

An account of two instances of the true scurvy, seemingly occasioned by the want of due nourishment : being an extract of a letter addressed to Dr. Baker / by Francis Milman.

Contributors

Milman, Francis, Sir, 1746-1821.

Baker, George, Sir, bart., 1722-1809.

Publication/Creation

London, 1772.

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/rt7u6vnc>

License and attribution

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

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



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

XXI. *An Account of two Instances of the true Scurvy, seemingly occasioned by the want of due Nourishment; being an Extract of a Letter addressed to Dr. BAKER, by FRANCIS MILMAN, M. B. Fellow of Exeter College, in Oxford, and one of Dr. RADCLIFFE'S Travelling Physicians. Communicated by Dr. BAKER.*

Read at the COLLEGE, DECEMBER 11, 1771.

“ **M**ARTHA Snare, of the
“ parish of Brandon in Suffolk, an unmarried woman, about
“ forty years of age, was, in January 1771, seized with an extraordinary lassitude, and inactivity, together with wandering pains in
H h 4 “ her

“ her shoulders, arms, and breast,
“ not attended with a swelling in
“ any of the parts affected. Her
“ respiration was at the same time
“ difficult and oppressed. These
“ symptoms increased upon her every
“ day. In the latter end of April,
“ being then in the neighbourhood,
“ I was desired to visit her as an ob-
“ ject of charity, and as a person,
“ the singularity of whose case might
“ be worthy of my attention. I
“ found her labouring under a
“ *dyspnoea*, and pain in her breast,
“ with a weak, and very quick pulse.
“ Her tongue was of a brown co-
“ lour. Her gums were spongy,
“ bleeding upon the least touch, and
“ in some parts corroded almost to
“ the roots of her teeth. Her breath
“ was horridly offensive. Her whole
“ body was extremely emaciated, par-
“ ticularly her arms and legs, the
“ skin of which, from the elbows to
“ the

“ the ends of the fingers, and from
 “ the knees to the ends of the toes,
 “ was so stiff and hard, as, upon
 “ being stroked by the hand, to give
 “ a crackling sound *. In the small
 “ of her legs, for the space of two
 “ or three inches above each ankle,
 “ the skin was cracked in several
 “ places, where it poured out a thin
 “ ichorous fluid, which, drying, gave
 “ that whole space the appearance of
 “ an intire scab, except where its
 “ continuation was interrupted by a
 “ crack, or fore. The fore arms,
 “ for about the space of two or three
 “ inches above each wrist, were in
 “ the same manner covered with
 “ almost one intire scab; and there
 “ were a few detached scabs and
 “ cracks in the arms nearer the el-
 “ bows. She remained in bed the

* Sauvage, in his *nosologia methodica*, speaking
 of *scorbutus inveteratus*, mentions this symptom:
 “ Cutis in tibiis crepat.”

“ greatest

“ greatest part of the day, always
“ finding herself more stiff after the
“ least degree of motion. Her men-
“ strual evacuation had ceased near
“ two years. As to stools, she was
“ regular. Her urine was of an high
“ colour, tinged with brown.

“ HER sister, Elizabeth Snare, aged
“ forty-two years, unmarried, was
“ likewise at the same time affected
“ in the same manner; the disease
“ of this woman differing from that
“ of the other only in degree. She
“ was much stronger than her sister,
“ being able to do the common
“ business of the house; which, as
“ well as the linen of the bed, was
“ remarkably clean, though the per-
“ sons of both inhabitants were so
“ very offensive. This woman like-
“ wise found herself very stiff
“ after any exercise. Her arms were
“ much less affected than Martha’s,
“ having very few cracks or scabs on
“ them;

“ them ; but the skin of them was
“ hardened, and, as in the other
“ case, crackled under the touch.
“ Her legs too were much like her
“ sister’s. In fine, all her symptoms
“ were similar, but less severe.

