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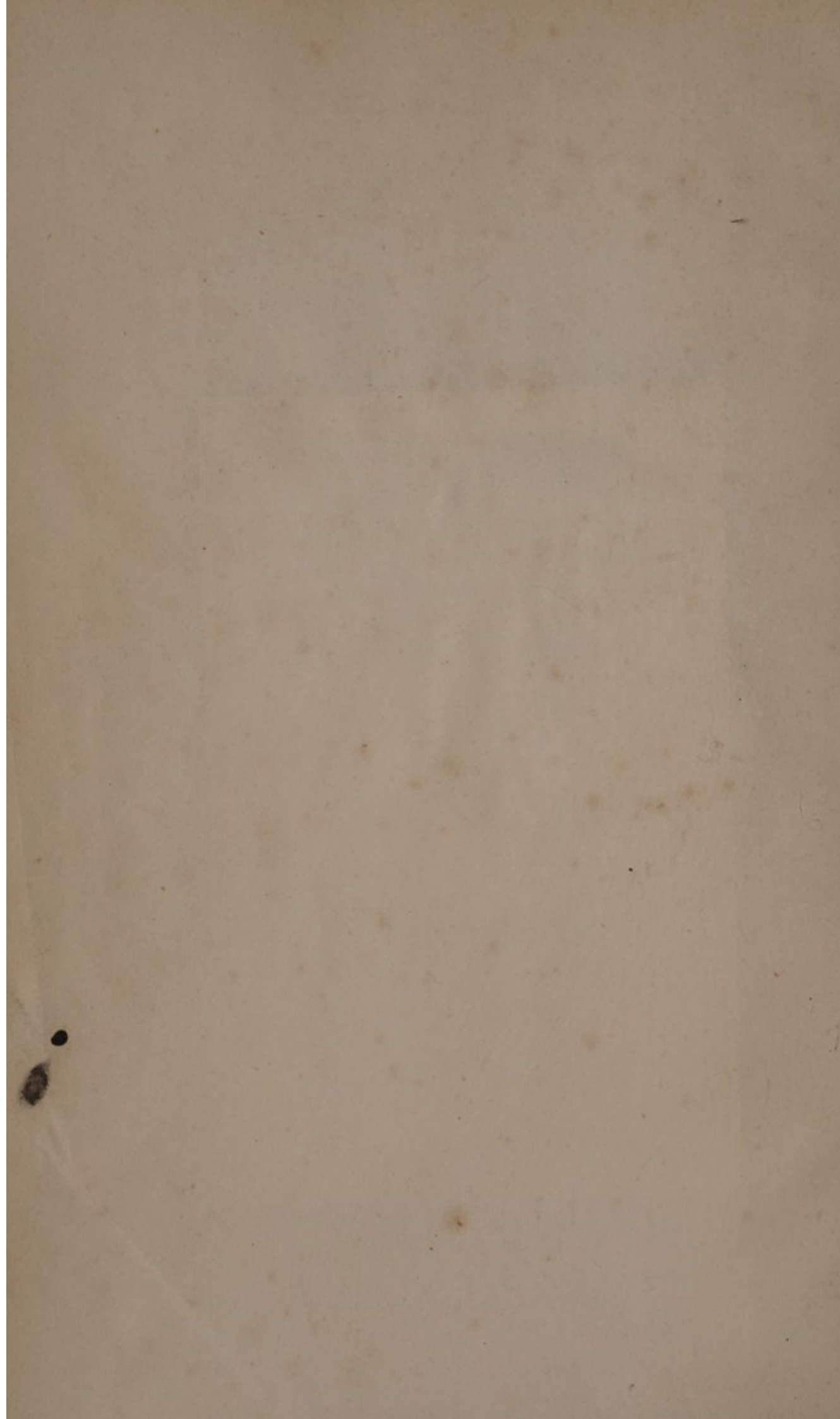
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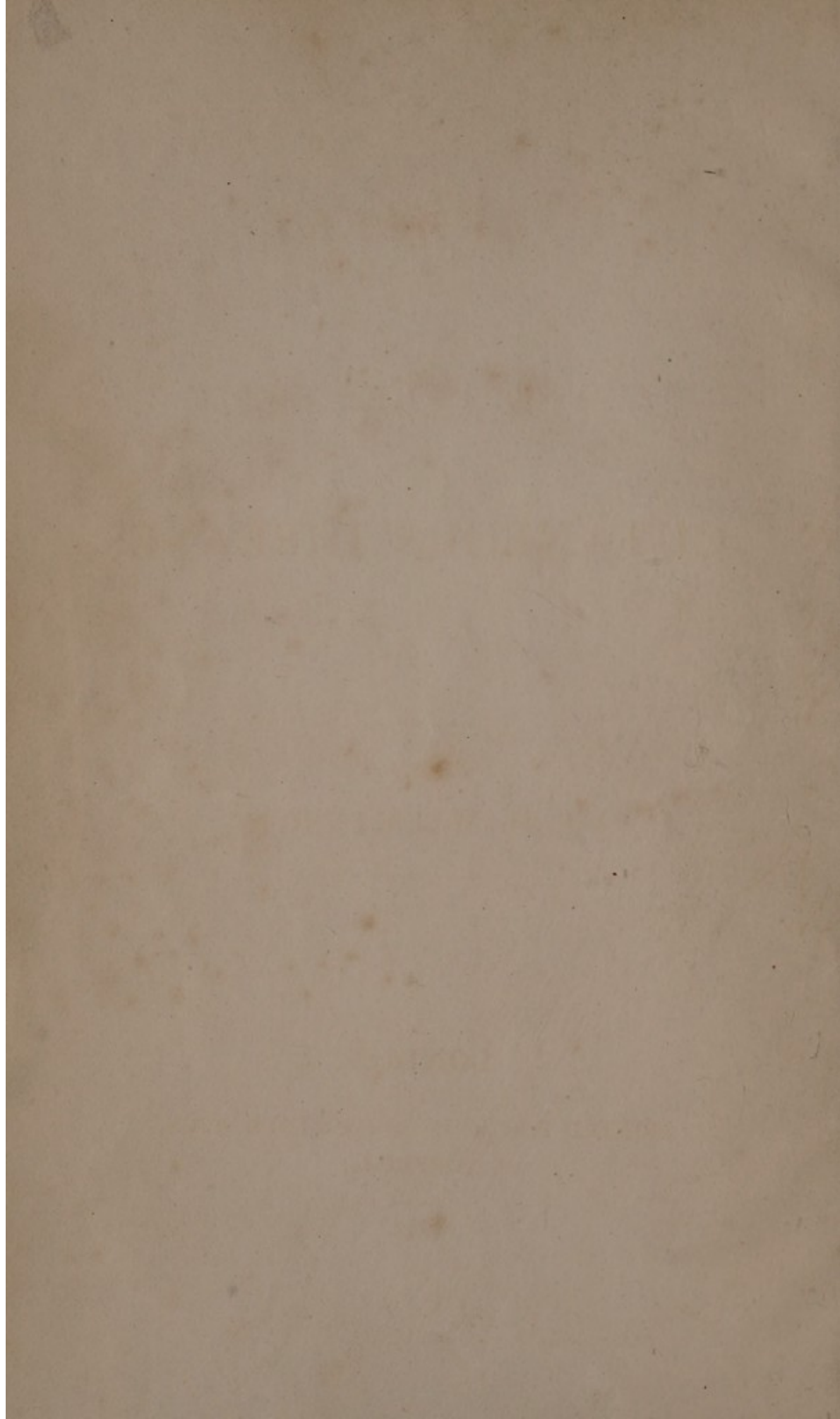
REMARKS

CUTANEOUS DISEASES

J. M. WILKINSON

LONDON

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15, CORNHILL



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ON

CUTANEOUS DISEASES.

BY

J. H. WILKINSON.



LONDON:

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CORNHILL.

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George Barth.

REMARKS
ON
THE
CUTANEOUS DISEASES



LONDON:
PRINTED FOR JOHN AND ARTHUR BACH,
CORNHILL.

1828

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I

PREFACE.

THE excuse which most modern authors have offered for writing upon Cutaneous Diseases, is, that they form a part of medical science, which has not been sufficiently cultivated; yet though many have been induced, on this account, to publish their different arrangements and treatment of such diseases, the subject is still so imperfectly understood that the same excuse continues in full force, and may likewise shelter me whilst making a feeble effort to assist others in their researches, by my own observations and experience.

As I shall not give a systematic account of the diseases of the skin, but merely make remarks upon them, I shall pass immediately to its pathology, being perfectly satisfied with what has been already written concerning its anatomy and physiology.

The reader will find very few cases detailed in these pages, not because I have not many to relate, and such as might seem very interesting to myself, (for any man may easily fill a volume by such means,) but because I have always entertained a great aversion to a book half made up by the insertion of cases, and frequently of so much similitude, that the minute relation of any one good case, might have answered every purpose of instruction; yet this is a common practice with many authors of the present day, some of whom must have, or ought to have, the power of filling a few pages with their own observations and reflections; but from the facility with which they put together their own cases, with long quotations from others, they are enabled to exhibit one prominent feature in their publications,—that of wishing to gain a little notoriety, by having their names as often as possible before the eye of the public.

37, *New Broad-street,*
March 1, 1822.

REMARKS
ON
CUTANEOUS DISEASES.

IN the different publications upon cutaneous diseases, it appears to me, that the secretion upon the surface of the true skin, and its power, when altered from its natural state, of producing all the different eruptions, has never been properly or sufficiently considered; nor yet how dependent their varieties are, upon the different states or condition of the skin, upon which such disordered secretion acts.

The prevailing opinion, that different eruptions are produced by different diseased secretions, appears to me to be incorrect, since, I believe, that the diseased secretion is always essentially the same;

and that the varieties of the eruptions are produced solely by the conformation and constitution of the subject.

We continually observe that the same causes produce very different effects in different individuals : that the same medicine vomits one person, and purges another, and excites a diaphoresis in a third ; that the cold damp air, acting upon two people at the same moment, in the same situation, produces in one a pleurisy, in the other a typhus fever.

