

**An address to the governors of Christ's Hospital, on the causes, and means of prevention, of the disease called ring-worm, in that establishment : to which is attached a few rules for the domestic management of the scholars during their vacations / by Samuel Plumbe.**

### **Contributors**

Plumbe, Samuel, 1795-1837.  
University of Glasgow. Library

### **Publication/Creation**

London : Effingham Wilson, 1834.

### **Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/tjnrhgcb>

### **Provider**

University of Glasgow

### **License and attribution**

This material has been provided by This material has been provided by The University of Glasgow Library. The original may be consulted at The University of Glasgow Library. where the originals may be consulted. This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

# AN ADDRESS

TO THE

GOVERNORS

OF

## CHRIST'S HOSPITAL,

ON

THE CAUSES, AND MEANS OF PREVENTION, OF THE DISEASE CALLED

### RING-WORM,

IN THAT ESTABLISHMENT;

TO WHICH IS ATTACHED,

A FEW RULES FOR THE DOMESTIC MANAGEMENT OF  
THE SCHOLARS DURING THEIR VACATIONS;

BY

SAMUEL PLUMBE,

LATE SENIOR SURGEON TO THE ROYAL METROPOLITAN INFIRMARY  
FOR CHILDREN;

ACTING SURGEON TO THE PAROCHIAL INFIRMARY OF SAINT GILES IN THE  
FIELDS, AND SAINT GEORGE, BLOOMSBURY;

AUTHOR OF AN ESSAY ON RING-WORM AND SCALDED HEAD,  
OF

A PRACTICAL TREATISE ON THE DISEASES OF THE SKIN,  
&c. &c. &c.

---

London :

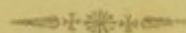
EFFINGHAM WILSON,

88, ROYAL EXCHANGE.

---

1834.

# DEDICATION.



The following address is respectfully dedi-  
cated to—

WILLIAM BRACKSTONE TARBUTT, ESQ. Chairman.

HENRY WINCHESTER, ESQ. AND ALD.

WILLIAM HUGHES HUGHES, ESQ. M. P.

JOHN ATKINSON, ESQ.

THE REV. M. M. PRESTON,

JOHN BRITTON, ESQ.

JOSEPH WILSON, ESQ.

LONDON:

WILLIAM TARBUTT, GREAT WINCHESTER STREET.

WILLIAM ANDREW BECKWITH, ESQ.

JAMES HORNE, ESQ.

AND

JOHN CLARK, ESQ.

Members of the Special Committee appointed to  
investigate the causes of the prevalence of Ring-  
worm in Christ's Hospital, as an acknowledged  
ment of the value of the good opinion which led  
them to apply for assistance in their enquiries to  
their humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

14, Southampton Street,  
18th August, 1834



## DEDICATION.



THE following address is respectfully dedicated to—

WILLIAM BRACKSTONE TARBUTT, ESQ. *Chairman.*

HENRY WINCHESTER, ESQ. AND ALD.

WILLIAM HUGHES HUGHES, ESQ. M. P.

JOHN ATKINSON, ESQ.

THE REV. M. M. PRESTON,

JOHN BRITTEN, ESQ.

JOSIAH WILSON, ESQ.

WILLIAM DAY, ESQ.

WILLIAM ANDREW BECKWITH, ESQ.

JAMES HORNE, ESQ.

AND

JOHN CLARK, ESQ.

Members of the Special Committee appointed to investigate the causes of the prevalence of Ringworm in Christ's Hospital, as an acknowledgement of the value of the good opinion which led them to apply for assistance in their enquiries to their humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

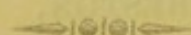
14, Southampton Street,  
18th August, 1834.

AN ADDRESS

TO THE WORSHIPFUL THE GOVERNORS OF

CHRIST'S HOSPITAL

&c.



Gentlemen,

I presume it will be known to most of you that I was requested, on the 12th ultimo, by the Chairman of the Select Committee for enquiring into the causes of the prevalence of a contagious disease, called Ring-worm, in your establishments, to proceed to Hertford, to examine the heads of the boys there, reputed to be suffering from this disease, who were above twelve years of age, and the advancement of whose education, consequently, had become a matter of serious consideration to the Committee;—that I had before, and have been subsequently, honoured with the confidence of the Committee so far, as to be desired to examine the heads of the boys in the Hospital, supposed to have Ring-worm, in London;—to examine the Diet Table; and to report as to



## AN ADDRESS

TO THE WORSHIPFUL THE GOVERNORS OF

CHRIST'S HOSPITAL,

&c.