“ THE foregoing account of these
“ women seems to exhibit two in-
“ stances of a great degree of the
“ scurvy, produced in a singular
“ manner ; the circumstances, which
“ had attended these poor persons,
“ having been very different from
“ what are held to be the ordinary
“ causes of that disease. They nei-
“ ther had lived in a cold, moist air,
“ nor in a low country ; nor had
“ salted meat been their food. On
“ the contrary, their place of habi-
“ tation was on the high and sandy
“ heath of Brandon ; and, though a
“ ground-floor, was perfectly dry,
“ and well defended from the
“ weather. This being the case,
“ it

“ it did not immediately occur to
“ me, from what probable causes
“ this cruel malady might reasona-
“ bly be supposed to have arisen.
“ But, upon an enquiry into their
“ way of life, my difficulties were
“ lessened. I found, that, for several
“ months, previous to their illness,
“ they had lived intirely on an infusion
“ of the common sort of bohea-tea,
“ without milk or sugar; and bread,
“ without any other addition to their
“ diet whatever. They pleaded, that
“ the small pittance, allowed them
“ by the parish, would not enable
“ them to procure any better nourish-
“ ment, during the winter-season.
“ And I was informed in the neigh-
“ bourhood, that, though very idle,
“ they had the reputation of being
“ sober women; but that the info-
“ lence of their behaviour had pre-
“ cluded them from that charitable
“ assistance, which their condition
“ now

“ now required. The particulars,
 “ which I collected concerning their
 “ way of living, led me to consider
 “ them as persons almost starved; an
 “ infusion of tea perhaps not con-
 “ taining any nutritious matter, and
 “ bread being in itself inadequate to
 “ the purposes of nutrition. But, it
 “ may be asked, how should a want
 “ of nourishment occasion the scur-
 “ vy? We are informed, that the
 “ scurvy is to be considered merely
 “ as *a gradually accumulated putre-*
 “ *faction*; but the little nourishment,
 “ taken by these women, had ma-
 “ nifestly an opposite tendency; tea,
 “ according to Sir John Pringle’s ex-
 “ periments, being antiseptic, and
 “ breadaceous. Whence then could
 “ those symptoms of an inveterate
 “ scurvy, the putrid gums, the
 “ stinking breath, the difficulty of
 “ respiration, the ulcers of the legs
 “ have arisen, since the ordinary
 “ causes

“ causes of them are not here to be
“ discovered? A want of food will
“ gradually occasion a putrid taint.
“ Animals, starved to death, do not
“ perish from a want of blood, or
“ an insufficient quantity of other
“ juices, but from the corrupted state
“ of them. All our fluids have a
“ natural tendency to putrefaction.
“ In order that they may be preserv-
“ ed from a morbid putrescence,
“ there must be a continual renewal
“ of them by fresh chyle, and an
“ expulsion of those particles in
“ which corruption is beginning. If
“ there be not such a constant ac-
“ cession of fresh food, our fluids
“ soon follow their own nature; and,
“ as an addition to the evil, this
“ want of nourishment must deprive
“ the constitution of that degree of
“ *plethora*, which is requisite for car-
“ rying on the various secretions and
“ excretions. Hence those parts of
“ the

“ the blood, which were degenerat-
 “ ing into putrefaction, instead of
 “ being expelled by some of the
 “ emunctories, will be accumulated,
 “ and, like a leaven, soon spread
 “ their influence through the whole
 “ putrescent mass. But, if a fresh
 “ supply of food can be procured,
 “ even of animal nature, experience
 “ has shewn that we can live a great
 “ while on it consistently with health.
 “ The constant addition of new chyle
 “ keeping up the necessary degree of
 “ *plethora*, the secretions and excre-
 “ tions will be duly performed; and
 “ the corrupt parts of our humours
 “ will be carried off by them.
 “ Hence fresh broths, though pu-
 “ trescent, are great assistants in the
 “ cure of the scurvy. It is not
 “ then the antiseptic nature of the
 “ food taken in, which preserves our
 “ fluids from putrefaction, but the
 “ constant change of them, by
 “ which

“ which those parts, which are cor-
“ rupting, and which, if retained
“ would not fail to produce mor-
“ bid effects, are expelled. The diet
“ of these women not yielding a nu-
“ tritious chyle, seems not to have
“ answered any of the purposes
“ above-mentioned; and though
“ acescent and antiseptic, seems not
“ to have had sufficient power to
“ counteract the natural disposition
“ of their juices.

