On the advantages of an elastic convoluted spiral bandage in varicose veins and ulcers of the legs / by James Startin.

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Startin, James, 1851-1910. Royal College of Surgeons of England

Publication/Creation

London : S. Highley, 1851.

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ON THE ADVANTAGES

OF AN

ELASTIC CONVOLUTED SPIRAL BANDAGE

ARICOSE VEINS AND ULCERS OF THE LEGS.

IN

JAMES STARTIN, ESQ.

BY

SURGEON TO THE HOSPITAL FOR DIEASES OF THE SKIN

[Extracted from the "Medical Times," No. 37, March 15, 1851.]

LONDON: S. HIGHLEY, FLEET STREET.

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1851. [Gratis.]

ON THE ADVANTAGES

OF

CONVOLUTED SPIRAL BANDAGES

IN VARICOSE VEINS, &c.

MUCH has been said of late, in your own and contemporary pages, on the subject of the class of maladies heading this communication; yet I believe it is very generally allowed, by surgeons of every grade, that Thompson's remark is as truthful and apposite as when it was pronounced, viz., that "the varicose is a very obstinate form of ulcer, and baffles often the best directed efforts of our art," ("Lectures on Inflammation," p. 439;) consequently, I shall make no apology to your readers for introducing a plan to their notice which I trust they will find as efficacious in their hands as it has proved in my own; and, in earnestly soliciting them to institute a few trials of it, I will guarantee that their labour will be inconsiderable, the expense triffing, and the advantages important.

the advantages important. For some years, many hundred examples of varicose ulcers have annually passed under my observation, as surgeon to the Hospital for Diseases of the Skin, and the treatment generally adopted has been far from unsuccessful; yet the plan I am at present advocating, which has been in public practice for many months past, and in private for a longer period, possesses some advantages which are not so readily attained by the method in former and more customary use, which was that recommended many years ago by Whateley, ("Practical Observations on Ulcers on the Legs, 1797,") although somewhat modified by the bandage employed at the hospital, being made of "Glover's patent

twilled flannel," and constitutional treatment being superadded to the local means recommended by that author.

In the following brief remarks on the novel surgical appliance under consideration, it is unnecessary to insist upon the causes, or to describe a varicose ulcer; suffice it, therefore, to say, that an inability to support the column of blood in the superficial veins, owing to the faulty action or destruction of their valves, constitutes the chief morbid agency; and it is to supply this deficiency by the artificial substitute of a convoluted spiral band of vulcanized Indianrubber, which comprises the plan I am desirous of testing by professional experience and opinion. It may be well, however, to premise, that this treatment is specially advocated for those varicose ulcers only which are not complicated with extensive erythema, eczema, impetigo, psoriasis. or other disease of the skin of the leg, and that it will probably be found most useful in that varicose sore, so well characterised by Sir E. Home as "a species of ulcer which is seldom very deep; when it spreads, it is generally along the surface; its shape is commonly oval, the ends of the oval pointing vertically; the edges of the surrounding skin are commonly neither thick nor irregular, but are imperceptibly lost in the ulcer," &c.- (Home on Ulcers, p. 275.) Yet it may be borne in mind, that, providing varicose veins are present, and other disease of the skin of the leg is not present, beyond the ordinary ædema or erythema surrounding nearly every ulcer, that the convoluted spiral bandage will exert a beneficial effect, and be found applicable; and this is the case whether the ulcer be round, oval, or irregular, deep or superficial, irritable or indolent, cicatrizing or sloughing, single or several, painful or otherwise; for this bandage interferes with no dressings or manipulations, nor does it conceal the wound, or hinder the application of any other roller, poultice, or remedy,-its sole office being to supply artificially, the place and functions of the imperfect or deficient valves, and thus divide the column of blood as obtains in the normal condition of the limb; and I believe it will be found to accomplish this most desirable end most effectually, whilst, at the same time, it constitutes a cool and agreeable support for the leg, and removes that undue tension of the skin so commonly found complicated with varicose ulcers, by furnishing numerous points d'appui, and tending thus to prevent or avert those specific diseases of this membrane before referred to, which are produced, or materially augmented by a tense state of its parts.

