physician, as some imagine; these rules and means are the general results of medical experience, and have indeed a certain connection with the causes of disease. But he only who can perceive the whole chain of grounds and inferences from whence these rules are deduced, and who can himself devise means and rules in innumerable instances which books must ever fail to describe on account of the shifting nature of the causes of disease, is competent to practise as a scientific physician and not as a mechanical empiric.

*Sangrado—Warm Water and Bleeding—The Fig and the Olive.*

We all remember how Doctor Sangrado, in 'Gil Blas,' based all his practice of the healing art upon two simple and easy means of cure—those of warm water and bleeding.

One of our fraternity, who quite recently visited the Turkish army in company with the chief

physician, relates the following amusing anecdote. They came to a bed where lay Ali Mahomet, who had been attacked by convulsions the night previous (probably common epilepsy). Before the great physician had time to inquire into the cause of the attack, the nurse or sister gravely explained to the doctor that the patient had emptied a vessel of unclean water in some unlucky angle of the hospital, and that he had neglected to exclaim "Destur!" (which signifies, with your permission;) that some wicked and vindictive genius, who had ensconced himself in this said angle, had been besprinkled, and in revenge visited this hapless sufferer with an unequal punishment.

We are highly amused at the barbarous theories of semi-civilised nations, and often surprised at their limited resources in the healing art; in one instance, that every disease should be treated by one uniform plan of warm water and bleeding; in the other, that the fig and the olive were almost the only remedies employed.

But while we smile at such simplicity, we must not, in our own highly cultivated condition of society, allow ourselves to be carried away by a dogmatic adherence to two or three

potent remedies in the treatment of cutaneous eruptions.

Extraordinary revolutions in medical practice have been witnessed from time to time during many centuries, and very opposite modes of treatment have been adopted during successive generations. These contrary systems of cure cannot, with any show of reason, be explained by a corresponding and frequently repeated change of the human constitution; nor by any sudden alterations of mode of life or diet. Such revolutions in the plans of treatment, and such opposite systems of medicinal cure, appear sufficiently to prove that where vigorous treatment is proposed, which might be attended with danger, we should proceed with caution.

### *The Lancet and Calomel.*

Middle-aged practitioners well remember the universal employment of the lancet and administration of calomel, both employed on almost every occasion, and in cases of an opposite nature.

These two remedial agents became a kind of

fashion, which was followed by the bulk of medical practitioners, though many were possessed of considerable powers of mind. It is scarcely necessary to add, that this system of bleeding and calomelization has fallen into almost total disuse since a quarter of a century, when it was still in full operation.

Such practice, and all heroic methods of treatment, are attended with great danger, and are constantly followed by results which, though they may not be serious, are yet very mischievous and difficult of cure.

*Imperfect state of present Medical Treatment.*

It cannot be presumed that our present process of cure approaches perfection. It is much more than probable that the coming century will witness a treatment perhaps of an opposite nature to the present.

As we become more highly civilised and more dependent upon each other, we incur the danger of becoming ignorant of much sound practical treatment, which was followed in a simpler mode of life.

*Advantages of Herbal Treatment.*

If we go back a century we find, especially in country practice, that many diseases were treated, and readily cured, by infusions of fresh herbs and by recently made decoctions of plants long known and had in repute. Such decoctions are now rarely employed, and the properties and valuable uses of many British plants and herbs are almost unknown.

One great and all-important advantage of treatment by such means as fresh infusions and decoctions of wholesome and healing plants indigenous to our soil is, that at the conclusion of the cure the general health is greatly amended and the blood enriched and refreshed. While, on the other hand, the treatment by preparations of minerals, and those medicines resembling them, is apt to leave the constitution in an unfavorable condition, and unfortified against the insidious attacks of future disease.

*Fresh Infusions and Decoctions of Herbs preferable.*

We are too apt in the present day, even where the preparations from plants are employed, to

rely upon stale extracts and concentrated infusions which have become inert in the manufacture. Would a stale and concentrated infusion of tea or coffee refresh, or do the same good, as a fresh-made cup?

By means of these simple infusions and decoctions, many of the ancient practitioners sustained a character for curing disease not excelled in the present day by the most eminent men.

*Advance of general knowledge.*

We are all acquainted with the marvellous strides which have been made during the last quarter of a century, in our knowledge of physiology and pathology; an advance due to our increased powers of observation by means of the microscope.

The present age is one pre-eminently of mechanical progress. Genius and talent appear to have been directed to the perfection of mechanical art, including telegraphic communication and the printing of photography—arts which, a century back, would have been viewed with the utmost astonishment.

*Science of Medical Treatment Stationary.*

18. We cannot, however, conceal from ourselves the fact, that the cure of disease has not advanced side by side with the discoveries of the microscope. Nor has the successful treatment of disease improved in an equal ratio with the sister arts and sciences. It is certainly true that physicians have, by means of the aids which the extraordinary improvements in mechanics have afforded, been able to foretell and distinguish cases of disease, with a skill never hitherto attained. But therapeutics, or the action of medicines upon the human constitution in health and disease—and the proper adaptation of remedies—have neither in the one case nor in the other been properly defined. Indeed, but very little progress in this branch of science has yet been made.

In many of the arts and sciences there appears but little place for fresh inquirers—the subjects seem to have become exhausted. But in therapeutic medicine, in the treatment of disease, the field of observation is but little occupied. There is a vast and unexplored region which it would be well for the health, comfort, and life of

our fellow-creatures, were it speedily entered. It may be repeated here, that the cure of disease by fresh infusions and decoctions of the numerous indigenous and medicinal plants with which a wise God has gifted every country, is a subject not only of interest to the student and to the philosopher, but of the first importance to the public.

### *Mercurial Treatment.*

So dangerous was the employment of this mineral for medical purposes considered to be by the Romans during their civilised era, that they forbade its use. An edict prohibited the poisoning of Roman citizens. Its use in medicine was continued by the Arabian physicians, however, and from Arabia the practice of prescribing mercurial preparations spread into Europe about the fourteenth century.

The European physicians of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries employed mercury with a vigour never since attempted. The frightful consequences of such treatment are left as standing monuments in the shape of deformed and hideous skeletons, preserved in museums of anatomy. Since that

period no attempt has been made to administer this potent mineral in such murderous quantities. The John Hunter and Abernethy schools, however, continued to advise its use in lessened quantities, and thus avoided these terrible results. In vast numbers of cases, nevertheless, they did much mischief, and did not fully apprehend the right use of mercury in medicine.

The attempt to cure cutaneous eruptions by means of bichloride of mercury, or any chemical solutions of the same drug, without having first resorted to the employment of the many mild and health-giving infusions which are well known to those accustomed to their use, and without having tried the effects of an altered diet, baths, fresh air, exercise, and similar means of cure, resembles the schoolmaster of former days, who used no other persuasive arts of compelling his scholars to learn than the birch and the rod; who ignored all moral influence, and believed only in brute force—a system which, while it injured the body, at the same time debased the mind of the pupil.

*Treatment by Arsenic.*

The uses of this efficient and yet poisonous agent have been known for many centuries. In the East, and in parts of Europe, it has been long taken for the improvement of the complexion.

The scientific and medicinal use of arsenic has, however, been understood only within a few years.

Its effects upon disease are becoming better known, and its wonderful power on the skin is well appreciated by the profession. At the same time, its use is misunderstood by many who, being unaccustomed to its administration, imagine that arsenic possesses some Utopian action, and that if it be not taken with effect it may be employed with impunity—a character which cod-liver oil however, sustains, and as a medicine or food, never injures the constitution, even when its administration fails to cure the disease for which this universal and fashionable drug has been given.

Many ailments, many diseases, which are inscrutable because their cause is unknown, may

arise in after years as a consequence of the excessive use of this mineral; the eruption which gave rise to the severe treatment having been probably quite forgotten.

In addition to this possible and remote danger, arsenic frequently disagrees during its use, because the system is unprepared for its digestion and elimination through the proper emunctories.

If this drug disorders the constitution at the time when it is taken, it invariably fails to cure the eruption for which it is given.

In making these reflections upon the abuse of two medicinal agents of gigantic power, let it not be for one moment supposed that it is for the purpose of condemning altogether the employment of such powerful and valuable remedies. It is the empirical and indiscriminate employment of these strong medicines which is to be condemned.

*Importance of attention to the General Health previous to Treatment by Minerals.*

If the general health be first attended to, and due preparation be made for the administration of these drugs, a tithe only in quantity will be found

requisite to cure cases which, under the converse condition, would resist treatment altogether, or prolong the illness to a protracted and very unnecessary length of time.

The extraordinary advantages, in all cases of skin disease, of a preliminary attention to the health and condition of constitution previous to the use of arsenical medicines, must be tried and witnessed to be duly appreciated.

*Advantages of avoiding a Mineral Treatment.*

If a prolonged and dangerous use of arsenic be thus avoided, we husband the powers of nature, the springs of life will then have been left untainted at their sources, and consequently the inscrutable laws of human life will be unimpeded in their natural course. Let it not be forgotten that we are all born with different degrees of vitality; that every individual possesses a certain and peculiar tenacity of life, and that every one has a limit to his term of existence.

If, therefore, we draw too largely upon our resources, we lessen the vis vitæ, we empty prematurely and extravagantly the storehouses of the

constitutions with which we have been endowed. In any disturbed condition of the human economy, when the balance of functional action has been deranged from causes extrinsic or intrinsic, it is often necessary, in order to secure a return to health, that one part shall be exalted and stimulated to action. This stimulation appears to act by bringing into play the vital power, that great resource of nature, by means of which she is able to redress a disturbed balance. But to permit this play of nature she must be unimpeded in her course, her processes must not be violently or carelessly interfered with, nor her rules rudely assaulted, and the future must be as much considered as the present.

