

**Observations on the effects of various articles of the materia medica, in the cure of lues venerea: illustrated with cases / by John Pearson.**

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OBSERVATIONS  
ON THE  
EFFECTS OF VARIOUS ARTICLES  
OF THE  
*Materia Medica*,  
IN THE CURE OF  
*LUES VENEREA*:  
ILLUSTRATED WITH  
CASES.

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BY  
JOHN PEARSON,

SENIOR SURGEON OF THE LOCK HOSPITAL AND ASYLUM,  
AND THE PUBLIC DISPENSARY;  
READER ON THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF SURGERY.

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1800.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

EFFECTS OF VARIOUS ARTICLES

OF THE

Malaria Febrilis

IN THE CURS OF

THE FEVER

ILLUSTRATED WITH

CASES.

BY

JOHN PEARSON,

PHYSICIAN OF THE LOCK HOSPITAL AND ATTENDANT  
ON THE TROPIC DISPENSARY;  
READER OF THE LECTURES AND CHAIRMAN OF THE

London:

PRINTED FOR J. GALLAGHER,

CROWN COURT, LONDON.

ST. W. SMITH, NO. 40, KING STREET, LONDON.

1860.

R41250



TO

THOMAS FOWLER, M. D.

*Late Physician of the General Infirmary of the  
County of Stafford.*

MY DEAR SIR;

THE success with which you have investigated the properties and effects of several articles of the *Materia Medica*, has conferred on you a solid reputation among your contemporaries, and renders this expression of respect to your talents peculiarly proper, from one who has been engaged in similar inquiries. But, while I cherish a high estimation of your public character, it affords me a peculiar satisfaction to address you as a friend; assuring you, that I feel the highest gratification in tracing back the various events of many succeeding years, by  
which

DEDICATION.

which our friendship has been more closely cemented, till it has acquired a vigour, which I trust will suffer no abatement, and a maturity which will never know a symptom of decay.

That enlarged Philanthropy by which your professional exertions have been actuated, during the long course of an useful life, will, I am sure, feel less gratified by the most laboured panegyric on your various acquirements, than by a tribute paid to your social virtues and your moral character.

I am, Dear Sir,

With great respect and regard,

Your faithful and affectionate friend,  
and obedient servant,

JOHN PEARSON.

Golden-Square,

May 1, 1800.



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## INTRODUCTION.

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1. **T**HE various and discordant opinions which have been adopted and disseminated by different medical writers, concerning the efficacy of several articles of the materia medica, in the venereal disease, have proved the occasion of much confusion in reasoning, and of no less instability in practice. It were desirable therefore, to attain to some degree of precision, in estimating the qualities of the mineral or vegetable productions which have been recommended for the cure of that complaint; to ascertain whether any other substance than Mercury be a true and certain antidote; and to what ends and purposes any of the numerous medicines recommended



may be employed, either in conjunction with Mercury, or after the completion of a mercurial course.

My principal design, in publishing the following work, is to communicate the result of my observations on these subjects, with a view of contributing my aid towards dispelling those uncertainties in which some important practical topics have been so long involved. But, previously to my entering upon the subject, I shall offer some introductory remarks, and display the nature of that evidence upon which many revolutions, in the mode of treating Lues Venerea, have been either attempted or actually brought about.

2. Towards the conclusion of the fifteenth century, this new and contagious disease invaded Europe, and spread with uncommon rapidity through its different kingdoms; the symptoms which characterized it were formidable and loathsome; and its obstinate and untractable



untractable nature, resisted the most consummate medical skill of that period. The astonishment and perplexity excited by the ravages of this hitherto unknown plague, cannot be ascribed, solely, to the novel or uncommon form in which the complaint shewed itself; since there is scarcely an appearance produced by *Lues Venerea*, which is peculiar and appropriate to that malady, and which has not occurred as a character of some other disease. The mode in which it was most commonly communicated, the unrelenting fury with which it proceeded from one order of painful and disgusting symptoms to another, and, above all, the inefficacy of the several methods of treatment which were adopted by the physicians and surgeons of that period, furnished reasons but too cogent, both to the patient and his medical attendant, for regarding it as one of the most destructive scourges that had ever visited the human race.



3. Within a very short space of time after the first appearance of this malady, it was discovered that Mercury was capable of subduing its malignity, and of curing the effects produced by the virus ; a discovery which, during a short time, restrained the progress of the disease, and allayed the apprehensions of the afflicted.

The physicians and surgeons of that time, were indeed very imperfectly acquainted with the history and peculiar character of Lues Venerea ; and their knowledge of the powers and properties of the remedy they had acquired, was too vague and indefinite to conduct them to a safe and successful method of practice. They were accustomed to administer the specific in immoderate doses, and repeated them at too short intervals ; hence, by suddenly exciting a violent salivation, they sometimes destroyed the unfortunate patient ; and when that did not happen, they very frequently inflicted calamities on him, not inferior



rior to what might have been produced by the disease they were attempting to cure.\*

The medical practitioners of those times did not possess a correct knowledge of the quantity of Mercury necessary to effect a radical cure; they had no distinct notion of

\* Tandem eo incommodi res veniebat, ut dentium usus adimeretur, ipsis vacillantibus. Os alioqui totum uno occupante ulcere, cibi appetentiam, frigefacto stomacho, & turbante foetore, amitterent ægri. Cumque fitis esset intolerabilis, tamen, quod ad stomachum faceret, potionis genus nullum inveniebatur. Multis ad vertiginem, quibusdam ad insaniam usque infestabatur cerebrum. Tremebant inde non manus tantum, sed pedes etiam, et universum corpus ac lingua balbutiẽm trahebat, nonnullis immedicabilem. Multos in media curatione interire vidi, et quendam novi sic medentem, qui tres una die viros agricolas, cum intra hypocaustum plus æquo æstuans conclusisset, ac illi salutis, quam sic adepturos se sperabant, studio patientius quam par erat confisterent, donec defectis per caloris vehementiam cordibus, mori non sentirent, misere jugulavit. Alios vidi intumescẽte ad fauces gutture, quum exitum non haberet sanies primum, quam in sputo dejici oportuit, deinde ipse etiam spiritus suffocari, quosdam cum mejere non possent, mori. Omnino pauci convaluerunt, atque illi hoc periculo, hac amaritudine, his malis.

Ulrichus de Hutten, de Morbo Gallico: Cap. IV.



the length of time during which its medicinal action ought to be supported in the animal system; nor were they always competent to distinguish between the proper effects of the venereal poison, and the pernicious consequences of an injudicious practice.

The ill success which, in a great variety of instances, attended the exertions of the early practitioners, and the deplorable condition to which great numbers of their miserable patients were reduced, by the mal-administration of this active mineral, soon brought their mode of treatment into disrepute, and excited inquiries after other remedies, less uncertain in their specific qualities, and less injurious to the health and comfort of the diseased, in their consequences.

As the persuasion that the Lues Venerea was originally imported from Hispaniola, in the ship which brought back Columbus and his companions, was generally adopted, and as it was also a current opinion, that this  
malady



malady was endemial in the West-India Islands,\* it was presumed, that the country whence it was derived, could probably furnish a safe and efficacious remedy.

4. The *Lignum Sanctum*, or *Guaiaicum Wood*, was brought into Europe early in the sixteenth century, and the Decoction of it was declared to be an infallible remedy against every form of *Lues Venerea*: nor were its advocates satisfied with placing it on an equality with Mercury; they averred, that this vegetable was capable of eradicating the disease, where successive courses of Mercury had totally failed of success.

This new medicine was however often found to be inefficient in the cure of *Lues Venerea*; and the failures which occurred,

\* Although this account of the origin of *Lues Venerea* is commonly received as authentic, yet I have, during many years, been accustomed to controvert the opinion, in my lectures on that subject; the substance of which I design hereafter to offer to the public, in a Treatise on the *Lues Venerea*.

were sometimes ascribed to the introduction of a spurious kind of Guaiacum Wood ; at other times, to a diminution of its medicinal qualities, by keeping it too long. These opinions excited many respectable men to enter into minute and detailed descriptions of the genuine Wood, the state in which it ought to be used, and the proper mode of extracting its virtues ; and not a few engaged in sharp controversies on topics relating to it, the greater part of which, we now consider as frivolous, or absurd.\* It was however generally admitted, that the Wood of the young trees, when employed in a recent state, had the best claim to confidence ; hence, many diseased persons were induced to migrate to the West Indies, for the express purpose of drinking decoctions made of the fresh plant,

\* Aphrodisiacus, pssiam.

Astruc on the Venereal Disease.

Demetrius Capeuarius, de Ligno Sancto. Comment.



and of enjoying the other advantages of what was called the *Indian mode* of treatment.

The following curious narrative, will exhibit the nature of that discipline, which was practised among the rude natives of Saint Domingo.

C'est souvent par la mauvaise maniere d'administrer les remedes, qu'on est privé de leurs meilleurs effets. L'observation suivante sur l'usage du gayac est des plus intéressantes. Sa source n'est pas suspecte ; c'est le récit naïf de deux cures, rapportées par un témoin, sans prévention, qui n'etoit pas homme de l'Art, & qui prétendoit, ou qu'on n'apportoît pas en France le vrai gayac ; ou qu'on ignoroit la méthode de s'en servir. Voici le fait tel qu'on le lit dans les diverses leçons de Loys Guyon, Dolois, Sieur de la Nauche, Conseiller du Roi en ses Finances au Limosin. Lyon, 1625. Livre IV. Chap. V. Page 610.

“ Moi

“ Moi étant à Paris, l’an 1563, j’avois  
“ grande familiarité avec deux jeunes Adole-  
“ scences, enfans de ladite Ville, tous deux  
“ de bonnes & illustres maisons, desquels je  
“ tairai les noms, qui se trouverent infectés  
“ de cette contagion vénérienne, parce que  
“ le plus souvent elle se prend par paillardise,  
“ acte déshonnête, & par conséquent honteuse,  
“ laquelle ils celerent tant de temps qu’ils  
“ purent.

“ Enfin la maladie se fit connoître par la  
“ pélade, par pustules rouges qui leur vinrent  
“ au front, douleurs au milieu des os, tant  
“ des bras, jambes, cuisses, epaules, que sur  
“ le devant de la tête, les nuits jusqu’à  
“ environ l’aube du jour, & autres signes,  
“ comme la douleur au gosier, ne pouvant  
“ bien avaler la viande. Les parens les  
“ mirent entre les mains de Médecins & de  
“ Chirurgiens bien expérimentés, qui y firent  
“ tout ce que l’Art permettoit: mais ils ne  
“ guérirent pourtant. Pour la seconde fois,  
“ furent



“ furent appelés d’autres Médecins à cette  
“ cure, qui y appliquèrent tout leur sçavoir,  
“ mais en vain : & au contraire cette maladie  
“ s’empiroit, & se faisoit des tophes & nodo-  
“ sités à la partie antérieure de leur tête,  
“ & aux os des bras, cuisses & jambes,  
“ avec douleurs nocturnes insupportables : &  
“ comme la nuit s’approchoit, & durant icelle,  
“ crioient & se plaignoient incessamment, tant  
“ que les voisins les entendoient se lamenter  
“ de tous côtés, à cause de quoi, leurs corps  
“ devinrent secs ; ces deux jeunes hommes  
“ étoient de complexion différent, & avoient  
“ néanmoins les mêmes symptomes, ce que  
“ les Médecins jugeoient être fort extraor-  
“ dinaire.

“ Enfin, ces adolescens après avoir beaucoup  
“ souffert de maux de peines & d’angoisses,  
“ tant par les Médecins & Chirurgiens, que  
“ par empiriques qui les avoient gouvernés,  
“ que du propre mal ; après avoir fait beau-  
“ coup de dépenses, & ennuyé leurs parens,  
“ furent



“ furent laissés comme incurables, & en état  
“ de ne pouvoir jamais plus vivre fainement,  
“ & eussent fort désiré que la mort les eût  
“ saisis. Les choses étant en tels termes,  
“ Dieu eut compassion d’eux & de leur  
“ parens. Le Sieur de Chantonay, gentil-  
“ homme Bourguignon, de la Franche-Comté,  
“ fut envoyé par le Roi d’Espagne en  
“ Ambassade par devers Charles IX. Roi de  
“ France, qui lors se tenoit ordinairement à  
“ Paris ; ledit Ambassadeur, qui fut informé  
“ du cas de ces jeunes gens, dit qu’il  
“ avoit vû en Bourgogne, en Allemagne, en  
“ Flandre, en Italie, & en Espagne, plusieurs  
“ vérolés qui avoient été traités inefficacement,  
“ & qui avoient été chercher leur guérison  
“ radicale en Amérique, & allegua spéciale-  
“ ment l’exemple d’un sien Secrétaire.

“ D’après cet avis, ils allèrent s’embarquer  
“ en Espagne, pour passer à l’Isle de Saint  
“ Domingue.

“ Là



“ Là les Médecins du Viceroi furent d'avis  
“ qu'ils passassent en une autre isle qu'on  
“ appelle S. Jean au Port Riche, où les  
“ femmes sont fort entendues à guérir cette  
“ Maladie. Voici le traitement qu'on leur  
“ fit dans une cabanne de sauvage, sous la  
“ direction d'une femme du pays.

“ Elle cassoit & fendoit avec ses dents de  
“ petits tronçons de jeune arbre de gayac, &  
“ les faisoit bouiller dans un vaisseau de terre  
“ sans couverture. Elle leur faisoit boire tous  
“ les matins une chopine de cette décoction,  
“ en deux ou trois fois ; puis les faisoit pro-  
“ mener, exercer à l'escrime, ou bien alloient  
“ travailler à une mine d'or, qui n'était gueres  
“ loin du village, l'espace de deux heures :  
“ puis venoient, étant pleins de sueur, à la  
“ maison, & changeoient seulement de ché-  
“ mise ; puis les faisoit dîner, ne buvant que  
“ de l'eau de pluie puisée dans une marre.

“ Sur les trois heures après midi, on leur  
“ faisoit boire autant de gayac, comme au  
“ matin ;



“ matin, & faire le meme exercice ; & sans  
“ autre cérémonie ni remede, se trouverent  
“ entièrement guéris dans six semaines ; sans  
“ autre inconvénient, que d’avoir les gencives  
“ enflées & enflammées ; ce dont ils guéri-  
“ rent incontinent, après qu’on les eut fait  
“ saigner, en les piquant en plusieurs endroits  
“ avec un os de poisson fort pointu. Les  
“ nodosités qu’ils avoient aux os disparurent ;  
“ toutes les douleurs nocturnes cessèrent dans  
“ quinze jours ; l’appétit leur revint ; enfin  
“ tous les accidens se dissipèrent ; ils retour-  
“ nerent sains en Espagne, puis à Paris.  
“ L’un, fils de Maître des Comptes, est devenu  
“ Officier aux Finances ; l’autre a rendu de  
“ grandes services au Roi ès dernieres guerres  
“ de l’Union, dans la profession des armes.  
“ Il faut que l’arbre soit jeune & tendre : on  
“ ne nous en apporte que du vieil.” Louis,  
Parallele des Traitemens, &c. Chap. II.

5. The experience of a few years, taught  
the medical practitioners of the sixteenth  
century,



century, that the *Lignum Guaiaci* was not an infallible antidote against *Lues Venerea*; and the frequent proofs which occurred of its insufficiency, led them to inquire after other vegetable remedies. Accordingly, about the middle of the same century, first the China Root, and then the *Sarsaparilla* Root, were brought into Europe, with the most positive and respectable attestations of their superior efficacy in venereal complaints.

The *Guaiacum* Wood, however, was not absolutely superseded by the arrival of these competitors; for the three vegetable specifics, as they were termed, were administered, sometimes separately, and often in conjunction, to great multitudes of infected persons; and, as the writers of that period assure us, with the most distinguished advantage. But, although this method of treating the disease, prevailed during many years; yet the use of Mercury was not absolutely laid aside, even by those who were the strongest advocates



cates for these new medicines; and many eminent men, who flourished at that time; were so far from concurring in the general opinion, respecting Guaiacum Wood, China Root, and Sarsaparilla Root, that they regarded them as uncertain, or even nugatory, in venereal cases; and they insisted on the propriety of confiding in Mercury alone, for the radical cure of Syphilis.\*

6. Amidst the several discordant opinions which have been maintained and defended, concerning the most successful mode of treating Lues Venerea, the fortunes of Mercury have been various and fluctuating. With a certain proportion of medical practitioners, it maintained a steady and undiminished reputation: by many, it was disparaged and undervalued, as a mineral possessed of no decided efficacy; and, by some the administration of it was exploded altogether. Even in the time

\* Brassavolus, Bayrus, Rondeletius, &c.



of Morgagni,\* this medicine was interdicted by some of the most eminent physicians in Italy; and strong prejudices against the use of it subsisted, according to the testimony of Murray, so late as the middle of the present century.†

How far reason, or fashion, or caprice, was predominant in conducting to such a determination, I presume not to decide: certain it is,

\* Memini, cum ego adolescentulus Bononiam petii, usque adeo jam desertum utrumque Mercurii usum, ut annis octo quos ibi medicinæ studio tribui, ne unum quidem audiverim medicum, nedum viderim, alterutra rationem utentem;—Quibus igitur præstantissimos illos medicos vidisti, inquis, remediis utentes contra veneram Luem? Nimirum decoctis sive pervulgata, idque ut plurimum ratione datis, sive alia quam Valsalvæ, nec raro, in usu fuisse, vidi.

Morgagni de sed & Causis Morb. Lib. IV. Ep. 58.

† Adhucdum Florentiæ in Nosocomio incurabilium ad solum Guaiaci lignum & Sarsaparillæ radicem, tanquam ad sacram anchoram medici confugiant, & in Nosocomiis Hetruriæ plurimis lege usus Mercurii sit interdictus.

Appar. Med. Tom. III.



that notwithstanding the puny clamours of ignorance, the crafty discourse of interested empiricism, and even the imperious voice of authority, Mercury continues to this day the medicine commonly employed, and alone relied on, in all truly venereal cases. And, although there are many who pretend to exclude it from their nostrums, yet their perfidious declarations are occasionally betrayed by the salivating qualities of that mineral, which, in defiance of every disguise and combination, will sometimes appear, to the detection of the impostor.\*

7. In asserting the preference due to Mercury, as an antivenereal remedy, before all

\* Mr. Bromfeild, speaking of these nostrum-mongers, observes, that "many of them are happily furnished with a never failing diet drink, that cures the Evil, Leprosy, Lues, &c. and declare they never give a grain of Mercury; yet we find by the state of the patient's mouth, or bowels, that *by accident a little of the Corrosive Sublimate had slipped in, unknown to the preparer.*"

Bromfeild on the Night-Shade, &c. P. 79.

others



others yet introduced into practice, I neither intend to deny, nor to conceal, that real inconveniencies are sometimes connected with the administration of that medicine. There are certain peculiarities of constitution, where its irritating qualities predominate over its medical ones, and where the mode of its agency seems rather calculated to distress the patient, and to injure the health, than to remove the disease for which it is exhibited: hence, it were highly desirable to acquire a medicine equally potent as an antivenereal, and not possessing certain active properties peculiar to that mineral. But this concession forms no valid objection against Mercury exclusively.

There are other articles of the *materia medica*, which produce ill effects on the animal system, even when administered with the utmost skill and judgment. It is sufficiently known, that Antimony, Ipecacuanha, Peruvian Bark, Opium, Digitalis, Rhubarb, Magnesia,



nesia, Honey, &c. when brought into conflict with certain idiosyncrasies, will excite great and serious mischief; the primary and direct effect of these medicines, on one or more parts of the animal system, militating absolutely against their medicinal qualities. But, exceptions of this kind make no impressions upon the minds of considerate men, unfavourable to the generally acknowledged merits of these drugs: they note the particular instances, and substitute other medicines in their stead, which possess qualities corresponding to the indication.

The wish which I have expressed, that another medicine could be found, on which reliance could be placed, for the cure of Lues Venerea, does in no wise spring from any distrust of the sufficiency of Mercury; it originates merely from the same source which would induce me to desire, that the means of remedying every form of human misery, were abundantly multiplied.

I regard



I regard every effort used to increase the store of useful medicines, as highly meritorious; and, notwithstanding my firm persuasion of the safety, efficacy, and pre-eminency of Mercury, in all cases truly venereal, yet I should be guilty of a very perverse and contracted mode of thinking, were I to oppose the introduction of another specific, or censure the experiments made to ascertain its intrinsic merits. Scarcely any new medicine has been proposed during the last twenty years, of which I have not made some trial; and, so far am I from being discouraged by ill success, that I am at this time employed in making experiments with two preparations, as unpromising *a priori*, in my opinion, as any that have been ever made the subject of inquiry.\*

\* These are, an oxide of Copper, and an oxide of Iron. When I have ascertained their merits, and the most eligible methods of preparing them, I design to communicate the result of my observations to the public.



There is, however, I conceive, a point beyond which experiments ought not to be urged; there are cases where no hazard ought to be incurred, by following dubious methods of treatment, when a certain and efficient mode of practice is already well established: much less is it warrantable, from the real or supposed discovery of a new medicine, to attempt to explode, or even to depreciate the use of a remedy which has been sanctioned by the concurrent experience of three centuries.

What number of specific medicines may yet lie concealed among the arcana of nature, can form no proper subject of conjecture; but, that Mercury is as indubitable a specific against Lues Venerea, as any one article of the materia medica is against any one malady, is a fact too authentic to be disputed by any who have either employment or reputation to lose; and, as for those who possess neither, their suffrages are not worth collecting.

When



When inquiries like those which constitute the substance of the following work, are submitted to the public, it is usual for the authors of them to appeal to actual experiments, and to vouch for the truth of their observations. To those who have never duly considered the obstacles that impede, and the difficulties which perplex, almost every attempt at investigations of this kind, it must appear extraordinary, that any person should fail of gaining a correct knowledge of the powers and properties of medicinal substances. Yet, that men do perpetually miscarry in their researches, is a fact too notorious to be controverted ; and the disagreeing reports which are ushered successively into the world ; the disparagement of medicines once high in celebrity, and the restoration of others to credit, which had been expunged, or were become obsolete ; might almost tempt one to suspect, that experiments often prove an occasion of multiplying the avenues to error, rather than of con-



ducting to the acquisition of truth. Let any person trace the vicissitudes of fortune which have attended any one powerful instrument of medicine, in different countries, and at distinct periods of time, and he will quickly discover how little credit is due to many a well-told tale; he will probably be humbled and abashed, on detecting the simple credulity, the frivolous levity, or even the party spirit, which have in their turns usurped the place of a fair unbiased judgment, and imposed their spurious offspring, in the room of a sober and legitimate induction.\*

A detailed

\* Dr. Gregory, the present professor of medicine in the University of Edinburgh, has delivered his sentiments on this subject with a manly freedom, in the Introduction to his Philosophical and Literary Essays. P. 94, &c.

“This kind of dissingenuity has very seldom been practised in any branch of physics, except in medicine; in which indeed it has long been abundantly common, and consequently is well understood. It seems now to be pretty generally considered as one of those peccadillos, which, like barbarous Latin, are *Medicis condemnanda*; and is perhaps thought justifiable, on the long established medical



A detailed history of the several modes of treating Lues Venerea which have been proposed

medical axiom, *Si populus vult decipi, decipiatur*. And, at any rate, great allowances are to be made for those who must live by the follies, and fears, and vices of mankind. But I much fear that some of my professional brethren have abused their privilege in this respect, to such a degree as to make it almost useless. The most candid, and patient, and experienced physicians, who are surely the best and only competent judges of such a question, have been obliged to confess, that great numbers of our Medical Facts and Observations are as little to be relied on as our medical theories; and less they cannot be. In a neighbouring country the same remark has been so generally made, and is so well confirmed, as to be expressed in the form of a proverb, *Grand observateur, grand menteur*; which my late venerable colleague and preceptor in medicine, Dr. Cullen, whose long and extensive experience had fully taught him the truth of it, used frequently to quote to his pupils, with great acrimony. I much fear the French proverb will soon be translated, and naturalized in this island; and that in a few years a book of Medical Observations will be of as little value or authority, as an equal number of medical advertisements and certificates, selected from the London newspapers."

"When either physicians or metaphysicians were disposed to act disingenuously in the account which they gave



posed at different periods of time, would furnish an ample illustration of these remarks; since almost every kind of vegetable and mineral production, even the Bark of Sassafras and the Balsam of Sulphur,\* two of the most inert substances in nature, have been celebrated as antidotes, and have obtained attested records in their favour. Indeed some learned and respectable writers have proceeded so far as to aver, that the venereal disease may be cured without the aid of medicine; and they pretend to prove, that certain changes of the climate, various modes of exercise, parti-

gave of their own observations, they would be encouraged to do so by the evident difficulty, or in many cases the seeming impossibility, of detecting any falsity in the account which they gave of their own thoughts and their own observations."

"Metaphysicians could scarce have any other motive but mere vanity for acting in such a manner: Physicians would have that and more, for not only empty praise, but much solid pudding, may be earned by assuming the character of a great discoverer, and observer, and improver in medicine."

\* Rulandi Observ. Medicinal.



cular forms of diet, the supervention of some acute diseases, and even the powers of restitution naturally inherent in the animal system have each of them been equal to the eliminating of this virus, and restoring the infected person to a state of soundness. I shall state some of the evidence which they adduce, in confirmation of these singular propositions, and offer my observations upon it.