From what has now been stated, it will be understood that the convoluted spiral bandage may be combined with any other treatment, local or general, furnished by expe-

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rience, or deemed advisable in the cases wherein the apparatus is to be applied; so that it may be regarded as an adjuvant rather than as the sine guanon of the treatment; and, when employed with this view, I have much confidence that its value will be generally allowed and appreciated. Before proceeding to describe it, however, it may be well to mention that, during its employment, lotions containing a little purified glycerine (3ss. ad 3viiss.) to prevent their drying, and slightly medicated with nitric acid, yellow or black wash, have in my experience proved more useful and suitable applications than plasters or ointments; and I prefer the following method of using these liquids :- A small piece of bibulous paper torn from the sheet into the size and form of the ulcer (the object of which is to furnish a soft, smooth surface, and to prevent the dressing sticking to the sore) is first to be wetted with the lotion, and then placed upon the ulcer so as barely to cover its edges; over this, a pledget of lint or linen wet in the same solution is next to be laid, and this should be large enough to cover every portion of the discoloured or inflamed skin surrounding the wound. This dressing, when thus applied, may or may not, at the option of the operator, be secured with a turn or two of the common calico roller, wet in the same liquid; and over all is to be placed the convoluted spiral bandage, in the manner I will detail after having briefly described its nature.

This bandage may be manufactured of two or more qualities, according to the class of patient on whom it is to be applied, or the cost to be incurred; the best kind for ordinary use consists of half or three-quarter inch wide elastic band or webbing of vulcanised Indian-rubber covered with silk or cotton, two yards and a half long, or four or more yards in length, when the external saphena vein is to be supported to its entrance into the falciform opening of the fascia lata. At one end of this narrow band, a piece of strong silk binding, six or seven inches long, the ends of which are to be sewn together, is fixed obliquely, so as to form a sort of loop or stirrup into which the foot is to be placed ; the other end of the band is sewn at right angles into the middle of a yard or more of similar binding, which serves, after the fashion of a garter, to fix the bandage below or above the knee or round the pelvis when the spiral turns are completed.

This simple arrangement constitutes the entire apparatus; the webbing or band of which it is composed costs from 1s. to 4d. per yard, according to whether the vulcanised thread constituting its foundation be covered with silk or cotton, or is finely or coarsely manufactured; but another still cheaper and equally efficient method of constructing these bandages