As a great river flows if it be not choked during its slow and steady course, by sand, silt, and wood of the mountain forests, with even and regular pace to its ocean home—so the stream of life should flow onwards, gliding peacefully to the inevitable end.

But it is our busy interference with the laws of God, our ignoring of this first grand principle, our weak and mistaken hygiene, which brings such disastrous consequences upon our health, and

even shortens life itself, thus causing an immense variety of disorders and diseases, which become increasingly complicated as civilisation advances.

Man, though of a finer and more complex structure than the irrational creatures, often takes such liberties with himself as would destroy the constitution of any of the lower animals.

## CHAPTER I.

### PROPER TREATMENT OF DISEASE, AND OF SKIN DISEASES IN PARTICULAR.

---

#### *Diet.*

DIET plays a most important part in the treatment of all disease, and tells with an effect appreciated only by those who have paid attention to the study of dietetics.

When the meat and drink are unsuited to the patient, or to the condition of that patient, a condition temporarily induced by the disorder under which he may be labouring, it is surprising to witness the difficulty with which a recovery is effected.

In questions of diet the family medical attendant should be consulted, who is presumed to have become acquainted with the peculiarities of his patients.

The effects of a wrongly adapted diet is often witnessed in the canine species. They who are usually called dog doctors well know that too rich a diet produces skin disease in the dog; and that in order to produce a fine coat and good health of body in that animal, a certain quantity of coarse food, with plenty of air and exercise, are indispensable.

This subject is a difficult one, but highly interesting, and requires long study and diligent observation, in order to establish rules of diet and the method of its application for the cure of disease, or for the preservation of precarious health.

The best dieticians can but give an approximation to a rule of food and drink upon the whole, and under ordinary circumstances most suited to the mass of mankind.

One broad rule holds good, however, in the great majority of cases, both in the treatment of disease and the preservation of the health:—that food of the simplest kind and in the most moderate quantities taken at fixed intervals favour to a great, and an unmistakable extent, both the recovery from illness and the preservation of good health, and this moderation fortifies the

constitution against the attacks of disease, both of the infectious and contagious classes.

*Vitality not dependent upon Food and Drink alone.*

A few observations will clearly show how questionable are certain rules of overloading the stomach, and over-stimulating the organs of the body by strong drinks, which rules have, to a certain extent, obtained in our day. Tenacity of life and vital action are not sustained in proportion to the quantity and quality of our food, and stimulating properties of our drink; but are influenced by a great number of circumstances, many of which are under our control, and others not so.

In the first place, it will be allowed that families of wealth are able and do supply themselves with the richest food, and with stimulating drinks of the best quality, and yet we find that they are not healthy and strong in proportion to the quantity of food and drink consumed, but that the health and life is preserved by their general mode of life, and other circumstances independent of mere food. On the other hand, we observe

that the orange-girl and milkmaid, and others following similar occupations, and who cannot afford any such luxuries, but live on the very coarsest food, present the most striking instances of robust health and sound constitutions sustained to the most advanced ages, on the plainest and simplest food.

Professor Hufeland shows clearly that in all instances of extraordinary longevity, the centenarian, and in a few instances those who have culminated to 130 or even 150 years, were people who led a most active life in the open air, and always lived upon the simplest diet. Simple living does not ensure longevity, but conduces, with other favorable circumstances, to the preservation of life and fortifies the body against the attacks of disease.

In the second place, we remark that the Spanish and French peasants live very much on chestnuts and onions, and are yet strong and vigorous, and possess constitutions which bear extraordinary fatigue. It is true they have abundance of air and exercise. It is also true that a simple diet and not rich food has invigorated them and their ancestors. In Mexico it has been shown that soldiers have

marched distances which would have exhausted well-fed European soldiers, and yet have fought battles at the end of their march. During these marches they have been fed on dried beef and parched corn.

### *Artificial Life.*

Very much may be said on the score of our artificial mode of life and the unnatural state of constitution which we make for ourselves; at the same time, the proper method of meeting the difficulties under which we consequently labour is not to attend to the food and drink only, but also to duly consider all other possible means of husbanding the vis vitæ.

We possess at the present day means and appliances and opportunities of seeking pure air and exercise of the passive kind, where active exercise cannot be borne, which was denied to our forefathers. These opportunities of enjoying pure air and invigorating the body with suitable exercise are remedial agents often far more potent for the cure of disease than any elegant and fashionable preparations or drugs.

*Mental employment conducive to health and  
longevity.*

To some, from their position in life, labour of body, except in the shape of horse or foot exercise, is impossible; and for such, full occupation of the mind is another means of preserving the health.

Hufeland also lays down the rule that activity of *mind* as well as *body* are highly conducive to longevity. This activity of *mind* not only keeps in action, as it were, the *vis vitæ* or tenacity of life, but diverts from indulgence of the table and from bad habits. Once more, compare the pampered child of fortune with the hardy child of toil, and no comment is required.

Lastly, let it be understood we do not include people who are scantily fed and clothed, and who are exposed to vicissitudes of temperature and to prolonged labour, which overtax the energies of the body.

Regular and proper exercise, whether of the body or mind, strengthens, by a fixed law of God, both the physical and mental powers—excess of action weakens and prematurely ages both or either.

*Overloading the Stomach.*

When overtaxed, the stomach often shows its irritability in a variety of ways; by corresponding sympathetic derangement of the functions of distant organs of the body, such as palpitation, giddiness, disorders of the liver and kidneys, nervousness, and a multitude of similar disturbed actions. Occasionally the stomach expels its contents, and by this process gives an increased tone to the system. The nervous energy of the body is often actually lowered by a very full stomach, though the converse also holds good.

In many constitutions there is, however, a wonderful toleration, and an almost unlimited supply of food can be taken, but it is very questionable whether it be with any advantage; such people do not appear strong in proportion to their appetite, nor do they recover more quickly from disease or live longer than abstemious people. Indeed, it is noted that multitudes of very old and poor women live on a scant and insufficient diet, and yet attain to long lives.

In stating the case so strongly it must not be inferred that there are not constitutions in which

the practitioner in attendance may deem it advisable to order an increase in the quantity of the food and stimulant in the drinks. Certain people require constitutionally a much larger supply and a much more stimulating diet than do others.

It is becoming the prevailing custom, however, at the present day, to live well, and sufficient attention is not paid to other means of improving the health.

And referring these questions to their effects upon the skin, it can be safely asserted that many cutaneous eruptions are entirely caused by a diet too large in quantity and too stimulating in quality.

Many cases of eczema of the head and legs in robust men follow upon quantities of beer drunk.

On the other hand, certain skin diseases arise from too limited and scant a diet.

#### *Anxiety a cause of Skin Disease.*

Anxiety frequently operates by bringing out a rash or even an eruption of some duration in point of time. Some people are always attacked with nettlerash after eating certain articles of diet.

Drinking cold water when fatigued and heated by great exertion will often cause a permanent eruption. Thus, we see how readily the skin is acted upon in some people; and it is not difficult to imagine what an effect diet may have upon cutaneous eruptions.

*Food to be adapted to circumstances.*

Different climates require different foods. It is well understood that even the instinctive calls of nature direct us to that food most suited to the climate in which we are born, and frequently incline to that aliment peculiarly adapted to the individual.

Again, the special quantity and often the quality is to be regulated most materially, according to the exercise of the body. Vigorous exercise in the open air requires a large quantity of food of a solid character—of a nourishing rather than a rich quality. The horse, when wild, or if idle, when domesticated, can subsist easily on grass; the hard-worked animal requires a proportionate quantity of corn.

The hunting hound can eat with advantage a

considerable quantity of meat, but the chained dog is healthier if fed principally on biscuit.

The plethoric or sanguine certainly does not require so rich and stimulating a diet as the phlegmatic or feeble constitution.

Hufeland states that milk is wine to children and wine milk to old men. Much depends upon the condition as well as the constitution of a person. The custom of feeding young children on much meat or beer appears unnecessary. And the habit of constant stimulation amongst adults also seems unadvisable on account of the continued excitement of the organs of the body by means never designed by nature. Much must depend in questions of diet on habit, but because they have become habits, attention is not therefore the less necessary.\*

The argument might be carried on to an indefinite extent, and fill a large volume, but the great secret in questions relating to diet lies in the

\* The barbarous tribes in South America are said to mix the decayed wood of certain trees with the oil carried about as a portable food; so convinced are they by experience that too rich and concentrated a food is unwholesome. Quantity is as necessary for substantial health as quality.

adaptation of the food to the individual case, whether in health or disease. Very much, again, depends upon the mode of life—upon long practised habits and a variety of circumstances.

We ought not to neglect other important means of sustaining the powers of life besides mere feeding.

It would occupy too much space to show in how many different ways the energies of life may be exhausted—an exhaustion which cannot be recruited by overcharging the stomach and overstimulating the nervous system.

This is an age of excitement, of complete absorption in commercial pursuits and speculations, and the consequences are frequently visible in various forms of disorder and disease both of the body and skin. The Appendix contains a tabular form of the rules of diet laid down as on the whole and generally advisable for the great majority of constitutions. The rules are framed by the officials of the cutaneous dispensary at Blackfriars.

*Treatment of Cutaneous Eruption, by diet—  
Quantity and Quality.*

The dietetic treatment of disease is a subject of

great difficulty on account of the shifting nature of the data upon which we form our conclusions, and of the complicated circumstances which surround the question.