These circumstances are familiar to all of us ; and we easily explain them, by considering the different habits, and the different states of system, of those who are, at the same moments, exposed to the same causes. Yet, though equally applicable, we seem to have neglected these observations, when considering the morbid phenomena of the skin ; for the same cause, exciting the same defective or deranged cuticular secretion, may produce the different varieties of *Lepra* in one person, of *Psoriasis* in another, and of *Pityriasis* in a third.

It is not necessary, at present, to state the general cause of such diseased secretion; but, whatever it may be, (for instance, a long-continued interruption, or irregular action of the digestive powers,) I have no doubt that such cause will produce on the skins of different persons the different diseases mentioned. But such cause may likewise produce the varieties of Impetigo, and some, if not all the varieties of Herpes: the three orders of Squamæ, Pustulæ, and Vesiculæ, may therefore be produced by the same cause, and, in most instances, may be cured by the same remedies.

If this be admitted, it will be also granted, that the same causes may produce contagious eruptions, since some of the order of Pustulæ are very contagious. In what, then, does the contagion of such eruptions consist? Is there a peculiar miasma, or poisonous fluid (*sui generis*), which, upon its application to different skins, occasions on each the same excitement, and the same eruption.

This is well known not to be always ne-

cessarily the case : even the itch, which is, generally, very quickly communicated, will not affect some skins, though exposed to it for months;* and it will exhibit itself on some as a vesicular, on others as a pustular disease.

The varieties of *Porrigo*, two or three of which are exceedingly contagious, will not affect some children, though they wear the hats and caps of the diseased ; and no two eruptions can be more unlike, than the varieties of *Tinea Capitis*.

A young woman has lately been placed under my care, who, having been engaged, for some weeks, in washing the heads of children affected with *Tinea*, has experienced a complete attack of *Psoriasis Unguium* ; and during last year, I met with another servant, who, from the same cause, was affected with *Psoriasis Palmaris*.

We frequently see that little children, having the *Porrigo Furfuracea*, or the P.

* One of the rankest eruptions of this kind, that I ever beheld, was on a female servant, who had slept in a small bed, with another girl, for six weeks, without communicating the disease to her.

Granulata, two varieties, as different as possible in appearance, will, with their fingers, communicate to the arms or necks of their nurses or mothers, the Circinatus, or common Ringworm, which seems to have a different character, as well as appearance; and may be cured by ink, an infusion of galls, or any astringent fluid.

Now, the miasma of the Small-pox, and Chicken-pox, or of any other contagious eruption attended with fever, though it will not affect *all* the bodies to which it is applied, or which are exposed to it; yet, when the affection does take place, it never fails to produce an eruption of nearly the same appearance; for the most confluent Small-pox exhibits, at its commencement, the same character of pustule as the distinct or more mild eruption.

But, the varieties of the eruptions before mentioned, though all proceeding from the same fluid or secretion, have no similarity to each other in appearance.

I conclude, then, that a certain vitiated secretion takes place within a part or parts of the skin, and produces an eruption; the

Lepra for instance, which is more or less severe, as the secretion is more or less vitiated, or the skin more or less irritable.

The same vitiated fluid, secreted on another skin, of different texture, or habit, (or of a different degree of heat or dryness,) shall produce Psoriasis or Pityriasis, and sometimes impetiginous and herpetic eruptions.

These different phenomena may be exhibited on the same individual. The skin of the scalp seems to differ in its nature or texture, from the skin of the other parts of the body; and a child, with any variety of Tinea Capitis, may, by communication with his fingers, produce an eruption on other parts of his body; but, such eruption will seldom bear much resemblance, and frequently none, to the Tinea which produced it.

This is illustrated still more effectually, by the different exhibitions of Psoriasis on the different parts even of the same person affected by it. In the Psoriasis Palmaris, the skin of the palms of the hands, having a firmer texture from pressure, and gene-

rally a greater degree of heat, the disease produces a more squamous, and a much more indurated affection.

In the Psoriasis Unguium, the fingers being more sensitive, and particularly irritable around the nails ; the disease produces a fretful, tettersous affection, with little vesicles, continually filling with, and discharging an ichor, which destroys the cuticle.

The Psoriasis Diffusa is a mere squamous eruption, receiving no peculiarity from its locality, but frequently bearing a great resemblance to the Lepra Alphoides.

We cannot doubt that the secretion, in these cases, is the same ; and that the difference of the affections produced, depends upon the difference in the parts of the skin upon which it acts.*

In respect to contagious eruptions, without fever, I can find no satisfactory explanation of their production ; but I think it is not very improbable, that they differ from others only in the degree of acrimony,

* Quidquid recipitur, ad dispositionem recipientis recipitur.

or the more irritating nature of the secretion which produces them. Another circumstance is indeed necessary to render them contagious—a certain state of the skin exposed to their action; for it is well known, that, however contagious an eruption may generally be, we cannot communicate it to some individuals.

On the other hand, some of those eruptions, which are not considered contagious, may become so very acrimonious, that coming in contact with a skin in a certain state of irritation, such skin shall be infected, as in the variety of Impetigo, called Grocer's Itch, and in some other impetiginous eruptions, so very like the common Itch, that it is difficult to distinguish them except by the infectious quality of the former.

When we reflect upon the peculiar structure of the skin, viz., of the cuticle, the rete mucosum, and cutis; and consider that an eruptive disease may sometimes affect the first, sometimes the second of these coverings, and sometimes penetrate to the cutis, to the capsule of the hair, and

even to the adipose membrane; we may easily conceive what a different appearance, and even character, the disease might assume, according to the part or parts which it occupied.

How easily, then, may we be induced, by the division and subdivision of an eruptive disease, into all its different varieties, to consider that there is something essentially different in such varieties; and that they frequently must require very different remedies: whereas, not only the different varieties of each particular order, but the different orders themselves, may be cured by the same remedies.

I would, on no account, attempt to diminish the value of Dr. Willan's classification, which I think, not only beautiful, but even useful, as far as it enables us to convey to each other, with facility, without the labour of description, more correct ideas of the peculiar appearance of each eruption; but, I cannot admit that, it has contributed, in the least degree, to the power of subduing them.

As, in the course of these remarks, I

shall take the liberty of commenting frequently upon his work, and shall do so with the freedom of a man who thinks for himself, it may be necessary, perhaps, to say, that no one can more highly estimate the abilities of the late Dr. Willan, with whom I was well acquainted, nor can any one more fully appreciate the worth of the work alluded to; but its greatest beauty, the classification of the eruptions, and the division of each into its different varieties, led him away, and has led away most of his readers, from the sameness of method and remedies, necessary for the cure of such diseases; and induced him and them to think, that not only the different orders, but their genera, and even many of their varieties, required different remedies, and different modes of treatment.

Thus, his excellent work is swelled out, and rendered, in many parts, unnecessarily tedious, by an enumeration of a great number of remedies for each eruption, (if remedies they may be called) extracted from ancient and modern authors, both those which were successful and unsuccessful,

three parts of which, for any particular efficacy, are not worth mentioning.*

Dr. Bateman, likewise, in his Synopsis, though he seems to be fully aware that the same cause may produce the different eruptions, and that "the diseases which commence with one generic character are liable, occasionally, to assume another in the course of their progress, as some papulous eruptions become scaly, and still more frequently pustular;" yet he is not led by such observations to conclude it possible that the *same remedies* may cure the *different genera*, but, on the contrary, observes that "it is very obvious, as Dr. Willan used

* But a still greater fault, of which more than one modern medical author has been guilty, is that of making long quotations of the opinions of Greek, Latin, and German authors; which opinions, however ingenious they might have been in their day, are not now worth the trouble of reading; and still less so when describing a comparatively trifling complaint, like Strophulus and its varieties, for the comprehension and cure of which we surely can need no assistance from Etmuller, Lorry, Myrops, Russel, Aëtius, Avicenna, &c. &c.; quotations from whom, if not intended to exhibit the erudition of the author, must be intended to enlarge the work, and to increase the price of it.

to remark that the adoption of any one mode of practice, or of any single pretended specific under the varying circumstances of this disease (Porrigo Scutulata) must be unavailing, and often extremely injurious."

Accordingly, he gives us a list of *thirty-three remedies*, externally and internally, *for this single variety*; stating, indeed, that "the milder remedies are to be employed in the more irritative states of the disease; and the stimulating applications where the discharge is acrimonious," but, without specifying any preference to one or more of the thirty-three remedies, but leaving you to make your own experiments, with the flattering prospect, that "such *occasionally* succeed, and such and such are *occasionally* useful."

I conclude that all or most of my readers have perused Dr. Willan's work on Cutaneous Diseases; and if they have not, I wish they would, for two reasons: first, because it is decidedly the best work extant upon the subject; and secondly, because I am not writing a treatise, but mere-

ly remarks arising from the perusal of his and other works, and shall not attempt to give a description of the character or progress of any disease, being perfectly satisfied with his very accurate performance of that part of the subject. But I object to his manner of amplifying the subject; I object to his method of spinning out the history of a disease, till he tires us with the recital; I object to his incessant quotation from Greek, Latin, German, and old English authors, (few of whose innumerable remedies any skilful modern practitioner would think of employing,) and not stating, in many cases, any decided opinion, concerning the superior virtue or efficacy of any particular remedies; though, from his extensive private and public practice, one would have expected him to have been capable of deciding this point in every eruptive disease.

His history of Scarlatina, which occupies a hundred and forty-three pages, above a fourth part of the volume, justifies these remarks.

In the year 1803, I attended several

cases of the Scarlatina Maligna with Dr. Willan, and the late Dr. Hamilton. It is well known that the disease raged most fatally during that period, and we lost four of our patients out of five in one family. Never were men more puzzled to know what remedies to adopt: all which Dr. Willan has recommended in his publication were employed. Emetics, purgatives, calomel and antimony; many other diaphoretics; opium, wine, and acids; bark, blisters, decoct. contray. with oxymel of squills; application of cold water, gargles of different descriptions, fumigations, &c. : all without the least good effect; all without making the least sensible impression upon the disease in any of its stages.

