

A treatise on the gonorrhoea : to which is added, A critical enquiry into the different methods of administering mercury : intended as a supplement to a former work, intituled, A new and easy method of cure, by the introduction of mercury into the system through the orifices of the absorbent vessels on the inside of the mouth / by Peter Clare, surgeon.

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T R E A T I S E
O N T H E
G O N O R R H O E A :

To which is added,

A Critical Enquiry into the different Methods of administering MERCURY.

Intended as a SUPPLEMENT to a former Work, intituled, A NEW AND EASY METHOD OF CURE, by the Introduction of MERCURY into the System through the Orifices of the absorbent Vessels on the Inside of the Mouth.

By PETER CLARE, Surgeon.

Non mihi, sed rationi.

L O N D O N :

Printed for T. CADELL, in the Strand, 1781.

[Price One Shilling.]

TO THE PUBLIC.

SINCE my Letter to Dr. *Buchan* was printed, I have seen a Pamphlet containing *A Series of Experiments, instituted with a view of ascertaining the most successful method of Inoculating the Small Pox.*

From the whole of these experiments it appears, that neither the number of the pustules, nor the mildness of the disease depends, in the smallest degree, on the mode of preparing the body ; that Inoculation generally succeeds best, without any preparation ; and that the common method of giving violent purges and mercurials, does more harm than good.

No one will question the accuracy of experiments made by the ingenious and candid Dr. *Watson*, F. R. S. and Physician to the Foundling Hospital.

P R E F A C E.

SOME friends having lately desired me to publish my observations on the subject of the Gonorrhœa, saying such a step was necessary, in their opinion, to complete my former * book, I have thought proper to comply with their request.

There are two very different methods of treating this disorder, the one by internal medicines entirely, the other by external application, in the way of an injection solely, or for the most part. The former is generally a very tedious, and in many re-

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spects

* On the Cure of the *Lues Venerea*.

spects a disagreeable process; the latter is both easy and expeditious, but dreaded by many persons on account of a false idea which has long prevailed, and is even now too generally adopted. This ill-founded notion I shall endeavour to remove by such arguments and quotations from writers of distinguished credit, as will greatly tend to confirm my opinion.

I long declined using injections, till being informed of the superior advantages of them, not only from the profession, but from several of their patients also, I could no longer entertain a doubt of the fact. Subsequent success has established me in this mode of practice, and I hope to have the good fortune to convert others also, as open to conviction, and as desirous as myself, of arriving at truth.

On

On the publication of the former work, I flattered myself the profession would have made some practical improvements on my new mercurial process; but finding they rather neglected it, it became expedient to use my utmost exertions, and I apprehend the process is rendered much more convenient and eligible than it was at first †.

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† Finding the mercurial powder rather disagreeable to some patients, I have lately converted it into a mucilage or liniment, of an adhesive viscosity, in which form it is more agreeable and useful. The dose is the smallest that can well be imagined.

With twenty-five grains of this composition, which contained one scruple of the mercurius dulcis, (applied to the lips) I cured a young gentleman in twelve days of a chancre, which a person whom he consulted, proposed to remove at once with the knife. The patient was much shocked at the proposal, and went to him no more.

No man surely of professional knowledge in these days, would think to cure a mortification (where the whole mass of blood is corrupted) by removing the black and gangrenous part by excision or caustic.

It is a pleasure to me to hear from gentlemen of unquestionable veracity of its success under the direction of some of the profession, not only in common, but also in some desperate cases which had resisted many strong courses of mercury: the patients thus cured, related the fortunate circumstance to their friends (in justice to me, as they were pleased to say), and I attribute the having received no account of the cures, from the gentlemen under whose care they were, to reasons of an obvious and delicate nature. I am sorry however that this or any other consideration should have deprived the world, as well as me, of the satisfaction of their additional and impartial testimony.

If, on the contrary, upon a fair trial, the process had failed them, a
friendly

friendly representation of the matter would have afforded me an opportunity of explaining, and have tended to a removal of their objections.— I wish to have the *real* opinions of others, whether friends or not, in the same undisguised manner as I give my own; for by collision of opposite sentiments truth frequently is obtained, and science is improved*.

Every

* A young author complained lately to me of the disingenuous behaviour of one who had undertaken voluntarily to support his cause in print. This friend, it seems, acted in a double capacity: "He brought many sensible arguments in my behalf," says the author; but mark the sequel. Soon after, on looking into a monthly book of literary criticisms, (in which I find since, he is engaged to execute a part) I saw myself abused, and my friend extolled; I had almost forgotten the circumstance, when I was told the other day to my great surprize, that this identical gentleman had made his boast in an unguarded convivial hour, (*in vino veritas*) that he himself had written that very criticism."

Every professional writer on this subject finds himself in an awkward situation; for if he publishes his opinion and practice without reserve, (a duty which regular practitioners owe to the incorporated society of which they are members,) he is thought to lay his profession too open to the world, and incurs blame on that account*; and when he acts a different part, reserving his *arcanum* to himself, he is then sure to be condemned, and in truth with more justice, for pursuing the line of an empirical pretender whose views are always considered as selfish and mercenary.

Professions

* It is my endeavour and wish to write so as to be understood by those who have had a liberal education, and are able to comprehend an argument, whether they are medical men or not; for if they have not professional knowledge to guide, so neither have they professional prejudices to mislead them.

Professions of disinterestedness from authors, or others, meet with no regard or credit from mankind; ambition, and love of emolument, are the most common and powerful incentives to action: yet on occasions where private advantage and publick benefit can be brought to unite, there is certainly a great additional pleasure to every liberal mind.

