

THE LANCET.

VOL. II.]

LONDON, SATURDAY, JUNE 15, 1833.

[1832-33.]

EXTRAORDINARY RAVAGES OF SYPHILIS AND MERCURY ON THE HUMAN COUNTENANCE.

By THOMAS WEATHERILL, M.D. Liverpool.

Representation of the Face of MARY LLOYD, late of Mary's Court, Back Portland Street, Liverpool, as it appeared in the years 1830, 1831, 1832, and (with the exception of some slight improvement in the Mouth) as it is up to the present time.



THE subject of the above sketch is 38 years old, a widow, the mother of eight children, and has been for the last five months an inmate of the Liverpool Workhouse. She always possessed tolerably good general health until the winter of 1829. In December of that year she applied for medical assistance to the Liverpool North Dispensary. She was found to be labouring under symptoms of *lues venerea* in those

parts that are usually the seat of the primary stages of this disease, became the patient of one of the honorary surgeons attached to this charity, and, as she reports, was attended principally by him for a period of not less than eight months, and was several times salivated under his directions. The disease, however, in defiance of the Doctor's *ablest powers*, it appears, crept on; though the affair now was no longer confined to the mischief of the original complaint. In addition to secondary symptoms, the skin was violently beset with mercurial eruptions; in short, her throat, her gums, mouth, and fauces, her nose, eyes, and skin, were each and severally attacked by the combined forces of syphilis and mercury, and with so much virulence, that her medical adviser, after this long campaign, with a most inveterate foe, now recruited also by such a formidable ally, growing no doubt weary of the contest, fled precipitately from the field in despair, scarcely allowing himself time to smooth his retreat with the excuse, that "*he could do nothing more!*"

I shall now endeavour to convey some idea of the situation of this female after the "Dispensary Doctor" had done his best, and had taken his departure from her. *Look at the picture my pencil has portrayed—sans eyes, sans nose, sans mouth, and the remaining features of her face otherwise most horribly disfigured with vile sores and running wounds! Hardly anything human is there left. Eyes walled up by common integument,—nose frittered away by the ravages of syphilis and mercury! The teeth, most of them, are no more; the gums, palate, and, indeed, the whole interior of the mouth and fauces (they cannot be inspected), must be in a terrible condition! The lips are sealed together so completely, that not a demarkation, not a vestige of them, remains to tell the tale that they once existed! What is left of the mouth is entered by a circular opening, where it is supposed was once the left commissure, no larger in circumference than a goose-quill! Through this passage this truly pitiable, this mangled creature, receives her daily food. The faculty of hearing is much impaired. In a word, her person and constitution are frightfully mutilated—torn to very rags and tatters.*

Some benevolent persons were in the habit of visiting this poor sufferer, and administering to her wants, which led to the circumstance of her being seen by several medical practitioners. A change of air was recommended, together with a milk diet, arrow-root, wine, and porter; the dietetic part was to be assisted medicinally by the use of sarsaparilla, guaiacum, and

the like, thus, if possible, to patch her shattered frame.

She was removed a short distance into the country, across the river Mersey, and, through the kindness of a gentleman, supplied with everything necessary to render her situation as comfortable as it was possible then to make it. After being about three months from home, she returned to her old residence invigorated in strength, and capable of walking a considerable distance without any other assistance than a guide. In appearance (saving her face, which, no thanks to the Dispensary, also had somewhat improved,—some of its former ulcerations having totally healed up, and others having become less extensive, less offensive, and less virulent) she was almost like a new creature.

Early in last autumn she was, from an attack of the Asiatic cholera, bereft of her husband, and left in a state of pregnancy! She became a resident soon after this event in the Liverpool workhouse, and there, without any material change in her health, passed through the full period of gestation, and gave easy birth, in March last, to a fine healthy-looking boy,—not a speck, spot, or blemish, of any description, could be discovered on any part of whose body. From the diseased and debilitated state of the mother, the child, after she had suckled it eight or ten days, was removed from her, and nursed in another part of the house. At the expiration of three weeks, being up to that time apparently, in all respects, very healthy, it died rather suddenly of convulsions.

