

An essay on the gonorrhoea : with some observations on the use of opium, in the cure of that disease / by William Thomas.

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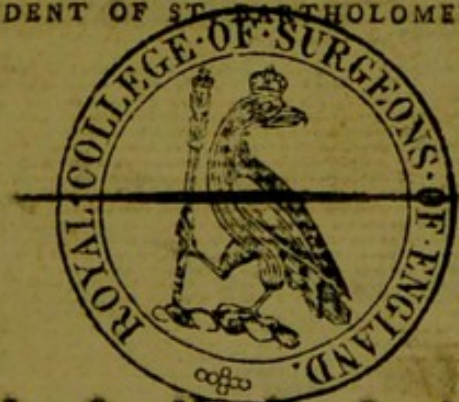
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AN

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ON THE
G O N O R R H O E A,
WITH SOME
O B S E R V A T I O N S
ON THE
U S E O F O P I U M,
IN THE
C U R E O F T H A T D I S E A S E.

By WILLIAM THOMAS, SURGEON,

LATE A STUDENT OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL.



L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR JOHN DONALDSON, CORNER OF ARUNDEL STREET, STRAND.

M DCC LXXX.

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Printed for John Donaldson, Corner of St. Paul's Church-yard, Strand.

M DCC LXXX.

T O

JOHN SHELDON, Esq.

TEACHER OF ANATOMY, AND SENIOR SURGEON
TO THE GENERAL MEDICAL ASYLUM,
ST. MARY LE BONE.

S I R,

TO a grateful mind there is a singular satisfaction in the acknowledgment of favors received. I have had the advantage of prosecuting my studies in Anatomy under your tuition; and I am happy, in having this opportunity of publickly acknowledging it. Accept my sincere thanks for the attention you were pleased to pay to me, while your pupil; and for the continuance of your friendship since, which I esteem a particular honor; and which it will be my utmost ambition to preserve.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient,

And most humble servant,

WILLIAM THOMAS.

WARWICK COURT,
APRIL 15th, 1780.

JOHN SHRELDON, Esq.

Teacher of Anatomy, and Senior Surgeon
to the General Medical Asylum,
St. Mary le Bone.

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WILLIAM THOMAS

Warwick County,
April 15, 1780.

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E S S A Y

When we find such contrary modes of practice, separately countenanced by men of great abilities, and each supported by cases that seem to render them equally right and conclusive; we may venture to conclude that

G O N O R R H O E A.

that neither of them will at all times and invariably be found to

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VARIOUS are the opinions entertained of the gonorrhœa virulenta: the mode of infection, the effect, the progress and the consequences, still continue unaccounted for to general satisfaction.

A preternatural discharge from the urethra, is the characteristic of the disease; but it has been thought the effect of ulceration, increased secretion, and both together; each opinion has been supported by very plausible arguments.

By some it is thought to be and is treated as a simple local inconveniency, from which no future complaints can ever arise: others look upon it in a more serious light, and if not prevented, suppose it capable of contaminating the whole habit.

When we find such contrary modes of practice, separately countenanced by men of great abilities, and each opinion supported by cases, that seem to render them equally right and conclusive; we may venture to conclude, that both opinions may be now and then right, but that neither of them will at all times and invariably be found so.

To steer our course carefully between each will generally be found most safe; but to weigh each opinion with the utmost attention is the duty of every practitioner; each individual determination is a matter of general importance; the advantages and disadvantages are too considerable to make it a matter of indifference, which method we adopt: by the first we may subject the sufferer to the painful, horrid effects of a confirmed pox; which may, perhaps, descend to his posterity; by the second, to an unnecessary hazardous course of mercury, by which the constitution may be irreparably injured.

It will be difficult, if not impossible to determine what are the genuine properties of venereal virus; whether it is in the form of miasmata, vapour or matter; we can only by careful observation trace it's effects, and be able to restrain them.

The venereal virus is certainly a species of infection sui generis: the arguments made use of to support the opinion, which prevails among many, that there is more than one species of venereal virus; that the venereal virus, which produces a gonorrhœa, is different from that which produces a pox, are by no means conclusive; they will be found erroneous. For there certainly does not exist more than one species of venereal virus, which of itself is always capable of producing a confirmed pox; but the virulency of it's action, is always more or less impeded and restrained from causing ulceration, and producing those effects which constitute a confirmed pox, by being blended with the different natural secretions of the body, and according to the disposition of the parts on which it is deposited: for instance, in the urethra, it will produce only an increase of secretion, for the most part, without any ulceration, therefore, the habit is most commonly unhurt by it: on other surfaces of the body, not so strongly protected by nature, ulceration ensues,
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and the time we find the venereal virus in it's full force, and capable of acting with it's greatest virulency, is, when it has produced ulceration on some part of the body, where the secretion is thin and incapable of restraining it's action in any very great degree; such ulcerations are generally known by the term chancre.

When the venereal virus, from a chancre, is insinuated into the urethra, it is retained there by the mucus, which smeares that canal, and is prevented by that mucus from coming separately and immediately into contract with the membrane which lines the urethra; and the venereal virus being blended, and sheathed with that tenacious secretion, it's irritating quality is very much blunted, and consequently acting in a milder degree, occasions only an encrease of that secretion from the lacunæ, which prevents it, in general from causing ulceration.

