

CASE OF MORPHŒA NIGRA.

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Katy B—, æt. 12, one of a family of nine, all of whom are healthy, with this exception. There is no hereditary disease in the family. Her father, who is not a strong man, suffers from dyspepsia. She, herself, has always been healthy up to the appearance of the present disease, in fact, up to the middle of last week. The disease first made its appearance six years ago. It began as a small pimple on the lobe of the left ear, which became very red at times, and at times almost disappeared. From this point the disease extended very slowly until the whole of the lobe became involved. It is now completely covered by a somewhat slimy, dense integument of a yellowish-brown colour, and studded, especially at the edges, with yellow elevated spots, which appear to be enlarged sebaceous follicles. There appears to be neither elevation nor depression. There is a total want of sensation in the part. It may be pierced to a considerable extent by a needle without giving the slightest pain or sensation of any kind. There is a very slight erythematous halo around the spot.

In about a year after the ear became affected—a similar pimple made its appearance on the left cheek, from which the disease gradually extended, as in the ear. At the present time the spot on the cheek is almost as large as a twenty-five cent piece. It is circular, and is covered by a somewhat dense, slimy, dirty brown-coloured integument, also studded around the edges by yellow, elevated spots. The edges are somewhat elevated, and there is a slight depression in the centre. There is also here a slight erythematous halo in the centre. There exists the same want of sensation here as in the ear. The patient amuses herself by showing others how she can stick pins into it without hurting herself.

Both spots are increasing in size, more rapidly, her mother thinks, during the last six months than formerly. Her general health has been good up to last winter, when she had an attack of pneumonia, from which she quite recovered. For the last two or three weeks she has been in bad health; appetite, poor; and

complains of lassitude. The child, at present, is thin and anæmic; complains of cough. On examination of the chest found some localized rales at the right apex; no other evidence of disease. She has been under no particular form of treatment. I might say here that a year and a-half ago she came to the Hospital, when I examined the spots, but did not then make out accurately the form of disease. The spots were not so large at that time.

Treatment: Ol. Morrhuæ with Sy. Ferri Iodid. Gave also a simple expectorant mixture.

Dec. 28th, 1877.—Patient has been suffering from febrile symptoms somewhat resembling typhoid. She has complained of severe pains in the abdomen, generally worse at night. To-day Dr. Zimmerman and I made a thorough examination of the chest and abdomen, and came to the conclusion that there was consolidation over a limited extent at the right apex. There appeared to be some swelling of the abdomen, together with a good deal of tenderness. It is possible that there may be enlargement of the mesenteric glands.

Jan. 2nd, 1878.—Patient has improved somewhat in general health, but is still very weak.

I have taken the liberty thus to give a detailed description of this case, partly on account of its rarity, and partly on account of the intimate relation it bears to that loathsome disease—leprosy.

According to Erasmus Wilson, "Patches of morphœa nigra were present in all the cases of elephantiasis which have come under our observation, but we have not seen it independently of that disease; sometimes the patches are round, and not more than a quarter of an inch in diameter, at other times they may be as large as a crown piece or the palm of the hand, in one instance the body was spotted all over with them. The tint of colour in morphœa nigra presents some variety. It is sometimes a yellowish-brown, sometimes brown, and sometimes almost black." He considers morphœa to be a faint trace of a worn-out disease, as an ember of a burnt-out fire; that the disease, leprosy, which was of so horrible a nature in Great Britain during the middle ages, still exists in these isolated cases of morphœa.