

Observations on venereal complaints, and on the methods recommended for their cure / [Thomas Gataker].

Contributors

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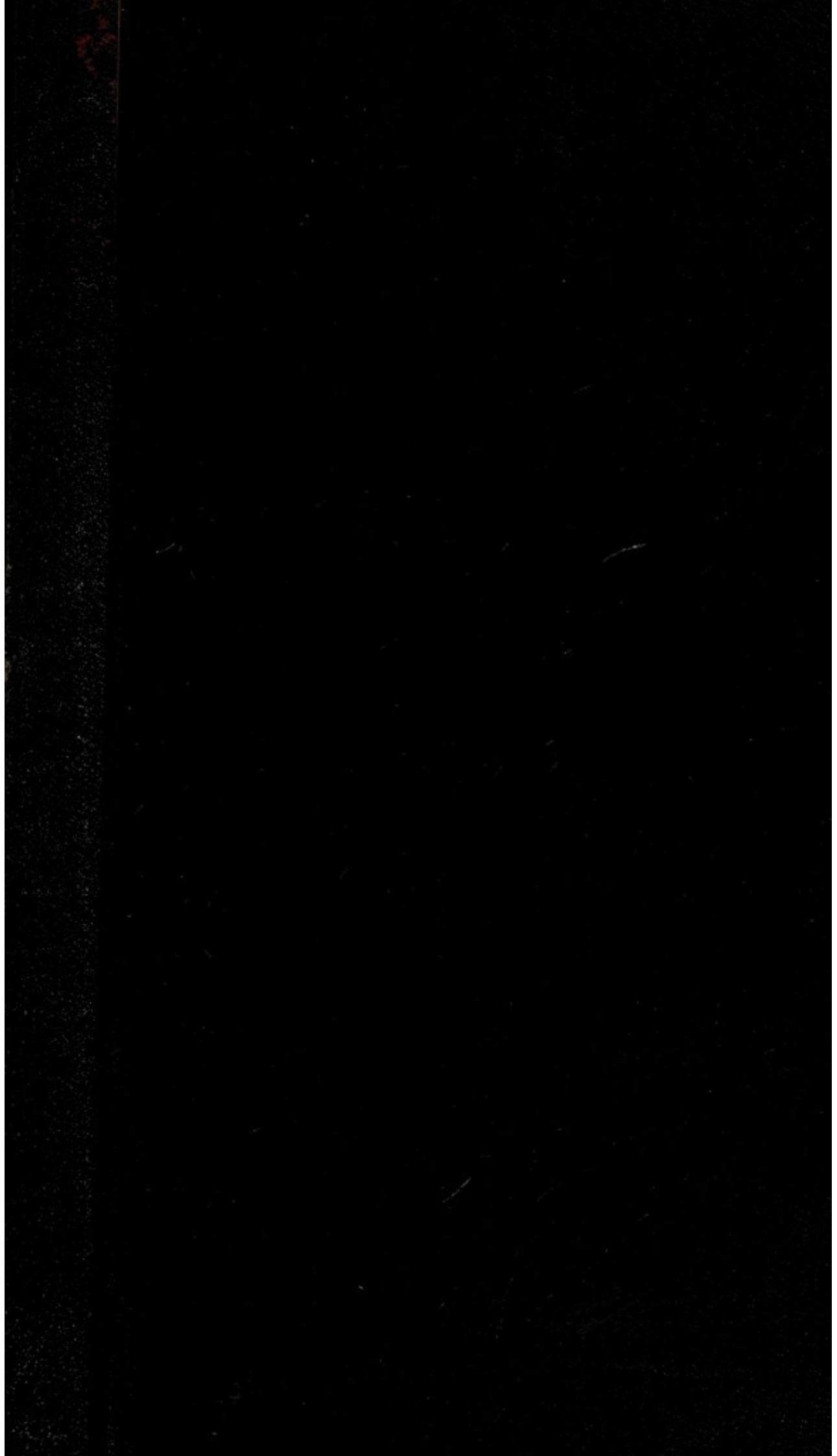
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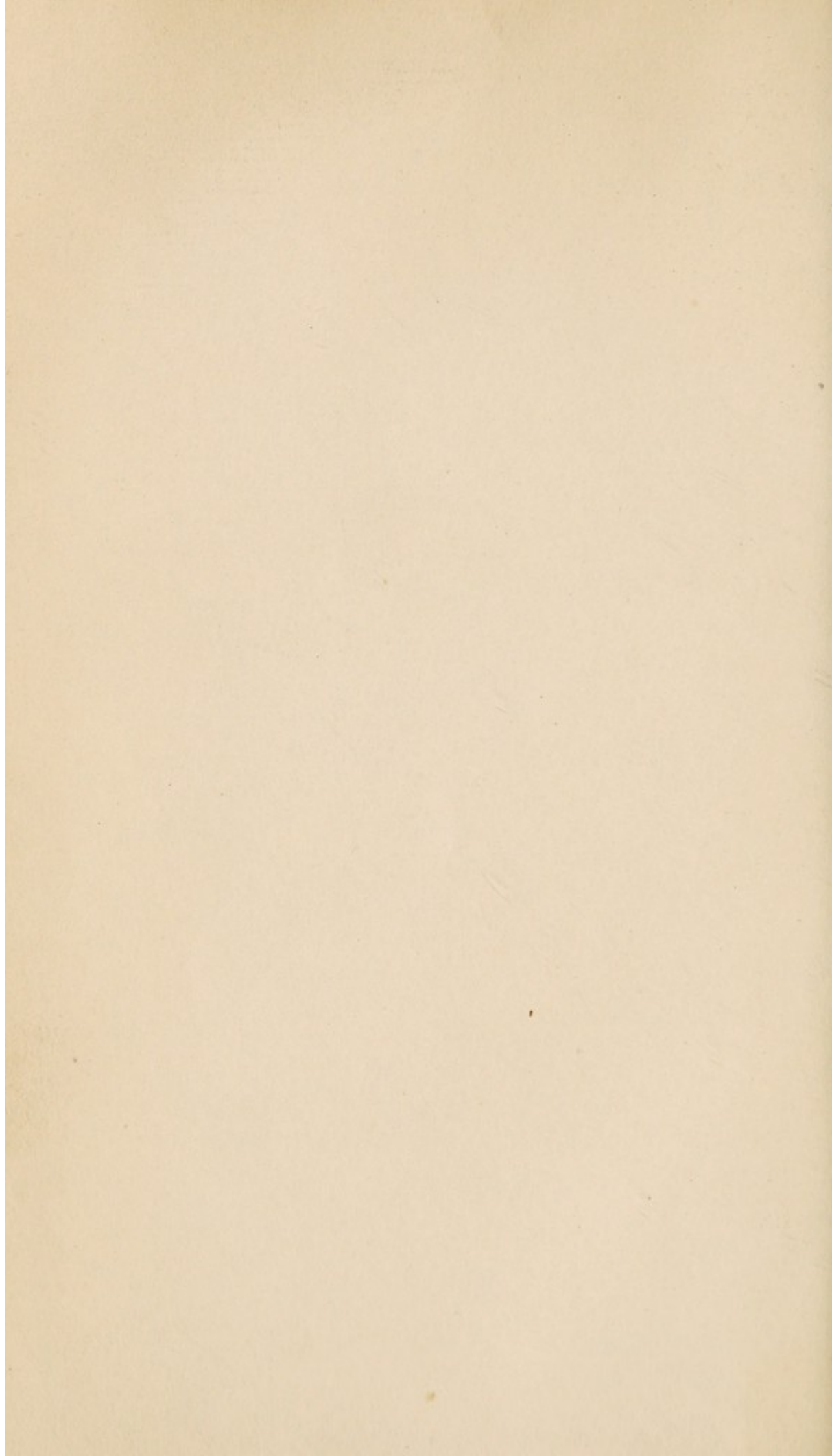
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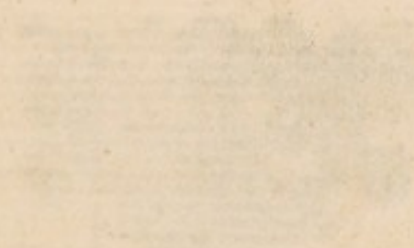
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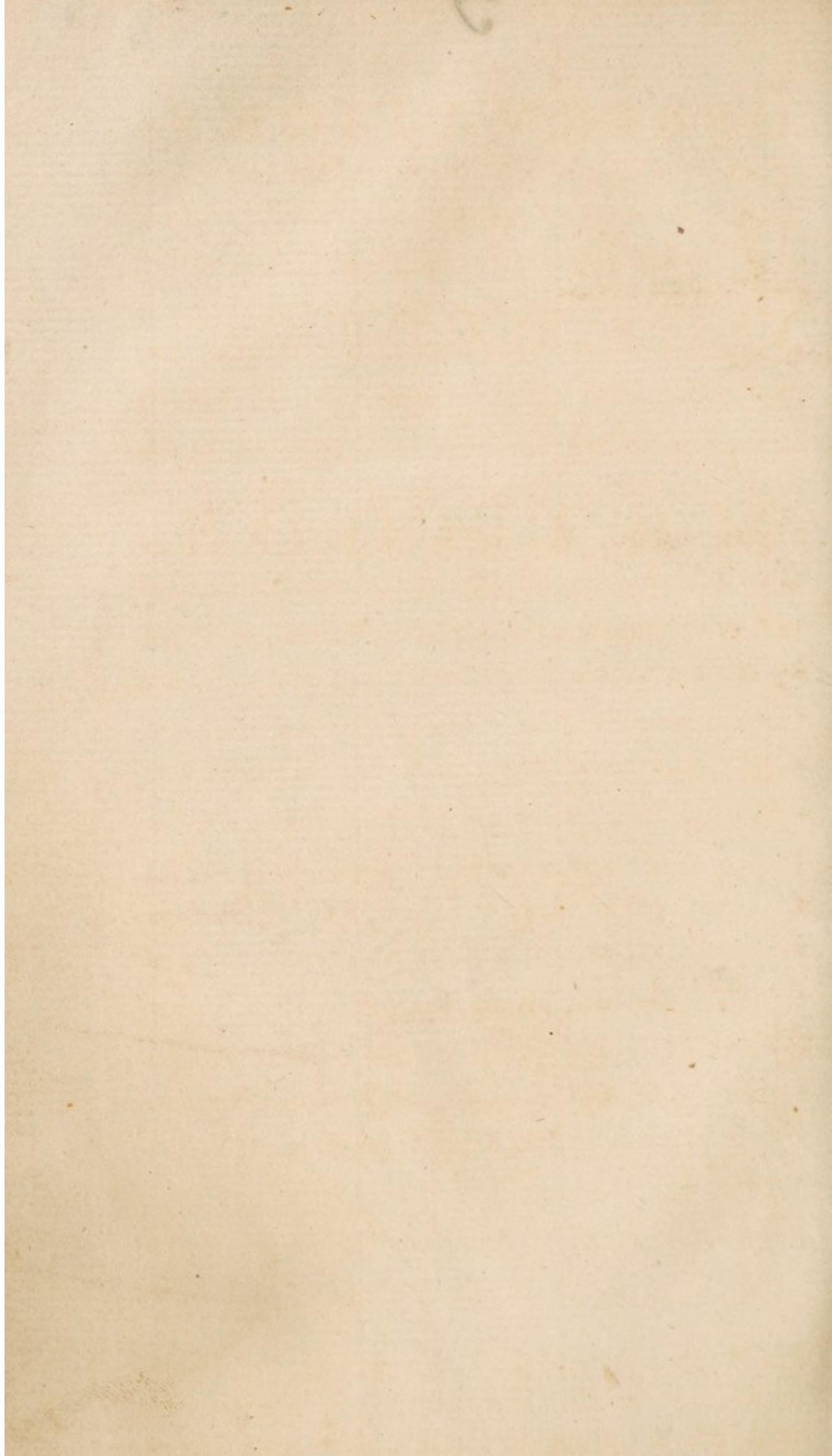
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RENEWATIONS
ON
GENERAL COMPLAINTS
AND ON THE
METHODS
RECOMMENDED FOR THEIR
CURE.
THE SECOND EDITION.





