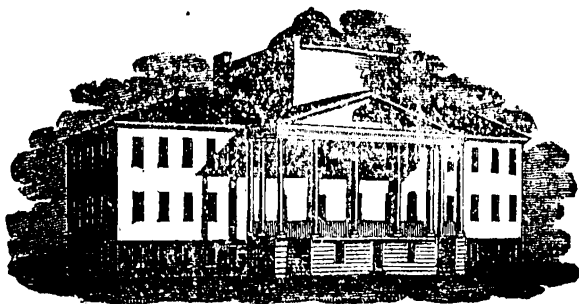


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I.

Observations upon a Disease of the Skin in Infants.

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By A. L. PEARSON, M.D.

EVERY practitioner of considerable experience must have met with perplexity in the treatment of diseases of the skin in infants. This is to be expected from the peculiar readiness with which internal parts sympathise with the external surface, and from the extreme *mobility* of the infantile system, in consequence of which morbid appearances suddenly change, and danger is present almost before we have seen reason to expect it. I have several times witnessed a squamous affection of the skin of nursing infants, which has either proceeded to a fatal termination, or apparently approached very near it. In its character at the commencement it bears the marks of porrigo, although it does not usually begin

on the scalp, nor are the yellowish pustules which belong to porrigo usually seen. There is redness and exudation on the skin, then dryness and a scaly deposit on the cuticle; a branny exfoliation takes place, and the skin is left dry, stiff and hard. The functions of the intestinal canal are in every instance more or less disturbed. In several instances the mother has had porrigo or psoriasis previous to the birth of the child, and in one the eruption was of a syphilitic nature. The parts suffering the greatest excoriation, were the nates and groin, no doubt from the greater heat of clothing and the acrimony of the urine; and in one instance the patient had nearly been lost from the deep rhagades in the groins, terminating in large foul ulcers. For the treatment, a most obvious indication is, to regulate the actions of the alimentary canal by small doses of calomel, or of Plummer's Ethiops, (sulphuret : antimon : e hydr.) which also de-

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termines to the surface. A change of milk would no doubt prove useful in many cases. The spirit of nitrous ether, which is highly valuable in some of the squamous affections of adults, is useful in this case, when it can be easily administered. The best palliative applications I know of, are the warm bath, which is of more avail than anything else, the infusion of slippery elm, and a lotion of sulphate of zinc in rose water, with tincture of opium.

To remove excoriation and prevent the painful chapping of the new cuticle, the oxyd of zinc, either in form of dry powder or rubbed with lard in ointment, is sufficiently efficacious. And for the hard, dry, but uninflamed condition in which the skin is occasionally found, the ointment of oxyd of zinc two parts, combined with ointment of nitrate of quicksilver one part, has proved sufficiently stimulating and highly useful.

The frequent fatal termination of this disease is analogous in its cause to what we see in superficial burns and scalds, which become dangerous to infants not in proportion to their severity, but the extent of surface which they occupy.

Case. Aug. 17, 1828. A male infant three weeks old, and which was born before the completion of the ninth month of gestation, became affected with flatulence, tormina, frequent, scanty, green colored dejections, with redness, heat and moisture of the nates and genitals. In the course of a few days, scaly patches appeared on the trunk and extremities, and lastly the scalp became affected, where the disorder put on exactly the appearance of the *porigo*

of Bateman. During the month of September the disorder continued and increased, there was frequent exfoliation of the cuticle, sometimes in large patches, extreme heat of the skin, pulse frequently 180, soreness of the surface of the body and pain on motion. On the 1st of October, under the use of the remedies I have mentioned, the disease of the skin began to disappear, but the constitutional symptoms became aggravated; the left hand and fore arm became affected with an appearance like phlegmonous erysipelas, and an abscess formed in the lower part of the fore arm, beneath the fascia; the child lost its sleep, by degrees refused the breast, and on the 12th of the month, the skin being free from the squamous disease, expired from exhaustion.

On examination after death the cavity of the abdomen and its viscera exhibited nothing remarkable. In the thorax the superior lobes of both lungs exhibited an appearance a little uncommon; they were solid, impervious to air, and when cut into, yielded on pressure a purulent fluid, and had a granular appearance not unlike the incipient stage of tubercular disease. The other contents of the thorax were not diseased.

Salem, October, 1828.

II.

After-management of Floodings, and on Transfusion.—From Lectures delivered at Guy's Hospital,

By Dr. JAMES BLUNDELL.

(Continued from p. 587.)

I SHALL now close the remarks which I have to offer generally on this tedious, but very important