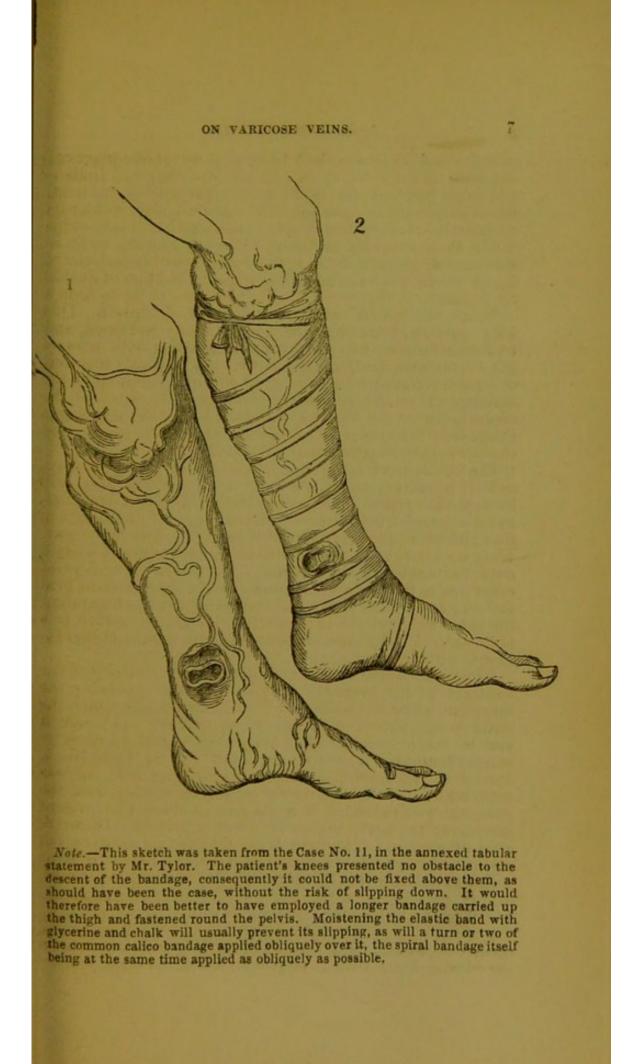
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exists, which is also the one employed in my public practice; this is, to take a piece of (No. 36) patent vulcanised Indianrubber sheeting, of any width, and two and a half yards long, on which parallel lines half or three-quarters of an inch apart are to be marked, so that it may be accurately cut into strips of this width; the incisions should be commenced on these lines alternately, at a distance of three inches from each end of the piece, the object of which is to leave a portion of double the breadth at the end of each bandage, so as to form a loop or stirrup for the foot, as before described. This wider portion of the bandage being properly fashioned, and an opening made in it, to fit the instep, either with scissors or a stamp made for the purpose, the apparatus only requires, to render it complete, a yard or so of cotton binding of the same colour as the vulcanised sheeting to be fixed at the opposite end of the band, as mentioned when the webbing is employed. The cost for each bandage thus constructed amounts only to eightpence or tenpence.*

The method of applying the convoluted spiral bandage, and its effects upon the varicose veins and the sore, will be best understood by reference to the subjoined drawings, by my friend Staff-Surgeon Pilleau, made from a patient who had been under treatment with it for some few weeks. The case has been chosen, not so much to manifest the rapid improvement of an ulcer of many years duration and great extent, as to demonstrate the mode in which these sores heal and the marked effect of the bandage in almost obliterating the appearance of the large varicose veins over which it is applied, and which has been represented without exaggeration or diminution.

From the sketch it will be perceived, that the loop of the bandage is first placed over the instep, so as to bring the commencement of the elastic band immediately under the outer ankle, which situation is to be preferred, although it can be applied under the inner ankle, should an ulcer or other peculiarity in the case require it. In the Plate No. 1, the ulcer represented in the lower third of the leg was originally of the usual oval shape, as will be seen from the part lightly shaded; it was then fully double its present size, and the ends of the oval pointed vertically. These are now transverse, showing the usual effect of this bandage, but owing to the patient's neglect, and several days' standing at the "wash tub," the edges of the sore had become a little elevated,

* Until Mackintosh and Co. are supplied with a stock of these bandages, they can be procured from Mr. Fisher, the dispenser to the hospital, 25, Bridge-street, Blackfriars, in two qualities (post free), at the cost of 1s. and 1s. 8d. each.



and the healing process had been slightly interrupted. On referring to Plate No. 2, it will be seen that two turns of the spiral bandage are made before reaching the sore, the upper turn passing close beneath its lower border, whilst the next or third turn is taken immediately above it; the bandage being then obliquely continued at equal intervals of threequarters of an inch, to an inch or more, until it reaches the knee, where it is fixed by a turn or two of the binding acting as a garter.

This is the general arrangement which I have found it best to follow, as the long column of blood in the external enlarged veins by this means is divided into eight or more short columns, and, consequently, the capillaries of the ulcer are relieved to the extent of this division of the pressure upon them, while much of the tension is taken off the entire skin of the leg, by the blood being caused to pass inwards by the deeper veins, and collaterally by the smaller venous branches. From such a disposition of this simple contrivance, the parts concerned in the reparation of the ulcer are left in comparatively a normal state, and it is surprising how quickly reparation commences when no constitutional cause is present to interfere with the process. The mode of cicatrizing in sores thus circumstanced, is, however, somewhat peculiar, and in deep ulcers much resembles what is seen in the reparation of bone, i. e., the base of the ulcer often heals, leaving an indented cicatrix the exact form of the sore remaining, as it were, impressed into the surrounding skin, as witnessed in plate (Fig. 1,) although it will be observed, that the lapse of a few months commonly serves to obliterate this appearance.