OBSERVATIONS

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LONDON:

Printed for R. and J. DODSLEY in Pall-mall;
and sold by G. HAWKINS in Fleet-street,
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A

L E T T E R

T O A

S U R G E O N.

S I R,

YO U desire me to communicate to you any observations on the venereal disease which I think may be useful.

I will endeavour to comply with your request, and wish what I send you may be worth your perusal and attention.

It will be unnecessary to say any thing of the origin and progress of this distemper, as they are circumstances chiefly of curiosity; nor shall I methodise what I have to offer, by the distinction of sections for particular symp-

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toms ; but without much order or studied regularity you must take my thoughts just as they occur.

You tell me that having had few opportunities of practice in this disease you have been led into errors and perplexities by relying, as you imagine, too much upon the directions of authors. I do not at all wonder at this : 'tis the misfortune of those who have the most occasion for the assistance of physical books, to be least capable of receiving benefit from them ; for after reading various opinions upon the same subject, and many of them perhaps plausibly written, a good deal of experience is still necessary to determine which may be pursued with the most advantage. I am thinking therefore that I may properly enough answer the purpose of your request, by making some cursory remarks upon the writers of this class. In doing this, I shall attempt only to obviate the mischiefs which may arise from what I presume are their principal errors ; leaving the rest of their works for your consideration in the course of your practice. As to what you mention of my recommending to you particular books on this subject, I beg
leave

leave only to give one general rule : read any of them, but read with caution, without relying farther on the opinions of others than as they strictly correspond with appearances, and your own observation of facts.

It would be tedious as well as useless to take a view of the multitude of authors who have written on the venereal disease. I shall fix therefore, if you please, upon two, whose books have been generally read, and are reckoned the standard performances on this distemper. The two writers I mean, are our countryman *Turner*, and the celebrated *Astruc* of *Paris*.

I shall begin with *Turner's* account of a gonorrhœa ; and to save your time as well as my own, shall, as I hinted before, remark only the particular parts which I think essentially wrong. I shall enter very early upon this task, as I presume the doctor is in an error at his setting out, I mean in his definition of a gonorrhœa. If you will consult his *Syphilis* you will find it is his opinion, that the discharge in a clap proceeds from ulcers in the urethra. To some it may seem of little importance to know whether the discharge is a real pus or

matter flowing from ulcers in the passage, or whether it is an increased quantity of the natural mucus issuing from the glands of the urethra in men, and of the urethra and vagina in women, arising from an irritation excited by the venereal taint. For my own part, I think the settling this point a very necessary circumstance to the cure; and as I look upon the latter opinion to be true, I shall endeavour to prove, that ulcers in the passage are not produced in a gonorrhœa. With this view give me leave first to mention an instance or two of some appearances that occur in other disorders, and which, on some accounts, may be deemed analogous to the discharge in a clap.

We daily see instances of persons who from a cold have a running at the nose, which for some time is quite equal in quantity to what usually happens in claps. Here, however, we have no suspicions of an ulcer in the nose, whose internal surface is not unlike that of the urethra. The same may be observed from humours settling on the internal membrane of the eye-lids, from whence tho' a watry humour generally flows, yet in many instances the discharge is purulent and very considerable

considerable in quantity. Do ulcers furnish this? Upon examination you will find the internal membrane of the eye-lids distended and inflamed, but not the least appearance of ulceration. Here then you have a considerable discharge, attended likewise with pain, another symptom of the gonorrhœa, and yet no ulceration. Several instances of this kind might be produced. What a quantity of yellow or green-coloured discharge proceeds from the lungs of many persons who never had either imposthumations or ulcers there? But to come to the parts which are principally affected in a gonorrhœa. Instances frequently happen where the venereal taint seems to have injured only the outside of the glans and the inner surface of the foreskin. You sometimes see a very large discharge from these, which will prove infectious to a woman who has commerce with such a person, and some cases of this kind require a good deal of care and attention in the cure. This disorder is undoubtedly a clap, and is described as such by *Astruc* under the name of *gonorrhœa spuria*. Here then the disease being situated externally, the effects of the venereal taint are

plainly visible. What is the result of your examination? Not the least appearance of ulceration is found, but the discharge seems to be an increased and morbid secretion from the odoriferous glands and the neighbouring parts.

Another very convincing proof may be collected from what happens in a venereal swelling and inflammation of the testicles. This accident, which is often owing to the patient's irregularity and imprudence, or to an improper method of treating the gonorrhœa, not unusually comes on at the height or worst state of the disease; consequently the ulcers, if there are any, must then be as bad as they can be at any time. In this state, however, we sometimes find the discharge is entirely stopped in a few hours, and instead of it the patient has a very painful swelling and inflammation of one or both testicles. Immediately upon this suppression of the discharge, the pain in making water, which was before very violent, generally ceases. What is become then of the supposed ulcers? are they healed instantaneously? or is the urine, the passage of which gave great pain before, become suddenly so mild and inoffensive as not to cause now the least disturbance?

disturbance? It is impossible this should be the case, since the urine in the mildest state would be apt to give some pain in passing over parts that are ulcerated; and it is natural to suppose that the inflammation which often upon these occasions affects the blood in general (for we frequently find the blood fizy in these cases) should rather increase than lessen the heat and sharpness of the urine. What follows will serve to explain this affair.

You bleed the patient for this swelling and inflammation of the testicles, and using cooling means internally as well as emollients outwardly, you abate these symptoms; and generally, tho' not always indeed, the running appears in some degree again, attended with pain in making water. The evacuations have probably very much lessened this last complaint; but still as the running comes on, the pain in making water is oftentimes increased considerably, with a return of the chordee, another symptom which vanished likewise upon the late suppression of the discharge. Is it not plain from hence that there is no ulceration in these cases, and that the pain in the passage is occasioned by the flowing of the discharge, the

peculiar acrimony of which irritates the parts, and produces painful sensations ?

It is surprizing that this opinion of ulcers being formed in the passage should have been so long taught and believed, when there are so many apparent reasons to the contrary. It may seem needless perhaps to offer any other arguments to prove the fallacy of it ; but as it has been the received opinion, and as I think productive of many bad consequences in practice, I cannot omit two or three others (and more might be produced) to corroborate what I have already said.

There is a disease, you know, very common to women, which is sometimes reckoned difficult to be distinguished from a clap, I mean the whites, a term not always applicable to the disease, since you will frequently find in these cases not only a very large and purulent discharge, but it appears of as bad a colour and consistence as the most virulent running. Notwithstanding this, you do not upon examination find any ulcers in the vagina. Why then must there be ulcers there when a discharge directly similar in its quantity, colour and consistence, arises from a venereal cause ?

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The use of bougies furnishes us with another very good reason to disbelieve the existence of ulcers in a gonorrhœa, at least it serves as a negative proof, by showing that matter, or an appearance of matter, may be procured by introducing a bougie into the passage, and letting it lie there a certain time. Upon removing the bougie you generally find it smeared over with a substance like matter, and (which will seem extraordinary to persons unacquainted with their use and application) this appearance will be produced in a sound as well as a diseased body. In short, whatever irritates the glands of the urethra, and makes them yield an increased quantity of their mucus, which is constantly separating to keep the passage soft and smooth, and to defend it from being irritated and inflamed by the heat and salts of the urine, will most probably occasion this appearance of matter. I shall end what I have to say upon the supposed ulcers, by mentioning one circumstance more.

A great number of bodies have been opened who were affected with this disease when they died. The state of the parts, thus diseased, has been carefully examined by our
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most celebrated anatomists; and the result of such enquiries has, as far as I can learn, always contradicted the received opinion of ulcers.

Having shown how little reason there is to suppose ulcers are formed in the urethra, 'tis unnecessary to mention all the errors into which such an opinion leads. I shall just make some remarks, however, upon the influence which it seems to have had upon the practice of doctor *Turner*. His general method of curing a gonorrhœa was by giving large doses of calomel mixed with some of the strong purgatives, as the pil. coch. min. or pil. ex duobus, 15 or 20 grains of the calomel to ℞j ʒss or ℞ij of one of these pills. This dose was to be given every night if the patient could bear it, or else every other night; and I presume such a dose repeated every other night only would be sufficient to weaken and injure most constitutions of a moderate degree of strength. These he tells you were the purges commonly used by the surgeons of the town. 'Tis true he gives some hints that different purges may upon some occasions be preferable, as in bilious or hectic habits he advises those of the cooler
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fort, but here likewise orders xij or xv grains of calomel to be given over night. He afterwards recommends an opiate to be taken in the evenings of the purging days, to dispose the patient to rest after the tumult raised in the blood by the preceding medicines. The necessity of an opiate for this purpose implies the impropriety of the dose, for violent purging is hardly ever proper in a gonorrhœa, especially in the beginning; and whatever purge is strong enough to raise this commotion, is surely much better omitted. In short, you see, without attempting to moderate the symptoms caused by the acrimony of the discharge, or endeavouring to regulate the running, so that it be not too hastily forced on or too suddenly check'd; without proceeding upon any rational process in the cure according to the different stages of the disease, immediate recourse is had to large quantities of mercury, in order to destroy the venereal poison, to bring the supposed ulcers to digestion, and put them into a state of healing. On the contrary, how often by this means may the painful symptoms be aggravated, the constitution harrassed, the strength impaired, and the patient perhaps hurried into an unnecessary

necessary salivation? It appears I believe from what I have already said, that the doctor had but an imperfect idea of a gonorrhœa; and this will be seen still more if we consider the method in which he treats the swelling and inflammation of the testicles. This complaint you know generally arises from a sudden suppression of the running, and is a symptom so dependent upon the management of it, that a person who treats the one improperly will not remove the other much more judiciously.

The immediate cause of this swelling of the testicles, as I observed, is generally attributed to a too sudden suppression of the running; but the circumstances which bring on the suppression are various and necessary to be attended to.

Strong purges, particularly of the mercurial kind, are very apt to produce this complaint: they heat and disorder the body in general, and by their irritation force the humours too precipitantly upon the urinary passage.

A more than ordinary degree of sharpness in the discharge occasioning violent pain, is another cause of this complaint.

A full habit of body, heated by intemperance or strong exercise, disposes the constitution very much to this disorder; and in such a state the addition of a common cold may give rise to this inflammatory swelling.

In short, whatever will throw a great fluxion of humours on the urethra and its secretory glands which are already inflamed, will occasion a proportionable increase of inflammation, pain and tension; and any parts in such a state we know will yield but very little discharge: hence the running being in a great measure stopped or totally suppressed, the humours are probably determined to the testicles.

I must not omit another very common cause of this disorder, namely, balsamic and restraining medicines improperly administered either internally or by way of injection.

The symptoms of this complaint are a heat, pain and swelling of one or both testicles, the pain sometimes extending up the groin. A swelling likewise and inflammation of the scrotum, attended often with the usual symptoms of inflammatory fevers.

One would suppose in such a case, that besides the common emollient applications to
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soften and relax the distended, painful parts, together with a truss or some other bandage to support the weight of the swelling; I say exclusive of these, one would imagine immediate recourse should be had to the general methods for removing inflammatory swellings, preferring probably such particular evacuation as according to the nature of the case shall seem best calculated to lessen the fluxion, and derive the humours from the disordered parts.

What is it doctor *Turner* proposes for the removal of these inflammatory symptoms? a very strong, heating purge, of pil. ex duobus and calomel: the dose to be repeated for some days, when if the running appears again, the same is to be given at proper intervals to purge off this running. Neither reason or experience justify such practice, which will not only be liable to injure the constitution, but will often aggravate the symptoms instead of removing them. And why is all this violence thought necessary? the running it seems is stopped, and must be forced on again. It is certainly a very rational intention to endeavour at procuring a fresh running, but this may be done by gentler means, such as will more effectually answer the end proposed without

without hazarding any ill consequence. It appears by the doctor's own account that this method was not always successful, tho' he says it usually dispersed the swelling; for he immediately adds, if notwithstanding this method of purging, the pain and fluxion still increase with inflammation threatening an abscess, you must vomit the patient with turpeth. mineral. repeated at due intervals 'till the tumour subsides, and then purge off the running. Abscesses are very uncommon terminations of these swellings when they are properly treated, but I make no doubt the doctor had seen such accidents, as the heating, violent purges which he directs would naturally enough produce a suppuration by increasing the inflammatory symptoms. As to vomits, which he proposes if the purges fail, there can be no objection to this method of evacuation in most instances; but why must they be mercurial vomits? Others will have an equal good effect, and the turpeth. mineral. which he recommends, is very apt to work roughly and uncertainly. Besides, if the mercurial particles enter the course of the circulation, they may bring on a spitting, notwithstanding all your care to prevent it, especially
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when mercurial purges have preceded ; or at least they will heat and inflame the blood, which should be by every means avoided, as contrary to any rational intention of cure.