What has been already suggested in reference to diet has been put forth for the purpose of inducing an inquiry not biassed by the prejudices and errors of the present age—an age which, though superior to the past, is still laden with erroneous doctrine—rather than with the intention of establishing fixed principles. In the art and science of Medicine there are still vast regions of inquiry very partially explored, and amongst them the study of dietetics ranks as not the least important.

The late and justly celebrated Mr. Plumbe, in his treatise on 'Diseases of the Skin,' relates a case in which a lady who was troubled from time to time with an irritable cutaneous eruption, always suffered a relapse when she took more than three ounces of solid food. Dr. Paris, in his treatise on Diet, states that he frequently gave permission to his patients to eat whatever they might prefer, if only they would promise to take a small quantity.

In sound health and under the advantages of vigorous exercise the quantity, if taken with zest, is of less consequence than the quality; but in disease, and particularly skin disease, the proper adaptation of quantity is of great importance in a curative point of view. Among other prohibited articles of diet at the cutaneous dispensary, tea is one which is strongly forbidden. Tea certainly does not agree with all constitutions alike, but that it is not in itself unwholesome is shown by the fact that many millions of healthy and very long-lived people have drunk this beverage all their lives, and have found it not only harmless but beneficial and refreshing.

It is, without doubt, the large quantity which is often taken that is so injurious. The stomach, instead of being in actual contact with solid food, which is the condition intended by nature, thus becomes distended with fluid, and may remain in this condition for a long time if the absorbent powers be weak. Meanwhile, the food remains undigested and may begin to ferment; hence flatulence and similar effects.

The food and drink should be strictly limited to a fixed quantity which is found best adapted

to the peculiar constitution of the patient. Moreover, it should be of as plain and unstimulating a quality as is compatible with the health of the individual; and, lastly, it should be taken at the most regular intervals.

*Proper Regulation of Diet goes far to Cure Diseases.*

Much might be written on the treatment by diet, and very much indeed may be effected by a proper adaptation of food and drink to the case and patient; but the subject is a large one, and requires much working out and considerable space to state any particular views at length. An attentive observance of the diet most suitable to the patient and to the character of the eruption will go far towards the curing of the disease, and most materially accelerate the treatment by medicinal means.

All these matters are, as a rule, much better arranged by the medical attendant, who brings a trained mind and a large field of experience in which that discipline has been exercised, to bear upon the subject.

*Ablution and Cleanliness a means of Cure.*

After the treatment by diet comes an important means by which cures are always greatly aided and disease often avoided, namely, that of ablution. Great attention to soap and water, especially in certain eruptive diseases of the scalp, will effect nearly as much in the way of cure as medicine.

It is well known that want of cleanliness is the principal cause of scabies or itch, and of many eruptive diseases of a like character.

Methodical ablution and attention to the clothing, therefore, rank high among the means of preventing the spread of skin disease, and also towards the cure of many eruptions. Many cases of itch even in good families are quite incurable unless diligent attention be given to regular cleansing and complete change of all apparel. The removal of superfluous hair is often indispensable for the radical cure of many eruptions. A case is related by a dermatologist of an old lady who was suffering from an insectal skin disease, and who was cured several times, but as often relapsed into a state of disease. It was found at last that the insects were harboured by a truss which had

never been removed even during the cleansing process.

A perfect purification in the treatment both of insectal and fungoid disease is absolutely necessary to ensure uniform success.

### *Use of Soap, Oatmeal, &c.*

As a rule, the use of soap is to be avoided in all cases of eruptions, and in its place oatmeal thickened by boiling water is to be employed.

In certain skin diseases, however, the use of black or soft soap is most important as a means of cure. For the removal of incrustations, poultices of potato starch and of arrowroot are preferable generally to either bread or linseedmeal. Poultices made of the soft part of a roll with milk are excellent as an external application in very many instances where linseedmeal is too stimulating.

### *Local Treatment of Diseases of the Scalp of Children.*

Diseases of the scalp of children are best treated, as a rule, in the following manner. First remove all crusts, or, if there be none, cleanse the

head well once or twice a day in the manner already indicated, then apply a mild preparation of citrine or golden ointment. Thirdly, attend to the diet, selecting the food and drink best adapted to the peculiarities of the patient and disease. Fourthly, the medicinal treatment must rest with the medical attendant, unless the case be of a simple character, when the mild infusions which are named in the Appendix—cod-liver oil, small doses of gray powder, and sometimes a little rhubarb and magnesia—will cure the eruption.

*Local Treatment.*

If there be inflammation of any part, a weak solution of Goulard's extract or white vitriol will be advantageously used several times a day as a wash, followed, on the subsidence of the inflammation, by a mild preparation of golden ointment.

Ringworm and diseases of a similar character are best treated by local applications of lunar caustic, of aromatic vinegar, and sometimes by blistering.

Care must be taken, however, that such cases are in reality true ringworm, or those escharotics may increase the mischief by causing inflammation and not advancing the cure.

In some forms of eczema, and especially of impetigo, all greasy applications are not only useless but injurious; in such cases, the means of cure must depend upon cleanliness and internal remedies.

*Dandriff or Scurf of the Head.*

Dandriff or scurf is an affection frequently attacking the heads of adults, and though not of serious consequence is often very annoying and extremely obstinate.

The cure is readily effected by washing the head once a week with soft soap, and applying every night a strong preparation of citrine, golden, or white precipitate ointment.

*Loss of Hair from affections of the Skin.*

In adults, certain affections of the scalp cause the hair to fall off, thus producing baldness in consequence of the glands of the skin becoming weakened, and shedding the hair which they contain.

For the cure of baldness arising from these diseases, ointments made up as pomades, and

liniments of a stimulating character, should be applied; and if these means fail, constitutional treatment may with good prospect of success be employed. For the purpose of cleansing the scalp, borax dissolved in water (1 drachm to the pint), with as much camphor as will become soluble, is a very excellent recipe; to be used once a week, especially if there be any tendency to scalp disease.

The treatment of alopecia, or baldness, must depend entirely upon the cause of the falling off of the hair. If some eruption has injured the glands from which the hair grows, the skin disease must first be cured; after which the glands must be restored to a healthy condition. Many cases of baldness depend upon a weakened condition of the skin of the head—a weakness entirely occasioned by a want of nervous energy. Hence, diseases of the brain, mental depression, and similar causes, operate in the same direction.

There are three indications of treatment, therefore, in attempting either to restore the hair or save further loss, viz., first, to remove all traces of skin disease; secondly, to re-invigorate, by proper stimulating applications, the hair glands, and thus

enable them to resume their natural functions ; thirdly, to treat constitutionally when any internal disorder has deranged the general health, and thus, by an action which, depressing alike all parts of the body, has also weakened the growth of the hair.

The nails are affected, as appendages of the skin, in a manner and by causes precisely similar to those which operate upon the hair of the head.

#### *Affections of the Nails.*

When the nails become very thin and brittle, and cause inconvenience by constantly and easily breaking, they should be kept close, and cut at regular intervals of time.

#### *Whitlow.*

Whitlow is a disease at the root of the nail, but does not properly belong to diseases of the skin. An early use of a stimulating lotion or liniment, proper paring, and sometimes the use of lunar caustic, will cut short the disease, and very speedily recover the diseased member, saving often weeks of lengthened and painful treatment.

Some forms of herpes, such as shingles, are best treated, and that, too, with a certain and determinate result, by Epsom salts, mineral acids, and lemon or orange juice.

The treatment in general use has been by magnesia, by Seidlitz and alkaline remedies.

### *Eyelids.*

Disease of the eyelids caused by skin disease, such as acne and eczema, or psoriasis, are generally curable by weak solutions of sulphate of zinc, citrine, or golden ointment, and by a regulation of the health.

### *Loss of Eyebrows.*

Loss of the eyebrows, from the effect of diseased action of the skin, is to be treated in the same manner as disease of the eyelids; and, in addition, by stimulating applications, similar to those employed for loss of the hair of the head. Loss of the hair, whether of the head or the brows and lids, is remediable by internal treatment, especially by decoctions and infusions of certain plants, which possess properties acting as a stimulant to the

skin as well as to the whole body. Such loss, arising absolutely from old age, or a natural local decay, cannot be repaired.

*Cure of encrusted Eruptions.*

Those forms of eruption called impetigo, and which often attack the whole body, causing the formation of large scabs and sometimes of sores, are readily curable by drinking freely of the infusion of many of our common British plants of the most wholesome description. Such plants are as healthful, when taken as a medicine, as are spinach, water-cresses, mustard and cress, lettuce, and all similar esculents when consumed as a food. The difference between the domestic and edible herbs in daily use, and the infusion and decoction of the British plants referred to, consists simply in the one possessing more especially medicinal and healing properties, and the other having nourishing qualities suitable as an article of diet.

Comments have already been made upon the treatment of skin diseases by the minerals bichloride of mercury and arsenic. The administration of the former is to be specially avoided because of

its uncertain effect, which is so frequently not only deleterious but dangerous. Arsenic, however, certainly does cure very many cases of cutaneous eruption with a precision far superior to any other drug in common use. Nevertheless, this mineral should be dispensed with as much as possible, since it has a future as well as a present effect.

*Combined effect of Arsenic and Infusions.*

In those cases, however, where the use of arsenic may be deemed indispensable, the joint use of the infusions and decoctions of certain herbs with the arsenic will not only increase the effect usually resulting from the mineral alone, but tend most materially to maintain the general health in a sound state. When these infusions and decoctions are employed at the same time with the arsenic, a very much less quantity of the latter is required. Sometimes only a fourth part of the arsenic, with these auxiliary helps, would be needed to cure the eruption.