“ THE resemblance of the sym-
“ ptoms to those, which characterize
“ the scurvy, led me to a similar
“ method of cure. Instead, how-
“ ever, of the *succi scorbutici*, I
“ ordered for them the *serum scor-*
“ *buticum*, thinking it more adapted
“ to their cases, as being not only
“ antiseptic, but in some degree
“ nutritious. In the room of their
“ tea, I advised them to use a milk
“ diet, and to eat as many china
“ oranges

“ oranges as they could procure.
 “ My advice, however, was not
 “ strictly followed. The last spring
 “ was in general so backward, and
 “ the situation of Brandon so parti-
 “ cularly bleak and barren, that, in
 “ the beginning of May, the apothecary
 “ cary could not get the scurvy-grass,
 “ or any of the other herbs, which
 “ enter the composition of the *succi*
 “ *scorbutici*; and indeed there were
 “ very few vegetables of any kind to be
 “ found at that season in the parish
 “ of Brandon. Instead therefore of
 “ the medicated, they drank com-
 “ mon whey. But they did not per-
 “ severe in the use of a milk-diet,
 “ it being impossible to persuade
 “ them to abandon the pernicious
 “ custom of drinking tea. Some
 “ china-oranges were given to them,
 “ but they were in so small a num-
 “ ber, that it is not to be supposed
 Vol. II. I i “ that

“ that they could produce any ef-
“ fect on the disease *. It was par-
“ ticularly recommended to them to
“ bathe their limbs in warm water
“ twice a day ; and the medicine,
“ chiefly trusted to, was the peru-
“ vian bark. Of this, in powder,
“ they took half an ounce from the
“ first to the third of May, inclu-
“ five. It was then omitted till the
“ sixth when they again returned to
“ it, and took it constantly in the
“ quantity of three drachms every
“ day till the twentieth. Under this
“ management they had a speedy
“ recovery ; so that when I saw
“ them in the beginning of June,
“ their sores were quite healed ; the
“ scabs had almost intirely dropped
“ off ; and their skin was become
“ soft. They could now walk with-
“ out any sense of fatigue ; and,

* Six oranges were the whole number, which they had.

“ in

“ in short, had every appearance of
 “ returning health and vigour. Much
 “ perhaps of this speedy amend-
 “ ment was owing to a more nu-
 “ tritious diet, than that to which
 “ they had been accustomed. But
 “ it seems evident, that the peruvian
 “ bark likewise was of singular bene-
 “ fit to them. I know, that some
 “ writers, of good character, have
 “ maintained a different opinion with
 “ regard to the effect of that medi-
 “ cine in scorbutic cases. Dr. *Lind
 “ has said, that “ neither a diet of
 “ fresh broths, nor peruvian bark,
 “ nor steel will remove a virulent
 “ degree of the scurvy, without the
 “ assistance of green vegetables.”
 “ And Dr. Monchy †, that “ though

* Lind on the scurvy, p. 245.

† Answer to the questions proposed by a so-
 ciety in Holland, viz. What are the causes of the
 diseases incident to Europeans in West-India
 voyages; and what are the means of preventing
 and curing them? p. 94.

“ many experiments manifest the salutary operation of the bark towards the cure of the scurvy, yet this chiefly is, and ofteneft happens after the use of fresh esculent vegetables, and the juices of the acid fruits for some continuance.”

“ The disease of these women was truly scorbutic; but they were cured without the use of vegetables, or fruits, except only the very few oranges, which were above-mentioned. And indeed (if I may be allowed to reason on a matter of practice) the proximate cause of the scurvy being a gradually accumulated putrefaction, depending on a relaxation of the fibres, and a disunion and degeneracy of the juices; whence can we more rationally expect relief in this disease, than from the tonic and antiseptic powers of this medicine, in which perhaps it is not equalled,

“ equalled, certainly not exceed-
“ ed, by any article of the *Materia*
“ *Medica* ?

“ OXFORD, OCT. 14,
“ 1771.”

XXII. *A Case of Hydatids, discharged by coughing, related in a letter from JOHN COLLET, M. D. Physician at Newbury, Berkshire, to Dr. BAKER. Communicated, together with some remarks on it, by Dr. BAKER.*

A general state of this case was read at the College, December 14, 1771.

“ MRS. Davies, wife of the
 “ reverend Mr. Davies (rector
 “ of this parish, and of Highclere,
 “ in this neighbourhood) now about
 “ thirty-seven years of age, although
 “ of a constitution naturally tender
 “ and delicate, had passed the earlier
 “ part of her life generally free from
 “ diseases. About four years ago
 “ she first began to decline in her
 “ health.