I trust, from the details now given, that most of the advantages of the proposed plan will become apparent; but there are a few not quite so obvious, which may deserve a passing remark, as they more particularly concern the poorer class of patients-this being more especially the poor man's bandage. The first is, that rest is unnecessary during the treatment, and the extreme ease and readiness with which the bandage may be put on the leg, and the pertinacity with which it retains its position under every motion of the limb, render it peculiarly applicable to this class of patients. The next is the facility that exists of applying poultices or the ordinary dressings to the wound, without removing the bandage, all that is necessary in the former case being to put the poultice over the bandage, whilst in the latter, the lower spiral turn of the band next the ulcer, may be drawn from the leg, and the dressing put upon the wound, and then fixed in its position by letting the elastic band resume its place, when the same process

may be repeated with the turn of the bandage immediately above the ulcer, by which means the ordinary tedious process of dressing is reduced to a minute's duration, and the varicose veins have the uninterrupted support of the bandage for any time that may be desired; ablutions, baths, &c., may also be used without disturbing, and with but very little hindrance from the bandage.

I have found patients express themselves very generally in favour of the simple expedient I have thus attempted to describe, nearly all have lauded its coolness, and the support it gives to the limb, whilst some have been enthusiastic in its praise, as will be verified by my colleague Mr. M'Whinnie, or by any of the gentlemen attending the practice at the Hospital for Diseases of the Skin, amongst whom Henry Chapman, Esq., (well known by his standard works on "Surgical Apparatus," and on "Treatment of Ulcers,") will, I am sure, bear testimony; as will also J. S. Tylor Esq., long a diligent student of cutaneous disease, and who has kindly furnished the annexed table of twenty-four recent cases in which the bandage has been used, the results being attached to each case. I shall, therefore, no longer trespass on your pages, than to cite two instances taken at random from my case-book, as they briefly show the little care and management necessary for a satisfactory result under the use of this remedy.

Esther Pratt, aged 50, residing in King's-road, Chelsea, a married woman, having borne seven children, applied Sept. 11, 1850, as an out patient (No. 28,341) to the Hospital for Diseases of the Skin. She stated that she had suffered from enlarged veins of the left leg for upwards of twenty years, and that the limb had often been in a state of ulceration for many months at a time, but had healed again under the treatment obtained from hospitals and dispensaries; for the past four or five years, however, the sore had remained open, and had resisted every means she had tried for its cure, and that latterly it had spread to the size of a large table-spoon, was very painful, particularly at night, and subject to burst out bleeding; from which cause she on one occasion nearly lost her life. On examination, this ulcer was found to be situated in the middle third of the inside of the leg, very nearly in the course of the internal saphena vein. It was rather larger than a modern table-spoon, irregularly oval in shape, the long axis of the oval being parallel to the leg; it was not deep, nor were the edges indurated. A patch of erythematous inflammation extended to about an inch and a half around the sore, which was not otherwise than healthy in appearance, a circumstance owing probably to its having been poulticed and rested for a week or ten days previous to