One fine girl, about eleven years of age, in high health and spirits in the morning, was attacked, an hour after, by the disease, and destroyed in thirty-six hours.

I may mention here that I had attended these children two years before, through the Scarlatina Simplex, strongly marked with every characteristic symptom, though

neither of the above physicians could believe that I was not deceived, concluding that it must have been Erythema; but I believe that very few medical men will now doubt the fact.

About this time, Dr. Peart published his "Practical Information on the Malignant Scarlet Fever and Sore Throat," in which he describes the wonderful effects of the Subcarbonate of Ammonia, and considers it to be endowed with a specific power over that disease. Like other practitioners, he was continually lamenting the loss of his patients by that dreadful malady; till, by his own suggestion, he employed the Subcarbonate of Ammonia, in the manner he describes; and from that moment, he did not lose one patient out of nearly three hundred.

When I read this account, I immediately enquired after the character of Dr. Peart, and finding, that he was most respectable, both in talent and probity, and engaged in very considerable practice, I had no reason to doubt the truth of his statement, and therefore immediately adopted his remedy;

and consonant with my own principle, that an effectual remedy for one genus will, with proper management, cure all the genera of the same order, I administered it in all the following diseases,* Erysipelas, Rubeola, Scarlatina, Urticaria, Roseola, and Erythema, with all their varieties; and I am happy to be able to declare that, from that moment to the present, a space of seventeen years, I have, not only never lost a patient in the above diseases, but have never had a case of the kind that has even appeared dangerous, or that has even given me a moment's anxiety.

Of course, it will be understood, that in these diseases, a case will sometimes occur, especially of Erysipelas, which may need the additional assistance of some other remedies; but this will seldom happen, if the Carbonate of Ammonia be given early and

* It appears to me, that Erysipelas is improperly classed by Dr. Willan; it is frequently unattended by any Bullæ, or even the slightest vesication; and the inflammation is of the same nature as that which attends Rubeola, Scarlatina, and Urticaria, and may be cured by the same remedies.

rapidly, as it generally prevents any disagreeable or severe symptoms from taking place. These remedies will be suggested by the understanding of any man of moderate skill in his profession, and therefore I need not mention them. But, to allay the distress of the surface, both before and after the bursting of the vesications, and to prevent sphacelation in those parts which may have such tendency, I know of no application equal to the lotion which Dr. Peart recommends, and which may be applied at all times with the greatest safety. The following is the form :

℞ Ammon : Subcarb :

Plumbi Superacet : āā 3i.

Aquæ Rosæ Oi. m.

In addition to my own testimony of the powers of this medicine, I have that of my friend Mr. Ricardo, of Bow, whose opinion is highly valued by all who know him, and who, not believing in specifics, will not be thought to give too much credit to the virtues of any one particular remedy. He writes as follows :

“ I have received your letter, requesting me to state the result of my experience of the effects of Subcarbonate of Ammonia, in the treatment of Measles, Scarlatina, and Erysipelas ; as I employed this medicine at your suggestion, many years ago, I lament that I have not placed on record any *particular* cases, many such having been under my care ; but, perhaps, it may be sufficient for your purpose, that I am able to declare, that the exhibition of Subcarbonate of Ammonia in such cases, has been attended under my direction with constant success. You know, that I am situated in the neighbourhood of many schools which I have the pleasure of attending ; and during twelve or fourteen years in which I have employed the Subcarbonate of Ammonia, I have not lost a single patient of some hundreds whom I have attended in the above diseases.

“ As an additional circumstance in favour of this remedy, I must mention, that I lost two patients whom I attended with another medical gentleman, where I had not sufficient influence to have the Ammonia em-

ployed. To be as particular as my memory and my present ill state of health will allow me to be—I must state, that among the paupers I have lost two or three children; but the exhibition of the medicine was evidently neglected by the nurses, as was every other attention necessary to give the patients a chance of recovering.”

It has been observed, that Dr. Peart has no claim to originality in the employment of the Subcarbonate of Ammonia in the cure of Scarlatina; Dr. Withering having sometimes used the same remedy many years before. But, may there not be almost as much originality in the *manner* of exhibiting a remedy, as in the *first adoption* of it? Dr. Withering says, that “the volatile alkali may likewise be given *with advantage*, but it is difficult to get a sufficient quantity of it swallowed,” p. 84; and he prescribes it in the following form:

“R. Sal: Absinth: 3 ij.

Sal: Vol: Ammon: 3 ss.

Aq: Fontan: 3 ij. m. p. Solutio.

to be put into a quart of white-wine whey,

and the whole to be taken in twenty-four hours." By which, it appears to me, that he knew little of the powers of Subcarbonate of Ammonia in this disease. His manner of exhibiting it would destroy its effects, or at least, the effects upon which I should depend for its advantages in Scarlatina. But, in p. 75—8, we see, that Dr. Withering's principal dependence is upon strong emetics, which he gives in every period of the disease, as some bleed in Measles, there being no need in either disease, of one or the other, if the Subcarbonate of Ammonia be properly exhibited. Next to emetics, the doctor thinks that *diuretic* medicines are most to be depended upon; and, for this purpose, he found the *fixed vegetable* alkali to *answer best*, and with it he sometimes joined the Ammonia as before described, depending probably upon its diuretic quality. Dr. Peart does not attempt to theorise upon the subject; content with the success of his remedy, he cares not in what manner it operates; but, I will take the liberty to state, that I depend not upon its diuretic, nor its diapho-

retic qualities, but believe, that it possesses the power of increasing the strength of the arterial action, at the same time that it diminishes its frequency ; that it supports the *vis vitæ* without increasing the heat or irritability of the system ; and by such means counteracts the tendency in the Scarlatina Anginosa and Maligna, to ulceration and sloughing, and all the other evils which sometimes attend this dreadful disease. But, to effect such purposes, it must be given as Dr. Peart has prescribed, in a state as strongly stimulating as it can be swallowed, and not made into a mere diluent by a quart of white-wine whey.

I hope I shall not be thought to have expatiated too much upon the virtues of a remedy which I have found so efficacious in my own practice ; but, I have seen so many cases of Scarlatina and Rubeola treated by others with the common anti-phlogistic remedies, which have been so lingering, and have left such ill effects in the system, that I feel it my duty to urge the employment of the Subcarbonate of Ammonia as extensively as possible. I am

well acquainted with the success in Scarlatina attending the affusion of cold water; but, at the same time, that the employment of it is frequently objectionable to the friends of the patient; in my own experience, the general effects of it are not equal to those produced by the Ammonia. Nor do I find, that the affusion of cold water is yet employed in Rubeola or Erysipelas, whereas, the Subcarbonate of Ammonia may be given with almost equal success in all the Exanthemata attended by erysipelalous inflammation.

It is surprising to me that Dr. Willan, conscious, at this time, of his inability to stop, by any of his remedies, the dreadful progress of Scarlatina Maligna, and publishing a treatise, professedly to canvass the opinions and remedies of the different authors who had written upon the diseases of which he treats, should not have put to the proof, the assertions of Dr. Peart upon such an interesting subject as Scarlatina Maligna, when he might have had the opportunity of contradicting the statement, if he had found it to be false, or if like me he

had been convinced of the truth of it, he might have saved himself the trouble of writing three parts of his dissertation upon that disease: instead of which he gives only the following passage from Dr. Peart's publication, without making a single remark upon it. "A physician, near Gainsborough, considers Volatile Alkali to be endowed with a specific power over the malignant scarlet fever and sore throat." He dissolves two drachms of the Carbonate of Ammonia in five ounces of water, and directs the patient to take half a table spoonful, or two tea-spoonsful every two, three, or four hours, according to the urgency of the symptoms. If the difficulty of swallowing abate, and the patient wish for it, a little cold water may be added to each dose. Cold water, or toast and water, may be drank at pleasure. The above remedy was given in every form, and in every stage of the Scarlatina. "Some," he says, "were glowing with universal efflorescence; in some, the extremities were swelled; in others, foetid ulcers appeared; in most, the throat was swelled and inflamed, often ul-

cerated; and respiration almost prevented; but, in the most alarming cases, a scorching fever, and raging delirium, rendered the patient's situation horribly distressing: yet, in all these variations of the disease, the Volatile Alkali was my specific, which I administered to between two and three hundred patients, successively and successfully." "The immediate effects of the remedy are stated to be a diminution of heat, fever, and delirium, and a disposition to sleep." It is hardly necessary to mention, that during the exhibition of this remedy, the bowels should be kept in proper order; and that if, at any time, there should be any accumulation, four or five grains of Hydrarg. Submur. should be given; gargles, likewise, should be employed.

To return to the first order of eruptions, Papulæ, I have little to add to what Dr. Willan has said of the Strophulus, the Lichen, and their varieties. They are simple diseases, generally well understood, and commonly yield easily to the remedies prescribed for them by Dr. Willan and others.

But the Lichen Circumscriptus, and the

L. Agrius, are sometimes very troublesome, particularly the latter; and as they will often, if not properly opposed, continue for five or six weeks, I shall make two or three remarks upon the treatment.

I give the patient, twice in the week, five grains of calomel at bed time, and a common purge in the morning; and every day, five or six grains of the Subcarbonate of Ammonia every four or six hours. Under this treatment, I have no fear of any mischief from my applications to the surface: for, though I am well aware, with Dr. Willan and others, that when this eruption is suddenly repelled by cold or other means from the surface of the body, "the incident may be succeeded by violent disorder of the constitution, by great heat and thirst, an accelerated pulse, frequent vomiting, pain in the bowels, head-ach, and delirium," p. 44; yet I never witnessed any repulsion, or any inconvenience of any kind from the following applications:—

I dilute a little aromatic vinegar, with one third of water; and with a piece of lint wrapped round a probe, and moistened

with this acid, I slightly touch the parts which are most affected with the itching, heat, and painful tingling. This I do every day, or every other day, and in the meantime I prescribe the following lotion :

R Ammon : Subcarb :

Plumb : Superacetat : āā. ʒi.