8. The physicians and surgeons who flourished at an early period after the first appearance of Lues Venerea, had constant opportunities of observing, that their patients acquired very decided advantages from a copious and long continued perspiration. All the arrangements which they annexed to the administration of the Decoction of Guaiacum, were calculated to promote that effect; and they likewise employed Fumigations with Spirit of Wine, the Hot Bath, the Vapour Bath, Sweating Chairs, and violent Exercise, with a similar intention.

It



It appears probable, that these several modes of attaining one and the same end, were adopted with the design of increasing the momentum of the blood, of liquefying the virus, and of exciting a depuratory fever, by which the morbid matter should be discharged by the skin: for, as medicine was chiefly Galenical, its professors very consistently expected more beneficial effects from a regular systematic course of evacuation, than from the more obscure agency of specific remedies.\*

\* Ambrose Paré taught that Guaiacum could not cure the venereal disease, and gave a decided preference to mercurial frictions, above any other mode of treating it; yet, he regarded Mercury as bringing on a crisis, and effecting a cure, by the evacuations which it promoted, rather than by any other quality.

Par art & ayde des medicamens, se procure une crise, par le moyen de laquelle, nature aydée, & dominatrice, expelle & chasse le venin par les evacuations susdites; de sorte qu'estant la crise parfaite, il s'ensuit vraye & entiere curation.

Les Oeuvres D'Ambroise Paré. P. 451.

Th



That certain advantages may be obtained by a sudorific plan of treatment, is an opinion which has been so long prevalent, and is so widely diffused, that it would argue a most unreasonable share of scepticism, to reject indiscriminately all that has been offered upon the subject. M. Louis, who was a cautious and enlightened observer, entertained a very favourable opinion of the efficacy of sudorifics; for he has asserted, that the methodic use of such medicines, would radically cure erratic pains, derived from a venereal infection;\* this however, I conceive, ought only to be understood as implying, that when the venereal virus is subdued, sudorifics often prove beneficial in removing those symptoms for the cure of which the farther use of Mercury is not adapted. But, although the application of heat and moisture, and the administration of diaphoretic medicines, have been useful under the direction of prudent men, yet

\* Parallele des Traitemens, &c. P. 60.

they



they have been too often grossly misapplied ; and the general principle which actuated medical men to employ them, has been frequently urged to a most culpable excess ; inasmuch, that they have produced the last stage of weakness and extenuation.\*

It may be farther observed, that a strong persuasion of the extraordinary efficacy of this mode of treatment, has given occasion to the most whimsical and ridiculous practices, of which the following narratives afford a curious illustration.

Scatebat quidem è grege mendicabulorum Lue Venereâ, aliquot diebus universum corpus fimo equino obruit, ut tantum esset, qua respiraret. Erat stercus stabulorum equino

\* Debeo hoc corpus emaciare, & omnem pinguedinem expellere.—Potus esto aqua, vel serum lactis tenuissimum, nec alius, exercitatio corporis maxima, quotidiana, continuata cum taedio ad sudores usque, nam vis vitæ debet esse tanta, ut omne oleum consumat, nec permittat novum generari.

Herm. Boerhaave, Prælect. Academ.  
de Lue Venerea. P. 342.

lotio



lotio saepius perfusum, quodque jam computruerat. Effecit ille hâc arte, ut totum virum exprimeret: addidit aliquoties euporistum, ex axungiâ, larignâ, & hydrargyro. Nec alia vitæ lex servata est, quam mantica offerebat: atque his remediis curatus est.\*

A treatment still more disgusting, was practised in Persia, according to the testimony of M. Sanchez. J'ai appris en Russie, des personnes dignes de foi, que les Persans se guérissent de la maladie vénérienne, de la manière suivante: le malade se met tout nud dans une Latrine, jusqu'à au col, avec une espèce de chapeau sur la tête, afin que la vapeur des matières échauffe la respiration & toute la tête. On lui fait prendre des liquides seulement pendant 21 jours, qu'il y reste. Il y dort, & au bout de ce tems, il sort parfaitement guéri, & son corps renouvelé.†

\* Sylloges Memorab. Medicinæ. J. R. Camerarii.  
Cent. IX. Hist. LXXV,

† Observ. sur les Malad. Vénériennes.



M. Peyrilhe, adduces this fact as an evidence in favour of the antivenereal powers of the Volatile Alkali;\* but I am disposed rather to regard it as a very extraordinary mode of conducting the sudorific process, and this opinion derives confirmation from the following remarks, of Kempe. *Optima ejectio, mea quidem sententia, est lenis sudor; experientia enim docet, multos aegrotos in calidis terris, usu sudoriferorum potuum sanatos esse. In Hungaria sunt montium cavernae, in quibus homines venerei aliquot dies delitescere solent, sudant ibi et levamen symptomatum suorum persentiscunt. In Polonia, singularem quandam a Lue Venerea sudando se liberandi methodum esse ferunt, scilicet aegroti quotidie aliquot horas in calidum equorum stercus se ingerunt; durante hac curatione tenuia et pauca cibaria sumunt, quam diætam quatuor septimanas continuant, et dicuntur aegroti a*

\* Essai sur la vertu Anti-Venerienne des Alkalis Volatils. Chap. IV.



lue esse liberati. Postea etiam noctu in lectis vehementer sudare, mihi relatum est.\*

I presume, few persons could be found in this country, who would submit to these offensive and ridiculous practices ; nor would any man of credit in his profession, hazard his own reputation, and his patients safety, by employing diaphoretics alone in the treatment of the venereal disease: yet it must be allowed, that the evidence in favour of the efficacy of that class of medicines, far exceeds that which accompanies any of the modern remedies proposed as substitutes for Mercury. I have, however, repeatedly tried the full effects of sudorific medicines, aided by hot baths, but without curing one patient by them ; and I have known, in several instances where the venereal disease has been mistaken for Rheumatism, that a course of hot sea bathing, and of the Bath waters, have been prescribed with-

\* Spicelegia quædam ad Curat. Luis Venereæ, &c.  
J. F. Kempe. P. 22.



out the least advantage. Indeed, in all the cases which have fallen under my notice, where the Bath waters have been used, the disease has been uniformly aggravated.

9. That the secondary symptoms of Lues Venerea do not proceed with equal rapidity to the destruction of health, or life, in hot climates, as in cold ones, is I conceive generally allowed, by those who have enjoyed favourable opportunities of making a comparison. The disease is likewise usually attended with fewer inconveniencies in Spain, Portugal, Italy, and the southern parts of France, than it is in this kingdom; and, as far as I can rely upon the testimony of various persons with whom I have conversed on the subject, a smaller quantity of Mercury, and a shorter period of time, are sufficient for the curing of it. I have likewise had some opportunities of observing, that persons migrating from this country into a warmer region, with Lues Venerea in their constitution, have passed many



many months there, without suffering so much disturbance from the disease, as to induce them to seek for medical assistance: but, immediately after their return to England, the virus has proceeded in its ravages with renewed activity.

Within the last one hundred and fifty years, many of our nobility and gentry were accustomed to pass over to France, when afflicted with secondary symptoms, from a persuasion, that they could obtain a more expeditious and radical cure in that kingdom; and Sydenham, unwilling to admit that the physicians of that nation were possessed of superior skill in treating the disease, ascribes their pre-eminent success to the greater comparative purity of the French climate.\*

That very salutary effects might be expected from a change of climate, was taught

\* Hujusmodi ægris, œconomia illorum corporum everſa ac viribus proſtratis, apud nos aër craſſus ac humidus reſarciendis minus idoneus eſt, cum iſte Gallia, utpotè qui ſalubrior ac magis ſerenus, ſpiritus corporis & vires deperditas inſtaurare aptus ſit, &c. Sydenham. Opuſc. P. 405.



early in the sixteenth century, by an author, who declares, that he was often an eye-witness of the cure of the disease from that circumstance alone, without the aid of any medicine. Si quis apud Barbaros eo morbo inficiatur, qui gallicus vulgò dici solet, raro aut nunquam pristinæ redditur sanitati, quin mors tandem inde consequatur. Solet autem hic morbus quodam dolore ac tumore primum proripere, ac tandem in ulcera verti. Paucis admodum toto Atlante, tota Numidia, totaque Libya, hoc notum est contagium. Quod si quisquam fuerit qui se eo infectum sentiat, mox in Numidiam, aut in Nigritarum regionem proficiscitur, cujus tanta est aeris temperies, ut optimæ sanitati restitutus inde in patriam redeat: quod quidem multis accidisse ipse meis vidi oculis, qui nullo adhibito neque Pharmaco neque Medico, præter saluberrimam jam dictum aerem, revaluerant.\*

\* Joannis Leonis Africani. de totius Africæ descriptione. Lib. I. Fol. 33. Ant. 1556.



The influence of the air on venereal patients was an object of attention to Gabriel Fallopius: he seems indeed to have considered the agency of climate, as principally efficient in modifying the form or violence of the symptoms; yet he is positive that advantage, or detriment, is connected with the temperature of the atmosphere. Ideo possum monere vos, ut si amicus inficitur Gallico, & fuerit in aëre frigidiori & tenuiori, moneatis, ut eat ad crassiores et calidiores, saluberrimum tamen.\*

Vercellonus is still more explicit in expressing the beneficial influence of a warm climate, both in mitigating the symptoms, and retarding the progress of the disease.— Patet proinde morbum hunc in calidis regionibus minus sævire, quam in frigidis, atque Indos iccirco, quibus idem endemius & vernaculus est, cum ipso ad extremum usque senium perdurare.†

\* De Morbo Gallico. Cap. XXXVIII. P. 703.

† De Lue Venerea. Cap. IV. P. 224.



From these and other testimonies which might be produced, if necessary, we may be authorised to believe, that the influence of a warm climate upon those infected with Lues Venerea, is not inconsiderable; that it may retard the progress of the disease; that it may render it milder in some of its symptoms; and also that it may contribute to increase the activity and certainty with which the proper remedies operate, and thus render the patient less in danger of suffering from some of the sequelæ, which often prove as troublesome as the original complaint. It cannot however be supposed, that upon so slender a foundation as these facts afford, any person should infer, that a migration near the equator, could supersede the necessity of using any other mode of treatment: a conclusion of this nature would be repugnant to the constant experience of mankind during three centuries.



I do not apprehend that, at this period of time, any person is in danger of being misled by such representations as are contained in the foregoing pages; they may serve, however, to evince how easily men impose upon themselves, in matters where even the bias of interest, or the eagerness of vanity, can scarcely be suspected of having offered an allurements: and where, indeed, we must often resolve the incorrectness of their information into an incontinency of discourse, or a strange indifference about the interests of truth.

10. That the venereal virus could be subdued, and its mischievous effects eradicated, by a coarse and simple diet, joined to laborious exercise, and a constant exposure to all the vicissitudes of the weather, without the aid of any medicine, was inculcated by the highest medical authority in the sixteenth century, and has been repeated by various writers of eminence down to the present time.



Vidi ego sæpè malum, qui jam sudoribus omne  
 Finisset, sylvisque luem liquisset in altis.  
 Sed nec turpe puta dextram summittere aratro,  
 Et longum trahere incurvo sub vomere sulcum;  
 Neve bidente solum, & duras proscindere glebas,  
 Et validâ aëriam quercum exturbare bipenni,  
 Atque imis altam eruere ab radicibus ornum.  
 Quinetiam, exercere domi quo te quoque possis,  
 Parvam mane pilam versa mihi, vespere versa,  
 Et saltu, et durâ potes exudare palæstrâ.  
 Vince malum; nec te fallat, quòd desidis oti  
 Assiduè desiderium, lætique sequetur.  
 Tu læto ne crede, gravi ne crede sopori—\*

Vella, in his small treatise on the venereal disease, speaks nearly the same language.—  
 Tertium problema est, propter quid est quod multi sanati sunt à tali ægritudine beneficio solius exercitii? He then offers such reasons as the theory of his own times suggested, and concludes thus:—& mihi videtur quod usque in hodiernum diem non sit inventa medicina sibi compar, & hac de causa rustici laborantes facile sanantur, quare Virgilianum illud non fuit vane dictum, i Georg. 145.

\* Syphilis. Fracastorii. Lib. ii.



labor omnia vincit

Improbis, & duris urgens in rebus egestas.\*

Gabriel Fallopius has written a short chapter on the advantages of exercise in venereal complaints; and, in a subsequent one, entitled *De Vero Antidoto*, he delivers the following narrative: *Ego vidi aliquos curatos ligno fagi, qui coniecti in triremes, atque instituta victus ratione tenuissima, laborantes, ex toto liberantur: sed iste non est usus medicus.*†

Francantianus is equally explicit with his predecessors, in favour of strong exercise:—*Alia vero est curandi ratio per continuata exercitia, & vehementiora, quae tum insensibiliter, tum etiam sensibiliter, per sudoris evacuare possint.*‡

Tomitanus assents to the truth of these representations, but disapproves of the practice, because it is attended with some hazard to the patient.

\* Georgii Vellæ Opusculum. Cap. IV.

† De Morbo Gallico. Cap. XXXVII.

‡ Ant. Francant. de Morbo Gallico Liber.

But

But, not to multiply quotations from the older writers, I shall conclude with the following testimony from Prosper Borgarutius. Unde tanti etiam facio exercitium in omni morbo Gallico homine affecto, cum scilicet moderata aliqua mensura, ut multos hac tantum ratione liberos evasisse prospexerim: quemadmodum ex quamplurimis militiam exercentibus videre licet, qui quamquam facillime hanc pravam veneream luem percipiant, eam nihilominus exercitio quodam expellunt omnino, vel saltem ita humiliant, ut vix actiones eorum lædat.\*

Among the modern writers who have contended for the utility of this mode of treatment, I shall first cite the opinion of Ramazzini:—Si tamen bonos, & ingenuos practicos consulamus, nullum profecto fore existimo, qui ultro non fateatur, felicius sanari hunc morbum in populari & rusticana gente, quam in divitibus & nobilibus viris. Sæpe-

\* De Morbo Gallico Methodus. Cap. XI.



numero, præmissa purgatione simplici, Guaiaci decoctione lues illa abstergitur, & si quod reliquum est virulentiae, dum ad solita exercitia ablegantur, quando sola exercitatio, sed valida & continuata, primis illis temporibus, hujusce morbi, Fallopio teste, singulare erat remedium, facile excutitur.—Sic olim Dorias, celeberrimus ille classium ductor, remiges suos, quotiescumque gallico morbo laborarent, integri remi faginei decocto, & solita remigationis exercitatione sub dio; & in medio mari ad sanitatem deducebat.\*

Vercellonus confirms the same notion:—Narrat Emanuel Aranda, uti miles sibi perspectus Algerii ex usu egregii hujusce medicamenti, (Vinum Meracius) & ex laboribus, quos in triremibus perduraverat, à tam truculento morbo incolumis evaserat.†

The learned Baron van Swieten seems to have entertained no doubt of the fidelity of such

\* Opera Omnia. Tom. I. Orat. 3.

† De Lue Venerea. P. 257.



representations; he even supports them by adopting the same opinion. It is also remarkable, that the only reflection which he offers on the account given by Fallopius,\* is the following: *Nisi enim dura cogat necessitas, vix invenientur aegri, qui calamitosam adeo vitam ducere velint, ut a foedo morbo liberentur.*—He then proceeds to give the following narrative, as an additional confirmation of the power of diet, exercise, and hardship, to cure the venereal disease. *Vidi ipse memorabilem casum, qui me docuit, quid constans aegri animus, cum victu penitus macilento, ac validorum laborum tolerantia, efficere possit in Lue Venerea inveterata, & vix non desperata. Nobilis juvenis petabat a me consilium, qui in calamitosissimo statu versabatur. Quater salivationem mercurialem subiverat, semper postea repullulante Lue Venerea, quae sanata credebatur. Ter tentata fuerat cura per decoctum Guaiaci; nec meliori successu. Gerebat in sterno, ac claviculis, tumores, in fronte*



fronte similem unicum; cutis in variis locis maculis foeda erat; & dolores nocturnos ossium patiebatur. Omnium rerum inops cum esset, nemo illum recipere volebat, aut curam ejus gerere; universa familia detestabatur miserum. Fatebatur se non semel cogitasse, ut violenta morte miseriarum finem quaereret.

Moerentem animum erexi, lenimen malorum promittens, dum integram curam spondere non audebam in morbo adeo inveterato. Fidem dabat, se omnia tentare velle, & posse, etiam durissima, modo aliqua sanationis spes affulgeret. Cum satis robusta esset nativa corporis compages, & adesset aetatis vigor, rustica veste indutum hominem elocavi agricolae, ut, absque ulla duri laboris mercede, famulum ageret, solo victu contentus, & vili quidem. Praeter panem enim, alebatur dauci & pastinacae radicibus, solani esculenti tuberibus, pomis, pyris, hordeo, avena, in sola aqua coctis, & similibus. Potus erat lactis ebutyrati

ebutyрати serum acidulum, tenuissimum. Mensis Aprilis initio incepit hoc vitae genus, & duros ruris labores constantissime tulit usque ad mensis Octobris initium, quando me accessit sanus. Toto hoc tempore, a carnibus, piscibus, ovis, lacte, butyro, caseo, abstinuit severissime. Vidi illum, post aliquot annos, in foecundo conjugio viventem. & formosa sanaque prole beatum.

Mirum certe exemplum, quod docet, Venerum contagium elui potuisse ex locis corporis, quibus pertinaciter haerebat, & expelli de corpore, per sudores, validis laboribus in calido aëre excitatos, dum simul diaeta macilentissima fervabatur, et copiosus liquidi solventis potus sudori aptum vehiculum praebebat. Rari tamen sunt qui possent, rariores qui vellent, constanti animo hanc curandi methodum tolerare.\*

\* Comment. in Herm. Boerhaave Aphorismos. Tom. V.  
§ 1478.



11. But, if credit may be given to men of eminence in the profession, this rigorous course of discipline is not indispensably necessary ; for, according to Thierry de Hery, Nic. de Blegny, Vercellonus, Peyrilhe, and others, the disease may terminate by a natural crisis, and is susceptible of a spontaneous cure. A decision so extraordinary as this, does not restrict the efficacy of nature to the curing of a Gonorrhœa, or the removal of the primary symptoms of Lues Venerea, but extends her sanative powers to the eradicating of every form of secondary symptoms.

I need not undertake at this day to prove, that the whole of this statement about the efficacy of regimen, and the doctrine of a natural crisis, has no foundation in truth and reality, and that it has originated in mistaking the sequelæ of Lues Venerea, and the effects of Mercury, in a bad habit of body, for genuine venereal symptoms ; nevertheless, in rejecting the above conclusions, we need by no means to  
impeach



impeach the rectitude of intention of those who made them. They had observed, that ulcers often continued open on the penis, and that large, spreading, untractable sores remained in the groin, during many months after the patient had undergone a full and decisive course of Mercury ; and they had found, that ulcers of this description were commonly exasperated by the farther introduction of Mercury into the circulation. Hence they concluded, that these were venereal symptoms, which the mineral specific was unable to cure. And, when it was known, that a residence in the country, a plain diet, and rural exercises and occupations, were frequently beneficial to such patients, the advantages derived thence, were ascribed to the peculiar effects of the regimen on the venereal virus, and not to the change produced in the constitution.

The venereal virus, when introduced into the system, often gives rise to morbid appearances which do not in any proper sense  
partake



partake of the nature of the remote cause; and even symptoms originally venereal may lose that character, by the proper use of Mercury, while, to the eye of a common observer, they seem not to have undergone any favourable alteration. These facts may be illustrated, by what occurs daily in the Small-pox, Measles, &c. where eruptions, tubercles, abscesses, phthifical symptoms, and other forms of disease, supervene on the disappearance of the former complaints; yet no medical practitioner ever regards the latter as having any thing variolous or morbillous in their essential properties. No man finds any difficulty in distinguishing between the primary disease, and the sequelæ, in the instances now adduced; yet, in the venereal disease, the distinction has been too commonly overlooked; and to this want of discrimination may be traced many of those incorrect and marvellous narratives, which, while they detract from the reputation of the historian, reflect some disgrace on the

e

whole



whole profession. But, as a more direct reply to the representations made upon this subject, I would urge, that if exposure to hardship in all the vicissitudes of temperature; if hard fare, excessive labour, and the complicated evils attendant on poverty, can certainly destroy the activity of the venereal poison, and remedy its effects, whence does it arise, that no description of people, in any climate, are exempted from the necessity of having recourse to medicine? The German peasant, the Russian boor, the temperate Hindoo, the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands, the wretched Africans enslaved in our West India Islands, will no doubt furnish us with abundant instances, where the requisites of exposure to the extremes of heat and cold, of scanty allowance, and excessive fatigue, may be all found, in their full measure; yet no proofs can be brought, that the powers of the constitution, aided by this sort of discipline, did ever effect the cure of the disease, without the intervention of medical assistance.



12. Information concerning the efficacy of any particular mode of treatment, ought never to be conveyed to the public in the form of general, unqualified and positive declarations, until confirmed by experiments made upon a large scale, and sanctioned by time and the concurring testimony of others. Where precautions of this nature are slighted and neglected, the records of medicine will be perverted from their principal design, and prove but too often the repositories of misconception and error.

I presume that no well-informed man gives credit to a single assertion that has been made, by the writers quoted in the foregoing pages, concerning the extraordinary agency of sudorifics, of change of climate, of regimen, or of natural crises, in curing the venereal disease; yet all these vague and unsatisfactory narratives and sentiments, have been copied, or referred to, by a number of succeeding authors, without any expressions of disapprobation annexed

nexed to them. It is greatly to be regretted, that men truly learned and deservedly eminent, have been so frequently seduced into a concurrence with opinions which they never fairly examined, and have given an avowed, or at least a tacit assent, to practices of the merit of which they were not competent to judge.

This unwary mode of proceeding is certainly reprehensible in all cases ; but especially where the health and lives of mankind are so nearly concerned ; and the laws of strict integrity require, that the history of diseases, and the effects of remedies, should be recorded with the same sacred regard to truth and correctness, with which all testimony ought to be delivered in a court of judicature.

No men are so prone to indulge in fanciful speculations, as those that are without practice ; for, having little occasion to bring their notions to the test of actual experience, they proceed boldly in forming splendid and attractive



tractive theories, without the least fear of those consequences, which would be apprehended by men of an established reputation, and long experience. A man should be endowed with a lively genius, a comprehensive mind, and a talent for discerning the relations of things, in all the various divisions of the scale, and of combining them into a regular, uniform, and coherent structure, in order to model hypotheses with tolerable success; whereas the licentious indulgence of a vigorous fancy, may prove extremely incommodious to a mere narrator of facts, whose office it is to communicate what he knows, with plainness and simplicity; where patience and sagacity in observing the order and method of nature, a clearness of conception, and, above all, an inflexible fidelity, are requisites without which the most shining qualities are of no value.





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# OBSERVATIONS, &c.

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## CHAPTER I.

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### *Of the LIGNUM GUAIACI.*

**T**HE Guaiacum Wood was first employed by the natives of Saint Domingo, as an antidote against the Lues Venerea; the Spaniards soon acquired a knowledge of its virtues, and introduced it into Spain as early as the year 1508. The fame of this new remedy was diffused with such celerity through the other parts of Europe, that, according to the testimony of Nicholas Poll, more than three thousand diseased persons had derived permanent benefit from the use of it, before the year 1517.\*

\* Aphrodisiacus Aloys. Luifini. Ed. Lugd. 1738.

Frampton's Joyful news from the new found world.



A decoction of this wood, made with water, and sometimes with wine,\* was administered under every form, and during every period, of the disease; the physicians directing at the same time purgative medicines, at proper intervals; confinement to the house; vapour baths; and an appropriate course of diet, which was commonly dictated with a tedious exactness, bearing the signature of superstition, rather than that of medical science.† This process, continued during six weeks, and often for a longer time, with such occasional variations as new circumstances might suggest, was long regarded as the most safe and efficacious mode of treating patients afflicted with Syphilis.

The advantages which were connected with this method of cure, were so commonly believed and acknowledged, that during a considerable period of time, the exhibiting of mercury was not only discontinued, but the practice was publicly censured, as inefficacious and prejudicial. Many of the most eminent writers of the sixteenth century contended,

\* Lud. Septalii. Animad. Lib. VII.

† Aphrodisiacus.

that



that Guaiacum was a true specific, having the power of correcting the qualities of the venereal poison, and of expelling it out of the system ; and this opinion was revived and ably supported in the eighteenth century, by a man whose capacity, learning, and medical science, added lustre to the country and period in which he flourished.\*

Those favourable reports of the virtues of Guaiacum, which maintained their credit through more than two centuries, were not founded merely on the frail basis of partiality, or prepossession ; they were supported by well attested narratives of its good effects in great numbers of instances, where no mercury had been employed ; or where that medicine had done no permanent good ; or where the patients had suffered injury from it, instead of finding advantage. Yet, notwithstanding the numerous and respectable testimonies which were adduced in proof of the efficacy of this vegetable, its most strenuous advocates were obliged to confess, that Guaiacum was frequently administered in vain. The disappointments which medical practitioners often

\* Boerhaave, in Prefat. ad Aphrodisiac.



experienced, when they had relied on Guaiacum alone, as a specific remedy, introduced again the more frequent use of mercury; and, as this active medicine was soon employed with more caution and judgment than formerly, a very important and salutary change in the mode of treating lues venerea was consequently established. Nevertheless, so firmly were the generality of physicians persuaded of the antivenereal virtues of Guaiacum, that the same men who contended for the necessity of a mercurial salivation, maintained that this vegetable was not a less real, though not quite so potent an antidote.\*

When I was entrusted with the care and management of the Lock Hospital, in 1781, I observed, that Mr. Bromfield and Mr. Williams had been long accustomed to repose great confidence in the medicinal powers of a decoction of the Guaiacum wood; and that a method somewhat similar to that proposed by Ulric Hutten, and strongly recommended by Boerhaave, had been adopted in the hos-

\* Brassavolus, Fallopius, &c.



pital during many years.\* The patients for whom the Guaiacum was directed, were those who had previously used the usual quantity of mercury; but who complained of nocturnal pains; who had gummata, nodes, ozaena, and such other effects of the venereal virus, connected with secondary symptoms, as did not yield to a course of mercurial frictions. The diet of these patients consisted of raisins and hard biscuit; they drank from two to four pints of the decoction of Guaiacum every day; they were ordered to use the hot bath twice in the week; and they commonly took a dose of antimonial wine and laudanum, or of Dover's powder, every evening.