The administration of these infusions appears, in all cases, greatly to facilitate the digestion and

elimination of the mineral, and by such process to preserve the patient from any future mischievous effects of arsenic. The following infusions and decoctions have been found very successful in skin disease, and have benefited the general health.

*Infusions and Decoctions which have proved very effective.*

Decoction of elm bark; infusion of the sprigs of the black currant tree, in the scaly forms of eruption, including the first stages of eczema. Infusion of the mistletoe, shepherd's purse, and others, in the pustular eruptions.

For skin diseases of every kind resulting from a depraved state of the blood, the following plants will be found very effective. Infusion of the buckbean, *Menyanthes vulgaris*. Infusions of narrow-leaved brooklime, *Becabungula vulgaris*. Infusion of the common figwort. Infusion of common cleavers, *Aparine vulgaris*, roots and tops, or the juice expressed from the leaves and roots. Nettles, either as a porridge or a decoction; the plant should be used in early spring,

when very young—the common nettle of the hedges and fields. Water-cresses in quantities. All the plants of the Genus *Artemesia*—wormwood. In some cases the juice of the lemon in common use. There are many others, but a few well used and rightly combined will answer every purpose.

In the Appendix will be found a short list of plants, with their uses attached.

List of those plants which have been well tried and found most beneficial :—

Infusion of the sprigs of the black currant.

„ mistletoe.

„ buckbean.

„ wormwood.

Decoction of spring-nettles.

## CHAPTER II.

### DESCRIPTION OF SKIN DISEASES.

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#### *The Skin a covering.*

THE skin, the enveloping membrane of the body, performs various functions, and has assigned to it by the great Creator offices differing in character in the animal creation. In the armadillo, the rhinoceros, the shark, and some others, it answers as a coat of mail, a protection to the animal, and required for some wise purpose. In the elephant, the horse, and most animals of a similar class, it is a hide, or skin of firmer texture and more solid substance, serving as a more decided protection than the tegument which covers man; although it is more than probable that the human covering would become physically very much strengthened were it exposed continually to the natural stimulus of the air, and not covered by

the clothing of civilisation. The skin has several functions allotted to it in man. Many organs perform more than one office, but the cutaneous membrane fulfils several duties essential to health, and important to life itself.

(1.) First, it is a protection to the organs and vessels of the body which lie near the surface.

(2.) Secondly, it acts as a secretory surface, throwing off a portion of the watery fluids of our bodies, and, dissolved in that fluid, certain effete particles of the blood no longer required in the system. It also acts as a drain to superfluous nutritive particles, so often taken in excess by man, in the form of meat and drink ; while the kidneys also lend their aid to perform this most important office.

Without this wonderful compensating power of keeping the blood in such a condition that its relative constituents shall bear a certain proportion to one another, drunkards and gastronomists would quickly perish ; and so he who possesses a surface of body which acts freely and strongly can support a freedom of life which would quickly terminate in one more feebly constituted.

*Action of the Skin necessary to health.*

Thus we can easily understand the importance of attention to the skin, and of maintaining a free and natural action, by keeping its secretory power in full play, by cleanliness, and by preserving an equable circulation on the surface. Among the working classes, hard work effects this same object, that of cutaneous circulation and free secretion.

*The Skin a lining membrane.*

(3.) Thirdly, the skin lines the internal organs, being continued over the lips, and lining the mouth, stomach, and intestines. Here its secretions are of a different character altogether, but of equal importance. It covers the exterior of the eyes, ears, and interior of the nose and its caverns, but it is not continued into the brain.

*Derivative Action.*

(4.) It fulfils another office very wisely ordained, which is, to take off diseased action from the in-

terior of the body and convey it to the surface. Carbuncles, boils, pimples, and many eruptions, are clearly examples of this description. The popular notion that boils are healthy, or a sign of health, is correct, insomuch that the skin here is doing its duty, and keeping, by what is called a derivative action, the interior of the body safe while the exterior suffers in its stead. This opinion is correct in so far as it shows the inherent power of the constitution to throw out disease instead of allowing it to prey upon more vital parts. But as all these effects arise from a vitiated blood, the cause itself should be treated, and if it be treated in a proper manner these effects would cease. The virtue, therefore, of the appearance of boils and carbuncles and all similar eruptions consists in its negative character, and is an indication of strength rather than health.

*Causes of Fever Coughs and Colds.*

Many kinds of fever colds and coughs are the consequences of nothing more than a disturbance in the economy of the skin ; and we all know

that such disorders form a large proportion of man's ailments, and are the promoters of disease more than any other known cause. The question arises, therefore, How are we to compass our purpose of avoiding these noxious influences, and of keeping ourselves free from the effects of vicissitudes of temperature and those accidental circumstances in which we all become placed? The answer is plain and logical. In a state of nudity the skin is exposed continually to the natural stimulus of the air: the wind evaporates the perspiration, and by frequent friction the solid particles dissolved in that secretion are rubbed off, whilst the friction affords a fresh stimulus to the cutaneous surface. Covered by clothes, we miss the exciting effects of free air and the evaporation consequent upon exposure. The skin becomes tender and susceptible—its natural sensations become perverted, or certainly altered to a considerable degree. Thus, we are rendered more susceptible of cold and of atmospheric influence generally. It is well known that those who are continually in the open air are very little liable to take cold, excepting those who have constitutional tendencies to disease of the chest, or those who

are exposed a length of time sufficient to exhaust the vital energy.

*Fertile source of Colds and Inflammations.*

On the other hand, those who are confined to one or two rooms are much disposed to catarrhal and bronchitic affections and all disorders arising from atmospheric changes.

One most fertile source of cold, however, both in the feeble and the robust, and those either very much or very little in the open air, is exposure to cold after exhausting exercise or exertion which has diminished the nervous power and relaxed the secreting vessels of the skin.

It is not the sweating alone which is the source of danger, but the enfeebled state of the vital force.

Simple as these observations may appear, an attention to the principles contained in them would save from many an attack, not only of cutaneous disorder, but of inflammation of other organs of the body—of fever and diseases of the most serious character.

Tepid bathing, cold sponging, the shower bath,

the warm bath, especially on going to bed, friction by means of rough towels or gloves—all act on the principle of exciting the cutaneous circulation.

The vapour bath and hot air bath are more powerful means employed for the same purpose.

*Treatment to be varied according to circumstances.*

As every person cannot be treated in the same manner nor by the same precise rules, the judgment of a medical adviser is always to be preferred where the cure of disease or the preservation of precarious health is demanded.

#### *Construction of the Skin.*

The tissue of the skin is permeated by blood-vessels—both arteries and veins, the former the channels of supply, the latter those which return the fluid to the large vessels, by nerves and lymphatics or vessels of absorption, and by minute secreting glands.

(5.) And now we come to a fifth function of the skin. By means of these vessels the blood, which

circulates so finely in the front of the eye as to become invisible, gives out its useless carbon and takes in the vivifying oxygen of the air, by this process giving life and warmth, and acting an analogous part to the lungs themselves, and hence the sympathy between these two organs so often exemplified in disease.

The lymphatics or absorbents, as their name implies, are able to convey a great amount of fluid into the system by absorbing the vaporous fluids of the air.

Medical men frequently meet with cases where the fluids excreted exceed by a great quantity those taken by the mouth.

The power of absorption by the skin extends to deleterious vapours; hence, exposure to miasma and air strongly impregnated with breath is highly dangerous, especially when fatigue or any depressing influence has lowered the vitality for the time and relaxed the glands, which subsist in millions in the skin.

Nature, however, supplies a power of resistance to these evil influences where the vitality remains intact and strong.

Thus, we learn another advantage of attention to

the health of the skin, as well as to the other organs of the body.

*Sentient Character.*

(6.) A sixth office is a sentient one. By means of this function we perceive in a measure our relation to objects around us, are made aware of the peculiar conditions of atmosphere, and are warned of many dangers which would otherwise be hazardous to life.

(7.) The skin is a custodian of the whole body. Burns and scalds, when extensive, are among the most fatal cases, because the guardian of the body has been injured, while a deep wound rarely inflicts a tithe of the pain caused by a superficial but extensive laceration of the surface.

By the nerves which supply the skin, the tips of the fingers are endowed with an extraordinary faculty of touch, which may be cultivated to a marvellous extent. The assumption by some that the blind do occasionally feel colours with their fingers, tends to show at least to what extent the power of sensation may be exalted.

When the sensations of the skin are unnatural,

as in disease, we have the most distressing itching, tingling, and numbing pains, more difficult to be endured than the most violent aches; and sufferers imploringly beseech some relief for their agonised feelings.

It would take up too much space to recount extraordinary cases, but the amount of suffering without apparent and corresponding reason is astonishing. The cure is often surprisingly rapid and complete, for when the cause is removed the evil disappears at once.

#### *Appendages of the Skin.*

The appendages of the skin are the hair and nails. The hoofs and claws of animals are developments of the same nature as those which tip our fingers, the adaptation being suited to the several wants of different animals. The quills of the porcupine, the bristles of the hedgehog, and the feathers of birds, as also the wool of quadrupeds, are but modifications of hair. That development of nail termed the hoof is to be found in graminivorous animals. It is intended to support a heavy frame, and enable it to be carried

long distances in search of food. The hoof grows as do our nails, and is renewed after a similar arrangement as it becomes worn by friction. It enables the animal to traverse grassy prairies or stony hills, while its frame is gifted with wonderful powers of endurance. The foot of very many of these animals is their sole defence, which, capped like a hammer head, while the limb is wielded by muscles of enormous strength, enables these quadrupeds to inflict a violent blow. The horns of quadrupeds and the bills of birds partake very much of the nature of nails, though they spring from the bony structure of the head, but are hardened by a great quantity of earthy material. Abnormal growths of horny substances have taken place from the human head, but a description of such accidental growths would occupy too much space in a small pamphlet.