If any of the increased secretion from the lacunæ, impregnated with the venereal virus; or in other words, if the smallest quantity of the discharge from a gonorrhœa, is lodged in a sound urethra, it will produce the same complaint; a gonorrhœa will produce a gonorrhœa: but if any of the gonorrhœal discharge should be left on the glans penis, or come in contact with the internal fold of the prepuce, it may

now and then, according to the strength and weakness of the habit, fret, and cause ulceration, more especially if there should at that time be any slight excoriation; but the chancre so produced, will in general be milder, and much easier cured, than when the venereal virus, from a chancre, is deposited on the fine villus surface of the glans penis, or on the prepuce; for the secretion being thin and limpid, ulceration will always follow; that is, a chancre will, on the external parts of the penis, or elsewhere, if the integuments are thin and but slightly defended, constantly produce the most virulent chancre.

That the venereal virus is milder when mixed with the mucus of the urethra, I think will scarce admit of a doubt; for was it not, the extremity of the glans penis, and prepuce, from the constant lodgement of the gonorrhœal discharge, must be in a continued state of ulceration: indeed slight excoriations do frequently happen, and sometimes a kind of chancrous sore, especially on the frænum, but they very seldom give much trouble, or so long resist the usual applications, nor do they spread with that virulency which is so often observed in more confirmed chancres.

It is no uncommon thing to meet a chancre and a gonorrhœa contracted at one and the same time;

time; the person from whom the infection was received, may undoubtedly have laboured under both those complaints—or may have only had a chancre; the virus, from which chancre has produced a gonorrhœa in the urethra, and on the external parts a chancre.

Notwithstanding what has been just observed, it is by no means meant that in a gonorrhœa ulceration never does take place, for it most certainly may; many well authenticated cases have proved it beyond the possibility of a doubt; I believe if a gonorrhœa is properly treated, it will very rarely happen; but when it does, a confirmed pox may certainly ensue from it.

It appears therefore, from the foregoing observations, that a gonorrhœa is only an increase of secretion from the urethra; that the venereal virus, by being diluted with that secretion, is most commonly rendered incapable of causing ulceration, but when it does, the venereal virus, that caused at first only an increase of secretion in the urethra, may in time produce a confirmed pox; that is, when the venereal virus is once mixed with the general circulation, it will produce those different changes and appearances, which are constantly and invariably ob-

observed to be the effects of that stimulus upon different parts of the body.

A gonorrhœa is frequently cured without mercury; a confirmed pox never is; this is apparently a very strong proof that there are two species of venereal virus, as well as a proof of the inutility of mercury in the gonorrhœa; in answer to this it may be urged, that whenever a chancrous ulceration takes place upon the glans penis, and prepuce, tho' it in general is milder, as has just been observed, yet it cannot be cured without the use of mercury, either internally or externally; and upon a careful investigation of the matter, it will appear, that tho' the venereal virus in a gonorrhœa, and a pox is always similar, yet it may be frequently eradicated when only deposited upon such a particular part, as the membranous surface of the urethra, without the use of it's specific, mercury; but that it becomes absolutely impossible, after it is so intimately blended with the general circulation, as it must be, when ulceration has taken place. The method generally made use of for curing a gonorrhœa without mercury, is by astringent injections; if it is considered in what manner they act, and how they effect a cure, it will be clear, that the frequent success of it, is neither a proof of the virus in a gonorrhœa being different from that in a pox, nor
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will it confirm the opinion, that mercury is inefficacious and unnecessary, but rather that all astringent injections are, after a certain time, highly improper and hazardous. Various are the ingredients with which these injections are composed; solutions of saccharum saturni, ærugo æris, vitriolum album, and many others, are now made use of.

These injections may be made equally proper, or improper; they are all on one and the same principle—they are astringents. I am convinced by experience, that a gonorrhœa may frequently be perfectly and completely cured by them, but they must always endanger the habit, and their use requires the greatest care and caution. Different constitutions will require different degrees of strength in the injection; and it is absolutely necessary, that this should in all cases be ascertained with the greatest exactness; for upon this determination, in a great measure, depends the propriety or impropriety, the safety or the danger in their use.

If the injection should be too weak, it will be insufficient to answer the purpose designed; but the contrary is generally the case; for after a particular time in the gonorrhœa, it is almost impossible to make these kind of injections weak enough for most constitutions; and therefore it
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pens, that these injections generally do more harm than good: when they are too strong, they act too powerfully; they entirely close the vessels; they should only gently and moderately constrict; they quite stop the discharge which nature increases to guard and protect the urethra from the venereal stimulus; they bring on inflammation in the urethra, which is communicated to the neighbouring parts; whence ensues, swellings of the testicles, and inguinal gland: much more dreadful consequences very often follow the use, not only of the stronger injections of this sort, but even the very mildest, if used too frequently.

If the injection is made of a proper degree of strength, if it is neither too weak nor too strong, it will gently constrict the mouths of the vessels, and make them better able to resist the venereal stimulus; the injection will thus continue to harden and protect them, till assisted by the increased secretion from the lacunæ, the venereal is entirely washed away, and the stimulus being thus taken off from the part, the running ceases.

These injections do not effect a cure, by possessing any specific quality for eradicating the venereal virus, but merely from their astringency; they give a preternatural hardness to the parts,

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and render them less susceptible of the venereal stimulus, till partly by the increased secretion from the lacunæ, and partly by the injection, the venereal virus is taken away, by washing off the mucus of the urethra, with which it was blended.