It was not thought necessary, however, to confine such patients constantly to their beds; and they were seldom exposed to the vapour of burning spirit to excite perspiration; for it was deemed sufficient to produce and support a moist state of the skin, without urging the process so far as to occasion profuse sweating. This plan of treatment was sometimes

\* Ulrichi de Hutten, De Morbi Gallici curatione per administrationem Ligni Guaiaci.

Boerhaave Aphrod. in Prefat.



of singular advantage to those whose health had sustained injury, from the complicated operation of the disease, combined with confinement, and a long course of mercury. The breaches made in the constitution were repaired; the strength was recruited; untractable ulcers were frequently healed; carious bones exfoliated; and those anomalous symptoms which would have been exasperated by mercury, yielded readily to the decoction of Guaiacum.

In tracing carefully the history of this once celebrated remedy, nothing can be more evident than this, that it was administered to persons afflicted with very different forms of disease. One numerous class of patients consisted of those who, having used mercury according to the severe and often injudicious mode which was practised two centuries ago, found themselves harrassed with pains, nodes, ulcers, and several other symptoms, from which they were finally relieved by a course of Guaiacum: hence it was concluded, that this medicine was superior, as an antidote, to mercury. Another class adopted the Guaiacum course from the first attack of their disease; and, deriving sensible benefit, they hastily presumed that a cure was accomplished; but, although



though their frequent relapses might have shaken their confidence, yet, as the renewal of their Guaiacum course mitigated the violence of their symptoms, and often produced considerable appearances of amendment, they preferred this palliative method of proceeding, to the more distressing concomitants of a course of mercury.

In addition to these observations, it may be farther suggested, without any violation of candour, or of respect to our predecessors, that at a time when the natural history of Lues venerea was so imperfectly understood, many morbid appearances, totally unconnected with that poison, were nevertheless referred to it; and that the cure of such mistaken symptoms, would contribute greatly to augment the fame of the remedy. When it is therefore considered, that the good effects of Guaiacum are not absolutely confined to those cases, where a quantity of mercury sufficient to destroy the syphilitic virus has been introduced into the system; but that it may operate like a true antidote, suspending for a time the progress of certain venereal symptoms, and removing other appearances altogether, where subsequent experience nevertheless



evinces, that the unsubdued virus yet remains active in the constitution; we shall be competent to the explaining of many of those contradictory assertions, which abound in writers upon this subject.

A more enlarged and correct attention to the actual powers of this medicine, have now unequivocally proved it to be unequal to the purposes for which many of our predecessors gave it;\* but no experiments which have come to my knowledge, have shewn it to be destitute of all medicinal virtue; nor ought any one, in his eagerness to decry it as a specific remedy, desire to have it expunged from the *Materia Medica*.

I now proceed to give the result of my own observations on the effects of the decoction of *Lignum Guaiaci*.

This decoction commonly excites a grateful sensation of warmth in the stomach; it gives a sense of dryness to the mouth, and creates thirst; it also increases the natural temperature of the skin, and renders the pulse more frequent. If the patient drink the decoction made warm, and lie in bed, it gene-

\* Cullen's *Materia Medica*, p. 196.

*Apparat. Medicam.* Murray, Vol. III. p. 414.



rally proves moderately sudorific; and this effect may be heightened as much as we please, by employing the hot bath, the vapour bath, antimonials combined with opium, or the pulvis ipecacuanhæ compositus. When the decoction has been continued during ten or twelve days, in the quantity of four pints each day, the patient often complains of its producing the heart-burn, accompanied with flatulence; and he is usually costive during the whole course. If the person expose himself freely to the air, while he is taking this medicine, the secretion of urine will be augmented, but no sensible alteration will take place in the state of the skin.

When I have exhibited the decoction of Guaiacum in pains of the bones, as they are called, confining the patient at the same time to the bed, and enjoining a diet consisting of fluids only, I have rarely seen any beneficial consequences result from the use of it, except where it acted as a sudorific; and, in this respect, I think its qualities manifestly inferior to antimony, or volatile alkali. In several instances, after persisting in a course of it during four or five weeks, I have not gained any material advantage; and I have remarked, that when the  
dolores



dolores ostocopi were not connected with some morbid alteration of the structure of a part, this medicine was of little avail. When the strength and vigour has been reduced by a successful mercurial course, with confinement to the house, and where a thickened state of the ligaments, or of the periosteum, remains, or where there are foul indolent ulcers, these sores will often heal, and the enlarged membranes will subside, during the administration of this decoction.

The decoction of Guaiacum will often suspend the progress of certain secondary symptoms of lues venerea, for a short time; such as, ulcers of the tonsils, venereal eruptions, and even nodes; but I never saw one single instance, in which the powers of this medicine eradicated the venereal virus. It has been recommended by many people, to combine guaiacum with mercury, with the intention of improving the specific powers, and of counteracting the injurious effects, of that mineral: the advantages to be derived from this compound mode of treatment, are by no means well established; for Guaiacum is certainly no antidote against syphilis; nor have any proofs been given to the public, of its meliorating  
the



the action of mercury. When the decoction is given during the mercurial course, it sometimes seems to improve the health; but, as it is very liable to produce complaints in the stomach and bowels, the palpable inconveniences commonly surpass the uncertain advantages connected with it; and, as no previous course of the decoction renders the disease milder, nor authorizes us to rest satisfied with a smaller quantity of mercury than usual, it will seldom happen, that a satisfactory reason can be assigned, for giving the two medicines to a patient at the same time. In concluding this chapter, I would farther remark, that I have given the decoction of Guaiacum, with the best effects, to a great number of patients, in cutaneous diseases, in the ozaena, and in scrofulous affections of the membranes and ligaments; and it appears to me, that it is equally efficacious in such morbid alterations, which are not at all connected with the lues venerea, nor with the mode of treating it, as in those cases for which it has been the most highly celebrated.



## CHAP. II.

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### *Of the RADIX CHINÆ.*

THIS root, which is the product of both the East and West Indies, was introduced into medical practice in Europe, under the character of an infallible remedy against the lues venerea, about the year 1535. Decoctions of the China root had been employed with advantage in cutaneous diseases, and in gouty and rheumatic complaints, before that period; but the real or supposed benefit which the Emperor Charles the Fifth obtained from taking this medicine, procured it a reputation which, had it been confined to people in the common ranks of life, no virtues of its own would ever have acquired.\*

The regimen which was prescribed, during the administration of this medicine in venereal cases, was much less rigorous, with respect to diet and confinement in bed, than where Guaia-cum was employed; and the course was fel-

\* Vesalii. Opera, Tom. II. Frampton, Fol. 13.



dom protracted beyond thirty days: these circumstances would no doubt contribute to the preference given to this decoction, by those who esteemed it fully as efficacious as the *Lignum Guaiaci*.\*

To inquire into the various causes that concurred in procuring celebrity to a root, which in reality possesses few, or perhaps no useful medicinal qualities at all, would be irksome and unprofitable: it may be therefore sufficient to state, that its reputation was of short continuance; that it sunk gradually into insignificance and neglect, and that if a place had not been assigned to it in some compound decoctions, it would, before now, have been altogether overlooked, or forgotten.†

Perhaps, it may not be improper to suggest, that the eager introduction of the China root, at a season when Guaiacum enjoyed the highest reputation as an antidote against Syphilis, may seem to afford something like a presumption, that the latter vegetable did not possess the intire confidence of those who employed it. Without insisting upon an argument of this

\* Nic. Massa. in Aphrod. Fallopius ib.

† Apparat. Medicam.

kind, I shall only observe, that this circumstance, along with a multitude of similar incidents, may be fairly resolved into that fickleness, caprice, or love of novelty, which exercise a more powerful influence over the determinations and actions of the greater part of mankind, than a regard either to truth or utility.



### CHAP. III.

#### *Of the RADIX SARSAPARILLÆ.*

THE root of Sarsaparilla was brought into Europe from the West Indies, about the year 1530, with the character of being a medicine singularly efficacious in the cure of lues venerea. Some of the early writers on the merits of this plant, have been neither distinct nor uniform, in the accounts they have given of its virtues. By some, it was preferred to the Lignum Guaiaci ;\* while others maintained, that its sanative powers were really inferior to this vegetable, but that they were superior to those of the China root. †

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\* Regium est hoc auxilium, & antidotum ad fugandam Luem istam, & hac ratione ego fido Salsæ magis quam Ligno. Imbecillior est certe Ligno: habet tamen ipsa nobiles vires, quibus superat Guaiacum, & est quod si post superatum gallicum restent ulcera, Rhagades circa sedem, duplo citius sanat hæc, quam Lignum Indicum. Fallopius de Morbo Gallico. Cap. LXIII.

† Ut summatim dicam, in Salsaperilia sunt omnes virtutes sicut in Ligno Indico sunt, sed debiliores, & ideo medici



The Sarsaparilla was administered under the form of decoction, syrup, and powder; and these preparations were often rendered more complex, by the addition of several other articles of the materia medica, which were supposed to add efficacy to the principal ingredient. Yet, notwithstanding the high reputation which this medicine sustained among the early practitioners, it fell gradually into disuse and neglect; and the decoction of it was at length considered, as possessing merely the properties of a convenient diluent.

The Sarsaparilla root was however brought into more general esteem, about the middle of the present century, by the late Dr. William Hunter, who advised Dr. Chapman to make trial of it, in a very deplorable case of phagedenic bubo;\* and, the striking advantages which were derived from the use of it in that instance, induced Dr. Hunter to recommend it to several other medical practitioners. In no long time after this, Sir William Fordyce published a narrative, containing

*medici non pauci ejus virtutem augere conantur cum permixtione Ligni Indici.—Atque aliarum medicinarum, & aliorum simplicium permixtione. Nic. Massa. Cap. II.*

\* Chapman on the Venereal Disease. Ed. 2d.

a series



a series of experiments, made to ascertain the virtues of Sarsaparilla in venereal cases; to which he subjoined such practical remarks as the course of his observations had furnished. I shall insert these conclusions, for the sake of offering some reflections on them.\*

1. “ It (Sarsaparilla) will commonly relieve, in a very short space of time, venereal head-achs, and nocturnal pains; and, if persisted in, I believe will always cure.

2. “ In emaciated or consumptive habits, from a venereal cause, it is the greatest restorer of appetite, flesh, colour, strength, and vigor, that I know of.

3. “ When the throat, nose, palate, or the spongy bones in general are affected with a slough or *caries*, it will commonly compleat the cure, if persevered in long enough, provided a mercurial course, I mean by unction, has preceded the use of the sarsaparilla.

4. “ When the body is covered with dry blotches, or moist sores, (still supposing the cause venereal) it will greatly promote the cure, nay often compleat it: but without

\* Medical Observations and Inquiries. Vol. I.



“ the assistance of mercury, there will be  
“ danger of a relapse.

5. “ In simple chancres it will do little  
“ service, but if it is given in cases where  
“ the chancres or buboes will not heal or  
“ dissolve, after the use of mercurial unction,  
“ it will often cure, and always do manifest  
“ service.

6. “ It will oftentimes answer, and that  
“ speedily, without sweating, confinement,  
“ or any very strict *regimen*, at all seasons of  
“ the year, where mercurial unctions, and  
“ long-continued courses of strong decoctions of Guaiacum, either by itself simply,  
“ or compounded with a small proportion of  
“ our Sarsaparilla, have failed.

7. “ It would seem probable, from any  
“ observations I have yet been able to make,  
“ that the Sarsaparilla root is only to be  
“ depended on, in venereal cases where  
“ mercury has failed; at least, has preceded  
“ the use of the decoction, or when it is  
“ combined with it; and therefore is not  
“ to be trusted to alone, unless in such circumstances.

8. “ Mercury alone will in general cure  
“ most venereal complaints. The Sarsaparilla will perhaps always cure what resists  
“ the



“ the power of mercury. It is therefore  
“ probable, that we may find in mercury  
“ and Sarsaparilla properly combined, a cer-  
“ tain cure for every case that can be called  
“ venereal.”

My own experience of the efficacy of Sarsaparilla in venereal complaints, has indeed obliged me to form a very different estimate of its good qualities, from that which is given in the preceding observations; yet I would by no means affect to depreciate the labours of Sir William Fordyce, or to question the good faith with which his reports were collected. Indeed, the publication of his papers has been attended with the advantage of recalling the attention of medical men, to an useful article of the *materia medica*; and, if the advocate of this neglected medicine over-rated its useful properties, our obligations are still due to him, for introducing into more general notice, a vegetable remedy which has been too much undervalued by men of eminence in the profession.\*

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\* Thus it fell into disrepute, and by degrees was almost forgotten, insomuch that of late, some of our  
greatest



In the first of the foregoing remarks, Sir William Fordyce has expressly asserted, that Sarsaparilla can cure the venereal disease: the second remark does not express any thing more, than that this vegetable possesses eminently nutritive qualities. In the six following paragraphs, he requires, that a mercurial course shall have preceded the exhibition of the decoction; or that mercury shall be given in conjunction with it. It likewise appears farther, that Sarsaparilla cannot cure the primary symptoms of syphilis; and that, with one single exception, it never cures the secondary symptoms, without the co-operation of mercury. From the general tenor of the paper referred to, I cannot suppose, that the author designed to propose the Sarsaparilla as a competitor with mercury; but that he rather intended to teach, that the former

greatest masters of medicine have asserted, that its decoction is no better than barley water.

Med. Obs. and Enq. Vol. I.

If I was to consult my own experience alone, I should not give this root a place in the *Materia Medica*; for, tried in every shape, I have never found it an effectual medicine, in Syphilis, or any other disease.

Cullen's *Mat. Med.* Vol. II.

medicine



medicine could remove venereal symptoms, to the cure of which the latter was unequal, and which, on some occasions, would even aggravate them. In prosecuting this subject, I shall, for the sake of perspicuity, divide it into two distinct questions.

1st. Is the Sarsaparilla root, when given alone, to be safely relied on, in the treatment of Lues Venerea?

The late Mr. Bromfeild, my predecessor, and, during some years, my colleague at the Lock Hospital, has given a very decided answer to this question: “ I solemnly declare, “ (says he,) I never saw a single instance in “ my life, where it cured that disorder without “ the assistance of mercury; either given at “ the same time with it, or when it had been “ previously taken before the decoction was “ directed.”\*

My own experience, during many years, coincides intirely with the observations of Mr. Bromfeild. I have employed the Sarsaparilla, in powder, and in decoctions, in an almost infinite variety of cases; and I feel myself fully authorised to assert, that this

\* Practical Observations on the Use of Corrosive Sublimate, and Sarsaparilla, &c. P. 78.



plant has not the power of curing any one form of the lues venerea.

The Sarsaparilla indeed, like the Guaiacum, is capable of alleviating symptoms derived from the venereal virus; and it sometimes manifests the power of suspending, for a time, the destructive ravages of that contagion: but, where the poison has not been previously subdued by mercury, the symptoms will quickly return; and, in addition to them, we often see the most indubitable proofs, that the disease is making an actual progress, during the regular administration of the vegetable remedy.

The nature of that benefit which many persons actually obtain from Sarsaparilla, when they are afflicted with the lues venerea, will form a subject of discussion hereafter; in the mean time, I shall proceed to treat the second question, connected with the inquiry before me.

2. When the Sarsaparilla root is given, in conjunction with mercury, does it render the mercurial course more certain and efficacious?

In replying to this query, it is necessary to observe, that the phrase “to increase the  
“ efficacy



“ efficacy of mercury,” may imply, that a smaller quantity of this mineral antidote, will confer security on an infected person, when Sarsaparilla is added to it: or, it may mean, that mercury would be sometimes unequal to the cure, without the aid of Sarsaparilla. If a decoction of this root did indeed possess so admirable a quality, that the quantity of mercury necessary to effect a cure, might be safely reduced, whenever it was given during a mercurial course, it would form a most valuable addition to our materia medica. This opinion has been, however, unfortunately falsified by the most ample experience; and, whoever shall be so unwary as to act upon such a presumption, will be sure to find his own and his patient’s expectations egregiously disappointed.

If the Sarsaparilla root be a genuine antidote against the syphilitic virus, it ought to cure the disease when administered alone; but, if no direct proof can be adduced of its being equal to this, any arguments founded on histories where mercury had been previously given, or where both the medicines were administered at the same time, must be ambiguous and undecisive.



It appears probable, that Sir William Fordyce, and some other persons, entertained a notion, that there were certain venereal symptoms which commonly resisted the potency of mercury; and that the Sarsaparilla was an appropriate remedy in these cases. This opinion, I believe, is not correct, for it militates against all I have ever observed of the progress and treatment of lues venerea.

Indeed, those patients who have lately used a full course of mercury, often complain of nocturnal pains in their limbs; they are sometimes afflicted with painful enlargements of the elbow and knee joints; or they have membranous nodes, cutaneous exulcerations, and certain other symptoms, resembling those which are the offspring of the venereal virus. It may and does often happen, that appearances like these are mistaken for a true venereal affection; and, in consequence of this error, mercury is administered, which never fails to exasperate the disease. Now, if a strong decoction of the Sarsaparilla root be given to persons under these circumstances, it will seldom fail of producing the most beneficial effects; hence it has been contended, that symptoms derived from the contagion of  
Lues



Lues Venerea, which could not be cured by mercury, have finally yielded to this vegetable remedy. It must be acknowledged, that representations of this kind have a specious and imposing air; nevertheless, I shall endeavour to prove, that they are neither exact nor conclusive.

If any of the above-named symptoms should appear near the conclusion of a course of mercury, when that medicine was operating powerfully on the whole system, it would be a strange and inexplicable thing, if they could possibly be derived immediately from the uncontrolled agency of the venereal virus: this would imply something like a palpable contradiction, that the antidote should be operating with sufficient efficacy to cure the venereal symptoms for which it was directed; while, at the same time, the venereal virus was proceeding to contaminate new parts, and to excite a new order of appearances.

One source, and a very common one, to which some of the mistakes committed upon this subject may be traced, is a persuasion, that every morbid alteration which arises in an infected person, is actually tainted with the  
venereal



venereal virus, and ought to be ascribed to it, as its true cause.

Every experienced surgeon must, however, be aware, that very little of truth and reality exists in a representation of this kind. The contagious matter, and the mineral specific, may jointly produce in certain habits of body, a new series of symptoms, which, strictly speaking, are not venereal; which cannot be cured by mercury; and which are sometimes more to be dreaded, than the simple and natural effects of the venereal virus. Some of the most formidable of these appearances may be sometimes removed by Sarsaparilla, the venereal virus still remaining in the system; and, when the force of that poison has been completely subdued by mercury, the same vegetable is also capable of freeing the patient, from what may be called, the sequelæ of a mercurial course.

I state these facts with confidence, because they have been carefully verified by long and extensive experience: how far they may quadrate, or not, with any particular hypothesis, is not my present concern.

This part of the subject will receive some illustration, by a recital of the following cases.

CASE



## CASE THE FIRST.

In the year 1789, I was consulted by a gentleman, on account of a disorder in his throat, which he considered as the return of a venereal complaint. He had used a course of mercury, under the direction of a surgeon, for a chancre, and an ulcer on one of the tonsils: these symptoms had gradually disappeared, and he was declared, by his surgeon, to be cured. In about a fortnight after he had ceased to employ mercury, his throat became painful, and ulcerated; this being considered as a relapse, he resumed the use of the specific, but gained no advantage from it; on the contrary, he seemed worse. At this period, I first saw him:—he was much reduced; had a very quick and feeble pulse; and complained of great general debility. On examining his throat, I found one of the tonsils intirely destroyed; the ulcer had corroded about one half of the uvula, and of the velamen palatinum on that side; and it was proceeding rapidly down the velamen palatinum on the other side. I declared the ulcer not to be venereal; and directed the gentleman to go into the country,



country, to adopt a generous plan of diet; and to take a pint and a half of a strong decoction of Sarsaparilla every day. The amendment which succeeded on his following those directions, was rapid and decisive; he was perfectly well in about a month, and had no symptoms afterwards of a syphilitic nature.

### CASE THE SECOND.

A young gentleman had a chancre, which was succeeded by a bubo; and, not using mercury effectually, a venereal ulcer appeared some time afterwards in his throat. His surgeon directed him to keep at home, and conducted him through a very proper course of mercury. The primary symptoms were soon cured; but the ulcer in his throat remained foul and sloughy, and shewed no tendency to heal. When he had nearly employed as much mercury as had been intended, several small tubercles appeared on different parts of his body, which were soon converted into deep foul ulcers, of a considerable extent: these sores were likewise extremely painful, and discharged large quantities of a fetid sanies. The patient was  
greatly



greatly emaciated; he had a quick and feeble pulse, and exhibited every appearance of one in a very declining state of health. At this period of the disease, I was consulted; and advised, that the mercury should be discontinued; that he should be taken out every day in a carriage; and that he should take the decoction and powder of Sarsaparilla. The gentleman persevered nearly three weeks, in following these directions, before he experienced any considerable amendment; but, after the expiration of that time, he recovered rapidly, so that his sores were healed, and his health was restored, in about two months from the time of my first visiting him.

These two cases will serve to illustrate what I have advanced in the foregoing pages; and illustration is all I design by them. I should find no difficulty in filling many pages with recitals of the good effects of Sarsaparilla, taken after a mercurial course, where there have been nocturnal pains, swellings of the larger joints, nodes of the periosteum, caries of different bones of the face, and these accompanied with hectic symptoms, atrophy, and other formidable appearances: but I conceive;



ceive, that to multiply narratives of this kind, would be rather ostentatious than useful.

The instances in which the beneficial effects of Sarsaparilla are permanent, are those where the disease has been previously cured by mercury; and where new symptoms have arisen, not at all connected with the active state of the venereal virus. But I have also said, that this vegetable may do service in cases where the syphilitic poison has not been destroyed by the proper antidote: here the advantages derived from this medicine, are merely temporary, and commonly of a short duration. Of the truth of this statement, the following histories will afford a sufficient illustration.

### CASE THE THIRD.

R. B. aged twenty-five years, became my patient towards the latter end of the year 1794, after having employed two mercurial courses, unsuccessfully, in the country. When I first saw him, his knees, ankles, and elbow joints, were very much swollen, painful, and almost immovable; he was greatly emaciated; had a quick pulse; profuse night sweats,  
with



with the common hectic symptoms; and his general appearance was that of a man in the last stage of a phthisis pulmonalis. In addition to these complaints, he had a large node on the forehead, and another on the tibia of the left leg. I directed him to take the powder of Sarsaparilla, with lime water; and to use such nourishing diet as his stomach could receive. In the space of three weeks, he had amended considerably; his pains were quite relieved; he could move his legs and arms; his pulse was reduced to nearly the natural standard; and he was evidently regaining his flesh and strength. He persevered in this course of medicine, during two months, and his health seemed to be perfectly re-established: but the venereal nodes which had nearly subsided, now began to increase rapidly; he suffered much from nocturnal pains, and his health visibly declined. Under these circumstances, I concluded that the venereal virus was now proceeding in its usual course, and I accordingly desisted from giving him the Sarsaparilla, and directed the use of mercury.



## CASE THE FOURTH.

Mrs. —, aged forty years, had undergone two successive courses of mercury, on account of a venereal ulcer in the throat; and the disease had recurred twice. I saw her first, about three months after the termination of the second mercurial course: at that time she had a venereal ulcer on one of the tonsils, and complained of nocturnal head-achs. The infirm state of her health, rendered the immediate use of mercury improper; I therefore ordered a common gargle; the decoction of Sarsaparilla with bark; and advised her to remove into the country until her health should be improved. By persevering in this mode of treatment, during two months, she recovered her health; the ulcer in her throat was healed; and she ceased to complain of head-ach. From these favourable appearances, she too hastily concluded herself to be well; but, in about six weeks from this period, the ulcer again appeared in her throat; she had a node on one of the parietal bones, and complained as much of pain as ever. I therefore thought it proper to insist on her employing another course of mercury.

CASE



## CASE THE FIFTH.

Mr. F. used mercury, under the direction of an apothecary, on account of a chancre, and was supposed to be cured. In about three months afterwards, several venereal blotches appeared on his forehead, and he suffered very severely from nocturnal head-achs. His apothecary, not supposing these symptoms to be venereal, gave him the extract of Sarsaparilla, dissolved in a decoction of the root of that plant. This diet drink suspended the violence of the head-ach, and the eruption disappeared entirely. But, while he was still taking this medicine, with a view of establishing his health completely, the pains returned with an increased violence, and the eruptions appeared again upon his forehead. He now placed himself under my care; and his complaints were finally removed by the administration of mercury.