Gentlemen,

I presume it will be known to most of you that I was requested, on the 12th ultimo, by the Chairman of the Select Committee for enquiring into the causes of the prevalence of a contagious disease, called Ring-worm, in your establishments, to proceed to Hertford, to examine the heads of the boys there, reputed to be suffering from this disease, who were above twelve years of age, and the advancement of whose education, consequently, had become a matter of serious consideration to the Committee;—that I had before, and have been subsequently, honoured with the confidence of the Committee so far, as to be desired to examine the heads of the boys in the Hospital, supposed to have Ring-worm, in London;—to examine the Diet Table; and to report as to



the condition of the former, and the fitness of the latter, for due and healthy nourishment, and the prevention of disease. You have before this, also, without doubt, received a printed copy of the Committee's Report, to which has been appended, my evidence on these points.

In addressing you personally, therefore, I feel that some explanation is necessary as to my motives: they may be stated in a few words. In the first place, the brevity necessary to meet the wishes of the Committee, and the convenience of the Governors at large, in the framing of my report, did not give me space to say all I thought necessary, or to assign adequate reasons for what I did say. To supply these deficiencies, I now respectfully beg permission, as an act of justice to myself, and as, in my humble judgment, likely to afford satisfaction, and further desirable information, to the Governors and Friends of so charitable and splendid an Establishment.

It appears that this disease has never been absent from the Institution for ten or twelve years: that, during this period, a very large portion of the boys have been affected, or have been supposed to be affected; and have, consequently, been from time to time residing with their friends, deprived, probably of all education; or, at the Establishment at Hertford, of the advantages of all the higher grades of it, contemplated by the



Founder, and the body of Almoners and Governors, as the administrators of his bounty.

Deeply impressed with the magnitude and seriousness of the responsibility with which I was invested, and duly considering all which has come to my knowledge of the opinions and recommendations, with reference to this subject, of medical men of far greater reputation than I can ever expect to boast of, I need not say that I have proceeded with much care in the investigation, and much caution in the inferences I have drawn, as they appear in my reports to the Committee.

A short statement of the steps taken by me in this enquiry, will perhaps be as desirable to you as it will be satisfactory to me.

On the day mentioned, I was honoured with the first official communication on this subject, by the Chairman of the Committee of Investigation; and was favoured with a list of the names of thirty-two youths, of the age of from twelve to fourteen years and eight months, with instructions to visit Hertford, and examine them; "to report on the state of the diseased heads, and whether they were in a condition to be allowed to associate with their school-fellows in town, without infecting them." I was, also, requested to offer any suggestions which might occur to me, "as to the cause of this noble Institution having been



for so many years afflicted with this disease, and what plan I would recommend to get rid of it."

With these instructions I proceeded to Hertford, and having examined each individual case in the list, within my reach, with much minuteness and attention, had the satisfaction of reporting, that there was only one case of Ring-worm among the whole. A similar result and report followed my enquiries in London, in a great number of other reputed cases of the disease; and I learn, with much pleasure, that a rapid diminution of the numbers has gone on ever since.

I should add, that during my visit to Hertford, I noticed a considerable number of boys, much younger than those to whom the Committee directed my particular attention, mixing and playing with others in a healthy state.

My attention was next directed to the Diet Table of the Hospital, a copy of which I have attached, (see p. 9;) and the report I made was as follows:

"First—As to the quantity and quality of the different articles of meat, bread, and beer, I find nothing objectionable, except as regards boiling the meat too much, and in too large a quantity of water;—its nutritive properties being thus much



CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.—DIET TABLE.  
*London.*

BREAKFASTS.

$5\frac{3}{4}$  oz. Bread, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint of Milk and Water.

DINNERS.

*Sunday*—4 oz. R. Mutton, 8 oz. Potatoes, 3 oz. Bread.

*Monday*—4 oz. B. Beef,  $5\frac{3}{4}$  oz. Bread, Broth unlimited

*Tuesday*—8 oz. P. Pudding,  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. Butter, 3 oz. Bread.

*Wednesday*—4 oz. B. Mutton,  $5\frac{3}{4}$  oz. Bread, Broth,

*Thursday*—As Sunday.

*Friday*—As Monday.

*Saturday*— $5\frac{3}{4}$  oz. Bread,  $\frac{3}{4}$  oz. Butter, Pease Soup.

SUPPERS.

*Sunday*— $5\frac{3}{4}$  oz. Bread,  $\frac{3}{4}$  oz. Butter.

*Week Days*— $5\frac{3}{4}$  oz. Bread, 2 oz. Cheese.