It is in this manner that astringent injections are capable of curing a gonorrhœa; but it is not in this manner that mercury effects a cure: the washing away the venereal virus, and the eradicating it, is very different; the first may be accomplished by an astringent injection only, when it is lodged on a superficial membranous surface, before it has caused ulceration, and mixed with the general circulation: that of eradicating, can be done by the proper use of mercury only, which will always be attended with the same success, whether the venereal virus is lodged on an external surface, or mixed with the circulation in general: and however this method of curing a gonorrhœa by astringent injections only, may be extolled, the propensity it has in all cases to create local mischief, and the uncertainty of it's securing the habit afterwards, are insurmountable objections, and will always carry with it the appearance of presumption, while we are possessed of that infallible specific for venereal virus—mercury—the judicious use of which will not be liable to bring on any additional complaints, and will be attended with the pleas-

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ing satisfaction, both to patient and surgeon, that the habit will always be secured by it, in future.

Since then the most prudent method of curing a gonorrhœa is, by a careful and judicious use of mercury, both with respect to the local complaint, as well as for the future safety of the habit: it is necessary to examine which is the best method of introducing that medicine; a variety of ways have been proposed, but I shall confine my observations to those most frequently practiced in curing the gonorrhœa, namely that of giving calomel by the mouth, joined with other cooling medicines; and the use of calomel by injection.

The first step thought absolutely necessary towards the cure of a gonorrhœa is, to subdue what are called the inflammatory symptoms of it; and indeed with many this is almost the only object in view for some time; to effect it the body is kept in a constant state of purging, by lenitive electuary, jalap, &c. these are assisted by cream of tartar, or nitre, and sometimes both; calomel is given very sparingly; for the eradicating the venereal virus, seems to be a secondary consideration, that may be safely omitted until these symptoms are in some measure gone off.

The proper time when the calomel may be given more freely, and the eradicating the venereal virus may be attempted without danger of hazarding the parts to violent returning inflammation, is left to the discretion of the surgeon, who can very seldom judge the time from the cessation of the inflammatory symptoms, but most frequently from the length of time; for the fact is, that the symptoms usually called inflammatory, constantly increase during the use of the purging and saline medicines only. I have known these medicines given to prevent the inflammatory symptoms, before they appeared, merely on a supposition that a gonorrhœa was contracted, but without effect, the symptoms were equally severe, if not more so, than if no such precaution had been taken.

That the gonorrhœa does sometimes entirely disappear, in a very few days, during the continuance of these medicines, I can produce instances; but they happen so very seldom, that I should think they were brought about, rather by the help of a good constitution, than any singular advantage from these medicines.*

From

* If a person, after having connection with a suspicious person, has on heat of urine, chordee, and a discoloured running, together with an inflammation of the parts, it is always taken for granted that it is venereal, but these symptoms do very frequently arise without any such infection; such inflammatory symptoms, which

From the general prevalency of this practice, one should be led to suppose, that it was absolutely infallible, did not daily experience convince us of the contrary; for notwithstanding the early use of these medicines in a gonorrhœa, before the inflammatory symptoms are arrived to any great height, they seldom, if ever, are found capable of removing them, when in this slight degree; the chordee comes on, the heat of urine encreases, and instead of being confined to the particular spot it was at first, extends further up the urethra. All this is submitted to, and looked upon as additional complaints that must happen of course.

A fortnight or three weeks are generally elapsed before the patient can boast of any material alteration, but before that time, the calomel is given more freely. After a continuance of these medicines for five or six weeks, very seldom less, but frequently much longer, the heat of urine is no longer complained of; the chordee ceases to be troublesome, the running from being

which are often from excess, and a disposition of the habit to inflammation, may be always allayed by keeping the body open, rest, abstemious living, and the use of diluting liquors; or if the inflammation is not very great, a mildly astringent injection will remove it in a few hours; it is these kind of gonorrhœas which so speedily yield to such local applications. I have seen several gleans from the same cause, without any previous inflammation, which were removed by the bark, and an astringent injection.

ing thin, and much in quantity, becomes thick, and much less—the inflammatory symptoms are thought to be gone—but during the first five weeks, it is common for the patient to make much complaint of an acute pain near the bottom of the urethra, and in his groin; complaints which are generally unnoticed by the surgeon, or ranked among the general consequences of inflammation; it may oftentimes be so, but I am inclined to think, it will frequently be found the symptoms of a very serious change; and that it prognosticates an effect to have taken place, which it behoves the surgeon to pay the utmost attention to: I believe it is often a sign that the venereal virus has caused an excoriation in the urethra, which, from it's long retention upon, and constant stimulating, it is some times capable of doing.

But to return to the cure—Upon a cessation of the inflammatory symptoms, the purging, together with the cooling salts, are discontinued; and nothing is supposed to remain now, but to eradicate the venereal virus, which being accomplished, it is thought the running will generally cease of course, as it is taken for granted, that it even now depends upon that stimulus,

Here again we are in the dark, and acting upon the greatest uncertainty; the length of time it may require to persist in the use of the calomel, before the end may be accomplished, and we can for a certainty declare the constitution secure, is utterly unknown; we have no criterion from which we may form our judgment, but by the running, the continuance of which is very different in every constitution—In the strong and healthy, it will entirely cease, in a few days after the inflammatory symptoms disappear; but this happens so very seldom, after this kind of treatment, that we can by no means say, it is generally attended with such success.

On the contrary, it is more frequently the case, that after the most rigid perseverance in the use of calomel, or some other mercurial preparation, for a very considerable length of time; the patient, instead of finding himself the better, for such a long and tedious discipline, complains of being so much weakened, as to be hardly able to go about his business; he has a constant and universal trembling, but the running remains, with this only difference, that it is some times thinner.

While he is in this state, and without any previous suppression of the running, it is no uncommon thing to have an additional and un-

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looked for complaint—a bubo—which will now and then sink under a little mercurial ointment, but most commonly suppurates, when it seldom fails to give much trouble, and to put on the appearance of a true venereal ulcer.

