HOT AIR AND SULPHUR FUME BATHS IN CUTANEOUS DISEASES.

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[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

CASES OF LICHEN.

CASE I.—Mrs. G., aged 35, of sanguine, bilious temperament, had been troubled for several months with an inflammatory papular eruption upon different portions of the skin. The regions affected when her case came under my notice were, the outer aspect of the middle third of the left arm, and a few small patches upon the trunk of the body and upon the lower limbs. The arm was the worst. The papulæ here, as seen through a magnifier, were acuminate, crowded together in one large and well-defined cluster, of a moderately red color compared with the adjacent healthy surface, above which they were scarcely elevated. A slight serous exhalation emanated from them, and every eight or ten days they set up a furfuraceous desquamation. They occasioned severe smarting and pruritus whenever the patient took active exercise; the heat of the bed also produced the same trouble in an augmented degree. From the history and appearance of the disease, there was no difficulty in recognizing it as *lichen circumscriptus*. The patient had been under the care of her family physician for several weeks, and as all the symptoms still maintained their activity, she came, at his suggestion, to avail herself of the hot-air and sulphur-fume baths, as auxiliary to other curative measures, which she continued under his supervision. She commenced the baths on the 10th of January. The directions from her physician were that she should take one every other day; but her domestic engagements were such that her attendance upon the baths was very irregular. During the first few trials the diseased integument became more inflamed than before she commenced them; in consequence of which they were omitted for one week, during which the patient was put under the action of saline medicines in aperient doses. The baths were again resumed, and continued pretty regularly every other day. The quantity of sulphur hitherto used was $\text{ʒ} \text{ iij.}$; it was now reduced to $\text{ʒ} \text{ ij.}$ The temperature of the apparatus at the previous sittings had not been allowed to go higher than 118 or 120 degrees. The patient was now exposed to a heat of 125 to 130 degrees, and remained in the bath 30 to 35 minutes.

Indications of amendment, as seen upon the arm, began to appear at several points. The papulæ became fainter and fewer, until numerous small spots of healthy surface were brought to view. These soon coalesced one with another; and in this manner the cure progressed until seventeen baths were administered, by which time the whole area of the affected circuits was free from every vestige of the eruption, and the skin was restored to its healthy properties.

CASE II.—Miss E. B., aged 23, of a full vigorous habit, had been afflicted for twelve months with *chronic lichen simplex*, disseminated upon the neck, shoulders and upper part of chest. About six weeks before she called upon me, the inflammation assumed a more active type, in consequence of exposure and carelessness. The skin became thickened, ac-

quired a deeper red color, blended with a yellowish tint, was dry, and cast off an abundant pulverulent exfoliation from time to time, and would apparently be about to subside entirely ; but instead of this result, a fresh recurrence of all the symptoms would supervene. The sensation of smarting and prickling was annoying if she attempted to perform any active labor during the day, and it was still more aggravating and tormenting from the heat of the bed by night.

The successive crops of papulæ, surmounting the skin, were not so distinctly or regularly evolved as in the case related above. Preceded by severe smarting and itchiness, they appeared in the form of minute points, hardly perceptible to the eye, but very appreciable to the finger, which passing over the eruption, could detect the presence of small, hard bodies, agglomerated, as if the skin were loaded with them.

A variety of remedies, local and constitutional, having been resorted to without producing any amelioration of the complaint, her physician was desirous that she should make trial of the sulphur fumigations, in conjunction with an abstemious diet and aperient medicines, which he had recommended. She commenced the baths on the 25th of April, 1842. She took them twice a week for five weeks, by which time the eruption, with all its accompaniments, was brought to an end. Quantity of sulphur used at each bath, $\mathfrak{z}$ iij. ; time occupied in the apparatus, 45 minutes ; temperature on entering the box, 100 degrees, and gradually increased to 130 degrees. The stimulus of the two or three first fumigations occasioned some increase of the local irritation for a few hours after their application. The use of a tepid alkaline wash (subcarb. potas. $\mathfrak{z}$ ij. to two gallons water) was sufficient to allay this temporary inconvenience, and was beneficial also in procuring desquamation of the cuticle. The patient has had no return of the disease.

CASE III.—The remaining case which I have to report under this division of cutaneous diseases, is that of J. C., deaf and dumb, from New Hampshire, of a tall slender frame, and shoemaker by trade. Has had a lichenoid eruption for four years, with occasional intervals of a few weeks of comparative freedom from the malady. It sometimes diffuses itself upon the trunk of the body, and sometimes upon the anterior and inner surface of the lower extremities—the latter being the only affected localities at the time of his applying to me. His pulse was languid ; suffered much inconvenience from vertigo ; hands and feet cold except in quite warm weather ; bowels torpid ; general health not at all good. Has occasionally consulted a regular physician, but of late his chief hope of cure has rested on the use of various patent drugs—Brandreth's pills bringing up the rear ; and to the influence of these his debile condition is doubtless in a great measure to be attributed.

On the first of August last, this patient came to the city to spend a few weeks here and in the vicinity with some relatives, by whom he was advised to consult me in regard to the expediency of taking the baths.

The eruption bore the features of *lichen simplex* of a chronic character ; papulæ of moderate redness, and attended with the ordinary concomitants of prickling, itchiness, &c., and the patient resorted to the usual method

of assuaging these harassing evils—the use of the nails—in consequence of which numerous superficial abrasions were produced and kept in a state of constant irritation.

He was directed a dose of Rochelle salts, and to wash himself thoroughly in soft warm water and soap, as preparatory to his commencing a succession of the baths next day. He was now in a suitable condition to derive advantage from the fumigations, and I felt confident not only that the cutaneous affection would be subdued at once, but that a salutary impulse would be given to all the vital functions of the system. The baths were administered every other day—thermometer at the commencement of each sitting, 100 degrees, and increased during the progress of each bath to 130 degrees—quantity of sulphur, $\mathfrak{z}$ iij. He took seven baths, and made use, daily, of the alkaline wash. Internally he took, night and morning, ten to twelve grains of a powder composed of sulphur lot., carb. sodæ, pulv. rhei, equal parts, which kept the bowels in a good condition. He was allowed a generous diet.

After a fourth bath there began to be a desquamation of the cuticle, from which time the eruption faded away rapidly; and by the 18th of the month it had entirely disappeared. The patient was dismissed with advice to preserve his skin in a pure and healthy state by continuing the practice of the warm alkaline ablutions twice a week, and with the assurance that he would receive his reward therein. He sent me word, about ten days ago, that his old cutaneous complaint had not troubled him since his return home in August—that he had got a new skin, and that his general health was perfectly good.

26 Howard Street, Boston, Feb. 1843.

EXTENSIVE LACERATION OF THE MUSCLES OF THE FORE-ARM.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—Should you think, with me, that the following case furnishes any valuable or interesting practical suggestions, you will please give it a place in your Journal.

June, 1840, a young man aged about 22, of unusual physical development, as regards both size and strength, of good health and habits, was engaged at a *shingle machine*, which does its work by means of a *circumlar saw*, that is moved with great power and velocity. By some unfortunate movement, the right fore-arm was brought in contact with the saw just below the olecranon of the ulna, making an exceedingly ragged, lacerated wound through the integuments, something more than equal to the circumference of the arm, but owing to the obliquity it did not quite encircle the limb. It severed, or partially severed, a large portion of the numerous muscles on the exterior and posterior sides of the arm, and disconnected the attachments of others; *shattered off the ulna*, leaving only the olecranon for the upper fragment; tore away almost every vestige of the capsular ligament, leaving its relations exposed, and the extremity of the radius naked and protruding about three inches. The olecranon was