Those persons have much to answer for, who recommend a reliance on their *specifics without mercury*, at a time when their daily practice affords them, as well as others, the strongest proof and conviction of the fallibility of their medicines.—How ardently soever the faculty may wish for a more innocent remedy than mercury, they must notwithstanding be possessed of much stronger evidence than they are at present, before

before they relinquish the only incontestable security. The sole question then is; Which is the best method of administering mercury?

Mr. *Pott*, in his Preface to Observations on Wounds of the Head, recommends the advice given by Lord *Bacon* to students, “to consider one disease at a time, and to become thoroughly acquainted with that, before he undertakes another.” He further observes, “that the only means by which true and useful knowledge is to be obtained, in this and in every part of surgery, are a competent knowledge of the anatomical structure of the human frame, a close attention to the symptoms of diseases in the living, and a minute examination of the appearances in the dead: these are the great fountains of all medical knowledge.” Mr. *Pott* has here pointed

pointed out, in my opinion, in a
 very judicious manner, the path
 which every chirurgical practitioner
 and writer should pursue, who un-
 dertakes to explain the true nature,
 seat, and cure of any bodily disorder.

Chancery-lane,

April 10th.

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*A brief Account of the Remedies in Use
for the Cure of the VENEREAL
DISEASE, from its first Appearance
in Europe.*

THE cure of this disorder, which has now prevailed all over *Europe* near three centuries, has not been so much improved by the profession as might have been expected during so long a period. It raged for several years uncontrouled, before an effectual remedy for it was discovered. After the antidote for this poison was found to exist in mercury (quicksilver), still so unfortunate was the application of it, that many lives were lost by horrible salivations, (too shocking to relate), in consequence of the want of sufficient knowledge of the nature and quali-

ties of mercury, in the practitioners of those times.

In 1685, Dr. *Sydenham* wrote on this amongst other subjects. His account shews, that although the use of the remedy was better understood, yet the cure of the disorder was but little improved.

In 1731, Dr. *Turner*, a member of the College of physicians in *London*, who had made the Venereal Disease his particular study, thought proper to communicate his observations and practice to the world. His drastic purges, and mercurial prescriptions, were such as might destroy the most robust constitution; what then must have become of those of a weak and delicate frame?

Dr. *Boerhaave* has advanced a system of his own, apparently less detrimental than former ones, and which has

has been very much adopted of late years. The Doctor's theory of the disease is, that it is seated in the fat; therefore evacuations tending to waste and destroy the membrana adiposa (fat), would, in his opinion, contribute much to the cure of this disorder; for which reason he recommended the most powerful sudorifics and purgatives; the former of which are indeed less prejudicial to the constitution than the latter.

There are two circumstances which have conduced greatly to the better treatment of this complaint, within these twenty or thirty years; I mean, the extraordinary and rapid improvements in anatomy and chymistry: by the one we have learned the real seat of the disorder, by the other its nature and quality; and by both con-

joined, we are led to a more rational and easy method of cure *.

* As the generality of mankind will be naturally inquisitive to know, by what accidental, or other means, mercury was discovered to be a specific for this disorder, it may not be amiss to inform them, “that the first attempts of the cure of venereal maladies, by this remedy, were learned from the *Arabians*, who having recommended mercurial ointments in the lepra or scabies, gave a handle to the *Italian* physicians, to try their efficacy in removing the foulness of the skin from a new and terrible contagion : neither were they sparing of their liniments, which they continued to rub in for twelve, fifteen, nay, sometimes for above thirty days together†;” a very dangerous practice, which prevails too much even in the present age. *Sarsaparilla*, *sassafras*, *guaiaecum*, have all at different periods been in more or less estimation for their antivenereal virtues; but mercury is the only antidote for this poison, on which any age has reposed an entire confidence.

The decoctions of the woods have generally been used only as auxiliaries to mercury, in which capacity they have without doubt a considerable degree of merit.

† *Mead* on Poisons.

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T R E A T I S E
ON THE
G O N O R R H O E A.

TH E part principally affected by the gonorrhœa is the penis, which consists of three parts; two of which are called corpora cavernosa, and lie on each side, and a third, which is situated underneath, named corpus spongiosum urethræ, consisting of the bulb and membranous part, continued on to the bladder, and terminating at the other extremity in the corona, or glans penis. The urethra has three glands, which were discovered by *Cowper*, and called mucous glands,

from the tenacity of the liquor which they separate. There are also two, (or rather one,) about the size of a nutmeg; they lie at the neck of the bladder, between the vesiculæ feminales and penis, under the ossa pubis, almost within the pelvis of the abdomen: they separate a limpid glutinous humour, which is carried into the urethra by several ducts which enter near those of the prostatae. This liquor seems to be designed to be mixed with the semen in the urethra, in the time of coition, to make it flow more easily. The two first of *Cowper's* glands are about the bigness of a French bean, of a depressed oval figure, and a yellowish colour like the prostatae, being on each side the bulb of the urethra, a little above it. Their excretory ducts arise from the internal surface next the inner membrane

brane of the urethra, into which they open a little lower by two distinct orifices, just below the curvature of the ossa pubis in perineo, where they discharge a transparent viscous liquor. The third mucous gland is a small conglobate yellowish gland like the former, but somewhat less, situated above the angle of the flexure of the urethra, under the ossa pubis, in the perinæum, near the anus : it has two excretory ducts, which enter the urethra obliquely, a quarter of an inch below the two former, and discharges a liquor like them both in colour and consistence.

The seat of the gonorrhœa in women is the vagina, which is affected with a discharge like that of the urethra in men. It lies between the bladder and intestinum rectum, and has rugæ, under which are small glands, whose

whose excretory ducts are called lacunæ. These glands separate a mucilaginous slimy liquor to lubricate the vagina, and are the seat of the gonorrhœa in this sex, as the glands in the urethra are in the male. The meatus urinarius being a very short passage, the heat and scalding is consequently much less than in the men.