But if no bubo should arise, the general weakness and debility of the habit, gives the surgeon the first idea of a gleet; mercurials are therefore at length laid aside, and by the assistance of some of the balsams, and an astringent injection, the running ceases, and the patient gets well.

I appeal to every practitioner who attempts the cure of the gonorrhœa by internal medicines alone, if what I have just stated, is not a true and impartial account of the success of such practice; if they have not often lamented the inefficacy of such means, and if they cannot recollect frequent instances where their patients, from being strong and healthy, from the continued use of mercurials, have become weak and sickly; and upon a discontinuance of that medicine, they have always recovered their health and strength.

The invariable rule of purging indiscriminately in all habits, is certainly very injudicious.—
The inflammation may now and then in sanguine habits,

habits, where there is a particular disposition to inflammation, run high upon the slightest irritation, and be productive of complaints that will claim our whole and immediate attention; but when such cases occur, the medicines just mentioned will be found very insufficient to allay them.

By this mode of practice, the habits are so weakened and impaired, as to render them much more susceptible of the venereal stimulus, and when mercury is given, it's action will be found much more uncertain, than if such method had never been pursued. *

Cream of tartar, nitre, and all saline preparations, however cooling they may be, must be prescribed in this particular complaint, rather from custom, than from any particular advantages ever observed from their use; they always encrease the irritation, and are often the cause of additional complaints, which without their use, would never have happened: † their action is chiefly on the urinary passages, and for this very reason they

* In such debilitated habits, a very small quantity of mercury, in whatever manner it is exhibited, is apt very soon to affect the salivary glands, occasion a diarrhæa, attended with very violent gripings, or to weaken the patient by violent perspirations.

† An hernias humoralis seldom fails to come on, during the use of these kind of medicines.

they are improper, because they cannot act on them without stimulating them, and making the urine more sharp, which must of course add to the irritation, and consequently increase that inflammation which it was designed they should relieve.*

Altho' it may be said, that by this method gonorrhœas are daily cured, yet it cannot be proved that it is the best, or the most rational.

When a cure is brought about by this plan, it is by the venereal virus being destroyed by the long continued use of mercury, to the prejudice of the constitution, and afterward by the use of strengthening medicines, for the purpose of bracing up the habit in general; the other medicines usually joined with the mercury, are for the most part, so far from hastening the cure, they are quite insufficient to answer the design they are intended, and generally prolong the complaints.

The internal use of mercury alone, for the cure of this local disease, must be always tedious; is both hazardous and very uncertain, and by no means the most speedy or the most efficacious that can be made use of: a long continued use
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* Nitre is frequently observed to pass off with the urine, in an undissolved state, which must certainly, in a gonorrhœa, give most violent pain, and increase the inflammation of the urethra.

of it as in this method, is hurtful to the constitution, and some discharge from the urethra will continue; nay, be often increased by a rigid perseverance in the use of it, and will not cease but by the discontinuance of it, and by the proper administration of such medicines as strengthen the habit in general.

Many practitioners having so often experienced the tediousness and uncertainty of the method just treated of, have been induced to use calomel in an injection.

Calomel injections are very frequently made use of, yet very seldom with less impunity than astringents. There is a well known maxim in surgery; remove the cause, and the effect will cease; the maxim is certainly good, but it does by no means imply, that it may be always immediately or hastily attempted: calomel in an injection, is no doubt made use of, with a view of destroying the venereal virus; if it is applied for that purpose, to any part but that concerned in the gonorrhœa, it would be attended with much speedier success, as in a gonorrhœa it requires much care, lest it should inflame the tender surface of the urethra.

Injections which have calomel for the basis of their composition, tho' mixed with them in a
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much less quantity than is usual, will seldom fail to occasion more or less mischief—They give great pain; increase the inflammation; and are too frequently the cause of suppressions of urine, abscesses in perinæo, swelling of the testicles, and inguinal glands: and they are very capable of excoriating the urethra, a circumstance which should be guarded against as much as possible in every gonorrhœa.

Tho' injections, loaded with calomel, are often productive of the same complaints, as astringent injections; yet the calomel has this particular disadvantage, that when it has suppressed the running, by causing a violent increase of inflammation; yet in the gross powder in which it is generally thrown into the urethra (tho' by a constant use of it, even in this form, it will destroy the venereal virus, yet it has not the power like them, of defending the urethra, and rendering the parts less capable of being affected by the venereal virus: but on the contrary, the inflamed urethra is more susceptible of that stimulus than before, and is more likely to be ulcerated by it—and as the urethra has a double stimulus, namely the calomel and venereal virus, the inflammation will most commonly run higher. A proper enquiry into the cause of the gonorrhœa, and a careful observance of the effects it produces, and the efforts which nature always makes

makes to relieve herself, will very much assist in establishing the most rational method of curing it.

In the first place it is to be considered, that there is the venereal virus, a very active stimulus, lodged upon a very fine membranous surface, upon which open an infinite number of lacunæ, that constantly emit a certain quantity of a thick tenacious fluid, to prevent it from growing dry; over this fluid the urine loaded with it's salts, occasionally passes without irritating the membranous lining of the urethra, when the parts are in a natural healthy state: but in the gonorrhœa it becomes more or less inflamed; nature endeavours to defend the inflamed part, by increasing the secretion from the lacunæ, which in a healthy state is capable of being done with a much less quantity.