Aquæ Rosæ ʒiv. m.

and direct, that the same parts be moistened with it, whenever troubled with the above mentioned sensations. I have found this treatment not only to prevent any great exasperations, such as fissures, &c., but even to shorten very much the duration of the complaint.

THE PRURIGO.

THE Prurigo is more difficult to cure, particularly the Prurigo Formicans, and the P. Senilis.

The latter, indeed, has frequently baffled most of the remedies in common use. About twenty internal and external remedies are

recommended by different authors ; and for nearly twenty years, whenever I met with a case of Prurigo, I treated it with such remedies, and according to the directions prescribed. In slight cases, I generally succeeded, but, when I encountered an obstinate case, particularly of the Prurigo Senilis, a considerable time was necessary to make much impression upon the disease, and sometimes I was entirely foiled. Dr. Willan says, that sulphur given internally, is the most efficacious medicine for the Prurigo Formicans ; but, for the P. Senilis, the Harrowgate water, externally and internally, is the principal remedy.

About five years ago, I was requested to see an elderly gentleman, living four miles from town, who was afflicted with an eruption, which I was informed had nearly disordered his senses. When I entered his chamber, he was sitting up in bed, with his shirt off, and a most piteous spectacle he presented ; his body was besmeared with blood ; he was, at the time I entered, tearing his skin with a comb ; and he informed me, that for some months, he had employed his nails, but that lately, they

had been incapable of producing a smarting sufficient to overpower the dreadful itching, and therefore he was obliged to have recourse to the comb, which he employed in that manner, two or three times in the course of every night. I found that he had been subject to a slight attack of this complaint for years at different periods, and that it had been more than once treated as Scabies; that he had been possessed of great property, but that it had lately been considerably reduced by means to his mind the most distressing; and there is no doubt, but that this disease, which is always exasperated by every painful affection of the mind, was rendered so peculiarly afflicting by such circumstance.

He had taken, during the last three months, from different medical gentlemen, Sulphur, Sodæ Carbon., Decoct. Sarsapar. Comp., Cinchon., many different and strong purgatives, and the mineral acids. He had used, externally, warm baths, with and without salt; Liq. Ammon. Acet., Lot. Saturnin., Ung. Hydr. Niträt., Ung. Præcip. Alb., et Aq. Calcis c̄ Calomel. None of these had been capable of abating the in-

tolerable itching of the skin, sufficiently to procure him two hours sleep during any one night. He was considerably reduced in flesh and strength ; and his spirits were so much exhausted, that, for the last fortnight, he had thought it necessary to drink a bottle of Madeira every day.

I had, for a considerable time, previously to this case, adopted a method for the treatment of squamous eruptions, which, in its success was sufficiently satisfactory to myself; in short, I seldom failed to cure *Leprosy*, *Psoriasis*, *Pityriasis*, &c.

But, from the idea I had imbibed from the authors I had read, and particularly from Dr. Willan, that the different orders and genera should be treated in a different method, and with different remedies, I never contemplated the propriety of using the same means for the cure of papulous, which I had successfully employed for the cure of squamous eruptions.

However, in this case of *Prurigo Senilis*, which was the severest I had then ever seen, I was determined to try it.

Accordingly, I dipped some lint into

aromatic vinegar undiluted, and touched most of the prominent papulæ, bleeding as they were from the laceration of the comb, till the sense of smarting was as much as he could bear, though, at the height, he declared it was preferable to the itching. I then sent him the following ointment :

R. Sulph : Sublim :

Picis Liquidæ

Axung : Porcin : āā ℥ss.

Terræ Cretos : ʒiv.

Hydrosulph : Ammon : ʒij.

m. f. Unguentum.

I desired him to apply this ointment liberally over the whole extent of the eruption ; to renew it every day, and to wash it off every other day. I gave him four grains of Pil. Plummer. every night, and five drops of Sol. Arsenic. three times a day. Wine, salt provisions, shell-fish, and every stimulating article of food were forbidden.

During the second night after these applications, he slept above four hours, and the itching was considerably abated during the day. In three days, the acid was ap-

plied a second time, and afterwards a solution of Argent. Nitrat. every third or fourth day, previously to the ointment.

In less than three weeks, the patient was very comfortable, the eruption having nearly disappeared, and the itching being entirely removed.

The pills and solution were continued for three weeks longer, during which time a lotion of Hydrarg. Oxymur. c̄ Spir. Vin. rectific. was applied two or three times a day, instead of the ointment.

I may be told that these remedies are not new, and that they are used every day in cutaneous complaints, by many or most practitioners: it is true; nor do I pretend to produce any new remedies, but from experience (having tried almost every thing), to declare which I find to be most efficacious, and which I consider to be the best method of applying the best remedies; and, lastly, to shew by my own experiments and success, that the same remedies are the best for the cure of many of the different orders and genera.

This is my principal motive for writing

these remarks; an additional one is, that this exposure of my simple ways and means has lately appeared to me to be absolutely necessary for the support of the little reputation I had gained; for it has been thought by many that I have been in possession of a secret which I was unwilling to divulge; but it will now be perceived that any little success of which I can boast, has been owing to the combination of the remedies, but still more to the *method* of *applying* them. The ointment is applied so thick, that an effluvium or atmosphere, similar to a sulphureous vapour-bath is kept upon the surface night and day; yet I am convinced, from experience, that the ointment alone, though the very best single application, would not frequently, indeed in the greatest number of cases would not succeed, without the auxiliaries before-mentioned. Nevertheless, the ointment, with the other external applications, the Aromatic Vinegar, and the Solut. Argent. Nitratis. would cure many, if not most of the cases without any *internal* remedy. The aromatic vinegar produces an effect upon the eruption, which

enables the ointment, applied immediately afterwards, to act with much more efficacy ; and the Solut. Argent. Nitrat. contributes, though in a different way, very much to the same end.

As there is frequently some impropriety in the digestive powers in most cutaneous diseases, I find the Pil. Plumm. continued regularly, equal, in most cases, to the correction of it ; but if at any time I find it necessary, I employ other medicines.

For the purpose of acting directly upon the skin, to give a tone to its texture, or to improve its secretion, I think the Solut. Arsenic. Fowler. the most powerful internal medicine, and therefore I have long ceased to employ any other, except upon very particular occasions.

Principally upon this plan, and with these remedies, I have for many years succeeded in curing, with comparative ease, the following diseases : viz. Prurigo, Leprosy, Psoriasis, Pityriasis, Impetigo, Porrigo, Scabies, Herpes, Sycosis, and all their varieties, except one variety of Herpes, the Zoster, with which there is generally too

great a degree of irritation to admit of such treatment; at the same time it is, I may observe, a complaint easily cured by other remedies.

Thus the genera of five of the different orders of Dr. Willan's classification have submitted, under my management, to the same treatment, though they would not yield to the other various remedies employed by him and others; nor to the Harrogate, and other sulphureous waters. At the same time, I must confess that I have now and then met with a case, perhaps one in twenty-five, which has not yielded to this mode of treatment; but, on the other hand, when thus baffled, I have had recourse, in cases of *Lepra*, *Psoriasis*, &c. to the *Dulcamara*, *Pil. de Pice*, *Lq. Potass.* the different barks, fixed alkalies, and other favourite remedies, I have often been obliged to return to my own plan, and have at last succeeded. Though by such remedies, and in such forms, I have, for many years, treated the above-named diseases with great success, I must observe, that I sometimes employ the other acids, and frequently vary

the strength of the ointment, and towards the end of a disease have recourse to other and less offensive liniments : but these variations from the general remedies, depend upon circumstances which nothing but the experience of the eye can properly determine, and which I know not how to communicate to others, unless I could upon the patient subject them to ocular demonstration.

I should add, that in very severe or obstinate cases, particularly of the squamous eruptions, I sometimes employ, with advantage, another auxiliary,—an artificial Harrogate Bath, which, as its composition may not be known to every practitioner, is prepared in the following manner :—

R. Sodæ Muriatis, ℥ij.

Magnesiæ Sulph : ʒiij.

Potassæ Sulphuret : ℥j.

Aquæ—Cong : xxxiv.

The Salts must be first put into two-thirds of the water cold, and when perfectly dissolved, the Sulphuret of Potash added,

then the remainder of the water boiling, so that the whole may be of the temperature of 98 degrees of Fahrenheit's thermometer.

This bath should be used twice or thrice a week, and the patient should remain in fifteen or twenty minutes; and the ointment should be applied immediately after. The same bath may be used three times.

When we consider the delicate texture of the skin, and the daily unfavourable circumstances to which it is exposed, it is surprising that it is not more frequently damaged; and this would be the case were the cuticle an organised body; but, being otherwise, it is not sensible of the deleterious influence of such circumstances; is intended to defend, and does generally defend, the exquisitely sensitive structure of the cutis from such various mischief.

No two parts of the human body sympathise more strongly than the skin and the stomach, and no parts are more constantly exposed to accidental disturbance, or to the effects of impropriety of conduct; and thus we see, that they frequently act and re-act upon each other.

Whether the English people are more subject to Cutaneous Diseases than the people of other countries, is a disputed point: Dr. Willan seems to think they are, and that the want of public baths is one cause. Lady Mary W. Montague, who had resided long in different countries, and was a woman of great observation, favours the same opinion; and says, that in the eastern nations, where the use of the warm-bath is most prevalent, it is very seldom that a skin is seen damaged or disfigured by any eruption. It is not improbable, that the heavy meals of the English, and the frequent changes of their atmosphere, render their skins more irritable and more liable to such affections.

PORRIGO.

ALTHOUGH I have stated in the foregoing pages, that this obstinate disease, among others, had continually yielded to the treat-

ment I have described ; yet it has been, for so long time, an *opprobrium medicorum*, that I cannot refrain from dwelling longer upon it than upon any other, though at the same time, I feel very incapable of explaining its phenomena.

The Tinea Capitis, which, for centuries had existed commonly among the poor, has for above twenty-five years, raged in its several varieties among the highest and middle ranks of society, and has occasioned more trouble and distress in numerous families, than any individual disease with which I am acquainted.