Venereal matter almost always occasions a conversion of the mucus of the part, or of the fluids of the ulcer or wound, into a matter similar to itself; and when a sufficient quantity has been thus produced, it brings on an inflammation in the mucous membrane or glands, or in the wound or ulcer, and it is afterwards sometimes absorbed into the general system of vessels, but seldom before; the first symptoms therefore appear in the
part.

part where the infection was received. When the infection is communicated by the matter's being mixed with the mucus of the urethra, vagina, glans, prepuce, &c. if no running, ulcer, or pustule have as yet appeared, it may be washed off, and the disease, Dr. *Fordyce* says, may for the most part be prevented, by R. *Caustic. com. fort. Pharm. Lond.* ʒi. *Solve in aq. font. lib. j. et cola per chartam.*

Some of the above solution is to be mixed, by a little at a time, with a cupful of water, till it be strong enough to wash the mucus from the mouth without giving much pain. Fill a syringe with this liquor, and inject it into the urethra or vagina, retaining it there for about a minute; then add to the remainder of the liquor a teaspoonful of the solution, and wash the glans, prepuce, labia pudendi, &c. lastly,

lastly, inject and wash with a little pure water milk warm. p. 351.

I have known the same preventive effects in very many instances, apparently, (for we can seldom be assured of the fact) from a saponaceous lotion applied an hour or longer *post coitum*. The security may be further increased by the application of a little merc. dulc. to the thin cuticular surfaces, immediately after the saponaceous ablution.

When the venereal matter is mixed with the soft mucus, it produces an inflammation, and great secretion from the mucous glands; in which case it is not often absorbed into the general system, and the disease is called a Gonorrhœa.

Dr. *Fordyce* observes, that "most people are infected by the venereal matter mixing with, and being retained.

tained in the mucus of the urethra or vagina, or upon the glans, prepuce, or labia pudendi; from which it cannot be washed off by the urine, on account of the insolubility of the mucus in water; and the symptoms do not appear till twenty-four hours, nay, sometimes not till after three weeks from the time of receiving the infection, but most commonly they arise in four, five, or six days.

“ A Gonorrhœa from the urethra in a man, begins with an uneasiness about the parts of generation, together with an appearance of a little whitish matter, about the orifice of the urethra, a little swelling and sometimes redness there, and a slight pungency upon the evacuation of urine. The whitish matter soon increases in quantity, the inflammation about the end of the urethra becomes more evident,

evident, and for the most part there is now a tension and hardness through the whole of it, a swelling of the lacunæ, and a sensation of stricture in the penis, particularly on erection. The matter still increases, flows out, and grows thinner, loses all its adhesiveness, and is of a yellow, or greenish colour. There is now always a redness about the end of the canal; often a pain from the distension of the urethra, during the evacuation of urine, and a much severer towards the orifice, from its stimulus, with an increase of the redness just after it is evacuated. The inflammation prevents the extension of the urethra in erection, so that the penis is at that time curved downwards with great pain, which is increased if it be raised towards the belly, and the stimulus occasions

occasions it often to be erected, especially when warm in bed *."

I believe it would generally be esteemed good practice on this occasion to give nitre in considerable quantity, a cathartic electuary, or pill, and to take blood freely from the patient; also to direct large quantities of diluting liquors, and further to recommend a strict regimen, and abstinence from particular meats, vegetables, and strong liquors. The question is, are such medicines and restriction necessary? In my humble opinion they are not, and they appear, upon the whole, to do more harm than good, as I shall endeavour to demonstrate from the experience of those who are well qualified to give

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* Dr. Fordyce's Elements of physic.

an opinion in a matter of this kind, and also from my own practice.

Dr. *Cullen* remarks, “ that purgatives not only inflame the rectum, but also extend their irritation to the urethra.” May not chordee and priapism then often be attributed to this cause?

Dr. *Fordyce* recommends “increasing the secretion a little, by such gentle purgatives as procure only two or three evacuations a day.”—But who can ensure his patient two or three stools only in a day? The intestines being once put into motion, will not accommodate themselves exactly to our wish or convenience. Happily for the community, it should seem that even gentle purging might be dispensed with on these occasions.

The Doctor adds, severe purging often augments the inflammatory symptoms,

symptoms, brings on strangury and exulcerations, gives occasion to inflammation of the * testicles, and other neighbouring parts, or it stops the running before the infection is washed

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* This inflammation is not considered as a symptom proceeding from virus, but is treated like a common inflammation of any other gland. Emollient fomentations and cataplasms, unguents and saturnine lotions (which of late are much used), are proper to be employed as sedatives, to ease the pain of this swelling; and above all, a proper truss, which effectually supports the part, and takes off the weight from the spermatic chord; likewise phlebotomy, and anodynes, (which alleviate the chordee and priapism) are necessary. An inflammation of this part, arising from venereal irritation, brisk purges, or sudden cold, rarely, if ever, suppurates. A lancet has been inadvertently applied by one who thought he felt a fluctuation of matter in the part; a dreadful mistake, and should operate in future as a caution. The glands of the groin will sometimes become rather swelled and painful from sympathy, and soon subside, except they swell in consequence of a chancre, in which case, suppuration often cannot be prevented, and when it does take place, the disorder is commonly most effectually cured.

washed off, and the gonorrhœa either returns in a few days, or exulcerations take place.

The Doctor further observes, That long continued purging is apt to weaken the stomach and intestines, to hurt the digestion, to produce obstinate gleets, and leave hypochondriacal symptoms, particularly in irritable or melancholic habits*.

Many more authorities might be adduced in proof of the bad effects of a long course of purgatives in these cases, which are generally of considerable duration, when treated in this manner.

