

The morbid effect of heat seems to be materially promoted by the presence of moisture. I have mentioned to you the case of a weakly female, in whom the application of a poultice produced a distinct eczematoid eruption in the part so treated. In his clinical lecture on sudoral exanthems, Trousseau relates the case of a poor lady, who, after her confinement, was kept by an old prejudiced nurse soaking in her lochia, with unchanged linen, loaded with wadding bed-clothes to bring on the flow of milk. Scarlatiniform eruption appeared on the sixth day of her illness, on the tenth the whole body was covered by a frightfully severe and confluent eczema. The face flushed, delirium came on, and death followed. Trousseau ascribes the eruption to the irritating effect of the copious perspiration. To my mind the moist heat seems quite a sufficient cause, and I feel doubtful as to the possibility of so much irritation being produced by sweat. Rheumatic fever patients often perspire copiously, and for a long time without any cutaneous eruption being produced. The prolonged soaking in hot water which patients undergo at Leukerbad, very commonly has the effect of bringing out on the surface an eruption termed "*la poussée*." This, according to the account given of it by Constantine James, begins as an erythema, but often develops into a pretty smart eczema. It is regarded as a desirable event, but as it is not essential to a cure, this may perhaps be doubted. At any rate it illustrates my statement, that cutaneous eruptions may be produced by heat without any irritation from the secretion of the perspiratory glands. Recently I had a gentleman under my care, who had been invalided and sent home from India on account of eczema of the face. When I saw him the condition was that of chronic erythema; his skin flushed and got very red if he faced the fire, or drank even light wine. In cold weather he was better.

The foregoing considerations will probably incline you to join with me in the belief that excessive heat is one of the causes of eczema, as well as of other cutaneous hyperæmiæ. There are plenty of other causes which act either alone, or in conjunction with heat, but with these I am not dealing now. My object at present is to set before you the strong probability that heat acting in the way I have described, may produce eruptions of greater or lesser magnitude, often very much resembling those of the true exanthemata; and, besides, capable of perplexing you very much if you are not aware of their real nature.

Now, if the pathology of these disorders be such as I have described, there can be no doubt as to their treatment. The weak vessels and nerves must be judiciously toned, and the hyperæmiæ and its effects will cease. You need have no fear whatever of repelling the eruption if you only proceed with common prudence. Mr. Naylor tells us that sailors af-