You will not hesitate to own the unfitness of the doctor's directions ; but you will say perhaps that the present practice differs considerably in the manner of treating this distemper. I am convinced that there are many practitioners who treat every circumstance of the disease with much propriety and judgment ; but I cannot allow that the instructions of doctor *Turner* are wholly laid aside : daily instances prove the contrary : nor is it at all surprising that opinions which a few years ago were the established rules of practice, should be often adhered to now.

The next article which our author mentions is the bubo : but that complaint is much oftener owing to the more malignant species of the venereal disease than to a gonorrhœa.

We come then lastly to the disorder termed a caruncle ; a complaint, which 'till within a few years seems to have been very imperfectly understood by the generality of surgeons, and
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from mistaken notions of its causes practitioners were formerly led into such attempts to cure it as generally proved unsuccessful, always painful, and sometimes fatal to the patient.

In order to give an account of this disorder, which you particularly desire, I must deviate from my first intention of examining only the opinions of *Turner* and *Astruc*; for tho' the complaint is treated of by both those writers, yet we may, I imagine, form a better idea of the disease by taking a short view of the history of it.

It was originally the opinion that the stoppages in the urethra arose from fleshy substances growing there; conformable to which idea they termed the disease a caruncle or carnosity. I shall go no farther back than to our countryman *Wiseman*, who gives, I believe, as full an account of the complaint as any preceding writer. * He describes caruncles to be little grains of loose flesh, arising in the urethra from the erosion of the venereal matter; that they gradually increase in size, unless properly treated, and not only increase, but become callous; as in time, he says, does

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* 550, Folio edit.

the whole passage; and then the disorder takes the name of a carnosity.

The cure he ingenuously owns to be no easy task. He mentions two methods of extirpating these substances; by medicines to consume them, or by mere force with wax candles, probes of lead, silver, or steel, to tear and break the fleshy substances in pieces.

If the caruncle is recent, he proposes to * crush it to pieces by the common wax candle; but if this method fails, he then advises the use of medicated candles. Amongst the ingredients of which these are composed, are alum, red precipitate, and calcined vitriol. The end or medicated part of this candle is to be placed upon the caruncle in order to consume it; but if it cannot be passed beyond the caruncle, you are then to convey a piece of caustic thro' a canula to the caruncle, and destroy it by that means. Should it happen that the caruncle is situated far up the urethra, and you can neither pass the candle beyond it, nor introduce the canula to reach it, you are to attempt with a leaden probe to press upon it, and break or tear it off.

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One cannot think of all this violence upon so very sensible a part without horror ; nor can one upon this occasion help reflecting on the uncertainty of hypotheses, and how cautious a man ought to be in taking any opinion upon trust, where there is a possibility of examining into the reality of the circumstances. In the present case, the theory, however disagreeable in practice, appears plausible. 'Twas the settled opinion, that the running of a clap proceeded from ulcers in the urethra : it was imagined, reasonably enough upon this supposition, that loose spongy flesh might sometimes arise from these ulcers ; and as these substances became larger, they in a proportionable degree might hinder the free current of the urine. The method which was pursued for relief, tho' painful and dangerous, was agreeable to the theory ; that is, to break thro' and separate these fleshy substances from the internal surface of the urethra ; or, if that method failed, to destroy them by corrosive medicines.

Many reasons might prevent a better knowledge of this distemper formerly. The gonorrhœa was less frequent than in later times, consequently fewer instances were likely to occur

of the ill effects of it ; caruncles, as they were called, were often mistaken for the stone ; and as the operation for that disorder was less practised at that time, the true cause of the patient's complaint was probably never known ; and what contributed much to the ignorance of practitioners in this respect, was the neglect of opening diseased bodies. Time however made a good deal of alteration in these particulars, and the complaint became more the subject of enquiry.

Dionis was, I believe, the first who published a different account of the cause of this disorder. He tells us, † that the existence of excrescences in the urethra was an opinion so firmly established by his predecessors that no one presumed to dispute it ; and yet, says he, upon carefully examining bodies who were said to have had this disease when they died, I could never discover any excrescence ; nor have ever met with a surgeon, whose authority might be relied on, that asserted he had seen any. The way that *Dionis* accounts for the obstructions is, by attributing them to the urethra having been corroded and ulcerated by the

† 187. Operat.

the venereal matter ; that the scars, or cicatrices which were left after healing the ulcers, being hard and of a callous disposition, lessen the diameter of the urethra, hinder consequently the free passage of the urine, and obstruct the introduction of the probe, which obstruction to the probe's passing was thought to be owing to a carnosity. I make no doubt but *Dionis* examined several bodies who died with this disease upon them, and I verily believe he found no excrescence or caruncle. I do not dispute that he might sometimes discover hardnesses in the passage, and as it was generally imagined that the matter of a clap ulcerated the parts, it is not at all surprizing these hardnesses should be imputed to the scars of former ulcers. *Dionis* found very little advantage, as he himself acknowledges, to result from his enquiries, the method which he proposes for the cure being nearly the same as was recommended by his predecessors. This notion of scars, however, became the prevailing opinion, and is still one of the many causes said by some to produce the complaint. But whatever reason inclined him, as well as several succeeding practitioners, to attribute the stoppages to this

cause, the method which they took to remove them had a palpable inconsistency in the attempt. They tell you that the complaint is owing to the passage having been corroded with ulcers, and that the hard cicatrices or scars of these ulcers do in a greater or less degree stop the canal. How do they propose to remedy this evil? By destroying these hardenings with corrosive applications, which, if they really effect what is designed by them, must necessarily produce ulcers of at least as great an extent as the former were supposed to be, and of course the scars or cicatrices of these fresh ulcers must leave the parts in full as bad a state or worse than they were before.

It will be needless to mention every writer who took notice, after *Dionis*, of this disorder. The opinion of its cause, at least the method of cure, proceeded for a considerable time in that kind of regular succession of error, which in physical matters has sometimes happened in other instances.

I shall pass therefore to *Astruc*, who distinguishes these obstacles into various kinds*; as ulcers, caruncles, cicatrices, &c. and gives an account of several methods which had
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* P. 309. vol. I.

been brought into practice for the cure of them; as by corrosive medicines; by making an incision into the urethra to lay the obstacles in view, and after removing them by different applications, suitable to their different states, to heal up the incision; likewise by dilating the narrow or contracted part of the urethra with tents, which, while they lay in the passage, became larger by the moisture of the parts, and opened the canal in proportion.

All these methods he disapproves, and prefers the use of rods or probes made of ductile lead. One of these, of a small size, is to be passed to the obstacle, and, if it cannot at first be introduced into the bladder, is to be put as far into the passage as you can without giving much pain. It is to remain a few hours every day in the urethra till it can be passed freely and easily into the bladder; and then others of larger size are to be used till the passage is sufficiently dilated and opened, and the urine has a free discharge.

Le Dran, in his excellent account of the *fistula in perinæo* *, which complaint, as he has observed, generally owes its origin to some dis-

* P. 353. Operat.

order in the urethra, proposes to soften the callosities, promote a suppuration, and enlarge the canal by the following method. He directs that a piece of cat-gut be passed as far as you can into the urethra, and, being left there a certain time, it will swell by the moisture which it imbibes, and will in some degree open the passage. When cat-gut of different sizes can be readily passed into the bladder, you are then to use linen that has been dipped in melted wax and afterwards rolled upon the cat-gut in the form of a bougie ; which he thinks will yield less than the simple cat-gut to the inequalities of the urethra, and therefore widen the diameter of it more effectually. To prevent a relapse, which he has known to happen three years after the cure seemed to be completed, he advises that the bougie be sometimes used after the obstacles are removed.

Col de Vilars *, another writer of great eminence and credit, gives directions for making bougies, which will gradually and easily distend the urethra at the same time that they soften and relax its fibres : with these, he says, you may cure the most obstinate or inveterate case ;

* Vol. 4. p. 223.

case; but observes that as the urethra has a disposition to contract, (I suppose he means after some bad cases) he advises by way of precaution or prevention, that the bougie be used once a month after the cure.

I must now recur to our own country men, by whom very little was published since *Wiseman*, at least very little materially different from what he had observed. *Turner's* account is taken chiefly from *Wiseman*. But tho' very little was published on the disorder, yet our best practitioners were not idle in their attempts to cure it. The methods which I have just related were the subjects of their experiments, and they frequently succeeded in pursuance of the means recommended by *Le Dran* and *Col de Vilars*. The method particularly of *Col de Vilars*, if carefully attended to, was capable of procuring remarkable advantages; and yet the general practice was not so much benefited by it, as might have been expected. The reason of this seems deducible from the false or imperfect notions which were held concerning the causes of the obstructions. Some imagining them owing to excrescences or caruncles, used his plain and well formed bougie only to break thro'

thro' and repress these: some attributed them to the hard scars of former ulcers, and contented themselves with overcoming and getting beyond the resistances which these were thought to occasion, without leaving the bougie long enough in the passage to soften and distend it: others, and particularly some who have been long as eminently distinguished for their knowledge and integrity, as rank in their profession, discovering upon many examinations neither excrescences nor cicatrices of former ulcers, but a mere contraction of the diameter of the canal, and sometimes hard-nesses, formed their bougies of such a consistence as to be passed along the urethra, yet pliable enough to yield to the course of the passage; and tho' sufficiently firm to distend gently and gradually, yet soft enough to continue in the urethra without creating much pain or uneasiness; procuring hereby every appearance which *Daran* (whom I shall speak of next) claims to be the peculiar property of his bougies, and likewise the same advantages in every respect, as general experience now abundantly testifies.

Thus had continued the state of this affair some years before *Daran* published his *Preliminary*

minary discourse, wherein he undertakes to give an account of this disease. I shall, agreeable to your request, send you my opinion upon that performance, and shall examine what advantages may have arisen from it to the publick.

Many opinions you see were entertained in different times about the causes of the obstructions, nor were the real causes publickly determined when *Daran* wrote his book. Some embraced one opinion, some another, and others acknowledged all the imputed causes. In this uncertainty, the clearing up of which to the publick seemed a circumstance of importance, it was to be hoped some one, after a diligent and extensive enquiry into cases of this kind, would discuss the point candidly and uninfluenced by common opinions. What person, according to his own account, should seem better qualified for this task than *Daran*? who, as he tells the world †, has always made venereal complaints, and particularly those of the urethra, his chief study. His boasted experience of * twenty years must, one would imagine, have enabled him to give this satisfaction to the publick, and to have re-
jected

† 177. *Disc. Prelimin.*

* P. 3,

jected with certainty and authority the methods which were recommended from mistaken notions. Abundant opportunities seem to have offered. Some patients might not apply to him till it was too late to assist them. Age or accidental illness might prove fatal to others before the cure of the obstructions could be compleated ; nay he acquaints us † that 200 of his patients failed of cure by their disease being complicated with some other disorder. Is it not strange that he should want curiosity to examine the real state of the parts diseased, in order to settle a point which he labours to do afterwards, chiefly from the authority of other people's opinions ? The opening of dead bodies is readily enough allowed amongst the *French* ; and, when a single part only was to be the subject of inspection, the doing it could be attended with little difficulty or trouble. We might have expected therefore, as he attributes the disorder to * many causes, that he would have preserved some of the real diseased parts, and have had instances of each kind of obstruction. Thus some should have shown caruncles of different sizes and forms ; others ulcers ; others cicatrices ; and so of the rest.

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† 179.

* 4.

Such a collection, as it would have been very satisfactory to the curious, would have been likewise a strong enforcement and confirmation of his own doctrine. On the contrary, *Daran* adopts at once the whole list of causes mentioned by *Astruc* and others.