## CASE THE SIXTH.

Mr. C. underwent a long and severe course of mercury, on account of an ulcer in his

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throat,



throat, and a node on the left tibia: at the conclusion of it, he was much emaciated; his health was in a bad state, and he was nearly deprived of the use of his limbs. The ulcer in his throat was, however, healed, and the node had subsided. The gentleman who attended him, supposing the venereal virus to be extinguished, advised a course of warm sea-bathing; and Mr. C. went down to Brighthelmstone for that purpose. During his continuance there, he derived no advantage from the sea air, nor from the warm baths; and, after remaining nearly six weeks, he returned to town, and requested my attendance. When I first saw him, he was greatly emaciated; was extremely feeble; and the joints of his lower extremities so much swollen and painful, that he was obliged to use crutches, in removing from his bed-chamber into his drawing-room. The periosteum was tender, and somewhat thickened, at that part where the node had formerly existed; but the tumefaction was inconsiderable. By taking the decoction and powder of Sarsaparilla, he recovered his health, regained the use of his limbs, and acquired his usual degree of strength: but, although he flattered himself that  
his



his complaints were removed, I suggested some doubts of his being free from the Lues Venerea. In less than three months from the time I first saw him, the node began again to rise, and became very painful; the lower part of the ulna enlarged considerably, rendering the motion of the fore arm, both painful and difficult; a venereal ulcer appeared in his throat; and his body was almost covered with eruptions. The disease in his throat, the blotches on his skin, and the node on the ulna, were removed in a few weeks, by the agency of mercury; but his cure was not completed, till after the exfoliation of a piece of carious bone from the tibia of the left leg.

### CASE THE SEVENTH.

One of my patients in the Lock Hospital, who had nearly completed his course of inunction, shewed me a little tumor, resembling a small boil, upon the skin of his forehead, covering the right side of the frontal bone; this tumor was red and painful, and had a small pimple in its centre, containing a transparent fluid. In the course of two or three days, a little



matter was discharged spontaneously from the boil, and a rapid and extensive ulceration succeeded its rupture. The ulcer soon destroyed a portion of the skin, as large as the palm of the hand; the cellular membrane separated in large offensive sloughs; and the sloughing extended under the sound skin, beyond the margin of the ulcer, occasioning a great extent of hollowness, from this loss of substance. The destruction of the cellular membrane took place in every direction; and the mischief extended as low as the inner angle of the eye.

This ulcer was of a very irregular figure, was extremely painful, and discharged large quantities of an offensive sanies, mixed with corrupted cellular membrane. I suspended the mercurial course; advised the patient to remove from the hospital into lodgings; and directed him to take Sarsaparilla, both in powder and decoction. The fore was washed with a strong decoction of the shavings of Guaiacum, and covered with a carrot poultice. By pursuing this method, with such occasional variation of the dressings as the state of the fore indicated, it was perfectly healed in about six weeks. As I knew that  
this



this patient was not perfectly cured of the Lues Venerea, I ordered him to return to the hospital, on the first appearance of any suspicious symptoms: he accordingly applied to me, about a month after the healing of the sore on his forehead, and shewed me ulcers on both the tonsils, and on the posterior part of the fauces; for which I directed a course of mercury.

The ulcer which I have now been describing, is not a very uncommon occurrence: I have seen it several times in private practice, as well as in the Lock Hospital; and it has, in every instance, yielded to the mode of treatment described above.

As my principal design, in the introduction of cases into this work, is illustration, the foregoing histories will sufficiently fulfil the object proposed; I shall, therefore, omit inserting many others which I had selected for that purpose, and proceed to offer some practical observations.

The third, fourth, fifth, and sixth narratives, evince the virtues of Sarsaparilla, in cases truly venereal; they do not, indeed, shew that it can cure the disease; but they afford ample evidence of its power in abating the



violence of some symptoms, and retarding the progress of others, without proving permanently beneficial to the patient.

The seventh narrative presents an instance of what I suggested before; that new diseases may arise during a mercurial course, which are not truly venereal, and which are exasperated by mercury; and that these complaints may be removed by Sarsaparilla, (and sometimes by other medicines,) the original disease remaining unsubdued. The several facts which have been alleged in the course of this chapter, prove very sufficiently that Sarsaparilla is a good medicine; but they likewise militate against the notion of its being an antidote deserving of confidence, in Lues Venerea. It may, perhaps, be urged in its behalf, that it is a specific *quoad hoc*; since it alleviates venereal symptoms, and checks, in some degree, the progress of the disease. Against this plea, however, I would adduce what must appear like a very decisive objection; that no quantity of Sarsaparilla can successfully oppose the action of the syphilitic virus beyond a very limited period; since the disease will continue to spread, and infect the system more deeply, and even demonstrate  
the



the reality of its progress, by the appearance of new and additional symptoms, at the very time when the patient is under the full influence of the medicine, and is actually taking as large quantities of it as his stomach can retain. Nothing like this is ever seen to occur, during a skilful administration of mercury.

It cannot be deemed necessary to produce any more evidence of the insufficiency of Sarsaparilla, as a proper and certain remedy in the Lues Venerea; but, while I reject it as a specific, I would by no means disparage it as a medicine possessing no valuable qualities. In those cases where the malignant powers of the virus have proved materially prejudicial to the health, so that the patient cannot enter upon the use of mercury with propriety, the decoction and powder of Sarsaparilla, will often retard the destructive agency of the venereal poison, and repair the breaches made in the constitution: it may be sometimes given with advantage, during a course of mercurial frictions, when it does not occasion a determination to the bowels; and it will almost invariably remove many of the most troublesome sequelæ of a course of mercury.



Nor are the salutary properties of the Sarsaparilla root useful in those diseases only that are either immediately or remotely connected with Syphilis; its beneficial effects are often demonstrated in the treatment of foul, untractable, spreading sores; in more than one form of scrofula; and in the Elephantiasis, or at least, in cutaneous affections nearly resembling those to which that appellation is given.

The two following observations, recorded by Mr. Bromfield, may not be unacceptable to some of my readers. “ Mary Parr, aged  
“ twenty-eight years, when admitted into  
“ St. George’s Hospital, had large blotches  
“ on several parts of her body, but particu-  
“ larly on her head and face, which were  
“ incrusted with broad hard scabs. Her case,  
“ from appearances, was judged venereal,  
“ though the poor woman declared, she never  
“ had any reason to suspect it. A course of  
“ mercurial frictions loosened the incrusta-  
“ tions, and the subjacent ulcers began to  
“ discharge. Some of those on her body  
“ seemed to yield to the mercury, though  
“ it had but little effect on those of her  
“ head and face; and, during the course, her  
“ right



“ right eye-lid began to be affected with the  
“ same kind of blotch, which ended in a  
“ Lippitudo. She continued under salivation  
“ seven weeks, and, during the course, the  
“ bark was given with advantage.”

Mr. Bromfeild then tried the *Solanum*  
*Lethale*, but without any good effect. He  
observes, “ the old sores broke out, and  
“ those she had on her face spread very  
“ much, soon after she began taking the last  
“ medicine; particularly those on the *Alæ*  
“ Nafi and under-lip; which occasioned a  
“ great loss of substance in both.”——“ The  
“ remarkable success we had in a similar  
“ case, not long before, with the decoction of  
“ *Sarsaparilla* root, made us recommend it  
“ for this poor creature, but with very little  
“ hopes of success, or indeed of her life. She  
“ took it with milk, a quart in the twenty-four  
“ hours, and, in a month’s time, her sores  
“ were all healed, and she recovered her health  
“ and strength.”—

“ The inducement to try the *Sarsaparilla*,  
“ in the above case, arose from the service  
“ it had done a poor girl, who had been  
“ formerly salivated in one of the city hos-  
“ pitals, for large blotches, which were  
“ thought



“ thought venereal. They yielded a little  
 “ to the mercury during her spitting; but  
 “ soon after the eruptions returned, and she  
 “ was received into St. George’s. Another  
 “ salivation was recommended, which she  
 “ underwent with as little advantage as  
 “ formerly; she was considerably sunk by  
 “ her course of mercury; there remained  
 “ deep ulcers in her face; and the *Alæ Nasi*  
 “ were almost destroyed by the sharpness of  
 “ the humour. She began the decoction of  
 “ Sarsaparilla with milk, drank a quart in  
 “ the day, and continued it for a month; by  
 “ which means her sores were healed, and  
 “ she was restored to perfect health. From  
 “ the observations I have made, of the ill  
 “ effects of mercury, very often, in scorbutic  
 “ habits, I am apt to believe, that the above  
 “ cases were both of them of that species, or,  
 “ inclining to the lepra, and not venereal.”\*

Since the year 1793, in which I published  
 some Observations on the Elephantiasis,† I have  
 had about seven or eight distinctly marked  
 cases of that disease under my care. In

\* An account of the English Nightshades, &c.

† Practical Observations on Cancerous Complaints, &c.



one patient, who had blotches on the face, resembling those described by Mr. Bromfeild, the exhibiting of mercury in very small doses, proved eminently useful. The restoration of all the other patients to health, was effected by the use of decoctions, in which the Sarsaparilla root was a principal ingredient.

The opportunities I have had of acquiring a farther knowledge of the history of the Elephantiasis, have furnished me with the most satisfactory proofs, that it is an hereditary disease.



## CHAP. IV.

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### *Of the MEZEREUM.*

THE Mezereum root is sometimes mentioned, by the early writers on the venereal disease,\* as a cathartic proper to be given on certain specified occasions; but it was first introduced into practice, as an appropriate remedy against one order of venereal symptoms, by Dr. Alexander Russell, who published an account of its virtues, in the third volume of the London Medical Observations and Inquiries. “The disease,” says Dr. Russell, “for which I principally recommend the decoction of the *Mezereon* root as a cure, is the venereal node, that proceeds from a thickening of the *membrane* of the bones. In a thickening of the *periosteum* from other causes, I have seen very good effects from it: and it is frequently of service in the removal of those nocturnal pains

\* Aphrodisiacus. P. 1080, &c.

“ with



“ with which venereal patients are afflicted;  
“ though, in this last case, excepting with  
“ regard to the pain that is occasioned by the  
“ node, I own, I have not found its effects  
“ so certain, as I at first thought I had reason  
“ to believe.—I do not find it of service in  
“ the cure of any other symptoms of the  
“ venereal disease.” \*

This account of the virtues of Mezereum root, as an antivenereal remedy, is delivered with so much candour and fairness, that if it be not calculated to excite high expectations, it certainly contains nothing that can necessarily mislead. The seventeen cases which Dr. Russell has recorded, do by no means warrant a stronger form of expression than what he has adopted; and, although Dr. Home, in his *Clinical Experiments and Histories*, has asserted, that “ this root is a powerful  
“ deobstruent in all venereal tumors, of the  
“ scirrhus kind, where mercury has failed;” the evidence he has adduced of this fact, is so scanty and insufficient, that it can scarcely be regarded as forming an addition to Dr. Russell’s prior report.

\* *Med. Obs. and Inq.* Vol. III. P. 194, 195.



The Mezereum root is therefore said to have the virtue of curing one symptom of the venereal disease, a membranous node, or, “ a thickening of the periosteum;” while it possesses no efficacy against any other symptom. Now, I conceive, that such a representation of the fact before us, is not free from ambiguity; as it may imply, that the Mezereum can reduce a membranous node, considered as a local disease; or, that it can cure a venereal node, according to the strict sense of the words; so that, when the morbid alteration of the membrane is removed by the agency of this medicine, the patient may be regarded as perfectly free from any venereal taint: or, to state this matter in other words; that the Mezereum root can subdue one particular effect of Lues Venerea, without removing the cause; or that, in the single instance now under consideration, it can destroy both the cause and the effect.

The result of my own experience by no means accords with this representation; from all that I have been able to collect, in the course of many years observation, I feel myself authorised to assert unequivocally, that the Mezereum has not the power of curing  
the



the venereal disease, in any one stage, or under any one form.

If a decoction of this root should ever reduce a venereal node, where no mercury has been previously given, yet the patient will by no means be exempted from the necessity of employing mercury, for as long a space of time, and in as large a quantity, as if no Mezereum had been taken.

With respect to the power it is said to possess, of alleviating the pain, and diminishing the bulk, of membranous nodes, nothing peculiar and appropriate can be ascribed to the Mezereum on these accounts; since we obtain the same good effects, from Sarsaparilla, Guaiacum, Volatile Alkali, Blistering Plasters, &c. Nevertheless, venereal nodes which have subsided under the use of any of these articles of the materia medica, will appear again, and often with additional symptoms, if a full and efficacious course of mercury be not submitted to. It has indeed been alleged, that Mezereum always alleviates the pain occasioned by a venereal node, and generally reduces it, where the periosteum only is affected; and that it seldom fails of removing those enlargements of the periosteum



teum which have not yielded during the administration of mercury.

That some instances of success, in cases like these, may have fallen to the share of those who make the assertion, it would not become me to deny; but I have met with few such agreeable evidences of the efficacy of this medicine. I have given the Mezereum in the form of a simple decoction, and also as an ingredient in compound decoctions of the woods, in many cases, where no mercury had been previously employed, but never with advantage to a single patient. I have also tried it in numerous instances, after the completion of a course of mercury; yet, with the exception of two cases, where the thickened state of the periosteum was removed during the exhibition of it, I never saw the least benefit derived from taking this medicine.

In a few cases of anomalous pains, which I supposed were derived from irregularities during a mercurial course, the Mezereum was of service, after I had tried the common decoction of the woods without success; but, even in this description of cases, I have always found it a very uncertain remedy.

I have



I have made trial of this vegetable in a great number of scrofulous cases, where the membranes covering the bones were in a diseased state, and I am not sure that one single patient obtained any evident and material benefit from it.

The late Dr. Cullen, whose reports may justly claim attention from all medical men, when treating of the Mezereum, in his *Materia Medica*, says, “ I have frequently employed “ it in several cutaneous affections, and “ sometimes with success.”\* It were to have been wished, that the professor of medicine had specified what those diseases of the skin were, in which the Mezereum was sometimes employed with success: for, if I except an instance or two of *Lepra*, in which the decoction of this plant conferred a temporary benefit, I have very seldom found it possessed of medicinal virtue, either in *Syphilis*, or in the sequelæ of that disease; in *Scrofula*; or in cutaneous affections.

Indeed, the Mezereum is of so acrimonious a nature, often producing heat and other disagreeable sensations in the fauces, and, on

\* *Mat. Med.* Vol. P. 215.



many occasions, disordering the primæ viæ, that I do not often subject my patients to the certain inconveniencies which are connected with the primary effects of this medicine, as they are rarely compensated by any other important and useful qualities.



## CHAP. V.

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### *Of the CINCHONA.*

I Presume, that no well-informed surgeon ever imagined a specific virtue of curing the Lues Venerea, to reside in the Peruvian bark: nevertheless, it cannot be doubted, that every regular practitioner, who is much engaged in treating this disease, has seen as good effects produced by the Cinchona, in cases truly venereal, as by any one of the vegetables which has formed the subject of the preceding pages. If it has been alleged upon plausible grounds, that Guaiacum possesses medicinal efficacy in venereal pains; Sarsaparilla, where there are phagedenic ulcers; and Mezereum, in cases where there are membranous nodes. I would beg leave to add, that in the same sense in which the utility of these plants may be admitted, I would contend for the salutary agency of the Cinchona, in incipient buboes, in ulcers of the tonsils, and in gangrenous ulcers from a venereal cause.



The history of an enlarged absorbent gland in the groin, is frequently involved in too much obscurity, to justify the giving of an immediate and decided opinion upon its real character; and, under such a state of doubt, I have often given the Peruvian bark with singular advantage. The tumefaction has subsided; the gland has become moveable and free from pain, and has returned almost to its natural state; yet, notwithstanding these favourable appearances, the gland has, after a short time, again enlarged, proceeding rapidly to suppuration, and other venereal symptoms have arisen, sufficient to dispel all ambiguity. On the administering of mercury to such patients, the usual good effects of that medicine have taken place, and terminated in the final cure of the disease. Instances of this kind, with some variations, have occurred to me so frequently, that I cannot suspect myself of having mistaken Scrofula for Lues Venerea, in every case; and, if the fact be admitted, that the Cinchona will sometimes reduce a venereal bubo, without curing it, the conclusion which may be fairly drawn, is too obvious to be insisted upon.

My



My experience of the good effects of this medicine, in the venereal fore throat, has been more enlarged, and if possible, more decisive. I have repeatedly seen the ulcers become clean, and heal; the voice regain its clearness; and the health of the patient be quite re-established; so that he has concluded himself well, contrary to my decided opinion. The disease has however constantly appeared again; often with the addition of new venereal symptoms; and, under these circumstances, the patient has been invariably cured by mercury.

There are certain peculiarities of constitution, where the primary ulcer produced by the venereal virus, proceeds rapidly into a gangrenous state; and, not uncommonly, the introduction of mercury at this period, rather hastens, than controuls the destructive process. I have received patients, at different times, into the Lock Hospital, with the whole penis in a sphacelated state, where the infection had not been received above a week previous to their admission. To these men I gave Peruvian bark, and treated them according to the methods usually adopted in cases of mortification, without paying any attention to the remote cause of the sphacelus. The penis  
E 3 commonly



commonly separated near the symphysis of the ossa pubis; the sores healed; and the patients recovered and remained well, without requiring the aid of mercury.

In these particular instances, I supposed, that the early supervention of the gangrene, and the rapidity with which it proceeded, might be compared, not unaptly, to the application of a tight ligature made upon the penis, and that the absorption of the virus was anticipated by the death of the part. The truth of my opinion was justified by the event; for the men did not afterwards suffer, from any form of the venereal disease: yet I do not imagine, that any person will ascribe the extinction of the venereal poison, to the specific virtues of the Peruvian bark.

It may not be quite superfluous to suggest a caution, against employing the mode of reasoning which I adopted, in a general and unqualified manner; for I fear it would not be correct and applicable to any cases, except to those which are recent, and where the destruction of the whole substance of the infected part has been sudden and complete.

I have said, that there are certain constitutions in which a chancre, on its first appearance,



ance, always becomes gangrenous; and I have more than once noticed this very unfavourable occurrence, in the same patient, every time he received the infection, although it did not always prevail in an equal degree. In cases of this kind, the Peruvian bark is indicated, as well by the state of the system in general, as by the mortified condition of the affected part. Under a proper exhibition of this medicine, the sloughs will separate; the ulcer assume a clean and favourable aspect; and sometimes the sore will even granulate and heal.

More commonly however, when all the parts are wearing a promising appearance, the ulcer becomes painful, foul, unequal on its surface, spreads visibly every day, and has thick and indurated edges; and at this period the health begins to decline. The concurrence of these circumstances indicate, that the venereal poison has resumed an active state; that nothing farther is to be expected from the Peruvian bark; and that the administration of mercury ought not to be delayed any longer.

Such facts as I have now stated, are by no means rare and extraordinary; they must



have been noticed by every surgeon who has had the advantage of an extensive practice; yet I will venture to assert, that no such man ever imagines that he is, in a proper sense, curing the venereal disease, while he is merely promoting the exfoliation of parts, the texture and vitality of which have been destroyed by the syphilitic virus.

But, although the Cinchona is a remedy of great utility, when accidents like these supervene, yet it is not a medicine proper to be given indiscriminately, either before or during a mercurial course. Where its tonic qualities are not indispensably necessary, the power it has of diminishing the several secretions, may often occasion it to be extremely detrimental to the person who takes it.



## CHAP. VI.

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### *Of OPIUM.*

THIS narcotic juice was first introduced into practice, as a specific against the Lues Venerea, at New York, in America, about the year 1779. It was employed in several of the military hospitals there, where it acquired the reputation of a most efficacious remedy; and Dr. Michaelis, physician of the Hessian forces, published an account of a great number of successful experiments made with it, in the first volume of the Medical Communications, in the year 1784.

Opium was afterwards given as an anti-venereal remedy in some foreign hospitals; many trials were also made of its virtues, in several of the London hospitals, and in the Royal Infirmary at Edinburgh. Very favourable reports of its efficacy in removing venereal complaints, were published by different practitioners; but, at the same time, so many deductions were to be made, and



so many exceptions were to be admitted, that it required little sagacity to discover, that most of the advocates for this medicine, reposed but a slender and fluctuating confidence in its antivenereal powers. I made several experiments on the virtues of Opium in Lues Venerea, at the Lock Hospital, in the years 1784 and 1785; and published a narrative of them in the second volume of the Medical Communications.

The result of my experiments was very unfavourable to the credit of this new remedy; and I believe, that no surgeon in this country any longer relies on Opium as a specific against the venereal virus.\* I have been long accustomed to administer Opium with great freedom, during the mercurial course;

\* We have not learned that Opium has been alone a remedy for the venereal disease; and any experiments that we know to have been made, lead us to conclude, that it is never alone sufficient for that purpose. But from almost every experiment made, we are well assured of its being of very great use in almost every circumstance of the disease. It moderates and alleviates every symptom; and in many of them it will do this without the assistance of other remedies.

Cullen's Mat. Med. Tom. II. P. 254.

and



and the experience of nearly twenty years has taught me, that when it is combined with mercury, the proper efficacy of the latter is not in any measure increased: that it would not be safe to rely upon a smaller quantity of the mineral specific, nor to contract the mercurial course within a shorter limit, than where no Opium has been employed.

This representation will not, I presume, admit of controversy; yet we frequently hear people expressing themselves upon this head, as if Opium manifested some peculiar qualities in venereal complaints, of a distinct nature from its well known narcotic properties, and thus afforded an important aid to mercury in the removal of Lues Venerea. Perhaps it may not be unuseful to disentangle this subject, from the perplexity in which such indefinite language necessarily involves it.

Opium, when given in conjunction with mercury, by diminishing the sensibility of the stomach and bowels, prevents many of those inconveniencies which this mineral is apt to excite in the primæ viæ; and thus its admission into the general system is facilitated. Mercury will likewise often produce a morbid irritability, accompanied with restlessness and insomnolence;



insomnolence; and it sometimes renders venereal sores painful, and disposed to spread. These accidental evils, not necessarily connected with the venereal disease, may be commonly alleviated, and often entirely removed by a judicious administration of Opium; and the patient will consequently be enabled to persist in using the mineral specific. It must however be perfectly obvious, that Opium, in conferring this sort of relief, communicates no additional virtues to mercury; and that in reality it assists the constitution of the patient, not the operation of the medicine with which it is combined. The salutary effects of mercury, as an antidote, may be diminished, or lost, by the supervention of vomiting, dysentery, &c. Opium will often correct these morbid appearances; and so will spices, wine, an appropriate diet, &c. yet it would be a strange use of words, to urge, wherever these articles of food were beneficial to a venereal patient, that they concurred in augmenting the medicinal virtues of mercury. It may be supposed, that the majority of medical men would understand by the terms, “to assist a medicine in curing a contagious disease;” that the drug conjoined with the specific,



specific, actually increased its medicinal efficacy ; whereas, in the instances before us, it is the human body only which has been aided to resist the operation of certain noxious powers, which would render a perseverance in the antidote prejudicial or impossible.

The soothing qualities of this admirable medicine, can scarcely be estimated too highly ; yet we must beware of ascribing effects to them which have no existence ; since a confidence in the antivenereal virtues of Opium, would be a source of greater mischief, than its most valuable properties would be able to compensate.



## CHAP. VII.

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### *Of the CICUTA.*

WHEN Dr. Storck published an account of the virtues of Hemlock, he did not confine his encomiums on the medicinal efficacy of that plant, to its power of curing cancers; but he often expressed himself like a man who had found a specific remedy against every kind of disease. He has accordingly related some cases of Lues Venerea, which were cured by the Cicuta, after every other kind of antivenereal remedy had been tried in vain.\* Dr. Collin, who succeeded him, offers likewise a strong testimony of the virtues of the Cicuta, in Lues Venerea.—  
 “ Ubi antivenereorum princeps Mercurius  
 “ sublimatus corrosivus, in spiritu frumenti  
 “ solutus, ob nimium jam a Lue Venerea

\* Ant. Storck. Lib. II. de Cicuta.

Van Swieten. Comment. in Aph. Boerh. Tom. V.  
 P. 573.

Murray, Apparatus Med. Tom. I.



“ labefactata viscera exhiberi nequit, vel  
“ quando aegri illum non ferunt, Cicuta  
“ efficax praebet medicamentum, dolores  
“ leniens, sopiensque, & ulcera sanans, &  
“ corpus teterrimo malo feliciter liberans.  
“ De Cicuta efficacia. Cor. IV. P. 153.

The experience of forty years has, however, taught us, that the Cicuta is a medicine which cannot be absolutely confided in, upon any occasion. I do not intend to affirm, that it is destitute of every useful medicinal quality; for I have often found it a very serviceable article of the materia medica; and have given it in several diseases with remarkable advantage; yet it is, at the same time, so extremely uncertain in its operation, that no man ought to rely upon it for the cure of a dangerous disease, when he is possessed of any other appropriate remedy.

The extract, and the powder of Hemlock, may be sometimes given with evidently good effects, in spreading irritable sores; whether they are connected with the active state of the venereal virus; or when they remain after the completion of the mercurial course. And it would seem, that the benefit conferred by this drug, ought not to be ascribed solely to its



its anodyne qualities; since the same advantages cannot always be obtained by the liberal exhibition of Opium, even where it does not disagree with the stomach.

The following instances will both illustrate and confirm what I have now asserted.

About fourteen years ago, two young women were admitted into the Lock Hospital on the same day, both of them suffering from the secondary symptoms of the Lues Venerea; the most troublesome of which were, large, painful, spreading ulcerations, between, and under, the toes of each foot. They immediately began the usual course of mercurial inunction; and the common dressings were applied to their feet.