* Some gentlemen of the profession, who are averse to overloading the stomach with medicines, content themselves with administering mercury in the compass of a small pill, the operation of which often proves very rough, for, as Dr. *Saunders* remarks, p. 156, "the saline preparations never agree with weak stomachs, they are apt to gripe, they very frequently excite a fever." These are very sufficient reasons for not giving them in this form.

manner. Neither are antiphlogistic remedies to be depended upon, as they sometimes produce the very contrary effect to what was expected of them: amongst the first of these is nitre, in inflammatory disorders. Dr. *Lewis*, a late writer of no small credit, reckons, that nitre often gives relief in stranguries, and heat of urine, proceeding either from a simple or a venereal taint; and indeed the greatest part of practitioners have always given it, and still continue to give it in the venereal ardor urinæ. This practice, however, says Dr. *Hope* in his lectures on the *Materia medica*, I am apt to believe has taken its rise from the name of ardor having always been given to the pain in evacuating the urine, during the time of a venereal inflammation of the urethra, and the name and virtues of a cooler, having

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always

always been attributed to this salt. But it is certain that the urine passed during the time of a venereal inflammation is no warmer than at other times, and therefore to prescribe a cooler to allay the heat of it, is absurd: and I am persuaded, that on a free and candid examination of this matter, it will be found, that nitre has not the smallest power of alleviating the pain which is then felt; for I have given it in all the different stages of this disease, in small and in large doses; but from the sole use of it in a great number of trials, have never been able to observe that it afforded the least relief. Nor, when we consider the cause of that pain, and the effects of nitre, have we any reason to expect it; for the pain certainly proceeds from the acrid salts in the urine, stimulating the inflamed or excoriated urethra; and a
 solution

solution of nitre applied to any exco-
 riated part, always gives considerable
 pain. Experiments assure us, that
 on taking nitre into the stomach, the
 urine becomes impregnated with it.
 The larger therefore the doses are, the
 stronger will this impregnation be,
 and the greater stimulus added to the
 urine; so that we may sensibly con-
 clude, that this salt will rather aug-
 ment than diminish the pain in eva-
 cuating it. The Doctor further re-
 marks, that there are many weak and
 delicate stomachs, which cannot bear
 the cold it produces, and others in
 whom it always creates sickness and
 nausea."

Besides the disagreeable circum-
 stance of swallowing great quantities
 of nauseous medicines, we find there
 is the greatest uncertainty, as to their
 real effects on the diseases they are in-

tended to remove. A powder of any kind, which is applied to blood in a basin, may visibly affect that fluid, and render it thin or thick; yet being taken into the stomach, and possibly from thence into the circulation, it may take a very different effect on the circulating fluids, or perhaps none, having undergone a material alteration in its course.

A celebrated Lecturer on the *Materia medica* (now in his grave), discoursing with his pupils on the powerful operations of mucilaginous medicines in the alleviation of the pain arising from the stone in the bladder, remarked that such medicines were extremely useful where the stone was of the mulberry kind, and apt to vellicate the coats of the bladder. He told them the ropy mucilage would envelop the stone, and
make

make a uniformly smooth surface, and entirely deprive it of its asperities, and consequently of its power of hurting the bladder.

It is difficult for one conversant with the mechanism of the human body, and the operation of medicine, to suppose, that a mucilage given by the mouth will arrive at the bladder in that state. We are certain that particular remedies will stimulate particular parts : balsam of capivi, for instance, being absorbed, is known to affect the kidneys and bladder, by the strong odour it imparts to the urine ; but we do not find, this, or any other medicine, except quicksilver, will pass off in the same form in which it is administered by the mouth. This balsam is very much esteemed for its great virtues, particularly in certain stages of the gonorrhœa, but it is so
very

very disagreeable on account of its oily and bitter quality, as well as its smell, that some patients are soon disgusted with it, and others will not be prevailed upon to take it at all; we cannot therefore think it strange that many gentlemen should often prefer injections to all other means, which do not appear to render service in any degree equal to the trouble which attends them. It must be acknowledged that patients often suffer more from the remedy than the disorder; they are often more reduced in their flesh, (and more pallid in their countenance, a circumstance which frequently leads to disagreeable discoveries), from the operation of purgatives in a gonorrhœa in the space of one week, than they would have been in a month, if there had been no attempt made to check the progress of the disorder.

Further,

Further, there are many people who have not leisure to pursue the several directions and prescriptions given by writers, and if they could find time, they would have but little inclination to undergo so much fatigue and trouble. Such tedious processes are very ill contrived for the multitude, who must be, and are daily cured by means much more easy and expeditious, and quite as effectual.

Dr. *Buchan* is of opinion, “that a virulent gonorrhœa can seldom be cured speedily and effectually at the same time. The patient ought therefore not to expect, nor the physician to promise it. It will often continue for two or three months, and sometimes for five or six, even where the treatment has been very proper.”—*Domestic medicine*, p. 536.

Dr.

Dr. *Smith*, in his *Formulæ medicamentorum*, asserts, that the gonorrhœa, if taken in the beginning, may generally be cured in a fortnight without any injury to the constitution, or any ill effects whatsoever.

What each of these gentlemen have asserted, is certainly very true, and the difference is owing to the means made use of in the cure, as I have often experienced. The account of this disorder, and of the lues venerea, by Dr. *Smith*, is so concise, and copious at the same time, that I shall give it for the information of my readers.

“ The lues venerea has been distinguished into the first and second infection; or more properly into local and universal. Local, when the genitals only are affected, and this species of the complaint has been called a Gonorrhœa or Clap. Universal, when
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the habit in general is tainted with the venereal cacoethes; and then the disease is stiled a Pox.—A local infection, or Clap, if not attended with chancres, buboes, or swelled testicles, may be very easily and readily cured.