It would exceed the bounds of my present design to comment upon every part of this performance; give me leave, however, to offer some specimens of this author's manner of reasoning, and to make some remarks upon a few of the most interesting of his assertions.

Daran is a great advocate for the* existence of caruncles, the reality of which he undertakes to determine. He acknowledges † that *Dionis* and *Palfyn*, two very celebrated surgeons and anatomists, declare, that upon frequent examination of bodies who died with obstructions in the urethra, they never could discover any excrescences; and *Palfyn* he says seems to have given this opinion after due reflection ‡. *Monf. Petit* is mentioned upon the same occasion; who, according to *Daran* ||, had more opportunities than any other man in *Europe* to inform himself, by dissection, of the nature of venereal complaints. *Monf. Petit* declares, that

* 15.

† 19.

‡ 17.

|| 22.

that he had opened several persons in whom excrescences or cicatrices were expected to be found; but that, on the contrary, the internal surface of the urethra was free from any such appearances. *De la Faye* *, another very eminent surgeon, made the same examination on a great number of bodies, and with the same remark. In answer to these facts, *Daran* insinuates that the accounts are not true †. It is possible, he says, tho' it appears very extraordinary, that in the number of bodies examined by these anatomists, there should be none who had carnosities. But, as impeaching the integrity and candour of these celebrated men might be insufficient to destroy their authority, he endeavours to invalidate their testimony by the following very extraordinary observation; viz. that as the number of those bodies which have not been examined is infinitely greater than those which have, the negative argument of the latter proves nothing.

He afterwards mentions two or three more circumstances to favour this opinion, which are as little conclusive as his other arguments; and endeavours, by the most strained construction,

* 19.

† 23.

struction, to make * *Dionis* prove the existence of caruncles, notwithstanding he had just before quoted him as absolutely denying them. He likewise takes notice † of one case, which, tho' he did not see it, yet he seems to rely much upon ; where an excrescence shot out so far from the orifice of the urethra, that the patient was sometimes obliged to cut off part of it with his scissars. I will not deny the reality of this case, but being at least an unusual appearance, it does not properly serve to prove a general doctrine.

Daran I think seems tacitly to allow, that caruncles are not often the objects of *sight*, and chuses to rely chiefly on the sense of *feeling* ; for after bringing testimonies of authors in favour, as he imagines, of caruncles, he disclaims their assistance, and offers to prove the reality of caruncles by the *touch*. Why, says he ‡, should I call in the assistance of the dead, when the living can speak for me ? I am ready to convince the most incredulous by making them *feel* the carnosities, so as not to leave the least doubt of their existence. I will demonstrate to them, as far as
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* 24.

† 32.

‡ 30.

it is possible, that excrescences, quite different from strictures caused by cicatrices, are formed in the urethra. You will observe here, that he first says he will convince the most incredulous, so as *not to leave the least doubt*; yet immediately adds, that he will *demonstrate* to them, *as far as it is possible*, that there are real excrescences.

This author, tho' he imagines that * caruncles or callosities are the most frequent causes of the obstructions, yet insists that the original ulcers of the gonorrhœa, from whence these obstructions are supposed to be produced, do still remain; that the caruncles and callosities are only † incrustations which hide venereal ulcers, and that these crusts or scabs formed upon the ulcers, ‡ confine a purulent matter.

Daran as well as other authors allow, that the obstruction is not, in many instances, perceived 'till several years after its supposed cause, the gonorrhœa, has, in all appearance, been perfectly cured.

It seems therefore very extraordinary, that ulcers should lie dormant for 10, 20, or 30 years, which he allows they do ||, in a part
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* 182.

† 137.

‡ 53.

|| 60.

so extremely delicate and sensible as the urethra. That they should not grow worse all this time, or occasion an alteration in the stream of urine by lessening in some measure the diameter of the canal—that the urine should be daily passing over them without at all affecting them by its heat or sharpness—that these ulcers should be continued and maintained by venereal matter, which, in all other cases, we find very apt to spread its influence sooner, are circumstances very surprising and unaccountable, and require the strongest evidences to prove their reality.

In the first part of my letter, I have endeavoured to prove from analogy, from an attention to the symptoms, and from the authority of our most celebrated anatomists, that ulcers in the passage are not produced in a gonorrhœa: but I will at present, yield to the common opinion, and, supposing the urethra to be ulcerated in that distemper, let us see how this writer proves that the ulcers remain many years after the cure of the gonorrhœa has been thought perfect, without occasioning the least interruption to the current of urine, or any particular sensibility in the part different from what is common.

After asserting * that caruncles and callosities arise from ulcers which lie concealed, he adds, † that they plainly exist, because in four hours, and sometimes less, his medicines bring the incrustations to a suppuration, and make the old ulcers discharge in the same manner as when the gonorrhœa was fresh contracted. Here then rests the proof of these long-dormant ulcers. He puts his bougie into the urethra, and, by keeping it there a certain time, it brings on a running like a gonorrhœa fresh contracted. The same argument might be brought to prove that almost every man has ulcers in that part; since there is hardly any bougie, if passed into the urethra, and suffered to lie there the time he mentions, but will generally produce the same effect in a person never disordered with venereal or any other complaints. That this is a common symptom where the bougies have been used in a diseased state, is a very known observation. *Wiseman* mentions ‡ a flowing of matter upon the use of the candles. *Le Dran*, likewise, in his account of the *fistula in perinæo*,

* 132. † 133. ‡ 553. fol. edit.

perinæo, has the following paragraph. † The use of bougies often occasions a suppuration in the urethra almost like that of a gonorrhœa, which suppuration is frequently very beneficial in dissolving the callosities, and continues no longer than whilst the bougies are used.

Daran carries this affair still farther; for he not only pretends that his bougies, by their specific property, § actuate and put in motion the venereal poison, which has long remained inactive in the concealed ulcers; but (tho' he denies them to have any intelligent power) they will not, he says, affect any part of the urethra except it is diseased: * that if one of them is suffered to lie in the urethra of a person perfectly free from any complaint, there will not be the least appearance of matter upon drawing out the bougie; and yet the same bougie put immediately into a diseased urethra, shall, when removed, be loaded with matter on those particular parts of it, which were in contact with the parts diseased. Indeed he informs the reader, † that the trouble of making the first part of the experiment, (the letting the bougies lie in the urethra of a person quite free from

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complaint,

complaint, and expecting to see it drawn out without the least appearance of matter) is unnecessary; it being sufficient, it seems, that those parts of the bougie which were supposed to lie in contact with the obstructions, are marked particularly with matter. The truth of the affair is this: Any emplastic substance made into the form of a bougie, and suffered to lie in the urethra some hours, will irritate the glands of that part; and bringing on an increased secretion of the natural mucus, as well as an afflux of other humours, will produce a discharge or running in almost every person whether diseased or not. The quantity of the discharge is frequently different in different habits, independent of any venereal taint; and the same differences are observable in respect to the colour and consistence of the discharge. Where the bougies are used to cure obstructions in the urethra, we not only see them covered with matter, but clots or little pieces of it are collected on particular parts of the bougie; and generally about those parts which lay near the obstructions: the diameter of the canal being lessened in these places, and, by that means the regular course of the urethra being interrupted,

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some of the mucus probably lodges or stagnates there. Not that this circumstance is always necessary to produce these appearances, for we sometimes find these pieces of matter stick on several parts of the bougie which were not near the obstruction: and even where the bougies have been applied in a urethra perfectly free from any disorder, the same may be produced; a larger secretion being accidentally furnished in some places than in others, or those parts of the bougies lying probably in contact with some of the larger lacunæ. Yet these *Daran* calls the † suppurations of preternatural substances, which obstructed, or in part filled the urethra; and which his bougies, by their specific power, have brought away, laying open the concealed ulcers, &c. He does not stop here; for he not only tells the reader that his bougies have brought the ulcers to run, and have set at liberty the poison which lay long concealed there; but to confirm what he has advanced, he undertakes to demonstrate, that the running, thus brought on by the use of his bougies, is * malignant, or infectious. He proposes to prove this from the colour of the

matter, and from the communication of the taint.

The colour of the matter, as well as the running produced by the bougies, is a circumstance which admits of great deception on the mind of the patient, but can have little influence on the judgment of those who are conversant with the venereal disease. The discharge, he says, puts on its original colour, becoming yellow or green. *Daran* cannot surely have given much attention to the appearance in a gonorrhœa, or have reflected on the discharges from other parts of the body, upon various occasions, if he can suppose the yellow or green colour of matter to be certain indications of infection.

I observed before, that in the disease of women, commonly termed the whites, the colour of the discharge is sometimes yellow or green. Appearances of the same kind we sometimes see in men, where there never was any infection.

I took notice also of the yellow or green coloured discharge from the lungs of many persons who never had either imposthumations or ulcers in those parts.

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The same is often observable in the matter let out of abscesses.

But to come to the experiment of the bougies. The discharge brought on by these in a sound person is frequently of the same colour as you see in claps. This proof of infection therefore carries not the least weight with it ; and I believe the other, when considered, will be found as inconclusive.

He tells us, * that if a patient, who has a running brought on by the bougies, should be concerned with a woman, he will communicate infection to her ; and that married men, whom he has advised to forbear commerce with their wives during this discharge, have been concerned with other women, and have infected them. How could this intelligence be procured ? Was it from the man or the woman ? I should suspect the evidence of either. The man could not judge of this but from the information of the woman ; and if a man, believing himself infected, scrupulously avoids commerce with his wife, to what other woman has he recourse ? in all probability to one devoted to the promiscuous use of mankind ; and I should think it much more

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likely

likely that such a one should give a real infection to him. But whatever reasons might induce *Daran* to advance this, he must excuse the general belief of it till the certainty of the accident is better established ; because, at present, we find by experience that the fact appears otherwise. Give me leave to mention a circumstance or two more relating to this author.

A man that pretends to a secret or particular method of curing a disease, seldom allows any other man to understand it ; and generally sets up his own knowledge as infallible. All authors, * says *Daran*, look upon the obstructions in the urethra as incurable ; yet he gives you a quotation from *Col de Vilars* † where that author proposes a very rational and plain method, and tells you that it will cure the most obstinate or inveterate case. *Col de Vilars* observes, indeed, that the urethra has a disposition to contract ; and therefore advises the use of the bougie once a month, to prevent such an accident. As this caution is, in reality, only necessary in particular cases, one cannot suppose *Daran* objects to it, especially as it is agreeable to his own acknowledged practice ;

* 187.

† vol. 4. p. 155.

practice ; for * whenever the disorder is situated near the veru-montanum, which it very frequently is, he always advises a continuance of his bougies, because of the disposition which he says those parts have to contract; and yet this is very inconsistent with his general pretensions. He allows † that *Col de Vilars's* bougies will relax the fibres of the urethra and gradually dilate the passage, and if mercurial plaster enters their composition, he allows them likewise a dissolving power, but these he denies to be all the intentions of cure : no, his bougies, by a specific ‡ antivenereal and deterfive quality, open the concealed ulcers, subdue the poison lurking in the ulcers, cleanse and heal them ; and cure the disease § radically. How happens it then, if the disease is cured by medicines specifically adapted to a peculiar poison, and cured radically, that the parts are liable to a contraction, which will renew the symptoms of the disease, especially as the veru-montanum lies sufficiently open to the application of the bougies? Either his remedy has no specific power, or is less effectual than he would allow it to be.

Daran

* Obs. 6. 3me partie p. 137. † 158. ‡ 136. § 23.

Daran mentions frequently his own infallibility. * He talks of the infallible success of his remedy, † and that all sorts of gonorrhœas and their ill consequences are cured by him. Yet he allows § that two hundred of his patients missed their cure, by their disorder being complicated with some other disease. We should have been informed particularly what those diseases were. It is plain they were not of the venereal kind; because, || whenever he finds the cure protracted longer than ordinary, without some apparent cause, he has immediate recourse to a salivation, and a cure is effected. Are the following some of the complicated disorders which prevented the usual success? for he acquaints the reader, that ulcers in the bladder, ‡ in the prostate gland, and seminary vesicles, will receive no advantage from his method; so likewise ulcers which have been of long standing, or of so virulent a nature as to have caused a great loss of substance, admit of no cure.

