

X.

Cases of Yaws and Leprosy, treated with Nitrous Acid and Oxygenated Muriate of Potash. By C. Chisholm, M. D. *Inspector-General of the Ordnance Medical Department in the West Indies.*

CASES OF YAWS.

WILLIAM M'KEARNAN, aged 23, admitted August 18. 1798, arrived with the last detachment of artillery from England. Immediately before leaving England, he was stationed at Hilsea barracks, where he says his present complaint was contracted by sleeping in the same bed with an infected person returned from the West Indies. His complaints are entirely confined to the skin, and consist of a number of large ring-worms, and about the

the loins there are four yawy excrescences. In other respects he is in good health. After a purge, he was put, on the 29th, on a course of the nitrous acid, two drachms to a quart of water *per* day.—September 2. Has a yaw upon the calf of the right leg: an erysipelatous eruption on the same leg: the disease evidently yaws. Continue.—6th, Complains of his gums being raw and florid: the medicine otherwise agrees with him, and the yawy sores beginning to mend. Continue.—9th, A fresh eruption of yawy excrescences has taken place on the lumbar region, and on the left scapula; and some of the old are dropping off. Continue.—12th, Complained of much general pain, which has been succeeded by a fresh eruption of yaws. Continue.—15th, Sent to Negro Point for the benefit of sea-bathing, and continued there till the 20th, during which the exhibition of the nitrous acid was neglected; the disease consequently stationary.—20th, Ordered three drachms in a quart of water daily.—28th, In every respect better: most of the sores have dried up and sloughed off. Continue.—October 3. A considerable eruption of prickly heat, attended with

with much flushing of the face, and pain and throbbing in the temples: for the last symptom a blister applied behind each ear. Discontinue the nitrous acid.—6th, The above symptoms have continued, and, in addition, is sensible of a pricking pain in the left breast, with cough; bled to twelve ounces, and a little paregoric elixir at bed-time.—9th, The symptoms of inflammation being removed by the remedies ordered, began the nitrous acid again; the remaining yaws beginning to slough.—11th, All signs of superoxygenation have disappeared. Continue acid.—17th, Only two yaws remain. Continue.—18th, Cough flushing, &c. returned, but not troublesome. Continue.—20th, Together with cough, &c. on getting out of bed this morning was totally blind for the space of five minutes; only one yaw remaining. Discontinue the acid.—26th, The last yaw dropped off last night. About the beginning of November discharged free of complaint, but directed to go on duty for some time to Negro Point, for the benefit of sea-bathing.

Dr Davidson of Martinico has favoured me with the following extract of a letter, received by him from Dr Herries of St Vincent:

“ I have given the nitrous acid diluted as you directed, a fair trial in two cases of yaws, and one of lues, in all which it has surpassed my most sanguine expectations. They had not taken it more than four weeks, when, to every appearance, they were perfectly well; but I thought prudent to continue it a week longer. I have three patients with the yaws now, but not yet in a state to take the nitrous acid: when they are, I shall prescribe it for them, and will acquaint you with the result.”
29th November 1798.

Several other cases have occurred, in which the efficacy of this medicine has been equally conspicuous. Trials have been made in Demerera, in yaws, which have hitherto failed, partly from the impurity of the medicine originally, and partly from an injudicious exposition of it to the sun.

LEPROSY.

CASE I.

A Negro Woman, at Fort-Royal, Martinico, under the immediate charge of Dr Davidfon.—“ Before she had begun the use of the oxygenated muriate of potash, the leprous spots had rapidly spread, and became of that deep colour which the nitrous acid communicates to the skin; she complained also of intolerable burning pain in them; a difficulty of breathing, and pain in her chest. A fortnight after she began taking the medicine, at the rate of thirty grains in the day, the spots began to resume the natural colour of the skin; the pain in the chest ceased; her tongue became white. A purging, brought on by the muriate, retarded the progress of the cure; but by perseverance, and the addition of opium, that has been effected in about six weeks.”

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CASE II.

By the same. “ *Mr D—*, junior, of St Pierre’s, is about thirteen years of age, of a fair complexion, and slender make. His disease began with spots of a yellow colour at first, upon different parts of the body, and upon the face and lips, which gradually became larger, and of a deep brown, inclining to black; the ears thickened and swelled, the countenance of a horrid grim appearance; a stiffness of the tendons of the thighs, and inability to walk. He has taken the nitrous acid about three months. The change has been remarkable. About a fortnight ago all the spots had nearly disappeared; but omitting the medicine, from its having been expended, the spots again returned, and are now slightly yellowish. I saw him in St Pierre’s two days ago; he was then attending a merchant’s store. His appetite is good, he rests well, his body regular. His mother observed, that, after taking the medicine about a month, his cheeks became of a florid red, and also the spots became of a deeper red upon

on the body. He has begun the nitrous acid again, and I am in hopes that he will soon be restored to health, which I must confess I had little hopes of, when I first took him in hand.

CASE III.

A medical friend of St Christopher's has informed me very lately (January 21. 1800), that the nitrous acid, in one case of leprosy, produced a surprisngly beneficial effect; but not having a sufficient quantity of it by him, he was not able to prosecute the cure to completion.

The reader may advantageously compare these facts, on which every dependence may be placed, with M. De Gimbernat's case of leprosy, cured by the inhalation of oxygenous gas.—Dr Beddoes' Considerations on Factitious Airs, Case 33.