

lieu des erreurs qui naissent continuellement de l'inexpérience de l'observateur, de l'inégalité journalière de son aptitude, de l'illusion de ses sens, et difficultés inhérentes à la méthode d'exploration qu'il emploie."

CASE OF SNAKE BITE,

SUCCESSFULLY TREATED WITH OPIUM, SULPHURIC ETHER, &c.

By RICHARD COLLIERE, Esq., *the Medical Officer of the Imperial Brazilian Mining Association, at Gongo Soco, in Brazil.*

ON the afternoon of Saturday, May 7th, between the hours of three and four o'clock, while reclining in my study, fatigued by a close and anxious attendance of fifteen hours upon the lady of one of our mining Captains, confined for the first time, my attention was suddenly arrested by one of our negroes, named Matheus Mina, hastening towards my cottage. His face (familiar to me above all others in this extensive establishment) stamped with the deepest distress, induced me to meet him at the outward door. On inquiring into the cause of his apparent alarm, his only, but oft-repeated reply was, "Cobra, Senhor!" (Snake, sir!) Bringing him into my bed-room, myself and servant shewed him several specimens of snakes, anxiously asking him to tell us which it resembled; his answers were incoherent and unsatisfactory. In hurrying him down to the hospital I met a Brazilian, whom I besought to question him, which he did in vain, for nothing could be elicited.

On reaching the ward, wherein a bed was prepared for the poor fellow, he vomited more than a pint of black blood. Seeing him comfortably covered in bed, after some successful and earnest efforts to calm his phrensied feelings, at length I obtained from him the following facts:—he, and other blacks had been out in the woods, cutting *capim* (grass), when he felt himself slightly bitten by a snake. Endeavouring to pursue and kill it, he was prevented by a dizziness in his eyes, almost amounting, for the moment, to perfect privation of sight. The bite was in the second phalanx of the fourth toe of the right foot. The snake he called "cascavel," but this was owing to ignorance, almost all the negroes here designating every snake possessing poisonous properties, by this general name. The cascavel is the real rattle snake, so called from its happy habit of shaking its rattle before biting, thus affording time to escape from its fatal fang; and, in consequence, I have repeatedly heard it called, both by slaves and Brazilians, "Cobra muito boa" (the very good snake).

Having since seen snakes similar to that by which this black had been bitten, I have

no hesitation in asserting that the snake was of the numerous species which is here called "jaraáca."*

From the time of his being bitten until he reached the hospital, four hours had elapsed. On first fixing my eyes on him, his stooping posture particularly attracted attention, occasioned no doubt by his attempts to ease a poignant pain in the right inguinal glands; intense anguish was depicted in his countenance; he moaned much from racking pains pervading his limbs, particularly those of the right side; and there was great difficulty of breathing, and constant constriction round the fauces, during deglutition. Having never before seen a person poisoned by a snake, I cannot compare his symptoms with any other similar case, but I can convey a tolerable notion of him by observing that he seemed suffering, as it were, under all the severe symptoms of Asiatic cholera, when approaching the state of collapse.

I first made an opening into the poisoned part, with a small scalpel, intentionally incising a few vessels, and suffering a small stream of blood to flow for a few seconds. Into the wound thus thrown open, I poured a liberal portion of Beaufoy's concentrated chloride of lime, in its undiluted state, and then simply strapped the part up with adhesive plaster. The wound was thus washed three times during the first nine hours in the hospital, and was *never afterwards interfered with*. My object in so acting was to perfectly purify the foul fountain whence the powerful poison might possibly be still streaming into a system already sufficiently saturated. Strongly sensible of the force lent to absorption by a curtailed circulation, only a small quantity of blood was permitted to issue from the parts incised. So soon as he was placed in bed, he got a draught containing 30 drops of tincture of opium, one drachm of sulphuric ether, and two drops of essential oil of aniseed. This draught was repeated twice during the night, when he obtained nearly two hours' sleep, but, far from being refreshed, he awoke at six, A.M., with all the symptoms fearfully augmenting.