Here at least then the infallibility ceases.

In the conclusion of his *Preliminary discourse*, he declares no patient of his ever had

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* 52. † 186. § 189. || 182. ‡ 185.

a relapse unless he laboured under a complication of diseases : but how is it to be determined when the disorder was complicated or not? for if we admit that his incurable cases fail'd of success by the complication of diseases, we can never suppose, if the disorders in the urethra have been radically cured, that other diseases will renew the obstructions there. Nay, he adds immediately, that he cannot * say the disease never returns, because some of his patients get fresh claps, which, he complains, they † attribute to a return of the former disorder, — chusing to sacrifice his character as well as their own veracity, rather than acknowledge their incontinence. It must rely then upon the credit of the patient and his surgeon to determine whose account is right ; tho' the patient seems to have one circumstance strongly in his favour, and that is, the improbability of a fresh clap producing these obstructions. If the patient has had, according to *Daran*, excrescences or cicatrices in his urethra from claps ill treated, and if, by a specific remedy adapted to the nature of these complaints, they have been radically

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* 189. † 134.

and absolutely cured, will the accident of a fresh clap necessarily produce fresh excrescences or cicatrices in the urethra? No more, one should imagine, than a common clap properly treated would produce the same obstructions in any indifferent person.

As to the censure which, he says, some people pass upon him *, that the disorders in the urethra which he has had the treatment of, always return, I am convinced it is very unjust; for tho' he is erroneous in some particulars, and we know by experience that he is very far from being infallible, yet, as the bougies which he uses are of a good consistence, and I suppose free from corrosive ingredients, I make no doubt but, by a careful application of them, he will generally have the same success that other people have. After all, it must be allowed that *Daran* has been of some service to the public; for tho' in his book he advances wrong notions about the nature of the disorder and the requisites for the cure, yet his extraordinary pretensions to a specific remedy and his boasted infallibility, engaged the general attention; and the boldness of his
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* 189.

assertions becoming the object of enquiry and consideration to the profession, a method of treating these cases properly, which was before beginning to diffuse itself, became in a little time universally known.

When *Daran's Preliminary discourse* first appeared, many thought that there really was some powerful medical virtue in the composition of his bougies. In consequence of this opinion a variety of things, particularly the whole tribe of mercurials, was tried to answer the same purposes which his bougies were said to do. It appeared from these experiments, that all those which were of a good form and consistence, which were free from painful and irritating ingredients, and were properly used, did exactly answer in producing the same appearances in regard to the discharge, as well as every advantage in respect to the cure. Many, therefore, for a little time imagined themselves possessed of the specific secret; but the knowledge of the disorder and its cure becoming more general, these kind of notions soon lost their credit: and now you daily see the worst cases cured by bougies of different compositions, the ingredients of which

claim

claim no extraordinary or secret medical virtues adapted to the supposed poison, &c.

Having now given you the remarks which I had to make on *Turner's* opinion and treatment of a gonorrhœa, and having made, I fear, too long a digression on the subject of obstructions in the urethra and *Daran's* discourse upon them, I shall resume my original design, and take the liberty of offering a few observations on *Astruc*.

No one can read this author without admiring his learning and ingenuity. His history of the venereal disease, with his account of the nature, cause and cure of it, and his abridgment of the several discourses which have been published upon the subject, contain a great deal of curious and instructive knowledge. It is however much to be lamented that *Astruc* sometimes treats the subject too systematically, and in a manner too diffusive.

In books relating to particular sciences, it should, I presume, be the author's chief endeavour to give such a plain account of his opinion, that students of the science or profession of which he treats may clearly understand, and by that means improve from his instructions. If a great many additional circumstances

cumstances are thrown in which are either unnecessary or uncertain, and yet to the unexperienced are made to appear of equal importance with the most essential, the consequence must often be perplexity and confusion.

In the account which *Astruc* gives of the several authors who have written on the venereal disease, he condemns *Turner* for want of order or method in his manner of writing *. I shall not take upon me to determine the justness of the criticism, but cannot help observing that *Astruc* seems to have erred by a redundancy of method, having divided and subdivided his definitions and descriptions of disorders in such a manner, as makes them sometimes appear to a practitioner rather the offspring of imagination than the result of practical observation. This is seen remarkably in his account of the confirmed pox, where he mixes so many other complaints with the venereal symptoms, that it is difficult to say when a man is not poxed: and yet I believe there are few diseases so plain to be distinguished in general as venereal disorders are, nor hardly any one to which the body is liable that admits of a more certain cure. In this instance

* P. 1052. vol. 2. edit. 2.

instance therefore, making the symptoms so numerous and uncertain not only confounds the unexperienced, but may encourage the groundless fears of the timorous, as well as be made subservient to the schemes of designing men, who readily improve the apprehensions of the patient to their own private interest. At present I shall more particularly consider what relates to the gonorrhœa.

In his account of a gonorrhœa *Astruc* makes * four distinct species of it in men with respect to its situation. He describes likewise † three distinct species of it with respect to the cause; as proceeding from a simple inflammation—from a more violent inflammation—or depending upon the ulceration and suppuration of the parts diseased. He then adds, that as the inflammation of any part may be of four kinds, according to the species of tumour with which it is joined (agreeable to the antient division of tumours into phlegmon, erysipelas, &c.) so the same may be said of the inflammation that is the cause of a gonorrhœa; and therefore, admitting the same number of distinctions in this case, he reckons four different kinds of this disease with respect to the species of || inflammation;

* 247. † 250 || Id.

mation; making thus several sorts of gonorrhœas which depend upon the different seat, cause, and species of cause; and observing still farther, that each distinct kind may have different degrees with various symptoms peculiar to itself, and be capable by a mixture of these to produce many † more.

These distinctions he endeavours to support by reasoning from analogy on the inflammatory disorders of the lungs and intestines. He afterwards mentions the signs by which you are to distinguish the different causes of the gonorrhœa. Amongst these he relies chiefly upon the colour of the matter, from which a certain judgment may, § he says, be formed. Thus a clear, white, and ash-coloured running is made to denote only a simple inflammation. The same running being of a saffron-colour, yellow, or discoloured with drops of blood, shows an inflammation accompanied with an extravasation of blood. A yellowish-green, or a dark green running, mixed with matter, argues the inflammation to be attended with ulcers or a suppuration.

So likewise you are to form a conjecture of the * species of inflammation, amongst other
 E signs,

† Ibid.

§ 259.

* Id.

signs, from the quantity, consistence, and acrimony of the matter : thus he describes it to be of the œdematous kind of inflammation if the discharge is plentiful, thin and not very sharp; and so of the rest, as you may see more particularly by consulting the author †.

The event also of the disorder and the method of cure, are made to depend much upon these differences and distinctions ‡.

I am far from thinking that every clap is to be cured by the same means, an impropriety in the management of these complaints which has been perhaps too common. The age, strength and constitution of the patient, the state of the disease, and other occasional circumstances, ought no doubt to be attended to; but the numerous distinctions made by *Astruc* must certainly in some instances rather perplex than improve.

Suppose, for example, a person not much conversant with practice relies on the great credit of *Astruc*, and takes him for his guide. According to this author's instructions, he will consider the colour of the running as indicative of the state of the inflammation. If the running is white, clear, or ash-coloured, he supposes

† 259.

‡ 263.

poses there is only a simple inflammation ; and thus proceeds to form his judgment of the different state of the disease from the different colours of the matter as before described.

In reality these indications are far from being certain, for you will often see a bad coloured running with very mild symptoms, and the contrary when the symptoms are exceeding troublesome.

Again, if he considers the consistence, quantity and sharpness of the running, in order to know what species of inflammation the gonorrhœa partakes of, he will find himself full as much or more at a loss than he was about the colour. Thus while he is attentive to discover and distinguish symptoms which cannot be relied on with any degree of certainty, he perplexes his mind with real trifles, tho' of seeming importance, and neglects probably the observation of obvious and plain appearances, which would have been useful indications to direct his practice.

What I have already observed of ulcers, caruncles and cicatrices, has anticipated any farther consideration of these in respect to *Astruc*, who is very circumstantial in his account of the nature and differences of them. I shall here therefore take my leave of this author for

the present, with acknowledging, that however he may have indulged himself in these systematical refinements, which will be apt in some instances to mislead the unexperienced; yet it may, I believe, be truly allowed that his treatise on the venereal disease contains a more general knowledge of the distemper than all the other works that had been written before him on the subject. I will give you no farther trouble, by adding any thing more concerning the gonorrhœa, except what relates to some particular methods of treating it.

From the accounts we have of the particular or uncommon methods recommended for the cure of a gonorrhœa, we find them in general calculated to stop the running soon after its first appearance. The chief remedies employed for this purpose have been either rough preparations of mercury given internally, or certain liquors injected into the passage.

The first of these making a strong revulsion, or derivation of the humours from the parts affected, gave sometimes such a sudden check to the discharge as intirely stopped it; but the excessive vomitings or purgings which they frequently produced, were shocks too violent

for

for most constitutions to bear. A salivation was another common consequence of their use, which, with their general inefficacy and uncertainty, destroyed the credit of these medicines.

Injections, which always had their advocates, came hence probably more into esteem; and indeed the best, or what was called the regular practice in curing a clap, was till of late years so extremely disagreeable as well as hurtful to the constitution, that it is no wonder men were induced to try almost any other means rather than submit to such kind of discipline. On the contrary, the cure by injections was said to be both easy and expeditious, two circumstances of powerful recommendation.

In the composition of the injections which have been celebrated for their remarkable efficacy, we find in general the basis of them was some preparation of mercury. 'Twas, I suppose, imagined, that the disease was so far local, that an application of, what was deemed, the general specific to the immediate seat of the distemper, would have a more speedy and as certain an effect as giving the mercury internally, and making it pass the course of

the circulation before it reached the parts diseased.

Many injections of this sort have been highly extolled. Each had the same virtues bestowed on it, being all specifically adapted to destroy the venereal poison, and declared capable of curing the disease speedily, and safely.

A remedy so happy in its effects must undoubtedly be approved, and the credit of it universally established: how happened then that each of these boasted specifics, having gained a certain degree of reputation, and been brought into frequent use, should soon afterwards intirely lose its credit—that a succession of remedies applied in the same manner should from the first use of them to the present hour enjoy the same fashion of the times, and afterwards partake the same fate? A method of cure that was thought to save so much time and trouble, and give so very little interruption to men's pleasures, could hardly be abandoned from the mere caprice of mankind. It should seem therefore, that the neglect of these remedies was owing to their inefficacy, or because they were productive of some considerable inconveniencies; circumstances

stances which could not be well known till they came into common use: their ill consequences were then oftener felt, and the accidents arising from them, by being frequent, became the objects of public notice.

It has been urged against injections, that they frequently failed to stop the discharge, or if they did stop it, 'twas only for a short time, and the running appeared afterwards with additional violence—that very painful swellings and inflammations of the testicles, &c. often ensued the use of them,—and that various symptoms of the pox were occasioned by this sudden suppression of the discharge. It has likewise been of late years much believed, that the obstructions in the urethra owe their cause very frequently to these kind of remedies.

I do not enumerate these accidents from injections as disapproving the use of them intirely: I am convinced they may be employed with safety and propriety in many cases, and that in some instances the cure cannot be compleated without them. At the same time there is, I think, a great impropriety in the indiscriminate use of these medicines; and, when

they do prove serviceable, I am persuaded the benefit is not in the least degree owing to any specific property of the injected liquor.

Few remedies have, I believe, been employed with less judgment than injections, or spoke of with less impartiality. Some people finding that discharges which appeared to be of a bad nature, have been safely and effectually cured by them after other means had failed, have imputed this to the specific power of the injected liquor; and have been induced to think that the cure of all claps ought to be attempted by the same method. On the contrary, others having observed frequent instances either of the inefficacy or the ill effects of injections, have been disposed to reject the use of them intirely. Both these opinions seem to be erroneous, and have, I presume, arisen not only from imperfect or wrong ideas concerning the nature of the distemper, but in a great measure from the want of considering the common properties of the injected liquors.