“ Bland oil, such as oil of almonds, or the like, should be injected warm into the urethra, two or three times every day; and after the eighth day, the following injection should be thrown up a little warmed for four or five days more, or as long as there should be occasion.

“ No. 107. *R Vitrioli alb. ʒss—ʒi. ʒss—ʒi*
Solve in aq. fontan. ʒij.

“ The cathartic emulsion, No. 4. may be taken twice in a week, and a little mercurial ointment may be rubbed every night into the groins.

“ By these means, a clap, if taken in the beginning, may generally be

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cured

cured in a fortnight, without any injury to the constitution, or any ill effects whatsoever. If the symptoms should any of them be troublesome, they may be easily palliated. The heat of urine by plenty of diluent liquors, with gum arabic and nitre. The priapism and chordee, by opiates taken at bed time. The phymosis and paraphymosis, by emollient cataplasms, and oil thrown up between the glans penis and the prepuce. Buboës by the cathartic emulsion, and the mercurial ointment. The hernia humoralis, by blood lettings, and lenient cathartics, with emollient fomentations and cataplasms to the part. And chancres, by oil, or a strong mercurial ointment.

“ In a second infection, or Pox, mercury and its preparations are most to be depended upon. It has been
the

the general practice to prescribe mercurials in such a manner as to excite a salivation; but from experience it has been found, that a salivation is by no means necessary to the cure of venereal symptoms, as many bad cases have been relieved by mercurials, given as alteratives, when the mouth has not been at all affected. The following method will cure a confirmed pox, with as much certainty as a salivation.

“ No. 108. *R Mercurii calcinat.*
gr. j. ad iiij. Sulph. antimon. præ-
cip. gr. ij. ad iiij. extract. thebaic.
gr. fs.—gr. j. Conserv. cynosbat.
q. s. ut ft. bolus, omni nocte hor.
decubitus sumend.

“ No. 109. *R Rad. sarsaparill. ʒiiij.*
Laureolæ (the mezereon root) ʒij.
Coq. ex aqua fontan. lib. iiij. ad lib.
ij. colatur. Capiat lib. fs. 4 ter. de
die.

“ It may be necessary to continue the medicines for a fortnight after the symptoms have disappeared; and, during the cure, the patient should keep warm, use a light nourishing diet, and drink plenty of broths or the like. The warm bath would add to the efficacy of the medicines, and considerably hasten the cure.”

Formulae Medicam. p. 138.

I have experienced the same good effects in the cure of the gonorrhœa, from a vitriolic injection, as those described by Dr. *Smith*, and I know that others have observed the same. This answers much better than injections prepared with mercury. The last mentioned generally deposit a sediment, and the powder being conveyed into the urethra causes an irritation

ritation and pain in the passage. Some practitioners make use of oily injections (as they say) to *encourage the running*—which appears to me to need no encouragement, but on the contrary is too copious, and may be immediately restrained: for this purpose I make use of Dr. *Smith's* vitriolic injection, (cold rather than warm) which often completes the cure in the course of a fortnight (or less), the time mentioned by the Doctor.

If the injection causes any more than a slight sensation of smart or pain in the passage, it is evidently too much impregnated with vitriol, and the solution must be made weaker, as the irritation of the liquor would aggravate the symptoms, instead of diminishing them. One great objection to this sort of practice is raised

on the supposition that injections are apt to produce stricture in the urinary passage. This idea, I apprehend, is not well founded: I have enquired of many different people who have been troubled with this complaint, if they had used injections for the cure of the gonorrhœa, and was generally answered in the negative. I am much inclined to think with Dr. *Fordyce*, "that when a gonorrhœa continues long, it sometimes produces a stricture in the part." Inflammation is naturally disposed to produce contraction and stricture in the different sacculi and passages of the body, as well as in the urethra: therefore we may conclude, that evils are often attributed to injections, which in fact owe their origin to other causes. The same gentleman very justly observes, that
 omitting

omitting the injection once or twice will often make it fail of curing, when it would have otherwise produced that effect. He likewise remarks, that patients treated in this manner, are less liable to inflammation of the testicles, or of the glands in the groin (or to chancres) or strictures. These observations are certainly founded on fact. It is the general opinion, that small doses of mercury, either externally or internally, ought to accompany the use of injections. See *Fordyce, Saunders, Smith*, and others.—I give a grain of mercurial powder,* and apply it to the cuticular surfaces of the lips, and at the same time make use of the vitriolic

* But as even a grain of *any powder* is disagreeable to some persons, it may be administered in a paste of a mucilaginous viscosity, and the dose, so prepared, needs not exceed two grains in the whole.

olic in preference to every other injection. I know of no other (though I have made repeated trials of several), which would remove the disorder in twice the time which this takes to do it, and some that would not succeed at all, but seemed rather to aggravate the symptoms.

It is now proved by a repetition of ingenious experiments, and generally admitted, that the discharge in a gonorrhœa proceeding from the urethra, is not pus, but mucus. Pus is the matter which proceeds from wounds and ulcers, whereas mucus comes from surfaces not ulcerated, though sometimes inflamed. Dr. *Hunter* says he has often dissected the urethra of persons who have died, having the gonorrhœa at that time, and he adds, that he never discovered any ulcers in the passage. Mucus is in
itself

itself an innocent, mild fluid, but capable of acquiring virulence and acrimony from contagious infection.

The gonorrhœa is an increased and virulent discharge of the mucus from the glands of the urinary passage. Mucus, when untainted, is transparent like the white of an egg, appears as a drop sometimes at the orifice of the urethra next the glans, is of a mucilaginous viscosity, and its use is to sheathe and defend the passage from the irritating salts conveyed in the urine. It resembles the fluid in the eye, which is secreted in small quantity, but when the lachrymal gland is stimulated by grief, dust, or other offending substance, the discharge becomes copious and sometimes acrid.