the patient's application to the hospital. It was very sore. and the mass of enlarged veins, extending from the external saphena all over the limb, participated in this soreness, which was augmented in bed, on approaching the fire, on being handled or pressed upon, or on assuming the upright position. The following means were advised. The wound to be dressed every morning, with a compress of linen three or four times doubled, wet with very weak black-wash, containing glycerine, a piece of bibulous paper, imbued with the same lotion, being first placed next the ulcer, and directions given that the pledget of linen was to be moistened with this liquid twice or thrice a day, without removing the dressings from the leg or disturbing the wound. The bowels were to be kept soluble, and the inflammatory action in the leg moderated by a morning and evening draught of sulphate and carbonate of magnesia, containing ten drops of wine of colchicum in each dose; and, until the pain and inflammation had subsided, the patient was directed to bandage the limb with a common calico roller, previously dipped into hot water, and, at the close of the week, if matters progressed satisfactorily, she was told to renew her visit, to have the spiral bandage applied. In about ten days she called again, and as the ulcer was in an entirely favourable state, it was dressed, as before described, with the glycerine lotion, &c.; the pledget of linen being secured by a turn or two of wetted calico roller. The spiral bandage was then put on over all, from the instep to above the knee, in the manner already detailed, with directions that it should remain as long as it retained its position; that the dressing was to be renewed every other morning, without taking off the bandage, but that the pledget of linen, &c., was to be wet occasionally with the lotion, or warm water, if it got too dry, or produced irritation. Should the spiral bandage cause itching or uneasiness in any other part of the limb, it was to be sponged over with vinegar and water, or thin gruel acidulated with vinegar; and in the event of anything like an excoriation of the skin, a piece of wet blotting-paper was to be interposed, where required. This patient did not attend more than four times, and no change was made in the treatment thus advised, save to lessen the dose and frequency of taking the aperient, and to abstain from dressing the ulcer more frequently than absolutely necessary. By the middle of December the sore had entirely healed, and on the 18th she was dismissed cured, with instructions to continue the use of the spiral bandage as long as she found comfort or support from its employment.

The Rev. A. C., a clergyman from Devonshire, who had for many years suffered from varicose veins of both legs,

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which had baffled his professional advisers, both here and on the Continent, where he had resided occasionally for long periods, applied to me about six weeks ago, complaining of eczema in both limbs, which not only prevented his taking exercise, of which he was very fond, but was the source of much annoyance and pain to him, and obliged him to discontinue the "laced stockings," which had hitherto been his only source of relief. By attention to his general health, combined with a slight course of mercurial alteratives and hot wet bandages to the legs, previously anointed with an astringent ointment, the eczema yielded in about three weeks, when I advised him to throw aside his laced stockings, and to make trial of the elastic convoluted spiral bandages, to be applied from the instep to above the knee, over the wetted calico roller, to which he consented, and I saw him a week afterwards, when he said, (my friend being an Irishman,) " By my faith, I find these artificial valves of yours the coolest and most convanient my legs have known for many a day-I can walk as well as ever I could in my life.

The tabular report on the last page was kindly furnished me by Mr. Tylor, who writes as follows :---

" 37, Charterhouse-square, March 10, 1851.

"My dear Friend,—Enclosed are the details of twentyfour cases of varicose veins and ulcers of the lower extremity, taken at the Hospital for Diseases of the Skin. They have all been treated with thy 'Elastic Convoluted Spiral Bandage,' and ten of them have been cured since the 16th of December last, when this plan of treatment was frequently adopted there. It will be seen that one out of this number has become healed after having been only a week under treatment, and another within a period of ten days.

"I intend following out the remaining cases, and have no doubt they will present equally satisfactory results. It is true that most of these patients have been placed under a course of medicine, and all have used the glycerine lotion, but many of them had previously been in various hospitals in London, and had been subjected to both local and general treatment with but little advantage; so that, as far as can be judged from present results, I think this plan of treatment may fairly be considered to offer greater prospect of success in the cure of this troublesome class of complaints than any which has hitherto been tried.

"Jas. Startin, Esq." "JOSEPH S. TYLOB.

It must be borne in mind, that every case included in this Table was selected for its supposed fitness for the bandage,

and also that recourse was had to constitutional treatment, light diet and abstinence from malt liquors being enjoined. The treatment was not the same in every case, and consisted of chalybeates, mercurial alteratives, colchicum, opium, and aperients, according to the formulæ in the Pharmacopœia of the Hospital, lately published.* It was sometimes found necessary to allow the bandage to be removed every day, and a stocking, fitting tightly to the leg, was commonly advised to be worn to retain the bandage in its position; and in one instance, as it irritated the skin of the leg, the bandage was applied over the stocking.