I had taken particular precaution that this case should be as private as possible, lest unnecessary alarm might be excited among our negro population; but some of the inmates of the hospital making known the circumstance to those without, the

* In the "Corografia Brasileira," by Padre Manoel Ayres de Casal, there is a sentence regarding this snake, of which the following is a translation:—"The *jaraáca*, whose species is the most numerous, is fatal; that which takes its name from its white tail is not more than a span in length, and its poison hitherto has no known antidote; the being that is bitten by it instantly falls into convulsions and bloody sweats, and dies in a short time."

knowledge of it soon spread through the entire establishment, and such numbers now rushed into the hospital, that I was obliged to station four persons at the door to prevent the entrance of any one, unless by my permission. To those who saw him now, death seemed so certain and so near in its approach, that the blacks, with whom he had been a favourite, bemoaned him most sincerely, and piercing shrieks were heard on all sides, literally lamenting the living as one who was dead; and, indeed, for myself, in gazing on the ghastly and cadaverous countenance before me, I saw nothing to inspire a single ray of hope.

I now (six o'clock) gave twenty drops of the tincture of opium, with the ether and oil, as before. At seven o'clock I repeated the same dose, and lay down in the bed which was beside his couch, watching every muscular movement. His lips were much retracted; he still severely felt the pains passing through his limbs, but he had experienced no pain, since his admission into the hospital, in the toe which was bitten. I persisted in repeating the above medicine every hour, giving at intervals a plentiful portion of port wine, and excellent chicken broth.

At eleven o'clock, A.M., I found that his sight was so far improved as to enable him to distinguish the gentleman in charge of the negroes, but only when that individual stood at the foot of the bed, so that the light might fall directly on him, otherwise he could not discern him. At twelve o'clock the draught was again repeated.

At one o'clock, P.M., the entire abdominal region rapidly rose, and was suddenly swollen to a dangerous degree. I instantly gave him four drops of the liquor ammon. fortioris, three drops of essential oil of peppermint, the like quantity of the oil of aniseed, and one drachm of sulphuric ether. In a few minutes I had the unmixed delight of seeing the abdomen slowly sinking to its original and natural size. Hope here arose, and at half-past one o'clock I gave him another drachm of sulph. ether, with one of sweet spirits of nitre, and before half an hour had elapsed a perspiration was pleasingly visible on his chest and forehead, and the rigidity of his features, for the first time, seemed relaxing into something less ghost-like. The pulse, too, became now fully perceptible to the touch, and seemed at last to acknowledge the strong stimulants sent into the system. The constant sensation of cold now deserted him, so that there was no further need of bottles of hot water for his feet; the additional blankets, too, were removed. At three, P.M., he seemed sinking a little, but a drachm of the sulph. ether, with a drop or two of essential oil, set him up again. The laudanum was omitted this time, and was not used afterwards.

It may be worth while to notice that there

was no visible sign of the large quantity of opium administered in so short a time. The urine, which had been exceedingly scanty, came away now in tolerable quantities. From four, P.M. (twenty-four hours after admission), he became quite calm; all the excessive pains passed away, and he was now fully sensible to every external object; he also slept a little.

The remaining treatment was marked by nothing particular; he was supported with broths and wine negus, the bowels being kept gently open. He did not leave the hospital for a fortnight; this arose from a slight attack on his lungs. He is a most delicate subject in this respect. In the space of twelve months previous to his being bitten, he had twice nearly fallen a victim to acute pneumonia; and about two months since he had another similar attack. By the kindness of the chief commissioner he is now occupied in the easiest employment which the place presents, and I therefore hope to see him survive for some years yet, the poor fellow being additionally endeared to me in consequence of my having had him four times under my charge, during each of which he seemed beyond the reach of human succour.

It is not unworthy of notice, that on examining the poisoned part thirty hours after the patient had become an inmate of the hospital, the wound seemed to be so slight, and so clean and healthy, that it might have passed for a slight scratch with a cambric needle.

Gongo Soco, Dec. 4th, 1836.

ON THE IDENTITY,

IN NATURE, SYMPTOMS, MORBID APPEARANCES,
AND CAUSES, OF

HYSTERIA AND HYDROPHOBIA.

By FRANCIS EAGLE, Esq., Surgeon, London.

IN investigating the nature of any disease, the general character which it assumes, the peculiar locality of its seat, and the period of life at which it occurs, enable us to form (at least) a presumptive opinion, as to its cause. Some diseases are peculiar to infancy, some to puberty, others to the adult, and, lastly, to old age. To ascertain, therefore, the general laws under which diseases operate, is the first "stepping stone" to their peculiar nature. Hysteria, for example, arises most commonly between the age of puberty and that of thirty-five years. For what is this period remarkable? For the full development of the "sexual system;" it more frequently occurs in the unmarried than in the married; oftener attacks about the period of the catamenia, than at any other; is extremely uncommon in females who lead a life of prostitution; and on dis-