When their constitutions were under the full influence of mercury, the other symptoms of Lues disappeared; but these sores remained as large, foul, and painful, as ever. I directed Opium to be given every three or four hours; but no abatement of pain, nor sign of amendment ensued, although six grains of Opium were given in the day. I then ordered, that one of the young women should discontinue the Opium, and take five grains of the Extractum Cicutæ three times a day, increasing



increasing the dose five grains each day, till the Hemlock produced some giddiness. When she arrived at fifteen grains of the extract for each dose, her pains abated, and the sores began to look better: she persisted in taking about one dram every day, and in a fortnight the sores were perfectly healed. The other young woman continued taking Opium during a week after the first had begun with the Cicuta; but, when I observed the remarkable advantages which had been gained by giving this last medicine, I ordered this patient to take it in the same manner as the former; and the beneficial effects resulting from the change, were equally striking and satisfactory.

I do not infer, from such examples as these, that Cicuta has the power of removing venereal symptoms, when mercury has failed; because, I conceive that these sores had lost the syphilitic character, and owed their duration to a cause unconnected with the action of that animal morbidiferous poison.

The venereal ulcer which attacks the toes at their line of junction with the foot, is always an ill-conditioned sore, and often becomes gangrenous. As the Cicuta has succeeded very well in several cases of that kind, I

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have



have been induced to administer it in mortifications produced by other causes; and I have observed, that where a gangrenous ulcer spreads with much pain, where the pulse is hard and frequent, and where there are no appearances of any remarkable debility, the Cicuta will frequently check the progress of the disease; and will bring the ulcer into a clean granulating state, when no good effects had been obtained from bark, vitriol, cordials, &c. and when even Opium, liberally exhibited, had failed of allaying the pain, and was of no avail in restraining the destructive progress of sphacelation.

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Several other vegetables have been employed at different periods, against the Lues Venerea; and each has acquired more or less credit as a valuable remedy in different stages of the disease. I shall only mention a few of them.

Sassafras.

Juniperus.

Bardana.

Saponaria.



Saponaria.

Dulcamara.

Juglans.

Lobelia syphilitica.

Astragalus exscapus.

The five first articles, have no good claim to the title of antivenereal remedies: some of them may be occasionally directed in compound decoctions of the woods; but, whatever may be thought of the subordinate utility of each of them, I presume no person will assert, from his own experience, that any one of them can be fairly ranked as an antidote against Syphilis.

The putamen or green rind of the Walnut, has been celebrated as a powerful antivenereal remedy, for more than a century and a half; and Petrus Borellus has given directions for a decoction not unlike that which is commonly called the Lisbon diet drink, in which the Walnut, with its green bark, forms a principal ingredient.

Lue Venerea affecti, tantis cruciatibus olim vexabantur, ut morbus vere remedio praefaret, nunc vero facilè sequenti remedio curari possunt, absque fudoribus, absque ptyalismo, *absque inunctionibus*, licetque nec



cubili, nec cubiculo immorentur. Modus autem ejusmodi est. Acc. Antimonii & Zarzaparillæ ā ʒvi. Antimonium nodulo inclusum, in sex aquæ amphoris, in quibus sit Zarzaparilla cum 40 nucum putaminibus & hylis fufpensum, coq. ad tertias, ejusque decocto utatur æger, capiendo ter in die, nempe, mane, meridie, & vesperi, haustum ejus, fumendo, longe a cibis.\*

Ramazzini, whose works were published early in the present century, has likewise informed us, that in his time, the green rind of the Walnut was esteemed a good anti-venereal remedy in England. Ex nucum viridi cortice parari decoctum, in Anglia expertæ virtutis ad Luem Gallicam perdomandam, quam *Recentiores* omnes in acidi prædominio statuunt, nuper accepi a Cl. D. Nathan Lacy, Medico Anglo & insigni Anatomico.†

This part of the Walnut has been much used in decoctions, during the last fifty years, both in the green and dry state; it has been

\* Hiftor. & Observ. rarior Medicophys. Cent. II. Obs. 96.

† Ramazzini Op. Tom. I. P. 126.



greatly commended by writers on the continent, as well as by those of our own country: and is, without doubt, a very useful addition to the decoction of the woods. I have employed it during many years, in those cases where pains in the limbs and indurations of the membranes have remained, after the venereal disease has been cured by mercury; and I have seldom directed it without manifest advantage.

The decoctum Lusitanicum, causes a determination to the skin, more certainly than any of the other decoctions commonly employed; but, what share the antimony may have in exciting this perspiration, I leave to the chymists to determine.

Brambilla and Girtanner also contend for the antivenereal virtues of the green bark of the Walnut: but the result of my own experience will not permit me to add my testimony to theirs. I have given it in as large doses as the stomach could retain, and for as long a time as the strength of the patients and the nature of their complaints would permit: but I have uniformly observed, that if they who take it be not previously cured of Lues Venerea, the peculiar symp-



toms will appear, and proceed in their usual course in defiance of the powers of this medicine.

The decoctum Lusitanicum may be given with great advantage, in many of those cutaneous diseases which are attended with aridity of the skin;\* and I have had some opportunities of observing, that when the putamen of the Walnut has been omitted, either intentionally, or by accident, the same good effects have not followed the taking of the decoction, as when it contained this ingredient.

Many years ago, I made some trials of a decoction of the Lobelia syphilitica: but it generally disagreed with the stomach, and seldom failed of affecting the bowels, as a strong cathartic. These effects were inconvenient and prejudicial; and, as I could not observe that the persons who took it derived any evident benefit from it, as an antidote, I soon desisted from employing it.

\* Hunczousky, has recommended a decoction of the green bark of the Walnut, as a good application to ulcers. Act. Acad. Vind. P. 209.



Van Swieten,\* who has mentioned the antivenereal qualities of this root, upon the authority of one of his respectable correspondents, observes, in concluding his account of it,—*sed & illud remedium evacuando curat.* This great man had adopted a theory, which required, as a *sine qua non*, that antivenereal remedies should be evacuants of some kind; and, having learnt from his friend, that the *Lobelia syphilitica* could act as an emetic, a purgative, and a diaphoretic, he admitted it as an antidote, without making one experiment himself. A considerable quantity of this root was brought into England, at the time when I employed it in the Lock Hospital; but, as no accounts have been published of its efficacy, I may presume, that the trials of other practitioners were attended with no more success than my own.†

\* Comment. Tom. V. P. 576.

† The *Lobelia Syphilitica* has never acquired the confidence of medical practitioners in Europe; for Murray observes,—“*Paucissima experimenta in Europa cum eadem capta. Quod mirum; quum neque cultura stirpis difficilis sit, neque radicum illaesarum translatio.*”

App. Med. Tom. I. P. 776.



The *Astragalus exscapus* has been strongly recommended, as an antivenereal, by Professor Winterl of Buda, by Dr. Storck, Dr. Quarin, Dr. Crichton, and Dr. Girtanner.\* A decoction of this root is said to act as a purgative and diaphoretic; and to cure the secondary symptoms of Lues Venerea, in cases where no mercury has been previously employed. I must acknowledge, that the accounts which I have read of its antivenereal powers, have by no means produced a conviction in my mind, of its meriting the character it has obtained. I never employed it; and, until some more decisive evidence of its safety and efficacy be made public, I shall not subject my patients to the hazard of experiments, which, if not attended with real and permanent advantage, may inflict irremediable mischief.

I would by no means however offer any suggestions with a view of discrediting the accounts that have been published of the virtues of the *Astragalus exscapus*, since I cannot produce any evidence collected from my own observations: but some portion of

\* Quarin. Animad. Præf. Cap. XVI. Med. Journal. Vol. IX.



scepticism may perhaps be tolerated in a person, whose experiments made with a variety of vegetable remedies in Lues Venerea, and such as have been recommended by the most respectable authorities, have proved uniformly unsuccessful.\*

\* Murray informs his readers, that the *Astragalus exscapus* has not maintained its reputation with all those physicians who at first gave a favourable report of its efficacy.

Appar. Med. Tom. II. P. 472.



## CHAP. VIII.

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### *Of the AMMONIA PRÆPARATA.*

THE Volatile Alkali was recommended as a potent and certain remedy against Lues Venerea, by Monsieur Peyrilhe, more than twenty years ago: and this physician extolled it as a medicine of greater efficacy than mercury; always curing the disease, without injuring the health of those who took it. An interval of ten years intervened between the publication of the first and second edition of his work upon this subject; during this large portion of time, he and his medical friends were making frequent trials of the virtues of the new remedy he had introduced; he found his first reports confirmed by an ample number of subsequent experiments, and thus gained additional evidence of the efficacy of this preparation. Such are the authorities upon which the Volatile Alkali was confidently proposed



propofed to the world, as a new and certain fpecific againft Syphilis.\*

The work which details an account of this hitherto unknown quality of the Ammonia præparata, difclofes likewise fome curious and uncommon opinions; but the author has fo mingled the various parts of his hypothefis, with the description of the difeafe and its fymptoms, that it is not always eafy to difcover, when M. Peyrilhe is indulging the fallies of a brilliant imagination, and when he is describing the order, progrefs, and connexion of real phenomena.

The following account of the efficacy of this new remedy, I give in the words of the author:—Nous avons vu céder affez confamment à l'action de l'Alkali volatil, plus ou moins foutenue, les gonorrhées virulentes fimples des deux fexes, les chancres, les bubons, les exoftofes fauffes, dont le tiffu cellulaire n'a pas entièrement perdu fon organisation, les duretès lymphatiques des corps caverneux, certains efèces de rétention d'urine, tous les fymptômes dépendans de la cachexie vénérienne, maux de tête gravatifs,

\* Remede nouveau contre les Maladies Veneriennes.

foibleffe



foiblesse d'estomac, fleurs blanches suspectes, pustules, dartres, douleurs vagues des membres, douleurs nocturnes, & même, à notre grand étonnement, des engorgemens de la matrice durs, douloureux, suppurés, & quelques-uns réputés squirrheux. P. 27, 28.

The author informs his readers, in other parts of his work, that the presence of Scrofula, or Scurvy, in an infected person, constitutes no obstacle to the cure of the Lues Venerea, when the new remedy is employed; and, what may seem still more extraordinary, that the Volatile Alkali is better adapted to the cure of the disease in its more advanced stages, than when the infection is recent.

This learned writer farther maintains, that the Lues Venerea must be cured by exciting a fever; that mercury, by its peculiar stimulus, can produce the proper febrile state of the system, but that the Volatile Alkali is preferable to it: and he confidently affirms, that an inflammatory fever, has many times radically cured the most serious and inveterate venereal complaints.\* P. 75.

I have

\* This opinion did not originate with M. Peyrilhe; it occurs in a work published by Jacobus Vercellonus,



I have no intention of entering largely into a discussion of the merits of this theory; my first object is, to state the result of my own experience of the virtues of Volatile Alkali, as an antivenereal remedy.

Many years before I read M. Peyrilhe's work, I had been accustomed to give Volatile Alkali, in large doses, to such venereal patients as suffered severely from the dolores ostocopi; and the medicine was very often useful to them; but I never suspected it of possessing the important quality of an antidote to the virus. After I became acquainted with the opinions maintained in that work, I paid more attention to the effects of the Ammonia; and no long space of time elapsed, before I observed, that like other diaphoretic medicines,

in 1722, intitled *De Pudendorum morbis et Lue Venerea*.

“*Febris Lue Venereæ superveniens morbum solvit.*  
“*Testatur hoc continua experientia.*” — After giving some instances in confirmation of this doctrine, he adds,  
“*Et ego equidem sanatæ Lue nullum certius habeo*  
“*indicium ipsa febre, quæ usum pharmacorum exce-*  
“*perit, ita nimirum, ut quum aegrum Ephemerâ aliquâ*  
“*laborantem invenio, statim denunciem ipsum à Lue*  
“*integre convaluisse.* P. 224—5.

fuch



such as Antimony, Pulvis Ipecacuanhæ compositus, Antimony combined with Opium, Warm-bathing, &c. it suspended the progress of some venereal symptoms, and removed others; but that no permanent benefit was obtained by using it.

The Volatile Alkali will often relieve pains of the limbs; it will sometimes remove a venereal eruption; and even restrain for a time the progress of the disease: but, at other times, the virus will continue its destructive course, during the administration of this medicine; and the symptoms which were apparently cured, never fail of returning again, while the patient is actually persisting in taking full doses of this pretended specific.

### CASE THE EIGHTH.

A young gentleman had a large chancre on the preputium, for which he employed mercury during eighteen days. As the sore was then completely healed, he absolutely refused to persist any longer in using his medicines, and went into the country. At the expiration of about three months, he informed



informed me by a letter, that he was become very lame; that his ankles swelled much every night; and that he had nearly lost the use of one arm. I expressed my suspicions to him, that those complaints were venereal; but, as he would not come to London at that time, I advised him to go into a hot bath. He bathed only twice, and was so intirely relieved, that he concluded himself to be quite well. In about a month after this apparent recovery, he came to town, and complained of pains, resembling the rheumatism, in every limb; the tumefaction of the ankles had appeared again; but he was very unwilling to believe that his case was venereal. I ordered him to take two drams of the Spiritus Salis Ammoniaci, properly diluted, every day; and in about ten days his symptoms were removed. In a fortnight, the œdema returned; he became very lame, and venereal eruptions appeared on the skin. I then insisted upon his having recourse to mercury immediately; by which he was cured in the usual space of time.

CASE



## CASE THE NINTH.

A gentleman shewed me a swelling of the periosteum, at the upper part of the tibia, which I told him was a venereal node. The history he gave of himself was such as to render the correctness of my opinion somewhat doubtful; and, as he was very confident that his case was not a venereal one, I consented to treat it as a tumour derived from some other source. I gave him the Volatile Alkali in large doses, during a fortnight; and applied a blistering plaster to the part affected; but no advantage was gained. I then directed him to take Opium and Antimony. He found some relief from these medicines; and his pain was greatly mitigated; but he was never quite easy, except while under the influence of Opium. After persisting in experiments of this kind during four or five weeks, I at length prevailed on him to make trial of mercury. He soon obtained permanent benefit from the administration of this remedy; and, after passing through a regular course of it, he was perfectly cured.

I have



I have likewise given the Ammonia præparata, in the quantity of from two drams to half an ounce every day, to patients afflicted with venereal pains and nodes, (which are the very cases in which M. Peyrilhe maintains that it is the most efficacious,) but the advantages have been merely temporary. I have ordered the diseased person to lie constantly in bed, and to drink plentifully of a decoction of Guaiacum, at the same time; yet, under these favourable circumstances, although some relief was obtained for the space of ten days or a fortnight, new symptoms always made their appearance, and those for which the medicine were given, never failed to increase, during the time of employing it.

I meet with some instances every year, of nodes of the periosteum, situated on the tibia, and sometimes on the bones of the upper extremities, accompanied with much pain, disturbing the sleep, and impeding the motion of the limb; but which are nevertheless quite unconnected with Syphilis. These tumours generally yield to the application of blistering plasters, conjoined with the use of sudorific medicines. I have often given the Volatile Alkali to such patients, with evident advan-



tage ; and I have seen effects equally beneficial produced by Guaiacum, and by the Decoctum Lignorum. Nor is it at all extraordinary, that stimulating medicines, and irritating applications, should prove serviceable in reducing the tumefactions I have described, since they commonly occur in patients of a scrofulous habit of body.

That a fever excited by nature, or by art, will radically cure the venereal disease, is a proposition of too much consequence to be dismissed, without offering some observations upon it.

1. A Gonorrhœa is sometimes accompanied with febrile symptoms, at its first appearance ; but this state of the body is so far from contributing to the removal of the malady, that it generally forms a material obstacle to our adopting the best mode of treating it ; consequently, it is not every kind of fever which has the power even of suspending venereal complaints.

2. I know that a fever will sometimes suspend the progress of a Gonorrhœa ; but I never saw an instance in which it completely removed it. Mr. Hunter relates, that he has seen all the symptoms of a Gonorrhœa cease



cease on the accession of a fever, and return when the fever has been subdued.

“ So capricious sometimes, (says this useful  
“ writer,) is this form of the disease, in its  
“ cure, that the accession of an accidental  
“ fever has stopped the discharge, the pain in  
“ making water has ceased, and the Gonorrhœa  
“ has finally terminated with the fever. In  
“ some I have seen a Gonorrhœa begin mildly,  
“ but a severe fever coming on, and con-  
“ tinuing for several days, has greatly in-  
“ creased the symptoms, and on the fever  
“ going off, the Gonorrhœa has also gone  
“ off.”\*

To know the proportion which the different cases would bear to each other, in which the Gonorrhœa has been only suspended by a fever; or in which it has been cured by a fever; or where no particular interruption to its usual progress has occurred, from the supervention of a febrile complaint, would be a curious, and perhaps, an useful acquisition. It is not probable, however, that we can gain this knowledge in a short period of time, since the number of persons in whom these

\* Hunter on the Venereal Disease. P. 85.



two disorders happen to be blended, is comparatively small.

My own experience has however been sufficient to instruct me, that a Gonorrhœa may proceed, where there is general inflammation; where there is an Ague; and during the long progress of a Typhus; without gaining any amelioration of its symptoms. On the contrary, in those several instances, the disease was rendered more untractable, and resisted the efforts of the common remedies with peculiar obstinacy.

3. I have seen a great number of persons who were afflicted with the Lues Venerea, pass through violent fevers; inflammatory complaints; the diseases sometimes consequent to parturition; the small pox, &c. yet not a single instance has ever occurred to me, in which the patient derived any real and permanent benefit from the accession of these several morbid affections. I do not deny,

\* That change in the female constitution which is connected with pregnancy, has often a wonderful power of suspending the progress, and of modifying the form of the disease. An account of these, and of some other curious phenomena, will appear in my Treatise on the Lues Venerea.

that



that a temporary suspension of the progress of some particular symptom may have been observable; but I assert that no true and essential alteration in the active powers of the virus, was ever effected by the supervention of such acute diseases as I have mentioned.

### CASE THE TENTH.

The following case offers a curious example of the irregularity with which the Lues Venerea sometimes proceeds.

A married woman applied to me at the Dispensary in Carey Street, with a large and painful node, which was situated about the middle of the tibia. The account she gave me of the origin and progress of her complaint was so imperfect and obscure, that I could not immediately decide upon the true nature of it. As her sleep was greatly interrupted, and she suffered constantly from pain in her leg, I ordered her to take Antimony and Opium; and directed a blistering plaster to be applied on the tumour. The part was blistered repeatedly; she took Volatile Alkali, Decoction of Guaiacum, Decoction of Mezereum,



and opiates, in such doses as to mitigate the pain; but she obtained no permanent benefit from this course of treatment. I then ordered her to rub in a dram of the strong mercurial ointment every night. When she had used but four drams, and before her mouth was sensibly affected, she became ill, with the symptoms of a common fever; which rendered it proper for her to discontinue the frictions. The febrile complaint was nearly gone at the end of a week; and at that period a great number of small boils appeared upon different parts of her body. She now became quite free from the pain of the node; the tumefaction subsided gradually; and, by taking Peruvian bark and Cascarilla during a short time, she regained her health, and seemed perfectly freed from her former complaint.

This woman remained well during six months; but, at the end of that time, the node appeared again, attended with pain as before. She was relieved by taking the Corrosive Sublimate; but her situation in life obliging her to go into an hospital, I saw her no more.

I feel myself very little interested in the theories which may be proposed, of the *modus agendi* of Volatile Alkali, or of any other medicine;



medicine; provided such speculations do not corrupt the history of the disease, nor sanction an inadequate, or pernicious mode of treating it.

But, if it were to become a prevailing opinion, that a fever being the cure of Lues Venerea, whatever medicine could excite and support a febrile commotion in the human frame, would operate as a specific remedy in the cure of that disease; such a proposition, reduced into practice, would be attended with the most mischievous consequences.

The preceding pages contain ample proofs, that certain medicines have a power of interrupting the progress, and of altering the appearances of venereal symptoms, without actually curing the disease; hence it is probable, that mutations in the state of the system, of different kinds, whether occasioned by the efforts of nature, or produced by general diseases, may modify the action of the venereal virus, sometimes to the advantage, and at other times to the disadvantage of the patient.

To be acquainted with these circumstances, as matters of fact, will be highly useful to every practical surgeon; yet, if any one should



undertake to model a system upon such anomalies and unusual occurrences; or should slight or disparage a well known and efficacious method of treating the disease, because it may lie within the sphere of possibilities, that a commotion (not to be defined) excited in the animal body, can remove certain appearances seemingly connected with the infection; it may be fairly questioned, whether the understanding, or the probity of such a person be most worthy of animadversion.



## CHAP. IX.

OF THE

*TERRA PONDEROSA SALITA,*

OR

*BARYTES MURIATA.*

THIS saline compound was first prepared and recommended as an useful medicine, by the late Dr. Crawford: and an account of its virtues in cancerous and scrofulous affections was published by him, in the second volume of the London Medical Communications.

It would be inconsistent with the design of this work, to recite the observations I have made on the properties and effects of this preparation, in the great variety of cases in which I have employed it, since it was first introduced into public notice. My present plan restricts my account of it, to its efficacy in Syphilis. I never administered it indeed under the character of an antivenereal medicine; but I have given it with great advantage,



tage, on certain occasions, when I could not determine positively, whether the case were venereal or not; and where the disease has afterwards manifested itself by unequivocal symptoms. The following case will present a specimen of its powers.

### CASE THE ELEVENTH.

A gentleman had undergone three full courses of mercury, under the direction of different surgeons; and, from the length and severity of the last of these courses, it was presumed that he was cured. He first consulted me, in consequence of the appearance of a tumour on the frontal bone, and a little fore on the Septum Nasi; at the same time, he shewed me a small fissure in the roof of his mouth, where, on examination with a probe, I found the bone uncovered.

As his health had suffered greatly from mercury, and he had been so lately under the influence of it, I ordered him to take twelve drops of the Muriated Barytes, three times a day. When he had persevered in taking this medicine during a month, the  
node



node had disappeared; the sore on the Septum Nasi was healed; and I thought that the fissure remaining in the roof of the mouth, depended solely upon the irritation excited by a piece of carious bone, and that it would close when the exfoliation was completed.

Nevertheless, while my patient was actually taking this medicine with the greatest regularity, the ulcer in the nose opened again, and spread rapidly; the node returned upon the forehead; venereal tubercles appeared on different parts of his body; and his health became so materially disordered, that I thought it dangerous to delay the administering of mercury any longer. The gentleman now used a full and efficacious mercurial course, and he has, ever since that time, remained perfectly well.

I have frequently given the Muriated Barytes to patients afflicted with painful and ill-conditioned sores, derived from a venereal source, and it has sometimes proved beneficial, by improving the health, by increasing the tone of the stomach, and disposing the ulcers to heal.

Professor Gmelin recites the good effects he has seen of the efficacy of this medicine, in the following words:—Commendarunt alii  
hoc



hoc medicamen in exanthematibus chronicis pertinacibus ; v. g. tinea, lichenibus, scabie ; in ulceribus, ac bubonibus, aliisque malis venereis, experti sunt efficacem Althof, et apud eum Huber et Vogel."\*—

The Muriated Barytes ought by no means to be regarded as a medicine void of efficacy. When it is properly prepared, it has the power of suspending, for a short time, the progress of certain venereal symptoms, especially those which are situated in the ligaments, or the periosteum: and it is often serviceable in Scrofula, and in Ulcers connected with Elephantiasis. But these good qualities are uncertain in their operation, and narrowly circumscribed; nor is it a preparation on which great confidence can be placed, for the cure of any disease with which I am acquainted.

\* Appar. Med. P. II. Tom. I. P. 6.



## CHAP. X.

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OF CERTAIN

### *PREPARATIONS OF MERCURY.*

THOSE who are persuaded of the existence of antivenereal virtues in all, or in any of those articles of the materia medica which have been mentioned in the preceding pages, probably, may not deem the facts therein recited, such as to require them to yield up the opinions they have formed.

They may contend, since I have conceded the power of suspending the progress of Syphilis, and of conferring a temporary benefit at least, upon venereal patients, to the greater part of the medicines taken notice of, that this concession amounts to an acknowledgment of their specific qualities; and that, if they really do good, and successfully oppose the destructive progress of the virus, though with certain limitations, they may, when conjoined with Mercury, increase  
its



its medicinal virtue, and give more certainty to its action on the animal system.

It may likewise be alleged farther, that the very same species of arguing which I have considered as valid, when employed against the specific efficacy of the various medicines taken from the vegetable, mineral, or animal kingdoms, may be retorted with equal advantage against the certain efficacy of Mercury, in venereal complaints; since relapses often occur, where that antidote has been employed; and instances frequently present themselves, where new venereal symptoms appear, during the continuance of a mercurial course.

There is much truth contained in these allegations; and it can excite no surprise, if persons possessed of few opportunities of comparing the medicinal powers of Mercury, with those of other remedies, should be induced to conclude, that facts like these, very fairly deprive Mercury of its exclusive claim to the rank of sole specific against the Lues Venerea.

In replying to these objections, I would premise, that Mercury administered in any form, or after any method, or under any  
circumstances



circumstances which ignorance or caprice may suggest, is not a certain antidote, that is, an infallible remedy, against Lues Venerea. When this medicine is under the direction of an unskilful man, it will fail of effecting a cure, perhaps more frequently than it will succeed; and, what is of considerable consequence to the welfare of the diseased person, the complaint will be generally exasperated by it, and rendered more untractable, than if no Mercury at all had been given.

A long course of observation has convinced me, that if this alarming truth were as clearly understood, and as deeply impressed upon mens' minds, as it deserves to be, the great number of mutilated victims, whose sad condition excites horror, while it calls for commiseration, would be reduced within much narrower limits than I can venture to express.

