

CASE I. Prurigo of the trunk and genitals. A married woman, aged 36 years, without family, who made no complaint of her general health, except that she was costive, applied, November 11th 1851, complaining of intolerable irritation over the trunk of the body, which was covered with black specks. The vulva and anterior portion of the vagina were most troublesome. She describes the itching as like finely pointed needles or stings running into her skin. She had suffered from this horrible disease twenty-two years, and believed it to be hereditary, as her mother complained of a similar ailment. She was treated with arsenic for one month; at the end of which period the disease was, to use her own expression, "worse than ever", although the bowels had been attended to. Warm baths were now prescribed; and as her conjunctivæ were affected, the dose of arsenic was reduced, and a few drops of tincture of opium added to each dose. Under this she rapidly improved; and by the 2nd of January, 1852, was discharged cured. The disease returned on the trunk only, about three months afterwards, "like something crawling", and it yielded rapidly to the chloride of arsenic. I have seen nothing of the patient for nearly three years. There were symptoms of hysterical irritation about this patient, but whether as a result or as a cause of this disease, I could not ascertain.

CASE II. Prurigo. A widow, aged 40 years, subject to "rheumatic gout", applied for relief from a distressing eruption of flattened papulæ of the colour of the skin, affecting the whole trunk of the body. It had existed twelve months. She had not menstruated for two years. She had had no sleep for a long time; and her body was completely covered with scarifications in all directions, inflicted by her nails. She imagined that insects were "breeding and crawling all over her"; but it was not so: in fact, her sufferings had affected her intellect. She had the air and manner of a maniac. Arsenic, Plummer's pill, and warm baths, were prescribed; but, after a week's trial, finding no relief, she absented herself in despair.

CASE III. Pruritus. A man, aged 66 years, had been troubled with intolerable itching all over the body for about twelve months, which affected the health, by depriving him of rest at night. He was a person of cleanly habits, and had no eruption. He was cured in six weeks by Fowler's solution of arsenic. Warm baths were prescribed, but not used. The irritation returned when the arsenic was discontinued, and was a second time relieved by it.

CASE IV. Pruritus. A respectable widow, aged 55 years, in good health, but of costive habit, had suffered for eight years from a general irritation of the whole surface of the body and the mucous lining of the vagina. It was aggravated by warmth, and she had sleepless nights. A variety of remedies were tried for three months without any relief being obtained, when the chloride of arsenic was administered in the usual doses, which cured her in seventeen days.

CASE V. Prurigo Formicans. A widow, aged 40 years, had suffered from prurigo, affecting the whole surface in a severe form, for two years. When she applied at the dispensary, she complained of short breath, scanty urine, and slight œdema of the feet and legs. Pills composed of calomel and compound colocynth pill, every other night, and a diuretic mixture three times a day, consisting of acetate of potash, squills, and spiritus ætheris nitrici, cured the œdema and shortness of breath in a fortnight; and with these diseases the prurigo vanished.

This case establishes the principle, that cutaneous diseases will often yield to treatment directed to the general health, when it is defective. Where no such complication exists, I have found nearly as much success with arsenic in pruriginous disease as in other forms of cutaneous disease. I should not omit to mention that prurigo is occasionally sympathetic of fulness of the vascular system, as well as of gout, dyspepsia, dropsy, or jaundice, so that it may require in one case, blood-letting; in another, colchicum; in a third, stomachics and aperients; in a fourth, diuretics;

and in a fifth, calomel. There is no disease which requires more investigation. It is often complicated with boils and carbuncles.

In taking my leave of the order *papula*, it may be well to observe that an eruption of pimples rarely indicates a low and asthenic condition of the system; more frequently, indeed, it shows a necessity of depletion. It is, in almost all cases, associated, more or less, with constipation of the bowels; and I believe little success would attend any kind of treatment in papulous affections without the repeated and even frequent exhibition of purgatives. That these medicines alone are, however, generally insufficient, I have had ample proof. The subjects of papulous diseases are commonly persons of a dry habit of body. The perspiration and urine, as well as the alvine and uterine secretions, are spare and scanty.

An important distinction should be made between papulous disease arising from constitutional causes, and those arising from the irritation of pediculi, which, though generally associated with extreme uncleanness, certainly do sometimes infest the skin of persons of advanced age and languid circulation, in spite of every care. If mercurial applications should fail to destroy them, a general inunction of oil or lard would probably succeed. Meanwhile, the health should be invigorated by stimulants and tonics. All parasites thrive best on weak and debilitated subjects.

[To be continued.]

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DISLOCATION OF THE TIBIA BACKWARDS, WITH FRACTURE OF THE PATELLA.*

By T. OGIER WARD, M.D.

ON February 14th, 1853, Mrs. G., aged 40 years, returning home in the frost, slipped and fell, with her right knee upon the curb-stone, striking it with such violence as to fracture the patella, and dislocate the tibia backwards. As she lived near me, I saw her very soon after the accident, and found her in great pain, with the leg extended, the front of the thigh and leg forming two parallel lines, but with the knee forming a wide interval or slip between them. The ligamentum patellæ was very tense, and the patella was broken across, a considerable interval being perceptible between the broken portions. The head of the tibia was easily felt in the ham, and the condyles of the femur resting upon it, as there was no great amount of swelling.

As the nature of the case was very evident, I immediately tried to reduce the limb by forcible extension by the foot; but finding this of no use, I knelt down on one knee, and placing the other under the patient's thigh, I pressed down and flexed the leg, at the same time that her husband extended the foot, and in a very short time, after two or three efforts, we succeeded in bending the knee, and the reduction was effected, but was unattended by any snap, or jerk, or sudden change of form in the limb. The limb was then kept extended by splints and a roller, and the fractured portions of the patella were brought together. A few leeches, with fomentations, were applied, and she was purged, and took antimonial salines for four days to reduce the inflammation; after which time, confinement to her bed was all that was required to effect a cure. In eight weeks after the accident, she quitted her bed with a stiff knee; but she is now able to bend it about 35 degrees; and she walks considerable distances with the help of a stick; but she suffers from rheumatic pains in that joint, as she did before the accident. The two portions of the patella are united within half an inch.

Kensington, London, January 10th, 1855.

* This is the case referred to by Dr. Ward at the meeting of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society on the 12th December. [Vide p. 43.]