

and half a pound of soft soap, and made to scrub themselves daily in a warm bath, until all the black sulphuret had been brushed off. The sulphur bath was then repeated, the sulphuret of lead brought out, brushed off, and the process renewed, until it no longer rendered visible any trace of lead.

This precaution is indispensable with all who labour under saturnine disease, if we wish to ensure patients against relapse. Whilst at the hospitals of La Pitié and Saint Louis, I have repeatedly had patients under my care with lead colic, who had been discharged as cured from other hospitals a few weeks previously. The sulphur bath, which exhibited a thick coating of lead on the skin, explained at once the cause of the relapse. Indeed, the presence of this coating of lead on the surface of the body is, no doubt, the principal cause of the relapses which are mentioned by authors as occurring so often in these diseases. The lead which thus lies on the surface is gradually absorbed, and, at last, poisoning having again taken place, all the symptoms to which it gives rise are manifested. No patient who has suffered, and been treated for lead colic, can be considered safe unless he has gone through the ordeal of a sulphur bath, with a perfectly white skin. One of the great advantages of repeating the sulphur bath during the treatment is, that the patients, whom it is easy to convince of the importance of getting rid of the metallic poison when they see it plainly on their bodies, rub with real good will.

The mode in which the acid acts in neutralizing the poisonous effects of the lead is easy to explain. It combines, no doubt, with the lead in the tissues, and forms with it an insoluble sulphate or sulphuret, which is consequently inert, and is gradually eliminated from the economy. This is the interpretation adopted by M. Gendrin, and it appears rational enough.

Some of M. Gendrin's opponents have asserted that it is not by the sulphuric acid that he cures his patients, but by the sulphur baths which he simultaneously uses. I attach great importance, as does M. Gendrin, to the sulphur and warm baths, for the reasons given above, but I do not think that they are the active agents in neutralizing the effects of the mineral poison contained in the economy. This opinion, moreover, is founded on the results of my own experience. Whilst at Saint Louis, I saw some half dozen cases of colica pictonum treated by sulphur and alkaline baths alone, by one of the physicians to that hospital, who believed that this treatment was sufficient to effect a cure. The patients were under my charge, so that I had every possible opportunity of observing them. They got well, it is true, but after very long and protracted suffering. In one instance, the constipation lasted ten days, and at one time the symptoms assumed quite an alarming aspect. The result of the treatment (or absence of treatment) in these cases, satisfied me that sulphuric acid, given internally in saturnine disease, is really a most powerful therapeutic remedy, and that, in the cases in which I had previously seen it administered, the patient did not get well by means of the use of baths, or through the sole efforts of nature, but owing to the therapeutic agency of the sulphuric acid.

The treatment still resorted to by the greater number of the Paris physicians is a combination of purgatives and opiates. The singular series of purgatives, known under the name of *traitement de la Charité*, is yet followed by many. I have repeatedly seen these modes of treatment tried, both in private and in hospital practice, and always, it has appeared to me, with a less satisfactory result than when sulphuric acid alone is exhibited. Indeed, my confidence in the therapeutic powers of this remedy is so great, that I never think of using any other when called upon to treat a case of lead colic. The simplicity of the treatment certainly much enhances its value. Nothing can be more troublesome and more trying to the patient than the continued

medicine and injection taking which many practitioners consider themselves bound to prescribe. The duration of the treatment being, also, evidently shorter under sulphuric acid than when purgatives and opiates are resorted to, from the poison being sooner neutralized, there is less danger of the patient falling a victim to those frightful cerebral epileptic attacks, which constitute one of the chief dangers of saturnine diseases.

Not only is sulphuric acid a most valuable therapeutic remedy, but it has also proved an equally valuable preservative agent, which is the case with no other preparation. At the carbonate of lead manufactory of Clichy, M. Gendrin prevailed on the directors to insist on the workmen drinking every day one or two glasses of the sulphuric lemonade, and also washing themselves well, daily, with soap and water. It was found that these precautions enabled them to work with impunity for many months, although without them a few weeks' labour in the manufactory sufficed to bring on an attack of the lead colic. This result is one of extreme importance, both to the workmen and to the manufacturers. At the establishment mentioned, (that of Clichy,) a very large proportion of the workmen are invariably attacked with these symptoms of poisoning, in from three to six or eight weeks after their entrance. This fact being generally known, no workman will, or indeed can, labour regularly at the manufactory. Its population is entirely composed of men who have been out of work until they have exhausted all their resources. Scores of times have my patients at La Pitié said to me, "I knew, Sir, that I should fall ill in a few weeks, but what could I do? I was starving." Such a state of things, on the other hand, is extremely prejudicial to the manufacturers themselves. Their works are often at a stand for want of hands; the workmen whom they do obtain are inefficient, from ignorance of the processes that have to be gone through, and no sooner do they acquire a tolerable acquaintance with their duties than they fall ill, and are obliged to go to the hospital.

The use of the sulphuric lemonade alone is not sufficient to guard against the appearance of the disease, although it will retard it; the skin must be well and daily cleansed. Indeed, it would be well if a sulphur-bath were used occasionally, in order to demonstrate the state of the skin. The facts which I have already mentioned prove that absorption of lead, and of its preparations, by the skin, is one of the principal means by which the economy becomes poisoned—a fact which has been denied by several pathologists.

On some future occasion I may trouble my readers with a few remarks on the pathology and symptoms of saturnine affections. For the present, however, I shall conclude this short article by expressing the hope that it may be the means of inducing, on the one hand, medical practitioners in this country to try sulphuric acid in the treatment of lead colic, and, on the other, manufacturers of the salts of lead to test its efficacy as a preservative.—*Lancet*.

## MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE.

### MEDICAL PRACTITIONER INDICTED FOR MANSLAUGHTER.

At the recent assizes, held at Stafford, Mr. Dickenson, a medical practitioner, residing at Bilston, was indicted for the manslaughter of Mrs. Hickman, the wife of a respectable farmer, whose death it was alleged, he had occasioned by want of due skill and care at the time of her confinement.

From the evidence, it appeared that the deceased, a young woman in the prime of life, was unexpectedly seized with labour pains, whereupon she was supported to her room, and, without being undressed, was laid upon a bed. An old midwife was sent for, who speedily arrived, and assisted at the birth of a child, which almost immediately took place, followed by a considerable