Indeed, I am so far from feeling alarmed or perplexed, at the examples of ill success which occasionally attend the exhibition of Mercury, or from considering these misadventures as reflecting disparagement or disgrace on that mineral, that I am rather surprised



surprised at the success which so often attends the indiscriminate use of it.

There is a description of men who scatter abroad their crudities very liberally, in compendiums and essays; a class of productions, seldom calculated to convey information, but principally designed to perform the office of a midwife, by bringing their compilers into public view. With the spurious intelligence collected from these retailers of scraps, many people furnish themselves with a stock sufficient to undertake the cure of their own complaints; and, not uncommonly, impart the precious commodity to others who are less learned than themselves.

That Mercury, conducted by men of such endowments, should often fail of doing good, nay, that it should frequently inflict great mischief, would be according to the natural order of things: but, that it should ever prove finally beneficial, ought certainly to redound to the credit of a medicine, whose salutary agency cannot be invariably frustrated by all the blunders of hardy ignorance.

Before attempting, therefore, to calculate the proportion of relapses which occur where  
Mercury



Mercury has been employed, it will be equitable to make the following deductions:

1. Of all those instances in which that medicine has been injudiciously, or absurdly administered.

2. Let all those cases be subtracted, where the circumstances and situation of the patient would not permit a strict compliance with the necessary restrictions; also all those in which an inconsiderate, a prejudiced, or a refractory disposition, have refused submission to the injunctions of the surgeon; and it will appear, that the charge of not exterminating the disease, can very seldom indeed be justly imputed to that mineral.

The superior efficacy of Mercury, as the genuine antidote of Syphilis, is sanctioned by the experience of 300 years; and, what is a circumstance deserving of consideration, not one medicine besides, derived from the animal, vegetable, or mineral kingdom, has maintained its credit, with men actually employed in extensive practice, during a tenth part of that period. Perhaps, it would not be rash to assert, that no other medicine has maintained a general good reputation, as a specific against

H

the



the venereal disease, beyond the life-time of its first proposer.

Men may amuse themselves by declaiming against Mercury, as an uncertain remedy; they may utter querulous details of its baneful effects, and retail tragical stories of its malignant influence on the body and mind of those who use it: but surely all this turbulent eloquence may be directed with equal advantage, not only against every potent article of the materia medica, but against the very aliment by which we are sustained.

Almost every department of physical science contains propositions which require exceptions, or against which objections may be brought that scarcely admit of a satisfactory solution. Yet, notwithstanding these, philosophers do not suppose it necessary to abandon duly verified axioms, because a few phenomena, not perfectly understood, seem to militate against them.

He who shall discard all general rules, because they admit exceptions, ought likewise for the sake of consistency, to renounce all science, because human knowledge is fallible and imperfect.

My



My opportunities of administering Mercury, have not extended to less than twenty thousand cases; and I feel myself fully authorized to assert, that it is a remedy always to be confided in, under every form of Lues Venerea; and, where we have only that one disease to contend with, that it is a certain antidote, and as safe in its operation as any other active medicine, drawn from the vegetable, or the mineral kingdom. Let me not be misunderstood here, as if I meant to say, that it is a certain and safe remedy in the hands of any one who undertakes to dispense it. Quite the contrary:—for a multitude of indisputable proofs might be adduced, that ignorance and error often render it one of the most precarious and mischievous medicines in use.

It is not my design, at this time, to enter into a detailed account of the powers of Mercury, as an antivenereal remedy: I shall restrict myself to offering a few practical observations, on the efficacy of certain preparations, of that mineral, and more especially on that called Hydrargyrus Muriatus.

A solution of Mercury in the Marine Acid, has been long known as a chymical preparation; but it is not easy to ascertain who



it was that first gave it as an antidote in Syphilis.

M. Le Begue du Presse, assigns this honour to Basil Valentine; whether correctly or not, is a question of small importance at present: this however is certain, that it was employed early in the seventeenth century, in England; since Richard Wiseman has described it as a medicine possessing some reputation in his time, although he never thought proper to administer it in his own practice.

Dr. Turner has informed us, that some of his contemporaries were accustomed to give the Corrosive Sublimate, as a medicine capable of curing the Gonorrhœa very expeditiously; and he declaims, in a torrent of coarse, petulant, and illiberal language, against the preparation, and those who employed it.\*

The Muriated Mercury was finally introduced into general practice, on the very respectable authority of Baron Van Swieten,

\* One Sintelaer, in a work, entitled, "The Scourge of Venus and Mercury," published at the beginning of this century, speaks of the frequent exhibition of Corrosive Sublimate, and condemns it as an unsafe preparation.



who recommended it as a preparation of singular efficacy, against every form of the Lues Venerea. This eminent physician directed it to be given in smaller doses than had been usual before his time; and he likewise furnished those who adopted the use of this powerful medicine, with many necessary and useful cautions.

There are indeed some circumstances which induce me to suppose, that the Corrosive Sublimate had been employed as an antivenereal remedy in Russia, before its general introduction into other parts of Europe; and that, probably, Van Swieten derived his knowledge of the safety and efficacy with which it might be given in small doses, from Dr. Sanchez, who resided many years at Peterburgh. The decision of this point, is however an object of no moment in my present inquiry.

We are informed by Baron Van Swieten, that three hundred venereal patients were cured by the Corrosive Sublimate, in the year 1754: that all these persons remained well in 1755; and that two hundred more instances of success were added to the list.

De Haen adds his testimony, in confirmation of the efficacy of this mercurial



salt; and Dr. Locher, who had the care of an hospital at Vienna, appropriated to the reception of venereal patients, has recorded nearly five thousand cases, in which the Hydrargyrus Muriatus had been administered with success.

The three first volumes of the London Medical Observations and Inquiries, exhibit a numerous and respectable list of testimonies, in favour of the antivenereal powers of this medicine; and the permanence of the several cures, is confirmed by attestations, which bear the most unequivocal characters of authenticity.

The high authority of Van Swieten in the province of medicine, induced medical practitioners, in the several parts of Europe, to try the efficacy of Corrosive Sublimate in venereal cases; and it may be sufficient to say, that the favourable reports transmitted by them, of its excellent qualities, would fill a volume of considerable magnitude.

M. Gardane of Montpellier, in a work published in the year 1774, contends earnestly for the unquestionable efficacy of this mercurial salt, both in the primary and secondary stages of Lues Venerea; and declares himself incapable of comprehending, how a medicine



cine shall possess the virtue of removing venereal symptoms very quickly, and yet be unequal to the perfect extermination of the disease itself.\*

M. De Horne, who was directed by the French government to make a series of experiments, for the purpose of ascertaining the comparative efficacy of the different preparations of Mercury in Syphilis, has added his testimony to the invariable efficacy of the Corrosive Sublimate; and has expressed himself satisfied that the cures performed under his inspection were real and permanent.†

Domenico Cirillo, a practitioner of some eminence at Naples, advises the employing of Corrosive Sublimate, in preference to every other preparation of Mercury, in a work published by him in 1784.‡ His method is, to mix this salt with hogs-lard, and to make the frictions on the soles of the feet; which is

\* *Recherches pratiques sur les différentes manières de traiter les Maladies Vénériennes.*

† *Observations faites & publiées par ordre du gouvernement, sur les différentes méthodes d'administrer le Mercure dans les Maladies Vénériennes.* 1779.

‡ *Osservazioni pratiche intorno alla Lue Venerea:*



a mode of removing Lues Venerea, according to this writer, milder, and less uncertain, than any other in general use.—The ointment is prepared by mixing one dram of Muriated Mercury, previously dissolved in an aqueous Solution of Sal Ammoniac, with one ounce of hogs-lard. Half a dram of this ointment must be rubbed into the sole of each foot, on three successive evenings; then, three more frictions, each consisting of a dram and a half of the ointment, must be employed in the same manner; and finally, two drams of the ointment are to be rubbed in every night, until the patient be cured. The patient must also go into a warm bath, once every three or four days. Dr. Cirillo is averse to the exciting of a ptyalism; and he assures us, that by his method, the mouth is seldom made sore, the Mercury operating principally on the kidneys and skin.

Those who are but little acquainted with medical records and reports, would probably conclude, from such a chain of respectable evidence, that nothing more could be wanting, to establish the credit of Corrosive Sublimate, as an antivenereal remedy of superior efficacy. Nevertheless, this is so far from agreeing



agreeing with the actual state of things, that I am fully persuaded, there is no man in this country who has any large share of reputation to lose, who would venture to stake his character upon the certain efficacy of this mercurial preparation alone, where it would have to contend with the secondary symptoms of the Lues Venerea.

Various trials of the medicinal virtues of the Muriated Mercury, have been made in this country, within the last sixty or seventy years, the results of which do not accord with the foregoing narrative.

Mr. Bromfeild employed it in the early part of his practice, and “ found that it could “ not be depended on.” His opinion was confirmed, “ by the ample experience of a “ gentleman who had long been distinguished “ as one of the most eminent of his profession, “ in the treatment of the venereal disease.”\* —Mr. Bromfeild then proceeds, “ The authorities of late were so great concerning “ its success in the Lues Venerea, that we

\* I have some reasons for believing that this gentleman was the late Mr. Sainthill.

“ were



“ were determined to give it another trial in  
“ the Lock Hospital.”—I shall not transcribe  
the whole narrative of his proceedings, as  
it will be sufficient to say, that it did not  
succeed in those cases where the system was  
contaminated.

Comparative trials were also made of the  
efficacy of the Salt, and “ of Crude Mer-  
“ cury divided with Conserve of Roses:—the  
“ effects of this medicine were the same, in  
“ removing the symptoms, as the Corrosive  
“ Sublimate. To others, a grain of Calomel  
“ was given every night: the complaints as  
“ suddenly disappeared, as where the two  
“ other medicines had been given. The  
“ Mercurius Calcinatus was taken, a grain  
“ or two every night, and the patients were  
“ as soon relieved, as by either of the former  
“ medicines.—From the above account it  
“ is plain, that the specific quality of the  
“ Corrosive Sublimate is only as a mercurial,  
“ and that it cannot be depended on in vene-  
“ real complaints, where the blood is conta-  
“ minated; yet if novelty will recommend  
“ it to the favour of any, it is certainly as  
“ safe, and equally efficacious with Mercury  
“ in



“ in any other shape, given in very small  
“ quantities.”\*

The late Mr. Gataker's observations coincide, in general, with Mr. Bromfeild's. “ It may  
“ be unnecessary,” says he, “ to observe that  
“ the Solution of Sublimate was given for-  
“ merly for the cure of venereal complaints,  
“ and that the use of it was almost intirely  
“ laid aside, 'till Van Swieten communicated  
“ an account of his success by giving it dis-  
“ solved in spirits.”—“ In consequence of  
“ this account, strengthened by the recom-  
“ mendation of very eminent physicians of  
“ this country, the solution of Corrosive  
“ Sublimate soon began to be in common use  
“ for venereal complaints; and the effects  
“ of it at first appeared so favourable, as to  
“ induce some to believe that it would super-  
“ sede the necessity of a salivation on all  
“ occasions.—The result of further and more  
“ general experience has however destroyed  
“ this hope. In obstinate cases, it will some-  
“ times fail even to procure a temporary  
“ relief of the symptoms, and it is a general  
“ observation, and too well founded, that in

\* P. 81.

“ many



“ many cases, where it seems to have answered  
“ remarkably well, there is not a sufficient  
“ reliance on the permanency of the cure,  
“ the symptoms being very apt to return.”\*

M. Louis, whose surgical erudition, and great eminence in his profession, render his testimony upon this subject highly respectable, expresses himself thus:—Je l’ai administré avec soin, je l’ai vû donner par d’habiles gens, & il n’a jamais guéri que les personnes qui auroient reçu un plus prompt soulagement de toute autre preparation mercurielle.—Parallele des Traitemens, &c. P. 172.

It may probably administer occasion of surprise to those who are but little versed in inquiries of this kind, that such opposition of testimony should prevail, on a subject where, it must be presumed, the opportunities of reducing opinion to certainty, are perpetually presenting themselves.

In comparing the evidence given by the respective writers, some allowance ought no doubt to be made for diversity of climate; various modes of living; peculiarity of temperament; and other local and circumstantial differences,

\* Gataker’s Essays.

which



which may possibly, in some measure, modify the operation of the remedy. But, when every fair deduction and qualification has been admitted, so much direct contradiction will nevertheless remain, that any attempt to reconcile the jarring reports we have recited, would be absurd and impracticable.

It were desirable to arrive at something definitive, upon a question of such importance as that under discussion; yet it would favour too much of arrogance, for any individual to presume that his opinion could be sufficient to make the balance preponderate. I shall therefore avoid the endless and unsatisfactory mode of collecting suffrages, or of balancing testimonies, and adopt a more easy and simple standard of truth; by referring to the general practice of men of acknowledged ability in the profession, and such as have had the most extensive opportunities of appreciating the virtues of this medicine.

In adopting this method, I feel myself well warranted in asserting, that surgeons do not commonly rely upon the Muriated Mercury for the cure of the venereal disease in their private practice; and that, in no hospital appropriated to the reception of venereal patients,  
in



in this kingdom, is that medicine administered as the established treatment of the house: I believe the same observation is true, when applied to hospitals on the continent. When it is therefore considered, that a preparation of Mercury so easily procured; a medicine so much more desirable for common use than the mode of treatment by inunction; and, what forms a proper object of attention in all hospitals, a remedy of little expence, compared with the external application of Mercury; when, I say, notwithstanding these advantages, it is little used, and scarcely ever relied on, in cases where the constitution is affected, may we not infer from these facts, that it is declared, by a kind of general consent, to be a precarious and undesirable remedy?

I do not here intend to insinuate, that the Corrosive Sublimate is never employed; nor to deny that it possesses any antivenereal powers: I only mean to contend, that it is not, and it ought not to be, confided in, where secondary symptoms of Lues have appeared; and general practice appears to sanction this decision. If it be inquired, how we are to dispose of the evidence given to the superior virtues



virtues of this medicine, by men of eminence and undoubted probity ; I would ask, what are we to do with the numerous testimonies adduced in favour of the Ormskirk and Tonquin remedies, and of the various other specifics, recommended against the bite of rabid animals ? Are we to receive with implicit faith, the multiplied evidences recorded by great authorities, of the virtues of *Cicuta*, *Belladonna*, *Arsenic*, *Vervain*, &c. in the cure of Cancer and Scrofula ? — If respectable names, or numerous suffrages, are to be admitted as unexceptionable proofs in every question of this kind, we must express regret, instead of approbation, of the labours of those learned moderns, who have expunged, or treated as obsolete, a far greater number of articles of the ancient *materia medica* than they have retained. The attention of the public is indeed required, almost every year, to some new medicine of never-failing efficacy ; and another year's experience commonly evinces, that the only foundation of its claim to infallibility is, the property of infallibly disappointing the expectations of those who place confidence in its efficacy.

An



An aqueous solution of the Muriated Mercury, mixed with the Syrup of Violets, was formerly given by Professor Boerhaave, in doses containing  $\frac{1}{8}$  of a grain of the salt, in many obstinate complaints; but there does not remain any proof of his having given it in venereal cases.

Since the time of Van Swieten, Corrosive Sublimate, blended with mucilaginous and saccharine matters, has been very frequently employed as an antivenereal remedy, and with some appearance of success; and, as the mercurial salt, when combined in very small quantities with these substances, does not manifest itself to the taste, nor can be easily detected by the usual chymical tests; hence the *Sieur L'Affecteur*, and other empirical adventurers, have had the audacity to boast, of their possessing a rob, or syrup, which, absolutely containing no Mercury, is nevertheless a specific against the venereal disease.\*

I have been an attentive observer, during many years, of the effects of combinations of mercurial Salts with Syrups, such as may be found described in the works of Gardane, De

\* Med. Comment. Vol. VII. P. 461 and seq.



Horne, and others; and which are vended by empirics on the continent and in this kingdom, under different titles.\* It will be no important concession to allow, that the Gonorrhœa may sometimes disappear during the use of these medicated syrups; because this form of the disease is often susceptible of a natural cure; and it may be also granted, that venereal ulcers of the tonsils, and blotches on the skin,

\* Quelles que soient les protestations des charlatans, quelque déguisement qu'ils apportent à leurs remèdes, dont ils varient la forme & le goût au grè de leurs intérêts, & de l'opinion publique, on sait que le sublimé en est presque toujours la base. C'est avec ce spécifique, si dangereux entre leurs mains, qu'ils ne craignent point de présenter leurs eaux miraculeuses, leurs sirops déguisés, & leurs remèdes végétaux, qu'ils assurent ne point contenir de Mercure, & qu'ils annoncent comme une découverte qui leur est propre, & pour laquelle ils demandent les récompenses du gouvernement, avec d'autant plus d'assurance, qu'ils ont l'art de tromper les plus clairvoyans, & de mêler avec adresse à leurs decoctions, ou à la boisson ordinaire des malades, le remède qui peut guérir: espece d'escamotage fort en vogue depuis quelques tems. C'est en vain qu'on dévoile ces gens à secret, ou qu'on les expulse, en mettant le public en état de les apprécier: ils se reproduisent presque aussitôt; c'est une génération éternelle, que l'avidité fait renaître, pour ainsi dire, de ces cendres.

Obs. &c. par De Horne. Tom. I. P. 118.



are now and then removed by them ; yet, in all the instances that have hitherto fallen under my notice, these secondary symptoms have invariably returned.—On the other hand, I have known a three months regular continuance of the Syrup fail of curing recent chancres ; in many other instances, I have seen the disease proceed in its usual course, as if no medicine whatever had been employed ; and, in some important cases, where secondary symptoms of Lues Venerea were present, the most patient, expensive, and persevering adherence, has not been attended with any real advantage.

It would be foreign to the design of this work, to enter largely upon an enumeration of the medical virtues of the Corrosive Sublimate, and of the various circumstances under which it may be administered with utility ; I shall therefore only offer a few observations on its powers as an antivenereal remedy.

I am ready to acknowledge the appropriate merits of this preparation, when they agree with evident facts and observation ; for I am not of the mind of those persons with whom a medicine is good for every thing, or good for nothing. Any article in the materia medica



medica may be *bonum quoad hoc*, or *malum quoad hoc*, its efficacy being circumscribed within the lines marked out by actual experience.

When I was first entrusted, early in my life, with the care of the Lock Hospital, I engaged in a course of experiments, to ascertain the power of Corrosive Sublimate in venereal complaints; and, as I have given that preparation in a great variety of different cases, both in public and private practice, during the last twenty years, it may perhaps be allowable for me to express myself with some decision upon this subject.

When the Sublimate is given to cure the primary symptoms of Syphilis, it will sometimes succeed; more especially when it produces a considerable degree of soreness of the gums, and the common specific effects of Mercury in the animal system. But it will often fail of removing even a recent chancre; and, where that symptom has vanished during the administration of Corrosive Sublimate, I have known a three months course of that medicine fail of securing the patient from a constitutional affection. The result of my observations is, that simple Mercury,



Calomel, or calcined Mercury, are preparations more to be confided in, for the cure of primary symptoms, than Corrosive Sublimate. The latter will often check the progress of secondary symptoms very conveniently; and I think it is peculiarly efficacious in relieving venereal pains; in healing ulcers of the throat, and in promoting the desquamation of eruptions. Yet, even in these cases, it never confers permanent benefit; for new symptoms will appear during the use of it; and, on many occasions, it will fail of affording the least advantage to the patient, from first to last.

I do sometimes indeed employ this preparation in venereal cases; but it is either at the beginning of a mercurial course, to bring the constitution under the influence of Mercury at an early period, or during a course of inunction, with the intention of increasing the action of simple Mercury. I sometimes prescribe it also after the conclusion of a course of frictions, to support the mercurial influence in the habit, in order to guard against the danger of a relapse. But, on no occasion whatever do I think it safe to confide in this preparation



preparation singly and uncombined, for the cure of any truly venereal symptom.

I made a series of experiments many years ago, to ascertain the comparative merits of Mercury merely divided by triturating it with mucilaginous substances ; of calcined Mercury ; of Calomel ; of the precipitate of Calomel, produced by mixing it with Volatile Alkali ; of the pulvis cinereus of Black ; of Nitrated Mercury, &c.

The Calcined Mercury, the precipitates of Calomel as they have been called, and the nitrate of Mercury, when given internally, were neither milder in their operation, nor superior in efficacy, to Calomel, or to simple Mercury. Indeed, I prefer these two preparations to any of the former, as being less liable to disappoint my expectations, by exerting their primary action on the stomach and bowels, to the detriment of their more important effects as antivenereal remedies.

When any of the foregoing mercurial preparations were mixed with hog's-lard, and rubbed into the legs and thighs, they neither removed the local symptoms, nor affected the general system in so short a space of time as the Unguentum Hydrargyri. In



other respects, I did not remark any important difference in their agency as mercurial preparations.

The several operose and expensive preparations of Mercury which have had a currency at different periods, as possessing extraordinary medicinal properties, are generally falling into disuse: for it is now commonly understood by men of science in our profession, that *what* we give, is of less importance than *how* we give it.



## CHAP. XI.

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### *Of MERCURIAL FUMIGATION.*

THE practice of exposing the body to Mercury in the state of Vapour, is nearly of the same date with the discovery of the anti-venereal qualities of that mineral. It was usual, at that early period, to mix Cinnabar with various gums and aromatic substances, to which they often added Arsenic, combined in different proportions with Sulphur: thus injuring the health, and endangering the life of the person they undertook to cure.\*

Sunt igitur Styracem in primis qui, cinnabarimque  
Et Minium, & Stymmi agglomerant, & Thura minuta,  
Quorum suffitu pertingunt corpus acerbo,  
Absumuntque Luem miseram, & contagia dira:  
At vero & partim durum est medicamen & acre,  
Partim etiam fallax, quo faucibus angit in ipsis  
Spiritus, eluctansque animam vix continet ægram.  
Quocirca totum ad corpus nemo audeat uti,  
Judice me: certis fortasse erit utile membris,  
Quæ Papulæ informes, Chironiaque ulcera pascunt.†

\* Aphrodisiacus.

Parallele des Traitemens. Chap. V.

† Syphilis Hieron. Fracastorii. Lib. II. P. 38. 4to.



The mischievous consequences which often resulted from the injudicious use of Mercurial Fumigations, gradually lessened the reputation of this mode of treatment, and, in course of time, nearly abolished it. A new mode of fumigating was then introduced, in which the body was exposed to the vapour of Spirit of Wine; this was designed principally to promote sweating; and the diaphoresis was supported during some hours, by the aid of warm coverings, and the exhibition of large quantities of Decoctions of the Woods. But, while the fumigation of the whole body was performed by Spirit of Wine alone, Mercury, in a state of vapour, was applied topically, in cases of ozaena, ulcers of the throat, ulcers of the ears, venereal excrescences, &c. and with evident advantage.

In the year 1736, an empiric, of the name of Charbonnier, appeared at Paris, professing to use mercurial fumigations after a new mode, equally safe and successful. He was permitted to select some patients in different hospitals, for the subject of his experiments; and the progress and effects were superintended by the physicians and surgeons of the respective institutions. Many persons really  
affected



affected with Lues Venerea were undoubtedly cured by this man; yet it must also be admitted, that he failed in several instances; and what is still more important, a greater proportion of people died under this mode of treatment, than when Mercury was administered in the usual manner.

The practice of general fumigation with Mercury, being on these accounts discountenanced by Astruc, and by many of the principal practitioners in Europe, was nearly abandoned a second time, when M. Lalouette published, in 1776, what he called, a new method of treating the venereal disease by fumigation. The preparations which this author recommends to be employed as fumigating powders, are analogous to Calomel, and Hydrargyrus cum Creta; and, inasmuch as no sulphureous vapours arise during the process of combustion, these substances may be preferred to Cinnabar, or Æthiop's Mineral; but, on the score of real efficacy as mercurial preparations, it is not easy to explain how far they merit a preference.\* The fumigating machine

\* M. Lalouette is not the first person who was sensible of the disagreeable effects of sulphureous vapours, and who



machine is indeed a very convenient one, but it is no novel invention, as the author pretends ; for the plate given by M. Lalonette, differs in no material circumstance from that published by Nicholas de Blegny, in the year 1683.

In the years 1786 and 1787, having procured a fumigating machine, constructed according to the directions given by M. Lalonette, I made a considerable number of experiments, to decide on the comparative advantages of this method, and the common practice of inunction. I found that the gums became turgid and tender, very quickly ; and that the local appearances were sooner removed than by the other modes of introducing mercury into the system. But, to counterbalance these advantages, I observed, that it induced a considerable debility in a short space of time ; that a ptyalism was often excited rapidly, and at an early period ; and that, consequently, I was often obstructed in pursuing steadily a

who proposed methods of obtaining the beneficial effects of Mercury, by combining it with other ingredients.—Thierry de Hery gave formulæ for this purpose, more than two hundred years ago. *Methode Curatoire*. P. 170.

course



course of treatment, which operated so powerfully on the animal frame.\*

The conclusions I deduced from my experiments were the following:—That where checking the progress of the disease suddenly is an object of great moment, where the body is covered with venereal ulcers, or where the eruptions are large and numerous, so that there scarcely remains a surface large enough to absorb the ointment, the application of the vapour of Mercury, will be always attended with evident advantage. But, in addition to these remarks, I think it right to subjoin, that it is extremely difficult to introduce a sufficient quantity of Mercury into the animal frame, in this way, so as to secure the patient against the hazard of a relapse; I therefore consider it as a mode of treatment by no means eligible in general practice.