“ health. She then complained of
“ low spirits, and an oppression on
“ her breath. These symptoms were
“ followed by oedematous swellings
“ around her ankles; which swell-
“ lings, however, were inconsider-
“ able, and soon disappeared. Within
“ the last year, she has been much
“ harraffed by a violent cough, and
“ a great difficulty of respiration;
“ and has, at times, expectorated
“ large quantities of a very tough
“ and viscid phlegm. In this way
“ she continued, until September 6,
“ 1771, on which day she discharg-
“ ed by coughing twelve hydatids;
“ and since that time she has ex-
“ pectorated an amazing number of
“ them; whereof, for her own sa-
“ tisfaction, she has kept an ex-
“ act account, which is as follows.

Hydatids.

"	Sept. 6, 1771,	she coughed up	12
"	7	—	1
"	8	—	1
"	9	—	3
"	24	—	5
"	26	—	9
"	30	—	6
"	Oct. 6	—	2
"	7	—	1
"	16	—	3
"	17	—	3
"	18	—	2
"	21	—	2
"	28	—	6
"	Nov. 2	—	4
"	7	—	1
"	12	—	15
"	17	—	7
"	18	—	1
"	20	—	24
"	21	—	11
"	25	—	1
"	27	—	1

" Nov.

" Nov. 29	—	—	3
" Dec. 22	—	—	8
" 26	—	—	2
" Jan. 1, 1772,	—	—	1
In all			<u>135</u>

" THESE are of different sizes, from
 " that of a pea, to that of a pullet's
 " egg. Generally, they are brought
 " up with ease; but this never hap-
 " pens, unless a violent fit of cough-
 " ing, sometimes amounting almost
 " to suffocation, has preceded. It
 " is observable, that they always
 " come up ruptured; and that no
 " water either accompanies, or fol-
 " lows them; but only a great deal
 " of tough phlegm. Some few of
 " them have been tinged with
 " blood.

" THIS patient has a swelling
 " above her navel, which she first
 " perceived,

“ perceived, not quite six months
“ ago. This for some time increased
“ gradually; but has been attended
“ with no pain. It has been care-
“ fully examined by Mr. Withers,
“ a surgeon of great experience in
“ this town; who describes it to
“ be an irregular tumour, not very
“ large, seated in the lower part of
“ the *epigastrium*, about four or five
“ fingers breadth below the xiphoid
“ cartilage, extending itself a little
“ towards the right *hypochondrium*.
“ In the most prominent part of it
“ a fluid is distinctly perceived, which
“ seems to be immediately under the
“ common integuments.

“ BESIDES this swelling, Mr. Wi-
“ thers informs me, that the whole
“ *abdomen* is distended; that a
“ fluctuation may be felt in the
“ lower part of it; and that in se-
“ veral places, upon pressure, some
“ lumps are perceivable, which seem
“ to

“ to favour the idea of cyfts at-
 “ tached to the *peritonæum*. Dur-
 “ ing her illness it has been observed,
 “ that such lumps have several times
 “ been felt in the *abdomen*, which
 “ afterwards have disappeared. The
 “ distention of the belly began about
 “ a year and half ago.

“ The chief medicines, admi-
 “ nistered in this case, have been
 “ pills compounded of gum ammo-
 “ niac, myrrh, flowers of gum ben-
 “ jamin, and dried squills. About
 “ six weeks ago she likewise took an
 “ emetic ; but, during the operation
 “ of it, discharged only much phlegm,
 “ without any hydatids. By the
 “ advice of Dr. Lewis, of Oxford,
 “ she has lately taken several small
 “ doses of calomel ; and seems in-
 “ deed to have received considerable
 “ benefit from that medicine. The
 “ swelling, above the navel, is
 “ now become softer. Although
 “ she

“ she has still fits of coughing,
 “ they are not so violent ; and
 “ she has discharged no hydatids
 “ since the first day of January. Her
 “ strength is greatly recovered ; and
 “ whereas she lately was almost
 “ confined to her bed, she now rises
 “ early with chearfulness ; and, upon
 “ the whole, she gives us reason
 “ to entertain better hopes of a fa-
 “ vourable event.

“ NEWBURY, JAN. 13,
 “ 1772.

“ J COLLET.”