3, Savile-row.

* "Pharmacopœia Nosocomii in Curam Morborum Cutaneorum Fundati." Londini ; Apud S. Highley. Price 1s.

London : Printed by William Tyler, Bolt-court.

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TABULAR REPORT ON THE CONVOLUTED SPIRAL BANDAGE.

Name and Address of Patient.	Date of Application of the Spiral Elastic Bandage.	Description and Situation of Ulcer, &c.	Duration of Disease.	Duration under Spiral Bandage before Cured.	Results.
 Eliza Sampson, Wharf-rise, Kingsland-road. 	Dec. 16, 1850.	{Varicese Veins of Right Leg, Large Oval Ulcer}	Ulcer breaking out at intervals for six years.		{Progressing fa- vourably.
 Susan Harper, æt. 43, 5, Salisbury-court, Fleet-st. 	Dec. 16, 1850.	{Varicose Veins of Right Leg, Foul Ulcer, size of a shilling, over the Tibia in the centre of the Leg. Varicose Veins for many years.	Ulcer 6 months.	6 weeks.	{Ulcer cured, Jan. 27, 1851.
 Joseph Selvey, at. 41, 14, Hoxton-market. 	Dec. 16, 1850.	{Immense Varicose Veins of the Right Leg and Thigh, with Two large Ulcers situated half- way up the Leg on the inner side.	Varicose Veins 16 years, Ulcers 2 years,	6 weeks.	{Much relieved - Ulcers healed, Jan. 27, 1851.
 Mary Hickman, æt. 47, 14, Red Lion-square. 	Dec. 18, 1850.	{Varicose Veins of the Right Leg, with large} Ulcer over Inner Ankle. (Varicose Veins of Left Leg-Fsul Ulcer, size of)	Ulcer 6 weeks.	51 weeks.	{Ulcer cured, Jan. 24, 1851.
 Maria Hatton, æt. 39, 2, Vir- ginia-row, Bethnal-green. 	Dec. 18, 1850.	half-a-crown, just behind and above the Inner	Ulcer 2 years.		{Progressing fa- vourably.
 Elizabeth Sell, æt. 62, 112, Drury-lane. 	Dec. 20, 1850.	{Varicose Veins to some extent-large Ulcer, size of two half-crowns, over the Inner Ankle of the Right Leg. Tried all methods of cure.}	Ulcer 18 years.		Idem.
 Anne Garrett, set. 24, 109, Great Suffolk-street, Boro.' 	Dec. 20, 1850.	{Varicose Veins of Right Leg, ditto of Left Leg, with three Ulcers on the inner side, about middle of leg, largest the size of a shilling.	Ulcers at inter- vals 2 years. }		Not much relief- bandage badly applied by the
 Jane Cuffley, address not given, can be ascertained. 	Jan. 6, 1851.	{Varicose Veins, small Ulcer of the Right Leg, Varicose Veins several years.	Ulcer 6 weeks.	12 days.	Ulcer healed, Jan. 18, 1851.
9. Jane Brake, act. 45, 5, Berke- ley-street, Clerkenwell.	Jan. 6, 1851.	Varicose Veins of both Legs, Ulcer on each Leg over Ankles about the size of a shilling, Ulcer of Left Leg healed seven years since, and broke out again.	Ulcer of Left Leg 14 years' dura- tion, other Ulcer 12 years.	2 weeks.	Ulcer of Right Leg healed, Jan. 20, 1851.
 Sam. Chappell, æt. 61, 3, Tun-court, Redcross-st., Cripplegate. 	Jan. 6, 1851.	{Varicose Veins-Ulcer, size of shilling, over }	Ulcer 9 months.	6 weeks.	Healed Feb. 17, 1851.
 Elizabeth Shiel, sct. 60, 14, Well's-pl., South-st., Cam- berwell. 	Jan. 6, 1851.	{Varicose Veins of Left Leg. Uker, size of half-} a-crown, over Inner Ankle.	Ulcers 10 years.		Varicose Veins so large, that Mr. Startin had a drawing made of the case - (see plate.)