All injections that are of use to lessen or stop the running, whether mercury enters their composition or not, have no other essential difference than in their degrees of restringency. Mercurial

curial injections have been employed with a view of destroying the venereal taint—they have sometimes stoped the discharge and cured the patient effectually and safely—the success has been attributed to the specific nature of the mercurial part of the composition.—Improperly so.—For admitting that mercury is necessary to the cure, which is far from being constantly the case, how is it to be serviceable in this manner of application? You add some preparation of mercury to a fluid, and this fluid is to be syringed up the passage. I will admit even that the venereal poison lies open to the immediate contact of the mercury; and that the mercurial particles are so perfectly incorporated with the fluid, that they are well injected into the passage: is it to be expected that this slight contact of the mercurial particles, mixed thus with a large quantity of liquid, can be of efficacy to destroy an infectious matter? The operation of these injections may be accounted for a much easier way. The mercurials that have been recommended for this purpose, are composed of quicksilver and an acid formed into different preparations by different processes. When any of these

these

these are added to water or other liquids to make the injection which is to be syringed up the passage, the nature of the fluid is altered by the acid, and what was before a simple plain liquor, is now become a restraining one. The proof of this is very easily determined by tasting the injection, which you will find leaves a pungency or roughness upon the tongue. Thus what was looked upon as a secret for these complaints, and was supposed to work its effects by a specific property to subdue the venereal taint, is in reality nothing more than a common restraining, acting as such in a greater or less degree, according to the quantity of the preparation added to the liquor. The truth of this observation is farther confirmed by the variety of other injections which are now in use, and which perfectly correspond in their effects with those of the mercurial kind. You will meet with a great many receipts for the composition of these, and the principal ingredients of them, you will find to be of the restraining class. Such, for instance, are vitriol, alum, verdigrease, limewater with some of the drying powders, as bole, lapis calaminaris, or japan earth. Several other medicines are employed
for

for the same purpose, and are of the same nature. From this common property of restringency you will readily account for the uses that injections may serve, as well as the mischiefs they may occasion; and we find by experience that the same advantages and the same ill consequences have been produced alike by all of them; for as there are none of these but may be prejudicial if employed at improper times, so any of them may often be used with safety, as well as success, when the discharge is in a condition to be stoped.

Monf. *Daran*, because he found with other practitioners, that restringent injections used improperly would sometimes occasion contractions or obstructions in the urethra, rejects the use of * astringents intirely. He denies † that a gleet is owing to a relaxation of the parts, and insists that the discharge is supplied by an ulcer which remains unhealed. Thus making no distinction between a gleet attended with obstructions in the passage, in which cases restringent injections would certainly be pernicious, and a gleet furnished by a fluxion of humours to the glands of the urethra, he very injudiciously employs the same method

* P. vii.

† P. 41.

method of cure for both. Remedies of this kind, however, will probably preserve a considerable degree of credit; for tho' the promiscuous use and misapplication of them will be productive of bad consequences and discredit particular forms or secret compositions, yet there are some circumstances which will always be favourable to injections in general.

There are cases where they are really necessary, particularly when there has been a long continued fluxion of humours to the urethra, we find sometimes that no other means will put a stop to the running. There may possibly be cases, where the infection is originally so slight that the suppression of the running at its first appearance may not injure the constitution, or if it does, the consequences may not be discovered till a considerable time afterwards; and as those that have a common recourse to injections have generally a very free commerce with women, the accidents really owing to the use of injections are attributed probably to some later injury.

Some practitioners who have seen bad effects to arise from the use of these remedies will allow them no merit upon any occasion.

From

From this prejudice they sometimes pursue means which prove ineffectual, till at last the patient has recourse to injections and succeeds, much to the credit of the remedy. But there is another circumstance still more favourable, and which has, I believe, procured greater credit to every extraordinary method of curing claps than any real merit in them all.

You frequently hear of great encomiums made upon the cure of fresh contracted claps in a few days. Different people have succeeded in this by different ways, and amongst other things used for this purpose injections have been reckoned famous.

The real disorder in these cases seems oftentimes to be mistaken, or designedly miscalled.

Men who have rode long or hasty journeys, or have used violent exercises of any kind—others who have been guilty of excess in drinking, or too free an indulgence with women, will frequently have a running appear which is sometimes of a bad colour and very considerable in quantity; and if the body has been much heated, the patient may feel some kind of sensation upon making water different from what is common. This appearance of matter, whether

whether there is a drop only or a large quantity, is usually called a clap, especially if it has been preceded by commerce with women; and as any method will generally cure these complaints very easy, injections share the credit of such performances.

I have now finished the examination which I proposed to make, as far as relates to the gonorrhœa.

In speaking of *Turner*, I have considered the prevailing opinion of ulcers being formed in the urethra by the venereal matter; a subject which has been disputed by others, but never, I think, sufficiently attended to. I have endeavoured likewise to explode the use of strong purges with large quantities of calomel. Doctor *Turner* himself, in a comment which he published on *Astruc* some years ago, has taken an opportunity of speaking less favourably of these; tho' he there continues to recommend his former manner of treating the inflammatory swelling of the testicles, in opposition to very plain and rational directions given by that author. In his comment he proposes, for the cure of a gonorrhœa, a composition of quick-silver, gum-guaiacum and pil. coch.; a
method

method liable to great exceptions, and upon the whole little preferable to the other. The operation of these pills will be found very uncertain: in many instances they will produce a salivation, and still more frequently will heat the constitution, and of course increase the inflammatory symptoms. Instead of entering thus immediately upon the use of mercurials in almost all cases, and all states of the disease alike, the cooling method usually employed in most inflammatory and painful disorders would undoubtedly be much more easy and serviceable; and if, mercury is afterwards judged necessary, it may be given then with greater advantage and fewer inconveniencies.

I have next given a history of the obstructions in the urethra, and the chief methods which have been practised for the cure of them. From this account you will be naturally led to observe, that if the true nature of a gonorrhœa had been understood, the violence used in forcing off excrescences with wax candles, or the attempts to destroy either them or cicatrices by caustic applications, would never have been thought of.

Upon this subject I could not omit to mention

tion *Daran's* performance, and to observe the errors which he advances concerning the causes of the obstructions, as well as the requisites to the cure, and the appearances usually brought on by the use of bougies.

The freedom which I have taken with the celebrated work of *Astruc* will, I hope, be pardonable. If what I have said in relation to his manner of writing be true, the notice I have taken of it is what you had a right to expect from me, agreeable to the design of my letter.

What I have added of injections, in order to explain the manner of their operation, or wherein their power consists, will, I hope, be acceptable: the more so as authors who have mentioned these kinds of remedies, have contented themselves chiefly with giving positive determinations of their being useful or prejudicial, without attempting any rational account of their nature or use.

I have been equally desirous to remove the prejudices concerning the specific power of particular injections, as I was to confute the same notion about particular bougies. Indeed all such pretences, however they may serve
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private purposes, are hindrances to the advancement of true knowledge, by taking off men's attention from the observation of real truths, and directing their views to false objects.

The pursuit of this subject might lead into a general enquiry of false pretences to extraordinary ways of curing venereal complaints. Numerous instances would readily occur, as the venereal disease is one of the principal resources of quackery and physical imposition. The apprehensions with which most men are affected on the slightest occasions of this kind; the secrecy which is usually observed in the management of these disorders, and of course the many scenes of ignorance and deceit which pass unnoticed to the world for fear of exposing the injured party, are circumstances very favourable to that extensive branch of physic. I shall have occasion to speak of these particularly in the prosecution of my subject, being next to examine the methods recommended for the cure of this disease in its more malignant state, the pox. At present, however, I must decline the undertaking till some other opportunity occurs: give me leave only to observe, that as you professed

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yourself

yourself, but little acquainted with practice in this disease, I may perhaps have sometimes address'd myself to you in a manner which I should not otherwise have taken the liberty to do.

I am

Yours,

THO. GATAKER.

Park-place, St. James's,

March 1. 1754.

OBSERVATIONS

ON

VENEREAL COMPLAINTS,

AND ON THE

METHODS

RECOMMENDED FOR THEIR

CURE.

LETTER the SECOND.



LONDON:

Printed for R. and J. DODSLEY in Pall-mall;
and sold by G. HAWKINS in Fleet-street, and
M. COOPER in Pater-noster-row, 1755.

OBSERVATIONS

ON

VENEREAL COMPLAINTS

AND ON THE

METHODS

RECOMMENDED FOR THEIR

CURE.

BETTER THE SECOND.

LONDON:

Printed for R. and J. Dodsley in Pall-mall:
and sold by G. Hawkins in Fleet-street; and
M. Cooper in Paternoster-row, 1755.

A S E C O N D
L E T T E R
T O A
S U R G E O N.

S I R,

I Shall now, agreeable to your desire, consider some circumstances relating to the treatment of the more malignant species of the venereal disease : and having here no occasion to enter into dispute about the nature of the distemper, I shall confine myself chiefly to some remarks immediately relative to practice. I propose, however, to proceed in some measure upon

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the same plan as before, by examining the opinions of *Turner* and *Astruc*.

The former of these authors sometimes confounds the symptoms of the pox with those of the gonorrhœa, which makes it impracticable to treat the subject with propriety in the order he has placed it: I shall therefore consider some few particulars mention'd by him, without regarding exactly the method in which he has ranged and related them; and, to reduce the subject into as short a compass as possible, I will occasionally speak of *Astruc* under the same articles with *Turner*.

I shall begin with the original symptom of almost all poxes, the chancre. In the cure of this *Dr. Turner* recommends for external use, some of the strongest preparations of mercury, caustic remedies, or a fumigation with cinnabar. If the two first are ever judged necessary they should at least be used with great caution,

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as they may not only give a great deal of unnecessary pain, but in some constitutions may probably bring on such inflammations and such a fluxion of humours on the foreskin, as will much overbalance the benefit that can arise from their use. The pure quicksilver divided in its particles with lard is as good an application as any; nor should the efficacy of externals ever be rely'd upon in real chancrous sores so as to lessen in the least degree our attention to the internal remedies.

The fumigation with cinnabar is highly extolled by Dr. *Turner*, but, I imagine, with partiality or from a misapprehension of its effects. This method has been try'd in our hospitals with great diligence and care, and so little good has arisen from the experiments, that it retains but a very small degree of its former credit. In a few cases it may give a slight check to or possibly occasion a temporary disappearance

of the symptoms, but without at all advancing an establish'd cure.

Astruc's * account of externals is not much different from *Turner's*, except that he makes no mention under this article of the fumigations, tho' in another place † he disapproves their use in general.

The internals recommended by *Turner*, are, as in the gonorrhœa, the strong mercurial purges and vomits. But whatever pretence there may be for giving these in the cure of a gonorrhœa, where some evacuations are allow'd to be proper, it is certainly doing a violence to the constitution which cannot be necessary in the present case. What is the design here of giving mercury? It is to introduce it into the blood, that it may pass in the course of the circulation to the diseased parts, and destroy the venereal poison? If the body is so open as to prevent the patient's being much heated by
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* P. 358. v. I.

† P. 207.

this very active medicine, 'tis generally sufficient; and this effect, if not produced by the mercury, which it frequently is, may be occasionally procured by the use of some of the mild and cooling purges. Whereas in the other method, instead of admitting the mercurial particles into the course of the circulation, and mixing them with the general mass to destroy the venereal poison, you convey this specific into the body together with a purge to carry it out again; preventing thus the very purpose intended, by confining in a great measure the action of the medicine to the stomach and bowels. By this means you render the use of the mercury extremely uncertain, if not absolutely ineffectual, at the same time that the patient suffers an unnecessary and severe course of purging, which disorders and enervates him for the present, and perhaps fixes a weakness on his constitution more difficult to get rid of than the original disease. What I have observed here of

the cure of chancres, relates to the method recommended by *Turner* when he hopes to effect it without a salivation, for both he and *Astruc* agree in recommending a salivation when the case proves obstinate, or is attended with other venereal disorders.

The next symptom to be consider'd is the bubo or swelling in the groin, which often appears in a confirm'd pox, but is, I believe, more frequently the immediate consequence of a chancre; being generally attended with those kind of ulcers, or happening soon after they have been seemingly tho' imperfectly cured.