It is clear therefore, that this discharge, so far from being prejudicial, is at this time really salutary; and whatever is applied, either to lessen or suppress it, while the stimulus remains in force, will do much harm; not only in committing a violence to nature, by forcibly resisting her efforts, but the internal surface of the urethra will be quite deprived of it's natural defence, at a time it is more particularly necessary; the urine will consequently stimulate more than usual, and the

the venereal virus will be left to act upon the membrane more forcibly, and may probably cause an excoriation, and absorption of the venereal virus may take place; and however capable any injection may be thought of supplying it's place, however sufficient it may be supposed to be to prevent these ill consequences, there is certainly no artificial preservative so proper as that which nature supplies the part with.

When the venereal virus has gained admission into the urethra, it adheres to, and is retained there by the natural mucus, which smears that canal,

It most commonly remains there some time before it is perceived; the length of time that it continues in this apparently inactive state, is very different, it depends entirely upon the constitution of the person who receives it; in general it is about seven or eight days, very frequently much longer; it shews itself by an uneasy kind of titillation just within the urethra, and the person can hardly forbear rubbing the part: from this time the urine is found to scald a little at that part, and a small quantity of preter-natural discharge may be expressed from it.

This discharge, which is from the lacunæ, is occasioned by the *irritation of the venereal virus*

rendered mild, by being mixed with the natural mucus of the urethra.

The symptoms, as they constantly and regularly arise, are sufficient to convince any body, that the discharge is at first brought on by *irritation*, rather than inflammation: the titillation or itching always perceived antecedent to any other symptom, proves that the action of the venereal virus is by irritation; the inflammation that comes on afterwards, is an attendant symptom, which arises only in consequence of the great irritation.

The irritation is at first confined to one particular spot, which is generally about half an inch or an inch on the under part of the penis, but if not prevented, gradually extends further up the urethra.

Wherever the venereal virus acts, the orifices of the lacunæ become somewhat thickened and inflamed, and upon the greater or less degree of irritation from the venereal virus, upon these secreting vessels, depend the quantity and consistence of the discharge in a gonorrhœa: if the habit is weak, the irritation will be great, and the running will always be large in quantity, and very thin in quality; and as the irritation and consequent inflammation go off, it will gradually decrease and get thicker.

The greater or less degree of irritation and inflammation, depend very much on the habit: the venereal virus will always be found to act most powerfully, on relaxed delicate habits, and those naturally endued with great irritability; and it is not improbable, but in these kind and in scrophulous habits, and these weakened and impaired by any disease, but that the natural secretions are rendered thinner, and therefore less able to counteract any stimulus—and this may be the reason, why the venereal virus more certainly takes effect, and makes greater havock in these debilitated habits, than in the more healthy and robust, which are frequently seen capable of overcoming the milder stages of the disease, without any assistance from art.

As all the symptoms in a gonorrhœa depend from one cause, namely the venereal virus, it will be naturally suggested, that a removal of it from the urethra, by washing it away, will immediately prevent any further bad effects from it, and remove the present; if this could be safely done in every stage of the gonorrhœa, it unquestionably would. But the venereal virus is always so minutely blended with the mucus of the urethra, that it is impossible ever to wash away the one without the other; and the mucus is of so peculiar a nature, that no injection ut-

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terly inoffensive, yet known, will answer that purpose.

Most of the astringent injections will, by frequent repetition, wash it off, but the use of them, as I have before observed, is so very hazardous, that after the inflammatory symptoms have once shewn themselves, they are much better avoided,

It is but seldom that application is made to a surgeon, before the running appears, and the inflammatory symptoms have made some progress; the gonorrhœa is generally confirmed.

But if application should be made upon a strong presumption that a gonorrhœa is contracted, or at a time the inflammatory symptoms have scarce made their appearance, and are in their very earliest state, the use of a proper injection, with a view of washing away the venereal virus and mucus together, will then, and then only, be the most rational method of proceeding, and will, for the most part, be attended with success—a gonorrhœa, with all its consequences, will often be prevented.

But after the running is particularly noticed, and the inflammatory symptoms are more than slight, such injections become highly improper, and the use of them will be attended with those bad consequences before represented.

The idea of washing away the venereal virus must be now laid aside.—Another method must be pursued; from this time, the inflamed parts will be constantly liable to excoriate from any sharp injection, and the venereal virus liable to gain admission into the habit;* and no-body can, from this period, ever, with propriety, answer for the future safety of the habit, unless the venereal virus is eradicated by a proper and judicious administration of mercury.

The action of mercury on the venereal virus, is peculiar to itself, it resists the irritation of that stimulus, by destroying the stimulating body, and it is the only medicine yet known, that is capable of destroying it; the most common preparation now used for a gonorrhœa, is calomel; but the misfortune of it is, tho' it is an antidote for the poison itself, yet it is far from being so to the inflammatory symptoms the poison occasions—calomel is itself a very active stimulus, and when applied to the urethra in too gross a form, or in too great a quantity, much mischief may be done by it.—The propriety of using it in an injection, depends in a great measure, upon the carefully and properly mixing it.

Altho'

* The urethra is much more liable to be excoriated by a sharp injection, and ulcerated by the venereal virus, when in an inflamed state, than when uninflamed, and ulceration is the best surface Anatomists know of for absorption.

Altho' mercury is the only medicine that can be called a specific for the venereal virus, tho' it is the only one that can be depended upon for totally eradicating it, yet it should not be inferred from thence, that all others are entirely useless; there are some which, tho' not capable of eradicating it from the system, are nevertheless able, by sheathing the parts (without committing any violence to them) to counteract it's irritating property for a time; and tho' it's effects are not permanent, yet so long as they do continue, they will always relieve the inflammatory symptoms, and if repeated, will continually impede the action of the venereal virus, till by a slow and cautious administration of it's more effectual antidote, mercury, it is entirely destroyed.