Beer and Water.

Note.—It requires nearly 8 oz. of undressed Meat to produce 4 oz.

when dressed.

When Potatoes are not in season, the Boys have  $5\frac{3}{4}$  oz. Bread with their Roast Meat.

*Hertford.*

BREAKFASTS.

5 oz. Bread, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint of Milk.

DINNERS.

*Sunday*— $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. R. Mutton,  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. Potatoes,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  oz. Bread.

*Monday*— $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. Pl. Pudding,  $\frac{1}{4}$  oz. Butter,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  oz. Bread.

*Tu. & Wed.*— $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. R. Mutton,  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. Potatoes,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  oz. Bread.

*Thurs. & Frid.*— $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. B. Beef, 5 oz. Bread, and Broth.

*Saturday*—1 pint Pease Soup,  $\frac{1}{3}$  oz. Butter, 5 oz. Bread.

Note.—Sixty-six Boys have Rice Milk for Dinner every day, except Sundays; with a pint of which they have  $\frac{1}{4}$  oz. of Butter, and 5 oz. of Bread. When Potatoes are not in season, they have instead 5 oz. of Bread with their Roast Meat. Roast Beef is substituted for Roast Mutton once a month, both in London and at Hertford. They have, also, Veal and Pork twice a year.

SUPPERS.

5 oz. Bread, 1 oz. Cheese or  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. Butter, Beer and Water.



reduced, while the broth, as it is called, is unnutritive, and useless.

“Secondly—That the almost entire privation of vegetables tends to produce, *if it be not the sole cause of*, those eruptive diseases reported on after examination at Hertford, as also those in London.”

I stated, that I believed the allowance of bread had been thought to constitute a sufficiently large quantity of vegetable matter for the purposes of health; but suggested that the London bread always contained alum, a powerful astringent, and capable of engendering a tendency to constipation very generally\*.

I remarked, that on the contrary, fresh succulent vegetables, besides their nutritive properties, possess others tending to relax and regulate the bowels and purify the blood, and concluded with expressing my conviction, that if they were served out liberally and regularly, from day to day, the cutaneous diseases, now so general, would be speedily exterminated.

Perhaps a short statement of the general causes

\* Brown Bread is considered an aperient, and often resorted to, on account of this property, in preference to white. It is probable that this supposed quality is owing to the absence of Alum.



of the disease forms a proper and legitimate step to begin with, in the brief remarks I am about to offer; and these are two in number, namely, some general disturbance of the system, caused by errors in diet\*, or, contact with another child already diseased. It is often occurring, apparently spontaneously, from the first-mentioned causes, but having once occurred, is easily communicable by contact. It may be equally briefly said, that it disappears apparently, in a great number of cases, as spontaneously as it appears, thus giving a temporary reputation to thousands of nostrums, while it resists, in others, the whole of these for months and years.

This short address, however, must not be dedicated to the repetition of truisms, yet I am bound to repeat, that when I visited Hertford, there were among the boys a large number of cases of real contagious Ring-worm, occurring in one or other of the two ways I have mentioned; and a smaller number of older boys, including the list I have alluded to, who were deprived of the advantages

\* There is scarcely a school-boy in England who does not know what a Ring-worm is on other parts of the body than the scalp, and who does not readily cure it by the application of ink. Spots of this eruption may always be traced on the skin of other parts of the body, if the falling off of the hair be noticed at the beginning. They often occur on other parts of the body, while the scalp is free, and disappear in a few days, spontaneously; but, on the scalp, there are many obstacles to their doing so.



of education in London, by eruptions consequent on the want of consideration in the arrangement of their diet, and other circumstances, which seem to have been considered and treated as Ring-worm.

With reference to these two classes—to their cure and the means of preventing their recurrence, it will be observed, that a bad arrangement of diet will give occasion to what, for want of a better term, I have designated spontaneous Ring-worm. We are led, therefore, at once to the road of prevention as regards that. The details of the methods of cure, medically speaking, are too much influenced by existing circumstances, when it is established, and do not admit of being detailed with conformity to my object. The eruptions *not* of this character, also, may be prevented by attention to this important subject, and a due regard to the considerations I am now about to detail.

It does not appear, as far as I am aware, that the practice of cropping, and washing, and rubbing the heads, has been hitherto suspected of any influence in producing eruptions and disordered states of the scalp; but I am of opinion that it has, and a very powerful one too, and the grounds of that opinion are as follows\* :—

\* Of course, I do not mean to say that it can produce contagious Ring-worm, on the contrary, it is manifestly and decidedly calculated to prevent either the formation or spreading of that disease.



