

ON THE TREATMENT OF DIPHTHERIA.

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Having seen Dr. Cluness's remarks respecting the treatment of diphtheria at Sacramento, I was reminded of two cases which came under my notice in October last, and the memorandum having been kept by me, of both cases, they being the most severe I have seen for thirteen years, I considered a description well worthy of publication, if only to show the value of the chlorine water treatment.

The following is as brief as I can make it:—I. S. æt. 8 was seized on the 28th or 29th September with headache, lassitude, feverishness, and pains in his limbs and back. An aperient was administered which did not relieve these symptoms, and on the 2nd of October he complained *first* of his throat.

I was summoned on the 5th and found him lying in bed with his mouth partially open and inability to close it, apparently, from some internal mechanical obstruction. His countenance was anxious, skin around his eyes and mouth of a dusky hue, pulse 166 small and feeble, submaxillary glands very hard and swollen, and so œdematous was his neck that the surface of the skin was completely level from the lower edge of lower jaw to a point corresponding to the junction of the middle with the lower third of the sternum and transversely extending to the outer end of each clavicle. He was unable to swallow food without the greatest difficulty. The skin was hot; not having any thermometer in my pocket I cannot give the exact temperature. On opening his mouth the smell was very unpleasant; tongue much coated, brown, and very dry. A large mass of adventitious membrane, of a yellowish gray color occupied the whole space between the tongue, and hard palate, and extending to the gums all round. This mass was quite movable, and the handle of a teaspoon could be easily passed between the mass itself and the palate and all around in every direction as far back as the soft palate, showing that this membrane must have originated at the palatine arch and extended forward, forming no new attachment in its progress. After examining the case carefully I gave the parents no hopes whatever of recovery, thinking that of course *impossible*.

I ordered him to take as much beef tea, milk, and cream as possible, and one tablespoonful of port wine every two hours. The windows were raised to afford a free current of air through the apartment. A cold towel was then applied to his neck, and three teaspoonfuls of chlorine water administered every two hours. From this time immediate improvement commenced, and on the 15th, mark, in ten days from the time treatment was commenced, the throat and mouth were entirely free from deposit, and presented a natural appearance, the tongue was quite clean, the external œdema had completely subsided and appetite returned, in fact complete convalescence was established.

About this time the disease attacked his brother—two years younger, with nearly equal severity. He was treated precisely in a similar manner, as well as a third case in an *adult* in the same house, and all recovered with remarkable rapidity.

I have had a great number of cases under my care lately, all treated in a similar way with equal success, but none so severe as these. I use no local application any further than instructing my patients to retain each dose of medicine in contact with the diseased surface a moment or two before swallowing.

I have not exaggerated these cases in the least and have merely asked publication to show what chlorine will do alone. Dr. Kitchen stated in a former issue of your paper, that the only case he lost out of fifty, was treated by chlorine. This I cannot understand, if the mixture is made in the same manner as we do here.

I saw a letter from a medical gentleman living on the other side of this Province, addressed to my brother Dr. J. B. Benson, in which he said that the majority of his diphtheria patients died until he commenced using the chlorine water in accordance with his advice, after which he had ten cases of which only one died, and that was the only one which did not take the medicine.

My friend Dr. Baxter, of this town, told me the other day he had treated two cases lately with chlorine water and the recovery was very rapid indeed. How is it then that the medicine will not produce like results in the hands of others? I will not go further to discuss the pathology than merely state as my opinion that the day will come when all will agree that diphtheria is a purely constitu-