The most experienced practitioners have confessed, that they knew little or nothing about the disease ; and therefore, I conclude, that it cannot have raged in this country much longer than the period I have mentioned. My own attention was attracted to it about eighteen years ago, when affections of the scalp were shewn to me, which I had never seen before, and which, at first, baffled every attempt which I made to cure them.

The cause of this complaint having be-

come so prevalent in this country, during the above period, is equally unknown. Of all the various conjectures formed upon this subject, perhaps the most plausible is, that the number of children sent from the East and West Indies, for their education, has been, during the last twenty-five years, very much increased, many of whom, bringing the disease with them, introduced it to the schools, and spread it rapidly through the island.

To this idea Dr. Willan objects, that "such children who occasionally bring the disorder with them, if admitted into schools, are kept apart till completely cured, and are not afterwards more liable to it, than children born in this country : on the other hand, the *Porrigo Scutulata* occurs in schools, where no strangers have ever been admitted."

But, might not the children of such schools have had intercourse with the strangers before they were admitted? And though such strangers were kept apart to be cured, they might have communicated

the disease to others, before it was discovered by their attendants. Before this time, the disease had always existed more or less among the poor, but it was so much confined to them, that it very rarely got admission to a decent family, so that many professional men, like myself, passed many years without seeing more than two or three cases, and such were generally entrusted to the care of old women or empirics.*

The general health seems to be very rarely affected by Porrigio. Some of the most robust children have had the disease dreadfully for years, without the least diminution of their health; yet, in all its varieties it is rendered more or less obstinate, by the peculiar habit of the patient; and no diathesis has so much effect upon it as the scrophulous. Those, likewise, who are affected with worms, and with mesenteric obstructions, will often entertain the Porrigio till those complaints be removed,

* I have been informed, the remedies which easily cure the complaint in the East Indies, will produce little or no effect upon it in this country.

and may then be cured without much difficulty.

I have not met with any author who has attempted to account for the different varieties of this disease; and these varieties are phenomena which I cannot satisfactorily explain. But, we have authors who do not believe that such different exhibitions on the scalp are varieties of the same disease, or that the whole of them are contagious.

Professor Hamilton considers the Ringworm of the scalp to be "quite different from the scalled head;" and Mr. Cook thinks the "only criterion of the true Ringworm is the falling of the hair;" but, the experience of every day proves such ideas to be entirely erroneous: I continually see one variety produce another, and I have seen one variety, the *Lupinosa*, produce three other varieties in the same family. I recollect no disease, the varieties of which are so different from each other as those of *Porrigo*. The varieties of *Lepra*, *Psoriasis*, *Pityriasis*, *Impetigo*, and all the herpetic

affections, certainly differ very much from each other in appearance; yet, we can easily imagine them to be exasperated states of the same disease; but, who, without experience, could believe that the *Porrigo Favosa*, and the *P. Decalvans* are the same malady?

I have no doubt, as I observed at the beginning of these remarks, that the diseased secretion is the same, and that the different texture, temperament, and excitability of the different skins upon which it acts, produce all the different curious varieties which we have to encounter.

But neither upon this principle, nor upon any other, can I explain the action of the disease in producing the *P. Decalvans*.

In the *Furfurans* and the *Scutulata* you see the action of the disease commence upon or under the cuticle; and in a short time, the shafts of the hair are destroyed upon the surface; but, during the whole time, you may discern the ends of the shafts, (unless when covered with lamina of scales or scabs) remaining in the perfora-

tions in the cuticle, in the same manner as when the hair is shaved from the surface : and in these varieties, when the diseased action is subdued, the same shafts elongate or shoot through the same perforations immediately, without the aid of any particular stimulating application. But in the P. Decalvans, the whole process is different. In this curious variety, no appearance of any disease is seen acting upon or under the cuticle, at its commencement. The hair falls off freely ; sometimes in one part, sometimes in several ; but is evidently destroyed below the surface, for no part of the shafts remains in the perforations, which are entirely obliterated ; and the cuticle appears, as in the baldness of old age, as if it had never been pierced by hair.

In a short time, the cuticle of the bald spots becomes more polished, and of a whiter complexion than the other parts of the scalp ; but no desquamation, no eruption, however minute, can be discovered by the finest glasses. Dr. Bateman says, in his Synopsis, page 173, “ It is probable, though not ascertained, that there may be

an *eruption* of minute *achores* about the *roots* of the hair, in the first instance, which are not permanent, and do not discharge any fluid." What can the Doctor mean by the *roots* of the hair? Surely he could not call the *shaft*, as it pierces the cuticle, the *root*; and yet on no other part could an eruption of *achores*, or any other eruption, possibly take place.* But the fact is, that the *roots* of the hair are not destroyed, either in this, or in any other variety of *Porrigo*. It is evident that, in the *P. Decalvans*, the hair is destroyed below the surface, or the perforations would not be obliterated; and I have no doubt but that the tubular root, and the pulp which nourishes it, are frequently very much damaged by the disease; otherwise, when the latter is subdued, we should not often find so much time and trouble necessary, to stimulate the former to a healthy and reproductive action.

I am surprised to read in Dr. Willan's

* Dr. Willan likewise says, "Small pustules at the *roots* of the hair are said to have preceded, in some cases; I am doubtful respecting their existence in all."

account of the Porrigo Decalvans, that "if neglected, the patches remain bald for several *weeks*, but hair at length re-appears in them;" and Dr. Bateman, of course, makes the same observation.

I should say that, *if neglected*, the patches will remain bald for several *years*; and some have applied to me, who have not been neglected, but who have been under the care of eminent practitioners for more than one or two years, without a single hair being reproduced on the bald places.

Indeed I have found the P. Decalvans, if we take into consideration the time necessary, in many cases, to reproduce the hair, more tedious than any other variety, excepting the Lupinosa, of which I shall speak presently. It is almost impossible to keep classification of eruptive diseases entirely correct, and the P. Decalvans is one instance of it. The Porrigo is very properly classed in the order Pustulæ; but surely nothing can be more unlike a pustular disease than the Porrigo Decalvans.

The Porrigo is likewise a contagious disease; but the first variety noticed by Dr.

Willan, is not contagious, namely, the P. Larvalis, or Crusta Lactea. It is very accurately described by him; and I have generally found it to be easily subdued by the ointment mentioned, made stronger or weaker, according to the severity of the case, and the temperament of the patient. It must be always liberally applied, even over every part of the face; touching the scabs and other parts of the eruption, sometimes with the acetic acid *diluted*, sometimes with a solution of Argent. Nitrat.; as it may be thought necessary to produce, at the moment, a less or a greater excitement; and every night, I give in a powder, four grains of Plummer's alterative preparation.

Since the adoption of this treatment, I have seen only two cases continue to the length of time mentioned by Dr. Willan, (a year and a half); and in these cases the employment of other remedies was attended with less good effect on the disease.

But I must here notice an error in judgment which, though not wonderful among old women, or the most ignorant of the

lower orders, is unaccountable when delivered gravely, as the opinion of some of the most eminent practitioners of the present day; that this eruption, and some others, depend upon *poorness of blood*.

Consonant with this idea, they give tonic medicines, the most nourishing food, wine and other stimulants, to some of the most healthy, robust children, affected with the *Porrigo Larvalis*, which generally makes its appearance upon children of such description; nor does it often, even when it continues for years, diminish the general health of such children.

I will relate one remarkable case amongst many, which I have seen subjected to this treatment.

A fine, hearty, robust boy, about three years of age, was brought to me with an eruption affecting most parts of his body, and which appeared to me like the *Porrigo Favosa*; but which, I was informed, had, two years and a half before, commenced as *Porrigo Larvalis*. It had, within the last year, gradually left his face, and assumed a rather different, but not less distressing

appearance, on the other parts of his body. He had, during the whole time, been under the care of different medical men, and had been sent by them to different parts of the country for change of air, and to most of the watering places.

Being attracted by his large size, and full and gross appearance, I enquired concerning his regimen, and was informed that he had been, for some time past, attended by two physicians and a surgeon, and that it was their opinion that the disease was occasioned by *poorness of blood*; and therefore he was allowed fresh meat, such as beef-steaks, &c. little cooked, three times a day, with a little porter each time, and a glass of wine every day: all kinds of jellies, and other nourishing things, were, at intervals, added; and he took a preparation of iron three times a day. The external remedies, at the time he was brought to me, were the Unguentum Hydrarg. Nitr., Unguent. Zinci, and warm baths. No improvement had taken place in the complaint during the last twelve months. I had no hesitation in determining on the

proper method of treating this child ; but I had some difficulty in persuading the mother to consent to it ; so blind are we to the mischief which daily results from what is called *good living*.

I immediately deprived him of all animal food, except a little broth or beef tea ; allowed him no porter, nor wine, and ordered this light nourishment to be given to him in small quantities.

At first, I purged him thoroughly with calomel, and other purgatives ; and then gave him the alterative powder every night, and two drops of Fowler's solution three times a day. The eruption was touched, every third day, with the Solut. Argent. Nitrat., and now and then, when I wanted to produce more excitement, with the Aromatic Vinegar. The whole eruption was covered heavily and daily with the tar and sulphur ointment.

The second day he was better than he had been for months, and slept well ; and, in a week, he was so much improved, that little more than half the eruption remained ; In less than a month, he was perfectly well,

and never had any return of the complaint. The same remedies (except the external applications) and the same regimen were continued for six weeks.

Poorness of blood! How much better would it be for mankind in general, at least in the civilized world, and how much worse would it be for the medical world, if there were more *poorness of blood* in our vessels; or if so much *rich* blood did not flow through them. But where is this *poorness of blood* to be found? Perhaps in the half-starved, consumptive, cachectic children among the poor, in some of the alleys in the metropolis; but surely we shall never find a drop of poor blood in the well-fed, active children of this country; and yet the above case is only one of many which I have met with, agreeing in almost all the circumstances.

THE PORRIGO FURFURANS.

