

fell 5, against 18 in the corresponding month of the preceding year. The winds were principally from the west and south-west. The mean temperature was $39^{\circ}7$, or $1^{\circ}4$ higher than in January of 1857. February was a moister month, the quantity of rain which fell amounting to 1.74 in. The temperature was much colder than that of the foregoing year—by 4° ,—and to the same extent inferior to the average of London in February ($40^{\circ}1$) for sixty-five years. March was also a cold month, the temperature being $41^{\circ}7$ against $42^{\circ}5$, the average of London for sixty-five years.

The mean temperature of the whole quarter ($39^{\circ}3$) was $^{\circ}6$ lower than the usual average of the Metropolis. The greatest cold ($26^{\circ}2$) during the quarter occurred on the 6th of January, and the highest point the thermometer attained was $62^{\circ}4$, on the 25th of March.

From the returns of sickness which have been collected by the medical officers of health for London, the season appears to have been an average one in regard to the health of the community.

REPORT OF A CASE OF

OBSTINATE CHRONIC RHEUMATISM CURED WITH THE SULPHUROUS VAPOUR-BATH.

By JAMES WILLIAMS, M.D., Woburn, Bedfordshire.

JOHN D—, of Aspley Heath, a labourer of about sixty years of age, has been much exposed to weather during the greater part of his life. I have known him some years as a constant sufferer from rheumatism of a most obstinate and intractable character, though he has been frequently under medical treatment, and that, too, of all the neighbouring practitioners and public institutions in the county. His case being considered hopeless, he was obliged to give up ordinary labour, and lately he had taken an acre of ground upon which to amuse himself and eke out a bare subsistence, his nights being spent in restlessness and pain, and the little labour he was capable of pursued under constant pain and misery.

The principal parts of the body affected were the feet and ankles. He had, however, pains and soreness in the shoulder, back, &c. These pains frequently moved about, and were not almost present; they were sometimes in the hands. His general health was unimpaired, though the feet were constantly swollen, with great turgidity of the bloodvessels, rendering them partly varicose. The ankles are nearly stiff, and have been so for about two years. This circumstance made walking extremely painful and difficult, and if by chance he stepped upon a stone or an unlevel surface, the pain was so great as to cause him to almost sink upon the ground.

Amongst other remedies, I had tried to relieve him with colchicum, alkalies, lotions, embrocations, &c., which were not of the least service, and thus the case was given up. Some time after this a benevolent lady in the village applied to me on his behalf to know whether or not the sulphurous vapour-bath used by myself would relieve him, to which I replied in the negative. However, as she very much wished a trial to be made, I therefore agreed to give him a chance. I commenced with three baths, allowing an interval of one day between each. He was well steamed for about twenty minutes, and then showered with cold salt water before he left the bath. This practice I always adopt, as it seems to brace up the skin, and thus to fortify the system from a too relaxing action of the vapour. After these three baths he seemed much relieved, and the stiffness of the ankles considerably diminished. It now occurred to me that the principal disease being situated in the feet, the local application by means of a steam-bag would be sufficient to meet the requirements of his case, and it was consequently adopted. This mode of application was of no service; indeed he said he felt worse in his health, and therefore at his particular request returned to the general vapour-bath and shower afterwards. I gave him in addition, as he had a good deal of red sediment in his urine, a little bicarbonate of potash and tincture of colchicum, in a solution of the Heath cottage sulphurous water from the spring near Leighton Buzzard, twice a day. This he continued until he had had in all about seventeen sulphurous vapour-baths, with an interval of a day or two between each bath.

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His recovery was progressive and steady, and in the course of about six weeks he had regained entirely the use of his ankles, could sleep soundly at night, and labour without pain or inconvenience. No wonder, then, that he presented himself at my surgery one morning, with a face beaming with gratitude, to express his thankfulness at being "perfectly cured." I must say I had no idea that such a result could follow in a case so obstinate as his. The patient has a ruddy complexion, and is, no doubt, of an inflammatory habit of body. Here there is the clue to our success. The use of this sulphurous water has been of marked benefit in rheumatism, and when conjoined with the vapour-bath, or made the basis of the steam, no doubt it acts as a great purifier of the blood, and by the free perspiration induced relieves the system of many impurities, which, circulating in the blood, are deposited in the various tissues, particularly the muscles and ligaments of large joints, giving rise to painful contraction in the muscles, and impediments to free action when deposited about joints.

Some persons may suggest that the potash, colchicum, &c., were the principal agents of cure in this case. This, however, may be safely refuted by stating that it was freely given, and tried in all its forms for years, with no benefit; in short, the case was not relieved at all, except by the use of the sulphurous vapour bath.

While upon this subject, I must express my regret at the falling off in the use of baths generally. Doubtless, many obstinate cases which now fall to the care of quacks and other pretenders might have been cured by orthodox practitioners with the aid of baths. I look upon the vapour bath as one of our most potent weapons in most chronic and many acute affections, and skin diseases, especially those where dryness and great irritation exist. I have lately cured a very obstinate case of scrotal herpes, in a gouty subject, where dry vapour, lotion, ointment, and other remedies were of no avail. This case, however, will more properly form the subject of a separate paper. It should be remarked, that though upwards of three months have elapsed of trying changeable winter weather, the rheumatic case continues a good and perfect cure, no return of the symptoms having taken place, the patient being able to attend to his ordinary daily labour, and walk miles to and from his work.

My vapour bath consists of a small wooden chamber, about four feet by three, and five feet high; it has doors which open and close like a cupboard; it has also a perforated zinc box fitted in the top, closed by a lid, which, when partially removed, acts as a valve to allow the exit of superabundant steam; this opening admits of water being poured from a large jug or other vessel over the patient while sitting in the vapour below. There is also a small zinc box, with a perforated lid fitted to the bottom of the bath, this receives the condensed steam or shower, and is emptied by a small tap underneath the floor. It is altogether very complete and inexpensive; and I shall feel much pleasure in showing it to any of my medical friends should they think it worthy of examination.

Aspley Guise, May, 1858.

A Mirror OF THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY IN THE HOSPITALS OF LONDON.

Nulla est alia pro certo noscendi via, nisi quam plurimas et morborum et dissectionum historias, tam aliorum proprias, collectas habere et inter se comparare.—MORGAGNI. *De Sed. et Caus. Morb.* lib. 14. Proœmium.

LONDON HOSPITAL.

OLD STANDING DISEASE OF THE KNEE-JOINT, WITH CONTRACTION; DIVISION OF THE HAMSTRINGS, FOLLOWED BY EXTENSION; CURE.

(Under the care of Mr. CURLING.)

THE following cases illustrate very well the advantage of forcibly straightening contracted limbs under the influence of chloroform, and dividing the tendons when necessary. The joint affected in each case was the knee; two of the patients were children, and one a young man eighteen years of age.