I have just observed, that the action of the venereal virus, was by irritation—there is no medicine yet found so capable of appeasing and preventing irritation, especially when attended with inflammation, as opium; that it is to be depended upon in most diseases, where there is great irritation, I believe every body will allow: it is equally efficacious in appeasing irritation from venereal virus, and it's use will be found in a gonorrhœa, attended with as many advantages as even mercury itself.

Small dozes of it have been long ago recommended in the gonorrhœa, when the pain has been great, and the inflammatory symptoms run high; but small dozes are insufficient to answer the purpose; the venereal virus is always particularly irritating, and will always require full dozes, that must be persisted in; when the inflammatory symptoms appear even slight, till they are quite overcome, if opium is thus made use of; it's effect will be found as constantly and as uniformly successful as in all other irritable inflammatory complaints.

The advantages derived from the use of opium in a gonorrhœa, are not confined to the free and constant administration of it internally; for when used in a proper injection, it immediately gives ease, and never fails to relieve and abate the inflammatory symptoms. I have seen several instances where very virulent gonorrhœas have soon disappeared upon the free use of it, without one grain of mercury being taken.

I would not by any means have it supposed that I intend to introduce it as a substitute for mercury; for though it may now and then, assisted by a good constitution, be capable of curing a gonorrhœa, yet in general I know that it will be found of itself insufficient. Neither opium
nor

nor mercury relied on separately will be able to stop the running in a gonorrhœa in every constitution.

If mercury and opium are made use of together, both internally and in an injection, they greatly assist each other; by being thus blended, the mercury is rendered more safe and speedy in it's success, and the opium, much more effectual.

The common opinion that the inflammatory symptoms of a virulent gonorrhœa, are always to be subdued by the use of cooling purges, abstemious living, and the use of saline medicines; is a very erroneous one; some cooling purgative may undoubtedly be sometimes very necessary, when in sanguine habits the symptoms run high in consequence of such a disposition to inflame, and abstinence from all high seasoned food and spiritous liquors, right, but by paying that whole and immediate attention in every constitution, to the inflammation, it attacking a symptom only: if it is considered as the consequence of, and dependent upon violent irritation, it must be clear, that such inflammatory symptoms cannot be allayed, so long as the venereal virus remains; and that the most rigid perse verance in the antiphlogistic plan, can never remove it, but must rather increase than diminish it.

○ If instead therefore of debilitating the habit, by unnecessary purging, and adding fresh irritation to the inflamed parts, if instead of giving medicines that do this, those of the more lubricating kind are substituted, the secretion of the kidneys will not be increased by them, the urine that is secreted, will be made less acrimonious and irritating: if we do our utmost endeavour, by every means both local and general, to counteract the irritation of the venereal virus, and render the habit as little susceptible of it as possible; at the same time we are by the proper introduction of mercury destroying it; our medicines will be calculated, to sooth for the present the inflammatory parts, by lubricating them and sheathing them from the venereal virus, and to destroy the primary cause on which the inflammatory symptoms depend,

The inflammation accompanying a gonorrhoea is unquestionably local; it is confined to the membrane that lines the urethra; † it is not caused by any internal stimulus thrown upon that part, from any disease of the habit. But it is caused by an extrenuous body applied to the urethra, which is possessed of a stimulating property in a very great degree, and is called venereal virus. It is evident therefore, that so long as the stimulus

† This is to be understood as generally the case, independent of concomitant symptoms.

lus is acting, the inflammation must continue; our first invention, if it is merely to subdue the inflammation, must be consequently ineffectual.

That the inflammatory symptoms in a great measure subside, upon the use of certain applications, before the venereal virus is destroyed, is unquestionable. This effect may be speedily accomplished by two different kinds of applications, which act in very different ways. The first is by astringent or mild caustic injections; the second, by a soft anodyne lubricating one.

Astringents answer the purpose, not by possessing any peculiar properties to allay inflammation, for if used too frequently, or too strong, they will never fail to increase it, nor by bringing the parts nearer to a healthy state, but by violently constringing them, by giving them a preternatural hardness, and force to resist, and be less susceptible of the venereal stimulus—The other by lubricating the urethra, by sheathing the venereal virus, and acting as an artificial mucus to the part.

Most authors have condemned the use of injections in the early stages of the gonorrhœa, and the present practitioners in general, have dis-
local

carded them as productive of very alarming local complaints, and destructive to the constitution in general.

The injections usually made use of, and the general idea annexed to the use of an injection, is, that it's property must be astringent, that is, that all injections must certainly suppress the discharge: if injections possessing an astringent quality, in any great degree, are made use of, they will infallibly have that effect, and be the cause of complaints more painful to bear, and as difficult to get rid of, as the disease they were intended to remove.

The habit was thought endangered, from a supposition that the venereal virus was repelled into the habit by them.—It certainly might suffer now and then upon such occasions, but not always, for a suppressed gonorrhœa does by no means necessarily produce a pox; and when it does happen, it is not, as was supposed, from the suppression of the running, but rather from some accidental excoriation in the urethra, which the sharpness of the injection might have occasioned; by this means the venereal virus had an opportunity of getting admittance into the habit; for with respect to it's astringent quality, it only acted on the mouths of the lacunæ, it

constricted them, and prevented them from pouring out their contents, which they are stimulated to do in a much greater proportion than usual; and tho' the discharge from the lacunæ is greater than usual in a gonorrhœa, yet it is not till after it has escaped these vessels, and is lodged in the urethra, that it touches and becomes contaminated by the venereal virus.