The vapour of Mercury, when applied to venereal ulcers, to fungi, and excrescences,

\* Thierry de Hery, who published a Method of treating the Venereal Disease, about fifty years after its appearance in Europe, condemns general fumigations; but recommends topical ones, as subsidiary to the introduction of Mercury in another way.



is a medicament of singular efficacy, and merits the confidence of the surgeon; but little or no account ought to be made of the Mercury which is thus received into the circulation; for we should never, in those cases, introduce a smaller quantity of the specific by inunction, for the purpose of securing the constitution, than if no fumigation had been employed.



## CHAP. XII.

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*OBSERVATIONS*

ON SOME

*EFFECTS OF MERCURY.*

IN concluding this part of my subject, I will subjoin a few practical observations, which may probably afford some useful information to the younger part of my brethren in the profession.

Many persons have taught, that during a course of mercurial inunction, it is unnecessary to continue the friction until the ointment be absorbed; and that the same medicinal effects will be obtained, by merely spreading it over the surface of the skin, as by the more laborious process of rubbing it in as completely as possible. Nothing can be more at variance with truth than this instruction; nevertheless, a doctrine so peculiarly grateful to the feelings of indolent and irresolute



lute patients, has not failed to acquire considerable currency. I do, however, most strenuously protest against this slovenly and insufficient mode of applying the ointment; a mode which must finally end in the injury of the patient, and the disgrace of the surgeon. But I do not think it sufficient simply to oppose so delusive and dangerous an opinion, without urging it as a matter of no inconsiderable importance, that the patient himself ought always to perform the friction.

There may be circumstances indeed, under which an imperious necessity may constrain the violation of this precept; but, whenever it is infringed, it is always at the peril of the patient's safety, unless the assistant conduct it with an accuracy and dexterity which is seldom possessed by those who undertake this disgusting office. Many instances have fallen under my notice, where the ill success of the surgeon could be manifestly traced to this source; and where a compliance with the advice I have now suggested, has been immediately attended with the desired effect.

Another erroneous notion, which I would controvert, is the opinion maintained by many respectable persons, that free exposure to the  
air,



air, during a mercurial course, will neither impede the progress of the cure, nor diminish the efficacy of the specific.

It must indeed be allowed, in the first place, that of those patients who suffer only from the primary symptoms of Lues Venerea, a very small proportion restrict themselves from going abroad as usual; yet, notwithstanding the liberty they assume in this particular, they commonly obtain a radical cure of their complaints, in a moderate space of time.

These acknowledged facts do not however constitute any valid objection against what I now contend for; namely, that unrestrained exposure to a dry cool air, has a powerful agency, in diminishing the specific and medicinal virtues of Mercury.

When the venereal virus has produced what are commonly called secondary symptoms, the attempting to cure a patient without confining him to the house, will seldom succeed. In these cases, the failure cannot always be ascribed to certain irregularities to which persons who walk abroad freely are liable; for, where the closest adherence to rules are in other respects observed, the effects



fects of Mercury on the constitution are commonly feeble, and on the disease, irregular, unequal, and imperfect. Even in those persons whose symptoms are inconsiderable and recent a larger quantity of Mercury must be introduced, and it must be continued for a longer time, than where exclusion from the open air can be complied with.

I am aware, that particular instances may be adduced by every practitioner in surgery, of persons powerfully affected by small doses of Mercury, who have taken their usual exercise abroad; but these exceptions can only point out, what no man needs to be told, that a wonderful diversity in the operation of Mercury may be noted, in different constitutions, and under every variety of regimen.

Mr. Hunter seems to have thought, that neither cold, nor warmth, had any material effect on the action of Mercury in the system; but he supposed, that these natural agents might have some effect on the venereal disease, in rendering it more or less susceptible of the medicinal agency of the specific.\*

\* Treatise on the Venereal Disease. P. 339.



If it be well authenticated, that Lues Venerea does not yield so kindly to the powers of Mercury, when the diseased person is exposed to the cold air, as when he is confined to a warm apartment, we become possessed of a rule of practice which ought always to have full influence, in treating that malady. The reasons that pathologists may assign for this fact, will probably be various and discordant; but, misconceptions, or difference of opinion, ought not to give rise to any perplexity in the conduct which prudence so clearly dictates upon this occasion: for, whether the action of the venereal poison, or of the remedy employed to cure it, suffer an alteration, from exposure of the patient to the atmosphere, yet, in order to insure success, the obstructing cause must undoubtedly be taken away.

If the subject I am now discussing terminated in a question of mere speculation, the investigation of which had no farther aim than to the solution of a problem in pathology, the reader's attention would be scarcely recompensed by a more enlarged inquiry; but, since I conceive that the welfare of those who are obliged to use Mercury in large quantities,

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tities, and to continue during a long course of time under its influence, is intimately involved in it, perhaps it may not be unacceptable, if I give somewhat of a detailed account, of the circumstances which led me to the conclusion insisted on in some of the preceding pages.

In the course of two or three years after my appointment to the care of the Lock Hospital, I observed, that in almost every year, one and sometimes two instances of sudden death occurred among the patients admitted into that institution; that these accidents could not be traced to any evident cause; and that the subjects were commonly men who had nearly, and sometimes intirely, completed their mercurial course. I consulted Mr. Bromfeild and Mr. Williams upon this interesting subject, but they acknowledged themselves unable to communicate any satisfactory information: they had carefully examined the bodies of many who had died thus unexpectedly, without being able to discover any morbid appearances; and they confessed that they were equally ignorant of the cause, the mode of prevention, or the method of treating, that state of the system which immediately preceded the fatal termination.

As



As the object of my inquiry was of considerable importance, I gave a constant and minute attention to the operation of Mercury on the constitution in general, as well as to its effects on the disease for which it was administered; and, after some time was elapsed, I ascertained, that these sinister events were to be ascribed to Mercury acting as a poison on the system, quite unconnected with its agency as a remedy; and that its deleterious qualities, were neither in proportion to the inflammation of the mouth, nor to the actual quantity of that mineral absorbed into the body. The morbid condition of the system which supervenes on these occasions, during a mercurial course, and which tends to a fatal issue, is a state which, in a former work, I have denominated *Erethismus*;\* and is characterized by great depression of strength, a sense of anxiety about the *præcordia*, frequent sighing, trembling, partial or universal, a small quick pulse, sometimes vomiting, a pale contracted countenance, a sense of coldness; but the tongue is seldom furred, nor are the vital or natural functions much disordered.

\* Principles of Surgery. Chap. I.



When these symptoms are present, a sudden and violent exertion of the animal power will sometimes prove fatal; for instance, walking hastily across the ward; rising up suddenly in the bed to take food or drink; or slightly struggling with some of their fellow patients, are among the circumstances which have commonly preceded the sudden death of those afflicted with the mercurial Erethismus.

To prevent the dangerous consequences of this diseased state, the patient ought to discontinue the use of Mercury; nor is this rule to be deviated from, whatever may be the stage, or extent, or violence of the venereal symptoms. The impending destruction of the patient, forms an argument paramount to all others; it may not be indeed superfluous to add, that a perseverance in the mercurial course, under these circumstances, will seldom restrain the progress of the disease, or be productive of any advantage.

The patient must be expressly directed to expose himself freely to a dry and cool air, in such a manner as shall be attended with the least fatigue. It will not be sufficient to sit in a room with the windows open; he must be taken into a garden, or a field, and live

as



as much as possible in the open air, until the forementioned symptoms be considerably abated. The good effects of this mode of treatment, conjoined with a generous course of diet, will be soon manifested; and I have very often seen patients so far recovered in the space of from ten to fourteen days, that they could safely resume the use of Mercury; and, what may appear remarkable, they can very often employ that specific efficiently afterwards, without suffering any inconvenience.

This simple and successful method of managing persons labouring under the mercurial Erethismus, has the sanction of many years experience; and, in confirmation of its efficacy, I have the pleasure of saying, that I have scarcely lost a single patient from this cause, since I first adopted it.

As Mercury, however cautiously introduced into the human body, will sometimes be determined suddenly to the mouth, producing severe inflammation, ulceration, and the other disagreeable attendants of a copious ptyalism, the acquiring of a medicine which possesses the power of speedily and safely removing a salivation, has always been a great desideratum with surgeons.



Various remedies have been recommended for this purpose, with strong assurances of their efficacy ; such as, Purgatives, Nitre, Sulphur, Gum Arabic, Lime Water, Camphire, Peruvian Bark, Sulphurated Kali, Blistering Plasters, &c. yet I suspect, the reputation of these several articles, rests upon the basis of a scanty and inadequate experience. I do not presume to urge, that the medicines just now enumerated, are absolutely destitute of all utility in a salivation ; but the slowness with which the best of them exerts its good qualities, and the manifest futility of the greater part of them, destroy all confidence in their power to remove the serious inconvenience complained of.

The speedy and decisive advantages resulting from free exposure to the open air, during the mercurial Erethismus, induced me to try whether the same treatment would not confer an equal benefit on those who were suffering from a premature or excessive salivation.—Common prejudice has indeed, during a long time, proscribed exposure to the cold air, as being certainly injurious to those who are under the influence of Mercury ; and the inflammation



inflammation of the gums, cheeks and tongue, is, even at this day, frequently attributed to what is called a cold, as the exciting cause of it. These apprehensions are, however, ill-founded; for, although freely exposing the person to cold and moisture, or to heat and moisture, during a mercurial course, may be generally considered as improper, yet the aggravation of the inflamed state of the mouth, the supervention of rheumatic pains, &c. ought not to be attributed to pure atmospheric air, but to the water contained in a foggy or damp atmosphere. The good effects of this practice justified my expectations; for I observed, that the breathing of a cool, dry air, was no less beneficial than pleasant, to a person affected with ulcerated cheeks and gums; the animal spirits were likewise recruited, and the health so much improved, in the course of a week or ten days, that the patient was generally capable of returning to the use of his medicine again.

I have, accordingly, during many years, constantly directed those patients who have been suffering from this cause, to lay aside all coverings of the face; to go out in a carriage



with the windows open, and when at a proper distance from town, to alight and walk in the fields as long as their strength would permit. Their apartments ought likewise to be well ventilated; no more fire should be kept than the season of the year may render absolutely necessary, and the person should live in the open air as much as possible. Not a single instance has yet occurred to me where the least indisposition was occasioned by this mode of treatment; and the certain advantages attending it, are such as can only be properly estimated by those who have often employed it.

In recommending free exposure to air, I do not intend to preclude any other subsidiary means, which peculiar circumstances may indicate, or render eligible; such as, cathartics at due intervals; the Peruvian bark and mineral acids; with the assiduous application of astringent and other suitable gargles. The most material objection which I foresee against the method of treatment I have recommended, is the hazard to which the patient will be exposed, of having the salivation suddenly checked, and of suffering from some other disease in consequence of it.

That



That the hasty suppression of a Ptyalism may be followed by serious inconveniencies, has been proved by Dr. Silvester,\* who published three cases of persons who had been under his own care; two of whom were afflicted with violent pains; and the third, scarcely retained any food in her stomach, for the space of three months. I have seen not only pains, but even general convulsions produced from the same cause. But this singular kind of *metastasis* of the mercurial irritation, does not appear to me to owe its appearance to simple exposure to cold and dry air; because I have known it occur in different forms, where patients continued to breathe a warm atmosphere, but used a bath the water of which was not sufficiently heated. Cold liquids taken in a large quantity into the stomach, or exposure of the body to cold and moisture, will also commonly prove extremely injurious to those who are fully under the influence of Mercury; whereas, breathing a cool air, while the body is properly covered with apparel, has certainly no tendency to produce any distressing or dangerous consequences.

\* Medical Obs. and Inquiries. Vol. III.



If, however, a suppression of a Ptyalism should be occasioned by any act of indiscretion, the remedy is easy and certain; and consists only in the quick introduction of Mercury into the body, so as to produce a foreness of the gums; with the occasional use of a hot bath.



## CHAP. XIII.

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### ON THE USE OF ACIDS

IN

### *LUES VENEREA.*

SINCE the time when the science of chymistry began to be cultivated with successful diligence, and an enlarged and more correct knowledge of the properties of bodies has been acquired by experiments wisely imagined, and skilfully conducted, frequent attempts have been made, though with unequal success, to apply the principles of that useful science, to the phenomena of disease, and the operation of remedies. When a great number of hypothetical notions are successively proposed, upon subjects at the best imperfectly understood; when systems are constructed upon scanty and fallacious observations, and are chiefly supported by doubtful analogies; it may be naturally expected



pected, that such productions of the fancy will partake of absurdity, or error; or at the best, will present nothing to the mind but undiluted obscurity.\*

Those who, with Sylvius † and his followers, contended that the venereal virus was an acid, very consistently denominated Mercury an alkali, and interpreted the *ratio medendi* of that mineral according to the doctrines of chymical affinities; and, agreeably to these notions, absorbents and alcohol were considered as useful topical applications. On the contrary, the advocates for a predominant alkali being the source of *Lues Venerea*, directed acids to be given as the true antidote; hence, they “sometimes ordered their patients to eat six large lemons daily, besides

\* *Jacobus Vercellonus de Pudendorum Morbis.*

*Disputatum est, utrum acidi, an alcalici, an salini, an putridi generis sit, mihi quidem postremum videtur esse verisimillimum. Kempe Dissertat. P. 11.*

† *Opera Francisci Deleboe Sylvii. Tract. III. De Lue Venerea.*

*Mercurius Compitalitius. Art. III. P. 512.*

*Joan. Muys Praxis Medico-Chirurgica.*

*Lemery Cours de Chimie, &c.*

“ good



“ good store of verjuice at their meals.”\* But, into whatever incongruities individuals have been seduced, whether by current prejudices, by erroneous principles, or by the misapplication of right ones, still some advantages have commonly accrued to medical science; for, either the sources of former mistakes have been detected, or unexpected and useful discoveries have been accidentally made. There can scarcely therefore, be any thing more weak and inequitable, than to condemn and disparage a science, because a small number of its professors have sometimes discovered in the course of their investigations, the extremes of indiscretion, self conceit, or temerity. How long, or to what extent the principles and practices now alluded to prevailed in the world, are inquiries which form no part of the design of this work. It may suffice to observe, that the application of chymistry to medicine in the present period, has been conducted with an evidence and a suc-

\* Turner's Syphilis. Ed. V. P. 33.

Med. Transactions, Vol. I. A mechanical account of the operation of Mercury, by Dr. Barry.



cess, which the first promoters of that science scarcely knew how to wish for.

It is probable, that the Vegetable Acid is the only medicine of that class which has been employed as a specific against Lues Venerea, till towards the close of the present century; but, to what extent it was introduced into practice, cannot now be ascertained.

About thirty years ago, an Italian empiric pretended to possess an infallible specific, which contained no Mercury. At the request of some persons of high rank, he was permitted to administer his nostrum to certain patients in the Lock Hospital; and it had the fate which all other nostrums commonly meet, when their virtues are subjected to the scrutiny of men who are qualified judges of the subject. When the medicine was afterwards examined, it was found to consist chiefly, if not entirely, of the essential oil of lemons.

It was, during many years, the practice of the surgeons of that hospital, to order the patients to eat a certain number of Seville oranges, or lemons, every day, when ulcers from a venereal cause became stationary, or untractable; and evident advantages were derived from this treatment. Domenico

Cirillo



Cirillo has likewise spoken in the highest terms of the efficacy of this class of remedies, in obstinate venereal complaints.\*

During the last two years, I have paid particular attention to the powers of these Vegetable Acids in venereal cases; but I have not witnessed a single instance in which they proved competent to the removal of any one venereal symptom. The health of the patient has been indeed sometimes improved by the use of them; but the disease was neither suspended in its progress, nor meliorated in its appearance.

A man afflicted with a venereal sore throat, placed himself under the direction of a gentle-

\* Ma tutti questi ajuti sono da riguardarsi come presso a poco inertì, se si paragonano all'efficacia dell'acido vegetabile, al quale bisogna dare il nome di medicamento specifico per la guarigione delle piaghe veneree, cagionate da Lue antica, e da eccessive dosi di Mercurio introdotte nel corpo. Non un solo caso di questa natura ho veduto eradicativamente curato per mezzo dell'uso continuo de' Limoni, Aranci, o pure colle larghe bevute di aceto. Nè bisogna limitare l'uso de' Limoni, ma convien permettere anzi ordinare agl'Infermi, che per guarire prontamente nè facciano abuso.

Osservazioni Pratiche, &c. P. 168.

man,



man who professed to have great confidence in this remedy. The patient took lemon juice, and the juice of Seville oranges, during many weeks, and I saw him frequently while he was pursuing this course. The virus however proceeded in its ravages, without any sensible interruption, till the bones of the nose becoming affected, the patient very prudently despaired of deriving advantage from a longer continuance of the Vegetable Acid, and had recourse to the use of Mercury.



## CHAP. XIV.

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### *Of the VITRIOLIC ACID.*

THE Vitriolic Acid, mixed with hog's-lard, has been frequently employed, during the last fifty years, as an ointment against the Scabies, and some other cutaneous affections;\* and the same Acid, diluted with spirit, or water, has been often administered internally with great success, in some diseases of the skin.†

I have made great use of the Vitriolic Acid in cutaneous diseases, during the last twenty years; and have also thought proper to give it to various persons afflicted with the Lues

\* This medicine was employed in the Prussian army, in 1756, and an account of the success which attended it, was published by Dr. Helmich, in a [work intitled, *Dissertatio de Olei Vitrioli usu in quibusdam Scabiei Speciebus*. It is likewise mentioned by Baldinger, in his *Treatise on Army Diseases*.

† See a paper published by Dr. Carmichael Smyth, in the first volume of the *Medical Communications*.



Venerea ; not indeed with the express intention of curing that malady, but with a view of remedying certain inconveniencies which were obstructions to the use of Mercury. These incidental occurrences have furnished me with various opportunities of observing the changes it is found to produce, in venereal symptoms, the most material of which I shall proceed to describe.

When a bad state of health prohibits the immediate introduction of Mercury into the body ; or when the appearances are too equivocal to warrant a prompt decision on the true nature of the disease, and more especially, if dyspeptic symptoms, attended with profuse perspirations, harass the patient, and exhaust his strength ; the Elixir of Vitriol will commonly remove these supervenient symptoms, and give a temporary check to the progress of the disease ; nevertheless, the virus will soon proceed in its destructive course, even under the constant exhibition of the acid. I have often seen the Elixir of Vitriol, given in the quantity of two drams a day, evidently arrest the progress of venereal ulcers of the tonsils : and sometimes venereal eruptions will fade and nearly disappear, during the use of it ;  
these



these apparently beneficial effects however are never permanent. I do not mean to affirm merely, that the symptoms will recur when the acid is discontinued; but that the disease will make a certain and manifest advance, at the very time in which this medicine is given in as large doses as the stomach ought to receive it.

There are circumstances however, wherein the Vitriolic Acid will confer actual and durable benefit; as in those ulcers of the penis, of the groin, and of the throat, which sometimes remain nearly stationary, after the power of the venereal virus has been completely subdued by Mercury. I have administered the Peruvian Bark, Sarsaparilla, and other medicines of similar qualities, in such instances, without gaining the least advantage; whereas, on discontinuing these, and having recourse to the Elixir of Vitriol, in as large doses as would agree with the stomach, the ulcerations have speedily healed.

I have likewise found this acid very efficient in counteracting the troublesome symptoms produced by Mercury, when it has been determined too powerfully to the mouth. When the ptyalism is accompanied with ulcer-



ation of the tongue, of the cheeks, or of the tonsils, on suspending the use of Mercury, and exhibiting this acid three or four times a day in water, a more speedy amendment is obtained, than by the exhibition of any other article of the materia medica with which I am acquainted.

Some accounts have been lately published, tending to prove the antivenereal virtues of the Vitriolic Acid; and, if the theory proposed by some ingenious men, of the *modus agendi* of acids in this disease, be correct, it might be reasonable to look for such qualities in it, according to the rules of analogy. The experience of many years, has however been so little favourable to expectations of this kind, that I have not thought it necessary to make any farther experiments with this medicine.



## CHAP. XV.

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### *Of the MARINE ACID.*

THE advantages which may be derived from employing the Marine Acid, in Lues Venerea, both as a medicine capable of ameliorating the appearance of venereal ulcers, and of restraining for a time the progress of the disease, have been observed by me during many years. I was first induced to give this acid in venereal ulcers of the tongue, and of the throat, in consequence of the great benefit which had resulted from my using it in the Cancrum Oris ; and, although I did not view it as an antidote against Lues Venerea, yet I have frequently availed myself of its useful qualities, where it has been desirable to gain a little time, previously to the entering on a mercurial course.

I will recite two cases, for the purpose of illustrating its agency under the circumstances which I have stated.



## CASE THE ELEVENTH.

A gentleman consulted me in the year 1796, on account of a fore throat which had resisted all the common remedies, and had been supposed, by some who inspected it, to be of a cancerous nature. The tonsils were much enlarged, and were deeply and extensively ulcerated. From the mere appearance of the sores, I should have concluded them to be venereal; but he assured me it was not possible for him to be infected with that malady. Being in some doubt about the real nature of the complaint, I ordered eight drops of the Marine Acid to be taken in a simple vehicle three or four times a day; and directed him to use a gargle containing some of the same acid. The ulcers assumed a more clean and healthy aspect in about ten days; the tonsils subsided; and in about three weeks the sores were perfectly healed. He persisted in taking the acid regularly; but, in less than a fortnight, and during the time he was employing it, venereal eruptions appeared on different parts of the body, and a very painful node arose on the tibia of each leg. As the  
disease



disease now appeared under an unequivocal form, I discontinued the acid, and effected a permanent cure, by a course of mercurial inunction.

### CASE THE TWELFTH.

In the beginning of the year 1796, Mr. —, desired me to visit him: he had a node on the shin of the left leg, and venereal ulcers on the uvula, tonsils, and pharynx; his strength was much reduced, his body was greatly emaciated, and he appeared to be in a hectic state. This unfavourable state of his health rendered it improper to employ Mercury; I therefore ordered him to take nutritious aliment, to sleep in the country, and to take a decoction of Sarsaparilla, with the powder of Peruvian bark. The plan I had suggested not proving so beneficial as I expected, I directed the Marine Acid to be given, as in the former case, and ordered him to use a gargle acidulated with the same. In about ten days, the appearances in his throat were sensibly amended; his health was im-



proving, and he gained strength daily ; the node on the tibia was not painful, and seemed to be stationary. When the ulcers in his throat were nearly healed, and during the time he was steadily pursuing this plan of treatment, venereal blotches appeared upon the surface of his body ; and, soon afterwards, the ulcers in his throat began to spread anew. As the reasons for deferring a mercurial course no longer existed, and the disease was evidently gaining ground, I directed him to employ a course of mercurial inunction, by which he obtained a permanent cure.

The beneficial consequences which I had often remarked, from the use of the Vitriolic and Marine Acids, in venereal cases, were sufficiently obvious to engage my attention ; but I never inferred from such instances as are recited in the foregoing pages, that these acids could radically cure the venereal disease. I was accustomed to ascribe the advantages which were derived from these medicines, partly to their salutary effects on the stomach, and consequent improvement of the health of the patient, and partly to their agency as local applications.

As



As the Marine Acid is less grateful to the stomach, I do not prescribe it so frequently, in ulcers forming the sequelæ of a venereal taint, as the Vitriolic Acid; but, where I have directed it by way of experiment, I have not been sensible of any superior medicinal efficacy which the latter possessed over the former.



## CHAP. XVI.

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### *Of the NITROUS ACID.*

IT was my intention, about two years ago, to collect and publish a history of the effects of the Nitrous Acid in Lues Venerea; some circumstances intervened, which prevented me from executing my design at that time; and, since that period, the public has received so much information on the subject,\* that I find it expedient to contract my views, and to deviate considerably from my original plan.

The first account of the powers of the Nitrous Acid in venereal cases, was published by Mr. Scott, at Bombay, in April 1796: and the papers sent to the Right Honourable Sir Joseph Banks on this subject, were transmitted to me, by the polite attention of Dr. Gray, Sec. R. S. soon after their arrival in

\* See the publications of Dr. Beddoes, Dr. Rollo, Mr. Cruickshank, Dr. Ferriar, and several others, on this subject.



England. I began to make experiments with the Nitric Acid in the beginning of the year 1797, at the Lock Hospital. In the course of the years 1797, 1798, and 1799, the Nitric and Nitrous Acids were given to a great number of venereal patients, both in this kingdom and on the continent. Additional communications have likewise been sent by Mr. Scott from India: nevertheless, I am not sure, that the power of this medicine in Syphilis, has yet been ascertained in so satisfactory a manner, as to preclude all difference of opinion upon the subject.\*

It would argue presumption in me to suppose, that any thing I can offer, will reconcile the several discordant opinions, or reduce the gentlemen who have made experiments with various success, to a parity of sentiment; yet as the discovery of practical truth is, or at least ought to be, the motive of our researches, he who joins in the inquiry without partiality or prepossession, may hope for a candid attention to his labours.

\* Copies of the original letters sent by Mr. Scott, with a copious collection of interesting facts on this subject, have been published at different times by Dr. Beddoes.



As the publishing of a great collection of nearly similar cases, can be neither necessary nor useful, when such a multiplicity have already appeared, I shall restrict myself to a small number of instances, and select only those wherein I can vouch for the correctness of the experiments.