I saw the patient for the first time in January, 1831, and was so struck with the phenomena of the case, that I transferred her likeness at the moment upon paper. Since then I have frequently seen her, and occasionally urged, especially whenever the skin was tolerably free from ulceration, that there was a probability both of restoring her sight, and again freeing her mouth by an operation; but she would not consent to the undertaking; she placed great reliance upon the efforts of nature, and had been told they would sooner or later very likely open of themselves. The sight, particularly of the left eye, I believed to be not much injured, from the fact that she could perceive the flame of a candle, and discriminate between light and dark objects; the balls of the eyes moved in their sockets, and—through the integuments, which, when clear of ulcers, were semitransparent—the corneæ were to be distinguished.

Before closing my paper upon the case of this poor, unfortunate woman, I shall take the liberty to offer an observation or two on the medical treatment she received

while under the professional care of the dispensary surgeon. The patient applied at the dispensary soon after the irruption of the complaint, and though she was attended for a period of eight months, yet the disease was suffered to go on to a most ruinous, fatal extent! In individuals infected with syphilis, and who allow it to commit its depredations on the system and constitution, uncontrolled because unresisted, I readily grant the mischief will soon be extensive and serious, and finally terminate, almost with certainty, in the destruction of life; but when an opposite course is pursued,—the incursions of the enemy anticipated and repulsed at the onset,—there is little or nothing unfavourable to be apprehended; the disease becomes disarmed, and the patient is soon after restored to the wonted health and vigour. Poor Lloyd, however, was doomed to contend against the blighting influence of injudicious treatment. I do not state this merely from my own conviction; the same opinion has been pronounced by others of the profession—all I believe who have seen her, and it is entertained by the medical faculty of the Liverpool workhouse.

She is now, apparently, sinking very fast; I saw her last evening on her pallet of straw, weak, wan, and listless—a spectacle—a frightful mass of disease and destruction. I shall not hastily forget the impression which the interview—the last interview—with this wreck of humanity, has left upon my mind.

Liverpool, June 6, 1833.

ON THE CONNEXION OF RESPIRATION

WITH THE PRINCIPAL PHENOMENA OF
ANIMAL LIFE.

By FERDINAND LAU, *Physician-Accoucheur*,
London.

(Concluded from page 339.)

II.

A Pneumatic Theory of Respiration.

THE insufficiency of the doctrines of respiration hitherto offered, and that of the prevailing chemical one in particular, require the attention of physiologists. The conviction that the knowledge of animal life cannot be firmly based without clear views of respiration, has induced the author to direct his attention particularly to this object, and the present essay has been written with a desire of exciting the inquiry of medical philosophers. It

must be obvious that many more facts are requisite to give the stability which is necessary to a fundamental theory, and to enable the reader to compare the grounds on which he rejects the one and receives the other doctrine.

If we observe an animal of the higher class with attention, one of the first phenomena that strikes us is, the incessant working of the chest. What may be the cause, what the purpose of this action? It is evidently a mechanical function from which the lungs derive very great importance, for it cannot be interrupted even for a few minutes without endangering life; but that the supposed chemical action may be interrupted for a considerable time, has been already shown in the former part of this paper.

We have, finally, arrived at a very precise knowledge of the mechanism and structure of all the parts concerned in respiration, but it is only lately that this desirable end has been obtained. Soemmering and Reiseisen discovered, at the beginning of the present century, the communication of the trachea with the pulmonary cells, which latter were considered to be the blind terminations of the former. Sir Everard Home and M. Bauer made the important discovery that such was not the case, but that the cells were provided with apertures communicating with the vein and the heart itself.

Some years ago I examined emphysematous lungs. The air-cells were filled partly with a clear fluid, and partly with air. When the cells were pressed, or thrown on the fire, a succession of little explosions followed. On subjecting a small part of the emphysema to the field of the microscope, I observed in some of the transparent and extended cells a membranous formation similar to valves in vessels. The apertures described by Sir E. Home were undoubtedly obliterated by disease, and thus the liquid and the gas were held in confinement. This circumstance, as also the discovery of Sir E. Home, first gave me the idea that the air which enters the cells during their distention by inspiration, is shut up, and cannot return, but enters the said apertures, which, in all probability, are air-ducts, for the purpose of allowing air to enter the blood by atmospheric pressure. To prove such a communication by experiment, I had a rabbit deprived of sensibility by a blow on the head. The head was then removed from the animal, and all the arteries that could be found were tied. The thorax was then opened, and air was blown into the trachea, upon which the heart began to resume its action. I then made a small opening in the aorta, and