

the nitric acid, other potential agent, or the actual cautery itself, after the fashion recommended by Mr. Oubr , appears to be quite immaterial; neither, on the other hand, should I like to trust to local treatment alone, for the gradual death of tissue is merely the consequence of a constitutional disease; and though layer after layer of texture might be destroyed, still the root of the evil would remain untouched. Both methods should be put in practice at the same time; and I am sanguine enough to think that the person who will put his trust in them will find that this disease, by their combination, is as much under the influence of treatment as most other affections to which our bodies are liable.

6th. In applying the nitric acid it is a matter of some importance to instruct the little patient to inspire fully previous to its application, that the lungs may be filled with air, and thus guarded in some degree against the difficulty or even danger that might result from the inhalation of nitrous fumes; and in the course of treatment it will be found of great advantage to separate carefully every slough as soon as formed, using, if necessary, even some little violence for the attainment of this object, on account of thus obviating to a considerable extent the great contamination of the air of inspiration.

Lastly, I would beg to state that I am indebted to the artistic skill of my esteemed friend, Mr. Swanwick, for the accompanying representations of the patients in their present condition, who has very kindly made for me two excellent chalk drawings of them.

Manchester, February, 1850.

REPORT OF CERTAIN CASES OF YELLOW FEVER,

TREATED IN THE DETACHMENT HOSPITAL AT ST. JOHN'S, FROM THE 2ND TO THE 19TH DECEMBER, 1849.

By JOHN FURLINGE, M.D.,

CIVIL PRACTITIONER, LATE IN CHARGE OF DETACHMENT HOSPITAL AT ST. JOHN'S, ANTIGUA.

FIVE cases of yellow fever were admitted, of which two died. The men had been marched into St. John's, from the Ridge,* on the 30th November. One or two had been complaining on the evening of the 1st December, and ascribed their indisposition to fatigue and cold from the preceding night's march. They took purgative medicine. On the following morning three others were added to the list, and the five were admitted into the hospital with fever. The symptoms were very urgent in three; headach was violent; sense of tension from temple to temple, with a feeling as if the brain were compressed; pains of back and calves of legs were prominent symptoms, with hot, pungent skin; injection of eyes; pulse quick and full; tongue generally moist, and in two or three cases rough and furred, but still moist. After thirty-six hours the pulse became slower, sometimes natural as to frequency; skin was tinged lemon-coloured in all; the injection of the eye appeared to be sclerotic, and would seem to indicate a like condition of the dura mater, &c.

The treatment in three was bleeding to fainting.† In one of the three the bleeding was repeated in three hours, as severe headach had returned, when about eight ounces were abstracted; he became faint, and had no return of headach. After bleeding, brisk purgation was used; the purgative of calomel and extract of colocynth compound, followed up by a solution of sulphate of magnesia, and carbonate of magnesia. After the bowels had acted copiously, calomel and quinine,‡ five grains of each, were given every two hours, with cold douche to head, and cloths wet with cold water constantly applied to the same, with sponging the body, &c. One man had a blister applied to the nape of the neck. The fatal cases were treated in the same way, with the exception of bleeding, as their symptoms did not seem to warrant the abstraction of blood. They both were apparently doing well, alarming symptoms supervening when every reasonable expectation of their recovery was manifest. On the morning of the evening of the death of one, he was sitting up in bed, taking breakfast, and said there was nothing the matter with him but weakness. At twelve at noon he had hiccup, and hæmorrhage from his gums; at four p.m., black vomit, and at nine p.m. was dead. He appeared labouring under cinchonism, as he had become deaf, and complained of noises in his ears. He died on the fifth day.

* An elevated spot, about twelve miles from St. John's, where the garrison is situated, and where malignant yellow fever was prevailing.

† Average quantity taken, thirty-two ounces.

‡ See a condensed but good account of the use of quinine in miasmatic fevers, in "Ranking's Retrospect," vol. iii.

The other man (who died on the seventh day) appeared dreadfully alarmed at the death of his comrade, and became incoherent that night; he began to sink next day, and died the following evening at ten p.m.; he was apparently convalescent on the day preceding the night when he became incoherent; he had no black vomit, but was lemon-coloured.*

Although a fever of a highly malignant type has been chiefly confined to the Ridge, I think it right to remark that there has been all along a general epidemic tendency to fever throughout the island, and of a rather severe type. I have twenty estates under my professional charge, situated in all quarters of the island, and there are a great many labourers on them, white, black, and coloured, among whom a good deal of fever has prevailed, some very severe remittents, and all manifesting great cerebral disturbance.

The creole blacks, whites, and mulattoes, have suffered from the epidemic, but suffering less severely than Europeans, the type being generally remittent, (with a few intermittents,) among whom some deaths have occurred, the head suffering much; and in some there has been coma from the first, not always fatal,—the affection, whether intermittent, remittent, or malignant yellow fever, evidently arising from the same atmospheric inquisition, the type varying according to susceptibility or acclimated state of the individual,—the malignant fever occurring in the recently-arrived Europeans; the milder forms in natives, or those acclimated. The orifices made in the veins of those who were bled did not heal, but gaped, and matter formed in each, and the blistered surface in one (who recovered) became ulcerated and of a gangrenous look, and he subsequently suffered much from large boils, and had a carbuncle at the inferior angle of the right scapula. In two of the patients, during convalescence the pulse became very slow—48 & 56 in the minute—for some days; the same had been remarked by other practitioners.

The fever, no doubt, is to be ascribed to the dry and sultry weather in July and August, and followed up by rain, and then by intense heat, thus giving rise to malaria, of a highly malignant nature, pretty generally over the island, manifesting its effects more severely in certain localities.

The Ridge is considered a very healthy spot, and I understand no officer has died there, of yellow fever, for twenty-six years.

The treatment was that generally followed, although I should think it more scientific and accordant with our pathological notions to bleed, and then give calomel, with nitre and soda and sweet spirits of nitre, with blisters to neck, cold to shaven scalp, and sponging the body; and on the slightest remission, to administer quinine, in five- or ten-grain doses, every hour, till cinchonism was induced, or till other symptoms indicated its further use to be unnecessary. It certainly clashes with all preconceived notions, to give quinine to a patient with hot skin and violent headach, although, as far as I have been concerned, I see no cause to be dissatisfied with the result, as regards the cases treated in the Detachment Hospital.

Antigua, 1850.

P.S.—The deaths averaged upwards of fifty per cent.; and a practitioner of more than thirty years' experience in this island, told me it was the most malignant fever he ever witnessed. A military medical officer of rank and long experience, in conversation, said, that after thirty-six hours treatment was of no avail; they died in spite of everything; and it was a toss-up whether death or recovery followed. I may mention that the microscope showed the black vomit to consist of blood-corpuscles, occasionally mixed with epithelial scales. The corpuscles appeared, I thought, flatter than natural.

NEW METHOD OF REMEDYING THE ACCIDENTS CAUSED BY CHLOROFORM.

By M. RICORD.

(Translated for THE LANCET by J. L. MILTON, Esq., M.R.C.S. Lond.)

THE following letter, by M. Ricord, has been copied into the *Journal de Chimie*, Jan. 1850, from which I took it, having vainly attempted to get at the original. The subject of which it treats is important enough to merit attention; for few accidents can be more appalling to a surgeon than the death of a patient from the use of a remedy which that surgeon has administered, perhaps much against the wishes of the other.

"M. Ricord," says this journal, "has just published a very

* In this outbreak, the "judicium difficile" was well illustrated, prognosis being quite at fault; one man had been up walking about for two days, took his bed and died.