There are two ways proposed both by *Turner* and *Astruc* for the cure of the bubo, *viz.* by dispersion or suppuration. In the first, mercurials are to be given in such a manner as not to salivate, unless the bubo be attended with symptoms of a confirm'd pox, and then a salivation is

to be enter'd upon immediately. In the other method, when the tumour is suppurated the matter is to be discharged, the parts are to be treated with proper topics, and mercurials are to be then administer'd nearly in the same manner as before mention'd.

For the dispersion of the tumour, *Turner*, as usual, has recourse to his strong mercurial purges and vomits: *Astruc* rather prefers the preparations of mercury which have no remarkable purging quality, or else uses the mercurial ointment and gives the milder purges. But however preferable the remedies or directions of *Astruc* may be to those of *Turner*, he is certainly not to be justified in the discouragement which he gives to the suppuration of almost every swelling of this kind; it being equally safe, according to his account, * to suppress these critical determinations of nature, unless the matu-

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* P. 330.

ration is so far advanced as to render the dispersion impracticable.

The dispersion of these swellings may undoubtedly be oftentimes undertaken in slight cases, and very large tumours of this kind, when matter is not formed in them, will we daily see dissolve in the course of a salivation ; but from the same experience we find that the certainty and safety can by no means be so well warranted, when the swelling is considerable, and the tumour is made to subside by an alternate course of mercury and purging. *Astruc* * tells you indeed, there is no danger that the venereal infection, which he allows is by this means mixed again with the blood, should produce a pox ; for tho' the venereal poison should not be corrected by the mercury given in this manner, it will not, he asserts, remain long enough in the blood to infect it, being carry'd off by purging

* P. 332.

purging medicines as fast as it is sent into the blood.

This account you will say appears very fair in theory, and it would be equally consistent with good practice, if we were possess'd of such a purging medicine as had an elective property, and which, instead of working upon the stomach and bowels, could be conveyed into the blood, and draw from the general mass certain poisonous particles, over which it had a particular and determined power.

This however not being the case, and as we find that the most violent or continued course of purging has not the least degree of force in subduing the venereal poison, nor has any other use, but as it may either prevent or moderate certain inconveniencies sometimes arising from the mercury, we must look upon the account rather as a pleasing doctrine than a real practical maxim.

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Swellings in the groin which occur in venereal cases, if they are considerably large, are undoubtedly efforts of nature to throw out the poison from the constitution. So other humours are thrown off by various critical swellings in several parts of the body, and the event in most cases is not unlike in proportion to the malignity of the humour to be discharged. In common swellings which form matter and admit a discharge, the blood is generally cleared from some disease, and the whole mass is probably restored to a sound state: if through a weakness in the constitution this tendency to suppuration is insufficient, or by an imprudent use of large evacuations it is destroyed, fatal symptoms sometimes ensue, or a chronical illness is fixed upon the constitution that is with difficulty removed. Thus in the venereal swellings of the groin, which are at all considerable, if they are allowed to suppurate and are treated with common care,
how

how favourably do they generally terminate? On the other hand, when they are become considerable, and are not suffered to mature nor are dissolved by a salivation, but the cure is attempted by the alternate use of mercury and purging, how often do these tumours either return after a short disappearance? or, what is much worse, how frequently, by the venereal poison being thus absorb'd into the circulation, does the infection show itself in some other symptoms of much worse consequence?

'Tis hardly necessary to take notice of warts or excrescences appearing about the glans, as they have little particular in their manner of treatment. I shall only observe that, as these appearances may subsist where no venereal taint remains, they are sometimes unnecessarily made the objects of terror to the patient.

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The phymosis and paraphymosis, in regard to their internal treatment, depend so much upon what has been already said, and are so well considered by those who speak of them as operations, that I shall not offer to trouble you on these particulars, but shall pass to the last resource for most of the bad venereal complaints, a salivation.

Turner you find gives an account of the method of salivating by internal means, as well as externally by the use of the mercurial ointment. The first of these he himself disapproves, and that way of raising a regular salivation is now, you are sensible, almost intirely laid aside. Indeed the mercury given internally will in some few instances serve to quicken the effects of the other, but in general, the disposition it has, when given in considerable quantities, to pass suddenly through the bowels without entering into the
blood,

blood, the griping pains and the weakness it frequently occasions, and the imperfect manner in which oftentimes the blood is this way impregnated with the mercurial particles, are sufficient reasons to determine which method ought in most cases to be pursued.

Doctor *Turner* proceeds afterwards to give rules concerning the method of salivating by unction, and the means of relieving the symptoms which may happen in the course. In this account he has been pretty circumstantial, and many of his directions may be useful to such as are unexperienced in these processes.

It may seem perhaps too trifling to take notice of the manner of dressing a patient under these circumstances, by wrapping his whole body up in flannels; a method still very much in use; nor is the confinement of the patient to his bed and in a hot room so frequently dispens'd with

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as it might be. There may undoubtedly be constitutions that will bear this without considerable inconvenience, especially in cold weather, and some few may possibly be benefited by an extraordinary perspiration, as that secretion ought in all to be free and open ; but such a load of flannel covering in every case and on every person alike, does not appear to be well calculated for general practice. So very great a difference in the cloathing from what is common, and the confinement in a hot room and perhaps in bed, must necessarily weaken the patient ; and by heating the body must oftentimes aggravate the painful and inflammatory symptoms. The doctor seems likewise to observe too little difference in the degree of his salivations, having in every case that requires a salivation at all, very little dependence upon any but what we should call a profuse spitting. In many instances it is right to carry that point of security as far as possible ; but as the malignity

lignity of the disease is different in different habits, and the mercury has a much quicker and more powerful effect in some persons than in others, men of experience and reflection must often find it unnecessary to push things to such extremity, and will avoid such a force on the constitution when it can be safely omitted. Upon this head you will consult Dr. Astruc, who gives * a very good account both of the milder and the more severe way of raising a salivation; where you will likewise meet with ingenious explications of some of the effects of mercury, as well as useful directions in conducting these different courses. One cannot however recommend the strict observance of this author's † preparatory course. Every judicious practitioner will, I presume, according to the state of the constitution, direct some gentle evacuations previous to the use of the mercury. As these will empty and cool the body
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* P. 463.

† P. 459.

they will be a likely means to moderate any painful symptoms which may ensue, and the mercury will act with greater freedom in the circulation. To clean and soften the skin by the warm bath will also be proper, in order for the more easy admission of the mercurial particles when the ointment is rub'd upon it; and in some few instances it may be thought expedient to repeat the use of the bath: but you will find in *Astruc* that the work is very far from being finish'd here. Besides bleeding and purging, the patient is to be bathed twice a day if he can bear it, and an hour or more each time: the number of these bathings to be from ten to twenty. He is likewise to take draughts or medicated broths every morning, then bleed and purge again; and in bilious habits bathe once or twice more to allay the heat which this second purging may have occasioned: and all this is not done upon the pretence, as some make it, of dif-

disposing the mercury to pass afterwards by the skin, but is the usual preparation when you intend a plentiful salivation.

So again in cases where other diseases are complicated with the pox, you are first to attempt the cure of these, and then begin the preparatory course for the other. To give an instance or two. If the patient is subject to an epilepsy, he advises a course of medicines for this complaint, recommending amongst other things some powder made of the skull of a man that has suffer'd a violent death.

If the patient has the scurvy, or is inclinable to it, he would have him take ptisans made with the antiscorbutic roots or herbs, together with boluses composed of medicines adapted to the same intention; also chalybeate water, and a decoction of guaiacum, &c. When the patient has persisted in this method a month or two, and the scorbutic symptoms

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are suppos'd to be leffen'd, he is then to go thro' the common preparatory course for a salivation. But what is to become all this time of the pocky complaints? I am afraid that while you have been trifling about the others, the venereal symptoms have been increas'ing, and are become more confirm'd and malignant. Yet these preparatory circumstances are what *Astruc* would never have omitted, except in one or two instances that he mentions, and which very rarely happen.

The caution this celebrated author * immediately subjoins to these numerous directions may, I imagine, make most of them unnecessary, that is, to use the mercury sparingly, employing it in small doses and at due distances of time. This, as he himself observes, will probably prevent sudden and violent agitations in the blood which might happen from too free a use of the mercury; and we may add,
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it is highly probable that not only the venereal symptoms will be hereby effectually relieved, but if you find no amendment of the other complaints, you will at least meet with no considerable interruption from them to your principal intention, the eradicating the venereal disease.

I shall trouble you with only one particular more under this article; and I mention it not only with regard to practice, but to show how apt the most sensible of systematical writers are to run into a detail of circumstances that may serve to dress up their method rather in an agreeable than in a practical manner.

Speaking of the ulcerations of the mouth, * he says, some of them are useless and painful, and ought to be immediately suppress'd and heal'd; others are particularly useful, and ought to be encouraged during the whole course of the salivation.

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* P. 468.

These directions are very agreeable in theory, and what every man would wish to put in practice.

The same circumstance would be as desirable in the management of the small-pox. The eruptions about the lips, nostrils, and eye-lashes, may be painful and troublesome, and therefore one would wish to get rid of them. But as in the latter instance it would be either not practicable, or at least unsafe, so in the former it is full as impracticable, and if free from danger might at least be liable to great inconveniences. The method of doing this he informs you is, by touching the ulcers with an arm'd probe dip'd in a styptic or restraining mixture quicken'd with spirit of vitriol, or by using spirit of vitriol alone, washing the ulcers afterwards with something more emollient. The consequence of this might be a great deal of pain to the patient, an inflammation and swelling of the ulcerated parts, and the flow of saliva being interrupted, a swelling of
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of the whole face might ensue and prove extremely disagreeable.

I shall conclude what I have to offer on venereal complaints, by explaining some disingenuous proceedings in the management of these disorders: a subject I must acknowledge not very agreeable in its own nature, nor very encouraging to enter upon from the success which usually attends it; for whilst credulity affects the minds of some, and unreasonable apprehensions possess the imaginations of others, there will never be wanting artifice to impose upon the weakness of the former, nor knavery to avail itself of the fears of the latter.

There is hardly any disease which furnishes such frequent opportunities for imposition as the venereal disease: not only because disorders of this kind being kept private, male practices are less liable to be exposed than in other cases, nor that the apprehensions of the patient readily re-

ceive the impressions of such delusions, but it happens too that the very remedy for the distemper is favourable to the purposes of imposition.

This will appear evident from considering the different effects of mercury in the common use of it. Thus for instance, when the situation of the patient's affairs make a salivation or even a confinement impracticable, we find, if the mercury acts kindly in the constitution, venereal symptoms of a bad appearance are sometimes cured without much attention to common rules: when a moderate confinement is complied with, or particular care is taken to avoid catching cold, success is still more to be expected; and if the course is pursued till the mouth is made tender without bringing on a regular salivation, the present success as well as the future security may in some instances be greater and more to be relied on. Again, when a salivation is really intended,

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we very often find that the mercury, instead of affecting the mouth, either occasions no visible alteration in any of the natural secretions, or else exerts its operation on the kidneys, bowels, or skin, increasing the quantity of urine, stools, or perspiration. Upon these occurrences in the common use of this medicine have been founded the various schemes of employing mercury in such a manner, that it should answer the purposes of cure without the inconveniences of a salivation.

With this view some practitioners, after evacuations and bathing, used the mercury in small quantities and at considerable distances of time, till they had employ'd as much or rather more of the medicine than is usually necessary to raise a salivation. As this circulated and mixed with the general mass, it was expected that, by its specific property, it would destroy the venereal poison; and by doing it in this

gradual way, it would not occasion any disturbance in the constitution, nor affect the mouth, as it generally does when used in a more hasty manner. There was the more reason to hope for such an event, from considering that the salivation or spitting was not in itself of service to destroy or carry off the venereal poison, since the mercury used without certain precautions would produce that effect in a person of the most perfect health equally with one of the most diseased constitution. In reality this method would sometimes succeed very well, but was much more frequently liable to the following objections. In some instances the symptoms disappear'd only, without being absolutely cured. In others the symptoms would not even lose their external appearance till a more effectual course was pursued: a salivation would often happen in other cases, in spite of all endeavours to prevent it.