Darwin observes, p. 78, in his experiments on pus and mucus, that whenever the secretion of any fluid is increased

increased, there is at the same time an increased heat in the part. The same gentleman observes, p. 77, that “ the catarrhal humour from the nostrils of some who ride in frosty weather, and the tears which run down the cheeks of those who have an obstruction of the puncta lachrymalia, are easily distinguished from others, by their abounding in ammoniacal or muriatic salts, whence they inflame the circumjacent skin: thus in the catarrh, the upper lip becomes red and swelled from the acrimony of the mucus, and patients complain of the saltness of its taste. The eyes and cheeks are red with the corrosive tears, and the ichor of some herpetic eruptions erodes far and wide the contiguous parts, and is pungently salt to the taste, as some patients have informed me.”

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When the mucous membrane of the nose is stimulated by a violent cold, or other cause, we often see an extraordinary quantity of discharge from that organ; yet no one suspects the existence of any ulcers there, and it has been remarked, that the discoloured mucus of that part bears so strong a resemblance to the virulent discharge in the gonorrhœa, that it would oftentimes perplex persons conversant in these matters to distinguish two handkerchiefs the one from the other when stained with the respective mucus. Either of these fluids having acquired acrimony will inflame, and sometimes slightly excoriate irritable nervous membranes. These excoriations generally do well of themselves, and when they do not, no one hesitates to apply repellent and healing medicines to the parts, without
 9 even

even the smallest suspicion of any bad consequence. With ulcers the case is very different, there being the greatest reason to apprehend danger from the absorption of matter into the circulation. Writers of good credit assert, that a drop of acrid pus, absorbed into the blood, affects all the fluids, stimulates the vessels, and is capable of producing violent disorders, such as putrid fevers, &c. Impressed with such ideas, no thinking man, in this or any age, would adopt a practice at once so irrational and dangerous: but as the discharge is merely mucus, and proved to have no concern with the system or animal œconomy, it may be safely washed away (like any other fordes, from the surfaces of the body) by injections, which are not only far more

more expeditious in producing their effects, but also appear, on a due comparison of the merits of each, to enjoy another pre-eminence, that of being a more safe and agreeable method of cure than any other whatsoever.

A

CRITICAL ENQUIRY

INTO

The different Methods of administering MERCURY.

DIFFERENCE of opinion prevails with regard to the mode of administering mercurial preparations; the advocates for each, giving their reasons for that which they adopt in preference to any other. The alterative method is much in esteem and practice, and under proper regulations may be rendered very beneficial.

This appellation of *alterant* or *alterative* is given to all such medicines as correct the bad qualities of the blood,

Blood, and other animal fluids, without occasioning any sensible evacuation. According to Dr. Woodward, all that is commonly alledged concerning the change of the principles or ferments of diseases by alterant remedies, is merely chimerical and imaginary; he remarks, that there is no change made to the advantage of the human body without a successive renovation and discharge of what is hurtful, and a supply of its place by something innocent.

The Doctor gives the preference to evacuants, as being the only medicines capable of freeing the machine from whatever incommodes it. Some take a contrary course, and ascribe even the salutary effects of evacuants to their alterative nature, which has been alledged of mercury in the cure of the venereal disease. Among al-

terant medicines there are several which change the scene of the symptoms, and others which suspend the action of the morbid matter for a time; but these remedies which hold the morbid principles captive pro tempore, are only palliatives, and even on some accounts dangerous, since they may as well captivate other principles necessary to life.

Dr. *Fordyce* says, p. 362. Whatever preparation we employ, we should give it in such a manner and in such a dose as to produce hardness, fullness, and moderate frequency of the pulse, with as little sensible evacuation as possible; for the mercury cures sooner, and with greater certainty, when the strength is but little, than when it is much reduced by it."

Mr.

Mr. *Plenck* is of opinion, that
 “mercury, together with the vene-
 real virus, may be more conveni-
 ently and more easily evacuated by
 the ordinary excretions of sweat,
 stool, and urine.”

It seems to me much more safe to
 permit the gradual evacuation of
 mercury (after it has circulated some
 time, and subdued the virus) by one
 or other of the excretions, than to
 confine it within the body by opiates
 or other means, so as to occasion
 hardness, fullness, and acceleration
 of the pulse. The saturation or im-
 pregnation of the system with mer-
 cury is very hazardous, as it some-
 times terminates in a fatal diarrhæa.
 Surely it is most prudent to permit a
 little of the mercury to depart, and
 throw into the circulation such a pro-
 portion only, as may be altogether

safe and yet sufficient to keep up a gentle mercurial stimulus in the habit.

Mercury and wine operate somewhat alike upon the body. If a certain quantity of wine is drank, hardness, fullness, and acceleration of the pulse will supervene, till at length in common an evacuation takes place; when it does not, and the wine is retained there, (like mercury exhibited as an alterative) it excites feverish heat, and does the constitution much more injury than when it passes off gradually by any of the ordinary evacuations.

Dr. *Fordyce* observes, "it is never necessary to salivate a patient, unless he be so irritable, that the smallest dose of mercury immediately affects his mouth, or unless the disease be proceeding so fast that it would be hazardous.

hazardous to wait till it was checked by the remedy given in such a manner as to avoid salivation; or excepting when we cannot trust to his using it regularly. On the contrary, salivation renders the effects of the medicine uncertain,—p. 363. The same author says, “ If, notwithstanding these precautions, a salivation should come on, we know of no remedy which will remove it with any degree of certainty, although sulphur, camphire, and purgatives have been recommended for this purpose. If therefore the case be urgent, the best way is to let it go on, using the mercurial ointment * as before described,” p. 365.

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* Dr. *Saunders*, p. 157, says, he has known patients who have had violent fevers excited by mercury applied in the form of unction.