 Elizabeth Cook, et. 28, 10, George-gardens, Bethnal- green-rd. Sarah Bulipin, et. 60, 73,) 	Jan. 8, 1851.	{Large Varicose Ulcer over Inner Ankle of the}	4 weeks.		Relieved-bandage to be discon- tinued for a short time, as an ery- thematous state of the skin had come on: Ulcer better, Feb. 27, 1851.
Bermondsey-st., Berough.)	Jan. 13, 1851.	{No Ulcers at the present time, though she had often had them-large Variesse Veins of the Right Leg.	Varicose Veins 25 or 30 years. }	••••••••	{Relieved - finds much support from the bandage.
14. Jemima Boyton, 5, South- ampton-st., Camberwell.		{Varicose Veins of both Legs, Bleers over Inner Ankles of both Legs; Right, size of half-a- crown.	Ulcers 5 years.		S Relieved in both legs from wear- ing two spiral
 Emily Grimes, at. 36, 17, Great Tower-street, City. Mary Skinner, at. 61, 6, 	Jan. 15, 1851.	{Varicose Veins of Left Leg, with Varicose Uleer, size of half-a-crown, middle of inner side.	Varicose Veins 20 years, Ulcer 1 month.		(bandages. {Progressing fa- vourably.
Neckinger - road, Ber-	Jan. 15, 1851.	{Varicose Veins of Right Leg, Ulcer over Outer} Ankle size of a shilling.	Ulcer 12 months.		Nearly well.
 Wm. Woodward, mt. 36, 6, John-street, Commercial- rond. George Margetts, 12, Little 	Jan. 17, 1851	(Skin in various places.)	Varicose Veins 12 years.		/ Inflammation of skin subsided ; leg greatly re- lieved, March 10, 1851. Finds ban- dage give support, cool and comfort- able.
Warner-st., Clerkenwell. 19. Francis Ludlow, 17, Old	j Jan. 17, 1851	(Varicose Veins of the Leg. small Varicose Illess.)	Varicose Veins 7 years.		Much relief.
Change, Cheapside, 20. Chas. Hammeraley, get. 17,) Jan. 17, 1851	Inner Ankle, Varicose Veins six years.	Ulcer 3 weeks.	10 days.	{ Ulcer healed, Jan. 27, 1851.
10. Half-Moon-crescent, White-condult-fields.)	(smining, above Left Inner Ankle.)	Ulcer 5 weeks.	1 week.	{Cured, Jan. 27, 1851,
21. Lucy Wood, 1, Farnham- place, Gravel-lane.	f van. 20, 1851	(Outer Ankle.	Varicose Veins and Ulcer at in- tervals for 20 years.		Likes the bandage.
 Jane Harris, act. 70, 18, Leader-street, Chelsen. Mary Adzhend, act. 40, 29, 	f Jan. 20, 185	(Varicose Veins of Right Leg, with Ulcer, size) of a shilling, above the Inner Ankle. (Varicose Veins of Right Leg, Ulcer size of)	Ulcer 15 years.		Idem.
Malthy-st., Bermondsey New-town.	} Jan. 22, 185	shilling on dersum of the right foot towards the Outer Ankle.	Varicose Veins 4 years, Ulcer 3 months.	2 weeks.	Ulter healed Feb. 5, 1851 ; Varicose Velus much bet- ter.
24. Sarah Flowers, æt. 30, 9 Leadenhall-st.	Jan. 24, 185	1. {Varicose Veins of Right Leg and Thigh, Two Ulcers, one size of a shilling, two inches above the Inner Ankle, the other smaller, below and in front of ditto.	Varicose Veins 1 year, Ulcers about 6 months.	Large Ulcer 2 weeks, smaller do. 5 weeks.	Large Ulcer healed, Feb. 7, 1851; smaller ditto healed, Feb. 28, 1851.