THE disease, here described by
 Dr. Collet, is very singular ; and
 therefore seems to be well worthy of
 a place in *the medical transactions*.
 Nothing of this kind has ever occur-
 red to me either in practice or in
 books ; nor indeed, having made an
 inquiry among physicians of great ex-
 perience, have I met with any one,
 who recollects to have seen a similar
 case. Those anatomists likewise, who
 2 have

have been the most conversant in examining morbid bodies, agree, that they have not observed such appearances in the lungs. In the *sepulchretum anatomicum* of Bonetus, I find two instances of pulmonary hydatids recorded; both of which (a frequent fault in Bonetus) are described with too little precision. In the first case*, it is said, “that, besides an inflammatory swelling of the liver, there
 “ appeared to be an *hydrops pectoris*,
 “ on one side, and that one lobe of
 “ the lungs was filled with vesicles,
 “ which contained a viscid, clear
 “ fluid, resembling the white of
 “ an egg.” In the second case†, “the lungs are said to have been
 “ filled with many small hydatids,
 “ which, being gently pressed, poured out a great quantity of *sanies*.”

* Boneti sepulch. anat. lib. i. obs. 36.

† Ibid. sect. 2. obs. 38.

MORGAGNI * likewise gives an account of the dissection of an old man, “ in the anterior surface of the
“ right lobe of whose lungs there
“ appeared two hydatids, the one
“ greater, the other less.”

† THERE are found in the human body two species of hydatids, differing in a remarkable manner from one another. The first species is regularly organized, and is connected with vessels by peduncles. It consists of a bag or bags, of different sizes, filled with water, which water seems to be no other than the common *serum*. In proportion as the bag is distended, it thickens ; and the contained fluid gradually increases in consistence, becoming more and more ropy. It is sometimes bloody ; and flakes of the

* Morgagni de sedibus & causis morborum
&c. epist. 63. art. 8.

† Several of these anatomical remarks I owe to the favour of Mr. John Hunter.

coagulable lymph are often found floating in it. These hydatids give very little disturbance to the constitution, except by their size and weight. Of this species are the hydatids of the *ovaria*, being organized membranes, firmly attached to the neighbouring parts, and containing sometimes water, and sometimes gelly. The same substances are frequently found in the kidneys, and in various other parts of the body*. But whenever such substances are formed upon the surface, or in the substance of the lungs, whatever

* Of this class are the hydatids formed in the womb. It is not certain, that these have ever existed, except only in consequence of pregnancy, and where the *fœtus* has died early. In some subjects, the *placenta* has been found intirely degenerated into hydatids, bearing the exact resemblance of a bunch of grapes. It has likewise sometimes been observed, that the *placenta* has been expelled from the womb, partly degenerated into hydatids in this racemated form, and partly in its natural state.

effects they may produce, we are not to expect, that they will be spit up, as these have been in the case before us, any more than a part of the lungs themselves.

THE other species of hydatids is supposed to be confined to the liver, and consists of a strong bag, formed in the substance of that *viscus*. This bag is vascular; and, on the inside of it, is lined with a soft, pulpy, opaque coat, much resembling the *retina* of the eye. This contains a liquor, of the colour of whey, sometimes tinged with yellow; in which either a number of detached vesicles, of various sizes, are found swimming; or, what often happens, there is a *series* of them, one within another. When found loose, they have been taken for worms; but examined, without magnifying glasses, they appear to be inorganic concretions; and probably they are the
exu-

exudation of the coagulable lymph from the internal surface of the great containing bag, inspissated.

THIS species of hydatids is very apt to produce mischievous effects. For example, the external cyst sometimes bursts; and its contents are discharged into the cavity of the *abdomen*, thus causing a kind of *ascites*. This external cyst is likewise subject to inflammation, and adhesion to the circumjacent parts; from whence, especially if suppuration takes place, various ill consequences follow, according as different parts may happen to be affected by means of their contiguity.

WITH regard to the disease of Dr. Collet's patient, it is observable, that the hydatids, which she has discharged, are evidently to be referred to the second species, or that which is held to be peculiar to the liver. It is likewise to be remarked, that the

tumour, situated above the navel, from the description of it above given by Mr. Withers, should seem to belong to the liver. If then a conjecture, on a subject, which is at present obscure, and which admits of no demonstration, may be hazarded; is it not possible, that, by the gradual operation of morbid effects, a communication may have been opened between that *tumour*, and a branch of the *trachea*? In the opinion of some of our most expert and most judicious anatomists, such a supposition is not without probability.