

## Progress of Medical Science.

### THE PRESENT TREATMENT OF SYPHILIS AT THE VIENNA SCHOOL.

[The following condensation of Prof. Sigmund's recent clinical lectures on the progress in the treatment of syphilis in the past decade of years (1867-1876), gives the present treatment of syphilis at this, perhaps the largest venereal clinic of our time.]

The author bases his statements upon facts collected at his clinic and from a large private practice.

The following new remedies were tried: carbolic and salicylic acid, and iodoform and oleate of mercury.

The following old remedies were tried in new ways: suppositories of gray ointment, the combination of mercury, sodium and chlorine, and of iron and the oxide of mercury internally; corrosive sublimate by inhalation, a number of the mercurial preparations hypodermically, finally the inunction method combined with balneotherapy.

Carbolic acid, after trial in every way, proved of value only for *external* use, and is recommended by Sigmund for cleanliness for bandaging and rarely for caustic use. A solution of carbolic acid in water, 1-00 is the *general wash* for wounds and ulcers, and for injections into the vagina, rectum, mouth, throat, and especially nose (ozaena). One part to 20-30 water, or glycerine or alcohol, is the application for freely suppurating ulcers, for diphtheritic deposits, and especially for gangrenous surfaces. This application 3 or 4 times a day is the best antiseptic of all, and is never followed by any injurious effects. As a caustic (1-2 carbolic acid to 1-3 glycerine) for opening abscesses, etc., it is not better than the old Vienna paste. The Lister bandage method the author has used for gangrenous destructions of all kinds, especially in anaemic patients, and for the separation of gummatus infiltrations (for instance for the gummata of both testicles as large as the fists), and with the most satisfactory results.

Salicylic acid is like carbolic, but its high price prevents its general use.

Iodoform internally in small doses (0.10-0.15-0.20-30 daily), in pill form, morning and evening, induces after a time catarrh of the stomach and bowels. Its odor as discharged from the mouth and anus in gaseous form is so unpleasant to the patient and those about him as to lead to its disuse; moreover its external use is not of much value.

The oleate of mercury by inunction had no advantage over mercurial ointment, except that it never produces salivation. It is better in private practice because less known, and therefore betrays less.

Suppositories of mercurial ointment (4.5-1.5 cocoa butter each) were tolerated by but very few. Most patients are attacked with tenesmus, colic, more or less violent catarrh of the stomach and bowels, and in 2 or 3 days no mark of them could be retained. Moreover gingivitis and salivation occurred, without very favorable influence upon the syphilitic process.

Corrosive sublimate, with collodion externally is a most valuable agent (1 part sublimate to 8-16 collodion) when painted, over psoriasis palmaris and plantaris twice daily after a bath with soap. Gloves and stockings are to be drawn on afterward and left on over night. The heavy, thick infiltrations and massive horny incrustations always disappear after this treatment.

Sublimate inhaled locally into the mouth for pharynx and larynx complications preserves its high place, but it is without general effect because it can not be long continued.

Subcutaneous injections of mercurials, particularly with sublimate cyanide and calomel, show no special difference from each other. New phases of the disease are not prevented from appearing by this or any other form of treatment. The old method of administering mercury deserves the preference as a rule, and hypodermic medication is only to be resorted to in special cases.

Baths and mineral waters assist every form of treatment in marked degree by hastening metamorphosis. Of all the methods of treatment the "inunction cure" is most assisted by balneotherapy. Exercise in the open air is one of the great advantages also gained at a watering place. Many of the cases of the so-called scrofula, obstinate to iodine and bromine, because they are really inherited syphilis; cases of gummata and corneal and conjunctival affections, are readily cured of their old and obstinate, often disfiguring, troubles, by adding mercury to the treatment, while most of the anaemic and reduced patients are restored at once.

The time at which general treatment is to be undertaken, according to the author's careful clinical observations, is determined by the appearance of disease at places distant from its reception. Papulae in the vicinity of the place of infection and upon the tonsils, together with general glandular enlargement, which manifestations never occur before the sixth to the eighth week, are the indications for general treatment.

The number of facts has more and more increased, showing the successful treatment of syphilis in pregnancy with mercurial preparations, and especially with inunction. This treatment, the author states, never produces abortion or premature labor. Patients improve under it, and, if the treatment shall have been commenced at the time of appearance of papules, the mothers carry their children to maturity.