The laceration from a claw or nail of one of the feline tribe is not venomous, as is often imagined; it is the character of the wound which is so difficult to be healed, that has given rise to the supposition.

The hair is a natural clothing of the body, and in animals assumes very great varieties of colour

and formation. The elephant is sparsely covered, since his hide is very thick, and he is intended by nature to inhabit warm climates, where he protects himself from the heat beneath the umbrageous shade of the forest trees.

The same rule applies to the rhinoceros and a vast number of quadrupeds. The monkey is more covered, but he does not require much hair, his natural climate being quite warm, a cold soon proving fatal to him.

The nails of these animals, as does their whole conformation, approach the nearest to those of man; and unless kept short by friction they would grow to a considerable length.

Unnatural growths of hair occasionally take place, as on the chin and cheeks of women, and the most surprising accounts are sometimes given us of the history of these hirsute ladies.

#### *Disorders affecting the Hair.*

The hair is subject to several derangements besides that of falling off (already commented upon), such as matting, tangling, and a rough dryness. The remedies are cutting, free use of

the comb, soap and water, and an attention to the general health. The falling off of the hair is a much more serious matter, and requires a methodical treatment. The cells of which the hair is composed admit of a circulation of certain fluids, though they cannot be traversed by sensible nerves.

The colour depends upon the character of this circulating fluid, which is regulated by the composition of the blood in circulation in different constitutions. Anxiety, severe mental labour, and other influences, affect the colour. In some, the albumen is too largely deposited in the hair-cells, thus causing premature greyness; injuries have been proved to have been a cause of locally whitening the hair.

Derangements of the health certainly affect the colour as well as the falling off of the hair.

#### *Disorders affecting the Nails.*

The nails, too, suffer in any deterioration of the health, and often become insufficiently nourished.

In such cases they become thin and brittle, and

a distinct line often marks the precise time when this appendage of the body partook in the general depreciation of the health.

The growth of the nail into the flesh, which often takes place in the foot, is a wrong direction given to the development of the nail, sometimes from mechanical pressure. In this manner, inflammation and swelling result; and the nail becomes partially buried, causing intense pain.

Eczema often attacks the nails, occasionally nearly destroying them.

Whitlow is an abscess at the root of the nail, causing inflammation and intense suffering; matter forms, and a puncture is required to release the discharge from its horny case. If at the commencement of the attack a wet rag were constantly applied, it would in all probability arrest the disease and save the nail, which is otherwise lost. The constant application, for about two or three days, of camphorated spirit as a liniment, which appears to arrest altogether the disordered action, has been found, however, a never-failing remedy.

Nails which become black or blue, or which change their colour, have some disorder at their

roots, and are in a diseased state, requiring a little attention, when they soon recover their proper function.

### *Warts.*

Warts are abnormal and adventitious growths, excited by various causes ; they are, in fact, elevations of the skin. In very young persons they are apparently caused, in some cases, by intestinal irritation, or some similar organic disturbance.

The treatment of solitary warts by the application of aromatic vinegar and lunar caustic is well known. Corns are growths similar in character to warts.

These excrescences have become so common, and often so distressing, that the treatment of them is undertaken by a special class of men.

By a proper attention they may generally be removed altogether without an operation. Gradual paring, scraping, friction every night with some stimulating oil, will often cure the most intractable growths. Exercise reduces their sensibility, if protection from pressure be given at the same time. There is not space in a pamphlet to

treat of all these variations from the normal health of the skin, but the subject is an interesting one, and of great importance to those who suffer from such tormenting disturbances.

## CHAPTER III.

### HISTORY.

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THE most ancient reference to cutaneous disease on record is to be found in Holy Writ—Leviticus, chapters xiii and xiv. There, in a very crude manner, we have detailed the symptoms and treatment of leprous Jews, as also the information that the Levites were the physicians of those days.

This fact is paralleled by the account which Herodotus the Greek traveller gives us of the priests of the Egyptians practising medicine, such as it was at that period. Herodotus, who travelled more than two thousand years ago through Egypt, India, and part of Africa, in pursuit of knowledge,

has left the most ancient account of these countries. One interesting fact he has recorded—that the Indians did not eat flesh, but lived on pulse and similar food. He also relates a remarkable custom—that if any one was attacked by an uncommon disease with which the practitioners of medicine were unacquainted, every one passed in review of the case until it was seen by some one who had suffered in a similar manner, or was acquainted with one who had been somewhat similarly diseased.

Of profane writers, Hippocrates, the great Greek physician who flourished twenty-two centuries ago, is the most ancient. His work on medicine, though so ancient, is well worthy of perusal. He was contemporary with many illustrious Greeks whose sculptures, laws, and philosophy, and whose appreciation and knowledge of the fine arts were such that they remain unrivalled even at the present day. He writes on several eruptions of the skin in his work on medicine. His treatment was based upon general principles, and his theory that many varieties of eruptions were the same disease in different stages. He makes mention of prurigo senilis, or that eruption of minute eleva-

tions principally met with in elderly persons and accompanied with an intolerable and persistent itching which embitters the life of the sufferer. He also mentions many scaly eruptions which are constantly to be seen in the present day, and are generally termed scurvy. Celsus, a Roman physician, who lived during the last years of the Empire, is another writer of note and of considerable merit in a practical point of view. Like Hippocrates, he describes certain skin diseases, and treats at some length on boils, carbuncles, and on impetiginous and other eruptions.

The Jews suffered, as did all the eastern nations, from very severe forms of cutaneous disease, such as are unknown in these northern climes.

The same types of disease are still seen, but in more mitigated forms.

The leprosy of the Jews (from the Greek—*lepra*, a scale) is still met with in the East, though neither so common nor so violent as it must have been before the Christian era.

Examples resembling the disease which afflicted Gehazi, and Naaman the general of the king of Syria, are still, however, to be found in all their hideous deformity.

The victims of this distemper, when poor, beg with baskets, to avoid contact with others, lest they should communicate the disease. In some instances they are covered with a white shining scurf "as white as snow,"—mentioned in Scripture. The easterns are also subject to an hypertrophied condition of the skin sometimes of an enormous size, causing the most extraordinary appearance of the body. Elephantiasis is the name of one variety of this tendency of certain parts of the body to enlarge. This complaint is also common in Greece. Occasionally Europeans, who have long dwelt in those countries, are victims to this wonderful disease.

At the time of Pompey, in consequence of the intercourse which the Romans held with the Egyptians, leprosy spread into Rome for a period. We may thus infer that the Israelitish tribes either carried the disease into or, more probably, brought it out of Egypt, and took it with them to Palestine. The crusaders also brought this disease into Europe, where it remained in a comparatively mild form until the sixteenth century. It continued to infest the Hebrides and Shetland Isles long after it had disappeared from the

southern part of Great Britain. In these parts cases were met with so recently as 1798 and 1809.

When once the distemper becomes established in the constitution it is said to be incurable and hereditary. It was considered so contagious in the Shetland Isles that a magistrate had the power of separating man and wife if either became infected.

The bottle-nose in this and European countries is a very modified form of a glandular enlargement of the skin. The popular name may have arisen from the circumstance that often the subjects of this disfigurement were habitually addicted to the bottle according to general belief. This impression has, however, some grounds of credit, for undue stimulants affect most materially the outer covering of the body as well as the internal structure.

Unhappily there is no special cure for this affection. Diet, surgical means, and local applications will all do much towards the reduction of the swelling, provided that it be not of too long standing. That red condition of the nose, on either side, which spreads to the cheek, sometimes to

the chin, is another and similar disease which is curable.

These facts help to confirm the prudence of an early attention to disease. All diseases assume different forms according to the age in which they prevail. The alterations in the system of culture, the artificial method of feeding animals used as food, the drainage of the land, alterations of diet, change in the manner of clothing, and many other circumstances and conditions, all affect in various degrees the economy of our natures, and the results are seen in the ever-changing character of disease.

Since the time of Celsus no systematic arrangement of skin disease took place until the time of the celebrated Willan, who arranged skin diseases under certain orders and genera, just as Linnæus arranged his system of botany.

No superior arrangement has been offered since that supplied by our countryman Willan. Nor has any one yet proposed a methodical and comprehensive treatment of skin diseases, and the subject must be considered at present in its infancy.

## CHAPTER IV.

### SKIN DISEASES.

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THE Orders are as follows :

- Order 1. *Papulæ*, or Pimples.
2. *Squamæ*, or Scales.
3. *Exanthemata*, or Rashes.
4. *Bullæ*, or Blisters.
5. *Pustulæ*, or Pustules.
6. *Vesiculæ*, or Vesicles.
7. *Tuberculæ*, or Tubercles.
8. *Maculæ*, or Spots.

*Papulæ* are characterised by an eruption of small pimples, not containing fluid or matter, and terminating in scurf. Under this order are three genera, viz., *Strophulus*, an infantile disease, called the "red gum;" the pimples are of a bright red colour. This eruption generally passes quickly away.

*Lichen*. The same disease in the adult, but

more or less persistent; it is subdivided into *L. simplex*, *L. urticatus* (a kind of nettle-rash), *L. agrius*.

*L. simplex* may be mistaken for itch—is the “prickly heat” of tropical climates. This form varies in degree, and, if not quickly cured, often becomes extremely stubborn. From constant scratching, the skin becomes torn, and bleeds.

