

so many eminent authorities of the present day; and I trust that the following statement made in one of our best text-books on the Practice of Medicine may ere long receive considerable modification:—“In country districts the performance of tracheotomy in a case of croup is almost imperatively called for in the majority of cases, if some symptoms of amelioration do not follow the steady use of bleeding, emetics, the warm bath, and calomel purgation, pursued for twelve or sixteen hours.”¹

ARTICLE VI.—*Contributions to Dermatology.* No. 1. *On the Pathology of the so-called Eczema Marginatum.* By Dr M'CALL ANDERSON, Lecturer on Practice of Medicine in Anderson's University, Physician to the Dispensary for Skin Diseases, Glasgow.

THE disease to which the name of Eczema Marginatum has been given commences on the inside of the thigh where it is in contact with the scrotum, in the shape of a small round patch, which is red, elevated, itchy, and which may, as the disease extends, become the seat of papules, vesicles, excoriations, or crusts. The eruption heals in the centre, leaving the skin discoloured, owing to pigmentary deposit, while it extends at the edges in the shape of a circle, until it may reach the size of the palm or more. Similar patches often form in the neighbourhood, which coalesce with the circle first formed in such a way that a huge circle of eruption may result, which extends nearly to the umbilicus above, the knee below, and the sacrum behind. Often inside this circle new ones form in a concentric manner, or the surface may be studded with great numbers of minute rings of eruption which, when present, constitute a very striking and characteristic feature. In many cases, too, similar patches are detected on other parts of the body.

It is met with almost exclusively amongst shoemakers and dragoons (Hebra), a circumstance which is easily accounted for by the continued moisture and friction which these occupations entail in the situations referred to.

This disease is described by Devergie² under the name of Herpes. He evidently suspected that a fungous growth lay at the root of the mischief, but, like our Indian colleagues, who treat of it under the title of Burmese ringworm, he judged from the appearance which the eruption presents, and had never been able apparently to demonstrate microscopically the correctness of the opinion.

Hebra treats of this complaint under the head of Eczema; indeed it was he who applied to it the term Eczema marginatum. In an elaborate review, in the last number of the Journal of Cutaneous Medicine, of a recent publication of mine, my learned friend, Mr Erasmus

¹ Aitken's Science and Practice of Medicine, 4th Edition.

² Traité pratique des Maladies de la Peau. Ed. ii. p. 273.

Wilson, referring to the fact that I take a different view of the pathology of this disease from Hebra, says,—“Again, in another place, where our author ventures upon a dispute with Hebra, Hebra clearly comes off in triumph;” but, on reading further, the only reason apparently for such a statement is to be found in the following sentence:—“We assert, without hesitation, that Hebra is correct in regarding the somewhat remarkable eruption in question as an eczema;”¹ in other words, because Mr Wilson agrees with Hebra on this particular point, every one who disagrees with Hebra must be wrong.

In another place,² he makes the remark, that “its supposed cryptogamic origin is altogether unfounded.” But it is right to remember that Mr Wilson is quite consistent in holding this opinion; for he denies the existence of vegetable parasitic skin diseases altogether.

Let us now turn to an article in Virchow's Archiv for 1864,³ by Dr Heinrich Köbner of Breslau. In this a case of the so-called Eczema marginatum is most carefully described, the epithelial scales from which were found to be loaded with spores and tubes identical with those met with in tinea circinata. In order to verify the results of the microscopic examination, Köbner inoculated himself on the forearm with some of the scales, and in about a fortnight three very beautiful rings of tinea circinata made their appearance, the scales from which were found to be loaded with the spores and tubes of the trichophyton.

In conclusion, the following cases, which recently occurred in my practice, show that Köbner's case is not exceptional, and, taken in connexion with his, prove most conclusively that the affection under consideration is parasitic in its nature, and that in all probability it is a mere variety of tinea circinata.

A gentleman, æt. about 35, apparently in the most perfect health, consulted me on 11th December 1867, on account of what he described as an irritation of the skin, of a couple of weeks' duration. He was a great huntsman, but was obliged to give up hunting owing to its increasing the irritation.

He first showed me two small nearly circular patches on the calf of one leg, which were not elevated at their edges, and which exactly corresponded to spots of erythema. Then he showed me a painful itchy eruption on the inside of each thigh, in the situation where the scrotum lies in contact with these parts. This eruption had also an erythematous appearance; but the patches were *circular*, were *healing in their centres, and spreading at their edges*, which were *raised*. Struck by these circumstances, and also by the fact that at the spreading edges the small hairs were broken and unhealthy, I removed some of the scales, and examined them with

¹ Journal of Cutaneous Medicine, No. 5, p. 51. London, Churchill.

² Ibid., No. 4, p. 377.

³ Archiv für pathologische Anatomie und Physiologie, 29ter band, 2e folge; 9ter band, p. 226. Georg Reimer, Berlin.

the microscope, when I discovered spores, some of them isolated, some in chains, and tubes of a fungous growth. (See Fig. 1).

The eruption rapidly spread and extended to the buttocks, while on each thigh it occupied an area larger than the palm of the hand. At one visit, within the spreading edge the deeply pigmented skin was observed to be the seat of a great number of beautiful little circles of eruption, identical with those observed in ringworm of the body.

It is right to state, that this patient had a few months previous returned from a journey to India, where this complaint is said to be common; and he stated that he may have had a slight irritation of the parts when there, although it escaped his observation. He informed me, too, that he paid monthly visits to a friend in England, who had also recently returned from India, and that he knew that he had the same complaint. At these times he used the same bath and the same bath-towels as his friend.