When we consider attentively what may have been the objects of nature in furnishing the head with hair, it becomes apparent, that she intends it not only as a protective covering, adapted to the necessities of a vital organ—the brain, but, conformable with that established principle which originated with the creation of the human race, namely, the combination of utility and beauty, she intended it, also, as an ornament. It is, however, chiefly in the matter before us, its *utility*, which will probably be first considered, and this may be summed up in a few words:—it defends the brain and its coverings from “the winter’s cold, and summer’s parching heat.” I have taken this subject in its order, as the last point to which my attention has been directed by the Committee, or, I should rather say, by its respected, humane, and talented Chairman, since it formed no part of the report, but merely an answer to interrogations put by himself, after the report had been ordered to be printed; and I shall go into it a little more in detail hereafter.

Having said, at the commencement, that this publication originates in my wish to substantiate, as far as I am able, the opinions I have given in my reports, by facts and reasoning, I now proceed on the task:—

As the first step towards this object, I take the liberty to offer to the consideration of the Gover-



nors, a copy of the Report I first alluded to in p. 8 (as annexed,) substituting, for obvious reasons, numbers for names. The age of each boy is attached to the number, and the names will be ascertained with ease, by every Governor who has an opportunity of consulting the original Report. From this it will be apparent, that the extreme caution which it has been thought necessary to use, in avoiding the introduction of infectious disease into the Hospital in London, is, in itself, an evil of magnitude; and that it must be a preliminary step towards restoring the scholars to an uninterrupted course of education, *to ascertain what really is, and what is not contagious disease*, not only at the period of his admission, but at all others, when cutaneous disease may make its appearance. Now this desirable object is to be attained, not merely by examination on admission, but by continuing it from day to day, or, at least, every other day, so that the first appearance may become the signal for the separation of the individual from the rest, and the subjecting him to decided treatment. The really contagious Ringworm, is not, as many suppose, either difficult to know, or difficult to cure: far less difficult is it to stop the spread of contagion when it is discovered. In a large establishment like this, we may examine the boy's head on his admission, and find him perfectly healthy; but, supposing the seeds of the disease to have been previously sown by infection, or, supposing a spontaneous



12	11	32	suppurate, discharge and heal
12	10	31	Out with a friend
12	8	30	No disease remaining.
12	8	29	Ditto.
12	8	28	Merely a little scurf, not infectious.
12	6	27	A trifling irritation of the scalp, not ring-worm.
12	4	26	Ill in the Sick Ward, and I did not examine them.
14	4	25	A trifling irritation of the scalp, not ring-worm, not infectious.
12	2	24	Out with a friend.
12	1	23	There is a little pustulation and circumscribed redness; the disease is on the
12	0	22	wane, but not safe to be admitted at home.
12	0	21	Ditto.
12	0	20	Out with a friend.
12	0	19	Quite well.
12	0	18	Ditto.
12	0	17	Quite well.
12	0	16	Out.
12	0	15	This boy has been, for three years and two months, supposed to be suffering
12	0	14	from ring-worm. I cannot say whether he has had it, or not, but he now
12	0	13	suffers from chronic inflammation of the scalp, such as is frequently
12	0	12	produced by the long continuance of stimulating applications.
12	0	11	Quite well.
12	0	10	Out.
12	0	9	Quite well.
12	0	8	In the Sick Ward.
12	0	7	A mere spot of scurf.
12	0	6	This case is of the same nature as that of No. 11, it is not ring-worm, and
12	0	5	not contagious.
12	0	4	
12	0	3	
12	0	2	
12	0	1	
12	0	0	

JULY 12th, 1834.

SAMUEL PLUMBE.



appearance takes place after his admission, the  
 disease may occupy a great portion of his scalp,  
 and he may have infected many others, before a  
 discovery takes place. This is clearly only to be  
 prevented by frequent examination, and if I may  
 so express myself, by frequent searches after the  
 disease. I may, possibly, be told, that it is the  
 nurse's duty to detect and report every case on  
 the instant, but even they do not examine the  
 heads from day to day. The boy washes himself,  
 and the attention of the nurse is never attracted  
 till, perhaps, a large bald spot appears, and the  
 infection has been insidiously spreading for days.  
 In other cases it has occurred, that alarm has  
 been taken unnecessarily, as the table I have  
 given will shew; but in either case, the value of  
 an arrangement which shall lead to the instant  
 detection of any disease, whether infectious or  
 otherwise, inasmuch as all are more easily sub-  
 dued in their infancy than when established, must  
 be apparent. I do not mean to say, that such a  
 measure as the daily examination of a thousand  
 boys' heads, supposing them to have been all  
 healthy on admission, would be absolutely neces-  
 sary, but I fearlessly assert, that under present  
 circumstances it is so, if the extermination of the  
 disease, from the Institution, is to be looked for.  
 I treat on this part of the subject, presuming that  
 there be no cause in operation favouring the  
 spontaneous origin, or the spread of contagion,  
 that there be a diet, containing a sufficient quan-