*L. urticatus*. When the pimples are surrounded by wheals. It arises constantly from sudden changes of temperature and errors in diet.

*L. agrius* is an aggravated form, an inflamed variety. Is frequently mistaken for eczema and psoriasis. Occurs very frequently on the hands of those who handle irritating powders; hence the nomenclature *Baker's Itch*, or *Grocer's Itch*.

*Prurigo*. Derived from the Latin, to itch, on account of its ceaseless irritation. It particularly attacks elderly people, hence its name, *Prurigo senilis*. Baths, especially vapour ones, a wisely ordered diet, and suitable change of air, will cure cases which for years may have tormented the unfortunate victim, whose life has become a misery. Prurigo differs from lichen; the rash is much lighter in colour, indeed nearly the same colour

as the skin; the elevation of the pimples is very slight. In consequence of the scratching resorted to by the sufferer to relieve the irritation, prurigo is with difficulty distinguished from common itch.

Order 2.—*Squamæ*. Scales, or flakes of dead cuticle or scarf-skin; hard, thickened, and opaque. There are four genera—*Lepra*, *Psoriasis*, *Pityriasis*, and *Ichthyosis*.

*Lepra*, or English leprosy as it is commonly termed, is an extreme form of the *squamæ* or scales; patches as large as a dinner-plate often cover different parts of the body, and throw off daily immense white flakes. Such cases, if left to themselves, will last for many years, or even a life-time, and though most difficult to be got rid of under ordinary treatment, will gradually yield to a judicious system of medicine perseveringly and strictly carried out. This disease often commences by small spots, about the size of a threepenny-piece, which circles are covered with small shining scales, on a slightly red base; these attacks only disappear under medical treatment, and unless the disease be promptly attended to, one or two years

may be required to cure the eruption in its more advanced stages.

*Psoriasis* is similar to lepra, except that the surface of the skin becomes cracked, and sometimes the fissures more deep and long, and the inflammation causes an exudation. The patient is distressed by perpetual itching, burning, smarting, and at length by broken rest, and suspension of the functions of the skin, which may destroy his health, and even his life. These cases, though a few years ago considered incurable, are now found slowly but surely to get well if skilfully treated.

*Pityriasis*. Dandriff is its common name, when the head only is attacked; irregular patches of thin slight scales are repeatedly produced and separated; but they never form crusts, nor are they attended with fissures or excoriations. After this definition, it is scarcely worth while to enter into any details. When pityriasis attacks the head, treatment is absolutely necessary, as the constant discharge of small scabs is most inconvenient.

Order 3.—*Exanthemata*, or Rashes. “Red

patches, superficial, of various shapes, intervening skin of a natural hue, terminating in cuticular exfoliations.”

To this order belong Measles, Scarlet-fever, Nettle-rashes, Rose-rash; Erythema, or Blush-rash; Purpura, a disease of the blood, in which it escapes from the minute vessels of the skin and mucous membranes in the form of small circles or spots. This disease, unless arrested in its early stages, is attended with imminent danger.

It need scarcely be remarked, that the two first-named rashes are highly contagious, the others are constitutional affections. Nettle-rash is the effect either of a sudden chill after great heat, or else the result of food disagreeing with the system, and producing irritation of the mucous membrane of the stomach and alimentary canal. Some forms of nettle-rash become more or less chronic; the sufferer is harassed by sudden attacks, ushered in with swelling of the skin, and painful, stinging sensations. Both the active and chronic forms are amenable to treatment.

*Erythema.* “A redness of the skin, covering a certain portion, accompanied with severe disturbance of the health; not contagious. It some-

times consists of temporary red patches—on the arm, neck, or breast; delicate females are most frequently attacked. One variety occurs in oval patches of red along the shin bone, and becomes dusky or livid in colour.

Order 4.—*Bullæ* “appear like an immense blister.” The eruption consists of bladders, which vary from the size of a split-pea to that of a walnut, and which generally burst in a few days, and form ulcers or scabs. The fluid contained in these bladders is sometimes of a transparent black colour. Sometimes an immense bulla or blister appears, which, as soon as it has burst and become dried or ulcerated, is followed by a succession of single bullæ.

Order 5.—*Pustulæ*. “Elevations of the skin containing matter, and having an inflamed base.” Includes five genera—*Impetigo*, *Porrigo*, *Ecthyma*, *Variola*, and *Scabies*.

*Impetigo* is characterised by “small pustules running into each other and producing scabs.” This complaint often attacks the face, and renders the sufferer hideous in appearance.

The scabs which form are of a dirty-straw colour, like the soiled and stained bark of a tree. Many cases of impetigo, or crusted tetter as it is often termed, are exceedingly obstinate, and, if not treated by those who understand them specially, will last for many years.

*Porrigo* sometimes resembles impetigo in appearance, but is highly contagious, often attacking the heads of children, running through a school in an incredibly short space of time; sometimes it appears as a scabby eruption, sometimes as a baldness in circular patches. *Porrigo* is characterised by its honeycomb appearance, and its yellow crusts. In the variety which causes baldness no eruption often takes place, but the disease first shows itself by one or two patches on the head, to which immediate attention should be given. Ringworm and Scaldhead are names by which this disease is commonly known.

*Alopecia* or Baldness, which attacks grown people, will sometimes sweep away eyebrows and eyelashes as well as all the hair of the head, and is a form of *porrigo*; these terrible diseases are, with very few exceptions, quite curable.

*Porrigo larvalis*, or *Crusta lactea*, only attacks

infants, forming dirty-looking yellow scabs, which cover the head and face; these discharge, sometimes large, sometimes small quantities of acrid matter, causing more or less irritation. Frequent washing with a soft sponge and warm water will prevent the caking of the discharge, and attention to the health will cure this tiresome affection.

*Ecthyma* resembles impetigo, but the pustules are larger and more isolated. It frequently follows other skin diseases. Only a practised eye would distinguish it from other eruptions, the public would confound it with other diseases.

*Variola*, or Small-pox, is too well known to require description; its treatment should be undertaken by the family attendant.

*Scabies*, or Itch, is almost equally well known, though but occasionally met with amongst the respectable classes of society; but should it once reach the most aristocratic family, it will rapidly run through the household, and will often become chronic. Other skin diseases which occasion much irritation of skin, such as eczema, are frequently mistaken for scabies, thus rendering their cure much more difficult and complicated. Cleanliness is the great preventive of, and sulphur the cure,

for itch. Attention to the general health and even strict medical treatment are necessary in the complicated and advanced stages of scabies.

*Vesiculæ*, Vesicles, a small elevation like a pimple, generally clear and colourless, sometimes opaque and whitish, succeeded by scurf or a laminated scab. Genera are—*Varicella*, or Chicken-pox, *Herpes*, or Shingles, *Miliaria*, *Eczema*, *Aphtha*, *Rupia*. *Varicella* or Chicken-pox is a mild febrile eruption of vesicles, which contain a mixture of matter and watery fluid; similar varieties are called serum-pox, blister-pox, &c. &c.

*Vaccinea* is the small-pox, rendered mild in form by transmission through the cow. Vaccination is too well known and understood to require either explanation or description.

*Herpes*, small vesicles containing a thin semi-transparent fluid, collected in clusters, on an inflamed base; the disease runs through a series of stages and terminates in one, two, or three weeks, and forms thin scabs; there are several and peculiar forms of herpes. *H. zoster*, which extends half-round the waist from the shoulder downwards, described by Pliny, “*Enectat si cinxerit;*”

it kills if it encircles ; happily, however, it never spreads beyond two thirds of the body. *H. circinnatus* appears in a ring on the face, neck, arms, or shoulders. *H. labialis* surrounds the mouth. *H. preputialis*, *H. iris*, appears on the hands or fingers. *Herpes zoster* is called in the country, the shingles. *Herpes circinnatus* is very often mistaken for ringworm. *Herpes iris* may be confounded with baker's itch, and with certain forms of eczema or psoriasis on the hands.

*Rupia* is a form in which the vesicles are broad and flat, and the contents degenerate into dirty thick crusts which become foul ulcers. Infants with weakly constitutions are subject to this affection. Generally speaking, patients who suffer rupia have become depressed in constitution, and require an alterative treatment, with proper stimulants and plenty of nourishment.

*Miliaria* is a name given to an eruption which often appears during fevers. The vesicles are the size of millet seeds, and sometimes appear like drops of sweat on the surface. The eruption is symptomatic.

*Eczema* is a well-known eruption, "consisting of vesicles of a small size covering various parts

of the body, generally crowded together, with but slight inflammation and unattended with fever.”

*Eczema* appears in almost every variety of form, from a small crack or fissure and a spot the size of a pea which sheds a slight scurf, to immense patches as large or even larger than a dinner-plate, casting off daily in flakes the size of a shilling as much scurf as will fill an egg-cup. Eczema is not contagious, it is very irritating and sometimes particularly so when the surface affected is considerable and the disease very active in its nature, discharging a large quantity of semi-transparent fluid. In such cases the orifices force out an irritating fluid which excoriates the surrounding skin; this dries into scabs of laminated character which vary in colour, from silvery white to greenish yellow; if tinged with blood, these become a reddish brown. The most common form of eczema is a circular spot varying from the size of a pea to that of a shilling, and covered with a white scurf of small scales. This kind of skin disease is not only the most frequent, but it affects every age and constitution, and may attack any part of the external surface and even strike in-

wards, seriously deranging the functions of life and even sometimes causing death. Eczema of the hands, arms, and lower extremities is constantly mistaken for itch, and the difference is so slight that only experienced practitioners can distinguish between the two diseases. The distinction, nevertheless, is most important, as the one is highly contagious and may seriously attack a whole household, passing from one member to another, the infection lasting for months, while the other is confined to the sufferer alone.