The treatment of this case was almost exclusively local, and consisted at first of a lotion of liquor carbonis detergens, until my suspicion of its being parasitic was verified by the microscope, after which he had lotions of bichloride of mercury (gr. ii. to the ℥i.) of pure sulphurous acid and of hyposulphite of soda (℥i. to ℥i.). Of these there can be no doubt that the corrosive sublimate lotion was far the most effectual, and it was continued for about eight weeks before it was considered safe to stop it. Finally, as it produced some irritation of the skin, a little zinc ointment was used to allay this.

During the treatment, I accidentally discovered what promises to be the most perfect black dye for the hair which has yet been seen. After having used the bichloride lotion for some weeks, I changed it for the lotion of hyposulphite of soda, and the morning after the first application the hair of the part, which before was bright red, had become nearly black. One or two more applications rendered it jet black, while neither the skin nor the clothing were stained. I saw this patient a couple of weeks later, and there was not the least deterioration of colour, although of course, as the hair grows, the new portions will possess the normal tint. He was by occupation a turkey-red dyer, and was much interested in the discovery, though rather grieved to find, what medically must be considered one of its greatest advantages, that it did not dye the linen, and was therefore unavailable for his purposes.

About ten days after this patient's first visit (on December 22, 1867), a friend of his, a young gentleman, æt. about 26, came to me saying he feared that he had the same complaint; and sure enough, on examination, I found a round patch of eruption on the inside of each thigh where the scrotum is in contact with these parts. They were red, slightly infiltrated, dry and scaly, and the edges were elevated. A microscopic examination of the scales showed that they were loaded with the spores and tubes of a fungous growth as delineated in the accompanying woodcut (Fig. 2)

Fig. 1.

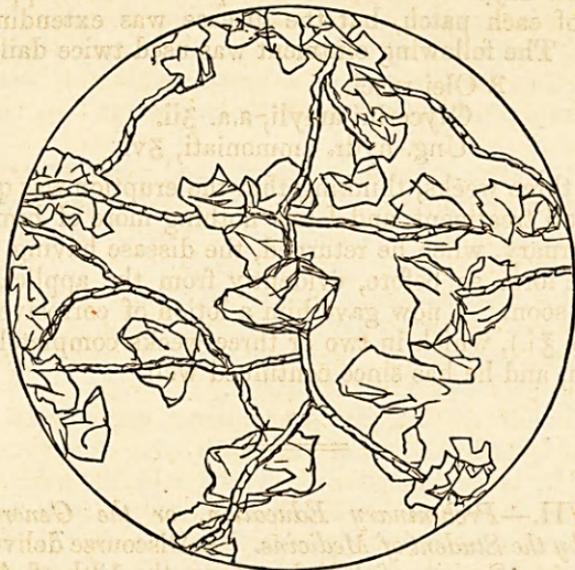
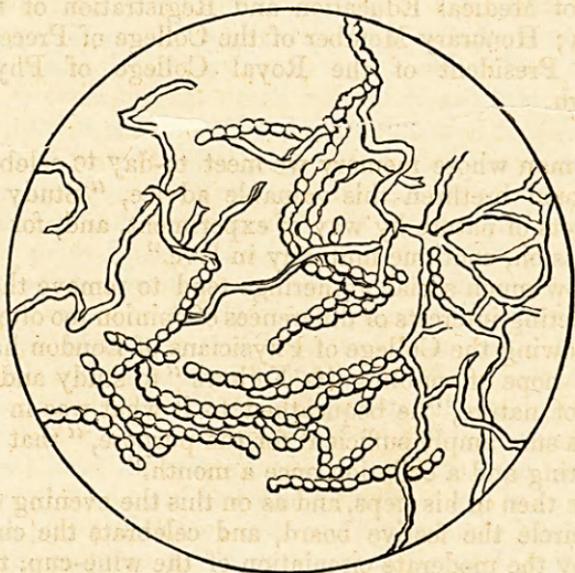


Fig. 2.



the last was drawn by my friend Dr John Wilson with the aid of the camera lucida.

After a few days' treatment the eruption had disappeared from the centre of each patch, but the disease was extending circumferentially. The following ointment was used twice daily.

℞ Olei rusci.
Glycerini amyli, a.a. ℥ii.
Ung. hydr. ammoniati, ℥vi.

In about three weeks, thinking that the eruption was quite cured, he stopped all treatment, and I saw nothing more of him until the 14th of February, when he returned, the disease having reappeared in the same form as before, evidently from the application being stopped too soon. I now gave him a lotion of corrosive sublimate (gr. ii. to the ℥i.), which in two or three weeks completely removed the affection, and he has since continued well.

ARTICLE VII.—*Preliminary Education, or the General Culture required by the Student of Medicine.* A Discourse delivered before the Harveian Society of Edinburgh on the 13th of April 1868, by ALEXANDER WOOD, M.D., F.R.C.P.; Chancellor's Assessor in the University Court, Edinburgh; Member of the General Council of Medical Education and Registration of the United Kingdom; Honorary Member of the College of Preceptors; and formerly President of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh.

THE great man whose memory we meet to-day to celebrate left to his professional brethren this valuable advice, "Study and search out the secrets of nature by way of experiment, and, for the honour of the profession, continue mutually in love."

Aware how much social gatherings tend to remove the asperities which conflicting interests or differences of opinion too often generate, besides endowing the College of Physicians of London handsomely, in the fond hope of enabling its Fellows "to study and search out the secrets of nature," he bequeathed to it what was in those days considered a sum amply sufficient for the purpose, "that they might have a meeting and a collation once a month."

Tread we then in his steps, and as on this the evening of his natal day we encircle the festive board, and celebrate the circulation of the blood by the moderate circulation of the wine-cup, the emblem of union and harmony and peace, let it be the pledge that "all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, shall be put away from us," not only here, but wherever we may be, and that, "for the honour of our profession, we shall continue mutually in love."