

theory of Goldsmith, I am afraid the elements will finally triumph, and turn all our posterity to a totally black color!

The instances to which Goldsmith refers, where black parents have produced white children, are extraordinary physical phenomena. If two of them should ever come together, their offspring would probably return to the original black color. They are called albinos, and no instances of their marriage and offspring have, to my knowledge, been recorded. Unless their offspring continued to be white, such instances would prove nothing more than that nature has only stepped aside, as she has in a thousand other instances, only to return to the old track.*

One color is as natural to man as another, and a common original color can only be produced by the composition of all the different colors which diversify mankind. It is quite as puerile to contend about the superiority of any particular color of the skin, as to its inherent beauty or naturalness, as about the color of the hair or the eyes. Familiarity reconciles us to the lesser diversities which exist among the species, and knowledge of each other pronounces them of no moment; will not time and knowledge also reconcile us to those which we conceive to be the greater differences? Since nature produces so great a variety of shapes and colors in the formation of the individuals of our species, and will continue to produce them in spite of our repugnances or preferences, it would seem to be the part of wisdom to submit to her decrees, and to learn to appreciate the variety as well as the uniformity of her operations.

[To be concluded next week.]

SMALLPOX AT PORTO CABELLO.

[In the Journal of the 22d of May last, a brief notice was given of the existence of smallpox at Porto Cabello, in a letter to the editor from W. T. Mann, Esq., resident at that place. We have received a more particular account of the epidemic from Dr. Lacombe, Port Physician of the city, the principal part of which is given below. It will be seen that he satisfactorily explains the circumstance, alluded to by Mr. Mann, of the disease being called *varicella* by the faculty on its first appearance. We shall be pleased to receive the additional papers to which Dr. L. alludes.]

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—The smallpox existed since the middle of last year in several neighboring islands, particularly in St. Thomas, and also on the Continent at Maracaibo. It was to be expected that the directions of the wind would bring us the dreaded disease, and long before the occurrence I had publicly manifested that opinion. In fact, the small rains we experienced here from December last till the month of April, creating an extraordinary cold dampness, combined with a cloudy atmospheric heat of 82 degs. Fahrenheit through the day, were the exact combinations that generally

* I do not conceive albinos to be a *lusus naturee*, but a rare physical occurrence—an illustration of the same thing which takes place in other species of animals—an instance of the occurrence of opposite colors in the offspring of the same stock, as a white and a black colt from the same parentage of a red color; or as a black and a white lamb from the same white mother and father. The rarity of its occurrence in the human species has, no doubt, originated the idea that it is a freak of nature.

produce eruptive diseases of all sorts in these climates. Some of our first authorities here have charged my predecessor in office, who left this place in January last, with having permitted a passenger of the Schooner *Susanna*, from St. Thomas, to land with the smallpox in a state of dessication, in November last, and they believe the contagion has been introduced to this place through that channel. As I was not then in Puerto Cabello, I cannot state the truth of the discussed and contradicted statement, but admitting, at the same time, that the contact from person to person is a direct line to communicate and spread the smallpox.

It is a common observation, that when the smallpox is to present itself in a population in an epidemic form, for a certain period previous the eruptive diseases known by the names of varicella, chickenpox, *pamphigus varioloides*, &c. &c., will at first present themselves and spread before a true case of smallpox will be met with by the practitioner. Such has been the case in this city; for the first cases of varicella were known to us here from the first days of December, but it was only on the 20th of February last that we, the practitioners of the city, recorded the first case of real smallpox, from which date new cases presented themselves daily, at the same time that the different classes of varicella continued to spread. The much-respected American Consul, Franklin Litchfield, Esq., whose family I attend, never had a single case of real smallpox in his house, but it is true to state he had eight cases of varicella of different sorts, which I treated with mild remedies, as they presented no danger. Knowing the danger in which the population was laboring under (the greatest number unvaccinated then), I proposed to the Chief Magistrate of this place to divide the city in shares to each practitioner, and to order them to go from house to house to vaccinate every person. This was adopted, and carried through in about six days, and the violence of the epidemic was checked from the beginning by this measure. However, some of the lowest classes escaped vaccination, either from ignorance or prejudice, and those were the victims, for the vaccinated would catch the varicella and run no danger of losing life, while those that were not vaccinated were taken with the smallpox, in most cases confluent or malignant, and would die at the rate of four out of six, although we employed the most active treatment, combined with the best known practice, and our own knowledge of the climate and habits of the people.

The population of the port and city of Puerto Cabello is only 3700; the population of the rest of the County, on a large surface of land, 2300—making a total of 6000 souls (official number) for the whole County and city of Puerto Cabello. The smallpox has not spread in the vicinities of the city and port. The deaths (official number), from the appearance of the first cases of varicella up to this date, are only 73, of whom 11 were in the city and 62 at the “Degredo” or smallpox hospital established out of town for the poor or laboring classes. I am happy to add that there hardly remain three cases in the city at present, and twenty at the “Degredo,” or out-of-town hospital, almost all of them out of danger, giving us hopes to see the scourge soon away from us, by the new measures I have been specially charged to carry through.

I will very soon send you some extracts from the history and course of the epidemic from its beginning, together with my practical or clinical observations, treatment, &c. &c., which I am about preparing for the medical faculty of Caraccas.

June 30, 1844.

Yours, very respectfully,
A. LACOMBE, M.D.

Health and Port Physician of Puerto Cabello, Venezuela.

BELLADONNA, IN VARIOUS DISEASES.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

DEAR SIR,—I have read with much pleasure, in late Nos. of your valuable Journal, articles on the use of belladonna, as prophylactic in scarlatina, and for the cure of dysmenorrhœa and neuralgia, and have thought that my experience with this valuable drug might be of interest to your readers. If your opinion coincides with mine, this sheet is at your service for publication.

CASE I.—*Myosis*. This was a case of scrofulous ophthalmia, of twelve years' standing, with nebula of the cornea. After the removal of the nebula, the pupil remained permanently closed, not larger than the head of a small pin. Sight but faintly restored by the removal of the nebula. Diluted tincture of belladonna, one drop to the eye, twice a day, restored the powers of dilatation to the pupil, and consequent restoration of vision.

II.—*Premature Pains*. Seventh month of pregnancy. Patient accustomed to abortion. Examination per vaginam showed the uterus to be operated upon spasmodically. Bleeding, pediluvium, opium, morphine, camphor, hyoscyami, gum assafœtida, all failed to give relief. The narcotics were used in large doses. A pledget of cotton, dipped in a saturated tincture of belladonna, quieted the uterine action in twenty minutes.

P. S.—Patient accustomed to the use of opium.

III.—Return of the same complaint to the same patient. Gave ten drops by the mouth, with like success.

IV.—*Prophylactic Powers tested*. Three children, aged respectively 2, 4 and 9, exposed to contagion of scarlatina. Gave of twelve drops of the tincture, diluted with one ounce of rain water, three drops thrice a day to the youngest; and increased the dose one drop for each year, to the older. The two youngest children removed from the house. Three days after, the child aged 4 years was attacked with scarlatina maligna. Seven days after, child aged 9 attacked with the anginosa variety; and nineteen days after, the remaining child attacked with the same variety. The use of the belladonna was continued through the whole course of the disease. The cure of these cases was the quickest and most perfect of any that I had during the prevalence of the epidemic, with the same violence of attack.

V.—Forty drops of the tincture, in one and a half ounce of water, was given to six individuals exposed to the contagion of scarlatina, in the following doses. To two adults, ten drops thrice a day. Infant