*Eczema* is, at the same time, one of the most curable and one of the most stubborn of skin diseases; if treated in the early stages, and under favorable circumstances, it yields gradually but surely to proper medicines. In its advanced forms and in inexperienced hands, it may last many years and may indeed become incurable.

*Aphtha*, or Thrush, is a disease too well known to require description; it only needs ordinary treatment.

Order 7.—*Tuberculæ*, or Tubercle, a small, hard, superficial tumour, circumscribed and permanent, or partially suppurating. The genera are,

*Phyma, Verruca, Molluscum, Vitiligo, Acne, Sycosis, Lupus, Elephantiasis, Frambæsia.*

*Phyma* includes the Carbuncle, Boil, and Sty. Occasionally these diseases are epidemic, as also Whitlows, but in general these affections attack solitary individuals, and arise from some morbid action in the blood or constitution. *Carbuncle* is well known to attack those people whose vital energy has been either weakened by long-continued depressing causes, or else, by causes of that character, but of a very exhaustive character. *Carbuncles* are frequently fatal in their consequences, and should be treated by skilful surgeons.

*Boils* are in some respects similar to carbuncles, but they are much smaller in size, the matter formed is more fluid, and is contained in a single sac. Boils occur at all ages, and under differing circumstances, but they invariably indicate an unsound state of health.

*Hordeolum*, or Sty, is a small tumour at the margin of the eyelid, in which matter collects; it is really an inflammation of one of the glands of the eyelid. Such affections also generally arise from some derangement of the health, probably from unhealthy secretions.

*Acne*, or Pimples, are similar to these last, attacking the small glands of the skin in the face and back. Pimples nearly always attack the young; they are sometimes of little consequence, but they are often very difficult of cure, and very disfiguring; men more frequently suffer from them than women; these vexatious eruptions can be cured by the use of proper means.

*Warts* are tuberculous growths, covered with hardened and thickened skin. The best local application is the liquid caustic potash; when, as is sometimes the case, they spread over different parts of the body, regular but simple constitutional treatment is necessary for their removal.

*Acne rosacea* is a form of pimple which, in the chronic stage, becomes so very different from ordinary pimples, as to require a totally different treatment. It is a kind of skin disease, to which women are specially liable; it attacks them about middle age, completely disfiguring the nose and adjacent cheek. The appearance of the sufferer in its advanced stages is that of a dram-drinker. This affection always has been, and is even at the present time, considered incurable; but it is certain that a careful attention to rules of diet, and

a regimen suited to the peculiarities of the patient, combined with judicious medical treatment, persevered in for some months, will at last remove this hitherto incurable and most distressing cutaneous disease. During his wanderings in 1847 and 1848, amongst the baths of France and Germany, the author saw several cases of Acne rosacea, by which many ladies in good position were completely disfigured; all the medical skill of Great Britain had been exhausted, before these baths were resorted to; such cases can now be cured at home.

*Sycosis*, an eruption of inflamed but not very hard tubercles, occurring on the bearded portion of the face, and on the scalp, and usually clustering together in patches. Sycosis of the chin may attack either the upper or under lip, as well as the chin itself. A thick matter cakes among the hairs, and mats them together; the itching is often great, and shaving becomes impossible. An early treatment is important in order to effect a speedy cure.

*Lupus*—*Noli me tangere*, or King's Evil, affects the nose and lips; this disease commonly causes jagged ulcerations of the cheeks, forehead, eyelids,

and lips; in other parts it destroys the skin and muscular parts, and occasions deep sores.

*Lupus exedens* is a terrible complaint, eating away the skin, and even the bones of the nose, and the flesh of the face down to the bones, causing a permanent deformity of the most hideous kind; such fearful complaints are happily rare; they appear to be constitutional. On the first appearance of tubercles an immediate attention to the general health, as well as to proper change of air, is imperatively demanded; no time should be lost, as the mischief, if it once occur, cannot be remedied; but much may be done by prompt treatment, indeed, the disease may be arrested. When the constitution becomes strengthened and settled, a relapse need not be feared; any sore spot on the wing of the nostril should have instant attention given to it. This disease rarely attacks the middle-aged. The treatment of King's Evil should always be entrusted to a skilled practitioner, and no attempt at home-prescriptions should on any account be made, nor should this disease be treated by those who are not fully acquainted with it. The principal remedies are the most bracing sea-air, tonics, cod-liver oil, a generous diet; rest from

all care, and sometimes arsenic should be given ; this latter medicine probably acts upon the absorbent vessels, after it has been digested and carried by the blood into the capillaries.

*Lupus-non-exedens*, a form of King's Evil which does not eat away the flesh and bones, but simply ulcerates, leaving a scar like a burn ; it commences in the tubercular form, and is slow of growth. Notwithstanding its less virulent nature, it is a disease which does not spread in the manner which the first-named, *Lupus exedens*, does.

This disease commonly attacks young and healthy females. The treatment should be entirely confided to a skilful practitioner, and must be based upon general principles.

*Elephantiasis*.—A disease rarely to be met in Europe, excepting Greece.

*Frambæsia*—Yaws, still more rare. Common in Africa or West Indies.

Order 8.—*Maculæ*. Permanent discoloration of some portion of the skin, often with a change of its texture.

*Genera*.—1, *Ephelis*, Freckles. 2. *Nævus*, dis-

coloration and excrescences of the skin, commonly known as Mother's marks, Spots, &c.

*Ephelis*—Freckles, very common in young people, especially those having a peculiar and mixed character of skin. Certain local and stimulating applications are useful in disfiguring cases.

*Nævus*—Mother's Mark, has always been considered as a local affection. Certain cases of Nævi have appeared after birth, and such should, of course, be treated both constitutionally and locally. Those cases which appeared with the birth of the infant are generally best cured by operation.

*Ulcers* of the leg properly belong to the surgeon's art, but are very frequently not only a result but a cause of, and very commonly are associated with, skin diseases affecting the leg.

*Varicose ulcer*, from disease of the veins of the leg (varicose veins) is very common amongst females, especially of the poorer classes, who are obliged to stand long during the day. These ulcers, by their irritation, often cause surrounding eruptions, which eruptions require treatment in addition to the cure of the original ulceration.

Labouring men are sometimes victims to this affection. Few of those suffering from these affections of the leg can afford the time to be confined at home in the recumbent posture which is the best and speediest means of cure, backed by the proper appliances and by constitutional treatment. It is, however, a great boon to be able to cure those who are unable, from force of circumstances, to rest from labour. The first step is to reduce the active inflammation, which is generally managed, by rest for one or two days, by Goulard's lotion—oxide of zinc held in solution in glycerine, and by poultices of roll made with milk. After the two days, if possible, a firmly applied bandage should be rolled evenly from the toes to the knee, and the bandage kept continually wetted with water. Sometimes the ulcer may be carefully brushed over with a solution of lunar caustic, and when chronic, and not painful, the red oxide of mercury will often cause them to heal rapidly.

The constitutional treatment must altogether depend upon the patient, and other circumstances, which cannot be discussed in a limited space. Moderate purging with Epsom salts, the diluted nitro-muriatic acid, and lemon-juice, are excellent

remedies when properly adapted to the case. Standing in the erect posture is to be avoided as much as possible. When the patient is at rest, the leg and thigh should be raised to an angle of forty-five degrees.

When the ulcerations are healed, regular and moderate exercise is beneficial to the general health, and promotes the proper return of the blood from the leg, and thus tends to prevent relapses.

Ulcerations of the legs do arise, however, from a depraved condition of the blood. In such cases, the sores are not confined, as in varicose ulcer, to one particular part of the calf, but are spread out over the whole of the leg.

### *Bandages.*

If flannel bandages can be borne they are preferable to cotton, on account of their more even pressure and the uniform temperature in which the limb is maintained.

The principles to be observed in treating diseased legs are, first, to reduce all active inflammation by rest, and keeping the limb in an elevated

position ; to heal any wounds by ointments, lotions or poultices ; to close any bleeding vein by the pressure of a small pad ; to keep a bandage constantly and evenly applied, and to attend to the general health ; treating medically any viscus whose functional action has been disturbed. Injuries occurring to the leg will often cause an eruption near the seat of the mischief, and such eruptions are frequently difficult of cure.

As diet drinks, decoctions and infusions of those herbs which have an action upon the kidneys and liver are most beneficial in these affections of the legs, often taking a surprising effect, especially when mechanical means are employed at the same time.

*Ring-worm (Porrigo Scutulata).*

A disease very common among children, and especially in schools. Distinguished from other affections by patches of shrivelled hair, short, brittle, and twisted. Patches may be few or many ; rarely attack the whole scalp. This dreaded complaint affects indiscriminately all classes, and apparently under all circumstances.

It is highly contagious, but, what is remarkable, only for those who are susceptible to the disease. At the same time, ring-worm arises spontaneously, and without any apparent cause. The cause of ring-worm is at present as much buried in obscurity as the cause of cancer. Doubtless some fault in the assimilative or nutritive economy of our natures exists in cases of ring-worm.

Treatment consists in cleanliness, stimulating applications, medicated ointments, sometimes blistering the head, and attention to the general health.

The hair should be shaved off, or clipped close.

The disadvantage of shaving the head is that the edge of the razor irritates the scalp. Change of air is another and effective means of cure. These affections of the scalp have been known to last for years when left untreated; they are, however, quite curable by proper means and appliances.