appearance takes place after his admission, the disease may occupy a great portion of his scalp, and he may have infected many others, before a discovery takes place. This is clearly only to be prevented by frequent examination, and, if I may so express myself, by frequent searches after the disease. I may, possibly, be told, that it is the nurse's duty to detect and report every case on the instant, but even they do not examine the heads from day to day. The boy washes himself, and the attention of the nurse is never attracted till, perhaps, a large bald spot appears, and the infection has been insidiously spreading for days. In other cases it has occurred, that alarm has been taken unnecessarily, as the table I have given will shew ; but, in either case, the value of an arrangement which shall lead to the instant detection of any disease, whether infectious or otherwise, inasmuch as all are more easily subdued in their infancy than when established, must be apparent. I do not mean to say, that such a measure as the daily examination of a thousand boys' heads, supposing them to have been all healthy on admission, would be absolutely necessary, but I fearlessly assert, that under present circumstances it is so, if the *extermination* of the disease, from the Institution, is to be looked for. I treat on this part of the subject, presuming that there be no cause in operation *favouring the spontaneous origin*, or the *spread of contagion*, that there be a diet, containing a sufficient quan-



tity of vegetable matter to be consistent with, and contributing to health; that the infected boys be most carefully and rigidly separated from the healthy; that the caps, if there must be such things, be not indiscriminately thrown about, and never, in sport, placed on any other head than their proper owner's.

I may be asked, is the daily examination of the heads of so large a number of boys practicable? To which I reply, that it is not a work of time or trouble. They might easily be mustered, like soldiers on parade, for the purpose; and spots of Ring-worm, on the neck and face, might be instantly detected, prevented from spreading to the head, and cured\*.

But there are causes favouring the spontaneous origin of the disease, as well as the spread of contagion constantly in operation; and first of

THE DIET TABLE. There was liberality—there was profusion as to dress. A very large portion of the waste, without regret. The Diet Table, it will be observed, (page 9,) states, that eight ounces of potatoes are allowed twice a-week, *when they are in season*, which, I understand, means about half the year, and that there is meat twice a-week. Looking at the

\* I have already mentioned the comparatively trivial nature of the disease of other parts of the skin, as compared with the scalp.



quantity of meat, bread, and beer, as I have already stated, they are, as to quality and quantity, quite unexceptionable. As to the meat when cooked, and to the manner in which it is cooked and sent up, I beg to offer a few observations. Taking one day of the week, Wednesday, as a sample of the whole, I found boiled mutton, bread, and broth. The mutton, when taken out of the coppers, was overboiled to an extent sufficient to have deprived it of a very large portion, perhaps half, its nourishment. It was dry and tasteless:—it had been boiled in a sea of water, certainly a vast quantity more than was necessary and proper; and that water, miscalled broth, was served up without a particle of vegetable, or any thing else to make it palatable, and was scarcely touched. The meat, almost dry, was served on square pieces of board, which, had there been gravy in it, would, in spite of all obstacles, have flown over, and been absorbed by the table cloth. There was liberality—there was profusion as to quantity, but it was impossible to contemplate the *waste*, without regret. A very large portion of the meat was rejected, and carried back to the kitchen; as was, also, nearly the whole of the broth.

I am quite aware, in thus freely speaking, that I may be met with the question—how, if there are such evils in existence, can the boys appear so well fed and healthy? and I do not deny that



the meat, bread, &c. contain nourishment enough to keep the powers of the constitution, and the general health, up to the necessary standard, I only assert, that the origin and protracted existence of Ring-worm, and other diseases with which it has been confounded, is mainly attributable to the absence of vegetables, which, I am convinced, would give a zest to the boys' meals, which they do not at present enjoy, and be consistent with a far more rigid economy than is observed to prevail in any part of this, otherwise, admirably conducted Establishment.

I do not deny the correctness of the views of your late venerated Surgeon, as to a diet of mere meat and bread in some cases, but, for growing boys, as well as all other human beings, a regular action of the alvine functions is necessary to health, and to prevent, most particularly of all others, those diseases of the skin which have so long infested the Hospital, and, to use the language of one of your reports, "baffled the skill of your medical officers."