THIS variety, Dr. Willan, and after him Dr. Bateman, says, "chiefly affects *adults*."

I am unable to account for our difference of opinion, when I say that, for the last eighteen years, of those who have been under my care with this variety, the proportion has been not more than one adult to thirty children; but even if I were to include the adults affected with Pityriasis, they would not amount to one-third of the children with the *Porrigo Furfurans*. Perhaps Dr. Willan might see, in his dispensary, and in other public institutions, a greater proportion of adults affected with this variety, than I have seen in private practice.

He says, that "it is easily distinguished from Pityriasis, and from Dandriff, by the pustular eruption at its commencement." But I have seen many cases, in which, with good glasses, I could discover no elevation of the cuticle, much less any pustular eruption at the commencement. The first appearance, in such cases, has been a little brown spot on the cuticle, which, in a few days has enlarged, and two or three lines of white scurf have formed across it, which, in a day or two more have united into a minute

scale. At this period, the hair frequently breaks off at this point of scurf, but, upon detaching the scale from the cuticle, and examining it with a lens, you find it to be nothing but light scurf, without the least appearance of any pustule, or even any papular enlargement underneath; yet I have seen affections of this kind spread over the scalp, depriving it of its hair, and communicating another variety to the same family, and continuing to the end of the cure, free from pustules, or moisture of any kind. At other times, certainly, the same variety, commencing as I have described, has, in a few weeks, generated small aches, the moisture from which has thickened the lamina of scurf, and matted the hair. I have reason to think that the *Porrigio Furfurans*, seldom, if ever, *commences* with aches; but that such pustules are the effect of the heat and irritation of the cutis, generated in the course of time, from neglect; because, when the parents or attendants have, from the first appearance of a little scurf, carefully kept the parts daily washed, and the hair cut

close, I have seen this variety, after three months continuance, without the least pustular appearance.

THE PORRIGO LUPINOSA,

P. SCUTULATA, P. FAVOSA.

To Dr. Willan's description of these varieties I have nothing to object; it accords exactly with my own observations: but I am rather surprised that he takes no notice of the similarity of the Por. Larvalis and the P. Favosa. The former indeed, commences with an eruption of aches, and the latter of favi; the former discharges a thinner viscid humour, the latter a thicker viscid matter; but I think this may be accounted for by the different ages of the children affected by the disease, and by some peculiarities in their different habits. For both eruptions produce a redness and inequality of the surface, attended with considerable itching: in both cases, the pustules break in a few days, and the discharge concretes into thin, brown, and yel-

lowish scabs ; and though the *P. Larvalis* is frequently confined to the face and neck, it sometimes, like the *P. Favosa*, begins on the scalp, and eventually spreads to the extremities, and over the whole body. In both cases, one crop of eruptions is succeeded by another, the lamina of scabs formed in the same manner, and assuming a darker colour as the diseases advance, and from both, a sour rancid vapour is exhaled, “*quelle (as M. Alibert observes) se rapprochoit infiniment de celle de l'urine de chat :*” and, lastly, they both produce tumefactions of the glands, in different parts of the body.

In my opinion, likewise, neither of them is contagious ; the *P. Larvalis* I am confident is not, and I have never seen the *P. Favosa* decidedly communicated. I have seen a few pustules produced upon the skin of a nurse, or a mother, which had been frequently pressed against a diseased child ; but such pustules remained entirely local, and were presently cured.

In respect to the remedies proposed by Dr. Willan and others for the above varie-

ties, I have given to the most efficacious of them a full and fair trial ; and the result is, that the Ung. Coccul. Indic., the Unguent. ad Scabiem of Banyer, Unguent. Nitric. Oxyd., Unguent. Oxyd. Zinci, &c. have not half the power over such varieties, which the Unguent. Picis et Sulphuris has, when prepared and applied as I have described.

To the *Porrigo Lupinosa* and to the *P. Scutulata*, I apply the Solut. Argent. Nitrat. more liberally than to any other variety ; and to the former every other day, till I have levelled its elevations, and destroyed the cuticle. The ointment is applied every other day, after the solution, in the thick manner before-mentioned, covered with a linen cap, and a black handkerchief over all : I mention these particulars, because I very much object to the oil-skin cap so much recommended, as it cannot fail, being impervious, and absorbing nothing, to confine every particle of contagious fluid or effluvium on the diseased scalp.

Unless when I meet with a very debili-

tated and impoverished constitution, I direct the same regimen in all eruptive diseases. I endeavour to avoid all things which may have a tendency to excite, or to produce any irritation upon the skin. I forbid wine and spirituous liquors, porter and ale, shell-fish of every kind, salmon, herrings, dried fish, and all salt provisions; and keep the mind as easy and as much diverted as possible, and the body in daily and adequate exercise.

Thus, for all the varieties of *Porrigo*, as for all the varieties of squamous eruptions, I depend upon the same remedies, applied in the same manner, and upon the same internal medicines; and very rarely do I meet with a case which requires any thing more than a proper regulation of such remedies. By these means I have frequently cured, with ease, cases of five, six, and eight years' duration. A particularly obstinate case of *Porrigo Scutulata*, which had affected a young lady for seventeen years, who had, during most of the time, been under the care of different professional men, and was, as she said, when she came

to me, as bad as she had been for fifteen years past, was perfectly cured by these means, in the course of three months.

Another case of the same variety, which had affected a servant-girl for fourteen years, was cured in the course of two months. But now and then, among a great number of patients, a case will occur, which will effectually resist for months the full force of the remedies mentioned. I have then been obliged to have recourse to other auxiliaries. At such times, I have employed, externally, the Hydrosulph. Ammoniaë, blisters, the leaf of the great Water-dock ; the Sulphuric and Nitric Acids ; and some other stimulants, which my judgment might suggest from the appearance of the disease, and the nature of the resistance. After such new, and sometimes very great, excitement, I have again had recourse to the ointment, and have generally succeeded.

Whenever I am convinced that the *disease* is *subdued* in either of the varieties, which it frequently is, long before the cuticle recovers its proper texture and colour,

I change the ointment, the composition of which is so disagreeable, for one which has little or no odour; such as the Unguent. Nitric Oxyd., Unguent. Coccul. Ind., Unguent. Gallor., Unguent. Zinci, and others. By these I may be able to restore the skin to its healthy state, using one or the other, according to the different appearances of the spots left by the disease.

But there are two or three states of the cuticle left by the disease, which are exceedingly troublesome, and sometimes as difficult to cure as the disease itself.

In the first years of my attention to the Porrigo, I considered these affections as the continuance of the disease, and was frequently baffled in my attempts to subdue them; but I have since had reason to think that they are sometimes produced by the remedies themselves.

To distinguish these subsequent affections from the disease, is one of those points which the experience of the eye can generally accomplish, but which I know not how satisfactorily to communicate to others: nevertheless I will attempt it.

The first circumstance I shall notice, as it is the most common, is the constant generation of scurf, which often takes place after the cure of the three varieties of *Furfurs*, *Lupinosa*, and *Scutulata*. I conclude that a habit of forming scurf is induced by the long-continued debility and diseased action occasioned in the vessels of the scalp by the *Porrigo*; and that such disordered secretion would go on for twelve months or longer, if not counteracted by active means. If the scalp be well washed, and daily anointed with pomatum, no mischief will ensue from it, and no other trouble than such attention occasions; but, if neglected, it will accumulate in great quantity, interrupt the insensible perspiration, become heated, and mat the hair; and, lastly, give an appearance to the scalp, as if the *Porrigo* were in full force.

Whoever has been in the daily practice of examining the cuticle of the scalp, may be able to detect the least deviation from its proper texture and colour; and by a constant particular attendance to the size and state, of the shaft of the hair, as it

pierces the cuticle, may be able to discover any increase in its dimensions, or any unnatural, relaxed, or tumid appearance. This is one criterion. The lightness of the scurf, its easy detachment from the cuticle, its having no portion of the hairs through it when detached, and the free, easy growth of the hair through the diseased parts in these varieties, form another criterion: to which may be added, that, during the action of the disease, the hair becomes frequently coarse, brittle, or straw-like in its texture; and when the disease is entirely subdued, it generally resumes its soft, silky state. Whenever, therefore, I find all these circumstances in my favour, I conclude that I have no *Porriga* to encounter; and whatever quantity of scurf may exist, I have recourse to the following simple means, and generally find them sufficient for the purpose. I direct that the head shall be washed, rather liberally, every night and morning, with *Spir. Vin. rectificat.* (of course, if the head should be particularly tender, the spirit should be at first diluted) and when dry, to be well rubbed

all over with pomatum. In addition to this, when I find no objection, I direct the head to be plunged every morning into cold spring water, then rubbed quite dry, and the Spir. Vin. and pomatum immediately applied. I sometimes use a lotion with the Hydrarg. Muriat. et Spir. Vin. rectific., but generally the Spir. Vin. rect. alone will answer. It has been proved often, that this scurf, when not attended by any of the circumstances I have mentioned, will, in the course of time (but often requiring a long time) cease entirely, without any other means than washing with soap and water, to which, I believe, the true *Porrigo* would never submit. But I have no doubt that these cases of scurf, yielding to such simple means, have induced many to say, that "the Ringworm will, in time, *wear itself out*," or that it has been cured with soap and water only.

Another affection, not less troublesome, but not often of such long continuance, takes place, now and then, towards the conclusion, or soon after the cure of *Porrigo*, consisting of inflammatory tumours,

about the size of large hazel-nuts, which are very painful when touched, are with great difficulty dispersed, and will not suppurate kindly. These, I believe, are always the effect of the excitement occasioned by the remedies employed; and I have seen them exasperated to a very great degree, and for a long space of time, when the same remedies have been continued under the idea that they were a symptom of Porrigo.

I conclude that Dr. Willan alludes to the same tumours in the following description, in which he mentions them as a symptom of Porrigo Favosa. "In many cases, there are, among the pustules, small, red, smooth tumours, which desquamate at the top, and very gradually proceed to suppuration, in the same manner as scrofulous tubercles do on the arms, &c.; sometimes large abscesses form near the vertex, or at the occiput, probably originating in lymphatic glands situated there. As soon as they are broken, and begin to discharge freely, the pustular eruption, and small ulcers on the other parts of the scalp, disappear."

