

A CASE OF

LUPUS OF SEVEN YEARS' STANDING SUCCESSFULLY TREATED BY LARGE DOSES OF IODIDE OF POTASSIUM.

By ROBERT MUNRO, M.A., M.D.

IN the summary given in THE LANCET for Dec. 30th, 1871, of the medical events of the year, I find the following remarks:—"Iodide of potassium is doing wonders in the cure of diseases probably syphilitic; though, as Dr. Buzard suggests, we are perhaps reasoning in a circle in setting down all diseases cured by iodide of potassium as syphilitic. The size of the doses taken, and apparently required, for the therapeutic effect is a very anti-infinitesimal sort of fact. Mr. Gay is curing a lupus of twenty years' standing with half-drachm doses three times a day, and Dr. Moxon and Dr. Austie lately reported remarkable cases of syphilitic disease of the nervous system cured respectively by scruple doses and ten-grain doses three times a day." A description of the case of lupus here referred to will be found in THE LANCET for Dec. 9th, 1871, and Feb. 24th, 1872. Being somewhat interested in the effects of large doses of iodide of potassium, and happening to be in London for a few weeks while this case was under treatment, I had an opportunity, through the kindness of Mr. Gay, of seeing his patient. The cicatrization was then nearly completed, and altogether the results of this drug appeared to me so eminently satisfactory that I resolved to try it on the first suitable opportunity. With the above facts already before the profession, I think the following case is worthy of being recorded, inasmuch as it is an additional evidence of the great value of iodide of potassium as a therapeutic agent in a class of diseases that have almost become an opprobrium to the healing art.

S. S—, a strong, muscular man, of a ruddy complexion, and twenty-seven years of age, consulted me about the middle of May, 1872, in regard to a lupus in his nose and face. The disease was of seven years' standing, and, besides involving the nose, the upper lip, the mucous membrane of the nostrils, and rather more than a square inch of the roof of his mouth, it extended in an irregular patch for about two inches down both cheeks. There was a slight but offensive discharge from the ulcerations, and his breath had a fetid odour, which I thought proceeded from the ulcerated roof of his mouth. He was dispirited about his case, as he had already consulted many of the most noted surgeons in this vicinity and in Glasgow without benefit. From a written account which he gave me of his own case, I could not gather much information in regard to his past treatment. Six years ago an eminent surgeon here recommended him to have the diseased portion removed by the knife, but this he declined. A distinguished professor recommended some ointment, which, he says, had no effect whatever on his face. Others told him it was cancer, and incurable. Latterly he fell into the hands of quacks, and had a plaster (probably arsenical) applied to the sore. In concluding his report he says: "I returned to Dr. ——— again, as I did time after time, as a fox to his hole for safety." No syphilitic history could be elicited. About a year ago I saw a woman here with psoriasis guttata, who had been taking arsenic for nearly twelve months without any benefit, except irritation of her eyes, but in a few weeks she got better under the internal administration of carbolic acid. This woman now turns out to be a sister of my patient with lupus. The patient also tells me that his father at certain seasons of the year had spots on his legs and arms similar to those I had seen on his sister. Thus psoriasis seems to have been in the family.

I at once commenced the treatment of the lupus by giving ten-grain doses of the iodide of potassium three times a day. On one cheek the disease was attached to the nose only by a narrow isthmus; and, wishing to observe the effect of a caustic on the sore, I brushed over the whole of this nearly isolated portion on the cheek by the acid nitrate of mercury. The crust dropped off in a few days, and left the sore with a much more healthy appearance. I then, at intervals of about a week, touched other portions

of the disease with this caustic, until at the end of six weeks I had gone over the whole of the surface of the disease, so far as it manifested itself externally. Each crust was removed by poultices, and the sores then dressed with the following lotion:—Carbolic acid, three drachms; sulphate of zinc, eighteen grains; water, twelve ounces.

About three weeks after the treatment was commenced I increased the iodide of potassium to one-scruple doses three times a day, and added three drops of the liquor arsenicalis to each dose. The progress of the case was very satisfactory; and about the beginning of August the patient's face was completely skinned over, and since then it has remained perfectly well.

I showed this case to various medical men, who all expressed themselves as highly pleased with the result; and on the 23rd of August to Mr. Gay, who happened to be in the neighbourhood, and who gave a highly favourable opinion as to the permanency of the cure. Up to this date (Sept. 16th) the cicatrices are becoming more of the colour of the skin, and there is not anywhere the slightest appearance of a recurrence of the disease.

Observations.—The *post hoc propter hoc* in the above case may appear somewhat doubtful, but for the following reasons I am of opinion that the iodide of potassium was the curative agent:—

1. The roof of the mouth and mucous membrane of the nostrils began to improve at an early stage, and ultimately became quite healthy, although no external treatment was used.

2. I am led to believe that arsenic was previously repeatedly tried in the case without any benefit; besides the small quantity used on the present occasion could hardly have the effect.

I have no doubt the acid nitrate of mercury assisted the favourable action of the iodide of potassium, by correcting morbid action in the sores. A few weeks after the patient commenced to take scruple doses of the iodide of potassium some red papular spots appeared on his neck, head, and body, but they did not cause any annoyance. Otherwise I have not observed any constitutional effects from the use of this drug, though it was administered for nearly three months.

Kilmarnock, N.B.

UTERO-PERITONEAL FISTULA.

By LAWSON TAIT, F.R.C.S.

IT is somewhat singular that, in the short time which has elapsed since the publication of my last case, I should have had two other cases of this singular condition under my care at the Hospital for Women. We know so little about it at present that I shall content myself with merely narrating the cases, reserving my comments until my experience shall have grown.

Lucy K—, aged twenty-six, applied at the hospital on March 22nd. She is the mother of four children, the last having been born five months previous to my seeing her. Since that confinement she has menstruated profusely, every month, for eight or nine days. The cervix was open, and, as I regarded the case as one of ordinary sub-involution, I passed the sound, on her second visit (April 5th). The sound passed straight up to the umbilicus without a hitch, and could be made apparent under the abdominal walls at almost any point. The uterus could not be felt above the pubis, and between the hands it felt very little larger than normal. The sound seemed to emerge from the middle of the fundus. The cervix was in a peculiar granular condition, and little pieces could be picked off by the nail, conveying a feeling to the finger, not of malignant disease, but of something with which I have not met before. Under bromide of potash she improved so that in April she menstruated only five days and not profusely. I saw her last on June 21st, when she was menstruating in normal quantity.

Sarah S—, aged thirty-three, has been married for seven years, and is the mother of four children. The last was born twelve months previous to her first visit to the hospital, and on that occasion her confinement was of longer duration than usual, her recovery was slow, and ever since