Injections become improper from, and offend only in their quality; and tho' rejected by many practitioners as unnecessary, and by others as hazardous, yet, if properly suited to the state and stage of the gonorrhœa, they may be not only used with the greatest safety, but the cure will always be expedited by them.

In forming the composition of the injection, we should take nature for our guide, and imitate her as much as possible.—The design of an injection in the first stage of a gonorrhœa, should be to counteract the irritation, to lubricate the inflammatory surface of the urethra, and to defend it as much as possible from the venereal virus; and to destroy that stimulus, opium, gum arabic, and argentum vivum properly dissolved, and mixed according to art in some oleaginous fluid, will answer these several purposes; to these I have frequently added, where the dispo-

sition to inflame was not great, a very few drops of extract saturn; which, when guarded by the oil and opium, and in the small quantity I have used it, has never done any harm, but has, I think, in debilitated habits, been attended with some advantages.

When from any violent exercise, or the use of improper injections, or internal medicines, a suppression of the running and violent inflammation ensues, which extends to all the neighbouring parts, it may be necessary to leave out the arg. vivum; but the injecting warm oil and opium, frequently into the urethra, will be essentially serviceable. Bleeding may be premised, and the body kept open by glysters, which, in such cases, is much better than giving medicines for that purpose by the mouth. Under such circumstances, no medicine whatever can be depended upon so properly as opium judiciously exhibited, both internally and externally, which should be always given in full dozes, and be frequently repeated, until the pain and the inflammatory symptoms remit.

An injection of this kind will, in every gonorrhœa, hasten the cure, which is a matter of the greatest importance; for the longer the venereal virus is suffered to remain in the urethra, the more liable it will be to disease it, and the habit more likely to suffer from it; and I believe it will be found, that in most cases where

a pox proceeds from a gonorrhœa, that it is in consequence of the great length of time, either from the negligence of the patient himself, or his surgeon having trusted to internal medicines alone, that the venereal virus was suffered to remain in the urethra.

Notwithstanding so much has been said in favour of the injection, and tho' I have often been convinced by facts, that a gonorrhœa may be cured very safely and effectually by it, yet I am very far from thinking, that the giving medicines internally, is a mere matter of form: I have frequently trusted the cure to calomel and opium, given night and morning in a pill, and it has generally removed what are called the inflammatory symptoms, much sooner than any other medicine given in this manner; at the same time a piece of some softening electuary was taken occasionally in the course of the day, to prevent costiveness from the use of the opium.

If calomel and opium, when taken by the mouth, are so very efficacious, when assisted by an injection of similar properties, the cure will be much sooner accomplished, than by either of these means when singly relied on; and as the future safety of the habit depends in a great measure upon the speedy removal of the venereal virus, we ought certainly to make use of every means we know of, that is likely to accomplish that end.

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There is another very weighty reason in favour of injections: calomel, tho' thought to be the best preparation of mercury, and what most practitioners make use of, is not always given with safety to the constitution: a long continued use of it seldom fails to weaken and impair it, as much, if not more than the gonorrhœa; if opium is joined with calomel, it will prevent those bad effects, at least the gonorrhœa will generally be cured before sufficient quantity is taken to produce such ill consequences, as may, with great justice be ascribed to it.

Opium, tho' a very efficacious medicine, yet like all others, must be sometimes given a longer, sometimes a shorter time before the designed purpose will be answered; with respect to the quantity and repetitions, as it depends on the constitution, it must be left to the discretion of the surgeon; general rules are all that can be given. A pill, containing one grain of opium and two of calomel, taken every night, will, in general, be found sufficient; * it may be continued in this manner for a considerable length of time, without any ill consequences, or even the least apparent inconveniency if the body is kept sufficiently open; but it will seldom happen that a long continuance will be necessary, as the inflammatory symptoms will generally disappear in a short time.

Tho'

* Altho' this quantity will in general be found sufficient, yet, if the symptoms run high and are urgent, the opium may be taken night and morning for a considerable length of time, without any danger, as I have very often experienced.

Tho' the indiscriminate use of purges in every constitution is improper, yet it is absolutely necessary that costiveness should always be prevented in a gonorrhœa, especially during the use of opium; but this had much better be effected by soft lenient purges, such as manna, which may be made into the form of an electuary, with some lubricating balsamic medicines.

The use of balsamics during the inflammatory stage of the gonorrhœa, will be thought imprudent, but there are many medicines that may be very properly called balsamics which are perfectly innocent, that will not heat the parts, but will thicken the secretions and lubricate the urinary passages; and will render the urine less sharp and acrimonious; which is a very sufficient reason for using them, when it is considered, that such a stimulating secretion must pass over so irritable a surface as an inflamed membrane.*

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* All medicines may be very properly called balsamics that have a power of thickening the secretions: but it is not the balsamic quality which proves so pernicious in the inflammatory stage of a gonorrhœa---far from it; all balsams thicken the secretions, which is the very thing we should aim at, as the parts are by them lubricated and sheathed, and thus rendered more capable of resisting any stimulating body that may be applied: most of the balsams are very hot, and inflammatory: it is this heating quality which irritates the urinary passages, and increases the inflammation.

The Puly. e Tragacanth. tho' generally omitted as unsafe in the first stage of a gonorrhœa, may be given very safely in any quantity; but the most efficacious medicine I have observed, is the common yellow

The pills should be repeated every night; the injection should be frequently used, and the electuary occasionally, till the heat of urine is no longer perceived, till the pain in the urethra and chordee are entirely gone, and the running from being thin and great in quantity, is become thicker, and so little as scarcely to appear, unless pressed out by the fingers. When these points are gained the inflammation is said to be got the better of, which, in the common method of curing the gonorrhœa, is seldom effected in less than five or six weeks.