I find, with reference to this point, that on the 15th of May, 1829, a deputation of five medical men, among whom there are the most distinguished names, visited Hertford, for the purpose of examining the children, and "reporting as to the disease called Ring-worm, and advising as to its cure;" and they reported, that the children



were "generally healthy,—that their diet was wholesome,—that they did not think any change of it necessary; but that there could be no objection, if it could be accomplished without inconvenience, to add a portion of vegetables to the dinner." Yet I am quite content to appeal to any observant person, (medical knowledge is not necessary to decide the questions medical sophistry can never successfully labour towards the negative.) Is constipation of the bowels a cause of cutaneous eruptions? Is not a dry and animal diet more likely to produce this, than one with a reasonable portion of vegetables? Every mother of a family—every observant human being—is as well able to answer these questions, as the greatest physiologist who ever theorized or discovered.

There is a medicinal as well as a nutritive property in succulent vegetables, which for time immemorial has been known to be through its influence on the alimentary canal, contributing to the purity of the blood, and to the warding off of disease; and there is no class of diseases more amenable to its influences, than those of the skin.

Scurvy, a disease showing itself in its most distressing forms on the surface of the body, was a dreadful scourge in our navy, till the fortunate observation of the effects of vegetable matter in the form of lime-juice. I mention this, not with



a view to communicate information, but as one of the most notorious of facts, elucidating the truth of my observations. Its power appears to have been almost accidentally discovered, and for a long time it was considered to have acted as an antiseptic merely, its real *modus operandi* not being discovered. Hence, it often failed in curing scurvy, though generally successful. If, in the case of the sailor taking it, it did not prevent constipation—it did not ward off the disease—the man suffered nearly as much as those who had never taken it\*.

\* Having had, in early life, extensive opportunities of investigating this subject, I, in the first edition of my work on diseases of the skin, published 1824, made the following observations:—

“It has long been matter of notoriety, that the employment of lime-juice is not always to be depended on as a preventive of scurvy, notwithstanding its former high character; and but little opportunity of observation is now necessary to show, that its good effects depend less on its antiseptic properties, than its power of exciting that gentle and healthy action of the bowels, which is the effect of most vegetable productions which are used as food.

“It need not be observed, that the use of meat which has been long salted, and consequently suffered a material diminution of its succulent and nutritious properties, is more speedily followed by scurvy than that which has been recently prepared; but it is also a fact, that the disposition to constipation is most marked and obstinate in such cases, long before other symptoms of disease make their appearance.”



Thus, then, I hope, in tracing a cause, I have suggested, at least, one step towards a remedy. I firmly believe, that a liberal supply of vegetables, from day to day, will not only prevent the generation of true Ring-worm, but also those cutaneous eruptions which have been mistaken for it. To prevent the generation of the infectious disease within the walls is the first object—to prevent its ingress from without, the second.

The latter would seem at first to provide, as it is the standing order, that every boy shall be examined by the Surgeon of the Establishment previous to admission. I have already explained, however, the reasons for thinking this insufficient, and for suggesting that the eye of the surgeon be on them from day to day, for some time. A sickly sheep may infect the whole flock before its own disease is discovered.

Supposing the alteration in the diet table to be made, and a powerful cause of the generation of the disease, inside the walls, to have been removed;—supposing the utmost vigilance and skill in the examination of the boys on their admission to be exercised, in excluding those who have the disease; we have still to deal with it in the person of boys already admitted; and the removal of all those circumstances which impede the means of cure of these boys, is the next point to be considered.



In the first place, they should be entirely separated, by day and night, from all others. I fear this is not done so effectually as it ought to be, either at Hertford or in London.

Then, as regards the caps; the indiscriminate tossing about of caps, apparently made for no other purpose, but, certainly, often on the scalp of an infected boy, and often carelessly transferred, from time to time, wantonly to others, perhaps healthy, and thus communicating the disease; very constantly, as I am informed, remaining in the possession of one who has got well, to be used, and soon inoculate him anew. These caps ought to be burned, or at least thoroughly washed, and they should never remain in the possession of a boy who has got the disease; but, for obvious reasons, should be taken away on its first appearance, and only restored, thoroughly washed, after recovery. It is hardly possible to conceive a vehicle more fitted to spread the disease, and prevent its eradication.

Next to attention to this particular, the pillow-cases, and the ticking of the pillows, should be looked to, and frequently washed; and it would not be a bad rule, on the occurrence of the holidays, to wash every thing in the shape of bed furniture.