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I have ever found those patients more easily cured, who were most susceptible of the mercurial stimulus. Let there be an affection of the mouth and gums, (parts which, from the less irritability of their surfaces, are best calculated to endure friction)

and

The same author remarks, that a gentleman who had had recourse to mercurial unction, being seized with a fever, sent for him and communicated to him his venereal complaints. His pulse was quick and hard, he complained of pain in his back, headach, thirst, and other such symptoms as I had frequently seen arise from a mercurial course conducted on the plan here prescribed. p. 139.

Dr. Cullen observes,—that purging is never excited by any means, without spasms of the intestines, which, when the operation is continued, are apt to end in durable spasm and inflammation. These are attended with very dangerous consequences. Neither does the method of purging by unction answer much better (although perhaps more effectual), because it is attended with very great pain.—*Lectures on Materia medica*, p. 453.

and an amendment of the complaint takes place at least nine times in ten; the mercury will run off in general very soon if the process is discontinued, which it must not be, but the tenderness of the mouth is to be kept up to a certain degree, (according to the urgency of the disorder, and to prevent a relapse) by the persevering use of the remedy in small quantity. It is not the mere quantity of mercury, but the method of using it, which in my opinion is the chief circumstance to be relied on in the cure. I would certainly run the risk (if there was any) of *not curing*, rather than expose my patient to the hazard of a large quantity of accumulated mercury ready at an hour's notice, or less, to emancipate itself from the body by stimulating

stimulating the intestines, and thus exhausting life.

We may be amused with the theory of mercury circulating in the system in perfect equilibrium, not inclining more to one secretion than to another; but it is certain this is a powerful medicine that ought not to be trifled with; we cannot say to it—So far shalt thou go, and no further. The most skilful pilot will find it difficult so to trim his vessel that it shall not sink or overturn when too heavily laden with mercury.

The ingenious *Plenck* (to whom the world is much indebted for the great improvements he has made by his experiments on mercury, and in the cure of this disease) says, that a salivation is a dangerous practice; for the famous *Astruc*, says he, asserts that there frequently supervene, violent

lent fevers, diarrhæa, dysentery, hæmoptoe, an immobility of the jaws, and likewise a suffocation, and that too, when a salivation has been most properly conducted; and after him the most skilful *Locher* tells us the same.

Several years since a practitioner had the misfortune to lose (within a short time of each other) two patients with chancres, for the cure of which he had raised very high salivations by mercurial ointment. Just as their complaints were healed, and salivation began to decline, one of the gentlemen was seized with a dysenteric flux, and expired within a few hours: his death was attributed to a piece of butter which the nurse had inadvertently put into his gruel. The other died also of a flux, arising from the sudden descent of the mercury

cury overturning the equilibrium, and rushing through the patient's bowels with irresistible impetuosity.

This inconsiderate and injudicious gentleman was threatened at that time with an indictment for the murder of one of the parties, because it appeared that he had been often cautioned (by the surgeon who had been called into consultation with him) to forbear the anointing, but he persisted in using the unction in spite of every remonstrance. The death of these two gentlemen coming so near together and befalling the same practitioner, occasioned more noise in this metropolis than the loss of twenty hospital patients, and will, it is hoped, operate as a caution on the mind of every practitioner.

Instead either of this practice by unction, or that of pills (my objections

tions to which have been frequently published) I make use sometimes of a grain of mercurial powder, and at others, of a mucilage composed of merc. dulc. (or other preparations) of the consistence of butter, yet of an adhesive viscidty, and so contrived, that the size of a common pea contains five or six doses. This may be applied (once or oftener in the day as the case may require), to the thin cuticular surfaces of the mouth or lips, from which, if managed with care, it will not pass into the stomach, but will adhere till it is taken up into the blood by the numerous absorbent vessels of those parts. The absorption may be assisted by a slight and momentary friction with the tongue or finger, and the worst venereal disorder be

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cured

cured by mercury administered in this manner *.

Dr.

* Since the common forms are disagreeable, and many of them very nauseous, why should we not adopt this? why might not a powder which has no taste, be conveyed in marmalade or currant jelly, as well as in balsam of locatelli or any other conserve?

It is the idea of physic which makes a bolus or pill difficult to be swallowed, and occasions a convulsive affection of the throat and fauces, and sometimes as far as the diaphragm and the stomach. Some persons indeed, by long habit, get the better of the disgust which these create at first. Would it not be agreeable to venereal patients to abolish such nauseating forms altogether? where would be the harm in so doing? It might be answered, the compounders of medicines would sustain a loss thro' this deviation from the common course of business. This argument has certainly some weight; but should not private advantage on this, as on other occasions, yield to the public good?

A mercurial lozenge, I believe, most patients would prefer to a pill, as it would dissolve gradually in the mouth, and give no trouble in swallowing. It would have the common, and all the required effect of a pill, and yet have certain advantages also, for whilst it was dissolving in the mouth,

Dr. *Hunter* says—"There can be no doubt of absorption taking place on the inside of the mouth, of the preputium, of the labia," &c.—

Mr. *Cruikshank* remarks,—“That though all surfaces absorb, and any surface may be stimulated to absorb more than it commonly does; yet in general, surfaces seem to tire, (if one might say so) and like muscles, having performed a certain quantity of work, refuse to do more.”

This process then will be attended with a peculiar advantage, as it will give the absorbents very little trouble, and favour their natural indolence.

F 2

Again,

a part of the mercury would probably be absorbed into the circulation from that surface, and what passed into the stomach being incorporated with the rosy mucus of the mouth, (saliva) would produce less irritation and sickness in that susceptible organ, and prevent the use of opium with which surgeons generally correct the stimulus of mercury, and which, as I have observed before, materially injures the constitution.