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From the want of sufficient success in this way, other methods were attempted; and it was hoped that a freer use of the mercury might be allowed without hazard of affecting the mouth, by determining the operation of the medicine to some of the common discharges of the body. Amongst these, the evacuation by purging seems to be the principal. 'Twas asserted that by the alternate use of mercury and purging, the blood might receive all the benefits of the medicine, and the poison as well as the mercury would be carried out of the body by the purging when the remedy had work'd its effect on the venereal infection.

Cures were sometimes made by this means, but many reasons opposed its becoming a general method. As in the preceding instance a salivation would sometimes accidentally supervene or was absolutely necessary to remove the symptoms;

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or even if the complaints seemed to be cured, the disease was oftentimes only withdrawn from view and not eradicated. Besides these inconveniences, the frequent purging which was thought necessary on these occasions was as disagreeable and troublesome as a fore mouth, and was infinitely more prejudicial to many constitutions by impairing the strength and weakening the digestion: and if you add to these, that the most severe and excruciating cholics were very common consequences of such a course, you will not wonder that this method lost its credit.

Other practitioners imagined, that the intention proposed might be answered by increasing the quantity of perspiration or urine. Upon trial of these means it appeared, that some of the preceding objections, as well as others peculiar to each of them, frustrated the designs of their patrons, who by attempting to bring these different methods into universal practice, deprived

deprived them in some measure of that share of merit which each in particular cases might have preserved.

The chief inducement for the promotion of all these schemes was to remove the grand objection against the use of mercury, its affecting the mouth; a circumstance so desirable, that no wonder it was sought after by the practitioner and encouraged by the patient: nor is it surprising that, for a certain time, speculative men of little experience and the artful adopters of novelties should find plausible reasons to support the propriety of their opinions. Numerous less likely schemes have been formed for the cure of almost every disease. But when men boldly assert that in each of these instances the safety and certainty of the method might be depended upon, and that the truth was confirmed by repeated experience; what shall we say when the facts appear generally otherwise? Shall we impute this

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contrariety to the warmth of these people's imagination? to their partiality for a favourite opinion? or may we not venture to think that self-interest had sometimes a prevailing influence? There is the more reason to admit now and then of the latter construction, as these pretences are always accompany'd with the most inviting assurances of the convenience and pleasantness of the method, and an exemption from the disagreeable circumstances which a patient would wish to avoid.

The remarkable power of mercury in subduing the malignity of the venereal disease, will frequently procure success in whatever form this medicine is administered. The least valuable of its preparations will now and then appear to do wonders to those who are unacquainted with its usual effects, and will very likely gain a temporary credit where it is managed with address. Hence partly arose the reputation which, at different times, was bestowed

bestowed on several nostrums of this kind. It appeared, however, afterwards, that most of these were either some of the common preparations disguised, and had only the additional merit of being secrets; or else that the common preparations were mixed with some other ingredient, with a view of determining the operation of the mercury from the mouth to some of the other secretions.

It would be endless to enumerate all the compositions which have been boasted of by quacks, or carelessly recommended by those who ought to have been more cautious in their encomiums. 'Tis sufficient to observe of the once secret compositions, that as most of them became publicly known they lost their credit with their secrecy; and that those which continued secrets, at least such as their proprietors would not allow were discovered, are now scarce ever in use or otherwise heard of but in the list of *Advertisements*.

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At present therefore the compositions of mercury are confined by men of experience and candour to a very small number. Most of the chemical preparations (except the mercurius calcinatus) differ in little else than in their milder or rougher effects on the stomach and bowels, according to the different combinations of the acid with the quicksilver, without receiving any considerable alteration in the specific property of the mercury; and those compositions which act by gentler means, and are more particularly distinguished as alteratives, are to be chiefly regarded as different methods only of dividing the particles of crude quicksilver, and vary hardly in any thing essential.

As I have hitherto endeavoured to expose such pretences in the management of venereal complaints as appeared to be founded upon a design of imposition, I cannot intirely omit one which has had
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its share of credit amongst these physical deceptions. The method of cure by diet-drinks has been as much extoll'd by some as the private compositions of pills, &c. have been by others.

The use of diet-drinks was once in repute amongst the generality of practitioners. We find in the history of the different methods of cure which have prevail'd in different ages, that the first use of mercury was very unsuccessful: not from the real inefficacy of the medicine, but from the extreme bad management of it. The unhappy or fatal consequences which ensued, made the remedy look'd upon almost as bad as the disease. In this dilemma other means were sought after. The chief substitutes for mercury were diet-drinks or decoctions of guaiacum, china root or sarsaparilla, which were given in very large quantities a considerable time. The first of these was highly

highly extoll'd, but lost its credit and gave place to the china root. The china root underwent the same fate, and was succeeded by the sarsaparilla, which was recommended likewise for complaints remaining after a course of mercurials; and the same is now in credit for these latter or secondary symptoms. But whatever good effects these compositions may have in the removal of some disorders remaining after a salivation or a course of mercurials, we find, if they are given in such recent cases as admit no doubt of being venereal, that they do not discover any specific power in destroying the infection. This must have appear'd very plainly in the early practice of this disease, for the specific property of these medicines, you may conclude, must be very inconsiderable, since after a diligent and plentiful use of them, practitioners were again obliged to have recourse to their former remedy, mercury, however disagreeable
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at that time in its effects. The event indeed proved remarkably fortunate, for instead of using the mercury with that imprudence as before, they administer'd it with greater caution; and the more modern improvements in the management of this most valuable medicine have not only fix'd the character of its efficacy, but have render'd the inconveniences that formerly resulted from it comparatively inconsiderable. Diet-drinks are therefore very rarely given now unless on account of some complaints which affect the patient after a course of mercurials; or they are try'd sometimes where the cause of the symptoms is judged to be doubtful. Of the disorders which either remain or soon arise after a salivation, those which most frequently create uneasy apprehensions are slight pains in different parts of the body, and eruptions or unusual appearances on the skin. When these proceed from remains of the venereal taint, they

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are frequently cured not only more easily but more effectually by an alterative course of mercury, than by repeated salivations. But they very often are owing to other causes, however strong a resemblance they may be sometimes thought to have to venereal symptoms.

In regard to the general complaints remaining after a salivation or a plentiful use of mercury, the cause of these is frequently mistaken by the patient, who, after what he has suffer'd, is naturally enough alarm'd at every pain or unusual appearance. It will be found however that the common objects of fear upon these occasions often go away of themselves, when the strength of the patient is restored, and the natural secretions are become regular. This indeed is not always the case: they may, as was before observed, be possibly owing to some slight remains of the venereal taint, or, as is equally agreeable both to reason and experience, they
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may often be justly attributed to other causes. The venereal disease happening in every kind of constitution, as the scrophulous, the gouty, the scorbutic, &c. it must be expected that different circumstances will sometimes necessarily occur from this natural difference in the habit independent of infection. For this reason, disorders which seem'd perhaps originally to have taken their rise from the venereal poison, may, by being mix'd with scrophulous or scorbutic humours or where other indispositious prevail, be with difficulty quite removed or may be liable to return tho' the infectious taint is absolutely eradicated. In such cases the use of mercury being laid aside, various other means have in different instances been occasionally directed with the desired success: and here the method of giving diet-drinks has been particularly recommended, either alone, or join'd with an antimonial or some other alterative medicine.

Diet-drinks therefore will probably preserve their just degree of credit in particular cases; but this can never justify the practices of some pretenders to nostrums of this sort. These people either being unable to distinguish one disease from another, or, what is more common, availing themselves of the fears and apprehensions of the patient, pretend that their diet-drinks have a peculiar power in destroying the venereal poison, and are not less serviceable in many other diseases. This extensive use of their medicines is artfully enough assumed, as in some of these cases the patients have doubts whether a scorbutic, scrophulous, or venereal taint predominates. In reality we find by multiplied experience, that these pretences, like numerous others of the same stamp, are founded upon deceit, and are carried on with evident marks of imposition.

Astruc

Astruc gives an account * of the same pretences at *Paris*, and tells us of two quacks who had compositions of this sort, with which they were to cure the pox as well as many other disorders. 'Twas intimated that some very powerful ingredients were added to the common diet-drinks which assisted their efficacy. These fellows, he observes, were countenanced by some considerable people, and they each collected a good deal of money before the medicines and their patrons fell into discredit.

A confirm'd pox may undoubtedly be sometimes cured effectually by diet-drinks. *Astruc* mentions several wherein mercury makes part of the composition, and mercury, as I before observed, will often prove successful in whatever form it is administered. I question indeed whether in some of the diet-drinks that he describes
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* P. 152.

the mercurial particles are really blended with the liquor, tho' in others they certainly may, by means of the mercurial waters, such as the solutions of corrosive sublimate or of quicksilver in spirit of nitre, which *Astruc* mentions * to be the practice amongst the quacks both of *London* and *Paris*. The impropriety of giving mercury in this manner admits of very little dispute, as the effects of the medicine are hereby render'd less certain than in many other forms, and the consequences will often prove dangerous; but the merit of these people consisting in a pretence to some new discovery, they are obliged to deviate from the forms which are usually employ'd, the better to conceal their impositions.

Having attempted thus to show how the purposes of quackery may be answer'd by the powerful effects of mercury and the variety of its operations, and having
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* P. 169.

observ'd how much the disposition and the apprehensions of mankind coincide with such designs, it will not appear surprising that men of less honesty than ingenuity should avail themselves of these advantages. It is by no means a matter of wonder that they should adopt the most trifling complaints into the number of venereal disorders, and magnify every real symptom of the disease into a circumstance of the highest importance, when they can thereby answer the double purpose of profit and an occasional reputation.

To carry on these designs with the most advantage, the least breaking of the skin about the private parts, the least pain, knot or fullness about the groins, the slightest discharge or running after strong exercise or debauch, shall be attributed to a venereal cause. In like manner every pain from the alteration of weather, especially if near the parts supposed most liable to be affected, as the nose, shins, &c; any

any foulness, disagreeable smell or unusual appearances in the urine, must be derived from the same unhappy source. A giddiness or a pain in the head, a lassitude, and eruptions of almost every kind, are deemed venereal; nor can a pimple or wart, unluckily situated, escape being made the objects of dread and horror to the affrighted and deluded patient.

From these and from the numerous other schemes practised in the management of venereal complaints, a variety of misfortunes are necessarily produced. Had the practitioner been as desirous of securing the patient's future welfare, as he was of establishing the character of some favourite theory, the effects of former disorders would not probably have re-appeared. The disease might have been intirely eradicated before it had tainted the whole constitution; nor might the consequences have been felt at a time perhaps when, from some chnage in the patient's situa-
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tion of life, the distance from proper advice, or other unfavourable circumstances, relief is very difficult to be procured.

On the other hand, if the belief of imaginary complaints had not been encouraged, many might have been freed from the most tormenting apprehensions, instead of being thrown into a settled melancholy, or driven into some act of violence. It would be hardly credible to relate what a number of unhappy persons languish under the most severe anxiety from imaginary symptoms of the pox. There is not in the world a set of people who are so calculated for the objects of imposition as these are. There is but one thing that you find a difficulty of making them believe, and that is, their being free from the disease; and in their pursuit after different advice they seldom fail to find those who will indulge them in their fears, in order to profit themselves of such credulity. Even this deception might be

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pardonable, if the courses which the patient is made to undergo would contribute at all to his peace of mind; but they almost always confirm rather than lessen his unhappiness. A bad state of nerves, or a melancholy disposition, will be little benefited by the use of mercurials; and we oftener find such rash undertakings either quite destroy the patient's life, or serve as a preparation for a mad-house.

I have now gone through what I proposed at the beginning of my first letter. I have endeavoured to point out and explain such particulars in the writers on the venereal disease, as I imagined might lead a man of little experience or too much theory into a perplexed and erroneous practice. I have attempted likewise to clear the subject from many false pretences in the management of this disorder, and have offered some general observations relative to the cure as they occasionally arose.

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A minute account of other circumstances are to be met with in books that treat of this distemper: a repetition of them here would therefore be tedious and unnecessary.

I am, S I R,

Your most humble Servant,

THO. GATAKER.

*Park-place, St. James's,
Dec. 30. 1754.*

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