

XXI.—Nitrate of Silver in Small Pox. By A. VON IFFLAND, M.D.,
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In my article published in the October issue of the *Medical Chronicle*, on the ectrotic or abortive treatment of small pox, with a *solution of the nitrate of silver*, you cannot but have perceived, that I assumed no other merit, than that of successfully testing the application as suggested to me, by Dr. George Douglas, (and to whom, as I therein observed, it had also been suggested). Indeed, I did not in the least, attempt to discover any new fact, but merely verified one, already *expressed*, and *now*, I am happy to announce, even *tried* by a distinguished member of the profession,—Dr. Alexander Rowand, and, I have therefore only to hope, that I have been chiefly instrumental in awakening general attention to it, and thereby, extending the benefits of so important an ectrotic in that loathsome and disfiguring disease, the *small pox*.

The importance of obtaining a modifying power over the variolous pustule, had engrossed my attention for a number of years. I have brought to the test, independent of what may have originated from my own mind, almost every means, which had been considered by several gentlemen prominent in the profession, as efficacious in preventing the maturation of the pustule, and the subsequent pitting. The sulphur ointment, tincture of iodine, mercurial ointment, thickened with starch, and even the pure nitrate of silver, have all, from time to time, been employed by me, but with no very satisfactory result, at least, they more or less, possessed such properties, as to render them, if not dangerous, highly objectionable, and sometimes impracticable in *confluent small pox*.

It now remains with me to observe, that nothing but a sense of moral obligation to the human family, as well as the interests of science, has induced me to recommend most earnestly to the members of the profession, a solution of the nitrate of silver, in the form prescribed in my article as the safest, and most efficacious application, which in the present state of our knowledge, can be employed as an *abortive*, in the incipient, or more advanced stage of the eruption in *small pox*.

For this important and valuable application, second only in consideration, to that of vaccine inoculation, the claim of priority (in Quebec*) appertains alone to *Doctor Alexander Rowand*, and I am happy, in common with his numerous professional friends, to recognize it. His zeal and activity in the cause of practical science is well known, and his labors in the field, cannot fail to bring forth useful fruits.

Grosse Isle, 23rd October, 1836.

* (The parenthesis is ours.—Eds. MED. CH.)