Inattention to frequent ablution, not only of the



head itself, but all which comes in contact with it, will often lead to the reproduction of the disease, again and again. Hence, it is not an uncommon occurrence for parents, and even medical men, to give up all attention to it in despair, and come to the conclusion, that it is a constitutional vice, which may perchance disappear, but whose departure cannot be hastened by art. It is given up, as a case not provided against by medical science; and the unfortunate sufferer becomes the victim of pretenders and nostrum-mongers, till the disease disappears spontaneously; or, by the repeated use of caustic and stimulating applications, is changed to a permanent chronic inflammation of the scalp, producing a constant formation of scurf and scab, and scale and pustule, ten times more difficult to cure than any case of Ring-worm that ever appeared.

I have alluded, in a preceding page, to the practice of cropping, washing, and rubbing the scalp, as adopted by the Hospital; and I stated, that my attention was directed to this part of the question by the Chairman of the Committee, whose indefatigable exertions and zeal in the investigation, has compelled me to give a great deal of attention to it, from the mere influence of good example.

On the 13th inst. he enquired of me—"how far may not the bolsters be imbued with this horrid disease, at Hertford, as to perpetuate it? If so,



would it not be wiser to avail ourselves of this vacation, to have the wards, and all their contents, purified? Young and delicate boys come to us at seven and eight years of age; how far do you think it wise to dock them immediately to their quick, subjecting them to the washing and scrubbing every day? Does it not irritate the roots of the hair? No, such plans are adopted at Westminster, Eton, or the Charter-House. There have been as many as five hundred boys at a time in the latter institution; and the man who has been employed to cut their hair for thirty years, has never known of the existence of Ringworm, beyond the extent of three or four cases."



formation and accumulation of vermin. I conceive it unnecessary to point out the equally complete efficiency to all purposes of cleanliness, of the use of the comb and brush.

Let us look, then, at the two plans, as regards the *health* of the hair and the scalp; and First—The cropping and washing, and scrubbing plan. It is clear, that nature intended that the hair should be as useful, at least, as it is ornamental. She not only provided the hair, but she provided an apparatus to supply it with nourishment and glossiness, by establishing at the root of every single hair a fountain of oleaginous fluid. By this process of cropping and washing, the hair is rendered useless as a covering of the head, while by the rough rubbing in every direction to make the head dry, the hair is rendered harsh and unhealthy, standing up like the stubble of corn-fields, and when friction by the towels is employed, its points are pressed down on the surface of the scalp, pricking and irritating, and often, in this way, producing little pimples. I have no hesitation in saying, that a great number of those cases which I saw at Hertford, miscalled Ring-worm, were produced and kept up in this manner.

I “ Secondly—As to the comb and brush. The comb is useful in preparing the way for the brush, in removing any little scurf, which is common to the scalp. The brush is useful by bringing forward, and



spreading, the fluid I have mentioned, over the whole length of the hair, contributing to its health, its beauty, and its usefulness."

The practice of clipping the hair so close has this additional disadvantage: the scalp is exposed (for to speak of the cap as a covering or protection of the scalp is absurd) to the heat of the sun; it becomes scorched and inflamed; and is not unfrequently, under such circumstances, found to be covered with scurf or scales, and even emitting a fluid discharge; and such cases are at once often condemned as Ring-worm.

INFECTIOUS Ring-worm is known by one particular sign, namely, an invariably circular patch of destruction of the hair of the scalp: not a patch of baldness, like the baldness of old age, with a white and clear skin, but the hair is withered and unhealthy, and if it be pulled off the spot, it more resembles rotten tow than hair. The circular character of the patch, and this tow appearance of the hair, will always enable the accurate observer to distinguish the true infectious Ring-worm from all other diseases. If a child returns from school in this state, where no stimulating, and caustic, or other applications have been used, the parents may rest assured that the cure is in their own hands. Let them have the child's hair cut moderately short, and the head washed, at least, six times a-day with warm water, and the mildest kind of soap: using no



spreading, the fluid I have mentioned, over the whole length of the hair, contributing to its health, its beauty, and its usefulness."

A FEW RULES  
FOR THE  
DOMESTIC MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOLARS  
DURING THE VACATION,  
ADDRESSED TO THEIR PARENTS AND FRIENDS.