Again, the same gentleman says,
 “ Now if, according to my calculation, three grains of calomel have as great an effect on the venereal virus as forty-five grains of mercurial ointment, and if it would require half an hour’s strong friction to make these forty-five grains be absorbed from the whole inside of the thigh, while three grains of calomel gently rubbed on the inside of the mouth may be absorbed in half an hour, or, though it should not be absorbed in twelve hours, still if it is attended with no trouble to the patient, who does not perceive the advantage of employing calomel rather than mercurial ointment ? ”

I hope the publication of the following observations which have been made by my medical acquaintance, and some remarkable cases which have occurred

occurred to me lately in practice, will convey further information, and tend to that point which I am solicitous to establish.

A certain physician has honoured me with two letters, the last, (as it contains a discussion of the matter in question) I shall give an extract of, in the Doctor's own words.

“ I have not the least objections to the whole of the principles, and the doctrines you have laid down, and think that you have established them on the firmest basis; but the doubt with me is, whether in injudicious hands too great a quantity of mercury may not in some cases be thrown into the habit, and where the least attention possible is paid to their
* regimen and conduct. I think that

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* With the greatest deference to this gentleman, I submit to his consideration whether

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much

I have seen cases, where some symptoms have arose, that are more properly to be referred to the effects of the antidote, than to the disease: but this can be no objection to the method itself, but to the improper use of it." 18 *October*, 1780.

Two other physicians have expressed their sentiments in one letter, saying, " We hope you will prosecute your plan, as it promises fair to be of use to mankind, and may save many a constitution which otherwise

much attention is necessary with regard to regimen (or conduct with respect to cold) when the mercury does not operate on the stomach and primæ viæ. A gentleman in the navy informed me, that he was several times wet through all his clothes, whilst he was under this process, but that he found not the least injury to his health in consequence of it; so peculiarly friendly to the constitution is this mode of administering mercury.

otherwise would suffer by the improper application of mercury."

8 June, 1780.

I was desired by a gentleman to look on a servant, (of thirty years of age) who had a complaint in his testicle, which had been forming there for several months. I examined him in the presence of a physician, who declared the case to be very unpromising and almost hopeless. The tumour was large, and chiefly scirrhus, there was also a sore which had an unkind aspect: it was not ascertained whether the mischief proceeded from a venereal injury, a contusion, or bad habit of body. The Doctor was pleased to direct that the merc. dulc. sexties sublimat. should be tried according to my plan. The family apothecary being present, I desired he would be-

gin

gin with giving the patient three grains every day to be rubbed on the lips and inside of the mouth. We agreed that the part affected should be covered with a poultice of bread and milk, and supported with a bag truss. In about three or four months, the apothecary brought the patient to my house perfectly cured by this method.

About a year ago or more, *a member of our company*, who resides in the country, brought his son to me, (a youth of nine or ten years) with an ulcerated forethroat, (which made him speak through his nose) and a continual hoarseness; these complaints he had been afflicted with for two years, and though he had used many means to remove the disorder, yet they did not avail, and the young gentleman (who, as the father informed me, had
always

always enjoyed a good state of health from his birth till this unfortunate illness) wasted much, and was apparently going into a decline. His parents were both desirous he should make trial of my process, which he accordingly did. In a fortnight the father called on me again, and reported his son to be considerably better. I saw nothing more of him till five weeks after, when he told me with much earnestness, that he was come to thank me for having saved the life of his son who had received a perfect cure, for which he desired to know what recompence he could make. My answer was, that I was very happy on the occasion, and wished no other return than that he would be pleased to communicate the intelligence to Dr. *Hunter* and Mr. *Cruikshank* whom he knew, and
 who

who had kindly interested themselves in the success of this mode of practice. The gentleman assured me that he would wait on Dr. *Hunter*, and also draw up an account of the case in writing and send it to me; but I have not been as yet favoured with it.

About the time this event happened, a physician of one of the city hospitals was called to see a patient of mine with eruptions of a venereal appearance, and for which I was giving him the mercurius dulc. to be rubbed on the lips and surfaces of the mouth. The Doctor refused his assistance till he had seen me, called at my house to meet the patient, and proposed to continue the process of three grains every day, to which the Doctor added a decoction to purify the blood, and assist in the cure, which had the desired effect in three
or

or four weeks. The Doctor thought the eruptions had as much of a scorbutic as a venereal appearance. This gentleman's polite and liberal behaviour I felt in its full force, and it is a pleasure to acknowledge it on this occasion.

I hope this and the other cases are introduced in such a manner as to give no umbrage to any of the parties alluded to; on the contrary, I cannot doubt but they will readily acknowledge the truth of the particulars on every proper occasion. I take it for granted, that the profession will see the propriety of not exposing without permission a private correspondence to public view.

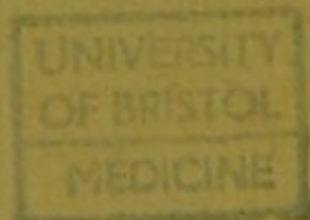
I think it will appear from the arguments and evidence adduced, that this new process of mercury is by much the most easy, safe, and efficacious
method

method of administering it, and weighty reasons alone which are capable of overturning my arguments and displaying their fallacy, and not the dogmatical unsupported assertions of any man, however great he may be in his own estimation, will induce me to change my opinion, which is not, like that of some other persons, equivocal and uncertain.—

Consider well, weigh strictly right and wrong,
 Resolve not quick, but once resolv'd, be strong.
 In spite of dulness, and in spite of wit,
 If to thyself thou can'st thyself acquit,
 Rather stand up, assur'd with conscious pride,
 Alone, —than err with millions on thy side.

CHURCHILL.

F I N I S.



ERRATUM:

p. 25, instead of 3^{ls}—3ⁱ. read 3^{ls}—3ⁱ.

FRONTIS

OF THE