I pretend not to say in how short a time, the same advantages may be procured by the method I have just pointed out, the success of it will be found different, in different habits; but it will always be found more certain, and much more safe, and expeditiously effected, and much pain will be prevented by this method. When the inflammatory symptoms entirely disappear, and the gonorrhœa is brought to the state I have just mentioned, there can be no doubt but the parts are free from inflammation. Custom has
taught

yellow wax mixed by the help of the yolk of an egg, and some lenitive electuary, or the following

R. Elect. lenit. ℥iſs
 Pulv. e Tragacanth. ℥ſs
 Cerae flav. (vos) ℥ii
 Syr. de Mecon. q. s.
 F. Elect. cujus Cap. q. n. m. major, sæpissime.

taught us to believe, we have made no further progress in the cure, that this is the only advantage gained, but is it not worth enquiring whether the venereal virus is not likewise destroyed at the the same time the inflammation is, tho' some slight discharge does continue.

Is it not very probable, that as the inflammatory symptoms are allayed, that the cause from which they originated and on which they chiefly depended is removed, and that the slight discharge may be now from some other cause; that either from the natural debility of the habit, the effect of a long unnecessary prosecution of internal medicine, and from the urethra having suffered much from stimulus and inflammation, the parts are unable instantly to recover their tone, and the *lucunæ* still continue to emit a greater quantity of their secretion than they naturally should do. We frequently find that in strong habits, where the secretions are thick, and the parts are able to recover themselves soon, that not the least discharge remains in a very few hours after the inflammatory symptoms have disappeared, the patient is always judged to be well, and any longer continuance of mercury is thought unnecessary: But in weak debilitated habits some running most frequently remains, either more or less, after the irritation and inflammation are quite gone; and though they should have lasted five or six weeks, calomel or some other mercurial preparation is always thought necessary,

fary,

sary, because the venereal virus is supposed to remain unsubdued. But it is never found to give way to mercury, if continued daily for ever so long a time after the inflammation is allayed. The habit is always weakened by it without any advantage to the local complaint—the discharge continues till the mercury is left off, and recourse is had to such means and medicines as strengthen the system in general.

Upon a discontinuance of all enervating medicines, Nature will often in time recover herself, but in general the cure may be expedited by the administration of proper restoratives.

From these and several other very convincing proofs, I can venture to affirm, that after the inflammatory symptoms have entirely vanished,*
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* A Gentleman, by a very tedious process of mercury for the cure of a gonorrhœa, contracted some months before I saw him, had his general health much impaired, without completing a cure, a discoloured running from the urethra still continuing. At the time he applied to me, the parts appeared by much in too irritable a state to suppose the inflammation was entirely allayed. I desired him to take no more mercury of any kind, which seemed to impair his health, and as I thought not likely to suppress the discharge. I gave him a grain of Ex. thebaic, to take every night, and desired him to make use of the oily anodyne injection; by which means the inflammatory symptoms that remained were soon removed:

Yet

the running which remains is quite inoffensive, and incapable of communicating the infection; that the running is the consequence of one or other of the causes just mentioned—it is no longer from the irritation of the venereal virus, but from a relaxation of the lacunæ; and the cure must be completed, by restoring the parts to their original strength, when the discharge will never fail to cease.

If in a few days, therefore, after the cessation of the inflammatory symptoms, nature has been too much debilitated to recover; the oily relaxing injection should be changed for one that is mildly astringent, which had much better be guarded by a small quantity of opium: an injection mildly astringent will be capable of acting very powerfully; for the urethra being at this time very tender and irritable, it is too apt even now, to occasion a return of the inflammation, which seldom fails to be accompanied with an *hernia humoralis*.

There

Yet from the long continued irritation in the urethra, as well as from the debilitated state he was in, the lacunæ still continued to emit a greater secretion than usual, which was still discoloured a little, but quite thick. I desired him to take the bark frequently, and to strengthen his habit by a more generous diet, such as he had formerly accustomed himself to. He seemed very anxious to know my opinion of the running, as he had within a day or two had a connection with a woman, who he was fearful would suffer; I assured him that I did not think the discharge infectious. Not long after he had a second connection with another woman; neither of whom had the least complaint in consequence.

There are few diseases which so often disgrace the surgeon as this I have been treating of; but the variety of accidents that attend it, are by no means to be attributed at all times, to the want of skill in the Surgeon, who it must be allowed, always labours under great disadvantages.

Regulations in diet as well as medicine, and perfect quietude, tho' often necessary, can very seldom be complied with. The fear of discovery or wilful neglect, and imprudence on the patient's part, too frequently render the best concerted methods inefficacious.

Altho I have presumed to criticise on some of the usual methods of curing this disease, I am far from offering this essay as perfect. On such a subject as this, it is a difficult task to lay down ideas on paper with satisfaction; so that it really should be considered as no more than the outlines of the practice recommended. There are innumerable occurrences, which it is impossible for an author to enter into, and much must be left to be suggested by the reader—and if any one should be induced to try it, I intreat him not to judge hastily of it, nor impute any accidents to the practice, which may be the consequence of a peculiarity in the constitution, or perhaps some imprudence in the patient, as these observations are confirmed by experience to be right—and I do not doubt but the practice here recommended, will in *proper hands*, prove as successful as it has in mine.