INFECTIOUS Ring-worm is known by one particular sign, namely, an invariably circular patch of destruction of the hair of the scalp: not a patch of baldness, like the baldness of old age, with a white and clear skin, but the hair is withered and unhealthy, and if it be pulled off the spot, it more resembles rotten tow than hair. The circular character of the patch, and this tow appearance of the hair, will always enable the accurate observer to distinguish the true infectious Ring-worm from all other diseases. If a child returns from school in this state, where no stimulating, and caustic, or other applications have been used, the parents may rest assured that the cure is in their own hands. Let them have the child's hair cut moderately short, and the head washed, at least, six times a-day with warm water, and the mildest kind of soap; using no



violence of friction with the towel to make the hair dry, but still sparing the healthy scalp, in this operation, less than the diseased spots.

To comprehend, fully, the value of this rule, and the foundation on which it rests, it is necessary to explain, that Ring-worm is a disease which originates in all parts of the body, as well as the scalp; and that it consists in its commencement of a very small circular red spot, when first discovered, seldom larger than a split-pea; that the circumference is formed of a ring of minute, extremely minute, vesicles; that every one of these little rings of vesicles constitute a perfect magazine of infectious matter. On the skin not covered by hair, they are of no importance, and disappear spontaneously, as I have before remarked; but on the scalp, they are not only no trifling disease in themselves, as individual spots, but retain the power of infecting every other part of the cutaneous surface.

These little vesicles do not, like the vesicles of small-pox, cow-pox, and other vesicular diseases, go through a tedious process of days to get larger and form a pustule, but as soon as they are formed they are broken, and their contents discharged; and, from their number and minuteness, they are discharging their contents from hour to hour; now, if the child scratches, which they are accustomed to do, such a patch, the virulent and



contagious matter is carried to another part, and produces a new spot of disease, so that there is a constant communication of the disease from part to part; and thus, if one spot appears to be getting well, another, and a new one, makes its appearance. By very frequent washing, the infectious matter is got rid of, almost as soon as formed; the original spot is prevented from spreading, and, at the same time, new spots cannot take place.

Let not the friends of children adopt the notion, that Ring-worm is a constitutional disease; that there is, in the constitution of any child, naturally, a disposition to generate, and keep it up. It is in no respect dependant on constitutional causes, more than other cutaneous affections are. Improper diet of any kind, which producing constipation of the bowels, leads to irritation of the skin, either in the form of scales or scurf, or pimple, is a cause of the vesicular disease called Ring-worm. If, therefore, a child arrives at home with this, or any other cutaneous affection, mild aperients, occasionally administered, are highly proper in the shape of medicine; and as regards diet, fresh and succulent vegetables ought to constitute a large part of the food. These measures will generally be all that are necessary; and if the holidays were six weeks, or two months, instead of one month, no parents or friends of children need return them to school



with any remains of the disease. Unfortunately, instead of this simple plan, parents are apt, in their anxiety to get rid of this obnoxious affection, to have recourse to empiricism, and stimulating and caustic applications are used\*, utterly without a pathological principle to guide the prescriber, and not unfrequently applied to healthy and sound, as well as diseased spots; thus contributing to establish a degree of chronic inflammation of the scalp, which for years remains, and is miscalled Ring-worm, until, in despair, all attempts of the kind are given up, and then the scalp returns to a healthy state. Stimulating applications, either in the form of ointments or lotions, should never be employed. Patience—the occasional exhibition of mild aperients—a copious use of vegetable matter as part of the diet, and frequent ablution, are all that are necessary in the shape of remedial measures, and all beyond them will be more likely to do harm than good.

\* I could furnish a list of two hundred, every one of which are reputed specifics; and all, more or less, stimulating; for even medical men say, sometimes one thing will cure it, sometimes another, and sometimes it resists every thing.



with any remains of the disease. Unfortunately, instead of this simple plan, parents are apt, in their anxiety to get rid of this obnoxious affection, to have recourse to empiricism, and stimulating and caustic applications are used\*, utterly without a pathological principle to guide the prescriber, and not unfrequently applied to healthy and sound, as well as diseased spots; thus contriving to establish a degree of chronic inflammation of the scalp, which for years remains, and is misnamed Ring-worm, until, in despair, all attempts of the kind are given up, and then the scalp returns to a healthy state. Stimulating applications, either in the form of calomel, or of mercury, should never be employed. Patience—

*Errata.*

Page 16, bottom line—for “there is meat twice a-week,” read “there is no meat twice a-week.”

21, line 10—for “to provide,” read “to be provided for.”

21, “25—for “person,” read “persons.”

all beyond them will be more likely to do harm than good.

\* I could furnish a list of two hundred, every one of which are reputed specifics; and all, more or less, stimulating; for even medical men say, sometimes one thing will cure it, sometimes another, and sometimes it resists every thing.