I have never seen any pustular eruptions, or small ulcers, disappear upon the breaking or free discharge from the tumours above-mentioned ; and if such circumstance were to take place, I should conclude such eruptions and ulcers to have lost the character of *Porrigo*, which I should never expect to disappear from such a cause. I know of no better remedy for these tumours than common poultices. A third affection is a shining, red spot, generally on the top of the scalp, of no particular shape, and seldom larger than a shilling : it sometimes has a slight resemblance to a cicatrix, yet is pierced by the hair, and seems every week, as if it would get perfectly well. This affection remains obstinate, when all other parts of the scalp are effectually cured, and the hair completely grown : a small scale of scurf rises, destroys a point of the cuticle, and the most minute ulceration takes place, which is soon healed, and the same action repeated every week. This, in the few instances I have seen, takes place on children of delicate habits, fair complexions, and light hair. I have always

suspected that the disease was not subdued in this spot, though all the other parts of the head were well: yet why, then, does it not, in the course of two or three months, re-infect other parts? However, with such suspicion, I persevere in the use of the ointment, and the other remedies, till it yields. I should mention that I have blistered such parts four and five times successively; applied Arsenic to it externally; destroyed the surface with the *Argentum Nitratum*, and with the Nitric and Sulphuric Acids; and applied all the ointments in common use, but in vain; and have been obliged to return to the remedies at first employed.

As some of the profession doubt whether the *Porriago* can be produced in any other way than by contact, I have paid particular attention to this point, and I am convinced that some children are capable of generating the disease.

Four children were brought to me, who had never been out of their parent's house but in their carriage; never had any other children to visit them, and never visited any. In short, the mother informed me,

that they were so strictly particular on this point, that they never suffered the servants who attended upon the children to have any communication with others. One of these children generated the *Porrigo Furfurans*; and between two and three weeks after, communicated the *Scutulata* to two of the others, and the *Decalvans* to the fourth. It was most difficult to cure the child who generated the disease.

I have had several other cases, where I had as much reason to believe that the children generated it: one was a child of only three months old, who had never been, since her birth, in more than one room: and I have seen several adults with the different varieties, who had never had any communication with children, or others, affected with the disease.

This being admitted, I am able to account for a circumstance which I cannot otherwise explain, and which twelve months ago, occasioned me as much discomfiture as surprise. Two families of fine children were brought to me from the country, and put under my care, who had been for near-

ly two years affected with Porrigo; and had found little or no benefit from those who had attended them. These cases yielded, like others, to the remedies employed, and in the course of two months seemed entirely subdued. One family remained in London three weeks after the disappearance of all complaint; not being able to discern, with glasses, the least point of the disease remaining. Yet soon after their return to the country, it re-appeared, and became in a short time, as bad as ever. During the last three weeks spent in town, as nothing was used to prevent the disease from re-appearing, and as it is a contagious and active fluid, how is its action suspended for such a length of time, and where does it lurk, since its whole action, in two or three of the varieties, seems confined to the cutis and cuticle? I can account for this in no other way, than by concluding that the patient generates the disease; for, in such case, of course, however completely it may be banished from the surface, it may be regenerated, unless the habit of body, or the secretions be entirely altered.

It very often happens that the disease is supposed to be subdued when it is not ; and many practitioners have dismissed their patients as perfectly cured, when little scales of scabs, and minute pustular points, may be discovered among the hair ; but in the above cases, no trace of such affections could be found, by the help of the best glasses. Had these children remained in town a month or six weeks longer, I have no doubt but a perseverance in the same remedies, would have radically cured the disease ; it was however attended with too much inconvenience and expense to the parents, to induce them to make a second trial. I have not heard, lately, whether they have received any benefit from the different experiments to which they have been subjected ; but I conclude that such are the cases which are every now and then brought to me, after eight, ten, and twelve years' duration.

In considering the peculiarities of Porigo, one of the most striking is the exasperation and obstinacy which the hair gives to every variety of the disease. When it

takes place in any part of the body where no hair grows, it is mild and easily cured by the simplest remedies; but in the eyebrows, whiskers, beard, &c. it produces the same effects as on the scalp, and is attended with nearly, if not quite, the same difficulties. Thus the old women, who undertake to cure the disease by extracting the hair by pitch plaisters, sometimes succeed; because the hair, being by such means removed, the disease either yields to the great excitement produced by the extraction, or may be as easily cured by simple remedies as when it takes place on other parts of the body. Yet I have seen several cases where the hair has been extracted by such means, and the disease remained as violent as ever. Nevertheless, whenever the shafts of the hair are swelled or enlarged as they pierce the cuticle, it will be better to pluck them out, as the ointment will then have more effect upon the disease.

I have seldom seen a truly strumous child affected by Porrigio in a mild manner: even mesenteric obstruction, without any other symptom, will render the disease

obstinate. If three or four children in the same family be affected, and only one of them be strumous, the other three may be cured in half the time which is necessary for the cure of the latter; the variety of which will generally be of the more obstinate character, the *Lupinosa*, *Scutulata*, or *Decalvans*.

Therefore, supposing that all the children contracted the disease at the same time, and from the same subject, which is sometimes the case, the strumous habit of one of them cannot act upon the disease in such a short space of time, nor affect it in such a manner, but by previously rendering the skin more irritable, and consequently more violently excited by the infectious matter. And thus, without seeking for any other cause than the different degrees of irritability in the different skins, we may be able to account, not only for the different varieties, but to explain some of the other phenomena of this curious disease.

In cases of *Porrigo Furfurans* of some duration and distinctly marked, my remedies, in eight or ten days, have produced

by their excitement, several small patches, in different parts of the head, exactly similar to the *Lupinosa*, and which have maintained that character for some weeks : and I have now under my care a gentleman with that form of *Psoriasis* commonly called *Grocer's Itch*, which is improving very rapidly, but the remedies have produced an eruption upon the wrists, in appearance and feeling very like the *Porrigo Lupinosa*. Worms, likewise, of every kind, increase the obstinacy of the disease, by increasing the irritability of the skin ; and therefore, whenever I discover such cause, I remove it as quickly as possible, and the *Porrigo* may be afterwards speedily subdued.

Another circumstance which I have continually noticed is, that the sea-air and sea-bathing produce no good effect upon this disease: though many eruptive diseases are very much improved, and some entirely cured by such means, yet they generally exasperate every variety of *Porrigo*. Some of the severest cases I have seen have been on the heads of children born and residing

on the coast, and on others placed at school in the same situation; and I have been informed, by mothers and nurses who have accompanied their children for several months every year, for four and six years, that the disease was generally very much exasperated for a considerable time after their arrival on the coast; and that they seldom, if ever, experienced any advantage, which they could attribute to the situation. Some children, likewise, who have been under my care, and who were obliged to leave town before they were quite cured, but with the hope that the cure might be completed by the sea-side, have hardly ever failed to become worse in such situation, and have sometimes been obliged to return to town, and to submit to a repetition of the process.

It may be observed, by the remarks which I have made on this disease, that *every internal excitement* tends to exasperate it; therefore, as the sea-air seems to excite, more or less, every individual exposed to it, and, now and then, to a degree which the systems of such persons cannot tolerate with comfort, especially during the first

week or two after their arrival on the coast; the question is whether such excitement is alone sufficient to account for the circumstance above-mentioned.

On a disease the most interesting of all the cutaneous eruptions, because, for fifteen or sixteen years past, it has occasioned more trouble and vexation than any other, even among the first families in the kingdom, it is much to be regretted that Dr. Willan's untimely death prevented him from saying more. The little he has written, which is published as a posthumous work, gives us merely a short descriptive account of the varieties, with a list of the common remedies in use, without any particular recommendation of any one of them, or of any particular mode of application. Indeed, at the conclusion of his account of *Porrigo Favosa*, he inserts a long quotation from Dr. Underwood, in which the Doctor says, that "the external application, however, of an ointment consisting of the *Unguentum Sulphuris, et Unguent: Hydrarg: Nitrat:* with a greater or less proportion of the latter, has hitherto *never failed* me, to-

gether with the internal exhibition of one or other of the fore-mentioned remedies."

I confess I read this with some surprise, and have no doubt but Dr. Willan did the same, though he has not made a remark upon it; but I think he would have noticed it, had his account of this disease been published during his life; for he must have often employed this ointment with very different success; and, for my own part, I have frequently used it with greater and less proportion of the Unguent: Hydrarg: Nitrat: with little and sometimes with no advantage. But, undoubtedly, Dr. Underwood thought that he stated the fact correctly, for I believe that every professional man thinks that he more frequently succeeds in these cases than he really does; and I make this remark preparatory to the following statement, which, under such impression, I consider correct,—that, for sixteen years past, in the different varieties of Porrigo, I have, with the *same remedies*, and with the *same mode of treatment*, cured, upon the average, ninety-five cases out of every hundred: notwithstanding that Dr.

Willan says, page 20, that "under these varying circumstances, how futile must be the pretensions of those who profess to remove this complaint, and every other form of Porrigo, *by the same mode of treatment, or by one specific application.*"

Dr. Bateman, who seems always to be very cautious not to say anything which his great master has not previously said, makes no remark upon this subject that is worthy of notice.

From the perusal of Monsieur Alibert's inflated fustian in his "Description des Maladies de la Peau," I rise, as I think every sober man must rise, puzzled and disgusted. Surrounded with greater advantages than any other surgeon in Europe, and with Dr. Willan's work open before him, he has neglected that learned author's beautiful arrangement, and has contrived, by his perplexing pathology, and by his inefficient and contradictory remedies, to render this department of the science more confused and incomprehensible than he found it. The only remark which he makes upon these diseases, which, in my

opinion, is worth our attention, and which might have been expressed in four words, is his conclusion, that *there is nothing like sulphur*.