#### *Parasitic and Insectal Diseases.*

During the last few years a controversy has arisen in reference to the origin of many skin

diseases in which parasites and insects have been discovered, as to whether the eruption is caused by the insect or parasite, or if it arises from some constitutional taint or disease.

In a stagnant pond we observe the facility with which insects of a low type, and fungi, are developed. The running stream, on the contrary, is rarely choked by the lowest order of vegetable growth, nor do these insects thrive in its freshening water.

Again, we observe the human frame to be much more liable to various diseases when its vitality is depressed. And it is proved, by the experience of all dermatologists who have studied the question closely, that under certain conditions of constitution the fungi or insects may be locally destroyed, only to return as soon as the application is suspended. There is no doubt that certain fungi and insects are highly contagious, but it is also quite certain that they very frequently arise spontaneously, and increase rapidly on account of the peculiar susceptibility of the patient.

Without doubt, the speediest and most complete cure of all these complaints is effected by internal combined with external treatment.

Many dermatologists endeavoured to show by their researches, which are more scientific and theoretic than practical or useful in a curative point of view, that insects and fungi are the cause of many skin diseases.

Now we know that in Scabies, or Itch, the disease is solely caused by an insect, which is produced and propagated by dirt and want of attention. At the same time, it is undeniable that even Itch is very much more easily communicated under certain conditions of health. Those much experienced in the treatment of cutaneous eruptions occasionally witness the extreme difficulty with which Itch is cured when it has arisen and spread through the members of a family even of the most cleanly habits. This tenacity is due to some peculiar condition of the constitution, which requires as much attention as that which is given to local applications.

Mr. Hogg, in his paper on Fungi, published in the 'British Medical Journal,' says—"Seeing, then, that the fungi are characterised throughout nature by feeding on effete or decayed matter; that the fungi supposed to be peculiar to certain diseases of the skin are also found in many other

diseases of the cutaneous surface ; that competent observers have not been able to find them in these peculiar diseases ; that sporules and filaments, described as the cause of one definite disease, have been found in the products of another definite disease, supposed to have a peculiar and distinct parasite of its own ; and that attempts have been made in vain to implant these parasites in a healthy skin ; one cannot but conclude that special parasites peculiar to, and productive of special diseases, do not exist. And in this opinion we are at least confirmed by the therapeutical fact, that the alleged parasitical affections are rarely if ever cured by destroying the parasite ; and that they can be cured by the due administration of appropriate alteratives and tonics, which are capable of correcting the blood dyscrasia which, in fact, originates the disease."

These views of Mr. Hogg have been impugned ; nevertheless, the question which interests the public, *i. e.*, the treatment of these diseases, remains untouched by all the discussions which have hitherto been agitated.

If the eruption is supposed to be the result of a

parasite or insect, local applications should accompany the constitutional treatment, which is indispensable in every case, whether of external or internal origin.

## CHAPTER V.

### METASTASIS OF DISEASE.

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THE subject of the metastasis of cutaneous eruptions has been touched upon in the beginning of this pamphlet, and it has been stated that in reference to skin disease, the idea once prevalent that it is dangerous to cure one disease lest another should be grafted upon its extinction, is but a prejudice.

The same argument might, with equal justice, but with some qualifications, be applied to such diseases as gout, asthma, hæmorrhoids, fistula, ulcers of the leg, otorrhœa, &c. Let the cause of these diseases be treated, and those alteratives, tonics, infusions, and decoctions which enrich the blood and act upon the secreting organs be administered, and at the same time apply local

remedies. But it is always unadvisable to pursue a local or discutient treatment, regardless of the general health.

To enter into a complete inquiry on the subject of Metastasis—to show in which cases a local treatment only is necessary, and in which a constitutional, and under what circumstances a combined treatment must be employed, would occupy as much space as would fill a small volume.

In my own practice I prefer to treat every case by decoctions and infusions of different medicinal herbs, where such a course is practicable.

It may be inquired, what is the meaning of the word Metastasis? The theory is, that if a disease be not radically cured, that is, if the exciting cause of the disease be not removed, and yet the disease be locally banished, it will, by means of that sympathetic influence which rules in our constitutions, be transferred to another part or organ. The question is one which would require a volume to be discussed properly, and can therefore be merely alluded to in this essay.

It may, however, be stated, that many believe much more in metastasis than others, and that a diseased or an impure state of the blood in which

the effete matters—which in a state of health are eliminated by the depurating organs—will produce a great variety of affections of various parts of the body, such as diarrhœa, dysentery, fevers of different kinds, indigestion, ulcerations, glandular swellings, bronchitis (principally chronic), consumption, acidity, flatulence, which often causes by sympathy giddiness and palpitation, nervousness, tic douloureux, rheumatism, and many more disorders and diseases in addition to that of the skin.

For my own part, I am firmly persuaded, that a variety of disorders and diseases totally different in themselves will arise in different constitutions, though the cause of these ailments, and the conditions under which the cause may take effect, will be common to all.

## CHAPTER VI.

BATHS, HERBS, &amp;c.

*Nitro-Muriatic Bath.*

Nitric acid,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  oz.; hydrochloric, 3 oz.; hot water, 15 gallons. To be prepared in a wooden bath; to remain in ten to twenty minutes.

*Alkaline.*

Carbonate of soda, 1 lb.; hot water, 30 gallons.

*Creosote.*

Creosote, 2 drams; glycerine, 2 oz.; hot water, 30 gallons.

*Sulphur.*

Sulphuret of potash, 4 oz.; hot water, 30 gallons.

*Tepid Salt-water Sponging.*

Marine salt,  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. ; hot water, 4 gallons.

*Acid Foot-bath.*

Nitric acid, 1 oz. ; hydrochloric,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  oz. ; water, 4 gallons.

*Mustard Foot-bath.*

Mustard, 2 oz. ; warm water, 4 gallons.

Such are a few of the baths in common use. In addition, and most important for purposes of cure, are the vapour baths—

Sulphur.

Chlorine.

Iodine.

Hot-air.

Common Vapour.

The nitro-muriatic bath is very useful where the liver is inactive.

The alkaline in rheumatic affections. In the lithic acid diathesis.

The creosote in many skin diseases ; in cases of much cutaneous irritation, eczema, prurigo, lepra, &c.

The sulphur, in itch, many forms of eczema,

Sea-water bath in general debility, chronic rheumatism.

The mustard bath cures, or rather prevents, chilblains.

As a refresher in the morning early, rough towels or gloves should be used after the sponging.

The Turkish bath, which was suddenly fashionable in 1862 and 1863, and was very much recommended by physicians at that time, is a most excellent remedy for certain skin diseases, and for rheumatic affections, also in some cases of gout.

In catarrh and some forms of bronchitis the Turkish bath is a certain cure, if employed in the first stage of the attack.

The different vapour baths can only be had at certain establishments, where the apparatus necessary for their administration is kept always ready for use.

The late Dr. Jonathan Green established No. 40, Marlborough Street, as a house where all medicated baths were administered with great success.

### *Herbs having Medicinal Properties.*

To attempt anything approaching a list of the

numerous plants which have been found useful for the cure of disease would be impossible, except in a work devoted to the subject. The following will be found simple, and yet very efficacious.

As a tonic :—1, Gentian root ; 2, Quassia chips ; 3, Chamomiles, &c.

For nervous affections, including certain forms of epilepsy :—1, Red Pimpernel, Anagallis, Primulaceæ ; 2, Mistletoe, Viscum ; 3, Spearmint, as an adjunct, &c.

As blood sweeteners : 1, Buckbean, *Menyanthes Vulgaris* ; 2, Brooklime, *Becabunga Vulgaris*, *Scrophularineæ* juice taken in small quantities, with the juice of watercresses or of Seville orange ; 3, Wild Raspberry ; 4, Watercresses ; 5, Young Nettles ; 6, Juice of Grapes, &c.

As diuretics :—1, Dames' Violet, *Hesperis Matronalis*, *Cruciferæ* ; 2, Flowers of the dead Nettle, &c.

As astringents for loss of blood :—1, Shepherd's Purse, *Bursapursa Vulgaris*, *Cruciferæ*, and many others ; this one the simplest, and perhaps the best.

For common cough :—1, Horehound, Marru-

bium, used as far back as the times of Dioscorides.

For cutaneous eruptions:—1, Decoctions of Elm-bark ; 2, Sprigs of the Black-currant Tree ; 3, Spring Nettles ; 4, Infusions of the rind of Oranges, of Lemons, and Citrons ; 5, Infusions of the whole tribe of the Wormwood genus—*Artemisia*.

## APPENDIX.

### RULES OF DIET,

*In use at the Dispensary at Blackfriars.*

#### MEALS.

##### *Breakfast.*

Bread and milk, or porridge, with or without eggs; bread and butter. Tea and coffee prohibited.

##### *Dinner.*

Plain roast or boiled fresh meats; fish or poultry, plainly cooked; rice, egg, or flour puddings; potatoes, and a few other vegetables.

##### *Tea or Supper.*

Milk and water, or gruel, or other farinaceous food; with bread and butter.

##### *Drinks.*

Barley water; toast and water; thin gruel; soda water.

N. B.—*To be avoided.* Salt meats, soups,

sweets, acids, fruits, pastry, and raw vegetables. No malt liquors, wine, or spirits, unless under medical sanction.

## GENERAL DIRECTIONS.

Remove flannel from *next* the skin. Wash, as cleanliness may require, with warm water.

Avoid using soap of any kind to the affected parts; in place of soap, use oatmeal-gruel, made thick, bran, or linseed-meal. Egg and warm water to cleanse the scalp.