The first trials which I undertook with this new medicine, were made with the Nitric Acid; but, as I did not remark any effects in the Nitric Acid, different from those produced by the Nitrous Acid, I commonly employed the latter, in the following manner:

Nitrous Acid, two drams;  
Pure water, a pint and a half;  
Syrup, four ounces.

This mixture was usually taken in the space of twenty-four hours. As local applications, I employed a saturnine lotion to the sores; and emollient poultices to tumours, and inflamed parts. All mercurial applications were absolutely prohibited.

*Cases*



*Cases in which the Nitrous Acid was given  
with Advantage.*

CASE THE FIRST.

Thomas A. aged twenty-one years, was admitted into the Lock Hospital, under my care, November 16, 1797. He had venereal ulcers on the prepuce, and a phymosis.

Nov. 19th.—He began to take two drams of the Nitrous Acid in the day.

23d.—The fores are cleaner, and have assumed a more healthy appearance.

30th.—The phymosis is better, and the fores begin to heal.

Dec. 5th.—The ulcers are nearly healed. A small, red, painful, and pustular eruption appeared on the trunk of the body, which excited great uneasiness. The pustules suppurated quickly, and on the 11th they had become dry, and desquamation began to take place.

20th.—The ulcers are healed, and the phymosis is quite removed.

He continued taking the Nitrous Acid till December the 30th, when being weary of confinement, and having no complaints, he eloped.

CASE



## CASE THE SECOND.

T. Macdonald, aged twenty-five years, was admitted a patient at the Public Dispensary, in Carey Street, June the 7th, 1798, with the usual symptoms of a Gonorrhœa. He took the Nitrous Acid during twelve days, when I discharged him cured.

## CASE THE THIRD.

W. S. a middle aged man, was admitted a patient under my care, at the Public Dispensary, May the 4th, 1798. He had a chancre behind the corona glandis, of a month's duration. He took the Nitrous Acid till June the 8th, when he was dismissed cured.

## CASE THE FOURTH.

Joseph Taylor, aged twenty years, was admitted a patient under my care, at the Public Dispensary, October the 17th, 1797.—He had two chancres on the præputium, and a small one on the frænum; the præputium was considerably swollen. This disease had  
had



had existed above three months. He was ordered to take the Nitrous Acid.

October 22d.—The sore on the frænum is cleaner, and assumes a healing appearance.

25th.—The sore on the frænum is quite healed; those situated on the præputium are no better.

He complains that his mouth is very sore. The inside of his cheeks look red, and his face is swollen, but his gums are neither turgid nor sore, as when mercury has been taken.

27th.—The swelling and uneasiness about his face and mouth, have entirely disappeared. The acid agrees very well with his stomach and bowels. The smaller sore on the præputium has begun to heal, but the larger one spreads, and is painful.

Nov. 3d.—The small sore is quite healed; the large sore is less painful, but it has not yet assumed a healthy appearance.

10th.—The sore is considerably amended, and begins to heal.

14th.—It is almost healed.

He continued taking the acid till Dec. the 26th. The last mentioned sore had been healed full three weeks; although the cicatrix was a little unequal and hard. I desired him to return



return to me if any fores appeared again, but I have never seen him since.\*

My friend, Dr. Joseph Vigarous, from Montpellier, informs me, that he has given the Nitrous Acid with great advantage in the Gonorrhœa. I have not been quite so successful; for the only instance which has occurred in my practice, of its conferring speedy and decisive benefit in that complaint, is that of Macdonald.

*Cases in which the Nitrous Acid was given without Success.*

#### CASE THE FIFTH.

John Ravard, aged twenty-six years, was admitted into the Lock Hospital, under my care, February the 25th, 1797. He had a phymosis; enlarged absorbent glands in each groin; and his body was covered with a venereal eruption. He was ordered to take the Nitrous Acid.

March 3d.—The phymosis is better, and the glands in the groin have subsided; the

\* These are the only cases in which I have seen the Nitrous Acid employed with apparent success.

eruption



eruption is paler, and seems to be disappearing from some parts.

9th.—He makes a large quantity of urine. The eruption continues to disappear.

He persevered in taking two drams of the Nitrous Acid every day, till the 26th of March, when I increased the quantity to three drams. The eruption was still visible, although it had a very pale and faint appearance.

April 1st.—The eruption is as vivid, and the blotches have become as numerous, as when he was admitted into the hospital. I accordingly directed him to discontinue taking the acid, and to begin a course of mercurial frictions, by which he obtained a permanent cure.

### CASE THE SIXTH.

Sarah Serle, aged nineteen years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into the Lock Hospital, October the 7th, 1797. She had chancres, and venereal eruptions; and began to take the diluted Nitrous Acid on the 9th of October.

16th.—The chancres appear cleaner, and seem in a healing state; the colour of the

M

eruptions



eruptions is less vivid. She voids more urine than usual.

26th.—The eruptions have a very pale appearance; but no desquamation has taken place.

30th.—The chancres are quite healed; the eruptions have not totally disappeared.

Nov. 10th.—The skin retains the faint mottled appearance which it had on the 30th of October.

Dec. 1st.—The eruptions have assumed a brighter colour, and fresh blotches are appearing on different parts of her body. She was therefore ordered to take no more of the Nitrous Acid, and to begin a course of Mercury. She was dismissed cured, January the 18th, 1799.

### CASE THE SEVENTH.

Frances Baldwin, aged fifteen years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into the Lock Hospital, on November the 3d, 1797. She had enlarged absorbent glands in each groin, and was directed to begin taking the diluted Nitrous Acid, November the 5th.

20th.—



20th.—The tumours are less painful, and are much reduced in size.

30th.—They continue to subside.

Dec. 7th.—The glands are enlarging rapidly, and have become very painful.

18th.—A suppuration has taken place in each groin.

I ordered her to begin a mercurial course, and she was dismissed cured, January the 18th, 1798.

The Nitrous Acid sometimes produced sickness and vomiting, and at other times disordered her bowels; but these inconveniences were regularly corrected by the addition of opium.

### CASE THE EIGHTH.

Elizabeth Taylor, aged twenty years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into the Lock Hospital, November the 9th, 1797. She had a Gonorrhœa and chancres. She began to take the diluted Nitrous Acid, November the 10th. The chancres gradually amended; the Gonorrhœa disappeared; and, on November the 30th, she was free



from any venereal symptoms. She was ordered to continue the Nitrous Acid.

Dec. 7th.—The original chancres remain well; but some painful fores appeared near the anus two days ago, which are now evidently venereal; and an abforbent gland is becoming painful and large in the right groin. She was therefore ordered to discontinue the Nitrous Acid, and to begin a course of Mercury. On January the 1st, the incipient bubo was intirely reduced; and the fores near the anus were almost healed. She was discharged cured on January the 25th.

### CASE THE NINTH.

Ann Clark, aged nineteen years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into the Lock Hospital, November the 9th, 1797. She had a Gonorrhœa, attended with dysuria urethralis. She began to take the diluted Nitrous Acid, November the 12th; and, on November the 30th the Gonorrhœa was considerably better, but the dysuria was not at all relieved. On December the 4th, an eruption, red and painful, of pustules appeared on the lower



lower part of the abdomen, and inner surface of the thighs; and the Gonorrhœa had become worse than when she was taken into the hospital. I therefore discontinued the use of the Nitrous Acid, and directed the common mode of treatment in its stead. She was quite cured on the 28th of December, but eloped before she was regularly dismissed.

#### CASE THE TENTH.

John Roe, aged thirty-two years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into the Lock Hospital, on October the 5th, 1797. He had an open bubo; the scrotum was covered with small foul ulcers; and at the upper part of the thigh there was a large painful sore, with jagged edges. This man had been under the care of a surgeon, and supposed that he had taken Mercury; but he had not employed any medicine for more than three months before his admission. He began to take the Nitrous Acid, October the 7th.

16th.—The sores are easier, and they exhibit evident signs of amendment.



20th.—They improve in their general appearance, and begin to heal.

November 2d.—All the sores are healed; but I thought it proper to continue the Nitrous Acid.

December 1st.—The ulcers remain well; but about two days ago a sore began to appear upon the skin covering the ossa pubis, which has all the characters of a venereal ulcer.

January 11th.—The sore has spread considerably, is very painful, and has an ill-conditioned aspect. I therefore discontinued the Nitrous Acid, and directed him to begin a mercurial course.

### CASE THE ELEVENTH.

James Thompson, aged thirty years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into the Lock Hospital, November the 2d, 1797. He had ulcers on the external surface of the præputium, and warts on its internal surface, and on the glans penis. He began to take the diluted Nitrous Acid, on the 5th of November, and continued it to December the 7th; without the least appearance of amendment,



ment, in either of his symptoms. I then ordered him to begin a course of Mercury. In fourteen days the sores were in a healing state; and several of the warts had separated. He was discharged from the hospital, cured, on January the 25th, 1798.

### CASE THE TWELFTH.

William Southwood, aged nineteen years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into the Lock Hospital, November the 2d, 1797. He had a Gonorrhœa; enlarged absorbent glands in the right groin; and a suppurating bubo in the left groin. He began to take the diluted Nitrous Acid, November the 5th.

9th.—The buboes increase, and are more painful.

20th.—The tumours in the groins are somewhat reduced, and less painful.

30th.—The tumour on the right side is nearly reduced; and the abscess on the left side is evidently smaller. At this time, a red, painful, pustular eruption appeared upon the surface of the abdomen, similar to that mentioned in case the ninth.



Dec. 6th.—The eruption is in a state of defquamation; but the buboes are increasing in size, and have become more painful.

He was so much dissatisfied with his mode of treatment, that he eloped the next day; although I had promised to order him Mercury, in a few days.

### CASE THE THIRTEENTH.

Jeremiah Leary, aged twenty-three years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into the Lock Hospital, December the 14th, 1797. He had a phymosis, and large venereal ulcers on the præputium. He began to take the diluted Nitrous Acid, December the 16th.

21st.—The sores are beginning to amend; and the swelling accompanying the phymosis has lessened.

28th.—His symptoms continue to disappear.

Jan. 11th.—He appears to be quite well. He complains that his mouth is sore, and that he spits blood in the day. His gums look red and turgid; but they scarcely bear any resemblance to that state which is produced by Mercury.

29th —



29th.—One of the ulcers has appeared again on the prepuce.

Feb. 1st.—The sore spreads rapidly, and has become painful; and the absorbent glands in one of his groins are enlarging, and have become uneasy. He was ordered to begin a mercurial course; which in twelve days cured his sores, and reduced the incipient bubo. He eloped from the hospital on the 21st of February, supposing himself to be well.

#### CASE THE FOURTEENTH.

John Marr was admitted a patient, under my care, at the Public Dispensary, January the 16th, 1798. He received the infection four months before, and had not taken any medicine for it. He has chancres on the præputium; a bubo in each groin; venereal eruptions upon his body; deafness, with tinnitus aurium. He began to take the diluted Nitrous Acid, January the 19th.

30th.—The chancres begin to heal; and the eruptions are less vivid in their appearance.

Feb. 6th.—The chancres appear to be almost healed; and the eruption is disappearing. The deafness, &c. is no better.

13th.—



13th.—The venereal symptoms have made no farther progress toward amendment.

20th.—The eruptions have become more elevated, and are of a brighter colour, and many more spots have appeared upon other parts of his body. The chancres have become painful, and spreading; and a phymosis has come on, attended with considerable swelling of the præputium.

26th.—All his complaints have evidently increased. He was therefore ordered to discontinue the acid, and to begin a course of Mercury, by which he was cured.

The Nitrous Acid agreed very well with his stomach and bowels; and he enjoyed good health during the time of his taking it.

### CASE THE FIFTEENTH.

In the beginning of the year 1798, I was consulted by a gentleman who had undergone three full courses of mercurial frictions, without obtaining a permanent cure. At the time when I first saw him, the lower extremity of the tibia of the left leg was exposed and carious; he had nodes on his forehead, and



and severe nocturnal pains in his bones: As he was in a bad state of health, with a quick pulse, and was much emaciated, I ordered him to take the diluted Nitrous Acid. He took this medicine during three weeks, without deriving the least advantage, either to his health, or venereal symptoms. I then directed a course of Mercury to be employed, which entirely removed all his venereal complaints.

*The Three following Cases were communicated by Dr. BAILLIE, F. R. S. L. & E. late Physician of St. George's Hospital, &c.*

#### CASE THE SIXTEENTH.

J. T. aged twenty-one years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into St. George's Hospital, July the 26th, 1797. He had severe pains in his limbs, and a large node at the upper end of the tibia of the right leg. He used the mercurial ointment during a fortnight after his admission; but, having a great aversion to Mercury, which  
he



he thought had formerly injured his health, he was permitted to discontinue it, and was ordered to take the Decoction of Mezereon. This plan was continued for about five weeks, in which time his pains were greatly relieved, and the size of the node was diminished, but neither of these symptoms was entirely removed. He was then ordered to leave off the Decoction of Mezereon; and he began to take the Nitrous Acid on the 19th of September.\*

For two or three days he thought his pains were easier, but they soon became as severe as ever. On the 3d of October, he was ordered to discontinue the acid drink, and to rub in mercurial ointment. By the due use of Mercury, his pains were removed, and the node disappeared.

#### CASE THE SEVENTEENTH.

H. G. aged twenty-five years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into St.

\* In these three cases, a dram of concentrated Nitrous Acid was mixed in a pint of water. The patients first took Lb. I in the day, and gradually increased the quantity to Lb. II.

George's



George's Hospital, August the 23d, 1797. He had ulcers upon his penis; a venereal blotch upon one of his arms; and a venereal fore throat, which had appeared about a month before his admission. He began to take diluted Nitrous Acid on the 23d of August, and continued it to the 29th of September. The sores on his penis had healed, but were now open again; the blotch upon his arm was of a fainter colour; and his throat, which seemed better during the first fortnight, afterwards became worse. He was therefore ordered to leave off the acid, and to have recourse to Mercury. After rubbing in the mercurial ointment for nine or ten weeks, he was perfectly cured.

#### CASE THE EIGHTEENTH.

W. A. aged twenty-eight years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into St. George's Hospital, August the 23d, 1797. He complained of pains in his limbs, which were always worse during the night; he had also great tenderness of the scalp, with a number of small swellings on the upper part of the head;



head ; there was likewise a venereal eruption on the skin. He began to take the acid drink on the 29th of August, and continued it to the 26th of September. During the first ten or twelve days in which he was taking the Nitrous Acid, he thought his pains were easier ; but the eruption, and the swellings upon his head, were not at all affected by it. His pains however, after a short time, became as bad as ever ; he was consequently ordered to discontinue taking the acid drink, and to rub in mercurial ointment. This course very soon removed his pains, the swellings upon his head, and the eruptions. After having continued the use of the Mercury till it was thought he was secure from a return of the disease, he was discharged from the hospital.

### CASE THE NINETEENTH.

*Communicated by Dr. MARCET, Physician of  
the London Dispensary.*

Freeman South, aged forty years, was admitted a patient at the Public Dispensary, November the 21st, 1797. He had a very foul,  
deep,



deep, ragged ulcer, in the right tonsil; the posterior part of the fauces on the same side was ulcerated, and there was another ulcer near the base of the uvula. He complained of tinnitus in the right ear; he also suffered great pain in that part, and on the right side of the face, when he swallowed his food. He had been married seventeen years, was the father of several healthy children, and he declared that he had never violated the fidelity he owed to his wife. He never had any appearance on his penis resembling a venereal complaint. He was ordered to take the diluted Nitrous Acid. In less than a week the ulcers looked cleaner, their edges assumed a florid appearance, and they began to contract. Soon after these symptoms of amendment had appeared, the sores seemed to become stationary; and, after the acid had been continued four weeks, the ulcers became foul again, and began to spread.

On the 22d of December, Mr. Pearson saw this patient for the first time. He repeated the same history of his disease which he had given before; but Mr. P. urging him with some close interrogatories, he acknowledged that after taking some liberties with a woman



woman of the town, a painful pimple appeared on the right angle of his mouth, and that when this healed, his throat became sore. As the disease was now making an evident progress under a course of the Nitrous Acid, he was ordered to discontinue it, and to employ Mercury, by which he obtained a perfect cure.

*Good Effects of the Nitrous Acid in Ulcers  
remaining after the Cure of Lues Venerea.*

#### CASE THE TWENTIETH.

James Gingle, aged fifty-one years, was admitted a patient, under my care, into the Lock Hospital, September the 21st, 1797. The projecting part of the penis was entirely consumed by a phagedenic ulcer, which was spreading slowly under the ossa pubis. This man gave the following account of himself;—that he had chancres about eight years ago, and was apparently cured of them: but that ever since, he has been subject to ulceration of the penis, which has sometimes healed during



during a short time, and then has appeared again; that he has not had any connexion with women since he was first affected. His disease was however generally regarded as venereal, and he had, at various times, employed a great deal of Mercury.

From the patient's narrative, and the general circumstances of the case, I did not consider it to be venereal; nevertheless, as I was desirous of knowing what effect Mercury would have in this case, I ordered him to employ mercurial frictions, and to dress the fore with a carrot poultice. He continued using Mercury, from September the 23d to October the 30th; in which time about one ounce and a half of quicksilver was introduced into the system, and the specific operation of that mineral was moderate, but sufficiently evident. At this period the fore was no better; it seemed indeed rather to have increased in size, and was become more painful.

On November the 1st, he was ordered to discontinue the Mercury, and to begin to take the diluted Nitrous Acid, continuing the application of the carrot poultice.



6th.—The pain of the fore is diminished ; the discharge is less, and its surface has become cleaner.

9th.—The ulcer continues to amend. As the Nitrous Acid griped him, Laudanum was added to the mixture.

Dec. 7th.—The fore is nearly healed.

16th.—He was so well, that he refused to remain any longer in the hospital, and went away without my permission.

### CASE THE TWENTY-FIRST.

*Communicated by Mr. RAMSBOTHAM.\**

A young gentleman applied to me in the beginning of February, 1798, on account of a recent, but very foul chancre, which was situated on the side of the penis, near the ossa pubis. I ordered him to rub in the mercurial ointment ; gave him small doses of Calomel, with Opium, at the same time ; and dressed the fore with Ungt. Hydrarg. Nitrat.

\* Late of Wakefield, in Yorkshire, now of Richmond, in Surry.

He



He continued this course during six weeks ; at which time the sore was almost healed, and my patient seemed likely to be cured in a short time. Unfortunately Mr. —, thinking himself nearly well, began to neglect his medicines, and omitted applying the dressings, in consequence of which the remaining surface of the sore became dry, and was crusted over. In about three weeks, the sore became painful again, began to spread, and proceeded gradually over the skin covering the right spermatic cord, at the upper part of which a small bubo formed. I now gave him Mercury again very freely ; and he also took a mixture, consisting of the Decoction of Bark, Powder of Bark, and Laudanum. To the sore I first applied mild digestives, and then a linseed meal poultice. Notwithstanding all my efforts, the sore continued to spread, and, about the middle of April, the ulceration had extended itself in the course of the right spermatic cord, dissecting that part from near the abdominal ring down to the testicle, and exposing the testicle itself to view.

The edges of the ulcer were hard and livid ; its discharge consisted of a fetid sanies, and its tendency to make farther ravages



was but too evident. The Mercury was now discontinued, and he took large doses of Bark, with Opium ; he was also sent into the country, where he lived principally on milk. He continued this plan till the 1st of May : his general state of health was somewhat improved, but there was no favourable alteration in the ulcer. I then accompanied him to Leeds, to consult Mr. Hey, who, having heard the history of his disease, and the mode of treatment, was of opinion that the venereal virus was destroyed. He ordered the linseed meal poultice to be continued ; with the addition of a powder composed of Pulv. Flor. Chamæm. and Pulv. Cinchonæ, to be sprinkled upon the sore ; and instead of the Bark, he advised a preparation of iron, in the form of Dr. Griffith's medicine, to be given ; at the same time exhibiting Opium in such quantities as to keep the patient easy.

The patient followed these directions during ten days, without finding any advantage ; and, as he did not consult Mr. Hey again, I gave him forty drops of the Nitrous Acid, in a pint of Decoction of the Bark, daily. The dressings were continued nearly as at the first ; and I directed him to take a pill every night,



night, consisting of a grain of Calomel, a grain of Antimonial Powder, and two grains of Opium. In the course of a few days, there was a visible alteration for the better in the state of the fore; the livid appearance and indurated edges gradually diminished; the discharge was more puriform, and his general state of health improved rapidly.

At the beginning of June, the ulcer was much diminished in size, and was healing very fast, when Mr. — was under the necessity of going a journey; he consequently discontinued the Bark and Nitrous Acid; and returned at the end of several weeks, with the fore much altered for the worse, and himself in a state of serious indisposition. A physician was now consulted, who directed medicines adapted to his symptoms; no more Nitrous Acid was administered; and I left Yorkshire before this obstinate disease had terminated.

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During the time that I was employed in making observations on the medicinal qualities of the Nitrous Acid in Lues Venerea, I  
gave



gave it to several patients who were afflicted with untractable ulcers of the legs ; to children suffering from the cancrum oris ; and in some diseases of the skin. In many of these cases, it was of no service ; and, where any beneficial effects followed the use of it, I did not observe that it was in any degree preferable to the remedies usually employed.

When M. Alyon published his account of the virtues of what he calls *Oxygenated Cerate*, (a composition of Nitrous Acid and Hog's-lard,) I immediately procured some, and applied it to ulcers, to cutaneous eruptions, and to the tinea capitis. The effects by no means corresponded with the expectations which M. Alyon's language was calculated to excite: it was of some service in eruptions attended with pruritus ; but it produced no digestion on the surface of ulcers ; and totally failed of curing every case of the tinea capitis in which I tried it. Perhaps it may be suggested, that the *Oxygenated Cerate* was not accurately prepared: to this I reply, that if M. Alyon's directions be sufficiently explicit, it must have been rightly compounded ; there is however an obscure brevity in his description of the manner



manner of preparing it, which would induce one to suspect that he either purposely concealed some part of the process, or that he wished the world to believe that he was the only person from whom it could be procured in a genuine form.

When the Nitrous Acid is given to patients using Mercury, it promotes the appetite, improves the general health, and lessens the peculiar operation of that mineral on the mouth and fauces, and in these respects, its qualities resemble those possessed by the other mineral acids. Its effects are likewise analogous to what are produced by exposure to atmospheric air.

The Nitrous Acid does not, however, as far as my observations extend, assist, or promote the action of Mercury in the cure of Lues Venerea; so that the surgeon would neither be authorised to diminish the quantity of that mineral, nor to abridge the time usually occupied in completing a course sufficient to give permanent security to the patient.

## GENERAL



## GENERAL CONCLUSIONS.

IN concluding this little work, I think it proper to offer the following observations, as the result of my inquiries into the merits of the several articles of the *materia medica*, in *Lues Venerea*, which have formed the subject of the foregoing pages.

1. The *Guaiaicum*, *Sarsaparilla*, *Mezereum*, *Walnuts*, *Opium*, and *Peruvian Bark*, have often removed some of the primary and secondary symptoms of *Lues Venerea*, and have alleviated others. They are likewise each of them capable of removing certain sequelæ of *Lues Venerea*, where the farther administration of *Mercury* would prove injurious. Yet, no satisfactory series of evidence can be adduced, demonstrating that any, or all of these vegetables, given singly, or combined, are competent to the eradicating of *Lues Venerea* from the animal body.

2. It must be conceded, that certain indubitable symptoms of *Syphilis* have disappeared, during a course of the vegetable remedies; but the same symptoms have generally recurred,







gentials, and of the groin, which may be classed among the *sequelæ* of Syphilis.

4. The Nitric and Nitrous Acids have removed both the primary and secondary symptoms of Syphilis; and, in some instances, it seems, that the former have not recurred, nor have secondary symptoms appeared, at the period they commonly shew themselves, when the cure has been imperfect. But, as far as my own experience extends, and that of many respectable friends, who are connected with large hospitals, a permanent cure has never been accomplished by these acids, where secondary symptoms have been present.

The same acids, when exhibited with the utmost care and attention to many patients labouring under the primary symptoms of the venereal disease, and where they have agreed perfectly well with the stomach, have been nevertheless, found inadequate to the cure of those symptoms. Indeed the failures which have occurred, both in my own practice and that of many of my surgical friends, have been so numerous, that I do not think it eligible to rely on the Nitrous Acid, in the treatment of any one form of the *Lues Venerea*.

But



But, while I am obliged thus to detract from the supposed merits of the Nitrous Acid as an antidote against Lues Venerea, I would by no means wish to see it exploded as a medicine altogether useless in that disease.

Where an impaired state of the constitution renders the introduction of Mercury into the animal system inconvenient, or evidently improper, the Nitrous Acid will be found capable of restraining the progress of the disease, while, at the same time, it will improve the health and strength of the patient. On some occasions, this acid may be given in conjunction with a course of mercurial inunction; and it will be found to support the tone of the stomach; to promote the appetite; to determine powerfully to the kidneys, and to counteract in no inconsiderable degree the effects of Mercury on the mouth and fauces. These advantages are by no means unimportant; and certainly entitle the gentlemen who have been active in promoting the introduction of this acid into general practice, to the gratitude of the public.

I will not presume, however, to assert, that we have yet learnt all that can be known, of the best mode of exhibiting this medicine; nor  
will



will I suppose that we have arrived at the *ne plus ultra* of its virtues. Yet, in the present state of our information upon this subject, it would by no means be warrantable to substitute the Nitrous Acid in the place of Mercury, for the cure of venereal complaints; nor to permit the knowledge we have gained respecting some useful properties of the former, to seduce us to reject what a long course of experience has taught us of the certain efficacy of the latter.

THE END.

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