Another author, I understand, sits in the professor's chair, laughing at all of us, ridiculing all classification and nomenclature, and all external applications: like David against Goliath, he enters the field against this formidable enemy, armed only with the blue pill, and senna tea, for his internal action; and for the external, a little hogs-lard or common cerate, after wiping the eruption particularly dry. Surely this is riding the digestive hobby with a vengeance. If all the varieties of *Porrigo* were generated by the patient's habit, and occasioned by any impropriety in the *Primæ Viæ*, this practice would be more than plausible; but the fact is, that not one in a hundred generates the disease, but that it is, every day, communicated to some of the most healthy children, whose regimen is most correct, and with whose digestive powers the most acute medical scrutiny can find no fault. With such children, the dis-

ease exists *in loco*, and must be cured *in loco*; and the blue pill, and any common cerate (wipe the eruption as dry as you will,) may be used for seven years without producing the least good effect upon it. But even when Dyspepsia long continued, or any other internal cause, might be thought, in the first instance, to generate the disease, or to exasperate it when contracted, such cause may be entirely removed, and yet the diseased action of the cuticular vessels may, from habit, continue, and no internal medicine, and no mild application externally, will, for years, be able to subdue it. This I have witnessed repeatedly, in a great number of cases.

IMPETIGO, &c.

THE varieties of Impetigo, the Grocers' and Bricklayers' Itch, the Sycosis Menti, and the Scabies, I treat in the manner before described, except that in the latter dis-

ease, I employ no other internal remedy but sulphur.

Perhaps no disease is more frequently mistaken than this common eruption; for, though every day before our eyes, it differs so much in appearance, that few can immediately decide upon its character: thus many cases continue for twelve months and longer, declared not to be Scabies, notwithstanding some of them have infected others. About ten days since I saw a young gentleman who has had the Scabies Purulenta for fifteen months, and has communicated it to five of the same family; and yet every one under whose care he has been placed, has declared it not to be the itch. How it could have been thus mistaken for so long a time, I cannot conceive; for I never saw this variety of the disease more strongly characterized, and had it not been so, its contagious nature should have decided it immediately, for no other eruption which resembles the Scabies is in the least degree infectious. I believe the difficulty arises from not considering that this disease appears in two characters, the lymphatic and

the pustular ; and many practitioners who have been accustomed to see the common itch as a lymphatic eruption, do not know it when it assumes a pustular form. Dr. Willan says, that one form of the Lichen, and some other eruptions have been mistaken for Scabies : but I do not think that any professional gentleman, who has attended to cutaneous diseases, can hesitate, except between Scabies and Prurigo. I therefore only feel it necessary to describe the particular circumstances by which I distinguish these eruptions.

The Prurigo frequently attracts notice only in the spring and autumn, and always rages more at those periods ; the Scabies is not more prevalent in any particular season, nor exasperated by any changes of atmosphere except by excessive heat. The Vesiculæ of the common itch are more acuminated than the Papulæ of Prurigo, and if you draw your finger over the points of the former, the sensation is more prickly. After a short continuance of the common Scabies, the vesicles are charged with lymph, which is not often discovered in the Papulæ

of Prurigo, and the former are more easily broken. And lastly, which seems not necessary to mention, the infectious nature of the Scabies, of which the Prurigo is entirely destitute.

The Scabies Purulenta exhibits large aches full of Pus, very much resembling those produced sometimes by mercurial friction, and by the ointment of Tartarized Antimony, and other exciting causes ; and as these are always sufficiently evident, the eruptions produced by them cannot be mistaken for Scabies, besides that they never continue for any great length of time.

I have also employed the same remedies in a case of Lupus ; and with sufficiently good effect to encourage a further trial. A boy, about twelve years of age, was brought to me, with this disease occupying both cheeks, his nose, and part of the forehead. It had destroyed a small portion of his nose, and seemed to be threatening the destruction of other parts. It had been gradually increasing for nearly five years. I diluted the Acetum Aromaticum with one-third of water, and slightly touched with it every

part affected, which produced considerable pain for two or three minutes ; afterwards I applied the Tar and Sulphur Ointment over the whole surface of the disease, and a little beyond ; and gave him the alterative pills and drops. On the second morning, the ointment was washed off ; and perceiving that my applications had produced no improper excitement, but had not checked, in any degree, the ulcerative process, I moistened the whole surface with a solution of the Argemum Nitratum, and re-applied the ointment. In two days more, I could discern a slight improvement in the appearance of every part of the face ; and in a few days afterwards, I again applied the acid, and soon employed it undiluted.—Every now and then the disease exhibited exacerbations, or extraordinary excitement, but never sufficiently to alarm me ; and in the space of three months it was so much abated, that the ulcerations were healed, and the characteristic features of the disease were obliterated. But it was far from being cured, when the boy, from circumstances which his parents could not con-

trol, was obliged to be removed. I have since been informed that a violent erysipelatous affection took place over the whole face and head, which very much alarmed his parents, who considered it to be a more exasperated attack of the disease, and therefore, after the affection had subsided, were easily persuaded to place him in an hospital, where the nitric acid was applied so liberally, as to produce a dreadful action over the whole surface, attended with excessive pain, which required poultices for three weeks. At the end of this time, such amendment in the disease was produced, as to encourage a second trial of the acid in a less severe degree, which was followed by a corresponding improvement. I have lately seen him, and the action of the disease seems to be completely arrested; but his face is most frightfully scarred, partly by the action of the disease, and still more by the acid, which, by the carelessness of those who applied it, made its way to other parts, and occasioned more mischief to the skin, than had been effected in the parts which the disease had occupied.

I mention this circumstance, not only as a caution to those who use the nitric acid as an external application, but because I have no doubt, from the progress the cure was making under my care, that the remedies I employed would eventually have succeeded, and no permanent mischief to the skin is ever occasioned by the use of the Aromatic Acid. We may likewise learn from this case, and many others, what liberties, in the way of applications, may be taken with a disease which, by our ancestors, was not only considered incurable, but so unsafe to touch, that they gave it the name of *Noli me tangere*.

Another case, which was considered by many of the profession to be Lupus, but which appeared to me only a very exasperated state of Psora, which, by such exasperation had lost its Psoral character, was put under my care when it occupied the whole cheek of a young lady, between fourteen and fifteen years of age. It extended to and behind the ear, round the lower eyelid, close to the nostril, and to the corner of the mouth; but though ulce-

rated points were to be seen over the whole surface, no other destruction of parts had taken place.* The same remedies were applied, and in the same manner, as in the last case; and, in a week or ten days, improvement commenced, and continued to increase gradually, and with very little interruption, for the space of four months: she was then obliged to go to Brighton, where she remained five or six months, and became considerably worse: since her return to town she has been again placed under my care; and by the application of the same remedies, she is again rapidly improving.

On other eruptions, which I have not named, I have no particular remarks to offer, as I deviate very little from the common mode of treating them.

To the varieties of Acne, I apply the Aromatic Acid twice a week, and the Solution of Hydr. Muriat. in Spir. Vin. rectific. twice a day; and when I employ an ointment, as nothing offensive can be ap-

* It had existed for several years.

plied to the face in such cases, I use the Unguent. Zinci : the alterative pills and drops are given as before-mentioned.

When we consider the following circumstances, which have been mentioned by different authors, and frequently noticed by myself:—that the varieties of Lichen are only different degrees of exasperation, the mildest becoming the Agrius by excitement; and, by additional excitement, terminating in obstinate superficial ulcerations, in form of Impetigo:—that Prurigo, though in its commencement, a papulous eruption, frequently terminates in pustules, and is with difficulty distinguished from the Scabies or Itch, and that this change may take place merely from neglect, or want of cleanliness in the patient:—that the Prurigo, likewise, in every variety, like the itch, avoids the face, the soles of the feet, and palms of the hands; and that the Prurigo Podicis, and other affections of Prurigo, are sometimes so like Psoriasis as not to be distinguished:—that the Prurigo Formicans, likewise, sometimes terminates in a pustular affection, not contagious, but con-

stituting one of the species of Impetigo :—that the Tinea Capitis will sometimes produce, upon other parts of the body, the Psoriasis Unguium, and P. Diffusa; and that one variety of Porrigo may, by the excitement of the remedies applied, be changed into another :—that the Arabian physicians describe the Lepra as often terminating in Elephantiasis; and Galen says, that two cases of Elephantiasis were changed into Lepra, by a particular mode of treatment. When I consider all these circumstances, I am not surprised that the Arabian physicians should believe that many of these eruptions, though very different in appearance, are of the same nature; and that they should describe their Sahafati, both dry and moist, the Ysagro, and Alkouba, and the Black Albaras, as belonging to the same genus; and indeed, I think that those who have reduced all the cutaneous diseases under two or three genera, have not been much wider from the mark, nor have been more likely to deviate into error in their curative process, than those who have separated them

into so many divisions and subdivisions, and have applied different names and remedies to the different stages and appearances of the same complaint.

As to the varieties of the different eruptive diseases which are considered to be syphilitic, such as the Lichen Syphilit: the Psoriasis Guttata Syphilit: the Psoriasis Diffusa Syphilit: the Psoriasis Gyrata Syphilit: the Erythema Papulatum Syphilit: and the Lepra Venerea, I agree with those who think they have nothing venereal in their nature; but that they are the effects of the excitement which the Lues produces in the system. To be a truly venereal eruption, it should be produced by no other cause than Lues; but this is not the case with the above eruptions, which may be referred to one or other of the genera already mentioned; the predisposition of the habit of each individual, giving the variety to each eruption. Some of these eruptions, which are called syphilitical, may undoubtedly be removed by mercury; but this remedy is not absolutely necessary, as I know from experience. It is now well

known, that many of the eruptions which used to be considered venereal, are produced by the excitement of mercury, and yet some of them may, after long continuance, be removed by a proper exhibition of the same remedy which produced them. It is not, however, necessary that I should enter into an explanation of this seeming paradox; but it is highly gratifying to observe, that the strong propensity to an indiscriminate use of mercury, which has been indulged for nearly a century, is every day diminishing.

FINIS.

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THE

of the Nervous System
in the Human Body

